

MASSIVE SUMMER DOUBLE ISSUE

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOCUS

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THE INTERVIEW
CHARLIE SHEEN

JENNY McCARTHY

AMERICA'S SWEETHEART RETURNS

SEX DRUGS AND VIDEO GAMES

THE UNTOLD STORY OF ATARI

PLAYBOY'S BEST BARS 2012

A NIGHT IN PARIS WITH WES ANDERSON

20Q ANDY SAMBERG

HOW WE LOST THE GOOD WAR

A REVEALING DISPATCH FROM AFGHANISTAN

NEW FICTION FROM DENNIS LEHANE



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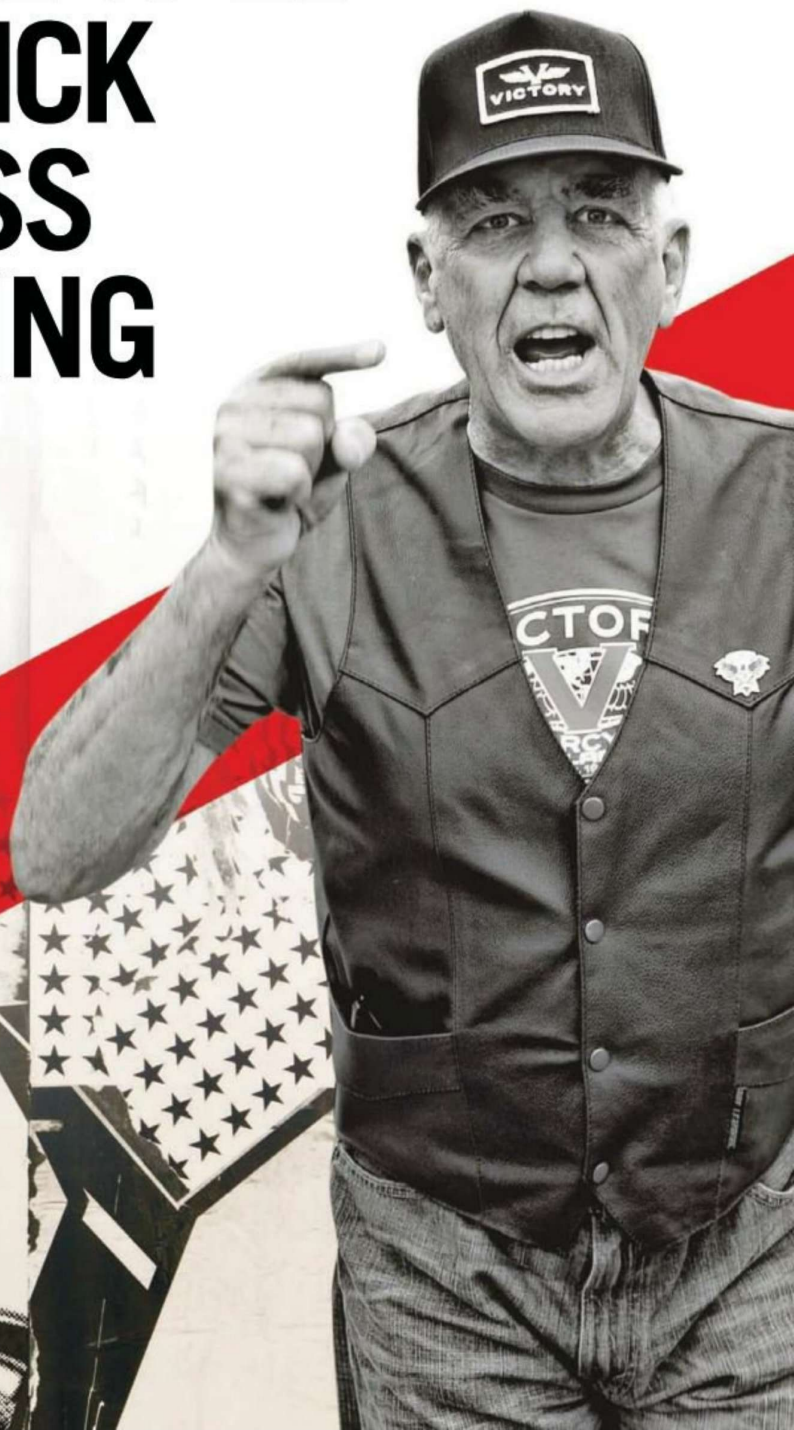
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If genius is, as F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "the ability to put into effect what is on your mind," then director **Wes Anderson** qualifies. Set aside a few nights this summer to feast on *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou* before heading to the theater for his latest, *Moonrise Kingdom*. The native Texan, a devotee of F. Scott (*Rushmore* is based on two Fitzgerald short stories), sits down with J.C. Gabel in *The Iconoclast*. Another bright mind, Marina Abramović, "the grandmother of performance art," talks about space, energy and magic with actor **James Franco** in the first installment of his new column for us. **Andy Samberg** could be considered a performance artist, if you consider placing your penis inside a box to be art. The *Saturday Night Live* cast member best known for his digital shorts *Dick in a Box* and *Lazy Sunday* explains in *20Q* how he got Natalie Portman to talk dirty. Speaking of R-rated beauties with X-rated minds, how great is it to see the irrepressible **Jenny McCarthy** back in our pages?

Steve Shaw captures her playful spirit in *Jenny McCarthy*. (You know you've made it when your name is the headline.) The last time Jenny posed for us, in 2005, the nation was already four years into the battle for Afghanistan. In *How We Lost the Good War*, **Shashank Bengali** dissects how the U.S. "lost the plot" and why what we're leaving behind looks nothing like victory.

Ayn Rand was one of the most revered and derided intellectuals of the 20th century, and her ideas are still challenging in the 21st, as you'll find when we revisit her 1964 *Playboy Interview*. The excerpt celebrates the iconic *Playboy Interview*'s 50th anniversary; you'll see more classic interviews in each issue for the rest of the year. We discovered another lost classic in our vaults—Robert Frank's unpublished photos of Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road*.

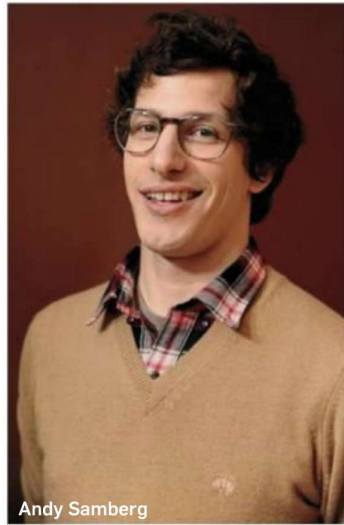
Greil Marcus examines the significance in *The Lost Photos of Jack Kerouac*. All seems lost for Joe Coughlin, the protagonist of **Dennis Lehane**'s forthcoming novel, *Live by Night*. Our exclusive preview begins with Coughlin, his feet fixed in cement, waiting to be thrown overboard. If that sounds like a man on the edge, wait until you hear from **Charlie Sheen** in the *Playboy Interview*. The actor insists he's done acting crazy; in fact, he's starring in a new comedy, *Anger Management*. So was the past year a big hoax, a bit of performance art? As F. Scott Fitzgerald also once said, "Action is character."



Wes Anderson



James Franco



Andy Samberg



Shashank Bengali



Greil Marcus

PLAYBILL



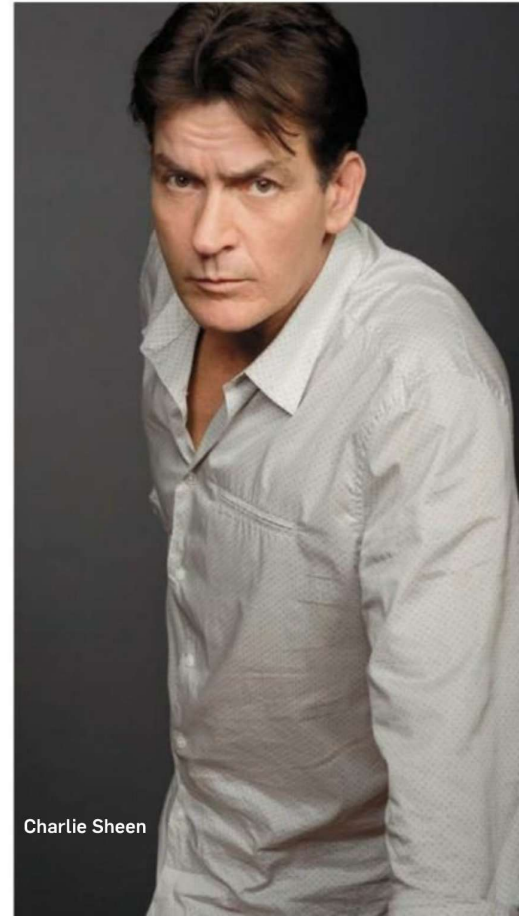
Jenny McCarthy and Steve Shaw



Ayn Rand



Dennis Lehane



Charlie Sheen

CHARLIE SHEEN ANGER MANAGEMENT



A hostile makeover

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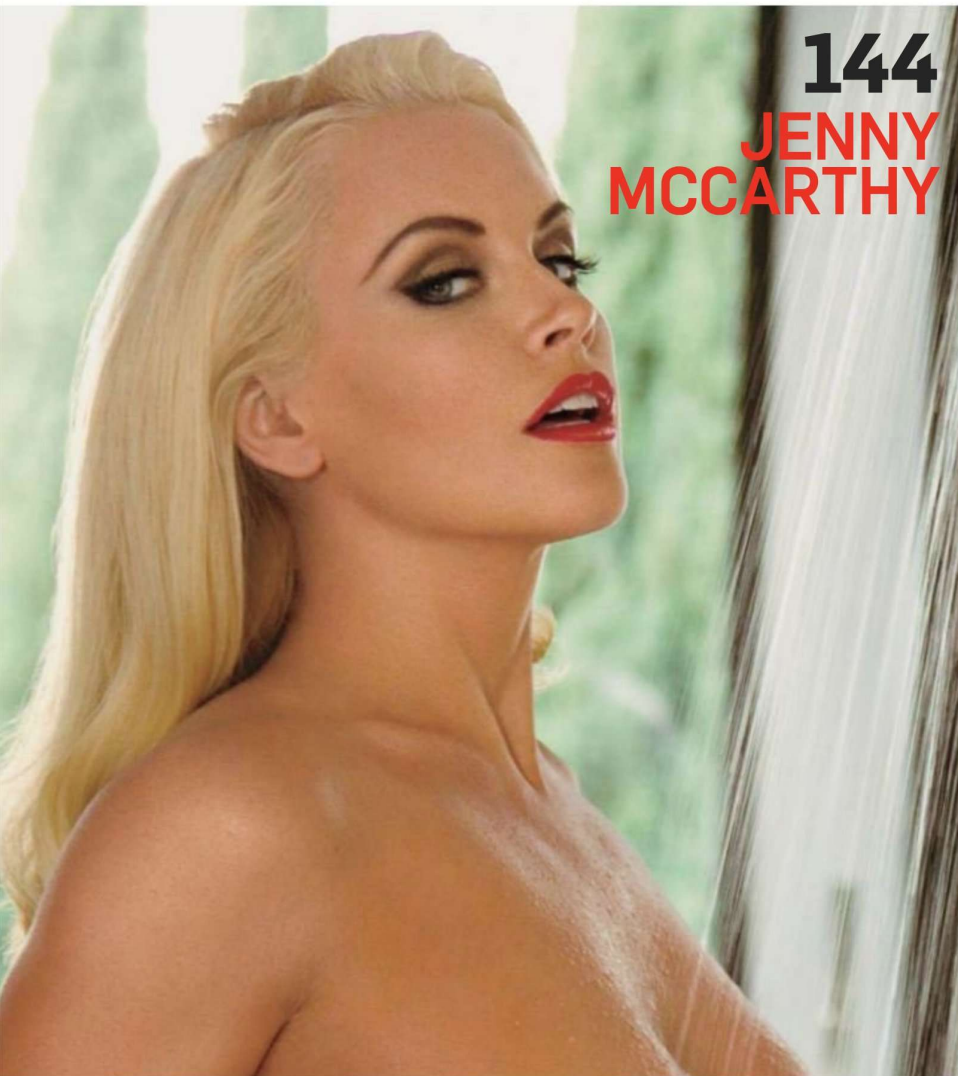


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HOW WE LOST THE GOOD WAR



Following the 9/11 attacks, sending troops into Afghanistan didn't seem like such a bad idea—that's where the terrorists were. Ten years later, as our beleaguered forces slowly withdraw, **SHASHANK BENGALI** dissects what exactly went wrong.



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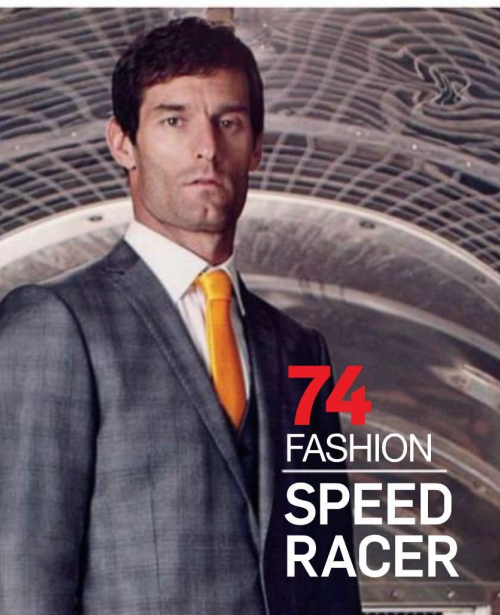
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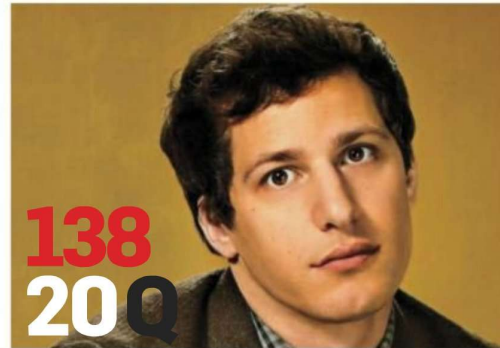


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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

JACLYN SWEDBERG'S PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON

On a day that matched her radiant beauty, Jaclyn Swedberg was named PMOY 2012 during a luncheon at the Mansion. She described the crowning as "surreal." Surrounded by friends, family and the Playmate of the Year sorority (including PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon and PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick), Hef presented the brunette with a check for \$100,000 and a plaque of her June PLAYBOY cover. Cooper Hefner also spoke, remarking that the 53rd Playmate of the Year will "do great representing the brand. She exemplifies what we'll be looking for over the next 60 years."



HEF AND GIRLS ON KENDRA'S NEW SHOW

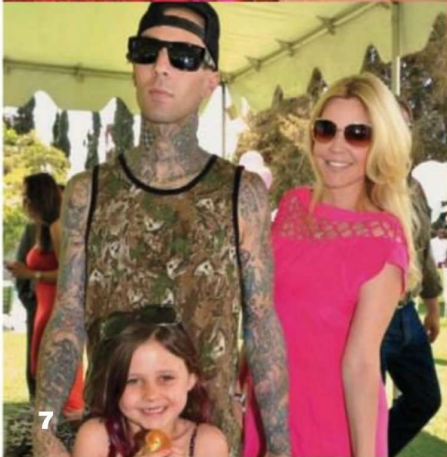
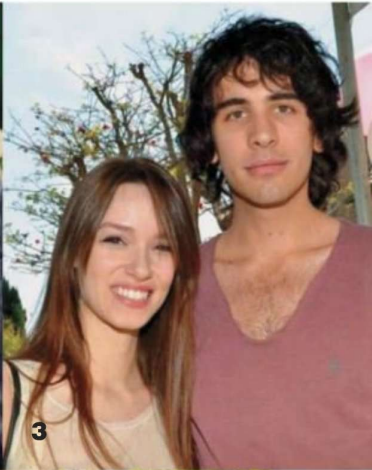
While the cameras rolled for WE tv's *Kendra on Top*, Hef, Trisha Frick and Miss November 2010 Shera Bechard took a helicopter from PMW's tennis court to visit the new L.A. home of Kendra Wilkinson, her husband, Hank Baskett, and baby Hank.



IDOL STEVEN TYLER ROCKS THE MANSION

As if the Mansion weren't already a place of dreams, Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp threw a session where campers jammed with musicians from Yes, Black Sabbath and Quiet Riot. Surprisingly, the camp marked Aerosmith legend and *American Idol* judge Steven Tyler's first trip to the Mansion.

**HANGIN'
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Good vibrations have been in the air over the Mansion and its inhabitants. There was quality family time during Easter, an amazing birthday party for one of the biggest boy bands in the world and a fun visit to the San Diego Zoo for our animal-loving girls. (1) Easter at PMW draws Bunnies. (2) Hef with PMOY 1982 Shannon Tweed and her husband, Gene Simmons, in their Easter best. (3) Alex Essoe and Nick Simmons. (4) PMOY 1994 and current cover girl Jenny McCarthy with Hef. (5) Corey Feldman and son Zen. (6) Benise with Miss June 1997 Carrie Stevens and her son Jaxon. (7) Miss December 2001 Shanna Moakler, Travis Barker and their daughter Alabama. (8) Cooper and Hef. (9) PMOY 2008 Jayde Nicole with a kid. (10) Hef with PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick and her son Keaton. (11) The Wanted celebrate member Nathan Sykes's birthday at the Mansion. They were glad they came. (12) Trisha Frick and Miss January 2011 Anna Sophia Berglund at the San Diego Zoo. (13) Inquiring giraffes want to know: What's up with those wellies?



BATTLE FOR POSITION

Ken Gross and A.J. Baime put together a compelling list of postwar cars in *The 25 Greatest Rides* (May)—with a few exceptions. The Mazda Miata, at number 21, is an influential convertible, but it's not more significant (nor a better ride) than the 356 Porsche, which isn't on the list. The Ferrari 458 Italia, at number 17, is a great car, but it hasn't been around long enough to stand the test of time. Same for the McLaren F1, at number six. The list should have included the 1965 Shelby 427 Cobra, which is the E ticket of postwar rides. And as long as you're including big, high-performance cars such as the Chrysler 300 (19) and the Chevy Bel Air (23), it's hard to ignore the Hudson Hornet. Make it a convertible and it moves further up the list. But any car buff has to love your selections all the same.

Dennis Adler
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Adler is author of 50 Cars to Drive and The Art of the Automobile: The 100 Greatest Cars.

FUNNY CHARACTERS

Proof I read @Playboy for the articles: The word *somnambulate* was used. Good job, #JessePearson. Nice article about [Alec Sulkin] @thesulk [#Borscht BeltRedux, May].

@ddelac

Loved your PLAYBOY profile, @thesulk. You are without a doubt the king of tweeting. Never retire from feeding us.

@CarmeloStar

Just read an article in PLAYBOY about @thesulk and Twitter. Suddenly ready to take this thing more seriously.

@jr_tamez

Nice try, PLAYBOY, but you can't fool me. I know @thesulk isn't a real guy.

@Beeyotch_Please

Just read your story about @thesulk. Now I can tell my girl I get PLAYBOY for the articles. Thank you!

@chrisvertrees

THE LIVING DEAD

As a privacy consultant, I've had a few clients who opted to disappear forever but none so foolish as to submit an insurance claim (*Disappearance in the East*, May). Getting an insurer involved in a pseudocide means you will need a partner in crime, and that leaves you exposed. It would be easier to embezzle some cash, stick up a bookie or get a loan with everything you own as collateral. One client of mine was facing a civil suit and, though he insisted he was innocent, expected he would be wiped out by the judgment. So he arranged to "move" to Lanzarote, an island off the coast of Morocco, after which he actually disappeared into South America. Ten years

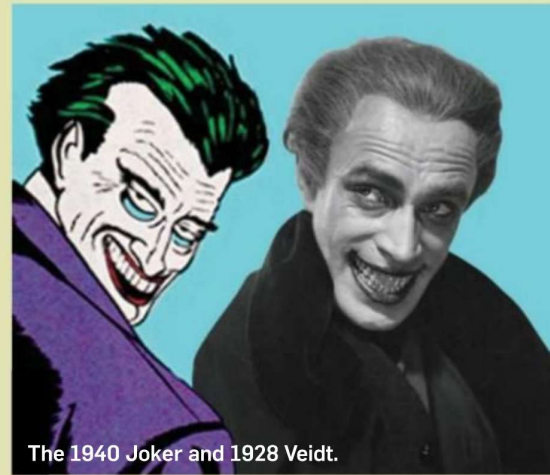
DEAR PLAYBOY

Who's Behind the Joker?

In your feature on comic-book writer Grant Morrison (*The Super Psyche*, May) you note Batman creator Bob Kane "possibly" got the idea for the Joker from artist Jerry Robinson. But I'm betting the inspiration was the character played by Conrad Veidt in the 1928 silent film *The Man Who Laughs*.

Phil Marsh
Santa Ana, California

This is the subject of much contention. Kane claimed that Robinson did show him a drawing of a demented joker on a playing card but only after Kane and writer Bill Finger had modeled the character on a publicity shot of Veidt. Robinson disputed that.



The 1940 Joker and 1928 Veidt.

later, mail still arrives for him on Lanzarote. My agent there scans each letter and e-mails the contents to him, wherever he may currently be on planet Earth.

J.J. Luna

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

Luna is author of How to Be Invisible, now in its third edition.

INSPIRED BEAUTY

I have never written PLAYBOY before, but Playmate Nikki Leigh (*On the Road*, May) deserves the time. I've done a fairly good job of predicting the Playmate of the Year.



Leigh: sociology grad, world traveler, stunner.

Some—Sara Jean Underwood, Hope Dworaczyk, Brande Roderick, Heather Kozar, Carmella DeCesare, Dalene Kurtis—jumped out at me, and I have that feeling about Nikki. She is breathtaking and has that certain "it" factor.

Jennifer Miller
Leesburg, Virginia

THE GOOD FIGHT

Hef is right, of course: A new generation of repressed conservatives is pounding on our bedroom doors (*The War Against Sex*, May). But instead of talking about morality, now they talk about public health. Pornography is bad for teen brains. Abortion is bad for mental health. Strip clubs are bad for strippers. Sex toys and swinging are bad for marriage. The internet is bad for children. The larger goal is to eliminate the constitutional separation of church and state. For example, as long as their objections are based on religious belief, licensed pharmacists can now refuse to fill prescriptions for contraception and RU-486, and therapists can opt out of sexual-diversity training. Homeschooling is another weapon. The children of conservatives are taught that pluralistic democracy is a gun aimed at the heart of religious freedom. Their take-away about sex is that it's "dirty" except with someone you love. Feminists talk about a war on women, but that trivializes the powerful historic forces that use sexual regulation to undermine secular democracy. It's a war against sex, which makes it a war against people.

Marty Klein

Palo Alto, California

Klein, a sex therapist, is author of America's War on Sex: The Attack on Law, Lust and Liberty.

DEEP INSIDE BATMAN

Grant Morrison, who made Batman face midlife, gave him a son and explored the psychology of Arkham Asylum unlike any writer before, offers no better insight into the Dark Knight than to label him "very, very gay"? Batman, who has no superpowers but intimidates superheroes who fly, read minds and run faster than light, has endured since 1939 because of his depth of character. He wants to defeat

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bullies, not bugger them, and Morrison knows that. I admire Morrison's creativity, so I'm disappointed he doesn't give Batman the same sharp analysis he gives Superman and Magneto. Finally, I can't dispute that Wonder Woman's creator loved bondage, but I must point out that he was a psychologist, not a psychiatrist.

Travis Langley
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Langley, a psychology professor at Henderson State University, is author of Batman and Psychology: A Dark and Stormy Knight.

You credit Jack Kirby as the artist for *X-Men #1*, which is an understatement. The X-Men, Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Silver Surfer, the Hulk, Daredevil and all their nemeses flowed from Kirby's vivid imagination. In 1971 his *New Gods* series featured a boy named Mark Moonrider and a Stormtrooper-helmeted bad guy called Darkseid (pronounced "dark side")—it turns out the hero was actually Darkseid's son! All this takes place in a galaxy far, far away where a mysterious power known only as the Source flows through all living things. Sound familiar? Suffice it to say, since Kirby's death in 1994 there has been a dearth of memorable new superheroes.

Paul Pruitt
Tarpon Springs, Florida

Most people know icons such as Superman, Wonder Woman and Spider-Man from just about everywhere but the medium that spawned them. Superhero comics sales are a fraction of what they were two decades ago, even though their characters have become embedded in the global culture. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who created Superman, and Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, who created the X-Men, deserve credit for tapping into a primal psychology when they invented these characters decades ago.

Danny Fingeroth
New York, New York

Fingeroth, former group editor of Marvel's Spider-Man line, is author of Superman on the Couch and co-editor with Roy Thomas of The Stan Lee Universe.

RIP, GRAPEVINE

What happened to *Grapevine*? Reading the May issue was like having a great dinner without dessert or a cigar.

Ken Roy
Dennis, Massachusetts

Grapevine, which debuted in 1979, had a great run, but social media have made many of the paparazzi shots old news by the time they appear in the magazine. We'll still share the most provocative photos in The Year in Sex.

WHALE WARS

I find it ironic that the flagship of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, the *Steve Irwin*, is named for a gentleman who caught and collected wildlife—it hardly sounds like he was a supporter

of animal rights (*Reality on the High Seas*, April). It's also ironic the group named a ship after Bob Barker, the 88-year-old former game-show host. You have to wonder what medical procedures and drugs that were found safe after testing on animals have kept him alive. I am not happy with Japan—killing whales for fertilizer and pet food is disgusting. But it's none of our business when native folks like the Faroese rely on these animals for food and clothing.

Alan Rigerman
Palm Springs North, Florida

PRESSING ISSUES

The *New York Times* columnist David Brooks has pretensions of being a deep thinker yet seems determined to avoid deep thought (*Playboy Interview*, May). I don't mean this just in the sense that he refuses to honestly examine the partisanship he says he finds so distasteful. It's hard to believe a serious person hasn't noticed that Republicans made up their



Brooks: somewhere to the right of the middle.

minds to block anything President Obama might do from the day he was elected. Far more important, Brooks continues to use the same clichés about the government and the market that litter politicians' speeches. The market is not given to us by God; it is structured by the U.S. government, in ways that redistribute income upward. This includes trade policies that subject less-educated workers to international competition while protecting highly educated professionals, more restrictive patent and copyright protections that provide huge rents to drug companies and other beneficiaries, and subsidies for too-big-to-fail banks and other large financial firms. It would be useful to see Brooks pressed on these issues.

Dean Baker
Washington, D.C.

Baker is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (cepr.net) and author of The End of Loser Liberalism: Making Markets Progressive.



PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

BECOMING ATTRACTION

SUSIE WOLFF

Only the world's most elite racing drivers make it to Formula One, which far outshines NASCAR in terms of technology, glamour and right turns. Meet Susie Wolff, one of F1's two female pilots, dashing both on and off the track. At 29, the Scottish lass has more than 10 years of pavement-shredding professional experience. This spring she was made the official development driver for the Williams F1 team, winner of nine World Constructors' Championships. (For more on F1, see our fashion feature on page 74 starring Aussie ass-kicker Mark Webber of Red Bull Racing.) If Susie makes it into the cockpit for a Grand Prix, she'll be the sixth woman ever to do so—the last was 20 years ago. Either way, she makes our pulse race.





SPEED • BONNEVILLE

PASS THE SALT

There's no event on Earth like Bonneville Speed Week (August 11–17) on the Utah salt flats, where Evel Knievels from all over bust land-speed records in homemade vehicles. Three hundred miles an hour? Breeze. See you there.



SOFT-SHELL CRAB BLT • SERVES 6

Sandwich

6 small soft-shell blue crabs, cleaned
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup buttermilk
2 cups cherry tomatoes
4 tbsp. olive oil
Leaves from 1 sprig fresh basil, chopped
2 tbsp. butter, softened
12 1-inch-thick slices French bread
1 cup flour
1 cup yellow cornmeal or corn flour
1 tsp. creole spices
3 cups canola oil
2 tbsp. rémoulade
2 cups mixed baby greens
Leaves from 6 sprigs fresh chervil
Leaves from 6 sprigs fresh dill

Creole Spices

2 tbsp. celery salt
1 tbsp. sweet paprika
1 tbsp. coarse sea salt
1 tbsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp. garlic powder
1 tbsp. onion powder
2 tsp. cayenne pepper
½ tsp. ground allspice

Season crabs with salt and pepper. Pour buttermilk into a bowl, add crabs and set aside to marinate. Cut tomatoes in half and place in a bowl with two tablespoons olive oil, the basil, salt and pepper and toss until coated. Butter bread slices and toast on grill. Mix flour, cornmeal and creole spices in a small bowl. Heat canola oil in a skillet until it reaches 350 degrees on a candy thermometer.

Remove crabs from buttermilk and dredge in the seasoned flour. Fry crabs, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, six to seven minutes. Remove crabs from skillet and drain on paper towels. Place one slice of toasted bread on each of six plates. Spoon marinated tomatoes onto each slice and place fried crabs atop tomatoes. Dollop a teaspoon of rémoulade on each crab. In the bowl used for tomatoes, toss baby greens with remaining olive oil. Place a handful of greens on each crab. Sprinkle with chervil and dill leaves, top off with a piece of toast and serve.

DINING • SOFT-SHELL CRABS

FEELING BLUE



When soft-shell crab specials begin creeping back onto menus, it's a sure sign summer is right around the corner. It all starts in early May, when across the Eastern Seaboard the first molting blue crabs shed their hard winter shells. That's the moment professional crabbers sweep in, grabbing boatloads of primes (the runts of the soft-shell crab litter), jumbos (the midsize models) and whales (the family giants).

Restaurants around the country tend to

monopolize the best of all three, but you will still be able to find a few wriggling beauties at your local fishmonger. (They're also sold frozen, but you want to purchase them when they're still kicking.) In blue-crab country (i.e., much of the East Coast), the soft-shells are abundant only until the end of summer. But in a few places—such as New Orleans—the water stays warm enough to keep them on menus for much longer.

To wit: Thanks to the Louisiana climate, John Besh (left), a chef with seven Big Easy restaurants, can have soft-shell crabs on his menus for nine months out of the year. "We're spoiled down here," says Besh, who grew up just outside New Orleans, fishing soft-shell crabs from the tall grasses along the banks of Lake Pontchartrain. "We used to call the crabs busters because they looked

like they were busting out of their shells."

As a kid he liked them fried and stuffed in a po'boy with Blue Plate mayonnaise, Zatarain's mustard and a dash of Tabasco. These days, however, his soft-shell preparations are more sophisticated. One of his favorites is an amandine version sautéed in brown butter and topped with Spanish Marcona almonds. But his signature soft-shell dish at his bistro Lûke (lukeneworleans.com) is probably the simplest: an upscale BLT—that's *B* for buster—served on toasted French bread with soft-shell crabs, cherry tomatoes and mixed baby greens (recipe above).

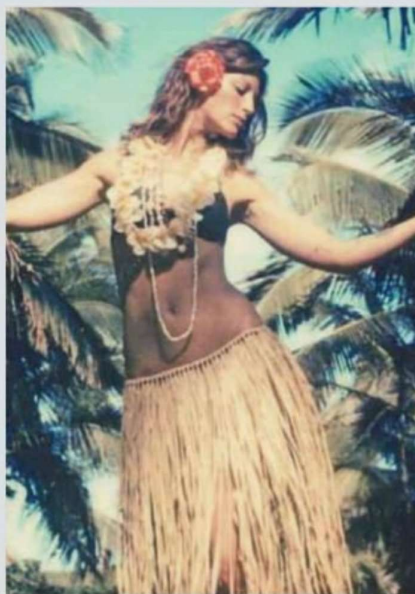
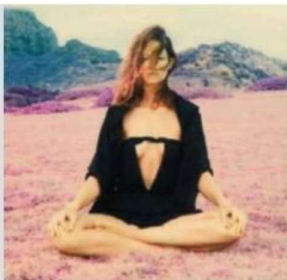
"Soft-shell crabs are one of those ingredients you can't go wrong with," says Besh. "You don't really have to cook them. Just heat them all the way through, and you've got molten jumbo lump crab. How great is that?"



MUSIC • TON OF CASH

THE MAN IN BLACK

Graceland should expect some competition as Johnny Cash's longtime wingman Bill Miller opens the (presumably) big black doors of the Johnny Cash Museum in Nashville. Housed in a former upholstery factory at 119 Third Avenue South, the 18,000-square-foot shrine covers every facet of Cash's career and legendary love affair with June Carter. Miller has even re-created a portion of the Carters' fabled compound, which burned to the ground in 2006 after Barry Gibb bought it (true story). Other highlights include Cash's Gibson guitar and hundreds of handwritten lyrics.



PHOTOGRAPHY • PULP FICTION

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

In 2009 photographer Neil Krug and his wife, model Joni Harbeck, set out to put their old Polaroid camera to good use. The result inspired *Pulp Art Book* (\$50, Nazraeli Press), a collection of photos that recall B movies, spaghetti Westerns and pulp-fiction iconography. The response led the pair to put out volume two in June. Pick it up at pulpartbook.com.

TOTALLY AGAVE.



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A modern marvel, this crew-neck tee (\$25, underarmour.com) uses anti-odor technology to keep you smelling fresher longer.

**UNDER ARMOUR
FITTED UNDERSHIRT**



J. Crew and Homespun Knitwear collaborated on this henley (\$65, jcrew.com). With its vintage vibe, it's okay it isn't blizzard white.

**HOMESPUN
COALMINER HENLEY**



The versatile tee (\$15 for a three-pack, hanes.com). To perfect the James Dean look, go small and pair it with a windbreaker.

**HANES COMFORT-
BLEND CREW**



Don't wear this V-neck (\$38 for a three-pack, calvinklein.com) as an undershirt. Instead, pair it with khakis or cuffed jeans.

**CALVIN KLEIN
CLASSIC V-NECK**



TURN ON • THE GREAT OUTDOORS

THE DIGITAL FISHERMAN

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BARMATE
WORDS TO DRINK BY

**JUSTINE
DENEÀ**

TO DRINK like a local at my place of work, Cavanaugh's Rittenhouse sports bar in Philly, order a Walt Wit, a Belgian-style white ale from the Philadelphia Brewing Company, or a Yuengling, which sounds like a Chinese beer but is actually brewed just outside the city.

HONESTLY, THOUGH, I'm not that provincial about my drink choices. In fact, my favorite summer drink is a Cuban original—the mojito. My personal twist is that I make it with fresh berries and Splenda.

BUT DON'T worry about buying me one during my shift. Just tip well. I'll pay it forward—generous tips almost always lead to free shots.

NEVER LEAVE your phone number on the check. It's a major turnoff. A real man has the courage to ask a woman out face-to-face.



Marlon Brando



Paul Newman



James Dean

STYLE • SHIRTS

DRESSED TO A TEE

While other men obsess about the hottest brands in menswear this summer, our money—along with the figurative cash of Marlon Brando, Paul Newman and James Dean—is on the standard shirt of the perennially cool: the plain white tee. It's the rare article of clothing that won't break the bank and will go with nearly everything. If that's not enough, it also epitomizes manly confidence, conveying the message that you make your own rules. That said, maximizing its strengths requires some effort to avoid looking like you just rolled out of bed. It needs to be the right fit, it needs to be wrinkle-free and it should almost always be blindingly white. Or it can be any of the shirts above.



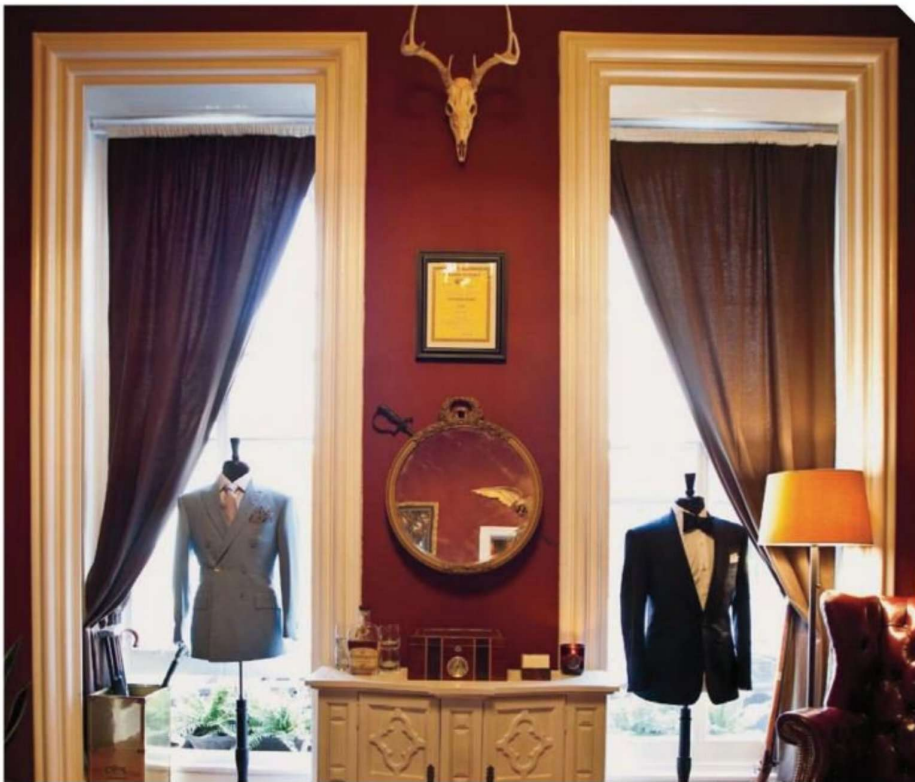
EVENTS • BEER

BREW MAN GROUP

Come for the Olympics, but stay for the barley and hops. From August 7 to 11, nearly 50,000 people are expected to descend on London for the Great British Beer Festival, where more than 800 sudsy varieties will await them. And in the Olympic spirit, the event will start with a competition—the Champion Beer of Britain contest.



TOTALLY SMOOTH.®



STYLE • SHOP TALK

SUIT UP

Our eternal quest to find the world's best men's shops leads us this month to the City of Brotherly Love. Philly boys Craig Arthur von Schroeder and Aaron Pierce launched Commonwealth Proper in 2008 with two goals in mind: Make suits

that fit properly and make them in America. Commonwealth Proper offers bespoke suits and off-the-rack shirts and accessories for men who take dressing seriously. It isn't cheap, but if you're done with flash fashion and want to build a lasting wardrobe, it's the patriotic place to start.

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THE BEACH Not many cities offer urban vistas in such proximity to beautiful beaches. Pictured here: the city's famed Pigeon Rocks. Byblos, easily reached from Beirut by cab, is one of the oldest (7,000 years) continually inhabited towns in the world. And yet the water is still clean. Sinatra and Brando docked their yachts here. Stay at the five-star Byblos Sur Mer hotel (byblossurmer.com).



THE NIGHTLIFE When it comes to dining, Beirut's table is savory. Try the *makdous* (pickled eggplant stuffed with red peppers, garlic and walnuts) at Abdel Wahab (961-1-200-550), or sample seafood at the wharf restaurant La Plage (961-1-366-222). Then hit the nightclubs. Pictured: White (whitebeirut.com), a rowdy and recently renovated rooftop dance hall.



THE HOTELS For a boutique feel, try Le Gray in Martyrs' Square (campbellgrayhotels.com). For old-school panache, hit Le Vendôme (pictured, levendomebeirut.com), right on the city's waterfront, a favorite of powerful politicians and international celebs. Added bonus: a free massage upon check-in.

TRAVEL • BEIRUT

PARIS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Like most Americans, we had always viewed Beirut as a violent place. For 15 years (1975 to 1990), Lebanon's capital city convulsed in civil war between its Muslim and Christian populations. Beirut was reduced to stones for kicking down ghosted streets. In recent years, however, the city has returned to prominence as a gorgeous destination on the Mediterranean Sea, the most cosmopolitan and tolerant city in the region. Nearly 2 million tourists visited in 2011. So we booked our flight, and it proved to be no mistake. Now we know why Beirut is called the Paris of the Middle East. Come along and see for yourself. Pictured above: downtown in the warm morning light.



FROM THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE • iPLAYBOY

BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

War never seems more hellish than when Ron Kovic writes about it. And he told of no greater hell than in his memoir of the Vietnam war, *Born on the Fourth of July*, excerpted in our July 1976 issue. "I'm in an ambulance now, rushing to someplace," Kovic recounts, describing the immediate aftermath of a firefight that left him paralyzed. "There is a man without any legs, screaming in pain, moaning like a little baby. He is bleeding terribly from the stumps that were once his legs, thrashing his arms wildly about his chest, in a semiconscious daze. It is almost too much for me to watch.... I've seen too much today, I think, but I hold on, sucking the air. I shout, then curse for him to be quiet. 'My wound is much worse than yours!' I scream. 'You're lucky,' I shout, staring him in the eyes. 'I can feel nothing from the chest down. You at least still have part of your legs. Shut up!' I scream again. 'Shut the fuck up, you goddamned baby!'" To read the rest, visit iplayboy.com.



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THE DARK KNIGHT RISES

By Stephen Rebellio

We wish we were reading the Bat-Signal wrong, but *The Dark Knight Rises* marks the end of the line for Christian Bale as the angst-ridden caped crusader from writer-director Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*. The trilogy-capping finale stars Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anne Hathaway, Marion Cotillard, Gary Oldman, Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine and pits Bale's broken-spirited Batman against Tom Hardy as the masked destroyer Bane. "We haven't seen Batman deal with someone with whom he's so evenly matched," says Emma Thomas, producer of the three Batman films by husband Nolan. "Bane has a plan, a brain. He's incredibly physically intimidating, and he's a real threat. Tom loved the challenge when we told him, 'You wear a mask through the whole movie.' Anne Hathaway also gives a great performance as Catwoman and does a lot of her own fighting—in high heels. You may work with people again, but it's never going to be the same as this."



Ted *Family Guy* maestro Seth MacFarlane writes and directs his feature-length comedy debut, in which Mark Wahlberg's childhood teddy bear comes to life through a wish. Ted turns out to be a foulmouthed, irresponsible druggie slacker who mucks up Wahlberg's relationship with the woman of his dreams (Mila Kunis) and sounds exactly like *Family Guy*'s Peter Griffin.

NOW SHOWING IN THEATERS

The Campaign The battle is on as fourth-term incumbent congressman Will Ferrell is challenged at the 11th hour by Zach Galifianakis for the seat in their tiny North Carolina district. Jay Roach's latest comedy also has Jason Sudeikis, Dan Aykroyd, John Lithgow and Dylan McDermott riding along the kooky campaign trail for laughs.



The Amazing Spider-Man In this reboot of the Spidey franchise, directed by Marc Webb instead of Sam Raimi, high school dweeb Peter Parker (Andrew Garfield) has enough on his hands being an adolescent orphan and crushing on new girlfriend Gwen Stacy (Emma Stone). Other circumstances really get Peter's senses tingling, though, when he starts web spinning and has to combat the supervillainous Lizard, played by scene-stealer Rhys Ifans.



Savages Things get hot for pot growers Taylor Kitsch and Aaron Johnson when Mexican drug cartel badasses led by Benicio Del Toro kidnap their shared girlfriend, Blake Lively. John Travolta, Salma Hayek and Demián Bichir are part of the dark fun in this Oliver Stone-directed crime thriller.

The Expendables 2 When rival mercenary Jean-Claude Van Damme murders one of the can-do troop, Bruce Willis evens the score by summoning the gang of Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham, Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Liam Hemsworth joins them, along with Chuck Norris, who convinced producers to tone down the film's crass language.



The Bourne Legacy Matt Damon's Jason Bourne sits out this fourth film, which follows agent Aaron Cross (Jeremy Renner) and other new characters—including Rachel Weisz—as they grapple with the Treadstone conspiracy fallout and adversary Edward Norton. Joan Allen, David Strathairn, Albert Finney and Scott Glenn reprise their *Bourne* roles.

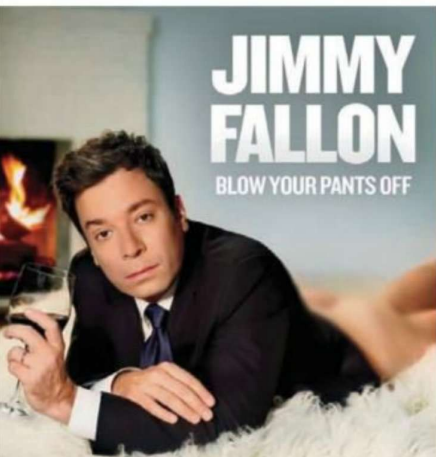


DVD OF THE MONTH

FOREVER MARILYN: THE BLU-RAY COLLECTION

By Greg Fagan

A peerless American icon whose films—save for the Billy Wilder landmark *Some Like It Hot*—remain infrequently screened, Marilyn Monroe finally gets her high-definition close-up in this new Blu-ray boxed set. All five HD debuts in the seven-film *Forever Marilyn: The Blu-ray Collection* benefit from digital remastering, as well as new bonus material. The films alone are enough: Each is an invitation to viewers to peel back the layers of legend to see what made Norma Jeane Mortensen so much larger than life. The new-to-Blu-ray films include the two 1953 comedies—*Gentleman Prefer Blondes* and *How to Marry a Millionaire*—that established her box-office allure. Each showcases the gentle comic ease that made her seem uniquely approachable. She evolves that character through the Irving Berlin road show *There's No Business Like Show Business* and Wilder's *The Seven Year Itch* (pictured), both widescreen glitz fests. *River of No Return* is a minor mess in which Monroe is gorgeously photographed but curiously instructed by her acting coach, whom director Otto Preminger fought to ban from the set. *Some Like It Hot* and her final completed feature, 1961's *The Misfits*, both previously released on Blu-ray, round out this essential collection. ★★★



JIMMY FALLON

BLOW YOUR PANTS OFF

than Adam Sandler's *What's Your Name?* by a factor of infinity. Randy Newman, Art Brut, Todd Snider, Ian Dury, Brad Paisley, Eminem—all are great musicians whose records will make you laugh more than most ABC sitcoms.

