

The New York Times



MARKED PHOTO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"I never really thought of it in terms of right or wrong, truth or lie," Laura Albert said of her career as JT LeRoy.

## Her Journey, All True

On the Road With the Onetime JT LeRoy

By ALAN FEUER

SAN FRANCISCO — "I'm hopeless at this stuff," Laura Albert had been saying as she stood in her apartment on a recent morning, placing objects into — then removing them from — a bag. Ms. Albert, the fiction writer better known as JT LeRoy, is blessed with gifts, though not a talent for logistics. She was running late for a road trip to Los Angeles, and her driving party — a Cuban-Dutch designer, a would-be film director and a reporter for *The New York Times* — had been waiting patiently since 10 a.m. It would be after 3 when they finally left.

Part of the problem was Ms. Albert's vulnerability to distraction (she had spent the morning in pajamas talking on the phone and fixing breakfast for her son), though it didn't help that with her cup of Chinese tea she had taken a Provi-



Below, from left: Courtney Love, Geoffrey Knopp, "JT LeRoy" and Ms. Albert (who wrote JT LeRoy's work, like the book at left).

nium then fell from grace, shot down as a hoax.

You can learn a lot about a person on an eight-hour road trip down California's blue roads, and that holds true for Laura Albert, as complex a character as one is wont to meet. The drive, down Highway 101, was ostensibly conducted to get the reporter to an interview with David Milch, the television writer (and one of Ms. Albert's best and last supporters). Yet like many highway journeys through the state, it had a rather strange existence of its own.

Over 400 miles the trip turned out to be a dreamlike blend of Kerouac and Freud, a barnstorm through the Santa Lucia range, with tears, antics, confessional moments and crab-meat enchiladas. Ms.

