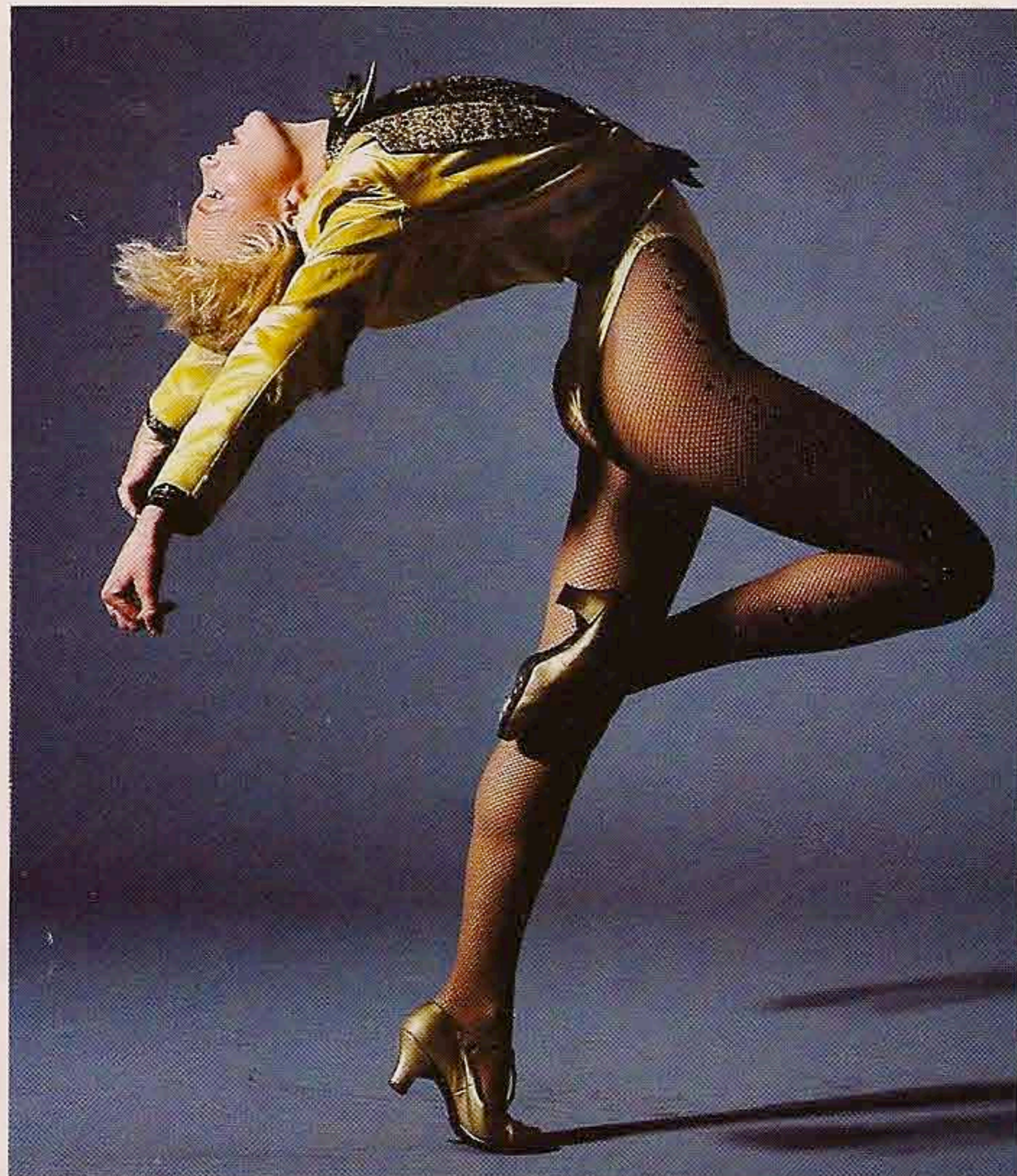


Janet Jones, in costume for the grand finale of the film *A Chorus Line*, where she plays Judy Monroe, a dancer in the chorus.