Which brings us to Jimmy Fallon, the late-night host and part-time singer. Fallon is a great mimic—on *Blow Your Pants Off*, his new 15-song comedy album, his imitations of Neil Young, David Bowie, Bob Dylan and Jim Morrison are eerily precise. But his guest musicians are even funnier: Eddie Vedder wailing the phrase “Balls in your mouth,” Paul McCartney singing about waffle fries and Bruce Springsteen grunting and groaning like he's imitating Joe Piscopo's imitation of Bruce Springsteen. ★★★

—Rob Tannenbaum

WHO'S FUNNIER?

Ever since ancient Greeks invented the comedy club (Nikos's Chuckle Hut, 1500 B.C.), comedians have been writing funny songs. By now we know something Nikos didn't: Musicians are better at comedy than comedians are at music. Here's proof: Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* is funnier



TEASE FRAME

Fans of the potent Southern-fried HBO drama *True Blood* (pictured) know Deborah Ann

Woll as Bill's progeny Jessica, the hot ginger vampire with an insatiable appetite. The foxy fanger can be seen heating up the show's fifth season right now, as well as in theaters in the romantic comedy *Ruby Sparks*.



REDFOO SPEAKS SAD ENDING

We caught up with RedFoo (pictured, in glasses) from LMFAO after a recent tour: “I just got back from a great trip to Japan. Our hosts took us to a mas-

sage parlor at one in the morning. Did I get a happy ending? No, I got a sad ending, because I didn't ask. You have to know the code words. When they ask, ‘Have you been here before?’ you have to answer, ‘Yes, and I always get

nontherapeutic massage.’ Those are the key words. But the masseuse was like, ‘Oh, my kids love your song.’ I didn't want to ask Mom for sucky-sucky. And I was really drunk, so I passed out before she even massaged me.”



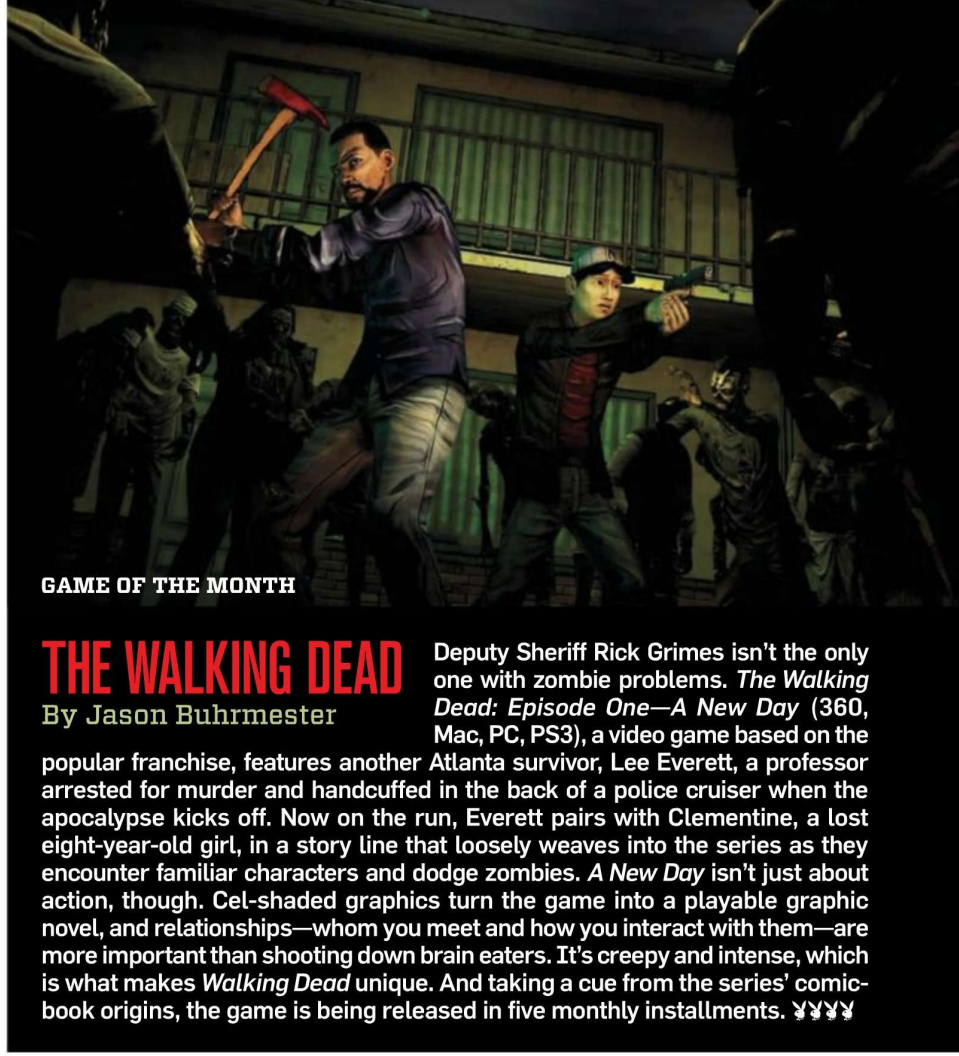
MUST-WATCH TV

TWENTY TWELVE

By Josef Adalian

The Olympics may not seem an obvious comedic target, which is why it's probably a good thing that BBC America's half-hour *Twenty Twelve* isn't really about this summer's games. Instead, the U.K.-produced series sends up the bureaucratic bungling of London's Olympic Deliverance Commission. Headed by Ian Fletcher (*Downton Abbey*'s Hugh Bonneville), the ODC members are a clueless cabal charged with managing the minutiae of London's 2012 Games, from the design of the aquatics

center to a hopeless plan to engineer an "audio logo" for the event. Producer Jon Plowman worked on Ricky Gervais's original production of *The Office*, but *Twenty Twelve* seems to be more a British take on another U.S. comedy: NBC's *Parks and Recreation*. Fletcher and other stand-out characters, such as hyperactive PR chief Siobhan Sharpe (a brilliant Jessica Hynes) and "sustainability" head Kay Hope (Amelia Bullmore), are not unlike *Parks and Rec*'s Leslie Knope. They care just a little too much about their work. Their constant overthinking ultimately makes them less effective employees but provides *Twenty Twelve* with the bulk of its many, if somewhat mild, comedic charms. ★★★



GAME OF THE MONTH

THE WALKING DEAD

By Jason Buhrmester

Deputy Sheriff Rick Grimes isn't the only one with zombie problems. *The Walking Dead: Episode One—A New Day* (360, Mac, PC, PS3), a video game based on the popular franchise, features another Atlanta survivor, Lee Everett, a professor arrested for murder and handcuffed in the back of a police cruiser when the apocalypse kicks off. Now on the run, Everett pairs with Clementine, a lost eight-year-old girl, in a story line that loosely weaves into the series as they encounter familiar characters and dodge zombies. *A New Day* isn't just about action, though. Cel-shaded graphics turn the game into a playable graphic novel, and relationships—whom you meet and how you interact with them—are more important than shooting down brain eaters. It's creepy and intense, which is what makes *Walking Dead* unique. And taking a cue from the series' comic-book origins, the game is being released in five monthly installments. ★★★

TRUE BELIEVER

STAN LEE

By Jason Buhrmester

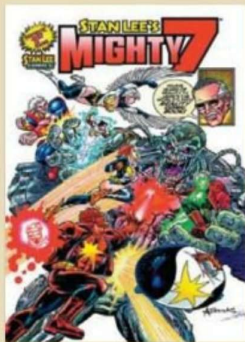
Spider-Man, the Hulk and the X-Men recently launched a new series, *Mighty 7*.

PLAYBOY: *Mighty 7* is the first comic book to feature you as a recurring character. How does it work?

LEE: I play a guy who writes comics but who has written so many that he's lucked out. I've gone to Archie Comics to see if I can write for them, maybe teenage-girl things, but they want me to do superheroes. I go out to the desert to think, and lo and behold, a spaceship crash-lands. Seven characters with superpowers emerge. Two are lawmen, and the other five are prisoners, but now that the ship has crashed, they're all in the same boat. They don't know much about Earth, and I convince them they need me to guide them and keep them from the authorities. I figure I'll turn them into superheroes and write about them, and everyone will think it's fiction.

PLAYBOY: Is it hard to come up with character names after all these years?

As with any great superhero, there's no keeping Stan Lee down. The visionary behind Marvel comics and the creator of such legends as



LEE: I enjoy it, though sometimes I'll think of a great name and somebody will remind me it's a Marvel character from 30 or 40 years ago.

PLAYBOY: Why did you wait so long to feature yourself as a character?

LEE: I'm enjoying it so much I don't know why I waited so long. I could have written myself in as Spider-Man's uncle, but it never occurred to me. [laughs]

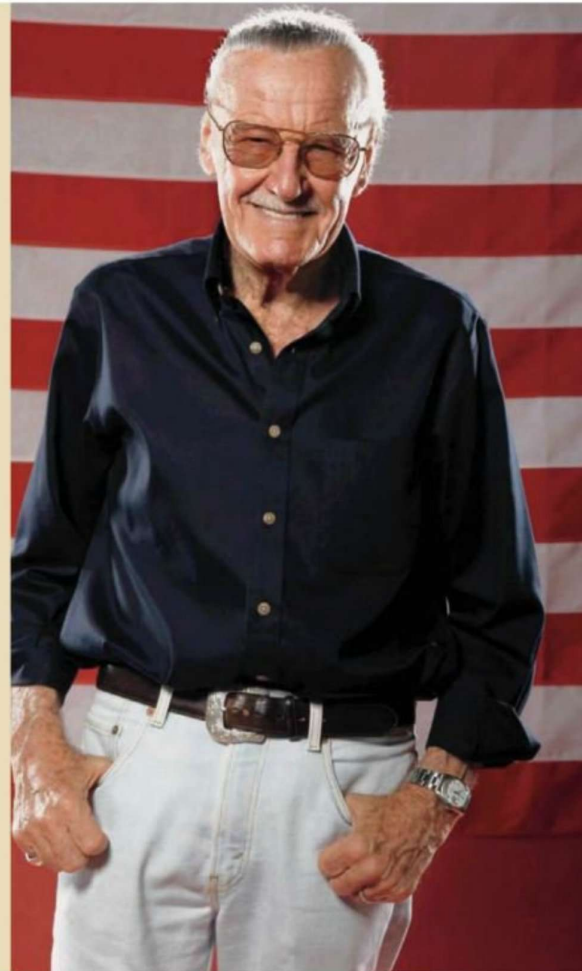
PLAYBOY: It's the 50th anniversary of Spider-Man. Did you ever think you would still be doing this?

LEE: I never had a clue that 50 years later I would be talking to PLAYBOY and answering questions about Spider-Man. We just hoped it would last and sell well.

PLAYBOY: You're 89 years old and still in the comic-book game. How have you lasted

so long?

LEE: The ideas come pretty easily to me. I just worried there wouldn't be any companies that had use for my ideas. If we went out of business and I had to find another job, to say I worked as a reference at a book publisher or a real magazine. No one had respect for comics or the people who wrote them. I'm lucky to still be doing this.



HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM PRESENTS

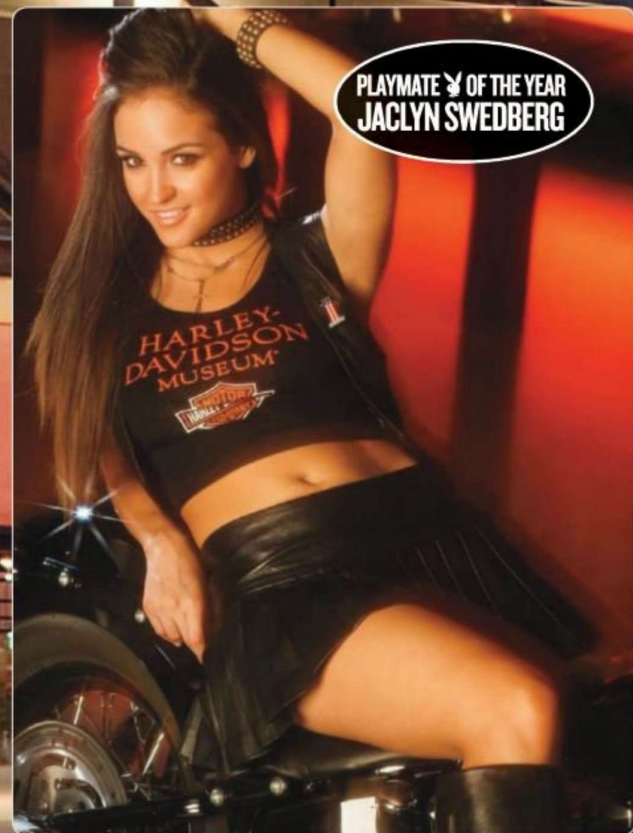
WORN TO BE WILD

THE BLACK LEATHER JACKET



One of pop culture's most enduring symbols, the black leather jacket is cultural shorthand for cool. Everyone from rebel outsiders to fashion insiders have made their mark by slipping on a second skin. *Worn to be Wild: The Black Leather Jacket* traces the evolution of the garment from clothing to cultural icon and offer visitors a rare opportunity to examine one of the world's most symbolically charged pieces of clothing.

Worn to be Wild: The Black Leather Jacket is on display from June 16 to September 3. Details at h-dmuseum.com.



I learned to ride a Harley this year, and to me there is nothing better than riding with the wind in my face, and the feel of leather against my skin!

Jaclyn Swedberg



Below: 1957 Model FLH "Billy Bike" Replica (left) and 1960 Model FLH "Captain America" Replica (right), from the 1969 film *Easy Rider*.

You'll see Elvis' leather, the Terminator Outfit, and Jean Paul Gaultier Jackets worn by rock stars from Gene Vincent to Joe Walsh.



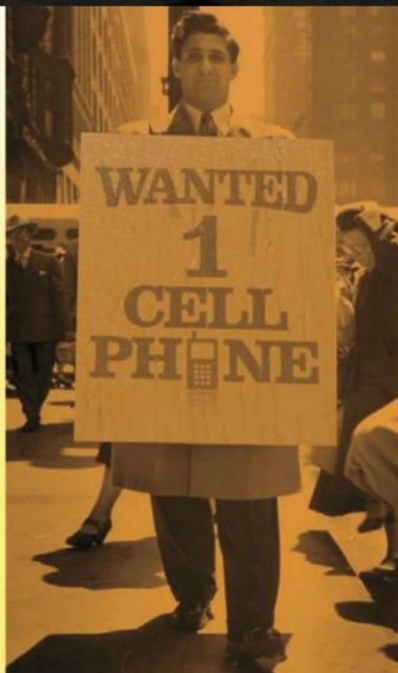
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SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



THE BAD NEWS: PEOPLE WHO EAT FAST FOOD REGULARLY ARE **51 PERCENT** MORE LIKELY TO **DEVELOP DEPRESSION** THAN THOSE WHO DON'T.

★ WHO SAYS SOCIALISM DOESN'T WORK?
★ In the "model socialist village" of Huaxi, **CHINA**, families earn more than **\$160,000 ANNUALLY** and are eligible for a free car, house, health care and cooking oil.



MAYBE IT'S WITH YOUR KEYS
THE TYPICAL AMERICAN LOSES AT LEAST ONE CELL PHONE A YEAR.

THE GOOD NEWS: A RECENT SPANISH STUDY FOUND THAT

40,000 PEOPLE WHO CONSUMED FRIED FOODS OVER A 14-YEAR PERIOD




DID NOT SUFFER AN INCREASED INCIDENCE OF HEART DISEASE.

DOES SOMEBODY HAVE A CASE OF THE MONDAYS? THE AVERAGE PERSON DOESN'T CRACK A SMILE ON MONDAY MORNING UNTIL **11:16**.

LET'S PLAY THE SHAME GAME.

According to a new poll, **3** of the more embarrassing contemporary behaviors are

SMOKING CIGARETTES, DRIVING A GAS-GUZZLING CAR AND GETTING CAUGHT NOT RECYCLING.

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For every Hollywood film, nearly **28** porn films are produced.



DUST OFF THAT RÉSUMÉ.

Compensation packages for workers hired from outside a company are on average **18 percent** larger than those for workers promoted from within a company.





FRANCOFILE

Talking With Marina Abramović

by James Franco

For nearly four decades, Marina Abramović has been the godmother of performance art, using knives, pills and even a gun to startle audiences. She recently announced plans to form the Marina Abramović Institute for the Preservation of Performance Art in New York.

FRANCO: You were born in Belgrade, and your parents were both in the Yugoslav military during World War II. From where did your urge to become an artist come?

ABRAMOVIĆ: My mother studied art history after the war and became director of the Museum of Revolution and Art, which was the horror for me, because it was like machine guns next to the paintings. It was a very political institution. Her understanding of art stopped just before Andy Warhol. Nothing after that.

FRANCO: Do you think you got some of your interest in art from her?

ABRAMOVIĆ: Yes, because when I was very young she took me to all the museums she would study. My first word was not *mama* or *papa*. It was actually *El Greco*. And I love *El Greco*. I would say “Eleco.” [laughs] I was just a little kid. She would bring me to studios of different artists. She’d drop me there, and I would play with the clay or do different things.

FRANCO: You put on a series of groundbreaking performances in the 1970s, each titled *Rhythm*. Why was the first performance titled *Rhythm 10*?

ABRAMOVIĆ: I just found 10 kitchen knives in the kitchen. And it was not more than 10 knives. We had the 10 knives—that’s it. Some kitchens don’t have that many knives, but in Yugoslavia we have lots of knives. So it was these 10 knives and two tape recorders. I put one on and

took the first knife and played this classic Russian-Slavic game, stabbing between my fingers fast, as fast as I can go. Each time I cut into my flesh, I would change the knife. I recorded 10 cuts, then I rewound the tape recorder and put the second tape recorder on. I listened to the sound from the first one and tried to take the same knife from the first round, play the same game and try to cut myself in the same place. I only missed twice.

FRANCO: How would you know?

ABRAMOVIĆ: I can’t explain. This is magic. It’s like you’re doing this very fast and just happening in the same place. I only missed twice. Then I rewound the second tape recorder and played them both with double sound. The idea of the piece was how you can put time—past and present—together to create this simultaneous mistake. This was the performance. But the energy of that and my relation to the public and the public attention, and everything that would happen—it was so intense, I could never forget that feeling. I knew that performance was my tool, and that was the only one.

FRANCO: In that piece we get two sides of you, the theatrical urge and what we could call the nontheatrical performance thread to your work. *Rhythm 10* seems to embody both. There’s nothing more real than cutting yourself—it’s a real knife and real blood—but when you play it back and try to match the first one, it’s like a script. In a way, it becomes theatrical.

ABRAMOVIĆ: This is the two layers. You’re right. I never thought about it that way, because most of the performances don’t involve repetition. In this case, repetition was part of the concept and layers. That’s very true. You’re the first one to mention that. Honestly, nobody ever saw it this way. It’s really good. I have to think about that.

FRANCO: The documentary *The Artist Is Present* captures the tone and spirit of the piece for which you sat in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City for seven hours a day, six days a week and let members of the audience sit across from you

as long as they wanted. What was it like for you in that space?

ABRAMOVIĆ: The most difficult thing was organizing the atrium, because it’s an enormous space. Plus, it’s a space where everybody goes somewhere—to the library, to the bathroom, to the next floor, to the side galleries. To me the big discovery was to use the four streetlights, which are actually used to make movies on the street. Those four lights focused the space for me and created a zone. So you have all these people running around, but the moment you enter, you’re in the zone and everything else disappears. Even the sound starts not being so present. You concentrate on what is happening in front of you, and that is all about energy. I think the concentration of other people watching is even more important.

FRANCO: What about the energy from the person sitting across from you? Would it sometimes be hostile? Would it sometimes be nurturing?

ABRAMOVIĆ: It was interesting, learning how to change that. I had a guy who was a Hells Angel, completely full of tattoos and piercings and everything. He was making a lot of noise because he was waiting in line. He was already fucked-up, saying, “Why do you have to wait for this? This is bullshit.” He sat in front of me, angry. Ten minutes later he’s crying like a baby—even five minutes later, sobbing like a baby. It’s an interesting thing, how your energy becomes clean, which I actually kind of train. It’s such a fast time, who can change the pattern and turn it into another thing. I never saw so much pain in this whole city like in New York. It’s unbelievable, the pain. Unbelievable. The people are not giving love, and nobody looks at them. Once you spend time—because the public is always seen as a group, especially in performance, in theater, everywhere—I really see them as individuals. And this was a big difference, that you take them one-to-one, relate one-to-one. That makes an enormous difference in the experience.

How
FORTY
 BECAME
the
new
TWENTY
by
JOEL STEIN

I grew up to be even less of a man than I thought I would. I don't go to an office. I don't wear a suit. I don't go to see the philharmonic, smoke a pipe or wear pajamas. I have not read one book about the Civil War. Instead of disciplining my son, I explain why his misbehavior won't get him ahead in the world. My son is two.

What I didn't figure on, however, was that the rest of my generation would mature even less than I did.

I am 40 and I am regularly asked by other men—some of whom are also 40—if I've seen movies about the Hulk, Captain America and Thor. Some of these men proudly tell me they frequent comic-book stores. People are aghast when I don't know the current rules governing vampires and zombies. I go to dinner parties where I am served cupcakes. Every time I'm excited about a new restaurant opened by one of the world's most talented chefs, I find out it is selling burgers, pizza or hot dogs.

I live in a society in which childless adult couples see Pixar movies on dates, get married inside Cinderella's castle at Disney World, play *Angry Birds* on their phones and read *The Hunger Games*. Dads I know go to Phish concerts where they do drugs, dance, pass around giant balloons and *listen to Phish*. One guy I know who has a great job and a great wife also has a great life-size *Star Wars* Stormtrooper in his screening room. Even before the Great Recession, it was totally normal for people to live at home for a few years after college and then, after moving out, remain on their parents' cell phone plan.

In no society in history would I be an acceptable adult: I write penis jokes for a living, can't fix anything in my house and



have a vocabulary that consists mostly of the words *cool*, *awesome*, *psyched* and *bummer*. In fact, just 50 years ago I wouldn't even have been an acceptable adult-comedy writer. They used to wear suits and have kids in their 20s, like on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. In the first season of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, Ozzie Nelson was pretty much the same age as Jerry Seinfeld on *Seinfeld*. It seems weird that Jon Stewart has gray hair, because he doesn't act like an adult, though he's pushing 50. Walter Cronkite and Brian Williams became network anchors at the same age. Which one seems more mature? Sure, the heroes in Judd Apatow movies mature, but they clear a pretty low bar: Seth Rogen gives up pot to raise his baby; Jason Segel gets married after five years of engagement; Steve Carell hides his collectible toys to lose his virginity at 40. If our grandfathers could see us, they wouldn't beat us up. They'd spank us.

We are indeed the softest generation. If we'd had to fight World War II, we would have come up with reasons the Germans weren't that bad. That's right: We have become so soft we're French.

I'm not asking men to be History Channel reality-show stars—hunting, camping, heli-logging and doing other things that don't have much to do with history. I just want them to read a book without wizards in it, listen to a song that isn't about going to a club and sometimes wear clothing other than jeans. It's gotten so bad that even the president of Iran doesn't wear a tie. And Iran is not a casual country.

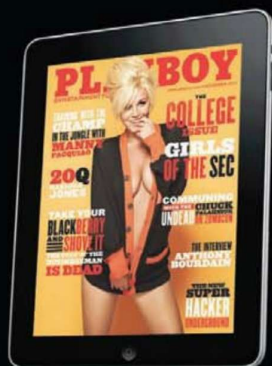
This extreme childishness wears better on women, who can get away with cutesiness longer than we can. Sure, they can go too far and wind up as one of those ladies who pack the back window of their cars with

Beanie Babies, or they're Madonna. But the abnegation of responsibility is the antithesis of manliness. And yes, that's how adults are supposed to talk.

We need to stop vilifying age if we want to get anywhere as a culture. You know who doesn't make fun of the elderly? The Chinese. But we spent the last presidential campaign making lame jokes about how old John McCain was. Of all the minorities to be prejudiced against, this is the stupidest group to pick, since, if things go well for us, we will become them. You think Thomas Jefferson and John Adams spent their time at the Continental Congress making fun of how old Ben Franklin was? Men in their 20s used to act older than they were in order to get respect, like Henry Cabot Lodge. By the time Tucker Carlson tried it, it wasn't working quite as well. That's because we had already gotten to the point where it was a compliment to call Dick Clark America's oldest living teenager. That should be an insult, like calling an alcoholic America's oldest living toddler.

We men are not going to fix this problem. We don't fix anything that doesn't cost us sex. So we need women to stop acting like *Tiger Beat*-reading tweens who confuse "cute" with "attractive." My self-deprecating cluelessness has gotten me regular sex since I turned 17, thanks to an army of girls who never matured past liking Duckie in *Pretty in Pink*. So to save our species from a future in which we spend weekends playing Candy Land and using lobster bibs for foods that aren't lobster, they have to hold out for men who act like men. If Lysistrata could use a sex strike to end the Peloponnesian War, maybe a new sex strike could get men to put down their comic books and read *Lysistrata*.

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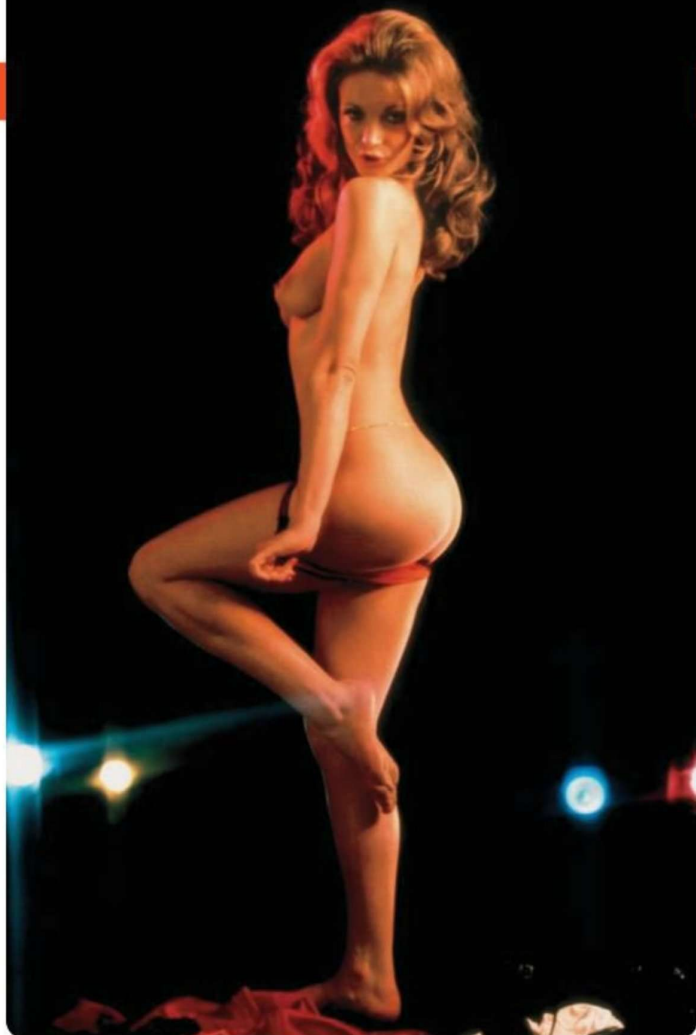


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CREW on the CRUISE

HERE WE GO



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Leave It to **BEAVERS**

BY LISA LAMPANELLI

When my husband, Jimmy Big Balls, and I met, we wanted to do everything together. Like every other fledgling couple, we sampled each other's hobbies and pretended to like them. Luckily, as two 48-year-old, pudgy, sedentary adults, we didn't require much more than a trip to the freezer for a pint of Ben & Jerry's or a stroll down the block for a couple of pies at Big Nick's.

Most couples, however, have more difficult decisions to make when it comes to their activities. Sure, you want to share everything, be part of each other's world, learn about each other—for the first month, anyway. But much like unprotected sex with Snooki, this is often a huge mistake. That's because many women's interests are in the yoga, feng shui and adopting-puppies vein, while most guys' interests lean toward the internet-porn, illegal-gambling and strip-club areas.

Out of the three, strip clubs seem the safest bet. Showing her that weird German scat video you found online will nauseate her, and inviting her to bet on Saturday night's championship cockfight will only get her ire up. So the strip club it is! But not so fast, Dollar-Bill Dennis. Is bring-

ing your girl to Harry's Hooter Hut really smart, or is it like marrying a Kardashian—a seemingly good idea that will most likely go horribly wrong?

Taking your girl to a strip club is like trying to get it on with an alligator: It's a huge risk that may end up biting you in the ass. It will change your relationship immediately, much like driving cross-country, moving in together or banging her sister. The decision to bring a girl depends on the girl and your relationship with her.

So what kind of girl should you take to Vaginas R Us? If the girl's a prude, forget it. If she's a women's rights activist, do not allow her through those zebra-skin-patterned doors. She'll think the women are being exploited and try to hand them pamphlets on how to become nursing assistants. In fact, the only type of girl you should definitely bring to a strip club is the hot bi-curious type. But hell, if you have a hot bi-curious type, why are you in a strip club?

So say you and your girl have co-signed on a trip to the Boobie Bungalow. Before you even walk in the door, there are a few things to remember. First of all, Charlie Champagne Room, pick the right club. Your sex life will be more barren than Paris Hilton's skull if you sashay with her into a club where every dancer knows your name and you have a regular table. It will dawn on her that those late nights when you said you were working you were actually putting Desiree Double-D through college. If people there yell out your name like you're Norm from *Cheers*, you may want to opt for the pussy parlor down the block instead.

If you do decide to take your woman to a strip club, remember: Women are stripper magnets. Just like dogs instinctively sniff other dogs' butts, strippers impulsively need to get all up in the other women. And this isn't necessarily a plus for you. Sure, more strippers will be hanging around the both of you, but you will instantly become the second-stringer. Even if it's your money being stuffed into that lace G-string, you're now the bass player instead of the lead singer.

If you can handle the demotion, sit back and have a good time. You're in a bar, you're drinking and lots of half-naked hotties are dancing around. You get to see your chick being touched, rubbed and seduced by a near-naked honey. And if there's one thing men love as much as turning around and admiring a big dump, it's a lesbian fantasy—unless of course it involves lesbians like Chaz Bono, Ellen DeGeneres or Justin Bieber.

But here's where you need to tread lightly, Sammy Single-Stuffer. Be careful that your girl isn't into it a little too much. One minute you think you're being cool and funny by buying her a lap dance, and the next minute you're watching your fiancée in a corner with a hot stripper; she's at third base with nobody out and is definitely coming home. At first you think your life will now consist of late-night parties, mind-blowing threesomes and all of you living together happily ever after. However, the problem with that particular scenario is that, much like Narnia, it is fantasyland. Hollywood leading men, pro athletes and oil magnates live this kind of life. You don't. So don't let your mind run wild.

Speaking for myself, Jimmy and I have mate-free zones. I don't drag him to the nail salon, and he's on his own for poker night with his buddies. And as far as strip clubs go, he knows better than to ask. If I had to sit in *Leave It to Beavers*, watching him get a face full of silicone, I'd pull the pole off the stage and beat him to death with it. Now that's real love!



Imagine going 185 mph with the wind whistling in your ears. Lambo's topless Aventador is worth every penny of its \$2.8 million price.



A motoring icon since the 1950s, the Mercedes-Benz SL gets a makeover for model year 2013: more powerful, lighter and as handsome as ever.

Drop Tops

Behind the wheel of summer's hottest roadsters

The open road beckons come summer. We've driven every two-seat convertible under the sun. Here are our faves. **Under \$30K:** Mazda MX-5 Miata Grand Touring (\$27,100). Hurtling down a winding road, the Miata is still the best two-seater for the bucks. **Runner-up:** Mini Cooper Roadster (\$25,050). **Under \$60K:** Porsche Boxster (\$52,700). Porsche's "entry-level" roadster is new and improved, with a stiffer chassis, more power and a slick-shifting seven-speed automatic that reads your mind. It's so good, it will make you think twice about spending more on a 911. **Runner-up:** Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport Convertible (\$59,600). **Under \$110K:** Mercedes-Benz SL550 (\$105,500). Now in its fifth iteration, the sharply restyled SL550 is 300 pounds lighter

than its predecessor. Its throaty 429 hp 4.6-liter biturbo V-8 is more powerful than the previous 5.5 liter. The born-again SL sprints to 60 in 4.5 seconds. **Runner-up:** Among true roadsters? None. **Money is no object:** Lamborghini Aventador J Roadster (\$2.8 million). Imagine the hottest Lambo ever. Then strip the top off it. Low-slung, loud, luscious and 700 hp—too bad only one was made; here's hoping Lambo makes more. **Runner-up:** Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse (\$2.3 million).



Rum Diaries

In the 18th century, the U.S., not the Caribbean, was the world's top rum producer. Celebrate our national heritage this July 4 with an all-American punch. Pictured: Sammy's Beach Bar Rum (\$22)—as in rocker Sammy Hagar. Made in Maui, this silver surfer will surprise you with its quality. Privateer True American Amber (\$35) is crafted in coastal Massachusetts. Smoother than a taut jib.

The Fabric of a Man

Never has the made-to-order shirt been so quickly, easily and inexpensively attained. At Proper Cloth (propercloth.com) you can browse the fabric gallery, design your shirt (collar? cuffs? buttons?) and send in your size and credit card number. Custom-made shirts will arrive at your doorstep days later. Prices start at \$89.



Monster Sound

Lazy beach days are best spent wrapped up in tunes. Monster's Inspiration noise-canceling headphones (\$330, monsterproducts.com) block out rambunctious beachgoers. A built-in microphone lets you take calls—but remember, this is vacation.



An Office in Your Suitcase

A mostly glass laptop sounds dangerous, but the HP Spectre (\$1,400, hp.com) is encased in tough Gorilla Glass, developed by Corning

and used in iPhones. The 14-inch Spectre packs an Intel processor and a 128-gigabyte hard drive. Sit outside and bump your favorite tracks with built-in Beats Audio sound processing while CoolSense technology regulates the system's temperature on hot summer days.

The Ultimate Beach Shooter

A rugged casing on Sony's Bloggie Sport (\$180, sony.com) keeps the pocket-size camera dry in up to 16 feet of water. Shooting modes compensate for underwater lighting conditions while you capture HD-quality video and five-megapixel photos.



Flat-Out Fun

Tablets do your packing for you, cramming all the movies, music and novels you want to bring on vacation into one device. The thinnest and lightest is Toshiba's Excite 10 LE (\$530, toshiba.com), an Android tablet with a 1.2-gigahertz processor and five-megapixel camera. The 10.1-inch backlit screen looks sharp even on a hike, and the GPS makes sure you get back to the resort alive.

Sun Is Shining, the Weather Is Sweet

House of Marley makes gear designed to honor Bob Marley, with eco-friendly materials and audio built for jamming. The Bag of Rhythm iPod boom box (\$350, houseofmarley.com) is a canvas rucksack that houses two tweeters and woofers built into a birch cabinet capable of withstanding even the heaviest bass vibrations.





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PLAYBOY ADVISOR

Before our first child was born, I could last as long as I wanted. Now I last as little as one and never more than five minutes. I've tried numbing condoms, exercises from the internet, pinching myself and pushing my tongue against the roof of my mouth. You can surf the web for hours researching premature ejaculation, but most sites just suggest exercises or buying their miracle products. I'm 41, if that matters. Please help.—A.F., Vancouver, British Columbia

*If you can last only up to five minutes, you have what a porn star—but not a doctor—would describe as premature ejaculation. Technically, a man suffers from PE only if he consistently ejaculates less than a minute or two after penetration. Many men suffer from lifelong PE, and some research suggests those cases have a genetic component. But rapid ejaculation happens to almost every guy once in a while, and the risk is that you let your anxiety about it surround your erection like a fog. If you think about not coming, you're going to come. Next time, take a deep breath. If you come too quickly and it hasn't been a chronic problem, shrug it off and use your tongue, fingers or a vibrator. You may find your partner's response gets you ready for a second round. You'll find alternative strategies in *The Good in Bed Guide to Overcoming Premature Ejaculation*, by Ian Kerner, available at goodinbed.com. If you use condoms, you'll find this study from Indiana University interesting: Researchers found that adding lubricant to condoms, having your partner put the condom on with her hands, knowing she is using contraception herself, and having sex with a spouse (versus a girlfriend) are each "significantly associated with longer intercourse."*

One of my favorite positions is 69. The feeling of my girl sucking my cock while grinding her pussy in my face can't be beat. The problem is my girlfriend doesn't like it. She says she can't concentrate on my cock because she gets overstimulated. How can I convince her to 69? As it stands, she'll blow me and I can go down on her but only as two independent actions.—B.B., Denver, Colorado

You have to love a woman who is worried she won't be able to blow you properly. We can sympathize; the position can be frustrating because it's the sexual equivalent of fading in and out of consciousness—if you pause to focus on your own pleasure, it's easy to neglect your assignment, leaving you in a 68 (69



Twenty years ago my girlfriend introduced me to her family. When I met her older sister I instantly knew I loved her more than my girlfriend. She was engaged at the time and is now divorced, with two children. I married my girlfriend, and we also have two children. I once confessed to my wife that when we make love I sometimes think about her sister. She rolled her eyes and said, "Keep dreaming." I've told my sister-in-law I find her attractive, and she always greets me with a kiss on the cheek. We've talked on the phone for hours about our jobs, stress, romance, sex, parenthood. What can I do?—A.V., Los Angeles, California

Unless your sister-in-law feels the same, which we doubt, there's not much you can do. It's known as unrequited love, and it sucks, especially if you see the object of your affection regularly. But while your brain screws with you by letting you fall for the unattainable, it also allows you to override your emotional response and rely on reason. In other words, you can recognize that though these feelings are natural and universal, nothing is going to happen and you need to maintain boundaries. Your wife will never be as exciting as a woman just beyond your reach, so it's unfair to compare the two. The key is, your wife loves you back.

minus one). Why not compromise with a time limit? Five minutes seems about right. Set an egg timer if you must, and when the bell rings, she gets to choose the next position.

I'm a guy with nipples that are so sensitive I can't wear suspenders or put a

pen in my shirt pocket. On the plus side, I can reach orgasm solely from my girlfriend playing with them. I suspect this is unusual, but just how unusual is it?—J.G., Lansing, Michigan

You're unusual but not unique. Being able to reach climax from nipple stimulation is far more common in women, but it's not surprising that it occurs in the rare man because our parts are created from the same tissue in the womb before the gender split (which is why guys have nipples to begin with). Many male nipples become more sensitive when engorged, but a guy may not realize it because neither he nor his partner gives them the proper attention. In one survey, men rated their nipples behind only the ear and neck as nongenital parts that contribute to orgasm. Here's a clue as to why it can feel so good: In a study reported last year, scientists monitoring blood flow in the brains of female volunteers found sensations produced by nipple stimulation travel to the same area of the brain as stimulation of the genitals. The pattern also appears in the few men who have been studied. A mystery that remains, the scientists say, is what triggers nipple stimulation to switch from ho-hum to erotic.

How can I protect my data when I travel overseas on business?—L.W., New York, New York

*The best method is abstinence—leave your laptop and phone at home. But as intelligence analyst Jeffrey Carr observes in his e-book, *A Traveler's Guide to Cyber Security* (available at Amazon.com and Lulu.com), "in a battle between security and convenience, convenience will always win." His guide helps you calculate your Cyber Risk Index, i.e., how likely you are to be targeted by hackers, based on where you're traveling and the industry in which you work. Carr also explains laws in Russia and China that allow officials there to monitor your communications. His general advice applies to any traveler—avoid free wireless, be wary of hotel systems, don't travel with removable media such as USB thumb drives and don't leave your electronics in your room. Your laptop and tablet should be "hardened," or locked down with encryption and security software. And use a prepaid phone loaded with only the contacts you need on the trip.*

Iwonder if the Advisor can help me find an early-1980s porn movie. It has a scene with a guy and two girls, one of whom is wearing a stars-and-stripes bikini. The background music is "You're

a Grand Old Flag.” There is another scene with a girl under a newscaster’s desk. I’ve searched for hours with no luck. I thought it might be *Newscast 2*, but it’s not.—T.C., St. Johns, Michigan

We’re confident a reader will recognize this patriotic film, and we’ll pass the title along, but it would help if you could recall at least one actor’s name. That will narrow your search at the Internet Adult Film Database (iafd.com) and the reviews and forums at Adult DVD Talk (adultdvdtalk.com). We browsed our eight volumes of *The X-Rated Videotape Guide*, Robert Rimmer and Patrick Riley’s attempt to mimic Leonard Maltin’s mainstream movie guides by writing synopses of thousands of adult films produced between 1970 and 1999. As usual, we gave up after being distracted by the great titles and absurd plots. What the world needs now is someone who will dedicate his or her life to summarizing every porn movie produced since 1999.

How do you get the smell of plastic out of sex toys? We have used different cleaners and soaps without success.—C.R., Harrodsburg, Kentucky

That’s not surprising; we haven’t found any way to remove the odor of latex, rubber, PVC or jelly from certain sex toys. In fact, because they are porous, which makes them attractive to bacteria, it’s best to place condoms over these types of toys before use. They may also contain plastic softeners called phthalates, which some research suggests could be unhealthy. People usually buy smelly toys because they’re cheap, then upgrade to silicone, which has no odor, transmits vibration better and can be cleaned with hot water. In *Sex Toys 101*, the founders of *Babeland.com* suggest a monthly “dildo soup”—a 10-quart pot of boiling water in which, using tongs, you immerse your silicone or Pyrex-like glass dildos and butt plugs that don’t have electronics inside. (Don’t add anything else; it’s not like stone soup.) Remove the toys after 10 minutes and air or towel dry. You can also place silicone toys that don’t have electrical parts on the top rack of a dishwasher for a regular cycle. Other nonsmelly toy options include those made from elastomers and hard plastics or acrylics.

My girlfriend has a small clit. She is aware of this and can climax only by applying a vibrator when I am inside her. When I am ready to climax I have to continue fucking her as she vibrates her clit until she comes. Sometimes I lose my erection while I’m waiting for her. Are there any products that can make her more sensitive? I am disappointed when our passionate lovemaking is interrupted by her inability to reach orgasm.—R.P., Grand Rapids, Michigan

Oh, where to begin? First, your girlfriend does not have a small clit—in fact, if you were to follow the glans (the part you can see) into her body, you’d find her erectile tissue is as long if not longer than yours. Second, we doubt she is unable to come without you when she uses a vibrator. She’s being kind. Third, it’s wonderful if you come together, but

we strongly recommend a better strategy than mutually assured eruption: Make sure she always comes at least once before intercourse. If she climaxes again during penetration, great. If not, withdraw and use your fingers and tongue to get her off again, or at least kiss her and whisper compliments as she works the vibe. You don’t want her to start looking for a product that will make you more sensitive.

My wife and I hired a cute 20-year-old as an intern for our small business. Business mixed with pleasure, and she moved in with us. Being in a relationship with two women at the same time is taxing, but I love them both. After a few months my wife grew tired of the group sex and now wants sex only with me. Our housemate still wants threesomes but is willing to have sex only with me. I’m worn out and up at two A.M. for “personal” time to write to the Advisor for help. What should I do?—M.P., Santa Fe, New Mexico

Time for a three-way conversation. If your wife is willing to share you with your housemate, this is a scheduling issue. Even a guy living a fantasy needs a few days off.

What should you do if you are approached by a dog that doesn’t appear to want to just lick you? Maybe you can survey mailmen.—P.C., Omaha, Nebraska

Besides standing behind your girlfriend? Dog bites are serious business because the most common victims by far are children. That’s why you should teach kids to ask permission before they pet any dog. They should also let the animal sniff them before they touch it, pet gently and avoid the face and tail. Also, never bother a dog if it is sleeping, eating, caring for puppies or sniffing your car for narcotics. If a dog threatens you, don’t try to prove your manhood (it knows you’re a man but obviously isn’t impressed). Instead, avoid eye contact and stand still or back away slowly. If you are knocked down, curl into a ball and use your arms and fists to protect your face and neck. If you are bitten, make sure to get proof of a rabies vaccination from the owner.

I’ve read you have a fairly thick erection if you can’t fit it inside a toilet-paper roll. I’ve also read you are fairly thick if you can’t wrap a dollar bill around your erection. I gave it a try, and the two ends of the bill barely touch each other. I’m six inches around and a bit more at the base and head. What’s the minimum you need to be considered thick?—R.S., Easton, Pennsylvania

A 2007 review of a dozen studies that measured penis size found the average girth at the middle of the shaft to range from 4.72 to 5.12 inches in circumference. (The average erection ranged from 5.5 to 6.3 inches.) A dollar bill is 6.14 inches long, and the toilet-paper tube in our emergency sex-toy bag measures 4.71 inches around. So that’s about right. If the dollar doesn’t touch or you can’t satisfy the Charmin, you’re above average. You’ll find many women appreciate that

more than length, for reasons involving the clitoris that we discussed earlier.

Why does the Advisor perpetuate the myth that women in ancient Greece routinely removed their pubic hair (July 2011)? This fiction is contradicted by centuries’ worth of vase paintings and other Greek art showing the thick black pubic hair characteristic of Mediterranean women. The single source that historian Paul Brandt cites for this no-hair canard is a scene in *Lysistrata* in which a character says she singed her hair with a lamp. Relying on an ancient comedy for credibility is like historians 2,500 years from now citing Jon Stewart as the authority on American grooming habits.—T.C., Lynnwood, Washington

You’re right on the point—the evidence suggests that women did not routinely go bare. This is according to classics professor Martin Kilmer, who in 1982 argued in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* that the *Lysistrata* passage translates as “short-haired.” Likewise, Greek vases show only trimming. Kilmer traces the idea of bare Greeks to a 1968 book that argued men at the time feared the vulva and so made women shave clean, which makes no sense. Instead, women likely plucked, singed and trimmed their pubic hair to expose the vulva, which was considered to be sexually attractive—and still is.

Guns turn me on—cleaning them, shooting them, watching my husband shoot them, even watching *Scarface*. I get extremely aroused when I watch the scene in *The Devil’s Rejects* in which a character rubs his gun over a woman’s breasts and then sticks it in her panties. Is this a type of fetish?—L.M., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

No, it’s just a tool in a submissive fantasy. Because you associate them with your husband and male characters, you may think of guns as strongly masculine, though plenty of women pack heat. Simulated danger can be a rush, but never screw with a loaded gun. It isn’t a toy.

