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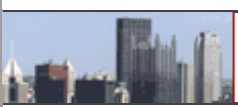
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By **Matt Sober**

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

This is probably going to sound a little weird. But keeping it locked up inside is driving me crazy:

I've got a serious crush.

On a telephone.

It's that unbelievably sexy little Chocolate phone, the one that looks and functions like an iPod. The one with the 1.3-megapixel camera. The one with Bluetooth stereo capability. The one that retails for \$150.

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In other words, the one that's totally out of my league.

Chocolate first caught my eye about a month ago, when Verizon started running those sexually charged advertisements during "Seinfeld" reruns. The seductive electronic music and Barry White-style voice-over guy were simply irresistible.

"Everyone loves Chocolate," he'd growl in a deep, smoky voice.

And it wasn't long before I found myself actually looking forward to the commercial breaks, just to catch a glimpse of the phone emerging, in slow motion, from that glistening vat of silky, brown chocolate.

Still, I knew it was all just a fantasy. Chocolate is smart. Chocolate is stylish. Chocolate has a great set of headphones.

There's no way Chocolate would ever be turned on by a guy like me -- not with all those buttons to

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decipher. I can hardly figure out how to turn on the oven, let alone a telephone equipped with an mp3 player and a video camera.

Besides, I was already in a committed relationship. I'd had the same Samsung since signing a two-year service agreement in August 2004.

And we've been pretty good together -- although, like everyone, we've had our ups and downs.

But who hasn't bounced his phone off the sidewalk and kicked it into oncoming traffic every now and again?

Well, as luck would have it, that two-year service agreement expired last week, entitling me to a new phone at a significant discount.

Meaning I'm an eligible man. Free to shop around.

A guy gets curious sometimes, you know? And, sometimes, my Samsung just seems so ... vanilla.

So I stopped at the Verizon store the other day for a closer look. And Chocolate's just as breathtaking in person as it is on TV.

Not to mention how amazing it feels in the palm of your hand.

But then I realized what I'd have to spend on accessories for the mp3 player, bringing the cost to about \$250.

And at that moment, I knew it was over.


The upshot of it all?

If I'm going to obsess about an impossible fantasy, it's going to be Kirsten Dunst.

And if I want Chocolate, it's going to have to be a Hershey's bar.

Matt Sober is a copy editor for the Tribune-Review. E-mail him at msober@tribweb.com, and include the word "story" in the subject line.

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