CHRISTOPHE JOUANY; HAIR: KERRY WARN; MAKEUP: MICHEL VOYSKI

HOOFING IT JANET JONES

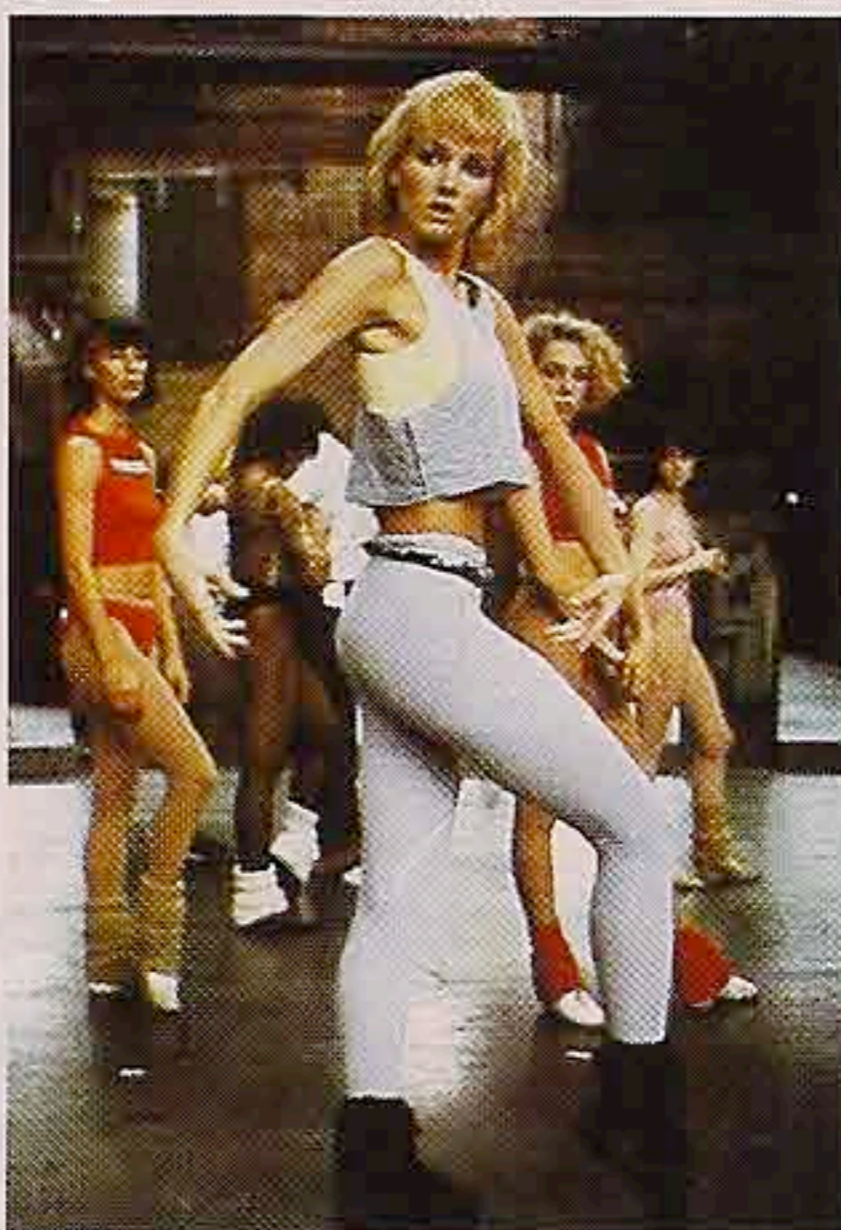
Janet Jones is 5-foot-9. Five feet of that is leg, and the rest is hair. With her gold *Chorus Line* costume, her dark eyebrows, and mass of messy blonde hair, she looks, more than anything, like a full-maned lion escaped from a jungle safari. Changed into civvies, sweatshirted and ponytailed, there's more of an indication of the girl from St. Louis who makes it big this Christmas in Sir Richard Attenborough's film of Broadway's longest-running show.

Jones didn't start dancing until she was almost 15—practically geriatric in the world of *grand jetés*. It was hard to drag her off the softball field for almost anything else, and she says, "I looked more like a boy than a girl. When I started developing, I guess that's when I realized I was a girl." And when she went to a local dance recital, she looked around and, like one of the *Chorus Line* characters, said: "I can do that." At 16 she went to New York with her dance teacher and classmates to see *A Chorus Line*. It was, to her generation of aspiring dancers, what *The Red Shoes* was to a previous group. At 17

she won the title of Miss Dance of America (picture Miss America, but substitute leotards for the swimsuit competition), and last year she made her screen debut in *The Flamingo Kid*, rising out of the country club pool to the sight of men's jaws dropping. It took six auditions to get the *Chorus Line* part—the director, the choreographer, the producers, almost everyone but the gaffer's mother sat in judgment. Jones was glad to be called back, and back again. The role she won is that of Judy Monroe, whom Jones describes as "kind of silly, off the wall, not as serious as a lot of the other characters." Early on in the film the company is singing "God, I Hope I Get It," but with Jones' character, she says, "The audience will see in her face that she's just having a little better time. She's serious about her dancing, and she's proud of herself, but it's not 'Omigod, I'm going to kill myself if I don't get this job.' If she wins, she wins. If she loses, she loses. She can go back to El Paso, Texas, and her parents will take care of her."

Which is pretty much the way Janet Jones feels about her dancing. "I enjoy it when I do it, but if someone were to make me work at it every day, I wouldn't love it." What she does want is to make the kind of transition from dancing to acting in films that Shirley MacLaine and Juliet Prowse (but few others) have made.

For relaxation, 24-year-old Janet goes back to the Midwest of her childhood, to her big Norman Rockwell portrait of a family: three brothers, three sisters, eight nieces and nephews. She talks to her mother by phone every day. When she was offered the role in *The Flamingo Kid*, she called to say, "Hey, Mom, I got this movie with Matt Dillon." Then she had to explain who Matt Dillon is.



Jones' character Monroe is serious about her dancing.

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