What is the protocol when handing someone a business card—should you do it before a meeting, during the introduction or at the conclusion? Is it uncool to give your card to a coed at a bar or social event?—S.K., Alexandria, Virginia

Here’s the rule: Give someone your card when he or she asks for it.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or send e-mail to advisor@playboy.com. For updates, visit playboyadvisor.com and follow @playboyadvisor on Twitter.




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VEXED AMERICANA

HOW DID WE BECOME SUCH A NATION OF HATERS?

BY TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER

Oh, fuck you Taffy!” says a blog post somewhere on the internet about a story I wrote on the extremely not-hot-button topic of linguistics. A comment on that blog post reads, “Fuck you Taffy! What a pretentious bitch.” On the *Wall Street Journal* website—*The Wall Street Journal!*—where the article originally appeared, one online commenter sums up his well-thought-out feedback on my story by saying, “I bet the chick who wrote this article is offensively ugly.”

Later that week I stop at a four-way intersection at the same moment as another car. I’m going straight. She’s going straight. I wave her ahead with a smile. She slows her car in the intersection, rolls down her window and screams, “Fuck you, you fat fucking bitch!”

At Starbucks, I ask a woman to hold the door so I can wheel in my stroller. “Suck a dick,” she says. This is the most curious of all: She knows she will have to stand on line with me after saying that.

You’ll have to take my word for it that I am neither extremely ugly nor morbidly obese nor incredibly rude—I’m not. And to understand my point you’ll have to believe that I’m neither pretentious nor that much of a bitch. Because even if I were, an eye roll, a private judgment, a muttered whisper would have been enough. But we don’t do that anymore. We don’t even have the decency to talk behind one another’s backs or use innuendo to imply a point. We aren’t even

kind enough to give a dirty look. We have traded in our passive aggression for full-on cruelty. We’re meaner than ever, and we’re getting meaner.

The theme at the 2010 Halloween party at the foreclosure-mill law firm of Steven J. Baum was homelessness. *The New York Times* featured grotesque photos of

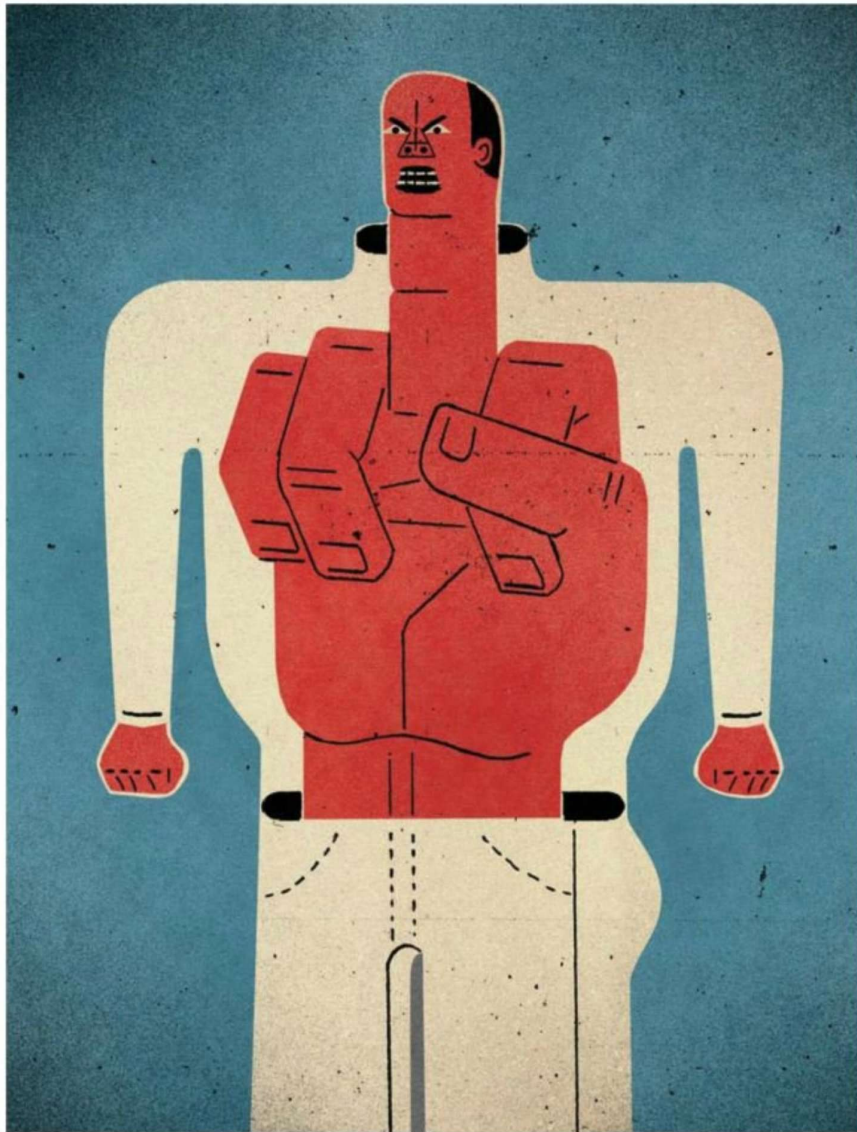
employees dressed in rags, mocking the people the firm’s policies had put out of their homes. (The firm itself went out of business last year.)

The recent suicide of a gay teenager as a result of bullying was made even worse when bullies at his school’s homecoming dance chanted about how glad they were that he was dead.

The contrarian view is that we’re not meaner, it’s just that our extreme actions are covered more extensively than ever before. Just 30 years ago our relationship with the news was limited to half an hour a day of television or a morning newspaper. With limited exposure, we can shake our heads and cluck our tongues at news of bad behavior and bullying. But

with 24-hour exposure online and via cable, we may have little choice but to do as we see. In other words, it could be that this sort of constant exposure is creating a crueler culture. The more we see outrageous behavior, the less outrageous such behavior becomes.

We believe we’re in command of our behavior to some extent, but we may actually have no such choice.



DAVID PLUNKERT

FORUM

We are born mimics. If you stick out your tongue at a newborn, she may do the same back at you. That's great when we are exposed to kindness, but it isn't so great when we are exposed to cruelty. "Media, especially TV shows, are more and more populated by characters that use intrigue, cold calculation and selfishness as modus operandi," neuroscientist Marco Iacoboni tells me. "Humans have the tendency to imitate, and I am afraid we are getting a lot of wrong role models from our TV shows." We love House, Simon Cowell, Howard Stern and the women on *The Real Housewives*, but we're having a hard time figuring out where they end and we begin. (How many of us have a friend or co-worker who has co-opted the persona of a TV character? I knew one guy who so embodied Lloyd from *Entourage* that he'd steal lines from him. During my 20s I knew at least four *Sex and the City* Samanthas, with their voices low and dripping with sexy wordplay.)

But before we let ourselves off the hook and blame biology, the internet and television, it would be wise to recall that our newfound meanness is not so newfound. In his 1939 classic *The Civilizing Process*, sociologist Norbert Elias examined etiquette manuals and educational texts in five different languages that were published over the course of 500 years. Elias found that as time went by, much of our outward emotional behavior disappeared—particularly expressions of shame. Shame has its own special evolutionary purpose: It signals a threat to our social bonds. If I were to say something stupid or

inconsiderate and then noticed my friends sharing a look among themselves, I would feel shame, which is an important reaction. It's how I stop myself from alienating the people I need to protect and nurture me. We may have decided as Americans to become an individualistic society, helped along by our electronic

to go, and so they're often released in the form of anger. We become bolder on our Facebook pages, posting things that may piss people off. Hell, we post things because we know they will piss people off.

Online, we are unable to read the social cues on people's faces that, if we were conversing with them face-to-face, would alert us that we had gone too far. Instead, we continue, and we become bolder and stronger in our new behavior, which soon becomes what we do in real life. It then becomes normal to tell a mother wheeling a baby in a stroller to suck a dick. This is classic behaviorism at work: Keep practicing a certain behavior, and it doesn't matter how you have been evolved to act—a habit is a habit.

So here is something for all of us to consider: How many mean things can you say or do every day before you have to consider yourself a mean person? How long before the person blowing off steam online becomes the person you actually are? Is it necessary to round up or round down?

In simpler times, we had the luxury of wondering if meanness was about thought or action. But we live in a time now when many of our actions take place in a murky in-between

world. Is an online comment a function of a thought or is it a function of an action? Is writing something mean the same as thinking something mean, or is it the same as saying it to someone's face?

Because that other persona, the one who we think exists only online or on line at Starbucks or in a passing car with an extended middle finger, that's us too.



Whether protesting immigration (above) or the policies of Rick Santorum (below), we have become a nation of angry and discourteous people.



devices and divides, our cars and computers, but we have still evolved as humans to need one another.

And here is where the internet truly comes in, in an unexpected way. Because we are still social people and needy creatures, we yearn for human connection. We spend more time on our computers, where our neediness can't be detected so easily. Our anguish and stunted shame need a place

GIVE 'EM HELL, BARRY

WHAT PRESIDENT OBAMA CAN LEARN FROM PRESIDENT TRUMAN

BY ISHMAEL REED

Back when I was teaching, I tried to stay abreast of the cultural interests of my students. One day a few of them giggled when I couldn't name the latest rapper. I told them, "There are some things you know, and there are some things I know. I saw Harry Truman make a speech in 1952." I had to explain who Harry Truman was. I was 14 and was among a group of people who showed up as the unpopular Truman—his support among voters was 22 percent at one point in 1952—entered the Statler Hotel in Buffalo. There was no caravan of black cars; the president's ride was a red convertible. He didn't look presidential. He looked like someone who sold ties.

After Truman's speech, a kid named Roy Cook and I stood across the street as the red convertible drove away from Buffalo Memorial Auditorium. I yelled "Hey, Harry," and he turned to us and smiled and waved.

My stepfather admired Truman. Although he had little schooling, my stepfather was a member of one of the last generations for whom the American dream was more than a dream. He and my mother arrived in Buffalo from Chattanooga with little cash but with a work ethic bordering on neurotic. They rose from the projects to own two homes. In those days, blacks and whites believed each successive generation would see its living conditions improve. He was a member of a union headed by a socialist, Walter Philip Reuther, survivor of two assassination attempts.

Although some credit John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson with spearheading the drive for civil rights, Truman did his part. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal endears him to today's progressives, but FDR's attempt to maintain the loyalty of Dixiecrats left out blacks. The GI Bill, which brought millions of white ethnics into the middle class, is more properly known as the White GI Bill. It was Truman who extended Social Security to those engaged in domestic work, where large segments of the black labor force were concentrated.

On October 11, 1952, during an address to a Harlem audience of 65,000, Truman cited his contributions to racial progress and criticized rival Dwight Eisenhower's use of the Southern strategy. "He has been touring the South to woo Dixiecrats into the Republican fold," said Truman. While Eisenhower supported segregation in the armed forces and wanted the Supreme Court to uphold *Plessy v. Ferguson*—the doctrine of separate but equal—Truman spoke of his order to integrate the armed forces and his establishment of the Committee on Civil Rights in reaction to assaults and murders of black vets. His Executive Order 9981 integrated workplaces and living facilities wherever soldiers, sailors

and airmen were assigned. But just as Johnson's deeds were overshadowed by foreign policy mistakes, Truman's legacy is tainted by his decision to bomb Japan with atomic weapons.

Some of today's progressives—who call themselves President Obama's base but who, according to the polls, linger among the fringes of the Democratic Party, where support for Obama is up to 80 percent—are demanding that Obama become a Harry Truman, denouncing his opponents in the way I saw Truman lambaste the Republicans in Buffalo. Such a style would invite Obama's enemies to label him as an angry black militant. Obama has to maintain his cool, analytical manner. Some progressives think the president should face opponents in the party primaries. Professor Cornel West has been suggested as an opponent. Ralph Nader has even called the president an Uncle Tom. Michael Moore said he voted for the black guy and got the white guy. They must know something blacks don't. According to some polls, African American support for the president is more than 90 percent.



The Nation contributor Alexander Cockburn got into it with me about the goals of the Tea Party, which I see as a movement energized by its resentment toward a black president. Cockburn views it as an uprising against Wall Street, even though billionaires pay some of the Tea Party's bills.

There may be something else afoot for those who believe race is still a major factor in American life. Progressives who rank class above race—an argument that harkens back to the debate between the poet Claude McKay and the underrated writer Mike Gold—have wondered why the white working class votes against its own interests. Maybe the white working class has awakened to the fact that they've been had. Their affection for the one percent on the basis of racial solidarity is not reciprocated by those who own most of our country's assets. The rich couldn't care less about an aristocracy based on color and have no qualms about throwing the white middle class overboard. Although some of them hold press conferences where they insist they be taxed, they have no real loyalty to the United States and use the country only for a change of clothes between partying in Monaco and the Cayman Islands. If members of the white middle class would read Dominick Dunne's novels and Louis Auchincloss's memoir about life among the rich, they'd find they have little in common with the one percent.

The chauffeur-driven limousines of the one percent have done a hit and run on the American dream to which my stepfather, Walter Reuther and Harry Truman—who said he spoke for the common man—were devoted.

READER RESPONSE

WAR ON DRUGS

While “Overdose County, USA” (April) highlights the high rate of prescription-drug abuse in McDowell County, West Virginia, the claim by one pill user that 95 percent of the residents of War are dope-



Not everyone around here is an addict.

heads is simply not true. Some addicts sell their food stamps and send their futures and their children up the river. Most people in McDowell County don't abuse drugs but struggle to make their lives better. In fact, the small towns in this area are no different from any others in America. The question is, what do we do now?

Janise Domingue
Berwind, West Virginia

Many young men I meet here received long sentences for selling OxyContin, a.k.a. “hillbilly heroin,” to support what can be an expensive habit. There has to be a better way to deal with this problem than the knee-jerk “lock 'em up” approach.

Robert Shell
Pocahontas State Correctional Center
Pocahontas, Virginia

Word spread quickly around McDowell County when Vince Beiser's article appeared. Residents had been stung a few months earlier when an Australian television crew portrayed the area as full of addicts. Although Beiser provides a more accurate account of the problem, a typical Facebook response to the article is telling: “It doesn't matter who writes it, we're always going to be portrayed as idiots.” The community has become hardened and distrustful of the national media; they now assume they will be portrayed badly because no one writes about the county except to note its poverty and drug problems. If your town were represented only with negative images and everyone told you how poor and dangerous your home was, would you feel empowered to do

something about it? Probably not. The impassioned responses to the coverage tell me the community is still fighting, despite its feeling of isolation.

Elaine McMillion
Charleston, West Virginia

McMillion is project director of Hollow, a forthcoming collection of interactive documentaries about residents of McDowell County (hollowthefilm.com).

I was a prosecutor for 29 years. A few years ago I tried a case involving an OxyContin overdose. When I interviewed the doctor who had written the scrip for the fellow who then provided it to the victim, she explained that when a patient claims he or she has severe chronic pain, even in the absence of injury, a caring physician works to alleviate the pain. So a highly ethical doctor can be a drug source for a short time. The abuser may have several physicians on hand who don't know other docs are in the mix. One hopes a good doctor would catch on soon enough, but I have seen this scenario many times. Some states are addressing the doctor-shopping problem with new reporting laws.

Eric Kaiser
Petoskey, Michigan

LAUGHING OBAMA

Has anyone noticed that President Obama resembles the *Laughing Christ*



The savior and the politician thought to be one.

image published in the January 1970 issue of PLAYBOY?

Dale Clark
Fresno, California

There may be a resemblance, but Jesus was a white guy with blue eyes.

DEBT CRISIS

Jonathan Tasini says the Bush tax cuts “gave away” \$700 billion to the wealthiest one percent (“A Fake Crisis,” April). If that's true, the money must have belonged to the

government and not to the people who earned it. But that isn't the case. Tasini's suggestion that we “get the monetary printing presses going” is equally suspect. Consider how that strategy worked for the Weimar Republic in the early 1920s.

Joseph Kutch
Pineville, Louisiana

During the 1930s the economist John Maynard Keynes recognized a fake crisis when he saw one. The “Great” Depression was created by wealthy people who wanted to buy land owned by the poor at under-



John Maynard Keynes: It worked once.

market rates. Keynes's cure was to have the government embark on a reckless spending program. Keynes admitted this wouldn't work a second time, but it didn't even work the first time. Hitler ended the Depression by starting World War II; George W. Bush started two wars but couldn't stop this one.

Benjamin Greaves
Seaside, Oregon

Tasini, rather like Paul Krugman in the March *Playboy Interview*, suggests we need deficits to finance jobs to build roads and schools and inspect our food. So this is the answer? Every unemployed factory worker, lawyer, teacher and firefighter should go into construction? While Tasini offers examples of short-term debt to finance a long-term good, our debt is spiraling out of control. According to the U.S. Treasury, it was \$7.6 trillion in January 2005 when President Bush began his second term, \$10.6 trillion on the day President Obama was inaugurated and more than \$16 trillion now—with very little to show for it.

Michael Zaleski
Jackson, New Jersey

E-mail letters@playboy.com. Or write: 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210.

NEWSFRONT

**Let's Make Babies**

BEIJING—Chinese officials have realized they can no longer afford to restrict couples to one child. Even with a population of 1.3 billion, China is expected during the next 30 years to suffer a shortage of working adults to support its elderly population. Workers who have no siblings often become the sole support for their parents and grandparents. The policy has also encouraged the abortion of female fetuses, which has contributed to the gender imbalance. There are at least 32 million more males than females under the age of 20, which could lead to social unrest when men can't find wives or work (except in the military, which could swell Chinese forces). The one-child rule is not universal; the birthrate in China is 1.8 children per woman because farmers who have a daughter and ethnic minorities are allowed to have two, as are politically connected couples from certain provinces whose first child is "disabled" by such afflictions as nearsightedness. Couples caught with an unauthorized child are fined or, in some cases, sterilized. Officials defend the policy, saying it has prevented 300 million births since 1979, when it was introduced. The regulations will most likely be relaxed gradually, first by providing an exemption to urban couples who have a daughter or who have no siblings themselves.

Safety First

TAMPA, FLORIDA—To prepare for the Republican National Convention, the mayor proposed a crackdown on dissent. He asked the city council to pass an ordinance that forbids protests of more than 50 people or ones that last more than 60 minutes and don't have a \$50 permit. He also proposed a "clean zone" where knives, gas masks, axes, brass knuckles, Mace, chains, crowbars, bags of bodily fluids, air pistols, water pistols, masks, pipes, ropes and wires would be banned—but not guns, as Florida state law prohibits the restriction of weapons in public places. (The Secret Service will ban guns at the convention.)



more commonplace in America's jails. In a five-to-four vote, the Justices deemed the searches appropriate no matter the charge and even if officers have no reason to suspect a person has contraband. The majority said they didn't want to second-guess officers. The dissenters cited cases in which people had been stripped after being detained for a noisy muffler, not signaling a turn or riding a bicycle without a bell. In one case a nun was told to remove her clothes after being detained at an antiwar protest. The majority said anyone placed under arrest is a potential terrorist. "People detained for minor offenses can turn out to be the most devious and dangerous criminals," they wrote.

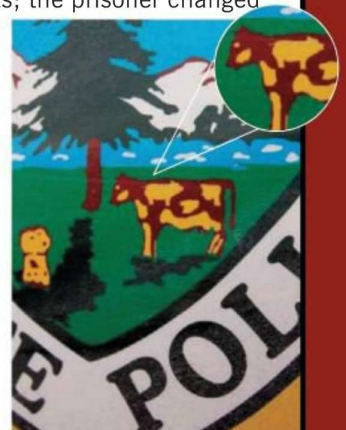
Outside the Foxhole

FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA—For the first time, the U.S. military has allowed an atheist event to be held on base. Soldiers organized the Rock Beyond Belief festival in response to an event held by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Because the military does not consider atheist and agnostic soldiers to be a "distinctive faith group," they are still not permitted to meet on base.

Porked

MONTPELIER, VERMONT—An inmate in a prison print shop altered the Vermont State Police logo on a decal placed on the side of cruisers. The logo includes a cow with spots; the prisoner changed the outline of one spot into the shape of a pig—an alteration so subtle it was a few years before a cop noticed it. The police laughed off the prank but docked the prison shop \$780.

**Spread 'Em**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Thanks to a Supreme Court ruling, strip searches may become



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: CHARLIE SHEEN

A candid conversation with the infamous bad boy about his hugely public meltdown, his recovery and the collateral damage it all caused

"I'm not crazy anymore," Charlie Sheen announced this past January at the Fox Network Television Critics Association party in Pasadena, California. He said it with a chuckle, but there was an unmistakable sincerity to his confession. Usually when famous actors suffer a public scandal there are apologies and pleas for forgiveness. Not too often do they come right out and admit they went bat-shit crazy.

Of course, denying his insanity might have been an exercise in futility. Few celebrities have had quite as dramatic or memorable a meltdown as Charlie Sheen. When 2011 began he was one of the highest-paid actors on TV, earning an estimated \$40 million annually for starring on *Two and a Half Men*. And then, seemingly overnight, he went off the rails. The show took a production hiatus in late January as Sheen dealt with his public addictions to drugs, porn stars, trashing hotel rooms, etc., and during the next few months he went on a media tirade, doing increasingly erratic TV and radio interviews. He coined such catchphrases as "winning," "tiger blood" and "Adonis DNA." He claimed to be a warlock and a Vatican assassin who was fed up with "pretending I'm not a total bitchin' rock star from Mars." One minute he bragged about "banging seven-gram rocks" during a typical night of partying, and the next minute the only drug he'd admit to using was called Charlie

Sheen, which he claimed normal people couldn't take without melting their faces and causing their children to weep over their exploded bodies. He introduced the world to his "goddesses," two girlfriends (one, Bree Olson, is a former porn star) who lived and had sex with him at his self-described Sober Valley Lodge. In March Sheen was fired by Warner Bros. for "felony offenses involving moral turpitude," which at the time seemed to be an understatement.

It took more than a year, but Sheen is finally back on TV with a new comedy, *Anger Management*, on the FX network. He plays a minor league baseball player turned therapist, and it will be either a triumphant return for the troubled actor or the final nail in his acting career's coffin. We sent writer **Eric Spitznagel**, who recently interviewed Jon Hamm and Craig Ferguson for *PLAYBOY*, to meet with Sheen and find out whether the former tiger-blood-fueled warlock is really on the road to recovery. He reports: "After rehearsal for *Anger Management* wrapped, Sheen and I talked in his trailer, the infamous former party bus he's had since *Spin City*, which is now decorated with crayon drawings from his children and outfitted with a fridge weirdly lacking in alcoholic beverages.

"The next day, he invited me to his home in a Los Angeles gated community, just down the street from rock guitarist Slash. Once again the

setting was more domestic than debauched. There was an actual apple pie cooling on the stove. 'It's all set dressing,' Sheen joked. 'As soon as you leave, all the drug paraphernalia and porn stars come out of the attic.' Sheen made me a smoothie, spiked with nothing but strawberries. After he showed me his dad's helmet from *Apocalypse Now* and we'd talked at length about baseball and why the Chicago Cubs will probably never win another World Series, we sat at his kitchen table and got down to business. During our conversation Sheen smoked so many Marlboro Reds that even my lungs hurt."

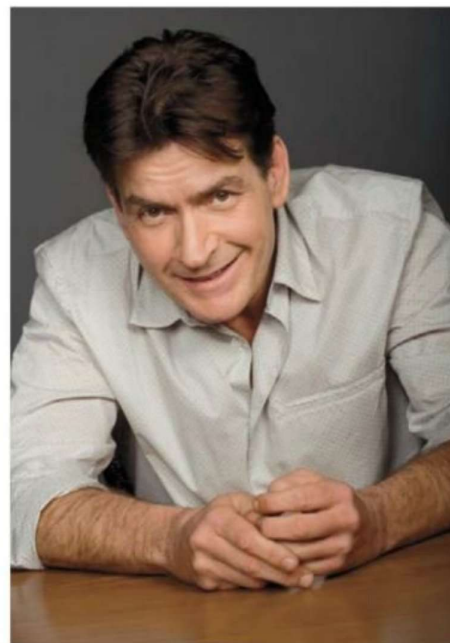
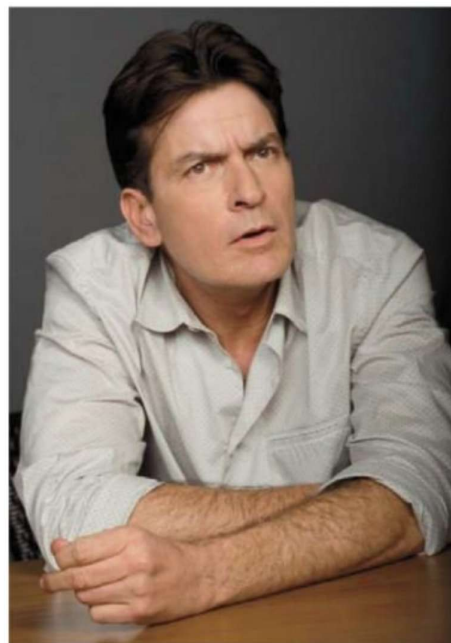
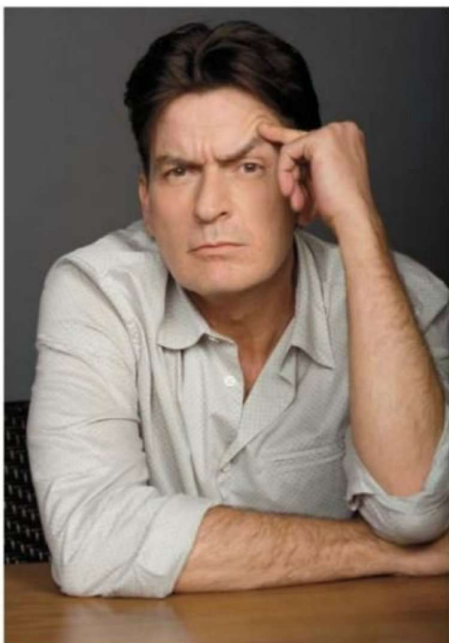
PLAYBOY: *Anger Management* is the second time you play a character named Charlie, after *Two and a Half Men*, right?

SHEEN: The third. I was Charlie on *Spin City* too.

PLAYBOY: Is that by choice? Is it just easier for you to remember?

SHEEN: I think it happens a lot in sitcoms. Jerry Seinfeld, Ray Romano and Bob Newhart all used their real first names. It's also easier for audiences so they're not confused by a new character. They feel they're already familiar with me right off the bat.

PLAYBOY: The Charlie you played on *Two and a Half Men* had a lot in common



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

"I didn't have a master plan. I didn't realize it was going to create such a global firestorm. At the time, it felt like I was watching a lot of it from above. I was a little shocked by how huge the whole thing became."

"I don't think it was the show in particular. It was the buildup of all the time I've been in the business, the divorces and everything. I started to unravel. I was mad about having to play the game—not that I was playing it well."

"Someone's in rehab, right? And he's like, 'Hey, man, I've got 45 days and then I'm clean.' Of course it seems that easy. You're in a place with no drugs and you can't leave. Way to go, man. Try it in the real world."

with you. How is the *Anger Management* Charlie similar to you?

SHEEN: He's not. I hear that shit all the time. It's like, Really, you want me to put my life on TV? Put it on fucking cable on Mars. "But it's so similar!" Really? Have you ever hung out with me? Idiots.

PLAYBOY: So you never draw on your personal life for your fictional life?

SHEEN: Now and again there are themes that might be similar. I think that's fine. If it's done tastefully, it's cool. There are times when they go too far and I'll tell them. I'm done playing a drunken, womanizing, immature character. This time I'm playing an adult. The guy on *Anger Management* is professionally accomplished, a former ballplayer learning to overcome his anger issues.

PLAYBOY: You went to anger therapy, right?

SHEEN: I went for a year. I learned some good shit there. This may sound stupid, but it all comes down to sticks and stones. You know what I mean? Sticks and stones may break my bones—

PLAYBOY: But words will never hurt me.

SHEEN: Exactly. There's so much value in that. The idea of leaving the room sometimes when you're angry. Just leave the room! If someone follows you, go to a different room. If they keep following you, get in your car. If they follow you in your car, drive to a police station. There are ways to not engage. It's like my dad [actor Martin Sheen] always said: Women know what buttons to push because they helped build the machine. So every time you give in to that, you're playing right into their hands. It's a good point. He's a wise man.

PLAYBOY: Your dad just celebrated a big anniversary.

SHEEN: His 50th wedding anniversary.

PLAYBOY: How does somebody get to 50 years in a marriage?

SHEEN: I have no fucking idea. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: Has he given you any relationship advice?

SHEEN: Dad always stressed the value of the truth. He said you never have to look over your shoulder when you tell the truth. You never have to remember the details, because they are what they are. And you don't have to make sure your story matches everyone else's. Just tell the truth and you're home free. If there are amends to be made, you make them. You own it and move on.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of telling the truth, we should talk about last year and your whole so-called meltdown.

SHEEN: Where do you want to begin?

PLAYBOY: Let's start with the basics. What the hell happened?

SHEEN: [Laughs] I don't know what happened. I think I cracked.

PLAYBOY: Did *Two and a Half Men* break your brain?

SHEEN: I don't think it was the show in particular. It was the buildup of all the time I've been in the business, the divorces and everything. I started to unravel. I was mad about having to play the game—not that

I was playing it well, but I'd been doing it for so long. I finally just said the things I had always been thinking. [laughs] But in the middle of a psychotic break.

PLAYBOY: Sean Penn called you a performance artist. Is it possible the whole year was one big hoax?

SHEEN: That's cool that he said that. It's a compliment, but it's not what was going on. I didn't have a master plan. I didn't realize it was going to create such a global firestorm. At the time, it felt like I was watching a lot of it from above, you know what I mean?

PLAYBOY: Like an out-of-body experience?

SHEEN: Yeah. It was surreal. And it never occurred to me where this stuff was going to end up or how it was going to be perceived. I didn't care about anything beyond the moment. And then I was a little shocked by how huge the whole thing became. It was like an organism you couldn't stop. It kept growing.

PLAYBOY: Some of the things you said will haunt you forever. "Winning" is now part of the pop-culture lexicon.

SHEEN: I guess so. You know what's interesting about that? It's stated in the pres-

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ent tense. We were in the act of winning. It was current. It wasn't "We've won" or "We're going to win."

PLAYBOY: It was an active verb.

SHEEN: Exactly.

PLAYBOY: Is that why people connected with it so much?

SHEEN: That's part of it. The economy was in the toilet and people were dealing with their horrible bosses. So they were like, "Oh, here's a guy who stood up to his boss, who had the balls to say, 'Fuck it, you're wrong, I'm right.'"

PLAYBOY: You kept insisting you were winning when everything that was happening in your life and career at the time seemed like the complete opposite of winning.

SHEEN: Absolutely. I was in total denial.

PLAYBOY: Was it just positive thinking? If you say you're winning enough times, maybe things will turn around?

SHEEN: It wasn't that bleak in my head. I felt I was winning by finally being able to speak my mind. I felt that was some sort of victory. And then it was fueled by the insane public outpouring of support.

PLAYBOY: Not only were you winning, but you called yourself a warlock.

SHEEN: I didn't know what the hell a warlock was; I just liked the way it sounded. It's got *war* in it; it's got a *kah* sound. *War-lock*. Remember the Salem warlock society? They were going to cast a hex on me.

PLAYBOY: Because you were making a mockery of their religion?

SHEEN: Something like that. I was hurting the warlock name. I was like, "Bring it on! I'll eat your hex for breakfast." [laughs] It's so fucking stupid. I'm in a beef with a warlock society? You're kidding me, right? How do you go from making Oliver Stone movies to being in a feud with warlocks?

PLAYBOY: The list goes on and on. Tiger blood, Adonis DNA, you're on a drug called Charlie Sheen.

SHEEN: [Laughs] Most of it came out of nowhere. It wasn't planned, it was just random. The tiger blood? I don't know. It's just a very dangerous animal. And there's a tiger in *Apocalypse Now*, by the way, so maybe there's a connection there. Adonis DNA? I don't know what the fuck that was about. That was just stupid. That went a little far.

PLAYBOY: You made a lot of allusions to war during that period, especially when talking about *Two and a Half Men* creator Chuck Lorre and CBS. Did it feel as though you were in a literal war?

SHEEN: It felt like combat, yeah. I don't know what real combat feels like, but it felt like emotional combat, like spiritual combat. One thing I can't tolerate is being disrespected. Fuck that. I'm talking about literal, genuine examples of disrespect, where you feel unappreciated. Guys want to be respected and acknowledged. They want to feel what they contributed matters. I felt I contributed a lot, and suddenly it didn't matter.

PLAYBOY: Why would CBS and Lorre change their minds about you?

SHEEN: Because they read things about me and believed them. They were like, "He's crazy" or "He's drunk" or "He's fucked-up" or "He's a fucking weirdo" or whatever. But if you're special, you're tortured. I know that sounds arrogant, but you can't not be special and have a 30-year career. You can't not be a little different from others and be successful for three decades. Your mind has to work a little differently than the average brain. But here's the good news. I'm not there anymore. I'm not working with CBS or Warner Bros. or Chuck anymore. Good news for them and good news for me.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever enjoy yourself on *Two and a Half Men*?

SHEEN: The early stuff was fun. It was fresh, and we were still kind of finding our way. The first time [*Two and a Half Men* co-star] Jon Cryer and I read together, it was magic. No question.

PLAYBOY: How is your relationship with Jon these days?

SHEEN: I don't have one.

PLAYBOY: You said some cruel things about him last year. You called him a troll and a traitor. Was that the heat of the moment, or did you really feel that way?

SHEEN: That was wrong. I whaled on him unnecessarily.

PLAYBOY: But at the time did you feel he should have defended you?

SHEEN: I made a mistake. But yes, I felt he should have come forward with some kind of support. But says who? What rule book is that written in? It's not. He was trying to keep the shit together, trying to cover my ass, pick up the slack. He just got caught in the crossfire. He's a beautiful man and a fucking fabulous dude and I miss him. I need to repair that relationship, and I will. I will reach out and do whatever is necessary.

PLAYBOY: Looking back on it a year later, do you have a better understanding of what went wrong, why you lost *Two and a Half Men*?

SHEEN: I know exactly what went wrong. CBS and Warner Bros. were in breach. That's it. That's why this thing never went to any kind of arbitration. They knew they'd have to admit they screwed up. They were too involved in their own egos and their own emotions. I guess that's why I went full-court press on them, because I knew they didn't have a case. My job was to show up and act; their job was to write. Or it was someone's job to write, and Chuck Lorre decided he wasn't going to do it anymore.

PLAYBOY: They would probably claim it had more to do with your drug problems.

SHEEN: That was a fucking hernia, by the way.

PLAYBOY: What was?

SHEEN: In January, before I got fired, when I went to the hospital. The hernia was real. Everybody thought I had OD'd or whatever. No, I had a fucking hernia blow out of my stomach. I called the paramedics, because that's what you do, right?

PLAYBOY: There were tabloid reports that you had a suitcase of cocaine delivered to your house.

SHEEN: That's such bullshit. And that's what I got fired over. I didn't get fired for the Plaza Hotel thing [when he was accused of assaulting a porn star]; I didn't get fired for the Vegas bender. I got fired for a hernia. And it's real. Check it out. [pulls up shirt] See that? [pushes out stomach and points to hernia scar] It's there. I didn't get it fixed because I thought we were going to court and I would have to show this from the stand.

PLAYBOY: There were rumors that the hernia happened after several days of constant partying and drugs.

SHEEN: No, that's just not true. It was because of a Dave Chappelle sketch.

PLAYBOY: Oh, come on.

SHEEN: Remember that scene where he's a blind white supremacist who doesn't know he's black? Have you seen it? It's the

funniest thing in the world. He becomes a Klansman, and he's railing against black people. It's insanely brilliant.

PLAYBOY: We're familiar with it. "If anyone's gonna have sex with my sister, it's going to be me."

SHEEN: Right. It's fucking hilarious. I'd never seen it, and I laughed myself into a hernia. That is 100 percent true.

PLAYBOY: So forget Chuck Lorre, forget Warner Bros. and CBS. It's Dave Chappelle's fault that you got fired?

SHEEN: It's his fault. There you go. Dave Chappelle cost me my job.

PLAYBOY: You claimed that you cured your drug and alcohol addictions with your brain. Explain how that works.

SHEEN: There are limits to it. You can't cure your own cancer, obviously, especially if it's late stage. But we're taught at an early age not to trust ourselves. I think the power of the mind is amazing, and we've barely scratched the surface of what it can do. But that was kind of an experiment back then. I was just kind of winging it, and it worked.

PLAYBOY: To a lot of people it sounds like denial.

*I'm not saying I'll never
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But it's hard. Parts of it are
soulless and parts of it are
nourishing. It's always a
roll of the dice.*

SHEEN: Of course it does. It sounds like you think you're above it all, that you're smarter than everybody else. But it's not about that. I just think the whole disease model of addiction is crap. It's rooted in fiction and junk science.

PLAYBOY: But you understand why it's hard to take that seriously. Many alcoholics say things like "I can quit anytime I want." But they don't—and can't.

SHEEN: Here's how I think of it. Someone's in rehab, right? And he's like, "Hey, man, I've got 45 days and then I'm clean." Of course it seems that easy. You're in a place with no drugs and you can't leave. Way to go, man. Try it in the real world.

PLAYBOY: You don't believe in rehab?

SHEEN: I don't. I believe in detox. I think detox is smart. You've got a guy who's in an opiate cycle or a dope cycle or something, and he can't get out of it. You shut him down long enough so at least his body can start working for itself again. I'm not saying in all situations it's bad to get help. I'm saying sometimes it's okay to trust yourself. Because that's the one thing they drill into you at these fucking

AA meetings: Don't trust yourself. Your brain is broken.

PLAYBOY: Put your faith in a higher power.
SHEEN: Exactly. Fuck that. I'm putting my faith in myself, not a higher power. My brain is broken? My brain wasn't broken enough to afford the 100 grand to get in here, you dickheads.

PLAYBOY: You're single, right?

SHEEN: At the moment, yeah.

PLAYBOY: No more goddesses?

SHEEN: Not anymore.

PLAYBOY: You had rules for that relationship: Nobody panics, there's no judgment.

SHEEN: Yeah, park your judgment at the door. Nobody dies. And one more—enjoy every moment! I don't know, it seems pretty simple to me.

PLAYBOY: Was there anything missing from those rules? Anything that would have kept your relationship with the goddesses together?

SHEEN: Those rules were created for a very specific circumstance, but they're still pretty good. It seems like basic groundwork you can build on. The judgment thing is especially hard. My mom offered me \$500 when I was 12 years old not to say anything negative for an entire day. I didn't make it past breakfast. And \$500 at the time was like a million bucks, but I couldn't make it.

PLAYBOY: Was there anything about the goddesses people didn't understand?

SHEEN: Everything. It was more fodder for them to criticize, more Sheen antics to judge when those same people would have loved to have a similar situation.

PLAYBOY: Do you still think it's possible for an intimate relationship to survive when more than two people are involved?

SHEEN: I think it was a hell of an idea but with the wrong people involved. I don't know, man. I'm kind of old-fashioned in a lot of ways. I prefer mano a mano. Even if you have two girls in the house, it's not like we're together all the time. But I need variety. Every man does. Not everyone will admit it, but that's how we're wired. It's in our ancestral blueprint.

PLAYBOY: So how do any marriages stay together?

SHEEN: It's just impulse control. The married guy looks at the hot chick and thinks, Oh, she's hot. But he doesn't do anything. When you can't control the impulse, you make a decision that burns down the whole kingdom. You can have rules at home that are different from the rest of the world's as long as you're not hurting anyone. People think it's insane up at my place. It's really not. There are always children there; there's always life there. It's just a good vibe.

PLAYBOY: Do you prefer to be single?

SHEEN: At least for now. It's definitely safer to be single, especially with this cottage industry that's devoted to extorting celebrities.

PLAYBOY: That's a real thing?

SHEEN: It is, yeah. There are businesses where women are recruited to hook up

with famous men, get dirt on them and then sell it. This actually exists. It's fucking heinous.

PLAYBOY: How do you trust anybody?

SHEEN: We take phones and purses at my house, and people have to sign shit. I'm not living in the Pentagon, but I've been burned enough to have to take precautions. It's either that or choose a different type of woman or party guest, because you never know. Sometimes the right choice seems great at the moment, but then suddenly it's as if somebody detonated a suicide bomb.

PLAYBOY: Is that why you're drawn to prostitutes, because you already know what the financial arrangement is, so there are no hidden agendas?

SHEEN: I don't do that as much anymore. It's just not, I don't know.... [long pause] I always feel I traded my time for something that could've been more valuable or substantial.

PLAYBOY: Meaning what? Actual intimacy?

SHEEN: The problem with prostitutes is, what if you actually like somebody you meet in that situation? Where do you go from there? What do you do?

PLAYBOY: If it starts as a service, can it ever become more than that?

SHEEN: It can, absolutely. But it's hard. I'm not saying I'll never be with a prostitute again. Parts of it are soulless and parts of it are nourishing. It's always a roll of the dice. There are times when that's the plan, and I'll abort it because the vibe isn't right. Sometimes it's hoping for a different result each time. At some point, you either have to change the players or forfeit the game.

PLAYBOY: Your fondness for prostitutes dates back to your first sexual experience. You lost your virginity at the age of 15 to a Las Vegas prostitute.

SHEEN: I did, yeah. [laughs] Nothing further, Your Honor.

PLAYBOY: And you paid for it with your dad's credit card. How did you not get busted for that?

SHEEN: Oh, I did. It was a bad scene, man. I'm watching TV in our living room, and he's in his office 20 feet away. I'm sitting on the floor with a bag of chips or something, and all of a sudden a piece of paper falls in front of me. I look up, and my dad's already walking away. It's his Visa bill. There's one thing circled, and it's \$350. There's an arrow pointing to it and three words: "What is this?" He had gone back into my bedroom and was just waiting for me.

PLAYBOY: He made you come to him?

SHEEN: He did. It was brilliant. That was a long walk. That was longer than giving up a game-seven bomb and having to make the walk back to the dugout. I was like a defense attorney going to trial against video evidence.

PLAYBOY: So what did you say?

SHEEN: I blamed it on my cousin Joey. I said it was Joey's idea. I was like, "You were asleep. We stole your credit card.

Sorry, our bad. Uh, Joey went second, by the way." [laughs]

PLAYBOY: He didn't lecture you about having sex with prostitutes?

SHEEN: Not really. He just hoped I understood that it's not love. I was like, "Really? You should have seen her, Dad. That's fucking true love." [laughs]

PLAYBOY: Are you following in your dad's parenting footsteps?

SHEEN: I try to. Even when I don't want to, it's there. We all have that moment of "Oh God, I sound like my dad." That happened to me recently. I remember he used to say to me, "This mess ain't going to clean itself up." I vowed I would never say that to my kids. But a few weeks ago I said the exact same sentence to Sam and Lola [his daughters with Denise Richards], word for word. "This mess ain't going to clean itself up!"

PLAYBOY: Your dad hasn't always been easy on you. He's talked about your drug problems publicly and was involved in at least one intervention. Are you ready to be the bad guy for your kids?

SHEEN: You have to. Hopefully they'll eventually realize you did it out of love and compassion and honoring the truth.

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PLAYBOY: Your dad had a wild past and his own struggles with alcohol addiction. Did that make it harder to take him seriously when he lectured you?

SHEEN: Yes and no. I don't remember him being as bad as he remembers. The way he describes his behavior, the drinking and all that, doesn't ring true for me. I don't remember it being that bad.

PLAYBOY: Maybe you didn't see it.

SHEEN: Nah. There weren't a lot of secrets in our family. My parents had fights. They were pretty loud about it. It never got physical, but a dish always got broken somewhere. You could almost predict it. "Wait for it...wait for it...." *Smash!*

PLAYBOY: But as far as you knew, there was no partying or drinking?

SHEEN: I don't know. Maybe there was, but it's not my memory of what his life was like.

PLAYBOY: Do you think he's exaggerating, or did it never happen at all?

SHEEN: It's almost as if he's created a history. I don't know why he would do that. Maybe it's shame, guilt, remorse, whatever it is.

PLAYBOY: Remorse for what?

SHEEN: We moved a lot. He lived job to job, so we were always traveling. We'd

live in houses for six months with no furniture. Beanbags were a big staple for us. He was doing the best he could. We weren't rich, but because of him I grew up all over the world. When I got home and had grade school geography, I was like, "Been there." That was pretty cool.

PLAYBOY: You celebrated your 11th birthday in the Philippines while your dad was shooting *Apocalypse Now*. Was it anything approaching normal?

SHEEN: It was the craziest time you could possibly imagine. The Philippines was a much different place back then. You could barely get a Snickers bar, much less a cake that wasn't filled with mold or rat shit. I remember one night we were in the bungalows where we lived at the time, and just as we were getting ready to go to bed, a naked Robert Duvall comes racing through the room, screaming at the top of his lungs like an Indian. Then he leaves, and he doesn't poke his head back in to explain. He doesn't say, "I'm out here with Dennis Hopper and he put me up to this." Nothing. To this day I don't know what the hell that was about.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about *Apocalypse Now* as an adult?

SHEEN: Everything you need to know about life is in *Apocalypse*. Everything. When Marlon Brando says, "You have the right to kill me, but you don't have the right to judge me," that's it, man. That's the world right there.

PLAYBOY: How often do you rewatch it?

SHEEN: At least every six months. I can't talk to people who haven't seen it until they have. I tell girls that if I'm going to date them, they have to watch that movie and they have to listen to Springsteen's "Brilliant Disguise." Listen to that song and you'll know a little more about me.

PLAYBOY: You've made three baseball movies, and now you're playing a ballplayer. Should we assume you really like baseball?

SHEEN: Absolutely. There's something about every spring when baseball season starts again. There's a feeling that everything in the world is good again. When I was growing up, my bedroom was covered in baseball shit. I would tape baseball cards to the walls before I realized they would be valuable one day. That's the kind of stuff I went to bed with and woke up with.

PLAYBOY: You were apparently pretty good at baseball in your teens. How close did you come to playing pro?

