

## The Bottom Line

Underwear is serious business. I never knew quite how much until I recently paid a visit to a local and rather posh lingerie shop to purchase what, under normal circumstances, I wouldn't be caught dead buying: a thong. A thong, as all women know, is a miniscule piece of material the size of a large band-aid that is supposed to give one a clean, sleek look and remove all signs of a V.P.L. (Visible Panty Line).

While I have never given much thought to my V.P.L. I was instructed by a saleswoman at Ann Taylor after purchasing a pair of white linen pants, that I needed a politically correct undergarment to go along with it.

"Honey," she said, with an-ever-so-slight Southern drawl, "unless you wear proper drawers, everyone will know you're wearing panties."

"I am wearing panties," I said.

"That's supposed to be your little secret. Don't you know that the no-panty look is what you should be aiming for here?"

I was enlightened.

"Sweetie," she continued, "go get yourself a thong and you'll never leave home without it."

I hot-footed it over to the lingerie shop where a bevy of beauties who know underwear the way my husband knows sports, couldn't wait to get their hands on my bottom and ply me with an assortment of things that guaranteed that no more V.P.L.s would invade my life again.

"Have you ever worn a thong before?" the salesgirl, Cindy inquired.

"Frankly, I'm not the thong type," I admitted.

"You will be after you leave here," she said. She planted me in a dressing room while she went to select a few choice thongs. She returned moments later, carrying with her a handful of what I thought was handkerchiefs.

"Here," she said, "slip these on over a panty liner from the box and you'll see the difference between these and ordinary panties. A favorite among the ladies is our thong called the Hanky Panky." She held up a white lacy "band-aid" and handed it over.

I closed the door, fearing that at any moment she might return and catch me in the throes of this despicable act. Following her instructions exactly, I positioned a hygienically- sealed liner in place as I held my knees together, securing it so it wouldn't go askew. Juggling the liner

in conjunction with the thong was an act so intricate and gymnastic, I was sure I could be hired as an act in the Big Apple Circus. The only problem was, I wasn't sure which the front was and which was the back. I called after Cindy who was lurking outside the room.

"Sorry," I said, "but does this little thingy actually have an instruction manual?"

"It's easy," she said, barging in and holding up the thong: simply place the sliver of material in the back."

"The back of what?"

"Your buttocks," she said.

"But, it won't cover my buttocks."

"That's the idea. That way no one will ever now you have anything on. You'll exude nakedness."

"Is that a good thing?"

"It is," she said, "if you're wearing see-through clothes. A fatal fashion flaw is a V.P.L."

I was becoming savvier by the moment.

"I can stay in here and observe if you'd like," she said.

"No thanks," I said, banishing her from the room, "I prefer doing underwear alone."

I stood there for ten minutes before I started to get the hang of it. Like the Global Positioning System in our car, I needed a positioning system designed for intimate apparel. Once the thong was in place, I felt a strangely odd sensation, as though my body had swallowed a foreign object. Was there a Heimlich maneuver for this sort of dilemma, I wondered, as I envisioned the EMS crew bolting into my dressing room.

"Hey Joe, it's another one of those thong jobs."

"Yeah Mike, seems this one is in real deep."

My nightmare vanished when Cindy returned.

"Having any luck?" she asked, as I gave one, hearty pull. I heard something pop and prayed I hadn't removed a major part of my anatomy along with the thong.

"I was hoping for less traumatic underwear," I said.

"You'll get the hang of it," Cindy assured me. "Buy this pair and go home and practice. By the end of the week, you won't be wearing anything else. And," she continued, "I'm ordering you a few more in nude to wear under your extra-extra-sheer garments. They've presently flown out of the store and we need to restock. I'll call you when they come in."

Not wanting to argue, I paid the fourteen bucks, went home and tossed the thong in back of my dresser drawers.

A week later, my husband said that while I was out, he had received a strange phone call from a woman telling me that my Nude Hanky Pankies had arrived.”

“What did that women mean?” he asked. “Is she promoting porn? And, what’s a Hanky Panky?”

“A thong,” I said.

“A rubber flip-flop beach shoe?”

“Underwear,” I said. “To erase my V.P.L.”

“What’s a V.P.L?” he asked, somewhat startled.

“A girl thing,” I told him.