SHEEN: Not close at all. I went to a camp called the Mickey Owen Baseball School, in Miller, Missouri, and I got scouted my final year there. I had a good arm for a guy my size, and it always surprised people. I also had decent speed. But I couldn't hit for shit. I remember contemplating all this when I was 16 or 17, trying to decide (continued on page 158)

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AFGHANISTAN WAS THE BATTLE EVERYONE AGREED NEEDED TO BE FOUGHT.

WHAT WENT SO TERRIBLY WRONG, AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

★ ★ ★ ★ OBSERVATIONS FROM INSIDE THE WAR ZONE ★ ★ ★ ★



Kabul is an overgrown village of 5 million, a drab, smog-choked place that seems not even to be auditioning for the role of a capital city. Open sewers line the streets. Donkey carts and aging vehicles slow traffic to a crawl. When I visited last fall, the snow-frosted peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains that surround Kabul were perpetually shrouded in auto exhaust and smoke from burning tires, a common source of fuel. The foulest assault on the senses, however, is invisible: Sewage deposited outdoors dries up and gets swirled around by the wind, producing fecal dust, a common cause of eye infections. A recent environmental study for the Afghan government concluded that “a breath of fresh air cannot be purchased for any price in most days of the year” and that, viewed from afar, the city’s landscape “looks like it has caught fire.”

Yet for most of the past 11 years, Kabul was insulated from the worst of the war in Afghanistan. While the U.S.-led coalition conducted military operations in remote villages and forbidding mountain passes where Taliban insurgents and their allies were based, in parts of the capital the war could feel as far away as it did in the United States. This unlikely oasis was dubbed the “Kabubble,” and as the conflict dragged on it became home to legions of expats—military contractors, aid workers, journalists and sundry other misfit adventurers—and a small circle of Afghans flush with wartime contracts or posts in the new, internationally backed government.

Inside the Kabubble you could walk to the Finest superstore—Afghanistan’s answer to Target—and select from imported cheeses and a dozen varieties of body wash. At the famous Sufi restaurant, the underworked security guards killed themselves with the same tired joke. (“Do you have a gun?” they’d ask when I entered. “No.” “Why not?”) One journalist had a brick

pizza oven built into his patio; another installed an indoor sauna. There were house parties galore, fueled by liquor acquired from one of the handful of bootleggers who skirted the Islamic republic’s ban on alcohol. A Blues Brothers-themed bash last year—thrown by a nonprofit group that teaches young Afghans to skateboard—promised “the blues, fried chicken, Ray-Bans [fake], toasted white bread and copious amounts of home brew.” Such was the lifestyle that a foreign correspondent who’d spent years reporting from locked-down, bombed-out Baghdad told a friend after moving to Kabul, “I covered the wrong war!”

But a summer ago—just after President Obama ordered U.S. forces to begin a gradual withdrawal from Afghanistan—a spate of spectacular violence pierced the Kabubble. Last June, Taliban insurgents blasted through security checkpoints and killed a dozen people in a raid on the hilltop Intercontinental Hotel, then thought to be one of the city’s safest. In the following weeks, the Taliban and their allies carried out more brazen attacks: assassinating the Afghan government’s top peace negotiator in his home, paralyzing the American embassy with a daylong siege and bombing one of the U.S.-led military coalition’s Rhino transport vehicles as it traveled down a busy highway in southwest Kabul. It was an unmistakable show of staying power by the insurgents. “You might be going home,” they seemed to be taunting the United States, “but we’ll still be here.”

American officials consistently downplayed the incidents. In briefings in Kabul, I heard a string of commanders argue that the Taliban had in fact been weakened by coalition offensives and that the attacks amounted to a desperate bid to score propaganda points. Every Afghan I relayed this to just shook his head at the rhetorical gymnastics. The insecurity they felt was real and exposed yet again the failings of their Western-backed government and security forces. “When I leave my house in the morning,” a 25-year-old real estate agent named Sayed Aman Abed told me in



It was a war full of good intentions and horrendous blunders. U.S. troops accidentally burned the Koran, and an Army soldier was charged with killing 17 innocent Afghans. President Obama at first tried a surge, with mixed results. Finally, in May, as options dwindled, he and President Karzai signed what they called a strategic partnership agreement that made America's exit official.



his office, not far from the site of the Rhino attack, “to be honest, I don’t know if I will come back alive.”



The United States, which frequently said it had invaded Afghanistan to help liberate its people, long ago lost the plot of the war. A calamitous string of crises this past winter—the video of marines urinating on Afghan corpses, the burning of Korans by U.S. soldiers, the retaliatory killings by Afghans of their Western military trainers, the lone Army soldier’s nighttime massacre in a sleeping village—served merely to emphasize that even after 11 years, thousands of lives lost and hundreds of billions of dollars spent on the war, Afghans didn’t like Americans, and Americans didn’t trust Afghans. One U.S. official who worked in Afghanistan until recently e-mailed me in exasperation,

intersected. The goals, to many, were just: Hunt down Al Qaeda and oust its fundamentalist Taliban protectors, and help build the foundations of a modern society where girls could go to school, people could get decent health care and women could enjoy greater rights. An international coalition pledged its support, and in the weeks after 9/11, U.S. forces swept into Afghanistan and flushed out the enemies with barely a fight.

What came next was far more complicated and something U.S. officials hadn’t planned for. “We won against Al Qaeda, but we did that in three weeks,” Hamill said. “Then we wanted to build this Valhalla country and show the world that America can turn around people’s lives.” Looking back, it seems ludicrous that anyone thought this could be achieved even with a military that wasn’t distracted in Iraq. But the story of the American war in Afghanistan isn’t one of a lack of vision or, until recently, a lack of public support. Even last June, after nearly a decade of conflict and stubborn economic troubles at home, a solid majority of Americans polled by the Pew Research Center—57 percent—still believed that using military force in Afghanistan had been the right thing to do.

Instead, the past decade has demonstrated the limits of using military might to achieve political results. The United States never understood the terrain of Afghanistan, was reluctant to dirty its hands with the hard work of nation building and waited far too long to invest enough resources. It relied on a series of proxies—brutal Afghan warlords, a devious Pakistani military establishment, a graft-riddled central government in Kabul—each of which proved more problematic than the last. When the Taliban returned after a few years, the U.S. military turned to deadly drone strikes and clandestine special operations to kill militants swiftly and silently. Those raids became deeply controversial and—although coalition forces rarely acknowledged it—were associated with the deaths and injuries of innocents, which turned more Afghans against the U.S. mission.

By the time an Army staff sergeant in the southern province of Kandahar allegedly shot and killed 17 villagers, including nine children, in a slaughter that horrified Americans, most Afghans were too jaded even to protest. My colleague Ali Safi, a journalist *(continued on page 152)*

U.S. TROOPS ARE COMING HOME, AND WHAT THEY'RE LEAVING BEHIND DOESN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE VICTORY.

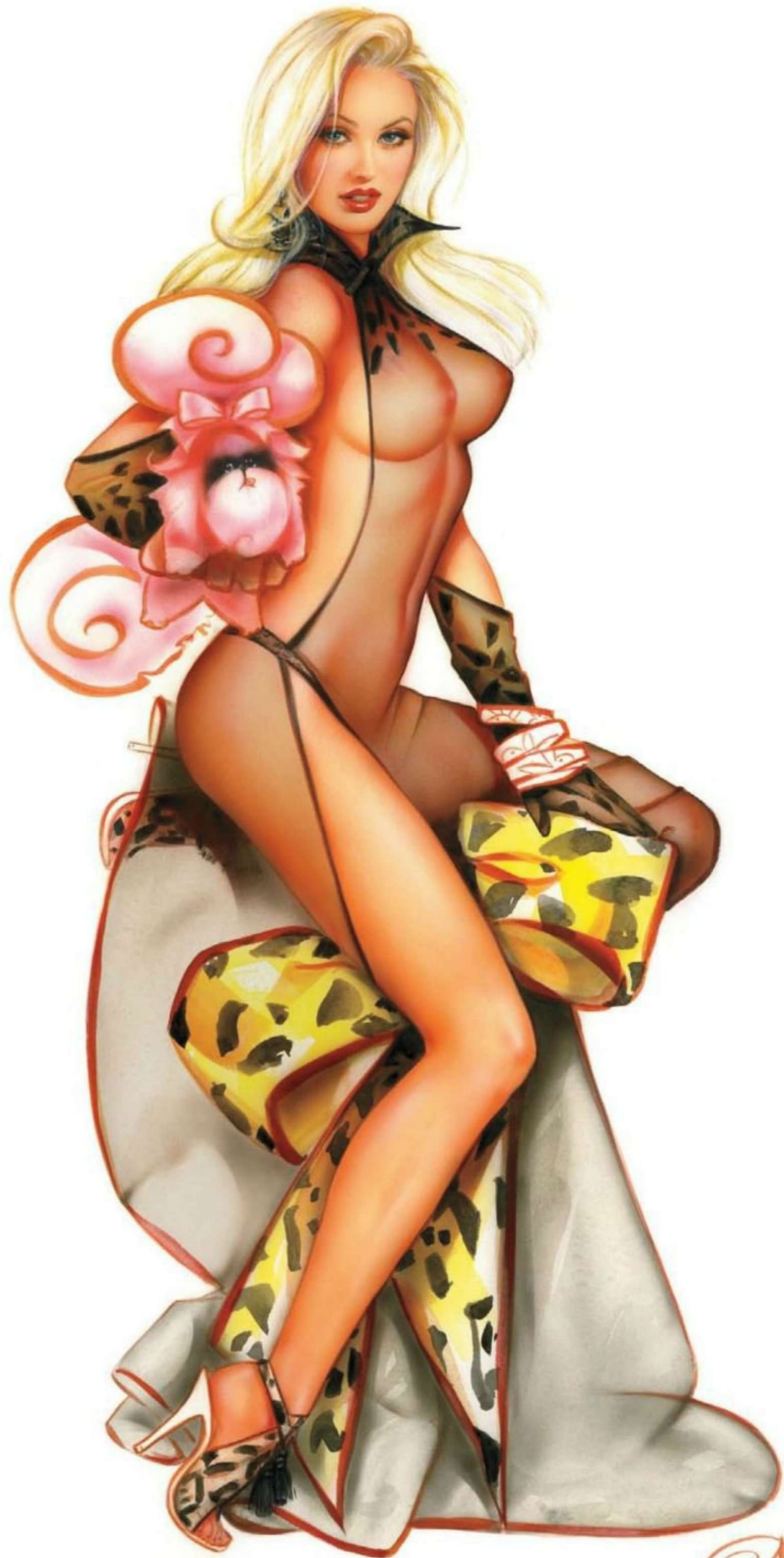
“Half the time I feel like this would’ve been over years ago if we just learned Afghan Etiquette 101: Don’t lift up burkas, don’t spit on people, don’t kill kids, apologize when you do, don’t piss on dead bodies, and, oh, by the way, don’t burn their holiest religious text.”

Now, in the twilight of America’s longest foreign war, it is too late for those lessons. U.S. troops are coming home as Afghanistan hurtles deeper into uncertainty, and what they’re leaving behind doesn’t look anything like victory.

“In November or December of 2001, if you were sitting in Kabul and thinking about what we need to do in the next 10 or 11 years to build Afghanistan, you would not do anything that we have just done,” said Paul Hamill, a Briton who previously worked in Kabul as an advisor to the Afghan government.

It wasn’t supposed to end like this. Afghanistan was the good war, bloodthirsty hawks and bleeding-heart liberals alike agreed at the start—the one worth fighting. If Iraq was the foolish joyride of a swaggering empire, Afghanistan was the place where American pride, values and idealism





"Can I interest you in a game of checkers...?!"



Prada vixen

nina kohne

heats up the
Sunshine State

MODEL

Alayhem

Nina Kohne has *the* body. A perfect 10. As good as it gets. If you need proof, consider the fact that this Slovenian stunner is a fit model for Prada. Founded in 1913 by Mario Prada and his brother, the Milan-based fashion house is among the most glamorous companies in the world and an arbiter of all that is haute and forward-thinking when it comes to women's wear. Prada designers use Nina's body to mold feminine garments that are as fabulous as the model herself.

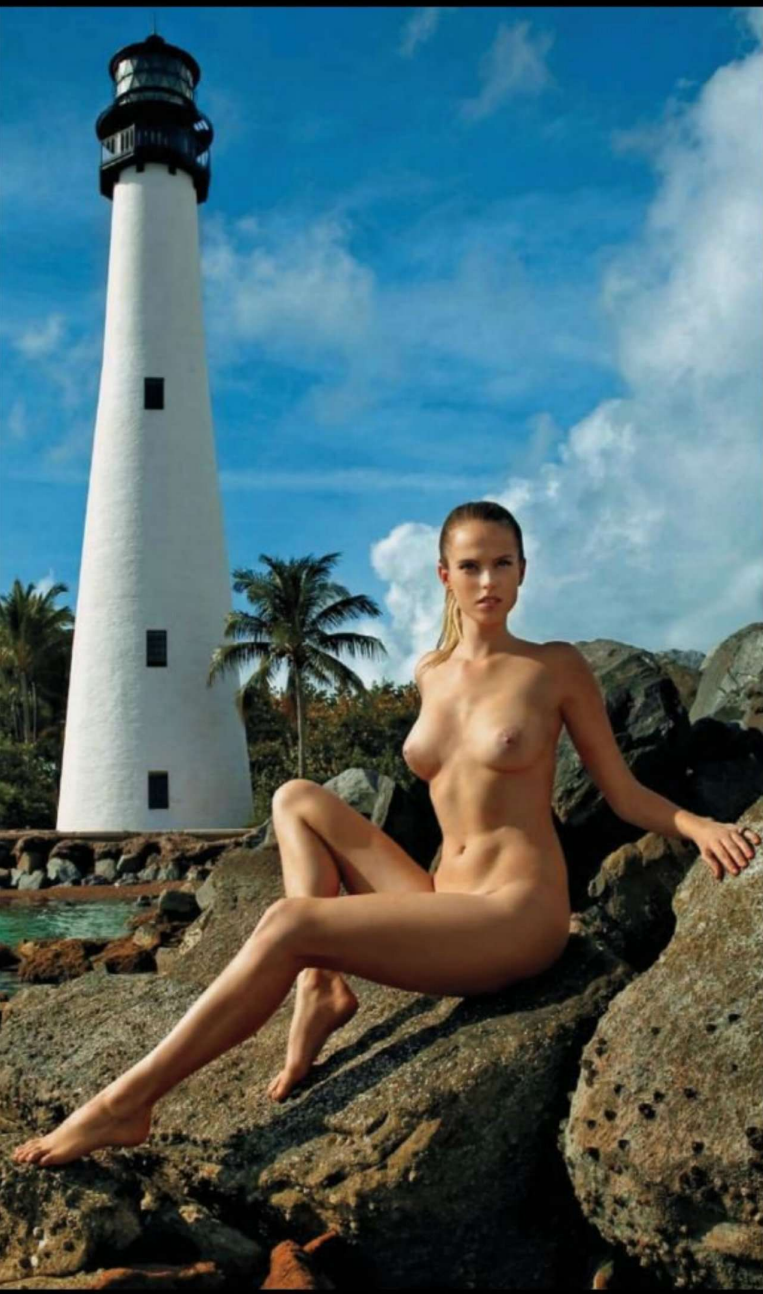
For your enjoyment, we caught up with Nina as she worked hard and played harder in sun-drenched south Florida. Nina rocked the lens with her toes in the sand at Miami's Haulover Beach Park. She braved the shark-infested waters and posed in the rarefied rooms of the exclusive Epic Hotel on the city's waterfront. If that wasn't enough, she hit the wilds of the Everglades, where she graced the sea of grass with nothing on but red stilettos, cruising aboard an airboat. Following the shoot, Nina partied with Playmates Rainy Day Jordan (December 2011) and Kyra Milan (March 2010). For this pictorial, however, we're letting the Slovenian have the spotlight all to herself. Ah, yes—that's perfection.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEŠ BRAVNIČAR



987687649714356224006

NINA KOHNE
has the body.
A PERFECT 10.
As good
AS IT GETS.









Some years later, on a tugboat in the Gulf of Mexico, Joe Coughlin's feet were placed in a tub of cement. Twelve gunmen stood waiting until they got far enough out to sea to throw him overboard, while Joe listened to the engine chug and watched the water churn white at the stern. And it occurred to him that almost everything of note that had ever happened in his life—good or bad—had been set in motion that morning he first crossed paths with Emma Gould.

They met shortly after dawn in 1926, when Joe and the Bartolo brothers robbed the gaming room at the back of an Albert White speakeasy in South Boston. Before they entered it, Joe and the Bartolos had no idea the speakeasy belonged to Albert White. If they had, they would have run in the other direction and set fire to any trail they could have left behind.

They came down the back stairs smoothly enough. They passed through the empty bar area without incident. The bar and casino took up the rear of a furniture warehouse along the waterfront that Joe's boss, *(continued on page 180)*

LIVE *By* NIGHT

BY DENNIS LEHANE



JOE MADE A BIG MISTAKE IN
ROUSTING THE GANGSTER'S
GAME, BUT IF HE HADN'T, HE
WOULD NEVER HAVE DISCOVERED
EMMA GOULD



THE LOST PHOTOS OF JACK KEROUAC

In 1959, Robert Frank—fresh off the publication of his seminal book of photography, *The Americans*—went on assignment for *PLAYBOY* to photograph his friend Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road* and the face of the Beat generation. Fifty-three years later, we offer these never-before-seen photos. Text by Greil Marcus



Jack Kerouac was a great camera subject. After the publication of *On the Road* in 1957 made him a star, his face was everywhere. He was on TV explaining “the Beat generation.” He was running from shutterbugs who were sure that wherever Kerouac was, history was too. The most characteristic shot of the time might be Fred McDarrah’s 1958 photograph of Kerouac leaving a New Year’s Eve party at the Artists’ Club in New York City. Caught in a crush out the door, his hair straggly with sweat, his eyes wide and angry, his mouth open in something like shock: Is this really what I wanted?

It was an explosion of celebrity, something Kerouac deeply wanted. Going back and forth over possible titles for his book as revisions on his three-week-fever-dream, one-paragraph manuscript neared their conclusion, he kept casting about



KEROUAC AND FRANK WERE SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE. KEROUAC BLEW THE TRUMPET FOR FRANK.

for the one that would make the most noise, that would best marry publicity and literature. Should it be *On the Road*? *Souls on the Road*? *The Beat Generation*? *The Hip Generation*? *Wow*? *The Rock and Roll Road*? He was thinking like an advertising man—and it makes perfect, just barely subconscious sense that on *Mad Men*, as the series began in 2007, set in the late 1950s, Jon Hamm’s Don Draper was all but Jack Kerouac’s doppelgänger. It wasn’t simply their faces, though Hamm’s resemblance to Kerouac might have been part of why he was cast. It was the Draper character as the show’s creator, Matthew Weiner, brought him into focus: the Madison Avenue smoothy in a dark suit and wing tips, with a blonde wife and kids





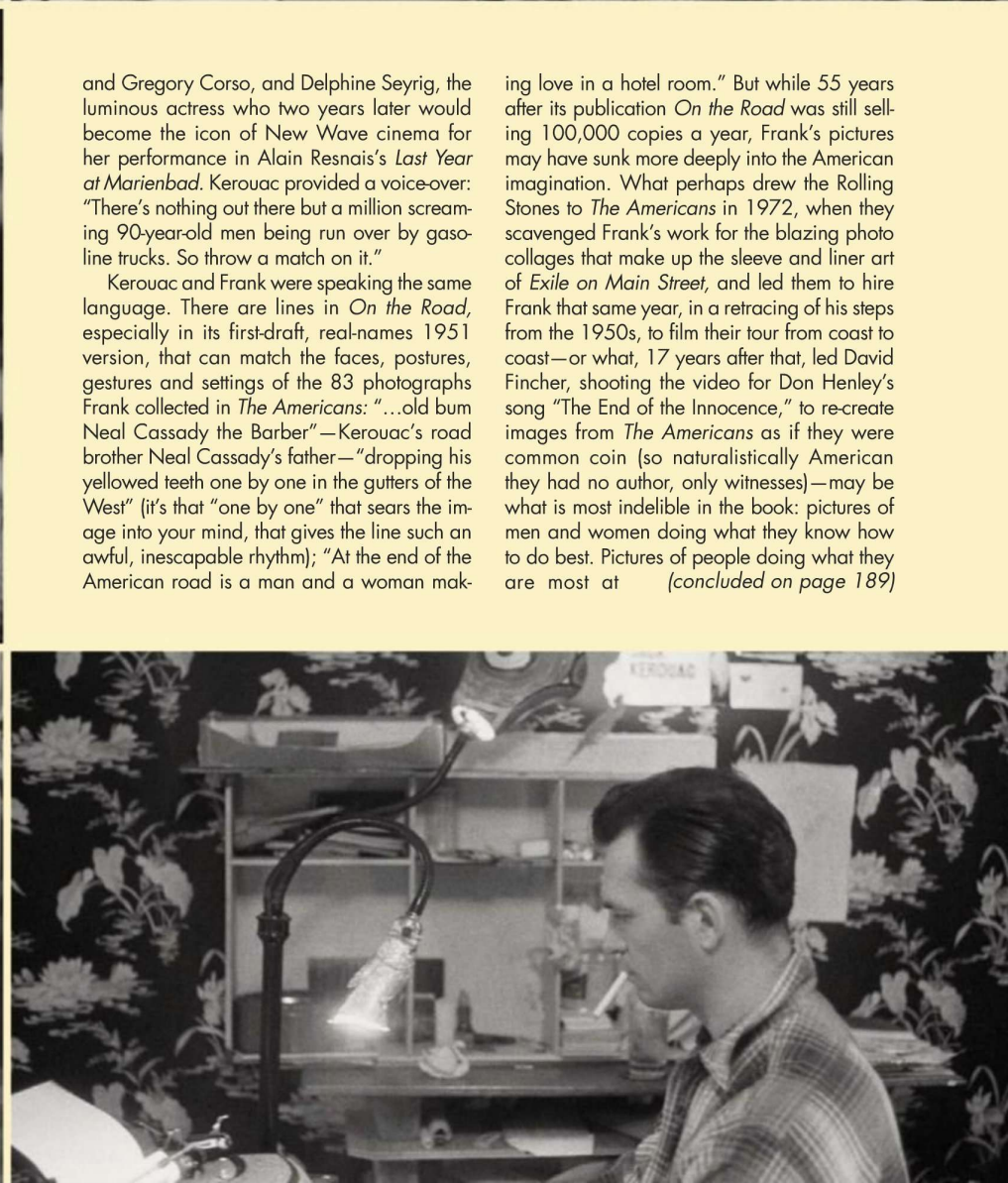
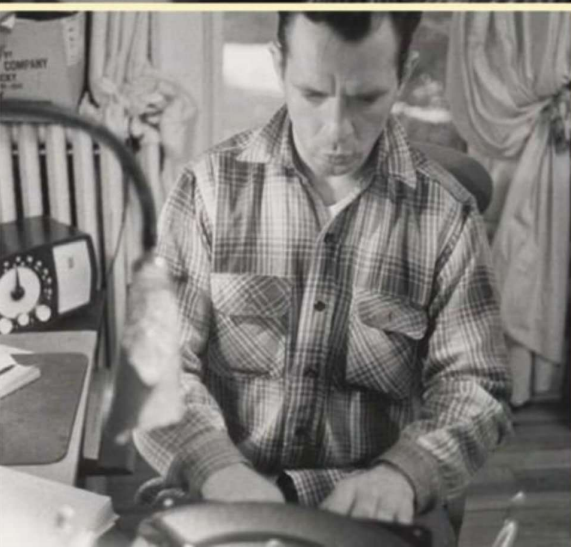
in the suburbs, dreaming of escaping to Paris to become a writer, sneaking off from the office to watch odd foreign films or visit his beatnik girlfriend in Greenwich Village, reading Frank O'Hara's *Meditations in an Emergency* and feeling stabbed in the heart: "Now I am quietly waiting for/The catastrophe of my personality/To seem beautiful again,/And interesting, and modern."

Those lines, from 1957, could go right on top of the McDarragh photograph. That is why the pictures Robert Frank made of Kerouac—and himself—in 1959 are such a relief: such a different story.

Frank was born in Zurich in 1924. He came to the United States in 1947. After the great American documentary photographer Walker Evans helped him

receive a Guggenheim fellowship in 1955, Frank set out to photograph the country, from New York to New Orleans to Los Angeles to San Francisco. In 1957 he met Kerouac in New York and showed him some of his road pictures. When Frank's *The Americans* was published in 1959, Kerouac's introduction blew the trumpet: "The faces don't editorialize or criticize or say anything but 'This is the way we are in real life and if you don't like it I don't know anything about it 'cause I'm living my own life my way and may God bless us all, mebbe'...'if we deserve it.'" In 1959, Frank, co-directing with Alfred Leslie, made his first film, *Pull My Daisy*. Based on Kerouac's play *The Beat Generation*, it featured painters Larry Rivers and Alice Neel, Beat poets Allen Ginsberg





and Gregory Corso, and Delphine Seyrig, the luminous actress who two years later would become the icon of New Wave cinema for her performance in Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad*. Kerouac provided a voice-over: "There's nothing out there but a million screaming 90-year-old men being run over by gasoline trucks. So throw a match on it."

Kerouac and Frank were speaking the same language. There are lines in *On the Road*, especially in its first-draft, real-names 1951 version, that can match the faces, postures, gestures and settings of the 83 photographs Frank collected in *The Americans*: "...old bum Neal Cassady the Barber"—Kerouac's road brother Neal Cassady's father—"dropping his yellowed teeth one by one in the gutters of the West" (it's that "one by one" that sears the image into your mind, that gives the line such an awful, inescapable rhythm); "At the end of the American road is a man and a woman mak-

ing love in a hotel room." But while 55 years after its publication *On the Road* was still selling 100,000 copies a year, Frank's pictures may have sunk more deeply into the American imagination. What perhaps drew the Rolling Stones to *The Americans* in 1972, when they scavenged Frank's work for the blazing photo collages that make up the sleeve and liner art of *Exile on Main Street*, and led them to hire Frank that same year, in a retracing of his steps from the 1950s, to film their tour from coast to coast—or what, 17 years after that, led David Fincher, shooting the video for Don Henley's song "The End of the Innocence," to re-create images from *The Americans* as if they were common coin (so naturalistically American they had no author, only witnesses)—may be what is most indelible in the book: pictures of men and women doing what they know how to do best. Pictures of people doing what they are most at (concluded on page 189)



Wes Anderson,

the director who makes the films everyone loves but no one sees, is back. The man behind *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox* explains the magic of Paris, the enduring appeal of Bill Murray and why Hollywood makes him nervous

The
Joy噪L&S

by J.C. Cabell

Dressed in his trademark fitted suit—one size too small—Wes Anderson zips down a winding Paris street on a Vélib' bicycle, pedaling between his apartment and his new office space, both in the Montparnasse neighborhood. The Texas-born director of such films as *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox* came to Paris in 2004 while promoting his fourth film, *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou*, and never really left. In Paris Anderson conducts his life anonymously, just as he likes it, and even after eight years, he doesn't speak much French.



It's fitting that Anderson would find himself living and working in Montparnasse, once the stomping ground of the artists, writers, photographers and filmmakers of the Lost Generation. A longtime F. Scott Fitzgerald devotee, Anderson credits two short works from *The Basil and Josephine Stories* as the inspiration for his second feature, *Rushmore*. And while his films have not been seen by large audiences, he is adored by an impassioned fan base that includes many film critics who applaud his propensity for nuance, a charge he doesn't deny. In fact, he embraces his obsessive attention to detail with pride and once made an American Express commercial lampooning his quirky image.

Like many of his peers, including Paul

in the mid-1960s. The movie is a return to form for Anderson. After making *The Life Aquatic* and *The Darjeeling Limited*, two uneven films admired by diehard fans but largely panned by critics, and the successful stop-animation film *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, based on a Roald Dahl book, Anderson chose to work with Jared Gilman and Kara Hayward, two unknown child actors. It was a risky move, putting two newcomers up against a roster of high-profile co-stars—Bill Murray, Bruce Willis, Frances McDormand and Edward Norton—who are all cast in supporting roles.

Anderson is what he appears to be, skinny legs and all, as he tours his new office, which features half a dozen windows overlooking the street below. His button-down shirts are embroidered with the initials *WWA*—Wesley Wales Anderson—recalling the Jazz Age, when literary dandies were impeccable



“
In the older days I looked at the studio system like it was a bank. I don't do that anymore.”

dressers with their own distinct style. As Cate Blanchett, who appears in *The Life Aquatic*, said to *The New Yorker* about Anderson, “Is he Dorian Gray, I wonder? He is from another time, but completely and utterly genuine.”

Sitting in his Montparnasse office, Anderson opened up in his own words about his life and career.

THE RELUCTANT AUTEUR

It's hard not to sound like an insane idiot when you say you're an auteur. I remember Barry Braverman, an old friend who shot the short film of *Bottle Rocket*. He also did aerial shots in this recent film and did a documentary about the making of *The Darjeeling Limited*. At any rate, when we were doing the short, we disagreed about something, and he said to Owen and Luke Wilson, right in front of me, “He thinks he's an auteur. He wants to put the camera here, and it's not correct. But what can we do, because he thinks he's an auteur?” You don't even have to write your own scripts to be one. Film is the kind of medium in which you can shape things a very specific way, and if you have your own way of doing that, well, you're probably an auteur. Or if you're writing your own scripts, then even more so you probably are one. I make the scripts. I don't know. Auteur. It just means author, doesn't it?

YOUTH RULES

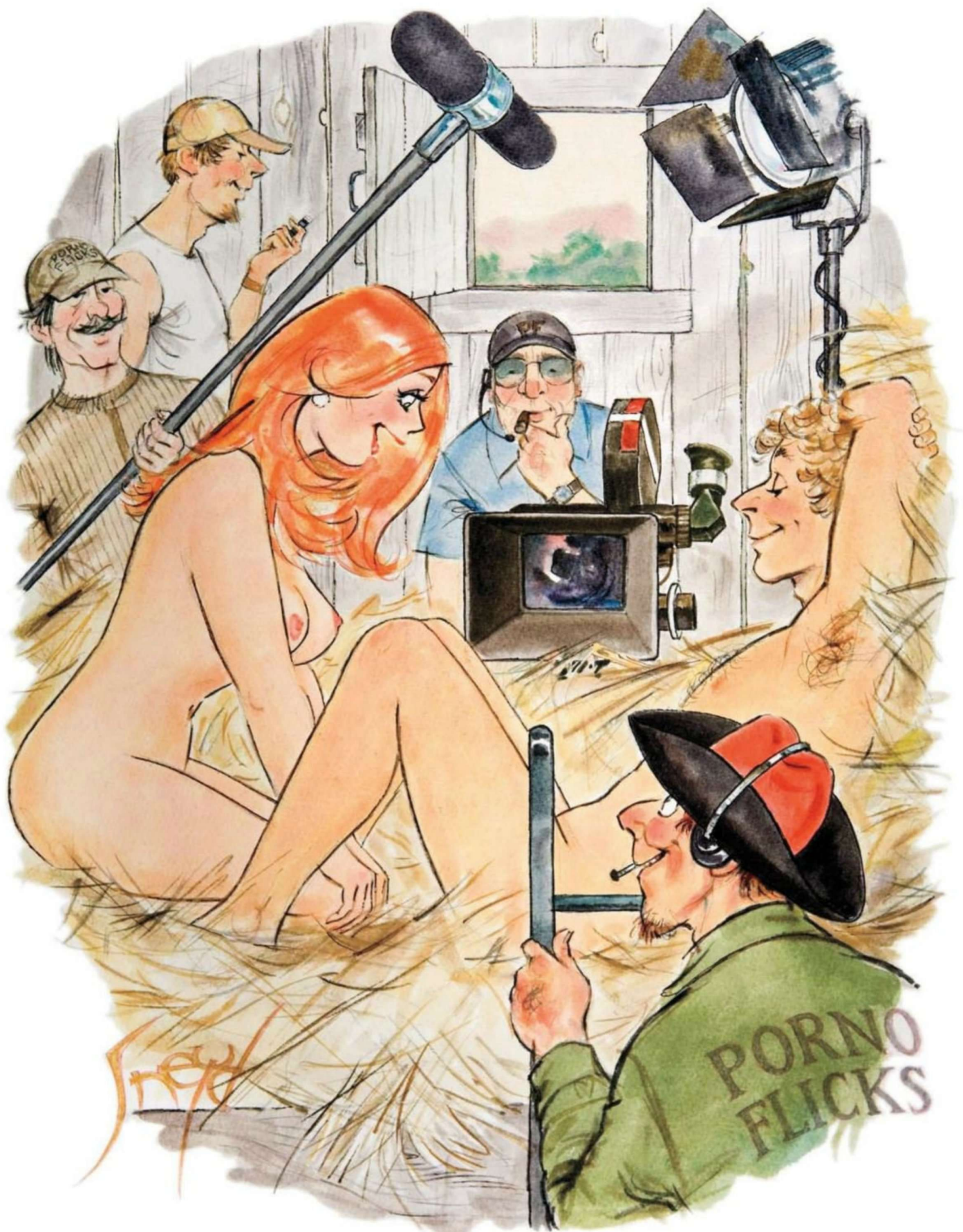
With every movie I do, there's usually a period when I'm not quite sure about all the details. (continued on page 160)



1. “It's hard not to sound like an insane idiot when you say you're an auteur,” Anderson says. 2. “Bill Murray had never heard of me. He happened to like the script. Why'd he read it? I don't know.” 3. “Owen Wilson and I lucked out.”

Thomas Anderson, Quentin Tarantino and Noah Baumbach, Anderson never went to film school but was blessed with early praise for his first film, 1996's *Bottle Rocket*, a sardonic comedy that launched the careers of Owen and Luke Wilson and turned Anderson, then a part-time movie-theater projectionist at the University of Texas, into a cinema wunderkind.

His seventh and latest film, *Moonrise Kingdom*, opened the Cannes International Film Festival this past May. The coming-of-age story follows two 12-year-old kids who fall in love and run away—he from a Scout camp, she from her parents' summer cottage—on a car-free island off the coast of New England



"I'd heard you were the next big thing—but I had no idea!"

THREE-PIECE SUIT, \$970, BY **TIGER OF SWEDEN**. SHIRT, \$80, BY **BANANA REPUBLIC**. TIE, \$125, BY **OVDIA & SONS**, AT **BARNEYS NEW YORK**.

SPEED RACER

RED BULL FORMULA ONE DRIVER MARK WEBBER SUITS UP IN SUMMER WEAR

FASHION BY
JENNIFER RYAN JONES

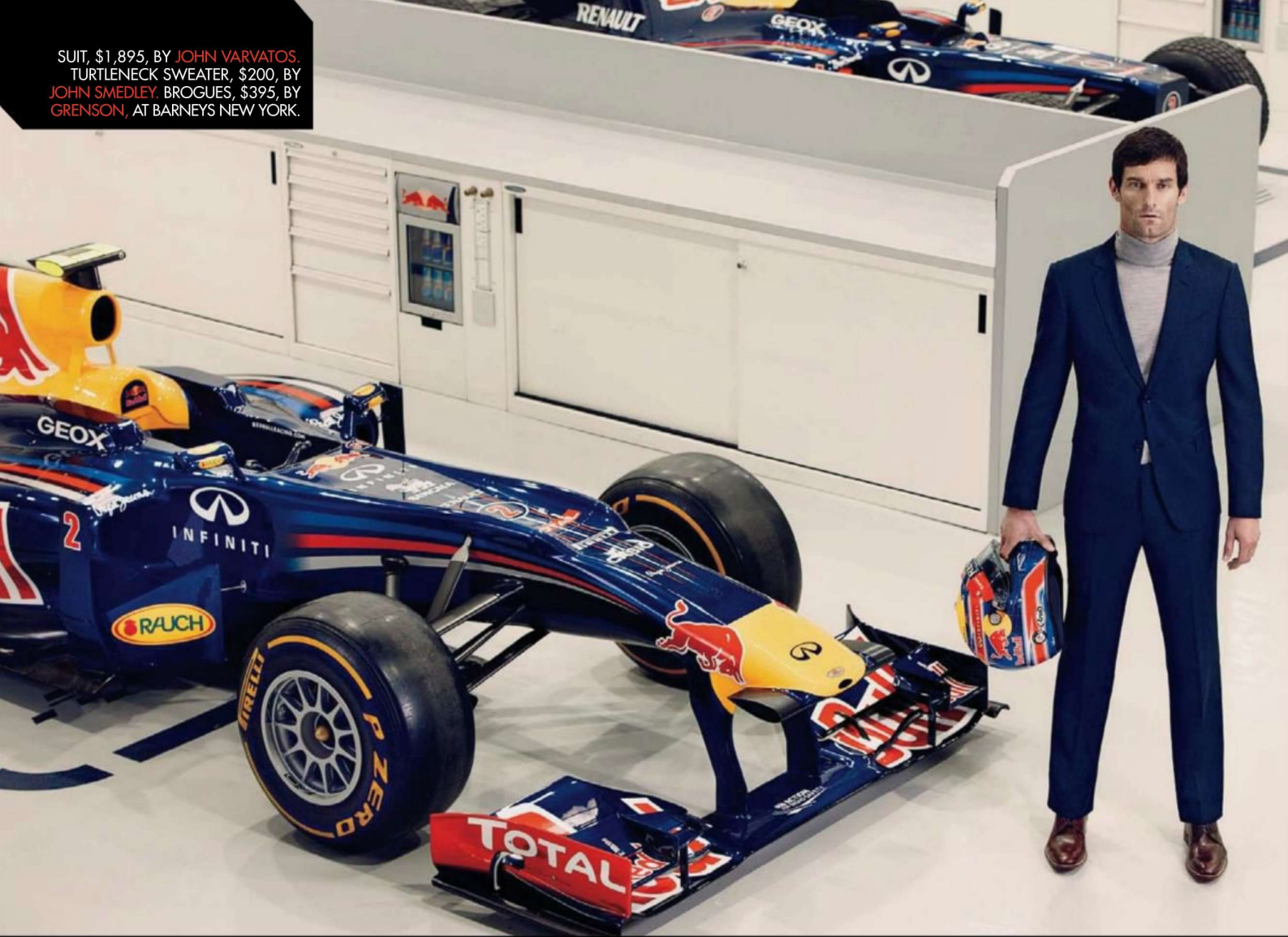
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GAVIN BOND

ARTICLE BY
A.J. BAIME

STYLING BY
GRACE GILFEATHER



SUIT, \$1,895, BY JOHN VARVATOS.
TURTLENECK SWEATER, \$200, BY
JOHN SMEDLEY. BROGUES, \$395, BY
GRENSON, AT BARNEYS NEW YORK.



FORMULA ONE RACING

WEBBER'S FIRST F1 VICTORY WAS
AT THE GERMAN GRAND PRIX IN
2009. CHAMPAGNE, ANYONE?

is the most expensive, technologically advanced and (arguably) glamorous form of sport in the world. It's a contest of precision and athleticism, of ideas and audacity. And, at the end of the day, speed. After a five-year absence, F1 is set to return to our shores for the U.S. Grand Prix in November. With the green flag set to wave, we got Australian Mark Webber, one of two pilots on the Red Bull team—the best in the world for the past two seasons, shooting for a third straight year of winning both the drivers' and constructors' world championships—to suit up in this summer's finest threads.

When it comes to style, laid-back is in Webber's DNA. "I'm from Australia, mate," he says. "I wear trainers,



BELTED TRENCH COAT,
\$1,610, AND SHIRT, \$315, BY
BURBERRY. KNIT TIE, \$135,
BY DRAKE'S LONDON.



SUIT, \$2,200, BY **VERSACE**.
SHIRT, \$160, AND TIE, \$95,
BY **THOMAS PINK**.



jeans, T-shirts. It takes me 10 minutes to get ready." But when he's in the cockpit, he's anything but laid-back. The winner of seven F1 races got his start (as all F1 drivers seem to) in go-karts when he was 12 years old. He raced in Australia, then moved to Europe to try to make it. You need to exhibit greatness to find a ride in the most competitive and popular form of international motor sport. What separates good from great?

"You need to have the car at one with you," says the 35-year-old, "so you can push it to the complete limit in every situation." The rest is "micro-adaptation," he says, the ability to "react quickly to changing conditions." As the drivers battle in close combat, kissing 200 miles per hour, danger is never far from their consciousness. "We love the rush," says Webber of F1 drivers. "We love the risk-taking. We don't want to take unnecessary risks, but we realize we're traveling very quickly. Pushing the limits, that's part of it."

Unlike any other major motor sport, F1 teams are all constructors. They build their cars from the ground up according to a specific "formula." Tens of thousands of man-hours and many millions of dollars go into every car and race. What is the pressure like seconds before a start?

"It's a sensational feeling," Webber says. "Everyone has put huge amounts of work into it. There's a great buzz, a mixture of anxiety and positive tension. You know you're about to be unleashed into the race. There's complete isolation. The quiet is surreal."

Then comes the burst of thunder, with 24 cars and some 17,000 horsepower let loose on the track. What is it like to grab that elusive checkered flag? "The most special feeling is when you hear your national anthem," Webber says, "and the emotion of spraying the bubbly. Trophies don't mean much, but the emotion of the event and the memories stay with you forever."

WEBBER ON TRACK AT THE MONACO GRAND PRIX IN 2010. HE TOOK THE CHECKERED FLAG.





THE CIRCUS IS COMING TO TOWN For the first time since 2007, Formula One will return to the United States. The U.S. Grand Prix is scheduled for November 18 in Austin, Texas, where promoters led by Red McCombs (former owner of the Minnesota Vikings and San Antonio Spurs) are building the first-ever purpose-built racetrack to host F1 on these shores. The 3.4-mile, 20-turn, roughly \$350 million Circuit of the Americas will host 120,000 fans, who will drain the state of Texas of its beer. (See the track rendering above.) The story of F1 is one of heroes, from Jim Clark and Mario Andretti in the 1960s and 1970s (pictured here) to today's top pilots—Sebastian Vettel, Fernando Alonso, Lewis Hamilton. If ever there was a moment ripe for F1's return, this is it. For the first time in history, six world champions are battling it out for the coveted title in 2012. When those engines start revving in Austin, the noise will rattle windows across the Lone Star state. Tickets are available at circuitoftheamericas.com.



MARIO ANDRETTI



JIM CLARK



BRUCE MCLAREN



JACKIE STEWART



NIKI LAUDA



DOUBLE-BREASTED BLAZER,
\$775, BY **AMI**, AT BARNEYS
NEW YORK. FRENCH-CUFF
SHIRT, \$135, BY **THOMAS PINK**.
JEANS, \$135, BY **PEPE JEANS**.



DON'T BE SO QUICK TO DISMISS THE IDEA OF FLYING SAUCERS. ASTROPHYSICISTS THINK THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE WE'RE NOT ALONE

BY ROB MAGNUSON SMITH

ILLUSTRATION BY KAROL LASIA



spotting a UFO is like falling in love—you suspect an illusion, but you can't turn away. On the clear morning of June 24, 2011, five luminous white disks, spinning and dipping among the clouds,

appeared in the sky over London. Witnesses captured the unidentified flying objects on their camera phones, and as I watched their videos I couldn't help but believe. The disks had intelligence, sentience, even

a kind of beauty. Since turning 40, I'd found myself at something of a crossroads. For the first time since childhood—though I knew it was absurd—I wondered if aliens existed and if they ever transported humans

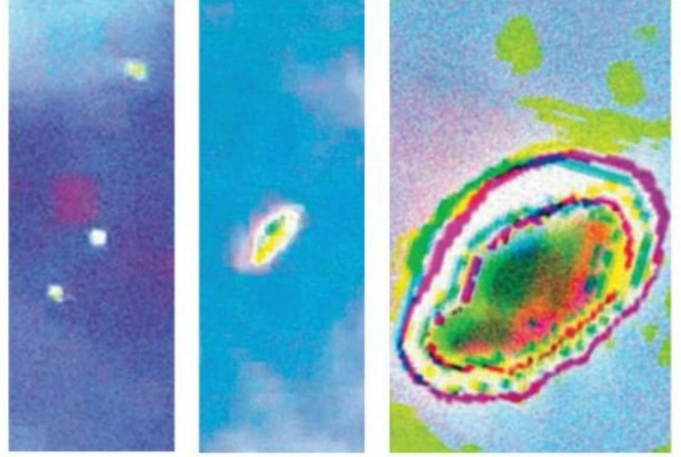
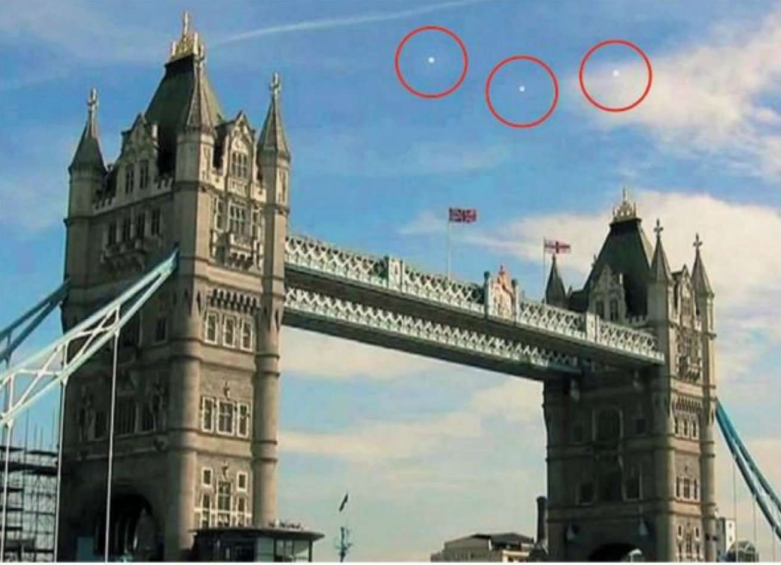


to an advanced world. Every night I watched the stars.

A few months later I found myself in London at the headquarters of the British Interplanetary Society. Richard Osborne had two drinks going—a glass

of claret and a champagne chaser. He turned toward me and said with urgency, “We need to become a multiplanet society as fast as possible. Our solar system is in a dangerous spot. There are too many rocks floating around.”

Astrophysicists, engineers and science fiction enthusiasts milled around the buffet tables, discussing wormhole portals, warp drives and the possibility of hitchhiking on negative force fields. On the walls hung movie



REAL OR FAKE? IN JUNE 2011 RESIDENTS OF LONDON WERE BAFLED BY AN EXTRAORDINARY DISPLAY WHEN A NUMBER OF WHITE DISKS WERE SEEN SPEEDING ACROSS THE SKY. THE UFOS WERE CAPTURED BY AT LEAST THREE CAMERAS, BUT ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGES REMAINS INCONCLUSIVE.

stills from *2001: A Space Odyssey* signed by Arthur C. Clarke, one of the society's early members. In a corner, a few of the latest rocket models stood on pedestals.

Osborne opted for the vegetarian lasagna, so I followed suit. We'd had only a few bites when he guided me back to the drinks table. He wore a silk ascot under his blue oxford, and his long hair rippled across his shoulders. A physicist by training and a rocket specialist by trade, Osborne resembled a slightly overweight professional wrestler. "I'm not worried about global warming," he said, "as much as I am about asteroids, which are a greater existential threat. We need to find our way to the next solar system. Or secure a base on the moon."

Osborne is a designer for Project Icarus, a worldwide organization dedicated to improving travel time to nearby stars. Using conventional rocket-propulsion technology, it would take

said. "I believe I've decimated his argument. After all, we can use asteroids to replenish our platinum-group metals, then target them for water refueling during lunar colonization."

I squeezed past him and got my hands on a beer. It had become uncomfortably warm at the Interplanetary Society—all the scientists, unleashed from their labs, had their brains on overdrive. I found an empty spot along the wall.

Standing beside me, a large man in a pin-striped suit had the reassuring air of a businessman. I found myself gravitating toward him.

He shook my hand and asked, "What brings you to our little gathering?"

"Just curiosity, I guess." He studied me quietly. I had a swig of beer. "I just hope we're not alone. You know, drifting around on a dying rock."

"We take our motto seriously here: From imagination to reality."

Atacama Large Millimeter Array is expected to detect a new galaxy every three minutes. Are we at a midlife crisis as a species, increasingly aware of our uncertain future?

In late December, after celebrating a certain extraterrestrial's birthday, I decided to check out the SETI Institute. I wanted to ask about the possibility of aliens at the place that had made its name searching for them.

The nonprofit Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute, founded in 1984 with the help of NASA's chief of life sciences, uses large radio telescopes to scan the outer reaches of our galaxy. The institute partners with NASA on many projects and currently employs more than 150 people, including astrophysicists and astronomers with ties to NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. Frank Drake, whose "Drake equation" is the most widely used way to estimate the existence of

WE ARE HOT ON THE HUNT FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE AT A FASTER PACE THAN EVER BEFORE.

70,000 years for *Voyager 1*, launched in 1977, to reach Alpha Centauri, the star system closest to our planet. The scientists of Project Icarus want to design a fusion-powered starship that could reach a nearby star in less than 100 years. They hope their research will lead to the launch of an interstellar vehicle by the year 2100.

I headed for the cans of ale stacked in a pyramid at the far end of the table. A little man in a tweed coat appeared at my elbow. His eyebrows twitched like angry mice. "Have you read my article on the benefits of asteroid mining in the April issue of *Spaceflight*?"

I told him I hadn't yet seen that issue. "I'm in a debate with a certain physicist from San Diego," the man

I looked around the room. "Anyone you know seen any UFOs?"

He shook his head. "We tend not to invite those types."

Space exploration has reached the outer limits of our solar system. *Voyager 1* should be the first man-made object to go interstellar. Meanwhile, the *Kepler* spacecraft has discovered dozens of planets orbiting distant stars. We are hot on the hunt for extraterrestrial life—and plan to make ourselves extraterrestrial—at a faster pace than ever before. Radio telescopes from Puerto Rico to Japan sweep the heavens for alien signals. Soon, on the Chajnantor plateau high in the mountains of Chile, the ultrasensi-

intelligent life in the galaxy, is a SETI Institute trustee. Still, visiting hours were not listed on the website. When I called the main number, I heard a recorded message. Operators were either away from the desk or on another line. What if I'd been an alien?

Before leaving San Francisco, I stopped at a neighborhood café. I asked the regulars if they had any messages for the institute across the bay. "See if those ETs do crossword puzzles," a guy in a Giants cap said. He tapped his newspaper with a pencil. "I need a five-letter word for *cornucopia*."

It was overcast all the way out of the city. As soon as I reached Silicon Valley, the clouds scattered and sunlight shot across (continued on page 170)



"Boy, you'd never get me up in one of those things!"



the
bronze
age

PLAYBOY'S GUIDE TO TANNING
IN THE HOT SUMMER MONTHS

Photography by TONY KELLY

P

People say tanning is bad for you. Chances are none of them are Brazilian. Or any of the beautiful women who live on the French Riviera and sun on the yachts of Monte Carlo.

Or the silver-screen sirens who bronze on the beaches of Malibu and around the pools of Hollywood Hills estates.

All over America this summer, the focus is on nabbing that sun-kissed look. And with boatloads of studies promoting a “shun the sun” mentality, some are choosing to avoid the sun altogether, replacing its effects with creams, lotions and sprays. (Yes, even the “GTL” knuckleheads of MTV’s *Jersey Shore* fake-tan.) But nothing beats the look of a real tan, and with the lure of beautiful weather—and women—coaxing you outdoors, the sun will be as much a part of your summer as barbecues and a cold beer.

“You’re not going to get around the fact that so many great activities, from being on a boat to hanging out on the beach, happen in the sun,” says Debra Jaliman, a New York dermatologist and author of *Skin Rules: Trade Secrets From a Top New York Dermatologist*.

Coco Chanel is credited with first popularizing the bronzed look, after a trip to St.-Tropez in 1923. A second Bronze Age began in the 1950s and lasted through the 1970s, with the likes of George Hamilton, Roger Moore and Brigitte Bardot (starting with *The Girl in the Bikini*, 1952). But gone are the days of slathering on baby oil to bake your skin. Today, SPF products have caught up with the medical research. Plus, the sun is a source of vitamin D, a key ingredient in a healthy body and mind. Just be smart and safe about how you sun yourself. It starts here.

Here are Dr. Jaliman’s tips for healthy tanning.

1

Wear sunscreen to stave off signs of aging such as fine lines and dark spots. “Listen, if you want the best tan of your life, wear 30 SPF,” says the good doctor. “It won’t block out all the sun. You’ll get better color because you won’t burn and peel, and the color will last a lot longer.” If you have fair skin, go with something stronger than 30.



A woman with long dark hair is sitting on a red lounge chair by a swimming pool. She is wearing a red visor with a white band and a red bikini. She is holding a martini glass with a blue cocktail. The background shows the blue water of the pool and a white building.

2

Look for sunscreens with physical blockers such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide to screen out UVB and UVA rays that make you look old.

3

Don't forget the feet, the tops of ears, the tip of the nose and the ankles—all spots that often burn.

4

Hydrate! Drink loads of water, especially if you're downing dark and stormies.

5

Remember to reapply. Water-resistant sunscreen can stay on in the water for up to 80 minutes, says Jaliman, but toweling dry will rub it off.



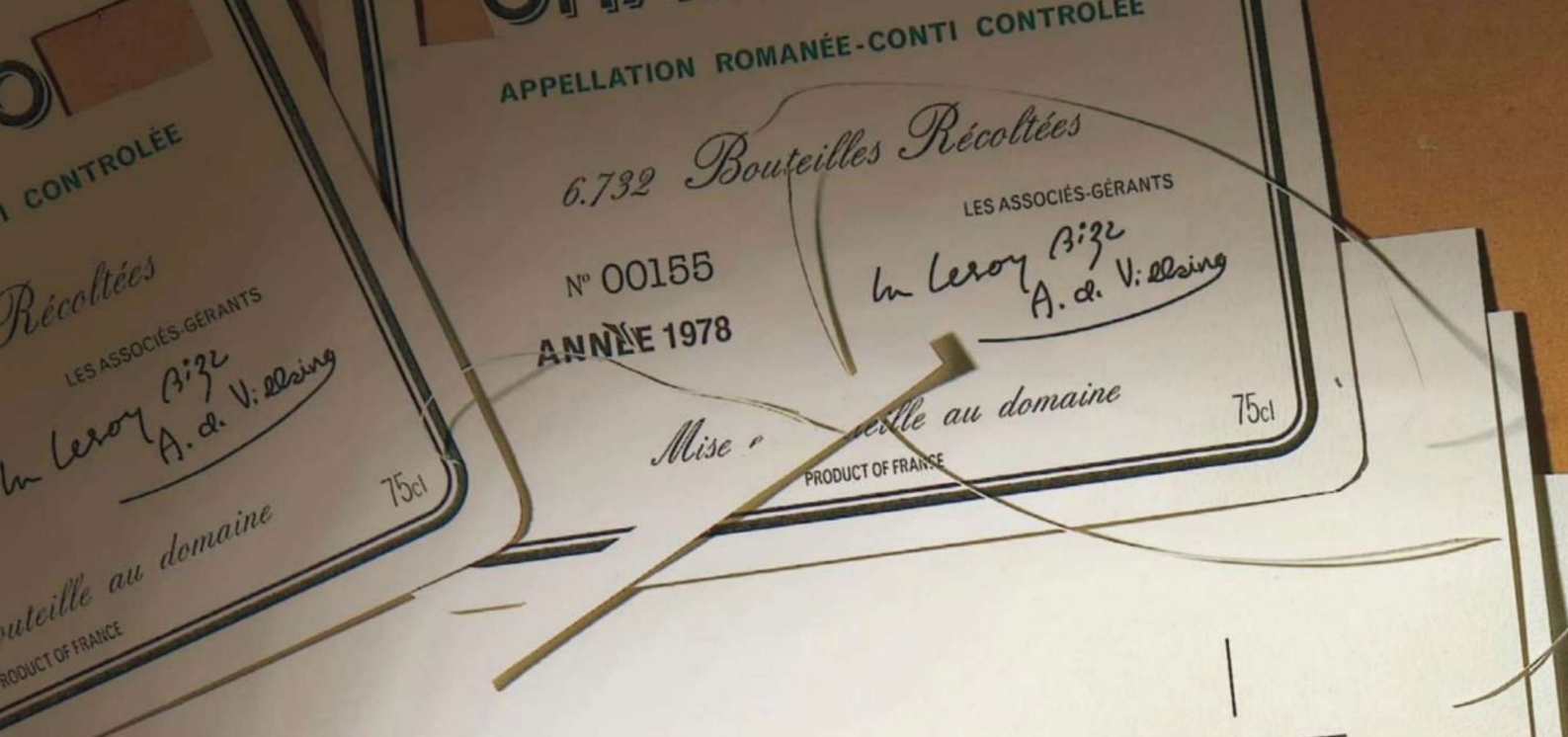
6

Protect your eyes with UV 400 shades. "Don't buy cheap sunglasses," Jaliman adds.

7

What's more fun than kissing a beautiful woman on the beach? Smooth your lips with a UV protector. The lips are more fragile than you think.

If you need more inspiration, begin with these startling photographs of women of the new Bronze Age. Then go ahead, catch some rays.



APPELLATION ROMANÉE-CONTI CONTRÔLÉE

6.732 Bouteilles Récoltées

LES ASSOCIÉS-GÉRANTS

N° 00155

ANNÉE 1978

*In Leroy Bize
A. d. V. Bisping*

Mise en bouteille au domaine

75cl

PRODUCT OF FRANCE

THE

DID THIS YOUNG INDONESIAN BACCHUS SEDUCE THE RICH AND POWERFUL
IN A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR WINE COUNTERFEIT SCHEME?

TALENTED MR. K

APPELLATION ROMANÉE-CONTI CONTRÔLÉE

By Wendy Goldman Rohm

LES ASSOCIÉS-GÉRANTS

N° 00157

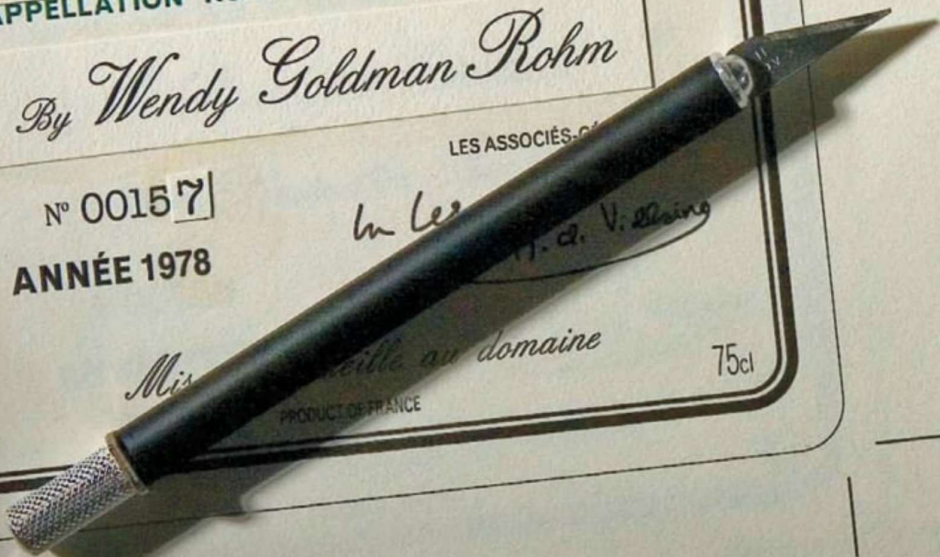
ANNÉE 1978

*In Leroy Bize
A. d. V. Bisping*

Mise en bouteille au domaine

75cl

PRODUCT OF FRANCE



MAISON DE LA ROMANÉE-CONTI



At dusk on March 30, 2012, a dining room overlooking Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor is filling up for an auction of some of the world's most expensive wines. John Kapon, chief executive of Acker Merrall & Condit, a prestigious wine auction house, holds forth at the podium, gavel in one hand, a half-filled wineglass in the other.

Grissini restaurant has been transformed into a multimillion-dollar trading floor. Similar rituals are under way across the city. Auction rooms and warehouses are brimming with guests eager for the fine wine, art and objects offered by such major houses as Sotheby's and Christie's.

In the past decade Kapon has catapulted his family's New York-based wine business, the oldest in America, to dominate wine sales globally. While the likes of Sotheby's and Christie's have a diversified business, wine is it for Acker Merrall & Condit. And Asia is the place to be.

Hong Kong is now the world's wine capital, outpacing New York, London and Paris as the mecca for oenophiles and auctioneers, fueled largely by the local plutocracy's 2008 decision to eliminate a tax on wine.

Some 200 guests, most in casual attire, stream in—wealthy Hong Kong citizens, investment bankers, wine collectors and their agents. As I look across the bay, huge container ships drift beside tiny skiffs. But I'm not here to buy wine. I'm here to understand a tale of provenance—the all-important coin in the auctioneer's realm. Essentially, this is a story of origins of self, of precious lots, of belief and the boundary between art and artifice. I want to know how a slender Indonesian Bacchus, a former friend and trusted advisor of Kapon's, in-

toxicated the rich and powerful, winning their trust and their millions—until the FBI showed up at his door.

This is one of Kapon's more sedate wine events—no sabers slicing through champagne tops and no show-offs dropping half a million in a night. He methodically announces the lots and brings down his gavel. These buyers know what they want. In the next 24 hours, lot by lot, \$7 million worth of liquid gold will change hands.

Open before me is the auction catalog, a thick volume embossed with gold letters. Wine duties aside, the booming market here has not been hurt by the fact that in the past two years Hong Kong has sprouted more new millionaires than any other city in the world.

I look up as Kapon gets deep into the Burgundies. The rarest of the rare fetch astronomical prices. The top vintages of Bordeaux and Burgundy sell for three times what they would sell for in America. Recently, however, the prices of Lafite—one of the great Bordeaux—have dropped here because of rampant counterfeiting.

Kapon announces lot number 309, a magnum of 1993 Ponsot Clos de la Roche. A Chinese man across the table begins to raise his paddle, but another bidder beats him *(continued on page 100)*

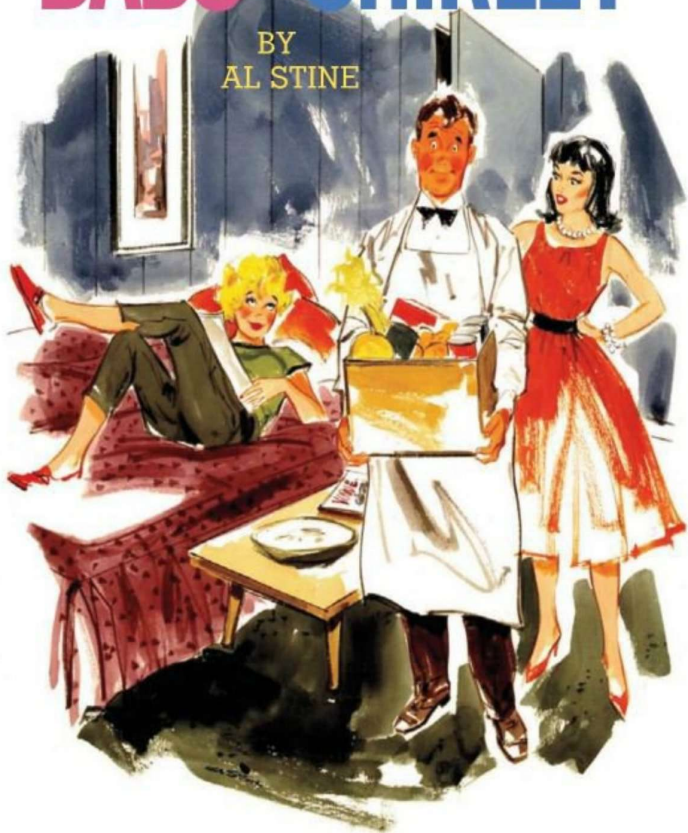


1. RUDY KURNIAWAN IN HIS ELEMENT. 2. THE FEDS RAID MR. K'S CALIFORNIA HOME ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 8. 3. WINE MERCHANT JOHN KAPON WITH PRECIOUS BOTTLES OF ROMANÉE-CONTI.

0 1 2 3 4 4 5 5 6 6 7 7 8 8 9 9
 4 4 5 5 6 6 7 8 8 9 9
 6 6 7 7 8 8 9 9

BABS & SHIRLEY

BY
AL STINE



"It's your turn, Shirley—I took care of the rent this month."



"Ordinarily I never chase after a man, Babs, but this one was getting away."



90 *"We're running a special this week where you can throw in a green, fuzzy bath towel free."*



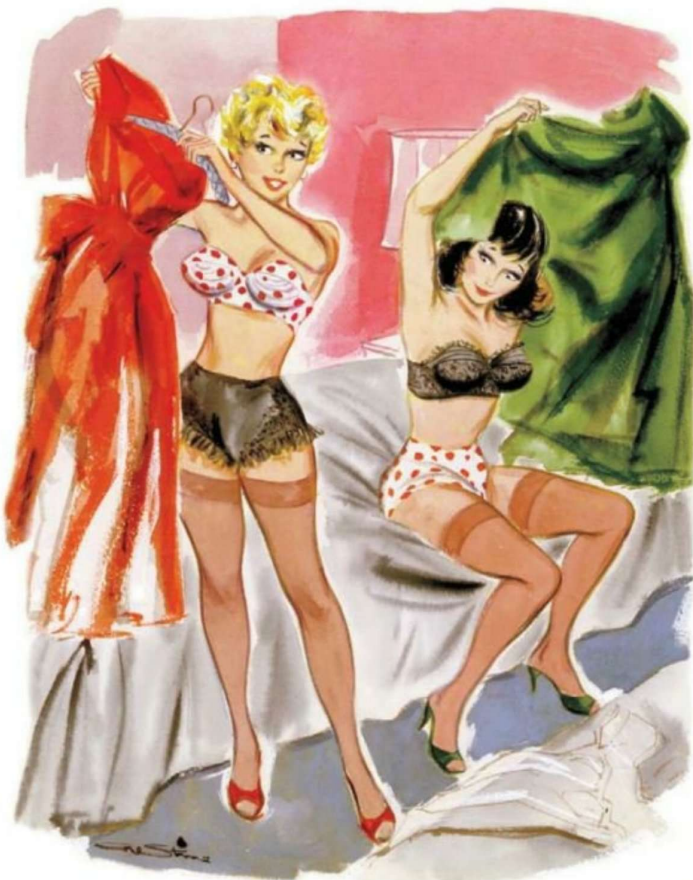
"Certainly I got the part—I even got a part for you."



"Why, Mr. Brookfield, I thought you said you didn't care for blondes."



"Watch yourself, Shirley. When these boys ask you to take off your things, they don't mean just your hat and coat."



"That certainly was a wild party tonight, Babs. What happened to you after the lights went out?"



"And please let Mr. Folger be as rich as I think he is." 91

GRANTED IN 1680 TO HERBY THE TANGUETTES
OF BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP



FOR CREATING COGNAC WITH HONORABILITY AND
THE KING'S TALL WITH FIDELITY

TONIGHT. TONIGHT WE OFF THE CELL PHONE, RETIRE THE EMAIL,
AND SAVE IT FOR ANOTHER DAY. WE SLOW IT DOWN,
DRAG IT OUT AND DOWNSHIFT DAY INTO NIGHT. THEN THROW IN
A FEW LIMES, A FEW ROCKS, MAYBE TOSS IN SOME JUICE.
A WINK. A TOAST. GIVE HER CHEEK A LITTLE LOVE.
TONIGHT WE RAISE OUR GLASSES AND LET THEM KISS.

TONIGHT WE
Tanqueray





 [FACEBOOK.COM/TANQUERAY](https://www.facebook.com/tanqueray)

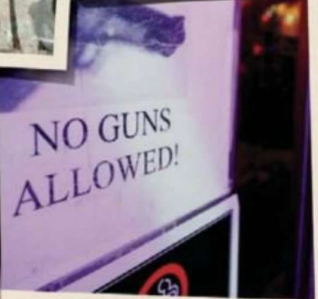
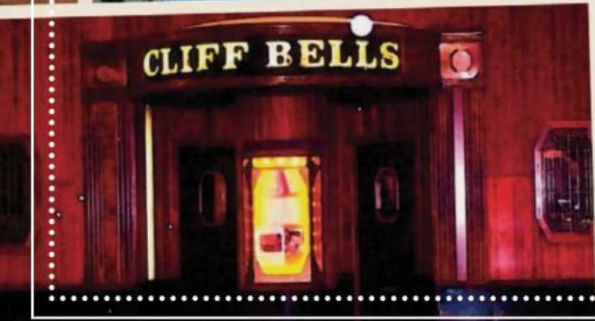
PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

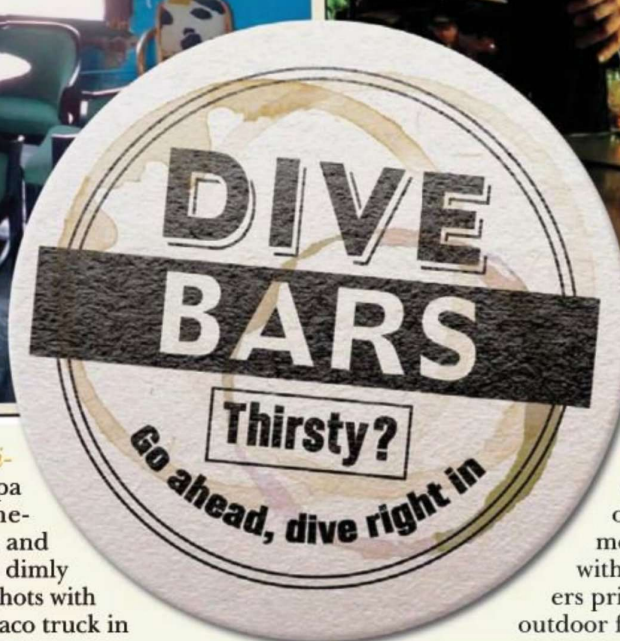
TANQUERAY London Dry Gin. 100% Grain Neutral Spirits. 47.3% Alc/Vol. ©2012 Imported by Charles Tanqueray & Co., Norwalk, CT.



By the editors of *Playboy*

This is journalism, people. All year long our swarms of investigative reporters ping-pong across the nation, hitting juke joints, mixology meccas, beach bars and dives by the dozen. We look under every maraschino cherry, jotting down notes on wet napkins with steeled nerves and steady hands. To make our bar guide as definitive as possible, we spare lots of sleep and no expense. If you know of a drinking establishment that belongs on this list, clue us in. Meanwhile, pour yourself a tall one and enjoy this intoxicating menu.





PANCHA'S (*Yountville, California*) When night falls in Napa Valley, off-duty cult-cab wine-makers, French Laundry chefs and vineyard workers gather at this dimly lit beacon to soak up Buds and shots with beef tongue burritos from the taco truck in the parking lot. (707-944-2125)

JIMMY'S CORNER (*New York*) Yards from the theme park that is Times Square, this utterly improbable, thoroughly New York dive is owned by an ex-boxer (that's Jimmy pictured on the wall with Muhammad Ali). The drinks are strong and cheap, and the TVs are always tuned to a game. (212-221-9510)

JUMBO'S CLOWN ROOM (*Los Angeles*) While fancier gentlemen's clubs abound in L.A., here is a full-on urban pole-dancing circus of a bar where you'd actually be proud to take a date. The music leans toward the 1980s, and the Emmett Kelly clown art is creepily comforting. Hollyweird at its best. (jumbos.com)

WALLY'S CAFÉ (*Boston*) Is it a dive bar? A jazz hall? A historical monument? It's all three, goddamn it. It's been a long time since Charlie Parker played here, but the music is top quality, and the crowd is the most racially diverse around—and in New England that's saying something. (wallyscafe.com)

HARVEY'S BY THE BAY (*Miami*) Though Mac's Club Deuce is the Miami spot that always makes these lists (and for good reason), we recommend this quieter cave. Originally a prison, Harvey's is situated on a 45-acre waterfront plot and named for the first Miami soldier to perish in World War I. Hoist a \$2 LandShark and you're living. (954-394-2763)

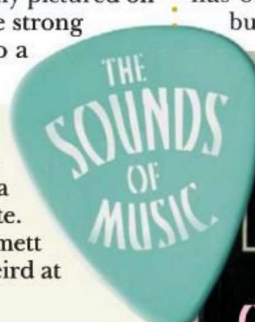
R BAR (*New Orleans*) New Orleans has many great dives, but this one is special. Get a haircut, drink a Bière Pâle, eat crawfish and rent a room—all in one spot. (royalstreetinn.com/r-bar)

TOMMY'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT (*San Francisco*) It's not exactly a traditional dive. What it is: a hole-in-the-wall Mexican joint that sells the best margaritas in the world. Owner Julio Bermejo stocks hundreds of tequilas. Take your pick, along with some killer ceviche. (tommystequila.com)

JACK LONDON BAR (*Portland, Oregon*) This fantastic haunt is hidden in the basement of an offtrack betting parlor turned pool hall. Enough said. (rialtopoolroom.com)

LEE HARVEY'S (*Dallas*) A half-century-old roadhouse (above) south of downtown Dallas, Lee Harvey's melds grunge and hipster posturing with a distinct Lone Star edge. Customers prize the PBRs, the pool table and the outdoor fire pit. (leeharveys.com)

EARNESTINE AND HAZEL'S (*Memphis*) Four blocks off Beale Street (ground zero for the American blues scene), beneath what was once a busy brothel, this bar (above left) has one of the best jukeboxes on the planet. The "soul burgers" are icing on the proverbial cake. (901-523-9754)



NOW APPEARING: OUR FAVORITE BARROOM STAGES IN AMERICA

Green Mill (*Chicago*) Al Capone's old haunt, where the jazz blares from dusk until early morning. (greenmilljazz.com)

Wild Bill's (*Memphis*) Order a 40-ouncer and settle into this blues-belt breeze—the very definition of a juke joint. (901-603-5314)

Joe's Pub (*New York*) Hot acts (right), three varieties of deviled eggs. That's a party. (joespub.com)

d.b.a. (*New Orleans*) The gem of the vibrant Frenchmen Street scene, this may be the best musical venue in a city brimming with them. (dbabars.com)

Tootsie's Orchid Lounge (*Nashville*) An original honky-tonk, where Hank Williams himself liked to drink. Even the bad musicians are good. (tootsies.net)





LA DESCARGA (*Los Angeles*) Sure, it's situated on a street dotted with discount furniture stores, but that only adds to the stealth sex appeal of La Descarga. Salsa dancing until two A.M. (ladescargala.com)

LIBRARY BAR (*Los Angeles*) Barman Matthew Biancaniello shakes inventive drinks, such as the whole enchilada (smoky mescal et al.), into the wee hours in a room lined with books and bottles, conveniently located off the lobby of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. "Shall we get a room...?" (thompsonhotels.com)

VESPER BAR (*Las Vegas*) You could walk around Vegas in shorts, sipping a cocktail from a neon flask. Or you could act like a real man, put on a blazer and take your woman for a proper cocktail in this elegant tavern (above right) in the lobby of the Cosmopolitan. (cosmopolitanvegas.com)

LIDO RESTAURANT & BAYSIDE GRILL (*Miami*) Let the masseuse at the Standard hotel spa do the work on your date. Then have her meet you on the deck of the hotel's restaurant-bar at sunset. A martini later and she'll melt in your hands. (standardhotels.com)

SMUGGLER'S COVE (*San Francisco*) At first this place looks like a Disney pirate setup overflowing with buccaneer junk. But don't be fooled. Head downstairs to the cozy galley-like bar and order a pair of old fashioned with rare aged rum. Just the thing if you're hunting for booty. (smugglerscovesf.com)

THE CRUISE ROOM (*Denver*) Step into the Cruise Room and you'll feel as if you're in the bar on the *Titanic*: elegant, maritime-themed, pre-Prohibition chic. If this place doesn't charm her, she's as cold as the iceberg you're about to smash into. (theoxfordhotel.com)

THE LIBRARY (*Dallas*) This spot at the Warwick Melrose has played provocateur to generations of upper-tier mischief makers. Patrons don't come for the literary gems on the walls but for the sturdy cocktails, the saloon singers and, if fancy strikes, discreet departures. (librarybardallas.com)

SIGNATURE ROOM AT THE 95TH (*Chicago*) On the 95th floor of the Hancock tower, the panorama of the Windy City at night will blow her away. So will the Signature martini. After a couple, take her across the street to Café Spiaggia for dinner. (signatureroom.com)

LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP (*New Orleans*) It's not fancy, but it is dark, intimate and magical. A far cry from the other drunk pits on Bourbon Street, Lafitte's is reputed to be the oldest bar in America. You never know when some fine player will sit down and tickle the ivories at the piano in the middle of the place. (lafittesblacksmithshop.com)

LEWERS LOUNGE (*Honolulu*) It's in a fancy hotel on Waikiki Beach (above left). That alone should be enough to excite her. Add in old-school ambiance, a jazz ensemble, a heady gin buzz and a sunburn that she needs gently massaged—you get the picture. (halekulani.com)

A cold one in your hand and your toes in the sand

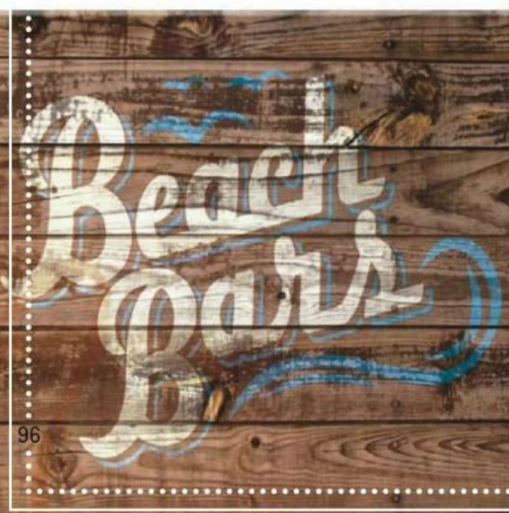
Sunset Beach (*Shelter Island, New York*) André Balazs's seasonal party palace: a slice of St.-Tropez on Shelter Island shores. (sunsetbeachli.com)

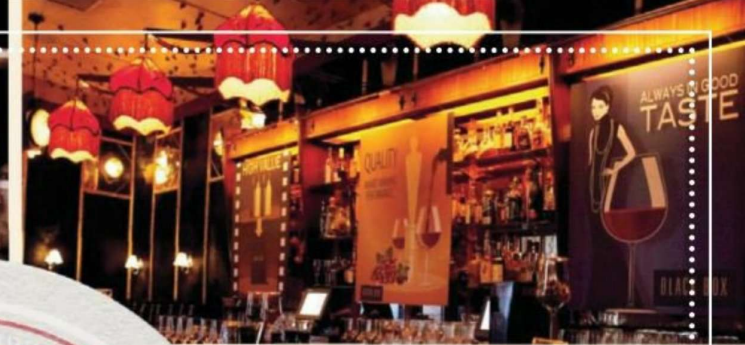
Hale Ahe Ahe Lounge (*Lanai, Hawaii*) The views of Manele Bay are even more intoxicating than the pisco sours. (fourseasons.com)

Marshside Mama's (*Daufuskie Island, South Carolina*) Gumbo, live music and icy beer a couple of miles off the South Carolina coast. (marshsidemamas.com)

Duke's Malibu (*Malibu*) Nestled on the Pacific Coast Highway. Mel Gibson's infamous DUI occurred after leaving Duke's. Take a cab home. (dukesmalibu.com)

The Beachcomber (*Wellfleet, Massachusetts*) Live tunes, lobsters and women on a Cape Cod beach (below). (thebeachcomber.com)





THE MUSSO & FRANK GRILL

(Los Angeles) Cocktail fads come and go, but the bartenders at Musso & Frank on Hollywood Boulevard hold steady in red jackets and bow ties. Dean Martin, Raymond Chandler, Johnny Depp—they all drank here. Don't dare order anything but a dry martini. (mussoandfrank.com)

CHATEAU MARMONT, THE GARDEN PATIO

(Los Angeles) When the history of modern celebrity is written, this bar (above right) will have its own volume. Harder to get in to than Harvard, it's the only place where Miuccia Prada, Louis C.K. and Waka Flocka Flame might share a round. (chateaumarmont.com)

THE SAZERAC BAR

(New Orleans) Every bucket list should include a Ramos gin fizz at the Sazerac Bar in the Roosevelt New Orleans Hotel—like drinking history out of a glass. The sazeracs aren't bad either. (therooseveltneworleans.com)

BEMELMANS BAR

(New York) Named for longtime Carlyle Hotel resident Ludwig Bemelmans, this temple of postwar elegance (above left) is as old school as it gets, from the trippy murals (painted by Mr. B himself) to the white-jacketed waiters. It's a time warp to a better era. Go there. (thecarlyle.com)

ROB ROY *(Seattle)* It's all about the ice at this warm, dimly lit boozy mecca. Big shards of hand-cut ice transform everyday drinks into works of consumable art. Imaginative creations round out the menu of authentic classics. (robroyseattle.com)

COLUMBIA ROOM *(Washington, D.C.)* One of the most intimate watering holes in the country, this 10-seat bar requires reservations; its cocktail tasting menu is a wonderful journey. Owner Derek Brown is one of the friendliest and smartest barmen ever to shake one up. (passengerdc.com)

PRIZEFIGHTER *(Emeryville, California)* Jon Santer left a high-profile job in the spirits industry to open the bar of his dreams. Start with a door-knocker punch, then follow it with a classic like a bee's knees. Terrific concoctions, totally unpretentious. (prizefighterbar.com)

NAPOLEON HOUSE

(New Orleans) If you haven't had a Pimm's in the courtyard of Napoleon's, you need to book a ticket to the Big Easy right now. One of the most beautiful and decadent bars in America since 1797. (napoleonhouse.com)

MCSORLEY'S OLD ALE HOUSE

(New York) Presidents, poets, beats and deadbeats have all drained a glass at this sacred East Village haunt established in 1854. It's the Vatican City of saloons. (mcsorleysnewyork.com)

CLIFF BELL'S

(Detroit) One of Detroit's great prewar spots, Cliff Bell's closed in 1985. Pioneering boozehounds refurbished the place in 2005 with original furniture, carved-wood wall fixtures—the works, just as it was way back when. A heady cocktail of stiff drinks, great jazz and Motor City magic. (cliffbells.com)



SUGAR MAPLE *(Milwaukee)* A Brew City temple that eschews imports. The lineup of taps runs almost as deep as the city's brewing heritage. (mysugarmaple.com)

THE MAYOR OF OLD TOWN

(Fort Collins, Colorado) Plenty of Belgian ales to choose from here, but we think of this place as more of a greatest hits collection of American craft breweries, all on tap in one long row. (themayorofoldtown.com)

DRAUGHT HOUSE PUB & BREWERY *(Austin)* Beer geeks, unite! A suds mecca (below) in one of the great party and music towns in America. (draughthouse.com)

HUMPY'S GREAT ALASKAN ALEHOUSE *(Anchorage)* The most taps of any bar in a state that could drain an ocean. Bonus: Alaskan king crab, Alaskan salmon, Alaskan cod fish and chips.... (humpys.com)

HOPLEAF *(Chicago)* It's hard to find a seat in this jammed brew haven even on Christmas Day. The beer menu is as long as the Good Book itself. Try the fried rabbit legs. (hopleaf.com)





COPA D'ORO (*Santa Monica*) A short walk from Santa Monica's famed farmers' market sits the most seasonally driven cocktail menu in the country. Go for the seasonal change, a bespoke cocktail created by barman Vincenzo Marinella from spirits, herbs, vegetables and fruits. (copadoro.com)

PDT (*New York*) Superior cocktails aside, two things set PDT (above left) apart. One: The entrance is a vintage phone booth in the back of a Crif Dogs, the deep-fried-wiener eatery. And two: You can get waffle fries. PDT ("please don't tell") marries a speakeasy vibe and a menu of drunk food no man could resist. (212-614-0386)

APOTHÉKE (*New York*) Running hard with the 19th-century-German-pharmacy theme, Apothéke doesn't mix drinks so much as fill "prescriptions." The menu is divided into stimulants, painkillers and aphrodisiacs. Insane-sounding ingredients abound. Roasted corn, anyone? (apothekenyc.com)

THE VIOLET HOUR (*Chicago*) No cell phones, no reservations, no baseball hats and no cosmopolitans. What you will get at this bar (below right): imaginative world-class creations as carefully thought out as a good novel. Our favorite: a coffee & cigarettes, made with Sailor Jerry rum and tobacco bitters. (theviolethour.com)

TEARDROP COCKTAIL LOUNGE (*Portland, Oregon*) House-made bitters and tinctures accompany bottles behind this bar. Owner Daniel Shoemaker is a spirits savant. All his bartenders go through rigorous training, and the results are spectacular. Try a *huevo batida* on a hot summer day. Cooool. (teardroplounge.com)



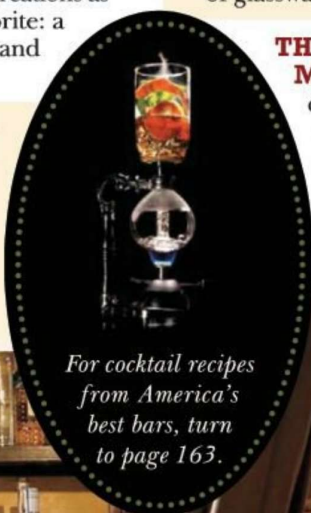
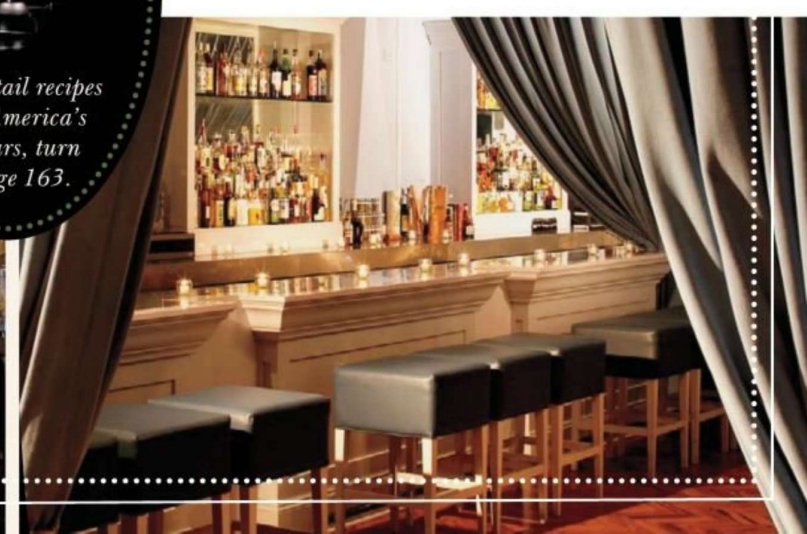
THE ALEMBIC (*San Francisco*) Smack in the middle of strung-out Haight-Ashbury (did we say smack?) sits this sophisticated cocktail bar (below left). The menu is divided into the canon of classics (jack rose, blood and sand) and new-school creations (try a love in vain). (alembicbar.com)

DRINK (*Boston*) In a city of hard drinkers, this cleverly named establishment resembles a sushi bar. No cocktail menu here. The bartender susses out your mood and delivers something unexpected but on point every time. Definitely try a Drink signature cocktail. (drinkfortpoint.com)

CURE (*New Orleans*) A cab ride Uptown transports you to this elegant wonderland with a menu that will widen your eyes if not your liver. The gin-based "expense account" cocktail is delicious, especially if you have a corporate card. (curenola.com)

THE AVIARY (*Chicago*) The cocktail counterpart to Grant Achatz's Alinea (three Michelin stars!), the Aviary is a deconstructionist's dream. Flavors arrive via vapors and fogs. Ingredients come frozen or flaming in more than 30 kinds of glassware. Like nothing else on Earth. (theaviary.com)

THE FRANKLIN MORTGAGE AND INVESTMENT CO. (*Philadelphia*) Named for the company that served as the front for what was once the largest illicit booze ring in the country, this establishment (above right) is an homage to the pre-Prohibition era: the style, architecture, music, even the lightbulbs—and, yes, the drinks. (thefranklinbar.com)



For cocktail recipes from America's best bars, turn to page 163.



TANQUERAY SUMMER COCKTAIL GUIDE



TANQUERAY & TONIC

1. Throw some rocks in a highball
2. Slice a lime & place on top
3. 1.25 oz of Tanqueray® London Dry
4. 3 oz of tonic

Alcohol content: 0.5 fl oz

*Cool down on hot summer nights
with these classic
Tanqueray Cocktails*



TANQUERAY GIN & JUICE

1. Splash 1.25 oz of Tanqueray® London Dry in shaker
2. Add 2 oz of both fresh orange and pineapple juice
3. Fill with ice, shake and strain
4. Squeeze some lime and dunk

Alcohol content: 0.5 fl oz



TANQUERAY DRY MARTINI

1. Splash 2-4 dashes vermouth on ice & strain
2. Pour 1.25 oz Tanqueray® London Dry onto ice
3. Stir and drain to glass
4. Deck with olive

Alcohol content: 0.6 fl oz



Angus Winchester

The Global Ambassador for
the House of Tanqueray

*"A man is defined by
his first drink and the
way he orders it."*



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

TANQUERAY London Dry Gin. 100% Grain Neutral Spirits. 47.3% Alc/Vol. ©2011 Imported by Charles Tanqueray & Co., Norwalk, CT.

MR. K

(continued from page 89)

to it. The gavel comes down and Kapon moves on to other lots.

Oenophiles and wine merchants have a fascinating but curious literary ritual, in the form of tasting notes. Some of the more colorful notes, my favorites, come from Michael Broadbent, who restarted Christie's wine auction business. Broadbent once described the taste of a wine as a "farmer with mud on his boots." In London, the queen's cellar man, Simon Berry, chairman of the legendary Berry Bros. & Rudd on St. James's Street, recently told me of an artist who would sip wines and then draw portraits of them as people.

Kapon has his own entertaining way of describing wines. I turn the catalog page and read such notes as "ridiculous concentration and insane baby fat" and "broad-shouldered and flamboyant." Other notes sound as though they describe a crazy woman.

For the FBI, however, these tasting notes have far more than entertainment value. Lot number 743 is a magnum of 1999 Romanée-Conti, one of the most prized Burgundies. Its note reads, "Dr. Conti recently admired the 99 after tasting almost 100 years of Romanée-Conti."

I'm startled.

Dr. Conti is the nickname of a man the FBI arrested three weeks earlier.

As John Kapon was wielding his gavel in Hong Kong, FBI special agent James Wynne was marveling at the brotherhood that had grown up around Rudy Kurniawan, also known as Dr. Conti and Mr. 47. From the FBI offices at the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building in downtown Manhattan, the 58-year-old Wynne comes and goes, having received permission to stay on to complete his work on this extraordinary fraud case. (The FBI's normal retirement age is 57.)

As head of the bureau's Major Theft Squad, Wynne first became interested in Kurniawan and his relationship with Kapon and others because of an Acker Merrall & Condit auction that took place in Manhattan in 2008. Over a span of about nine years, Kurniawan had emerged from obscurity to become one of the world's most renowned collectors of fine and rare wines. He was a regular at wine auctions, private dinners in Beverly Hills and lavish tastings at top restaurants on both coasts.

After buying up the rarest wines available at auction and from the cellars of refined sources, he won friends, admirers and customers in the most elite circles. Somehow he quickly enlisted the help of top auction houses and wine connoisseurs. During one year he sold \$35 million worth of wine. In a move that won confidence, Kurniawan surprised the wine trade by offering a guarantee against fraud: Customers could get their money back without question if they were

dissatisfied with the wines they'd purchased. Few doubted him.

No one seemed to notice when he began to sell rare wines that were fakes he'd allegedly manufactured in a laboratory set up in his home in Arcadia, California. According to the FBI, Kurniawan expertly blended lower-priced wines to mimic coveted ones that commanded exorbitant prices. A \$100 bottle of Napa Valley wine was transformed into an old Bordeaux that might fetch tens of thousands of dollars. He'd then pour his masterful creations into empty bottles from rare vintages—bottles he acquired from the Manhattan restaurant Cru, among other sources. He also copied wine labels using stencils and rubber stamps and had a special machine to top off his masterpieces with the right corks. As early as 2004, his trove was being offered at auctions worldwide, through retailers and distributors, as well as directly to collectors.

According to federal charges, a large number of Mr. K's fakes were sold in four major auctions held by Acker Merrall & Condit going back to 2005.

By May 2012 the FBI had spoken with an assortment of characters, including billionaires, real estate magnates, wine importers, auction houses, wealthy oenophiles, sommeliers and winemakers from Burgundy and Bordeaux.

How much did any of them know? Had they all been hoodwinked? Might some of them be accomplices? Mr. K, like Dionysus, was at first exalted and adored by his followers. He was pouring magic and history, the rarest and finest elixirs many of them had ever imbibed. They thanked him profusely, grateful to sit beside him and benefit from his generosity. Then came the dismemberment of belief.

Wine counterfeiting is nothing new. It has been going on since ancient Rome and came to a head in the notorious lawsuits brought by billionaire William Koch, which inspired a broader investigation. Stan Los, an investigator who spent 25 years at the FBI, has been helping gather evidence on wine counterfeiting. He notes the difficulty prosecutors face. "If you pass a phony \$20 bill, the Secret Service is all over you," he says. "If you pass a \$20,000 counterfeit bottle of wine, no one cares."

Evidence collected by the feds indicates Rudy Kurniawan made that sum look like small potatoes. Tens of millions of dollars' worth of his wines were changing hands. Documented in a torrent of e-mails, blogs, tasting notes and eyewitness accounts were interactions between Kurniawan and the likes of Goldman Sachs executive Andrew Gordon, venture capitalist Wilfred Jaeger and many others. Among them were witnesses, some friendly and some hostile. The feds face the formidable task of proving not only that the product was counterfeit but also that the person who

sold it knew it was counterfeit. Wynne knew prosecutors will have to show fraud as well as prove that the suspect had assembled the phony goods.

Early Thursday morning, March 8, the talented Mr. K was arrested at his home, where he apparently lived with his 65-year-old mother. He was charged with running a wine-counterfeiting scheme and with multiple counts of mail and wire fraud. The bits and pieces of Dr. Conti's masterworks were discovered in what the feds allege was a makeshift lab in his home. While Wynne and his colleagues confiscated evidence there, the grandson of a renowned vintner in France was about to fly to Manhattan.

The solidarity of Mr. K and his followers couldn't hold a candle to the ancient brotherhood surrounding Domaine Ponsot, as Wynne had come to learn.

Let's take a leap across the Atlantic. About three hours south of Paris, a curious group of men in scarlet robes and four-cornered hats can be seen parading through an ancient village. The silver pendants around their necks display a coat of arms with the figure of Noah at the center—a bottle in his left hand, a *tastevin* in his right. In Genesis, you may recall, Noah plants vineyards after the flood. The grapevine is synonymous with the tree of life. (A *tastevin* is a silver tasting cup, an artifact wine producers and merchants have used since the 15th century. It is designed with nooks and crannies so the wines' appearance and color can be appreciated.)

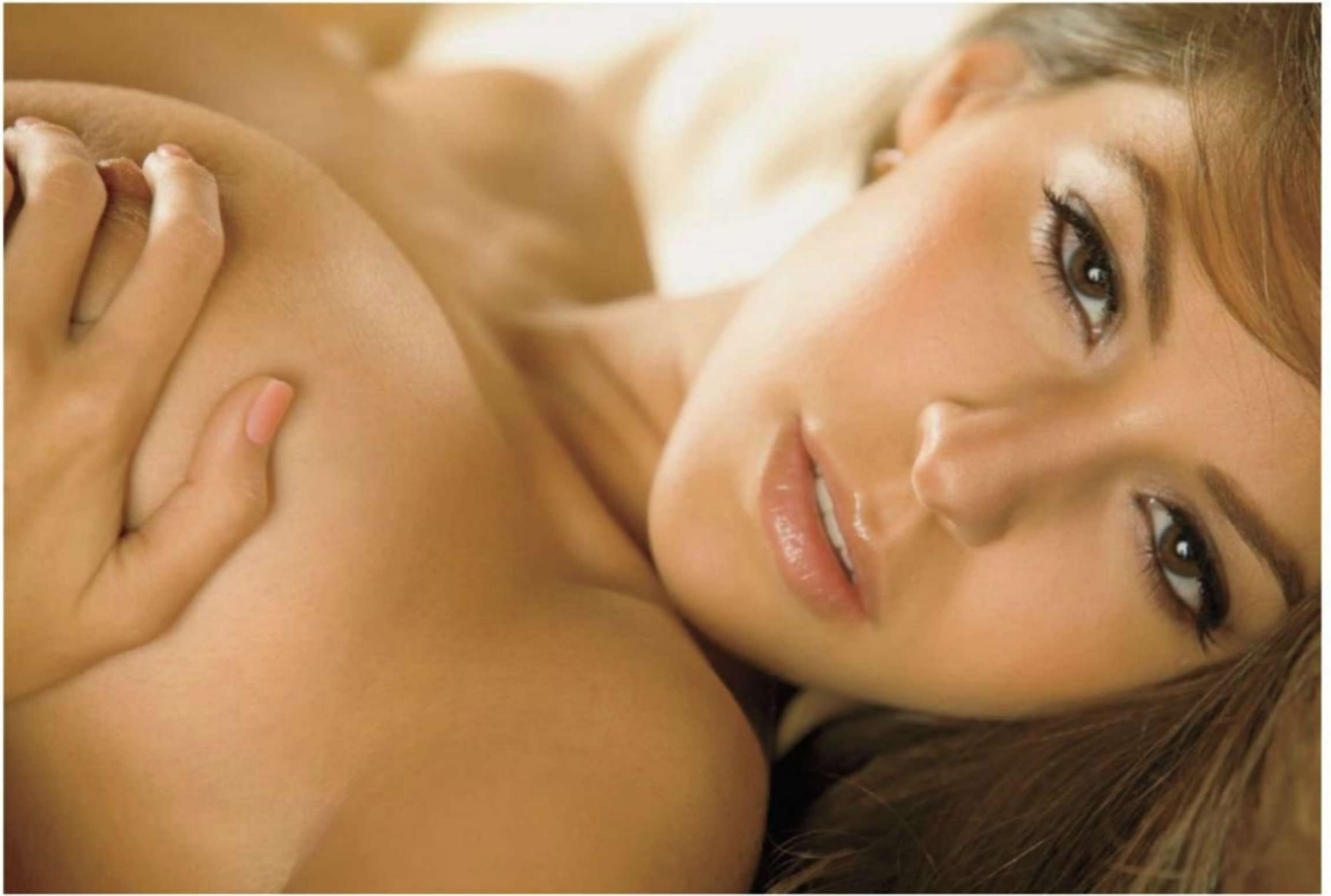
These reverent men are members of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, or Brotherhood of the Knights of the Tastevin, an elite society of vigneron, or winemakers, who have vowed to uphold the history and tradition of Burgundy. Heads of state, Nobel Prize winners and royalty have visited its *cercles du vin* and Cistercian storehouse. Legend has it Saint Vincent stopped at a vineyard in Burgundy, and as he talked with a winegrower, his donkey nibbled on the new vines. The following year the grapes were plentiful. Saint Vincent is hence the patron saint of Burgundy, and a festival is held each year to honor him, in hopes of another good harvest.

The Archbishop of Dijon is on hand to give his blessings as the red-robed *frères* of the *confrérie* again pass through the streets to give thanks to their patron. The brotherhood stands for all that is honorable in the cultivation of *vins sang*, the blood of the vine.

Just up the hill, in Morey-Saint-Denis, is Domaine Ponsot, maker of some of the world's most coveted Burgundies. Its fourth-generation proprietor, Laurent Ponsot, is a leader of the Knights of the Tastevin. Ponsot, 58, was readying for a trip to Manhattan, one of many since 2008, which is when he was alerted of a fraud that *(continued on page 185)*



"Now are you free Saturday night, Miss Kitty?"



Small Wonder

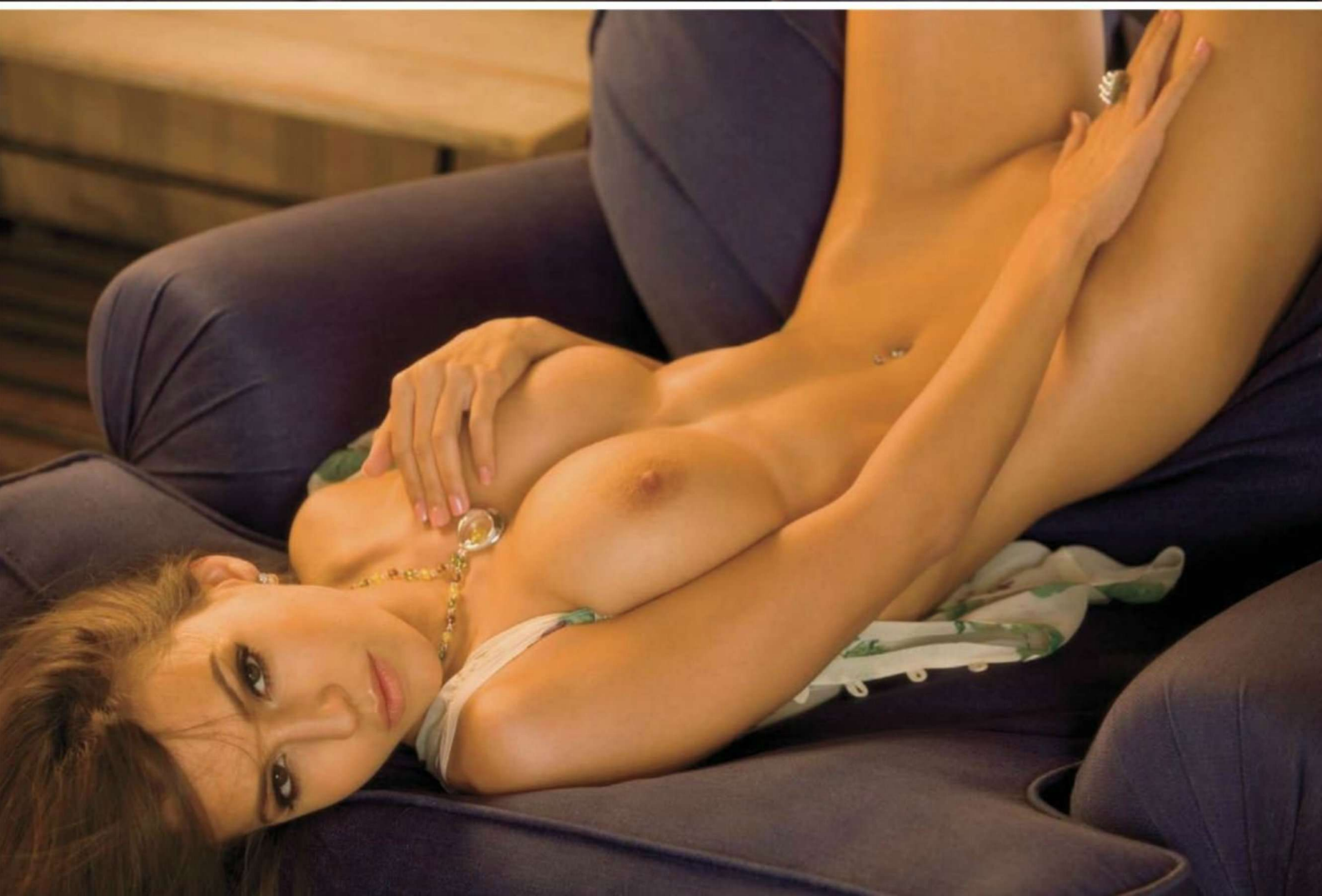
OUR DIMINUTIVE MISS JULY DREAMS BIG

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

Until now, here was the long and short—mostly short—of Shelby Chesnes’s modeling pursuits. “Because I’m just five-three, it was hard to find modeling jobs,” she explains. “I mean, even my Pilates instructor calls me Peanut.” And so the 21-year-old Florida native turned her attention elsewhere—namely to earning an associate’s degree in science and running a successful spray-tan business. “I’m very business-minded,” she says. “I love entrepreneurship and building companies from scratch. I’m much more responsible and mature than most people my age.” She also developed a serious interest in fitness. “Growing up in Florida, I was always outdoors—riding horses, surfing and paddleboarding,” says Shelby. “Then I was on an all-star competitive-cheerleading team in high school. After graduation I became obsessed with exercise and nutrition, so now I work out almost every day. It makes me happy and helps me feel good about my body and myself.” Yet despite the charge she receives in the gym and from her business endeavors, she still longs to make it as a model. “Modeling is my passion,” she explains. “I have a blast doing it.” Because good things come in small packages, we were more than happy to ignite her dream career. “I feel as though I’m entering a brand-new chapter in my life,” says our newly minted Miss July. “The Fourth of July has never been a big holiday for me, but from now on it sure will be. Talk about a fireworks celebration!”











See more of Miss July at
club.playboy.com.

MISS JULY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Shelby Chesnes



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Shelby Chesnes

BUST: 34C WAIST: 25" HIPS: 34"

HEIGHT: 5'3" WEIGHT: 100

BIRTH DATE: 2-14-91 BIRTHPLACE: Jupiter, FL

AMBITIONS: To use my Playmate status as a springboard for the modeling career I've always dreamed of.

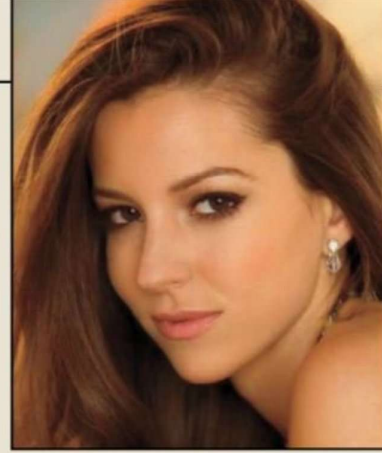
TURN-ONS: I'm a sucker for the tall-dark-handsome combo — and confidence is a must!

TURNOFFS: Men who are unwilling to learn from their mistakes and who are self-centered and overbearing. Could you be any more obnoxious?

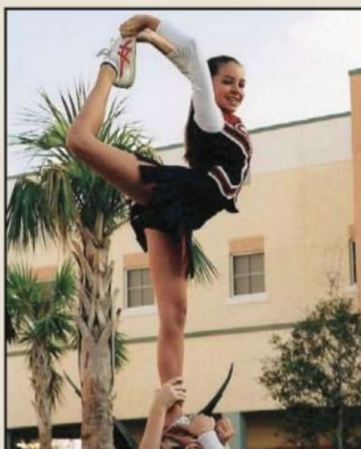
WHAT MAKES A WOMAN SEXY: It's all about being comfortable in your own skin and letting your authentic self shine through!

MY ROLE MODEL: My mom. Inside and out, she's the most beautiful person I've ever known.

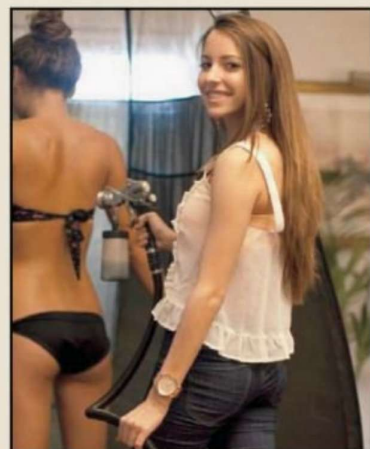
MY DREAM DATE: An evening that starts with a romantic dinner, moves to a hot tub and ends with a sunrise. 😊 Boom chicka wow wow!



My dog Marley and me.



Showing school spirit.



Spray tanning a client.

MISS AUGUST

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Smallville
Beth West



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Beth Williams
BUST: 34C WAIST: 24" HIPS: 34"
HEIGHT: 5'9" WEIGHT: 123



BIRTH DATE: 2-5-87 BIRTHPLACE: Athens, Ohio

AMBITIONS: To continue to model until I'm able to open my own assisted-living facility.

TURN-ONS: A man with a strong work ethic who is confident and funny and can fix a flat tire.

TURNOFFS: I can't stand a guy who takes longer than I do to get ready to go out. I mean, really, dude? I'M THE GIRL!!

I TOTALLY HATE: Scary movies - Why pay to have nightmares? Put on Superbad and let's laugh.

GUILTY PLEASURE: Cookie dough! Sometimes when I'm baking, more dough ends up in my mouth than in the oven.

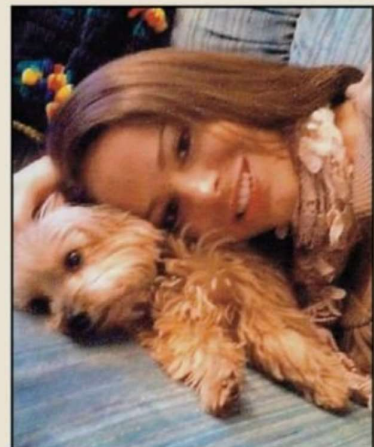
HIDDEN TALENT: Even though I have my Master's degree, I still dominate at the college drinking game flip cup. Want to take me on? 😊



Pageant girl.



Maui vacation
Cocktail.



My pup, Tay Tay.



COUNTRY STRONG

SADDLE UP
with
MISS AUGUST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

Summer is my favorite season!" exclaims Miss August Beth Williams. "I love to live off the land, garden and bake, so it's the perfect time for me. I can run outside and grab some basil for bruschetta or blueberries for a pie." The consummate country girl, Beth spends each June, July and August on her 38-acre spread in rural Ohio, which features a fishing pond, a vegetable and herb garden and a newly planted array of berries and nuts. "Living out in the sticks we have to create our own fun. My friends and I love to go tubing down the Ohio River, drive around in four-wheelers, build campfires and go 'cabrewing'—what we call taking out a canoe and drinking beer." But the 25-year-old also possesses a hardworking,



serious side. She has earned two bachelor's degrees from Ohio University (in health-service administration and long-term-care administration), along with a master's degree in health care administration. "I might go back and get a doctorate so I can teach. For now, however, I want to save money from my modeling jobs to open a nursing home." She plans to make it a family business. "My mom and aunts are nurses, and my sister is a physical therapist. The idea would be to have all of them work there with me." In the meantime, she's savoring the steamy perks of being Miss August. "A friend recently told me that August is the best month to be a Playmate for two reasons—it has 31 days, and it's the hottest month of all. I thought, *Hmm*, I'll take that!"











See more of Miss August at
club.playboy.com.

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

What's the difference between a gay pride parade and a bisexual pride parade?

The bisexual pride parade goes both ways.

A new husband arrived home with a big bouquet of flowers. His bride met him at the door, saw the flowers and dropped to the floor, spreading her legs in front of him. "This is for the flowers," she said.

"Don't be silly," he said. "I'm sure we have a vase somewhere."

A trio of burglars broke into a pharmacy and stole its entire supply of Viagra and Cialis. Police are now looking for three hardened criminals.



A husband walked into the bedroom and found his wife having sex with another man. "What the hell is going on here?" he asked. "Who is this man?"

"That's a fair question," his wife responded. Then, turning to the naked man beside her, she asked, "What's your name?"

A priest was walking down a side street in his little town when he came across a woman of ill repute. He stopped and told her in no uncertain terms that she had chosen the wrong path.

"You're telling me, Father," she answered. "I've been on this street for more than an hour and you're the first man I've seen."

An inexperienced coed asked her doctor, "What is a good time for sex?"

The doctor replied, "Between noon and one P.M."

Surprised, she asked, "And why is that, doctor?"

"Well," the physician responded, "that's when my nurse goes to lunch."

The irony of a blow job is that even if you have her at your feet, she's got you by the balls.

A cook got his hand caught in the dishwasher and they were both fired.

What's worse than biting into an apple and finding a worm?

Biting into an apple and finding half a worm.

A husband, the owner of a brand new car, was somewhat reluctant to allow his wife to drive his prized possession—even to a grocery store only a few blocks from their house. After she insisted, he finally relented, cautioning her as she departed, "Remember, if you have an accident, the newspaper will print your age!"

A father, while on a business trip late one night, was passing by his son's university and decided to stop in for a visit. He arrived at what he thought was his son's frat house and knocked on the front door. When one of the fraternity brothers opened the door, the man asked, "Does Brendan live here?"

"Yes," replied the boy. "Just leave him on the porch as usual."



A blonde enlisted in the Army, and when she was given her uniform the drill sergeant informed her that although her quarters would be in a separate building she would mess with the men.

Only later did she learn that he meant she would eat her meals with them.

A young man and his date were parked on a back road some distance from town. After sex the girl said, "I really should have mentioned this earlier, but I'm actually a hooker, and I charge \$50 for what we just did."

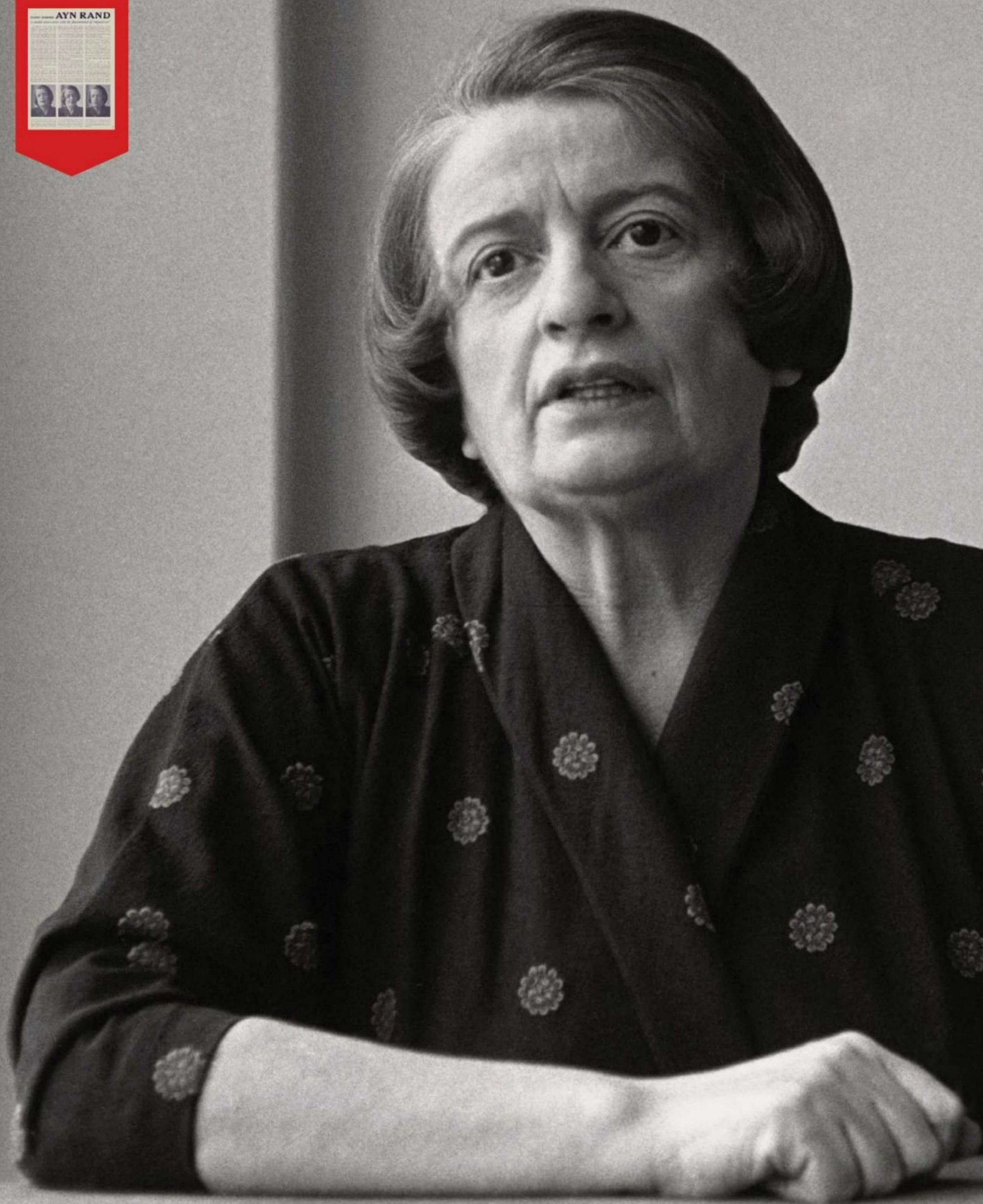
The man retorted, "And I should have mentioned this before, but I'm actually a taxi driver, and the fare back to town is \$100."

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



"Pretty springy board, isn't it?"

50 YEARS
of the
PLAYBOY
INTERVIEW



Ayn Rand

Remembering the great conservative thinker



Few writers in modern history have inspired as much reverence and derision as Ayn Rand, author of the mega-selling *The Fountainhead*, published in 1943, and *Atlas Shrugged*, in 1957. Astoundingly, more than 25 million copies of Rand's books have been sold. *Atlas Shrugged* is one of the most influential works of the 20th century. In a survey of books that made the most difference in people's lives, it ranked number two, behind the Bible.

Rand's novels, like her nonfiction, include didactic arguments supporting her philosophy, which she called objectivism. On the "About the Author" page of *Atlas Shrugged*, she explains, "My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute." Rand denounced religion, liberalism, socialism and communism; she embraced the free market, atheism and libertarianism. The highest ideal, she believed, was "rational self-interest."

Rand is still taught in colleges and dissected in book groups. More proof of her enduring relevance is the frequency with which she has been invoked this election year, when the economy is the number one issue. Rand is a hero of the Tea Party, and congressmen Ron Paul and Paul Ryan have cited her as an inspiration. Meanwhile Democrats have railed against Rand's laissez-faire capitalism, which has been embraced by the Republicans. Mentions of her are common in pop culture too; Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are fans, and Rand has been referenced on *Mad Men*.

Six years after the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*, PLAYBOY sent **Alvin Toffler**, who would go on to write the seminal and prescient book *Future Shock*, to interview Rand. She spoke in a deep voice edged with a Russian accent and "paused only long enough between words to puff on cigarettes held in a blue-and-silver holder (a gift from admirers) engraved with her initials, the names of the three heroes of *Atlas Shrugged* and a number of diminutive dollar signs."

Excerpted from the March 1964 issue

PLAYBOY: In *Atlas Shrugged*, one of your leading characters is asked, "What's the most depraved type of human being?" His reply is surprising: He doesn't say a sadist or a murderer or a sex maniac or a dictator; he says, "The man without a purpose." Yet most people seem to go through their lives without a clearly defined purpose. Do you regard them as depraved?

RAND: Yes, to a certain extent. Because that aspect of their character lies at the root of and causes all the evils which you mentioned in your question. Sadism, dictatorship, any form of evil, is the consequence of a man's evasion of reality. A consequence of his failure to think. The man without a purpose is a man who

(continued on page 177)

FATHER KNOWS WORST

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MAN TRIES TO MAKE A LIVING BY BRANDING HIS HIPSTER FAMILY VALUES? IN SHORT, CAREER SUICIDE. ONE SUCH FATHER EXPLAINS HOW DADDY BLOGGING DERAILED HIS PURSUIT OF WRITERLY RICHES—AND HIS LIFE



BY NEAL POLLACK

We had to brand ourselves, unless we'd somehow gotten ahead *before* the 21st century dawned and had therefore arrived in the new millennium prebranded. Otherwise, we were obligated to promote, pimp, shill and otherwise whore like never before. Our experiences were special, marketable and somehow universal. With effort and determination we could turn our quirky little selves into big cash money. There was no room for doubt, ambiguity or the nagging concern that this was all kind of a boondoggle. The era of personal branding had arrived, they told us, though I no longer remember who "they" were. You needed to blog about your shit or get off the pot.

I had ambition. I had guts. I had bills to pay. I had a wireless connection. What I didn't have was someone telling me that the whole concept of creating a personal brand, of turning the most private details of the only life you'll ever have into a *prima facie* profit-generating product is perilous, misguided and probably disastrous for the soul. Or maybe someone did tell me that and I decided not to listen.

When my parenting memoir *Alternadad* got close to its January 2007 publication, I smelled opportunity. Parenting, I believed, was hot, and hipster parenting was hotter. Social networking had begun to explode. The blogosphere promised



great riches to those who understood how to exploit its uncharted social codes. I prepared myself for something much bigger than a successful book. *Alternadad* would pave the way to a branded lifestyle empire.

Five years later, I'm still, unsurprisingly, a parent, but my "empire" has been reduced to the occasional Facebook status update about something cute or weird that my son says and the even more occasional quote for a Father's Day newspaper story. That's as it should be, really. But like a puppy on a chair leg, I tried to dominate the world, never realizing I'd chosen the wrong target. Let my experience be a warning to anyone who tries to brand his life.

It almost never works.

In early 2006 I heard from a reporter at *New York* magazine. He was working on something called "Up With Grups," about the "ascendant breed of grown-up who has redefined adulthood." The piece, as the writer later explained in his summary paragraph, served as "an obituary for the generation gap. It is a story about 40-year-old men and women who look, talk, act and dress like people who are 22 years old." His article graced the magazine's cover, complemented by a series of portraits of men much hipper and more downtown-looking than I holding their children in their BabyBjörns. It made some social observations that seemed trenchant at the time, though it has a before-the-fall vibe that dates it badly. People who were trying to look cool in 2006 are now just trying to hang on to their apartments.

The writer called me with some questions. I answered eagerly. He sounded happy as I talked to him, like a prospector who'd just discovered a rich vein of gold. "My son seems to like the Hives a lot," I said. "I mean, he doesn't know who they are. He calls it 'thunder music'

when I put it on. He gets very excited by that. That makes me sort of proud."

The reporter had found his fool, the ultimate example of arrested intellectual development in a Gen-X parent. I fed his buzz-worthy thesis as if it were a hungry python. "You have to have a little bit of *Dora the Explorer* in your life," I said. "But you can do what you can to mute its influence. And there's no shame, when your kid's watching a show and you don't like it, in telling him it sucks. If you start telling him it sucks, maybe he might develop an aesthetic."

Alternadad was still almost a year away from publication. It's a simple, universal story of two people without much money trying to define their identities in the face of new parenthood. All the "hipster dad" stuff in the book, though prominent, gets played for comic effect. The book's central joke is that no one who calls himself a hipster is actually hip in any way, and that's doubly true for a hipster dad. But I hadn't really thought through how I was going to present my upcoming book in interviews. So instead I said stupid stuff like "I recognize that changes and sacrifices are necessary. I do occasionally wake up before nine these days. But I didn't want to lose touch with the world's cultural progress. I didn't want to freeze myself in time."

The people of New York read the piece. My editor called after it appeared. He was doing a nice job with the *Alternadad* manuscript, but he suddenly didn't sound too pleased to be representing the "tell your kid his favorite show sucks" guy. Damage had been done, he said. "Next time, you should consult with us before you give an interview," he warned.

The theme had been set. One blogger wrote, "A generation of self-consumed male hipsters have suddenly discovered parenthood, and we'll be forced to listen to them for years on end. Really, it's enough to make you want to just crawl into a little ball and never read *New York* magazine again."

Still, people were actually talking about, or at least *around*, the book. Even though I'd unwittingly become a reviled figure, I'd bullied my way into a corner of the cultural conversation. I'd done a poor job defining the brand. But there it stood anyway, branded, ready for exploitation.

"Isn't there something unsavory in the idea of your kid as a kind of tabula rasa for you to overwrite with your tastes?" wrote the *New York* magazine reporter after a particularly pungent quote of mine. "Less a child than a malleable Mini-Me?" That moment, as it turned out, was the *Alternadad* brand's pinnacle.

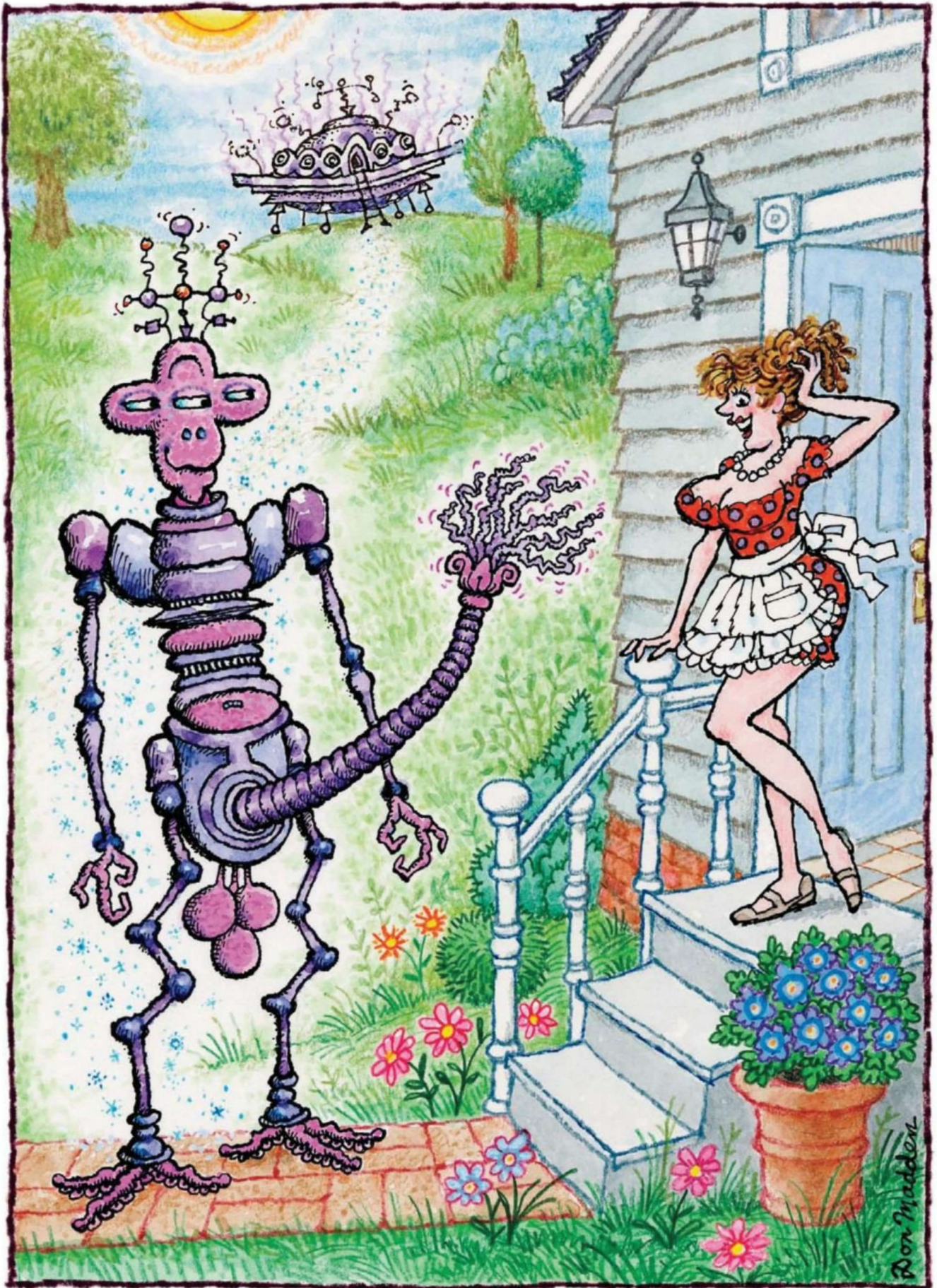
I had a personal website. For more than a year, in anticipation of the book, I'd been doing *Alternadad*-style material—cute jokes, little conversations, bits of cultural observation—and had built up a steady following with a decent number of commenters. NealPollack.com was all I really needed. But I wanted much more.

The word in 2007 was *community*. Facebook had become the thing, but it wasn't yet the *only* thing. If you wanted to have a brand, then you needed to graft a social network onto that brand. Otherwise, your brand would never become stratospheric, and that would be a tragedy, because you were your brand and your brand was your life.

This trend excited me because it would bring me riches. My big branding idea was an online humor magazine, combined with a community, that would serve as the major cultural portal for my generation of parents. The idea, I thought, was brilliantly conceived, without flaws. This "new parenting" cultural space was mine to own.

I registered a site, gave the community a name, Offsprung, and went about rebranding a brand that already had a decent brand identity. My first and most brilliant coup was persuading my friend Ben to be my partner. Ben, who'd been coding (continued on page 175)

HIPSTER PARENTING WAS HOT, AND THE BLOGOSPHERE PROMISED GREAT RICHES. I PREPARED MYSELF FOR SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER THAN A SUCCESSFUL BOOK. I WOULD BECOME A BRANDED LIFESTYLE EMPIRE.



"Of course I'll take you to our leader. But first, wouldn't you like to come in and rest from your long journey?"



Photography by:
SASHA EISENMAN
Featuring:
JAIME EDMONDSON



Carnal Knowledge

By Kim Harnami



THE ANCIENT GREEKS called it hysteria. Today we call it “not getting any.” A sex coach reports on her life’s work: curing the “epidemic” of sexually unfulfilled females

Nicola sat crumpled in a corner, rarely saying anything. She was wearing jeans, a frumpy gray T-shirt, running shoes and sport socks. When she finally spoke, she said she felt stuck in her life and that even simple tasks were daunting. She choked back tears, zigzagging from silent to seething. She seemed about to explode. Later, she did.

When we met for an intimacy-coaching session, Nicola revealed that she and her partner were married and did not like having sex with each other. As Nicola told her story, she was emotionally erratic: laughing one moment, then crying—up, down, up, down. The fluctuations were so dramatic that I thought to myself, She’s hysterical—and severely underfucked.

Physicians over the past 2,000 years would agree. The word *hysteria* has Latin roots and means, literally, “womb dis-ease.” Since the third century B.C. the term has been used to define the condition of female sexual deprivation. The symptoms range from nervousness, depression, mood swings, irritability and loss of sexual appetite to a general tendency to “cause trouble.”

The treatment for the affliction, which was administered for millennia, was a vigorous massage of the clitoris performed by a doctor—a treatment designed to bring on “hysterical paroxysm,” or what we today call orgasm. However, over time, the number of women suffering from hysteria became so great and the treatment so labor intensive that doctors, rather than delighting in the task, sought

to delegate it to midwives. By 1952 the American Psychiatric Association dropped the term *hysteria* for being ambiguous and later replaced it with the equally ambiguous *female sexual dysfunction*, or FSD. I prefer to call this ailment SUF (severely underfucked).

As a modern-day sex coach, I estimate that at least 75 percent of women suffer from this problem. I have devoted my professional life to curing it. When women are well fucked, they—and everyone else in their lives—benefit. Although we commonly think the word *libido* refers just to our sexual drive, psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung defined it as being our “life force” energy. It affects everything we do. Here, illustrated through real-life scenarios with my patients (the names have been changed), are the five most common SUF symptoms and the remedies that made them disappear.

Pathologia One:

Nymphomania nervosa, or fear of sluttiness

Jason and Penelope had been dating for a year. During a weekend getaway they got very drunk at a party. This led to backyard sex, balcony sex, lights-on sex, cock-slapping-Penelope’s-face sex. Jason was thrilled. He felt they’d reached a new level in their relationship.

When they returned to the city, Jason was swamped with work. Penelope called on Monday. Jason got distracted and didn’t call her that day or the next. Two days later, when he did call, Penelope was furious. She accused him of thinking she was a tramp, of using her, of having no respect for her.

Jason was bewildered. He felt that they were in a great place, that all was well.

It wasn't.

Penelope had allowed herself to be deeply sexually open with Jason. That left her feeling vulnerable. She needed reassurance that he still respected her and didn't think any less of her. Although things have gotten easier for women, the residue of the madonna-versus-whore dichotomy remains: Nice girls don't do naughty things. Thus, both women and men must take conscious steps to make it okay for women to be the naturally voracious creatures they are.

In my sessions with Jason and Penelope, I recommended that they do two things: (1) Create a no-slut zone. I told them both to banish the word *slut* from their vocabulary. If Jason labeled other women sluts in Penelope's presence (or in his mind), did he think she would be willing to 69 with him and be filmed while she did it? Nope. (2) Be even more attentive. Call. Text. When a couple starts breaking through sexual barriers, it can be a vulnerable time for the woman.

Jason did these things, and Penelope relaxed. It was safe for her to let go. Everything about her lit up. She could let herself be ravished, and she appeared ravishing.

Pathologia Two:

Dominatrix turbulentus, or taming of the shrew

Chelsea was a type-A physician who ran her own clinic, working 14-hour days and overseeing six other doctors. She bullied everyone in her life, from her office staff to her husband, Mark, who tried to please her until they were both fed up with his tiptoeing around.

In a one-on-one session with me, Chelsea related that she'd once had a brief extramarital affair during which she'd had hours-long sex for days at a time. During this period other people told her she seemed calm and pleasant. She stopped having arguments with sales clerks. Her road rage evaporated.

The contrast was clear. My diagnosis: Chelsea needed to be not only fucked often but fucked hard.

I coached Mark to take a more dominant stance with her. I told him that she would respond to a partner who could pin her wrists above her head while prying her legs open with his knee and growling into her ear how he would fuck her senseless. I advised Mark, "When you feel her subside even a bit, throw her over your shoulder and take her to the bed, the couch, the desk. Take her you must. Do not hesitate."

The caveat? "No" always means "no." However, a "maybe" means she just isn't convinced yet that her partner can handle her. His assertiveness will convince her. It worked. Once Chelsea saw that Mark could wrangle her feistiness,



*Men are like fire—
quick to ignite and
quick to extinguish.*

*Women are like
water—slow to boil
but keep on boiling.*



she relented and received what she craved most.

Pathologia Three:

Hysteria frigus, or frozen out

Christine had a difficult time jumping into sex with her husband, Charlie. He complained that she was resistant to sex much of the time. “I can’t become intimate right away,” she said. “I need warming up.” To Christine this meant expressing her feelings, but because they had sex so rarely, Charlie didn’t feel connected enough to open up.

As I explained to Charlie, there is more than one way to penetrate a woman. A man’s cock is one. His hands, mouth, words, wit—all register high as instruments of pleasure. Well-fucked women are stimulated from every angle: physical, emotional and mental. Emotional intercourse and “mind fucking” keep things simmering between the physical acts.

I recommended that Charlie and Christine set aside 30 minutes four to five times a week to reconnect on an emotional level. “Remember,” I said, “this isn’t the time for small talk. Don’t debrief the effluvia of your day.” I advised them to go deeper and really penetrate each other.

They bought a hot tub and put it in their backyard. Several evenings a week they convened under the stars. One morning, when I asked how they were doing, Christine exclaimed, “I feel like I’ve been fucked five times!”

And they hadn’t even kissed. That came later, and when it came, so did they.

“There’s something about being in the darkness and not even being able to see the other person that allows us to say anything to each other,” said Christine. Charlie nodded. “Our hot tub saved our relationship,” he said.

Pathologia Four:

Ecstasis frustratus, or ‘I’m busy’

Allison claimed not to enjoy sex anymore. “I used to,” she said. “In other relationships, ‘normal’ would be having sex three or four times a week. I hate to admit it, but lately I avoid sex with Jeremy.” When Jeremy wanted it, Allison was always “too busy”—staying late at work, doing laundry, getting a root canal.

As Allison and I began coaching sessions, she revealed that Jeremy had little stamina in bed. Before she was even close to orgasm, Jeremy was finished. A woman whose man repeatedly bails on her in bed experiences the sexual equivalent of a hit-and-run. She feels abandoned, and she is unable to open to him.

There’s an old Taoist expression: Sexually speaking, men are like fire—quick to ignite and quick to extinguish. Women are like water—slow to boil

but keep on boiling. The trick is for both sexes to meet in between. Men must master prolonging their arousal, and women have to learn to remain in the simmer zone.

I worked with Jeremy to build his stamina—something that’s easy but takes focus. The solution? Just breathe. Most men hold their breath and tighten their body as they approach orgasm. Instead, they should try rhythmic, steady breathing throughout arousal. I told Jeremy to let himself build to orgasm without holding back. When he reached a seven out of 10—getting close but not in danger of going over the edge—I recommended that he pause and make sure he was breathing, unclenching every part of his body. Then I told him to subside to a five and repeat for several rounds before allowing himself to ejaculate.

Within a short while Jeremy was able to choose when to climax. Allison didn’t need any more root canals.

Pathologia Five:

Hysteria affectus, or emotional roller coaster

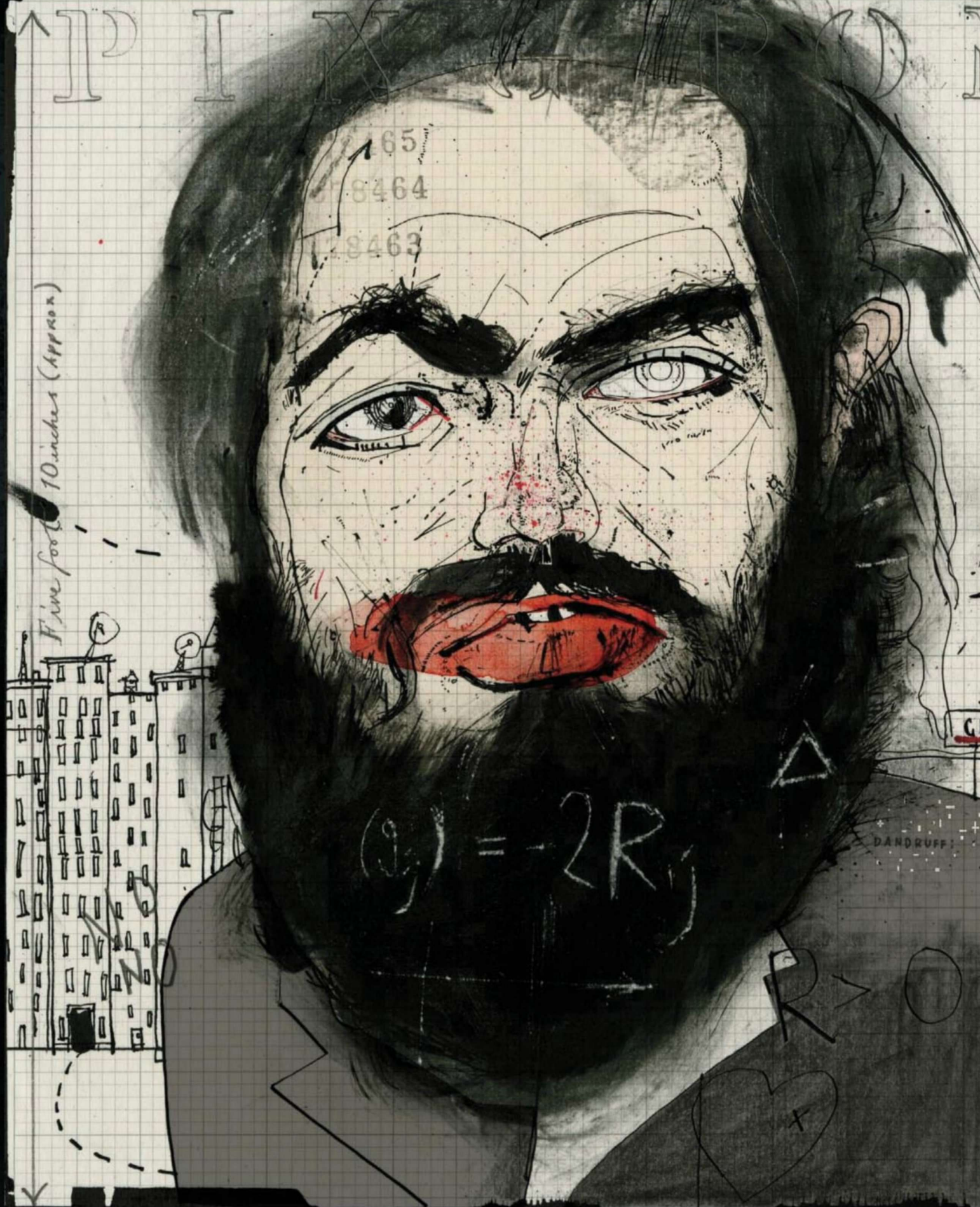
Remember Nicola from the beginning of our story, the most underfucked woman in the world?

Nicola had a case of classical hysteria: all the symptoms rolled into one unruly package. In addition to prescribing the sexual medicine indicated for the other pathologies (a steady diet of orgasm, whether she was alone or not), I set Nicola up with a new and exciting exercise program: vaginal weight lifting.

Many women have dissociated from their sexual energy. As a result, they’ve dissociated from their vaginas. The ancient (yet very modern; there is a world record for the sport) art of strengthening the pelvic floor—using a system of light weights attached to what is essentially a dildo—boosts sexual confidence, increases orgasmic potential and reconnects a woman with her genitals. Plus, her newfound power endows her with the unique ability to make her lover ejaculate or not with the power of her vagina alone. It puts Kegels to shame.

After a few months of lifting household furniture with her vagina (an exaggeration but only a slight one), combined with sex dates and more open communication, Nicola was on her way to being a well-fucked woman. And it showed.

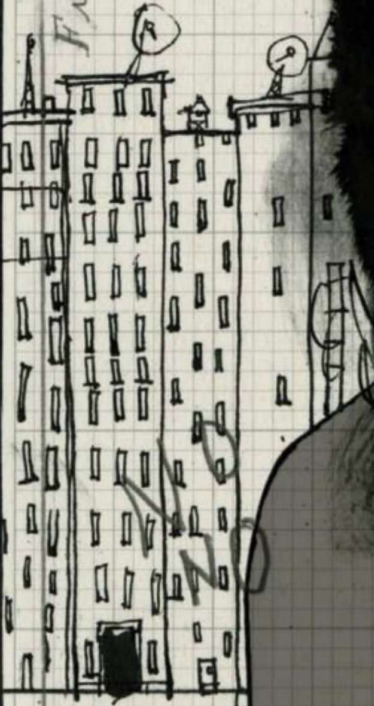




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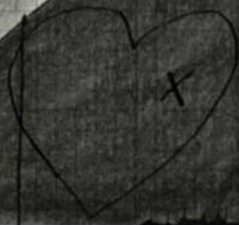
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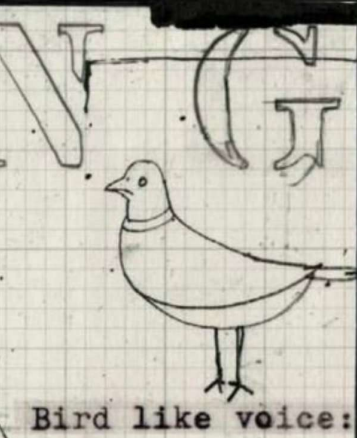
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DANDRUFF!



R O



GRIGORI PERELMAN IS ^(LAST 5) THE GREATEST
MATHEMATICIANS OF OUR TIME, A RUSSIAN GENIUS
WHO SOLVED THE POINCARÉ CONJECTURE, WHICH
PLAGUED THE BRIGHTEST MINDS FOR A CENTURY.
AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME, HE REFUSED A
^{1,000,000} MILLION-DOLLAR AWARD FOR HIS WORK. THEN
HE DISAPPEARED. OUR WRITER HUNTS HIM DOWN
ON THE STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG

I DON'T
GIVE
INTERVIEWS



A SHATTERED GENIUS

BY BRITT FORREST

I had never been on a stakeout, but I knew how it was done. I took a book. I brought a few sandwiches. I flipped on the radio and listened to the traffic report in Russian. That kept me awake as I waited for the mathematician.

I'd first heard of Grigori Perelman about nine years ago as news of his achievement leaked beyond the international mathematics community into popular headlines. Word was that someone had solved an unsolvable math problem. The Poincaré conjecture concerns three-dimensional spheres, and it has broad implications for spatial relations and quantum physics, even helping to explain the shape of the universe. For nearly 100 years the conjecture had confused the sharpest minds in math, many of whom claimed to have proven it, only to have their work discarded upon scrutiny. The problem had broken spirits, wasted lives. By the time Perelman

"HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THE ADDRESS?" PERELMAN ASKED ME. "I HAVE A CONNECTION WITH THE POLICE," I SAID. HIS EYES WENT WIDE. "THE POLICE?"

defeated the conjecture, after many years of concentrated exertion, the Poincaré had affected him so profoundly that he appeared broken too.

Perelman, now 46, had a certain flair. When he completed his proof, over a number of months in 2002 and 2003, he did not publish his findings in a peer-reviewed journal, as protocol would suggest. Nor did he vet his conclusions with the mathematicians he knew in Russia, Europe and the U.S. He simply posted his solution online in three parts—the first was named “The Entropy Formula for the Ricci Flow and Its Geometric Applications”—and then e-mailed an abstract to several former associates, many of whom he had not contacted in nearly a decade.

I liked his style. The more he did, the more I liked. In 2006 Perelman became the first person to turn down the Fields Medal, the top award in mathematics (there is no Nobel Prize in math). He has declined professorships at Princeton, Berkeley and Columbia. In 2010, when the Clay Mathematics Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts awarded him a \$1 million prize for proving the Poincaré conjecture, Perelman refused it. Unemployed these past seven years, he lives with his mother in a former communal apartment in St. Petersburg, the two subsisting on her monthly pension of \$160. “I have all that I need,” Perelman has told his concerned Russian math colleagues, with whom he has severed all but the most perfunctory telephone relations.

Perelman last gave an interview six years ago, shortly after a collective of Ph.D.s finished a three-year confirmation of his proof. Since then, the domestic and international press have harassed him into reclusion. Perelman has spurned all media requests, muttering tersely through his apartment door against a wave of journalists. “I don’t want to be on display like an animal in a zoo,” he told one reporter. “My activity and my persona have no interest for society.” When one journalist reached him by phone, Perelman told him, “You are disturbing me. I am picking mushrooms.”

While Russian society has largely passed judgment on Perelman—misanthrope, wacko—I admired him for his renunciation of the modern world’s expectations, his devotion to labor, his results. He had not solicited fame or reward in proving the Poincaré, so why should he be required to react to public notice? His will was free, his results pure, and therein lay his glory.

There was more than one path to glory, I reasoned, and some glory might be found were I to solve this riddle. Perelman was the riddle, speaking through mathematics, the complex language of his Poincaré proof incomprehensible to all but a few hundred mathematicians. For the rest of us, eager to grasp the meaning of exceptional behavior, there was only silence. With slight hope, I booked my ticket to St. Petersburg.

In advance of my trip I phoned Sergei Kislyakov, director of St. Petersburg’s Steklov Institute of Mathematics, where Perelman had worked as a researcher. In late 2005, two years after his Poincaré proof had made him the biggest name in his field, Perelman handed Kislyakov his resignation, stating that he had been “disappointed” in math. He was abandoning math altogether, he said.

Kislyakov knew how obstinate Perelman could be. When I explained that I planned to speak with Perelman, Kislyakov interrupted me. “I discourage you from coming here,” he said. “Perelman talks to no one, but he particularly hates journalists.”

“My editor has told me to go,” I explained. Kislyakov sighed. “Then I guess you must.”



The disappearance of genius Grigori Perelman has baffled his colleagues. He was spotted on a St. Petersburg train (above) in 2007.

It was spring. St. Petersburg was preparing for the Victory Day parade. Tanks lined the central canals. Banners crested the streets. In Kupchino, the southernmost stop on the blue Metro line, far from the palaces that give Petersburgers their proud self-possession, it looked like any other new day. The red-and-white trolleys coursed up the grassy center lanes of the avenues. People strolled in the courtyards that connected the battered housing projects. Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev had grown up in Kupchino, but this neighborhood was so removed from fame and influence that it made a perfect home for someone who preferred to escape all notice.

In my search for Perelman I thought I might rent an apartment, find one with a good view of his building’s entrance. A real estate agent walked me all over the

neighborhood. “Isn’t there a well-known scientist around here?” I ventured casually.

“He lives somewhere on this street,” said the broker.

“Have you ever seen him?”

“Seen him?” he said with a laugh. “Sure, I’ve seen him. Like I’ve seen Putin—on TV.” The guy showed me one dump after another.

To get around, I rented a Hyundai, all that was available at the leasing agency downtown. I parked outside Perelman’s building. A dozen stories high, made of unadorned concrete panels in the dull Brezhnev style, the structure covered half the block. A handful of people gathered in front of the brown steel door to Perelman’s stairwell, smoking, passing around a morning beer. In this place it appeared there was little rush to achievement.

On a previous day I had met one of Perelman’s neighbors, a teacher at a local school. She said that she and others in their building joked about pleading with Perelman to accept the \$1 million prize on their behalf. I couldn’t tell which was the source of greater amusement to her, the idea that Perelman would accept the million or the idea that he would engage her in conversation. Perelman mixed with no one, (continued on page 164)

Five foot 10 inches (approx)

The Apartment



JUAN IVARREZ • JORGE G

20Q

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY F. SCOTT SCHAFFER

ANDY

Samberg

SNL'S LATEST TRANSPLANT TO THE BIG SCREEN DEFENDS HIS HAIRCUT, TALKS ABOUT HIS HIPPIE PARENTS, COMES CLEAN ABOUT HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AND EXPLAINS WHY ASSEMBLING IKEA FURNITURE CAN BE SEXY

Q1

PLAYBOY: As a kid you had daydreams about being on *Saturday Night Live*. Once you joined the cast, did the reality live up to the fantasy?

SAMBERG: Absolutely. I had daydreams about being on the show when I was eight years old, but it got really intense when I was in college and doing stand-up in L.A. I started having literal dreams while I was asleep. And it was very specific. I didn't dream about doing the show and being in scenes and



having my own characters. It was more about being friends with everybody in the cast and just hanging out backstage and being accepted by them.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Your shaggy hair is one of your most distinguishing features. Does your contract forbid you to cut it?

SAMBERG: I've heard that before. That's a total rumor. My hair's short now, isn't it? And I haven't heard a word from anybody about it. Nobody seems to notice, so I guess my hair is less important than everybody made it out to be. I think they're all secretly relieved that it's shorter now. The other day Seth Meyers and I were watching clips from our first years on
(continued on page 190)





Nolan Bushnell is the godfather of the multibillion-dollar gaming industry,

At the age of 69 he aims to reinvent himself all over again.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SASHA EISENMAN

SEX DRUGS & VIDEO GAMES

a man who launched Silicon Valley with a beer in his hand and a pipe in his teeth .

The rise, the fall, and the redemption of the original Zuckerberg whiz kid

It's another perfect day in Los Angeles, but the real players aren't in Hollywood or Beverly Hills. They're downtown at the Los Angeles Convention Center for the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo, ground zero for the video game

by David Kushner

industry. More than 45,000 freaks, geeks and gazillionaires are here to check out the hottest games. Enormous screens flash with pixelated wizards and race cars. Booth babes in green Joker wigs and jet-black dominatrix boots vie for attention.

With more than \$16 billion in U.S. revenue last year, video games are one of the biggest entertainment industries in the world. They have penetrated every corner of our

lives, from blockbuster Xbox 360 games like *Gears of War 3* in our living rooms to quirky hits like *Angry Birds* on our cell phones. But the most influential guy at E3 is the most elusive of all. As passersby whisper his name in awe, Nolan Bushnell heads for the desolate aisles in the back, where the start-ups are. “The edge condi-

“If there’s ever a contest to define the most important single individual in gaming history, he has the field all to himself,” says Frank O’Connor, franchise director of the hit sci-fi *Halo* games.

But his impact goes far beyond gaming. A 69-year-old hipster with a bushy white beard and jeans, Bushnell is the original Zuckerberg, the first 20-something prodigy to run a company in Silicon Valley and define the wildly creative start-up culture that corporations from Apple to Facebook emulate to this day. A self-made multimillionaire, he rose from a suburb in Utah to make Atari one of the fastest-growing companies in American history. It’s no wonder Leonardo

down a minister over his Mormon religion, “I became a heathen,” he says, “and never looked back.”

And he discovered a whole new reason to look forward. While studying electrical engineering at the University of Utah in the early 1960s, Bushnell wandered into the department lab one day to find everyone huddled around *Spacewar!*, the first game ever created on a minicomputer. It was graphically crude but remarkably compelling. As Bushnell maneuvered his little spaceship around a black hole while firing bullets at his opponent, the future flashed in his mind. For many summers he had been managing the old-fashioned midway games—such as Skee-Ball and ringtoss—at nearby Lagoon Amusement Park, and he knew people would go crazy for something like this. “I said, ‘If I had this in my amusement park, I’d make a lot of money,’” he recalls.

Bushnell (in polka dots) with the first-generation Pong.

“It was magic.”

The magic, however, didn’t seem

possible to achieve. Computers were too expensive to mass produce for an arcade game, and Bushnell had a more pressing matter to worry about: getting a real job. But shortly after the 25-year-old fledgling engineer found employment at an audio-video company in California, he got the *Spacewar!* bug again. Living in the nascent Silicon Valley, Bushnell began palling around with eccentric



Nolan Bushnell started Atari and Chuck E. Cheese’s.

tions are always more interesting,” he says gingerly.

Bushnell is the godfather of video games. While modern-day dot-com whiz kids would be happy with one hit, he pulled a hat trick in the 1970s

“Nolan’s greatest contribution to the games industry is obvious. He basically started it.”

and 1980s that remains unrivaled: creating the first arcade smash (*Pong*), the first video game company (Atari) and the first arcade pizza chain (Chuck E. Cheese’s). “Nolan’s greatest contribution to the games industry is rather obvious. He basically started it,” says Will Wright, legendary designer of such games as *The Sims* and *Spore*.

DiCaprio has been in talks to portray Bushnell in an upcoming biopic.

How did one guy create a culture and an industry? You can’t understand the future of video game entertainment without knowing how it began. And as Bushnell reveals for the first time, the inside story starts in the same place he stands this day at E3: in the outer realms. “About all the interesting things happen at the edges, where the plates are rubbing together,” he says. “Not only do you get earthquakes there, but you get volcanoes. It’s the same thing with life. The closer you get to the edge, the more tremendous the opportunities.”

Clearfield, Utah is the last place you’d expect to find a future revolutionary. But Bushnell, who grew up in this working-class town near the Great Salt Lake, quickly found an edge of his own.

By sixth grade he was the town’s Napoleon Dynamite—a self-described “intellectually arrogant” six-foot-four brainiac and rebel prankster. He once faked a UFO invasion by rigging a 300-watt bulb to a kite, luring hapless cops to an alfalfa farm. After arguing



By 1985, the serial entrepreneur had moved on.

artificial-intelligence programmers and woolly DIY geeks, and he soon began

talking up his idea.

Bushnell realized he didn’t need an expensive computer to make a game at all. A buddy named Ted Dabney, who had studied electronics in the U.S. Marine Corps, had found a way to manipulate a television signal using a video board so that an ordinary TV screen could display a series of squiggles and dots—just what Bushnell needed to make a coin-op version of *Spacewar!*, which he called *Computer Space*. As he (continued on page 166)

WHY ATARI IS #1.

The most games, the best games are only from Atari, now over 100 titles in 10 different genres.

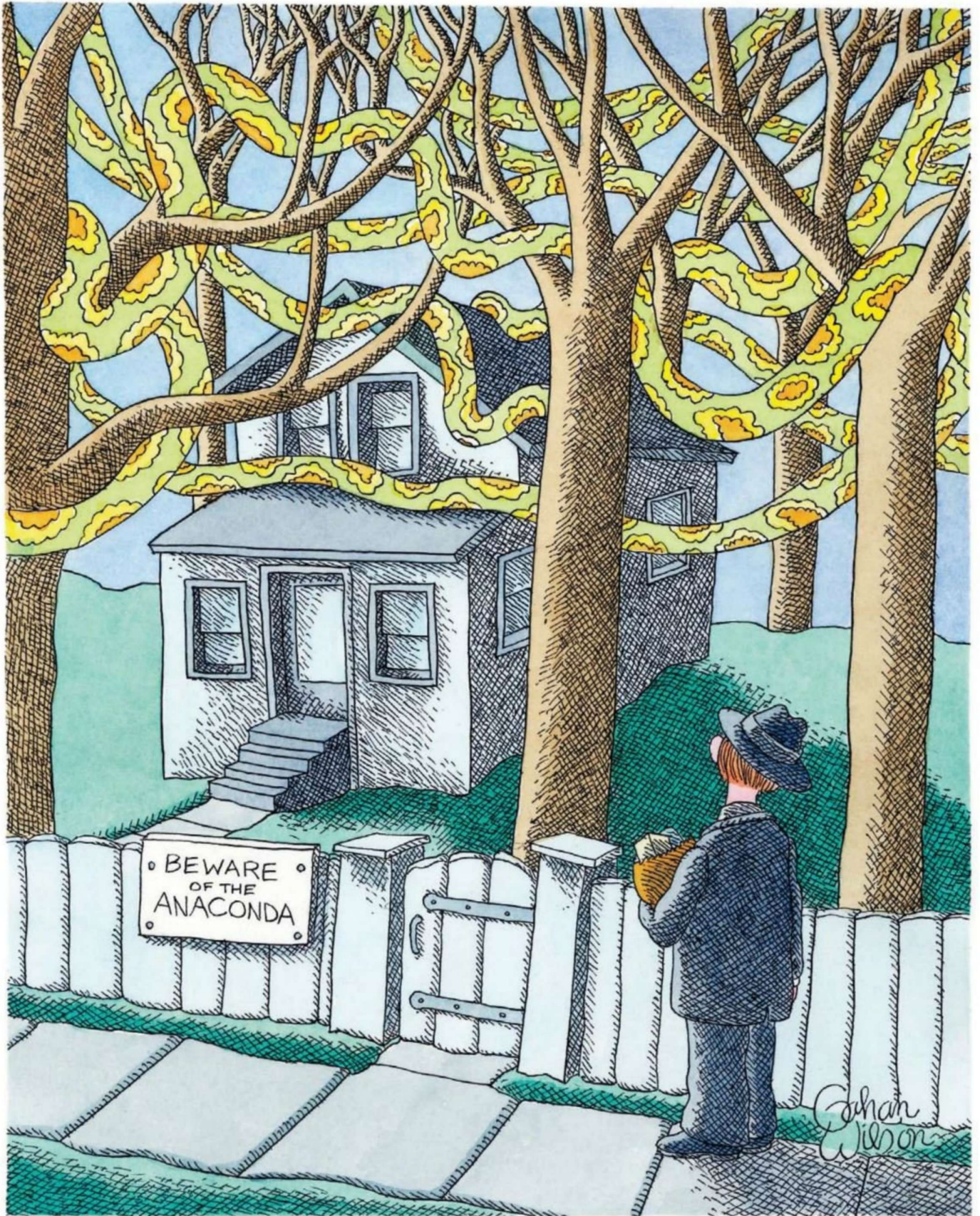
Atari brings the arcade classics home, only with the convenience of Atari's home video games.

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Jenny MCCARTHY

SHE WAS A SHY YOUNG LASS FROM CHICAGO
WHEN SHE FIRST POSED FOR *PLAYBOY*.
NOW SHE'S AN ICON.

JENNY MCCARTHY IS HOT IN HOLLYWOOD

Jenny McCarthy pulls out her iPhone and says just about the most preposterous thing she could say: "Don't mind me showing naked pictures of myself." We don't mind. Not at all.

We're sitting in a tidy bungalow Jenny uses as an office on a residential street in the San Fernando Valley. A black velour hoodie maps her curves; workout tights trace the lines of her yoga-toned legs. A photo from our cover shoot appears on her phone screen and reveals everything underneath. Forget landscapes and party balloons. This is what

the Apple Retina display was designed for.

"I'm not the girl with the ribbon holding her pinkie in her mouth, giggling," Jenny says of her latest *PLAYBOY* shoot, her first in nearly 10 years. "I still have that side to me, but this really strong chick came out." That reversal, that impulse to surprise, is part of what has made Jenny one of the most beloved, famous and atypical women alive. If you've seen any of her three previous pictorials—from ingenue Playmate of the Month (October 1993) to fierce Playmate of the Year (1994) to frisky cover girl cavorting poolside in Palm





Springs (2005)—you’ve seen Jenny’s evolution as a sex symbol. If you’ve followed her entertainment career—from game-show host to comedienne to best-selling author—you’ve seen her evolution as a subverter of that label.

And today Jenny’s doing it again, posing nude after becoming famous for something much more scandalous: publicly questioning the safety of childhood vaccines after her son, Evan, was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. (Evan is now 10 and much improved. They have a date tonight at L.A.’s Griffith Observatory. “He’s so into the universe right now,” she says proudly.) Jenny is returning to entertainment in full force. She’s set to host three TV shows this year: a new VH1 series she calls a modern version of *Playboy After Dark*; an inspirational giveaway show, *Surprise With Jenny McCarthy*; and NBC’s reality dating competition *Love in the Wild*. She’s also putting the finishing touches on her latest book, *Bad Habits: Confessions of a Recovering Catholic*. Out comes the iPhone again and Jenny shows me the cover: She’s dressed like a nun, echoing her first pictorial, in which she posed in a Catholic school uniform.

When asked if being a Playmate ever comes up in conversations with her female fans, Jenny says, “Just ‘You’re on my husband’s list.’ I hear that a lot.” So who’s on Jenny’s list? Although the gossip blogs speculate that she’s dating Chicago Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher, her lips are sealed. But Jenny is happy to report that sex has gotten better in her late 30s. “This point in my life has been the most fun, sexual extravaganza,” she says. “The orgasms are night-and-day better. I feel 100 billion times more sexual, and that comes out in this pictorial.”

Jenny’s return to the magazine comes at a time when the mainstream media is shocked—shocked!—by the breakout success of the best-selling “mommy porn” novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*. What does Jenny make of this? “It goes back to the stereotyping and confused collective thought that if a woman enjoys sex, she’s a slut and a whore,” she says. “We all have clitorises and we all have orgasms. Why the hell wouldn’t we want some raunchy stuff?”

Rauch is just one part of Jenny’s multifaceted public persona (she says “inspiring, dirty and funny” are the key aspects of her professional life). Which makes her all the more beguiling. “There’s room for guys to be attracted to strong females,” she says. “But I still feel like the girl next door.”










See more of Jenny at
club.playboy.com.

A photograph of a woman lying on her side on a concrete ledge. She is wearing a bikini top and has her hand near her head. The background is a textured concrete wall with shadows cast across it. The text is overlaid in white, bold font.

**“There’s room for
guys to be attracted
to strong females.
But I still feel like
the girl next door.”**

THE GOOD WAR

(continued from page 58)

for McClatchy Newspapers in Kabul, wrote to me, with weary understatement, “Everyone believes that this wasn’t the first incident of civilian casualties in the last 10 years of war, and it won’t be the last one.”

In some ways, the United States lost the propaganda war before it even began. In the 1980s, U.S. military and intelligence agencies funneled billions of dollars in aid, much of it covertly, to Afghan mujahideen rebels who were battling a Soviet occupation. The USSR finally withdrew in 1989, and when the Cold War ended soon afterward, the United States decided it no longer had a strategic interest in Afghanistan and abruptly turned its back on the country. That touched off a period of chaos that gave rise to the Taliban. Ryan Crocker, a veteran American diplomat who came out of semi-retirement last year to become ambassador to Kabul, has described that abandonment as a mistake the United States won’t repeat. But Afghans learned then that the American attention span is short and that our foreign policy can be fickle.

The George W. Bush administration quickly set about proving that axiom correct. Believing it had prevailed in Afghanistan, it launched into Iraq barely a year later. Its focus diverted—and without a real strategy to replace the Taliban with a new government—the Bush team funneled billions of dollars to Pakistan, expecting that its powerful military would keep a lid on things next door. It soon became painfully clear that Pakistan far preferred to have a weak and pliant state for a neighbor than one with a robust government that could potentially alter the delicate geopolitical balance in South Asia. When militants from Afghanistan fled over the border into Pakistan’s lawless tribal areas, Islamabad didn’t crack down. That region soon became a safe haven for the Taliban and Al Qaeda—the staging ground for everything that came next.

As U.S. troops deployed in massive numbers to Iraq—reaching a peak of well over 160,000 in 2007—a force of about 25,000 Americans remained in Afghanistan. In relative obscurity, they set about trying to perform an extremely difficult task—ground-up nation building in a tribal society deeply hostile to outsiders—using the only tools with which they’d been equipped: blunt force and cash. It was the foreign policy equivalent of trying to stop a gusher with a toothpick. Young American soldiers and their coalition allies, trained to kill, found themselves advising Afghan politicians, building hospitals and schools, interceding in land disputes and doling out money to tribal elders like Wall Streeters making campaign contributions.

When they did confront the enemy, military operations were large and disruptive, with hundreds of soldiers storming mountain ranges as if their commanders planned

to take Normandy, all to root out handfuls of insurgents armed mostly with aging assault rifles. “We were just kind of lost,” recalled an Army Special Forces officer who first deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 and who asked not to be identified because he was criticizing military strategy. “It was really sad. We were obsessed with these big sweeping operations, whole battalions trying to clear people out, and we just did not get it. We would clear up this valley, be there for a week and just kind of leave.” When they left, the insurgents, many having melted into the countryside or into Pakistan, often promptly reappeared.

In 2008, the mission adrift, Barack Obama ran for president promising “a responsible redeployment of our combat troops that...refocuses on Afghanistan and our broader security interests.” Once in office Obama ordered a detailed review of the war strategy and ultimately decided to send more than 50,000 troops into Afghanistan—nearly tripling the U.S. military presence. Since then, there have been some battlefield successes. The surge pushed the Taliban off balance in their southern strongholds. The shadowy campaign of nighttime “kill/capture” raids on insurgent hideouts eliminated thousands of suspected commanders, bomb makers, financiers, propagandists and others. The coalition poured tens of billions of dollars into building and training—from scratch—a force of Afghan soldiers and police who are gradually taking over responsibility for security.

But Obama’s idealistic, open-ended promise has given way to Afghanistan’s hard realities. Even the beefed-up U.S. mission hasn’t been big enough to match the country’s monumental needs. It has struggled to prop up an Afghan government, led by President Hamid Karzai, that is drowning in corruption and has lost the confidence of its people. A new generation of insurgents—the neo-Taliban, in some ways more extremist than their predecessors—has found new ways to strike, turning to roadside bombs and suicide attacks that have driven violence against civilians to record levels. Months of secret U.S. meetings with militant leaders, aimed at persuading them to negotiate a truce with Karzai, have failed to yield a breakthrough, and the most recent Pentagon report to Congress on the progress of the war determined in May that the Taliban still have designs on toppling the government and retaking the country.

Coalition reconstruction efforts, designed to win hearts and minds, continue to be bogged down by waste and violence, while Afghanistan’s economy appears to be headed for a post-American collapse. Currently, of every dollar of its national budget, an estimated 90 cents comes from foreign handouts—leaving it unclear who will pay future salaries for Afghanistan’s new security forces. Those forces too have been plagued by incompetence and shown a penchant for turning their weapons on their international partners. Sometimes the

killers are Taliban infiltrators, but U.S. military reports suggest that, more often, Afghans are retaliating against what they see as the Americans’ disrespectful behavior or a widespread perception that the foreigners are in their country to destroy Islam.

Indeed, even the Obama administration’s renewed focus underscored the limits of conventional American power. Like the Soviets in the 1980s and the British a century earlier, the United States is the latest invader to be worn down by Afghanistan’s complexities and a seemingly bottomless pool of local fighters. By throwing more soldiers and money at the problem, the Obama administration confirmed that while it might have had a more serious commitment to Afghanistan, it didn’t have a better strategy.

“In 2009, when Obama put these plans into place, what was needed was a radical change in direction,” Joshua Foust, a former U.S. military intelligence analyst who writes frequently on Afghanistan, told me recently. “And what he really did was triple down on the current direction of trying to occupy big swaths of territory, trying to impose a central government. These are things the Bush administration had been trying to do for the previous six years and had failed at.”

Weeks after a February incident in which U.S. troops burned the Koran, Obama told a news conference that the subsequent violence against American soldiers was “an indication of the challenges in that environment, and it’s an indication that now is the time for us to transition.” It was a belated acknowledgment that Afghanistan’s problems had outlasted America’s ability or willingness to solve them. Last summer Obama announced that he would pull 33,000 U.S. troops out by this September, just before voters are to decide on his reelection. By the end of 2014, and very likely earlier, U.S. troops would cease combat operations and move into a supporting role behind the Afghans.

Anthony Cordesman, a defense policy analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote recently that the Obama administration’s early promises of a withdrawal based on military conditions “went by the wayside, and by mid-2011, the political realities shaping U.S. and European efforts became a rush to leave by 2014.” The Taliban and their allies, knowing the United States is headed for the exit, seem content to lie in wait.

Among Afghans, whatever hope once existed for the American presence has vanished. One day last October in the provincial capital of Ghazni, 90 miles southwest of Kabul, I met a tall, round-bellied Afghan named Temour, who spoke English with a buttery British accent developed after years of living in west London. In the 2000s, with a civil war raging, Temour returned to Afghanistan to join an anti-Taliban militia commanded by his uncle. In late 2001, riding the wave of the U.S.



"Perhaps you would like to end with something sweet?"

invasion, the militiamen chased the Taliban out of Ghazni, and coalition forces set up a base on the city's outskirts.

At first, Temour offered his services to the Americans, using his contacts to locate Taliban weapons caches, traveling alongside coalition forces into enemy territory and mediating between rival tribes. "We did a lot of good things together," he told me. Sitting in his living room, which was covered with carpets and lined with embroidered cushions in the typical Afghan style, he reached into an envelope and pulled out a sheaf of papers. One was a letter signed by the American commander in Ghazni in 2005, praising him for "motivation and energy that will be an asset as Afghanistan rebuilds itself into a great nation." In photos of his daughter's first birthday party, at a restaurant in the town's main bazaar, uniformed American soldiers are among the guests.

Those Americans left Ghazni long ago. U.S. forces in Afghanistan constantly rotate in and out, with new teams arriving every few months, meaning that lessons and contacts usually don't last. Temour reckons that he's met a dozen American commanders in Ghazni. Sometime last year—after he complained several times about not being paid \$15,000 he'd been promised for his help

locating a cache of 27 Taliban mines—U.S. officials decided they no longer wanted to deal with Temour and effectively barred him from the base. When I asked one senior civilian official about it, he dismissed the onetime friend as a nuisance. "I'd say he's about 50 percent bullshit," the official said by way of ending the conversation.

With the Americans' limited local knowledge, their efforts to engage directly with Afghans had a decidedly ad hoc quality. Rolling into a new village or town, American teams would call meetings of tribal elders to ask, "What can we get for you?" Afghans quickly set about extracting as many high-dollar projects as possible. Schools and hospitals pleased the military's paymasters in Congress, who were eager for concrete results. But on the ground, in places unaccustomed to any outside investment, they were terribly corrupting.

Military commanders were unabashed about their goals for the billions the Pentagon had made available for development projects. In 2009, the Army published a handbook called *Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapons System*, codifying the policy of using aid to win over local populations and strengthen the legitimacy of the Kabul government. The trouble was that, depending

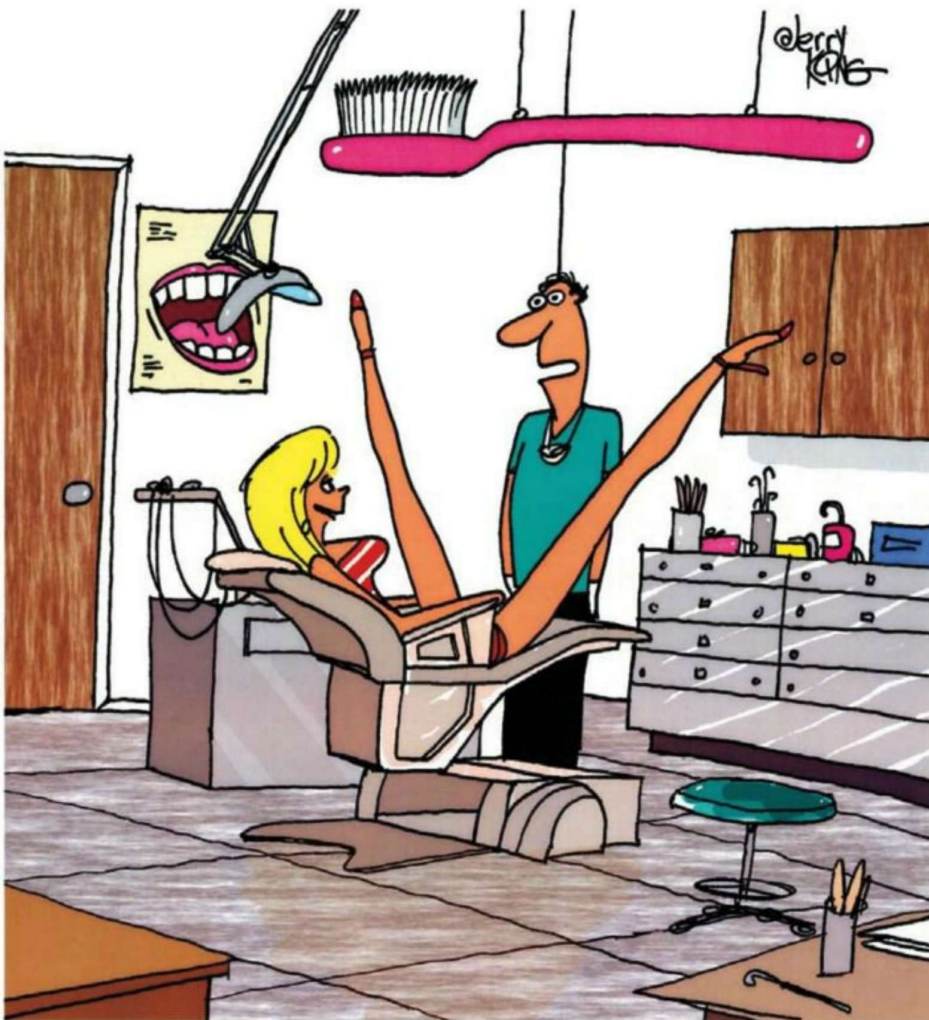
on whom the Americans chose to deal with, the projects often exacerbated tribal rivalries and allowed some groups to consolidate their power at the expense of others. Andrew Wilder, a scholar at Tufts University, conducted hundreds of interviews and found that the aid was in fact fueling massive corruption, worsening perceptions of the government. In some cases, contractors paid off the Taliban to ensure security so that a project could get built, funneling U.S. cash directly to the insurgents we were fighting.

Early in 2009, Foust, the former intelligence analyst, was based in the eastern province of Kapisa, where U.S. forces had planned to build a school. Two rival elders immediately tussled over the location, triggering shoot-outs on the main road that occasionally took aim at American troops. Under the traditional Afghan system, Foust told me, the elders would have settled such a dispute among themselves by convening a tribal assembly, or *jirga*, with the winning side making some concessions to the loser. "If we hadn't meddled, they would have figured it out," he said. It got so bad that Afghans would beg the Americans to stop building big projects because of the destabilizing effect they had on local politics.

Even the facilities that were built often lacked an Afghan government commitment to use them or enough international or local forces to secure them. Many turned into derelict white elephants—symbols of a malfunctioning mission and easy targets for insurgents. Washington spent \$300 million to repave the country's most important road: the section of Highway 1 stretching south from Kabul to Ghazni and ultimately to Kandahar, the second-largest city and traditional Taliban heartland. By the time I visited Ghazni, making the 90-mile journey along the highway from Kabul was an invitation to a kidnapping, roadside bombing or worse—so I hitched a ride on a U.S. helicopter. One of the passengers who traveled with me that morning was Ghazni's governor, Musa Khan.

Many analysts and American officials viewed Ghazni as a bellwether for Afghanistan. Home to the longest stretch of Highway 1 in the country, it is large and ethnically diverse and sits on an axis connecting Kabul, Kandahar and the volatile eastern provinces along the Pakistan border, the new focal point of the insurgency. As the chopper passed over dun-colored mountains, I could make out a long, whitewashed schoolhouse outside the provincial capital that an American reconstruction team had built a few years back. I learned later that the campus had never been used and had slipped into disrepair, its windows broken and plumbing backed up. One American soldier I met called it "the \$1.2 million monument to failure." Afghans refused to drive me the short distance outside the city to see it, because they feared that Taliban fighters were hiding in the surrounding hillsides.

Ghazni is a grim, dust-blown settlement with skeletal infrastructure and an air of menace. The afternoon I arrived, a uniformed police officer was gunned down at close range near the center of town, not a hundred yards from a checkpoint manned by Afghan security forces. In the space of



"Thank you, but when I said to open wide, I was speaking of your mouth."

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four weeks last fall, local officials told me, more than a dozen Afghan government personnel had been assassinated, including two female provincial employees who worked to promote women's rights. No one claimed credit for the killings, but the message was simple: The Afghan government wasn't in charge here.

Several Afghans told me that a Taliban network had taken root in the countryside around Ghazni: a "shadow government" that resolves disputes, metes out justice and in short does what many Afghans say their corrupt local officials can't or won't do. Often ruthless—reports circulate of women being stoned for crimes such as adultery—their methods suggest that the Taliban are far from ready to renounce violence, which the Obama administration said they must do before any peace talks could commence. But their brutish efficiency, for some Afghans, fills a void. Whereas taking a complaint to an official court might cost several weeks and upward of \$100 in fees and bribes, a Taliban court could haul witnesses in and settle the matter in a day. "It shames the local government," Temour said. "The gap between them and the people is getting bigger."

The few hundred American and Polish personnel stationed on a fortress-like base just outside Ghazni's city limits seemed like bystanders. When I visited, American civilians ostensibly there to work on reconstruction projects could venture off the base only with a heavily armored convoy of at least four mine-resistant, ambush-protected trucks, known as MRAPs. Polish forces seemed rarely to leave the base at all.

Even so, Ghazni was one of the deadliest provinces for coalition forces in Afghanistan in 2011, with nearly as many fatalities as in the previous three years combined. The area south of the provincial capital was "the number one area in the country to get blown up," said Navy Commander Tristan Rizzi, head of the U.S. team working in the area. Nearly 11 years into the war, the first-world armies deployed in Afghanistan are still bedeviled by cheap fertilizer bombs. "The weapon of the poor," one European commander told me, "and what's scary is there is not much we can do to detect it."

The insurgents have proven remarkably good at adapting their tactics. When coalition forces beefed up their vehicles with more armor or employed radio-jamming equipment to stop remote-control detonations, the insurgents just built bigger bombs and switched to command wires to set off the explosions. So nearly every day, route-clearance teams went out to scout the roadsides—a mind-blowingly risky job that requires soldiers to dismount from their armored vehicles and hunt for trigger wires in the scrub and dirt. While I was there, the danger became all too apparent when a 26-year-old American sergeant, John A. Lyons of Seaside Park, New Jersey, was struck by small-arms fire while on a bomb-clearing patrol near a village known to be populated by insurgents. He died hours later. "Coming from the West, we consider that the insurgents are stupid, uneducated

and so on. That's to a certain extent true," the European commander said. "But at the same time they are learning very fast." And, it seemed, they could keep at their deadly game indefinitely.

"The Americans are helpless here. But we are helpless too," said a man I'll call Abdullah, a tall, square-jawed investigator with the National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan's main intelligence service. He and his colleagues have grown increasingly frustrated by what he described as collusion between top levels of the Afghan government, including his own agency, and the Taliban. About a year ago, he told me, the NDS in Ghazni arrested an important Taliban suspect. Abdullah organized a heavily secured convoy to transport the prized captive to headquarters in Kabul. A few hours after handing over the suspect, Abdullah went to the bus station to catch a ride back to Ghazni—and there he saw the suspect, who'd apparently been set free, looking to find his own way out of the city.

"We risk our lives to collect evidence against these people. We arrest them and hand them over to the courts," he said. "But these people just bribe the courts and get released." He feared that his work was putting

"The Americans are helpless here. But we are helpless too. We arrest people and hand them over to the courts. But these people just bribe the courts and get released."

him in the crosshairs of powerful people; six months earlier he'd narrowly survived an assassination attempt when a gunman pulled up alongside him and opened fire as he was riding his motorcycle. He blamed one man: Musa Khan, Ghazni's governor. Handpicked by Karzai, Khan is a former protégé of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a powerful Islamist politician who helped bring Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan in the mid-1990s and also served as a mentor to 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

His dubious pedigree notwithstanding, Khan, with his impeccable English, early on had charmed U.S. officials, who hoped that with his religious and ethnic credentials (he was a Pashtun, like the majority of the Taliban), he could persuade insurgents to join the peace process. Their optimism gave way to dismay at Ghazni's worsening insecurity and Khan's unpredictable behavior. Last year, Khan went on television to announce that he'd allowed insurgents to fire rockets into a supposedly uninhabited area because they were under pressure from their commander to carry out an attack. The remarks left Afghans nationwide dumbstruck. Many suspected he was interested more in safeguarding his own power—or protecting the Taliban—than in achieving peace.

I met with Khan one morning in his plush office, inside a well-guarded compound ringed by razor wire. A somber, pious man with a long, jet-black beard, Khan told me that he had personally convinced hundreds of insurgents to put down their weapons. Asked for names or particulars, he demurred. "I know who is fighting and who is not fighting," he said. "There is no use for more explanation." His demeanor had been cool, almost serene, but after I left his office I learned that my line of questioning had irked someone. A few days later, while I waited to meet an ex-Taliban fighter, Temour sent me a terse e-mail. "We have information that the Taliban inside the city are looking for you. As a friend I would not advise you to come out." I had no way of knowing whether the threat was real, but I took no chances. Two days later, I left Ghazni to return to Kabul.

Two months passed, and Karzai's government announced that the city of Ghazni would be among the areas where Afghan forces would take over from the coalition in the next phase of the security transfer. This would have been surprising, given what I'd seen there—except that the city had been slated for transfer based on the wishes of the governor and others. Polish officials had also been eager to shed their involvement in a mission that had become increasingly unpopular at home. One U.S. official told me that the Poles' lobbying campaign had "apparently succeeded...despite facts, reality or appearances." The coalition had a schedule and was sticking to it.

The transition hinges on passing the baton to Afghan forces, but there are serious questions about the local soldiers' capabilities. In Ghazni I met a tall, leathery Mexican American named Vasquez who had spent the past several months helping train an Afghan police contingent. "They're a bunch of clowns, most of them," he said, shaking his head. Vasquez worked for a private security contractor, where his job was to teach the Afghan police how to maintain their vehicles. Once, he said, the trainees needed to inspect the undercarriage of a pickup but couldn't figure out how to operate the jack. Instead they used a forklift—and nearly dropped the truck on another soldier. Then there was the time an Afghan accidentally backed a vehicle into a trailer. Rather than appearing embarrassed, he stumbled out of the driver's seat, laughing uncontrollably while two fellow soldiers slapped him on the back. "I don't know what we're leaving behind," Vasquez said. "Some days it just seemed like kind of a mess."

Even worse—and long before the Koran burning in February inflamed tensions—the coalition had documented a growing number of cases of Afghan soldiers and police attacking their trainers. In April 2011 an Afghan air force colonel brought a gun to a routine meeting and wordlessly shot dead eight U.S. Air Force personnel and an American civilian. An Air Force investigation released this year found no conclusive evidence that the Afghan, Colonel Ahmed Gul, was a member of the Taliban. But the report described an atmosphere of such mutual mistrust and

loathing on the joint base in Kabul that one of Gul's victims, Master Sergeant Tara Brown of Deltona, Florida, had taken to carrying a loaded weapon with her when she walked past Afghan soldiers on her way to the gym. One American trainer's first reaction to the shooting was simply, "I knew it." The rampage, however, hardly made Gul a pariah. Investigators found that more than 1,500 people attended his funeral—possibly including some members of the Taliban.

The costliest piece of the U.S. aid program—the Pentagon set aside \$11.2 billion for the training mission in 2012—faces a dire future with the United States and its allies slashing spending levels. Many experts believe that the Afghan security force will be cut to well below the initial target of more than 300,000. It seems inevitable that American troops will leave Afghanistan in the hands of a smaller than hoped for contingent of soldiers and police of questionable skills and loyalty. Cordesman, the defense analyst, concluded, "The force goals and funding levels set in early 2011 are now clearly unaffordable, but there is no real plan for the future."

Life unquestionably has become more wretched for Afghan civilians. In 2011, the United Nations office in Afghanistan documented 3,021 civilian deaths due to the war, an increase of eight percent from 2010 and 25 percent more than in 2009. The vast majority of those deaths—nearly four in five—were attributed to insurgents, and the biggest killers were roadside bombs and suicide attacks. The figures have been rising even though the Taliban's mysterious Pakistan-based leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, has repeatedly called for civilian casualties to be avoided. Some analysts in Kabul told me they believed this was a sign that the coalition's assaults had broken up the Taliban's traditional command structure and drawn younger, more radical militants into their ranks. It could also reflect the growing power of the Haqqani network, an allied militia that U.S. officials blame for some of the biggest attacks in Kabul over the past year.

In any case, it suggests that any peace effort the United States tries to patch together on its way out could be undermined by the insurgents' internal divisions. The specter of a wide, post-American conflict—involving elements of the Taliban, the new security forces, the former anti-Taliban militias and who knows who else—is growing in the minds of Afghans.

"Only God knows" what will happen when the Americans leave, Sayed Aman Abed, the young real estate agent, told me in Kabul. "But I think civil war is inevitable." When the Kabubble was swelling, Abed did a brisk business selling homes, earning enough to pick up the \$27,000 tab for his wedding two years ago. But his wife had moved to live with relatives in the safety of suburban Atlanta, and lately he'd been thinking of trying to join her. Faced with their country's bleak prospects, many Afghans are voting with their feet. Asylum applications from Afghanistan are at their highest levels in a decade, according to the United Nations, with more than 30,000 Afghans seeking of-

ficial refuge abroad in 2011—a 25 percent spike from the year before.

In the waning months of the United States' Afghan adventure, no one is talking about victory. "It is possible that we will fail. I would say the margin for a kind of messy success is quite narrow," Ronald Neumann, a former U.S. ambassador to Kabul, told a security conference I attended in Washington in April. On May 2, the anniversary of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, President Obama made an unannounced, middle-of-the-night visit to Afghanistan to sign a strategic pact with President Karzai and deliver an address to U.S. troops. It was an election-year attempt to begin to tie a bow on the war, but two hours after Obama departed Afghanistan, a series of suicide bombings targeted a housing complex used by foreigners in Kabul. Just a few weeks earlier, a senior advisor to the coalition had told me that, after U.S. forces draw down, Afghan soldiers and police would be prepared to set up a multilayered buffer to protect Kabul, starting in the south in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, going on up through Ghazni and tightening outside the capital—a 400-mile belt where the majority of Afghans live. "We can maintain that indefinitely, for another decade, if we're willing to pay the bill," the advisor said. "That, to me, is as close to victory as we're going to get. I don't see anything better than that." If so, the Taliban may not be able to retake Kabul, but they're likely to control large swaths of the country and pose a direct challenge to the government's legitimacy.

Meanwhile, the good war isn't over; it's expanded. The fight against Al Qaeda is being won, but as much for what the U.S. military is doing in the shadows in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen as for what it has done in Afghanistan. Some have argued that last year's intervention in Libya—multilateral in nature, limited in scope, with no American boots on the ground—was the result of the harsh lessons learned from the heavy wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the Special Forces officer, a veteran of both wars, reminded me that the United States has been fighting such light conflicts against Islamist insurgents in the Philippines and Marxist fighters in Colombia for years, with no more than a few hundred soldiers on the ground at any given time, and achieving results. It's not a question of rewriting the American military playbook, he said; it just means using more of it.

"It's 1,000 troops over 10 years as opposed to 10,000 for one year," the officer said. After Afghanistan, he added, "a certain number of options are off the table. It may not be feasible to do ambitious nation-building campaigns given what we now know about our institutions and our people, and that's something we're going to have to come to terms with. We may just have to say, 'Well, that country's collapsing and we just don't have the resources to engage it in a certain way.' We've got a much more real sense of the limitations of our power. I hope that is the lesson we come away with." If the United States truly learns that lesson, then perhaps the good war won't have been a total defeat.



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CHARLIE SHEEN

(continued from page 54)

what I wanted to do with my life. Chris Penn, who was my best friend growing up, had just done *Footloose*. I saw how much money he was making and realized I was in the wrong business.

PLAYBOY: Was money that important to you?

SHEEN: A lot of people will say, "Oh, I got into acting because I wanted to explore my craft." They're a bunch of liars, unless they're Sean Penn, DeNiro or my dad. For the rest of us it was all about chicks and money. Seriously. It was about how I could get money so I could impress the girls and feel like I mattered.

PLAYBOY: You got to live vicariously as a ballplayer in some of your movies, such as *Major League* and *Eight Men Out*.

SHEEN: Yeah, but it never felt like the real thing. Shooting a movie can be so tedious. You're trying to get 20 different angles on the same swing. You never get into a rhythm. But I took it very seriously. When I was working on *Major League*, I trained with [Dodgers catcher] Steve Yeager.

PLAYBOY: You were taking steroids during the shoot, right?

SHEEN: That's right. I wanted to put a little zip on my fastball. I didn't want to look like I was lily-arming it up there. I was always a hit-the-spots, low-zone pitcher. But my character, Ricky Vaughn, is a flamethrower. With steroids I went from a modest 78 mph to a decent 85, which on film can be made to look in the 90s.

PLAYBOY: But aren't there health risks?

SHEEN: I got injured a lot afterward. Steroids build your muscles, but they don't build your tendons or ligaments. Once you start altering your body's blueprint, things start falling apart. Some players take steroids, and two years later, after they've broken records, suddenly they have back problems, shoulder problems, arm problems. They're out of the game for good.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever have roid rage?

SHEEN: Oh yeah. That's definitely a real thing. When you take steroids, you're pissed all day long. About nothing. You just wake up and you're fucking mad. But I had a trainer, Lyle Alzado, who was really smart. He'd been a defensive lineman in the National Football League. He knew enough guys who did steroids, and he knew enough doctors. I did steroids for only three months, and I never did them again. If there's a safe way to do steroids, we tried.

PLAYBOY: Some people think steroids have tarnished the sanctity of baseball. Do you agree?

SHEEN: Hey, man, back in the 1920s everyone was allowed one spitball pitcher. Why not have one guy on each team who takes steroids? Then it's even. People who are critical of steroids usually say the same thing: "Oh, it sends a bad message to the kids." How about the parents worry about that? How about parents become more heroic and send the right message at home before the

kid gets to the ballpark? When you were growing up, your biggest heroes were probably your parents, right?

PLAYBOY: Sure.

SHEEN: They were bigger than life, they protected you, and they showed you things you wouldn't have otherwise seen. They were our heroes. And then athletes become our heroes, because they're superhuman. They do things nobody else can do. They're better than 6 billion other people. It's sad because there are a lot of inner-city situations where you have single-parent families. A dad or mom is working four jobs, taking eight buses and getting home at 11. They're not able to have as much influence over their kids' lives, because they're not around. Their kids end up looking up to the guy with the thousand tattoos and the bad attitude who's in the playoffs every year because he looks like a god and a hero. And yes, those people are gods; they are heroes. They're better than anybody alive.

PLAYBOY: But you're saying parents should still be the main role models for their children?

SHEEN: Exactly. If they're worried about their kids using steroids, they should get to them first, before the athletes do.

PLAYBOY: Are you going to talk with your kids about drugs?

SHEEN: Probably, but I'm definitely not ready for it. What do you do? I have no idea. Do you tell them everything you did and then say "Don't do any of that stuff"? At least one of them is going to say, "But, Dad, I read about you in this article. You were pretty gnarly. Why shouldn't I have that kind of fun too?" What the hell do you say to that? Because it's not safe? Because you deserve a better life?

PLAYBOY: What happens if you find a bag of weed in their bedroom?

SHEEN: Well, I'd want to know about the quality and how much the damn thing costs—you know, just to make sure they're not getting fucking ripped off. And my next question would be "Is it Charlie Sheen OG?"

PLAYBOY: What's Charlie Sheen OG?

SHEEN: They now sell pot named after me in the dispensaries. And I'm not even a pot guy. I was so honored.

PLAYBOY: Do you stand by its quality?

SHEEN: Let's just say I tried it.

PLAYBOY: And you approve?

SHEEN: The quality's fine. There's too much quality, if anything. I couldn't feel my hands after a while. I smoked some with a friend, and she said, "What a trip. I'm with Charlie Sheen smoking Charlie Sheen." I was like, "How do you think I feel? I'm smoking myself!"

PLAYBOY: Would you do that with your kids? If you caught them with weed, would you want them to smoke it with you?

SHEEN: Good God no. I don't want to get high with my kids, because then everything is different forever. That's so stupid, I think. No, if I found weed in their room, I'd take it and wait. They're going to come to you at some point. They'll notice it's gone and go, "Oh shit. Where is it? Where is it?" Then when they fess up, I'll try to have as open a dialogue about it

as possible. I don't want them to do any drugs, but weed is better than Adderall. That's the worst drug ever. Everybody's on Adderall now—kids, adults, tweeners. It'll be the downfall of our society. That's why rehabs are filled with 12- and 13-year-olds, because they're all hooked on speed from the age of five.

PLAYBOY: Once they leave your house, you can't really control what they do, what drugs they try.

SHEEN: Yeah, but I have a deal with them. They have one, maybe two chances to call me anytime, no questions asked, and I will come and get them. But if there are signs of any physical damage on their bodies, then there's going to be gunplay involved. It's a whole different story for whatever house they're leaving. That shit gets burned to the ground. Period, the end. When it comes to my kids, I don't play around.

PLAYBOY: You've mentioned you might want to retire after *Anger Management*. Is that because you want to be a full-time dad?

SHEEN: Yeah, that's pretty much the reason. I can't tell you how many calls I've gotten at work: "He or she took their first step" or "He or she ate solid food" or "He or she rode a bike for the first time." I'm the breadwinner and I have to do this so my kids can have a life, but I feel I'm missing too much.

PLAYBOY: You could do what your dad did and just take your family everywhere.

SHEEN: Yeah, but that gets tough too. Sometimes they have to see things you don't want them to see. I remember when my dad was doing *The Execution of Private Slovik*. I was only nine at the time, and it was traumatic.

PLAYBOY: Why?

SHEEN: Because he was playing this character who's falling apart. He's so freaking good in that movie. You take the baddest dude in the world and put a camera on him and watch him unravel. But for a kid, you don't want to see that kind of vulnerability in your dad.

PLAYBOY: You didn't understand that he was just doing make-believe?

SHEEN: Not really. Growing up, there were times I thought my dad was insane. He'd always be in a corner, mumbling to himself. And we were like, "What's up with Dad? Does he hear voices or something?" It turns out he was always running dialogue in his head. I had a moment like that a couple of years ago. Sam and Lola were at the house, and I was running dialogue. The amount of stuff you have to keep in your head, especially doing television, is mind-boggling. And I heard Sam say to her sister, "Why is Dad talking to himself?" [laughs] And there it was. It was like a generational passing of the guard. Once again, I had become my father.

PLAYBOY: There are some ways you probably don't want to be like him, like having a heart attack at a young age.

SHEEN: I definitely don't want that. It freaked me out for a long time, because I think I was projecting fears about my own mortality onto his situation. I was so desperate to make it to my 37th birthday.

PLAYBOY: Because your dad had a heart attack at 36?

SHEEN: Right. And it seemed like my life was mirroring his in a lot of ways. I was in the Philippines with him for eight months while he shot *Apocalypse*, and then I went back 10 years later to make *Platoon*, which was my Vietnam film, my *Apocalypse*. It's a little strange, you know? It's a little freaking odd. I was seeing a lot of parallels between my dad and myself. I told myself, When I'm 36 it's going to happen.

PLAYBOY: You thought you were going to have a heart attack?

SHEEN: I was convinced of it. He survived his, but I wouldn't survive mine. It's just a story I wrote in my head. It wasn't based on any fact. I just decided it was going to happen. And a lot of times you can manifest that shit.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever talked with him about it, how close he came to dying?

SHEEN: Oh yeah, a lot. And it's a trip, man, because I'm more about science than religion, but he talks about seeing that light and being pulled to it. It offered him eternal comfort, is how he described it. Radical, right? And then the light moved and he saw his family and his work and his life. And he had a choice. You either go toward eternal comfort or stay here and be responsible. He leaned toward responsibility, and that's when he came out of it and saw people around him.

PLAYBOY: Did hearing that make you less afraid of death?

SHEEN: It confused me deeply. I've always been a little skittish about death. On certain days I'm okay with it. On other days it's like, "Really? I have to? No, man, not me." It must be the biggest trip because they save it for last, right? Who the hell knows? I don't know what to expect. I mean, I'm not in any way religious. I don't go to church, but I consider myself spiritual.

PLAYBOY: Spiritual in that you think something happens to our souls after we die?

SHEEN: Yeah. But I'm not talking about a heaven in the clouds. I think it's all around us. I think it's here. I think we're still here in some different dimension. I think it's like gills. I don't know how else to describe it. I think it's like gills that you sort of slide through.

PLAYBOY: So it's not like ghosts? There are no dead relatives hanging around?

SHEEN: Hey, we're on a fucking rock flying 67,000 miles an hour through space, spinning on its own axis with a moon that won't go away, around a star that's burning out, and for some reason we're positioned perfectly. Anything's possible. Ghosts, sure, I've seen them. I've been in hotels with them.

PLAYBOY: Ghosts of people you know?

SHEEN: Sometimes. When my friend [*Wild Orchid* and *9½ Weeks* writer] Zalman King died, I went to comfort his widow, Pat. We were making a toast, and I saw Zalman, who'd been dead for four hours, dance through the background. It was a trip. People are going to read this and go, "Pfft. More meds for Sheen." Whatever, man. I know what I saw. Another dear friend of mine, Stephanie, her father died. I was at her house, and he walked past me on the stairwell one day.

PLAYBOY: The ghost of Stephanie's dad?

SHEEN: Yep. I know it was him. I have no doubt. I'm not fucking high or experimenting with psychedelics and shit. I just accept stuff like that and don't try to figure it out. I saw these people, or their spirits or whatever, for a reason. I don't know what the reason is right now, but maybe it'll be revealed some other time.

PLAYBOY: Are you planning to grow old gracefully?

SHEEN: Nope, no way. Because I refuse to grow up. I won't become the adult guy.

PLAYBOY: But you can't stop old age from happening, unless you check out early.

SHEEN: I don't want that either.

PLAYBOY: Could you see yourself at 90 as the old guy whose life is pretty much over but who has the best stories?

SHEEN: That I'd be fine with. As long as I've got people I love who still want to hear my stories. It's all about the stories we can tell 20 years from now. That's been the good and bad of my life. I've been out with people who are like, "I've got to go home." And I'll say, "What's a better story in 20 years, that you went home and slept or this night continued?" And they're always like [*sighs*], "All right, I'll go." You can put people's feet to the

fire a bit just by reminding them that we're constantly creating our own history.

PLAYBOY: Some of your stories probably sound like fiction.

SHEEN: I'm sure, yeah. Sometimes it feels like it all happened to somebody else. I'll read about it in a magazine and it's been run through this whole machine. It's processed and propagandized and skewed. And then it has this life of its own, in addition to what it might've actually been.

PLAYBOY: But when you're an old man surrounded by grandchildren, the only version they'll hear is yours.

SHEEN: Yeah, I guess that's true. I kind of like that romantic image of being in a rocker with my family gathered around, all these generations in one room, listening intently to my stories. "Tell us one more, Grandpa Sheen. Tell us about the time you got banned from the Radisson for putting a cheeseburger in the air-conditioning vent." And I'll be like, "Well, actually, there was a small fire involved too. But it's getting late, kids. It's almost six P.M. We'll pick this up tomorrow." [*laughs*] Yeah, I like that. [*pauses and smiles*] I think I'd be okay with that.



"Can't we add something about a man's God-given right to regular blow jobs?"

WES ANDERSON

(continued from page 72)

People will ask me what I'm working on, and I'll try to describe it, and I can tell they're looking at me like they can't understand what I'm telling them. In the case of *The Darjeeling Limited*, I knew I wanted to do a movie about three brothers. I knew I wanted to do a movie about India. I knew I wanted to do a movie set on a train, and when I put those components together that's what it became. But any of those elements at one point could have been exchanged for something else. I knew I wanted *Moonrise Kingdom* to be a romance between two 12-year-olds that was bigger than they could handle and that sort of disturbed the people around them. And I wanted to do a movie on an island, like one in New England, with no cars. It was a time warp for me, because I've spent time in places like the island in the film.

The feeling of being in fifth grade and suddenly having this totally overwhelming crush on someone—in my experience I never even came close to telling her. I had virtually no communication with her in my lifetime. But she put the whammy on me, and I wasn't the only one. On Valentine's Day everyone had a white sack stapled to the wall for their valentines, and hers was overflowing with cards and hearts and candy. So *Moonrise Kingdom* is partly me calculating what I'd never actually been able to do back then, a fantasy of what could happen. Also, I relate to this crush—the female lead is carrying a big suitcase full of books around town. My feeling is that when you're that age and reading a novel you love, it becomes your whole world. I think kids desire fantasy at that age, and they very much want to believe it can become real. It's powerful to them, and you have your fingers crossed that there's some kind of luck element out there that they'll eventually tap into.

I grew up with people whose names inspired most of the characters' names in my films.

It usually takes me a long time to write a script. But in the case of *Moonrise Kingdom*, after a year of making notes and maybe a little dialogue, toward the end of that year I might have had only 13 pages. I showed them to Roman Coppola. I hadn't thought of collaborating with him on this yet; I was just getting his opinion on what I had. I wasn't getting anywhere. I had all these things I thought could go into it, but the underlying story wasn't yet there. And then I showed Roman the 13 pages. He read it, liked it and started asking questions, like "You have these two kids who are meeting in a field. What if they had met before and arranged to meet in the woods?" That became the answer to the first third of the film. I hadn't seen it until then.

STUDIO LIVING

In the older days I sort of looked at the studio system like it was a bank. You have to go to them, tell them you have a problem and ask for more money. I don't do that anymore. I didn't enjoy working that way.

It was sort of the way I learned it. I have a different way of seeing it now.

Our prep work on *Moonrise Kingdom* was advanced in some ways. We shot a number of scenes early, without the cast, just as practice so I could figure out how it would happen when we were all there. We're going to spend a little money going out there to shoot some scenes without the right people in them, but we're going to figure it all out, and it could be the thing that prevents us from losing a day of shooting later on, which can be a huge issue.

The most fascinating part about the beach communities on the island where we shot *Moonrise Kingdom* is that they are stuck in time. Most of these places are trying to preserve traditions, and you think to yourself, This is what life was like back then, which is fun.

CLASS OF 1965

Setting the film in 1965 was not something I had planned. I started writing narration to introduce the story, and I began with "The year is 1965." And I stuck with it. I have a theory about why I did this: The place where we shot was accessible from Newport, Rhode Island only by ferry in those days. It was a summer getaway island. Then in 1966 they started building a suspension bridge, and the island effectively became a suburb of Newport. The whole place changed, and everything that had existed for generations ceased to exist. My theory—if you can even call it that—is that this island is a metaphor for an America and, in fact, a whole planet that no longer exist, so you have to set this story in the past. That said, this is me trying to interpret what I already did. I only thought of that bit later.

UNKNOWN, PERIOD

It would be impossible to overstate how Owen and I lucked out in the beginning with *Bottle Rocket*. We had a series of breaks; without them we would not have had access to any of the stuff we ended up with, and here we are almost 20 years later. It was a series of people we met, starting with L.M. Kit Carson, our first real mentor as filmmakers. He got our script and our short to Polly Platt, who was the second one. She chose us, and that was that. Polly was at the time working for James L. Brooks, and he essentially said to us, "Well, you guys get to work in the movies." Everything else we've done is because Jim, Polly and Kit permitted us to do so.

Owen was unknown, period, and I was the one who pressed him to act. He opposed this in the beginning because he thought it would be unprofessional to use him and Luke as actors. He was underestimating himself and his own powers. One of the reasons Jim and Polly wanted to work with us was because of Owen and Luke on-screen. They were natural actors. I partly credit that for my being able to make movies.

THE FANTASTIC OWEN WILSON

Bottle Rocket was the most collaborative movie I have worked on, and most of the collaboration was between Owen and me.

He would make up dialogue and was able to improvise in a way that we would have written. I never had any other situations with anyone, including Owen, on any of my other movies where it felt right to do that. But it's exciting to do. There are scenes in *Bottle Rocket* where Owen is just improvising right there on the spot.

THE BREAKOUT THAT WASN'T

If you think back, *Rushmore* wasn't a breakout hit at all. That movie made only about \$17 million in America. It wasn't actually released overseas at all. To me those numbers sounded pretty good, but I had no frame of reference when it came out, truthfully. No one had seen *Bottle Rocket*. Luke, Owen and I went on a tour, which took us to the University of Texas, our school. We did a screening at the college theater. I had been the projectionist in this theater, in fact. Owen and I had seen a ton of movies there, and for us it was like, "Wow, we're going to finally show our movie here." There were 12 people in the audience. The place seated 1,000—it was a big room. Afterward, when we went to do the Q&A, it was insane. There were almost as many people on the stage as there were in the audience. For the five of us up there, it was not a great feeling. The film, I should note, was not beloved by the 12 people in the audience. Reactions were mixed.

I didn't think at the time that *Rushmore* was a success. To me it felt more like, Wow, this is going a lot better than the last one. What's clear is that the studio, before we test-screened it, thought it might make \$40 million or so, and it didn't. When *Out of Sight* came out, I ran into Steven Soderbergh somewhere, and I told him how much I liked the film, congratulations for the success, etc. And he said, "Thanks, but it was a flop. It's a complete flop." He knew all the statistics off the top of his head, and he felt it was a failure. I think it's truly a matter of opinion whether a movie is a success or not.

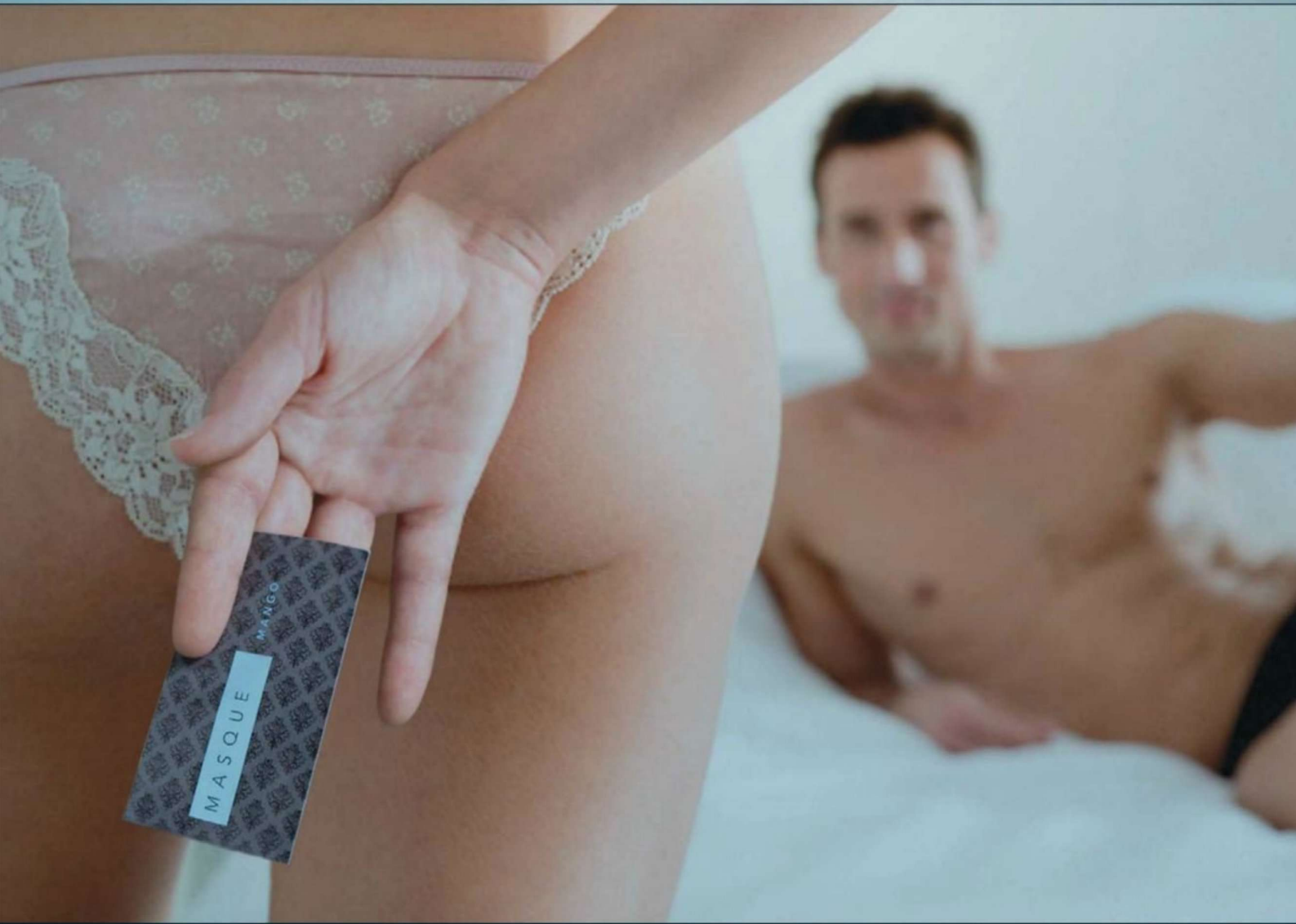
THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR GETS A JOB

I wanted to be an architect when I was a kid, and I've always liked writing short stories. Those two things, I suppose, are what I imagined I might be: architect or writer. I don't know if I could write a novel, but I did write some short stories. One of them was a one-page story that I never figured out. For years Owen would refer to it. The story was just a fragment, called "The Life Aquatic." But later on Noah Baumbach and I revisited it and wrote the script based on that page.

The guys we idolize—that 1970s gang of Scorsese, Coppola, De Palma, George Lucas, etc.—are a very film-school-oriented bunch. I guess Spielberg didn't go to school for film. I wanted to go. It just didn't work out.

My older brother was studying philosophy, I think. I don't know why I didn't pick something like English literature because, other than movies, that's what I was interested in—books. That was what I wanted to be doing. But

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it was interesting to study philosophy. Those are things I would never have read in a million years. But truthfully, I haven't picked up any kind of philosophical text since. When you work your way into that culture of philosophy, it's like a foreign language I tried to speak.

By the time I was in college, there were Criterion laser discs. I didn't have a laser disc player back then, but they had them in the University of Texas library. Criterion, if you remember, more or less invented the idea of having a director or somebody talking over the movie while you're watching it. Those commentaries were amazing to me. I don't listen to them so much anymore now that I do my own movies. But when I was starting out, that was part of my own private film school. I had never heard of Michael Powell or Emeric Pressburger. Scorsese said, on those collections, "This is what inspired this. This is what inspired that." I wrote those things down, dug up the films and watched them. I may never have heard of them otherwise.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS AS FINE LITERATURE

In relation to *Moonrise Kingdom*, there were children's books. There was a series called *The Dark Is Rising* by Susan Cooper. The first one I remember is *Over Sea, Under Stone*. That series of books is famous. I can remember the rhyme: "When the dark comes rising, six shall turn it back;/ Three from the circle, three from the track." I don't remember what track that refers to. They're from the 1960s, I think.

I also remember a series of books written in the 1970s by Helen Cresswell, about a family called the Bagthorpes. *The Royal Tenenbaums* was very much influenced by those books. The first one is called *Ordinary Jack*, and it's about this kid who is the normal kid in a family of geniuses.

You can read Salinger's Glass family stories, see the influence, how it all fits together, what's stolen and so on. But in the case of the Bagthorpes we took practically the whole story line.

F. SCOTT AND ERNEST

In the case of *Rushmore*, two Fitzgerald stories are part of its central inspiration. Both are from *The Basil and Josephine* collection. One is "The Captured Shadow," about Basil Duke Lee putting on plays. I used to try to put on plays when I was a kid. That story made me think I could use that idea for the movie script. The other Fitzgerald story is "The Freshest Boy," about a teenager being sent off to school and how he clashes with it.

Hemingway had the most wonderful way of creating a mood. His execution of a scene is so clear and vivid. And his eye, how his details are communicated—you go right into a scene and stay there. With Fitzgerald, suddenly in the middle of a story you have a long sentence that takes you outside of what's happening. In "The Freshest Boy" there is a scene where the protagonist has been teased, hated and crushed at his new school. Now they're playing football. The popular kid calls out

to him using a half-baked nickname that nobody's even heard before. And there's a magical sentence I can't recite that says we cannot know, it's not given to us to know when or where, but there are moments when some people are right on the very edge, and with the slightest effort they can be pushed over or pulled back—and at this moment this person was saved. You should look up that scene in the story and read it. It's a Fitzgerald moment that is almost like Proust.

"BILL MURRAY IS ON THE PHONE"

I don't think I'm responsible for resurrecting anything. I think Bill Murray had already started to take on these different roles—what some would call the second part of his movie career. He had done *Mad Dog and Glory* and *Ed Wood*. I may have caught him when he was going in a different direction already, but when we did *Rushmore*, it was a fluke. We had always been told, "You can't get Bill Murray. It's not possible. You can't find him. He won't respond." So we weren't worried that he might say no because we were sure he would probably never respond in the first place. "Let's just send

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it out there. It's probably not going to happen." And then one day he appeared.

It's funny: A lot of people have come to me to ask for help with him, trying to track him down. And I have to tell them all: Our process with him was not like what most people experience. We just happened to capture him at a moment in time. I remember I was in the office of a Disney executive one day. I was probably there only one time in my life, and he got a call saying, "Bill Murray is on the phone for Wes." How does Bill Murray know I'm in Burbank right now meeting with Donald De Line at Disney? Donald told me to sit at his desk, and he left the room. I sat in there for an hour talking with Bill. He talked mainly about a Kurosawa movie called *Red Beard* the whole time. At the end I said, "Bill, are you going to do this movie?" And he's like, "Yep." Then I met him in person because I had to take a picture of him that we needed to make a painting, but I'm not a good photographer. I remember shooting three rolls of film, and we painted the picture from the first shot because it was the only good one. And then I didn't see Bill again until the day before we started shooting *Rushmore*.

Bill had never heard of me. He happened to like the script. Why'd he read it? I don't know.

He still hasn't seen *Bottle Rocket*. I think he decided not to see it. It's almost an inside joke at this point. Anyhow, Bill had an agent at the time named Jessica, and we were shopping *Rushmore* around, and she must have said to him, "You need to read this script." It was a fluke but a very fortunate one for me.

STARTING WITH MUSIC

One of the things I always seem to start with is music. Sometimes it has to do with the characters, what their lives are like and what they're feeling, and sometimes it's more about the place where it all happens. Also sometimes I look for empty spaces in the movie where I can make something up, some visual thing, and set it to music and try to help tell the story that way.

There's a piece of music Benjamin Britten wrote to be performed by amateur groups in churches, an opera centered around Noah's ark. We did this in our church in Texas when I was growing up in the late 1970s. In fact, the costumes in the movie are taken from photos of our school production. My mother went back to our library to get them for me.

The other reason I have Benjamin Britten in *Moonrise Kingdom* is his *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. That's at the beginning of the movie. And then there was this French pop song sung by Françoise Hardy called "Les Temps de l'Amour."

MIDCAREER IN PARIS

I always dreamed about moving to New York and living and working there. So I did that, and after a few years I started dreaming about moving to Paris and living and working here. But I still live in New York most of the time. What you see around you now is more of a fantasy.

In fact, I got an apartment in Paris when I came to do the French press for *The Life Aquatic*. I was supposed to stay for four days. Then I talked to the publicity people who were paying for it, and I asked them, "If I get a smaller room, how long can I stay?" Another 11 days. Then, at the end of that, Jason Schwartzman arrived to film *Marie Antoinette*, and I moved into his guest bedroom. When they finished filming, I moved into the apartment they had rented for Kirsten Dunst and took over that lease. That cost too much, so I got another place after that, directly above Café de Flore, and I didn't leave for a long time.

SOMEONE NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN

Over the years, I've needed to cast children. Child actors are going to have only so much experience. It would be nice to discover someone no one has ever seen, so we start doing our auditions. Usually, whether they have previously been in something or not doesn't matter. You don't know when you're going to find the right person. You get a bunch of great ones in the first sessions. These are the ones who've done something before and somebody has already discovered them. Then for the next six months, it's slim

pickings. In *Moonrise Kingdom*, most of the better-known child actors made up the rest of the Scout troop: One played Billy Elliot on stage; one played Damien in the remake of *The Omen*; another has been in a Western.

The two main characters—first the boy, Jared Gilman. He lived in New Jersey, and I saw a QuickTime video of him. In his case, it wasn't the scene he played for the audition that grabbed me as much as the interview after the scene. He was so funny and interesting, and his conversation made me laugh. Then when I actually met him, I liked him even more. Once I saw the video, I started showing everyone, with the idea, I think we have our guy. The girl, Kara Hayward, is from outside of Boston, and I saw her on video as well. She seemed to make up all the lines herself. She was totally believable, and it hadn't happened like that for me before. We must have auditioned more than a thousand girls for the part.

WHEN A WUNDERKIND GROWS UP

I've been around too long to be a wunderkind. I'm too old. I've had ups and downs already. I think everybody who goes to a movie is going to come away with a different perspective. Everyone's right. If people like it or don't like it, it's valid. I have no issue with that, ever. But what I do have an issue with is the idea of a movie trying "too hard." I would say, "Yes, that is what I was doing. I was trying my hardest to make this work, to make this film better." It makes sense to me, though, if someone doesn't like the tone of it.

I'm just trying to make it better in my own opinion—more funny, more moving—or surprise someone with something they've never seen. To make an atmosphere, a stronger experience, hopefully.

All this is not really important. It's somebody's criticism. It's subjective, as are my and everybody else's films.

I try not to read things that will make me feel bad. But I've read plenty, including some horrible reviews. It's a huge mistake to get into it when people are just stirring up drama. I remember there was this thing a few years ago when someone wrote something about how my movies were racist. It was quite an elaborate piece, with plenty of examples, illustrating some alleged racist undercurrent running through my entire body of work. At the time I thought to myself, I have to do something about this. It's just plain wrong and horrible. But then I realized that this kid—or whoever wrote it—didn't really believe what he was arguing, did he? How could he? It was, on its face, ridiculous. There's no way this person could think that my movies—love them or hate them—are racist. Come on, that's just stirring up a little drama. There's plenty of actual racism in this world, so we don't have to pretend that it's secretly hidden in my movies. It's like Mel Brooks being considered racist for making *Blazing Saddles*. Although that one's actually kind of iffy.



SIR MIX A LOT

A menu of cocktails from our favorite American bars

MR. NEW YORKER from Rob Roy, Seattle

¾ oz. gin
¾ oz. oloroso sherry
¾ oz. dry vermouth
½ oz. Cointreau
Stir with ice. Strain into a chilled martini glass.

THE FORT POINT from Drink, Boston

2 oz. Old Overholt rye
½ oz. Punt e Mes vermouth
¼ oz. Benedictine
Stir with ice, strain into a chilled martini glass and garnish with a marasca cherry.

THE SIGNATURE SIDECAR

from the Signature Room, Chicago
1½ oz. Hennessy V.S.O.P
¾ oz. Grand Marnier
Juice of half a lime
Shake liquors with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass rimmed with sugar. Add lime juice and garnish with a lime wedge.

THE CLIFF BELL from Cliff Bell's, Detroit

1½ oz. Dewar's White Label scotch
¾ oz. sweet vermouth
½ oz. Absinthe Ordinaire
Dash of orange bitters
Stir with ice in a globe glass and garnish with an orange slice.

THE HARDEST WALK from Cure, New Orleans

2 oz. Punt e Mes vermouth
1 oz. Plantation overproof rum
⅛ oz. Gran Classico bitters
2 dashes of Regans' orange bitters
Combine ingredients in a shaker and stir 25 revolutions. Strain into a double old fashioned glass over dense fresh ice. Garnish with an expressed orange peel.

IT WAS NOTHING from Cure, New Orleans

1 egg white
Juice of half a lemon
Juice of half a grapefruit
½ oz. simple syrup (*heat equal parts sugar and water to dissolve sugar; cool*)
1½ oz. Barsol Supremo pisco
½ oz. Bittermens Citron Sauvage liqueur
Shake egg white, juices and syrup 15 times. Add remaining ingredients and shake 20 more times. Double-strain into a collins glass containing three ice cubes.

EUREKA PUNCH

from Smuggler's Cove, San Francisco
1½ oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
1½ oz. good-quality amber rum
1 oz. honey syrup (*heat equal parts honey and water to combine; cool*)
½ oz. yellow Chartreuse
Dash of Angostura bitters
2 oz. good-quality ginger ale
Shake all liquids except ginger ale with ice and strain into an ice-filled collins glass. Top with ginger ale and garnish with a lemon wedge and a mint sprig.



"I'm impressed. Can you show me any of the other positions you're more than qualified for, Ms. Hempstead?"

SHATTERED GENIUS

(continued from page 136)

she said, refusing even to ride the elevator unless he was the only one in it.

And with whom would he mix? The people I saw were roughly drawn, the elderly leaning on spindly wooden canes, the teenagers darting between the kiosks, wasting the day. An androgynous bum with dirty blonde hair nosed around the garbage. An old lady in a coarse gown looked at me through the windshield, then spat.

Ragged as these surroundings were, Perelman exceeded them. As a younger man, he had been handsome, with soft, dark features. But recent pictures—taken with a cell phone camera in a subway car and then transmitted across the web—projected a different image. Perelman's clothes were dirty and rumpled, his black beard mangy. Ringing the bald crown of his head was a nest of hair that stood on end. He looked disturbed as he gazed out from under thick eyebrows, chewing a nail. How would he react when I approached him?

My mark did not appear that first day, and I cautioned myself to have the patience of Perelman. He had spent seven years proving the Poincaré conjecture, seven years displaying the sort of patience that is well beyond most people. The editors of one Russian tabloid ran out of patience tracking him. When they sent a reporter to Kupchino, the reporter got nothing. A female clerk said she had once exchanged a few words with Perelman. The next morning the headline read, *THE SECRET LOVE OF GRIGORI PERELMAN*.

When I met Sergei Rukshin, Perelman's closest friend, I realized that my respected counterparts in the Russian press had complicated my task. "Nice to meet you," I said when I arrived at Rukshin's office in a St. Petersburg high school. He replied, "We'll see if it will be nice or not." But like a rusty faucet, once turned, Rukshin gushed, speaking about Perelman for more than four hours.

It was Rukshin, serving as the instructor of a specialized Leningrad math club, who recognized Perelman's talent in 1976. It was Rukshin, along with other supporters in academe, who piloted Perelman through the anti-Semitic Soviet policies that nearly prevented the young Jewish genius from obtaining an education commensurate with his mind. And it is Rukshin who now grieves over the condition of this favored pupil: "He lives in a blockade."

Day two of my stakeout. A truck pulled up and parked, obstructing my view of the entrance to Perelman's wing of the building. As I opened the door of my car, a few guys with fresh cuts on their faces straggled by carrying a 10 A.M. bottle, looking for something to do. I stayed where I was, grazing on chips, and kept my eyes on either side of the truck, where I could still see people passing by. A man in an ink-black coat appeared in front of my car. He waved his hands at me wildly, yelling, "No, no." Then he turned away. I couldn't figure out what that meant, except to say that the locals were beginning to notice me. The potential for violence mounted hourly.

There wasn't much I could do about that, and I thought instead about Perelman's evolution. Rukshin told me that as a child Perelman had interacted with other students, that he had not been antisocial. Besides math, he enjoyed Ping-Pong and the opera. According to Rukshin and others who have known him since adolescence, Perelman is heterosexual, but as Rukshin noted, "If Grisha ever looked on anything with loving eyes, it was on the blackboard." No friend can recall the name of a girlfriend. Shortly after Perelman earned his Ph.D., the Soviet Union collapsed. He left for the U.S., where he performed post-doctoral research at NYU, Berkeley and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He was out in the world, interacting with contemporaries. He was doing things.

Yet he was already turning inward. When the top mathematicians in Russia were earning roughly \$100 a month in salary, Perelman was exposed to a Western world of tenured professors, academic grants and funded research labs—the business side of academe. "It's possible to sell a theorem and it's possible to buy it," he told Rukshin when he returned to Russia, disenchanting, in 1995. "Even if you don't have anything to do with it."

Perelman had already begun his work on the Poincaré conjecture, a theorem expounded in 1904 by Henri Poincaré, a French polymath and the founder of topology, the mathematical study of abstract shape. Because the problem had a history of false proofs, Perelman told no one about his work lest he be discouraged. He was also wary that unsolicited input would cloud his mind. "For Grisha, it was complete self-restriction," Nikolai Mnyov, a friend and former colleague of Perelman's, told me.

Had I such industry, my life might have carried me to a position loftier than the seat of a Hyundai on St. Petersburg's provincial fringe, waiting for someone who would be displeased to see me, should he appear at all. The hours passed. I bit into a sandwich, bundled my windbreaker and used it as a pillow.

Who was I to complain? Perelman had truly suffered, acutely. He withstood a claim—since refuted—on his Poincaré proof from a rival Chinese mathematician. He turned down the Fields Medal, believing that acceptance would be, as Rukshin explained, fundamentally dishonest. Perelman once rebuffed a TV crew from Russia's Channel One when they barged through his apartment door, pushing aside his mother. He withstood the procrastination of the Clay Mathematics Institute, which took its sweet time—five years—to offer him the \$1 million it had committed to the person who solved the Poincaré. "Grisha is tortured by the imperfection of humanity," Rukshin said.

All this was going through my mind when, suddenly, Perelman appeared. Over a field of parked cars, his wild hair bounced along as he walked away from me on the path by his door. I had to chase after him. I opened the car door. When I looked up from the handle, relocating my mark, I saw that it was not Perelman. It was simply a man with wild hair, fleeing the pleas of the androgynous bum.

It was day three of the stakeout, and still no sign of Perelman. I was secretly relieved, since I had no idea what to ask him. I'm not

much of an interviewer. I approach my subjects as if we were in a bar, chatting over a beer. A standard swindle but enjoyable, if I'm not mistaken. People like talking about themselves. You just have to give them the chance.

But how do you talk to somebody who doesn't talk to anybody? Every question I thought to ask, I knew Perelman wouldn't answer. I couldn't take direction from the Russian press, which had deluged him with questions about why he wouldn't accept the money, why he had turned down the Fields Medal, why he wouldn't talk to them.

I didn't want to bother Perelman. I didn't want to be like all the others who had forced him into exile. I believed there was a delicate way to approach him.

I consulted those who knew him. When I met with Alexander Abramov in Moscow, he described the last phone call he had had with Perelman, three years prior. Abramov, a professor, has known Perelman since 1982, when he coached the Soviet team at the International Math Olympiad. (Perelman won a gold medal, posting a perfect score.) Exasperated by Perelman's solitude, Abramov asked him what he should do in order to meet with him. Perelman suggested that Abramov move to St. Petersburg. "Forever?" Abramov asked. "Maybe," said Perelman before hanging up the phone.

Maybe Perelman didn't like Abramov anymore. Maybe he didn't like anybody anymore. "I'm afraid he is at the level of a nervous breakdown," Rukshin said. "If this was still the Soviet Union, he would be forced into psychiatric treatment for this behavior." In 2008 Perelman asked Rukshin to limit their phone calls. Now they speak about once a year.

"It looks very much like the story of Bobby Fischer," Abramov said. "And Bobby Fischer couldn't be called a happy man."

It was the afternoon of day three, and the androgynous bum pleaded through my car window for a few rubles. Even up close I could not tell if this was a man or a woman. I watched the bum move along a little richer. When I refocused my eyes on Perelman's door, I heard myself gasp, "There he is!"

It was Perelman all right. The beard, the hair, the expression of uncertainty as he stumbled into the sun with his mother, Lyubov, by his side. He shuffled toward the garbage bins stacked by the door, looking as if he might rummage through them. He wore a black ski jacket, a black shirt, black pants. His mother was dressed in a red overcoat and a white beret. They turned down the lane, heading toward the courtyard behind their building. I locked the car.

The courtyard was the size of a city block, with trees, parking lots and playgrounds. Trailing at a considerable distance, I saw Perelman and his mother moving across a grassy field. I decided to approach him head-on rather than sneak up from behind, taking all measures to avoid agitating him. Even though I knew he had known English quite well at one time in his life, I thought it best to speak Russian with him to put him at ease.

I walked along one edge of the courtyard, hoping to meet him as he reached its far side. I hurried past a trash heap, around

the fencing of a dead tennis court. I circled around a small school, and when I reached the far edge of the grassy field, Perelman and his mother weren't there. I had lost them.

Frantically I searched the courtyard. I located them again, along a row of parked cars. But when I made another loop in order to get in front of them, I didn't see them. When I spotted Perelman and his mother once more, they were heading back the way they had come. I didn't have the luxury of positioning. I would have to approach them from behind. I walked briskly. I was 20 yards from Perelman and closing. Still I didn't know what to say.

Then I was at his side, and there was no more time to think. "Grigori Yakovlevich?" I said, employing his middle name, in polite Russian form. "Is it you?"

Perelman's head rotated slowly. He appraised me from the corner of one eye. He said nothing. "Excuse me, please," I continued. "I don't want to bother you. But I have come from America to speak with you."

Up close, Perelman looked about five-foot-10 and slighter than I had imagined. He was less menacing than he appeared in pictures. He did not waste thought on his appearance, though. Dandruff caked the shoulders of his coat. His clothes were streaked with stains.

Perelman spoke with a high-toned, bird-like voice. And he knew what to say. "You're a journalist?" he asked. His mother peeked at me from behind his shoulder, then pulled away. I nodded. Perelman looked at the sky, letting out a pained sigh. We took several small steps together. "From which publication?" he asked.

I told him. He nodded in recognition but said, "I don't give interviews."

"I know," I said. "That's okay." Perelman and his mother stopped walking. They looked me up and down, as though what I'd said had confused them. I didn't know how this was going to go, but at least Perelman had not run away. So I put on a big smile. "Good weather today, huh?" I said. And to my surprise, both the terrifying recluse and his nervous mother let out a laugh. They were disarmed. I was in.

"How did you know we would be here?" Lyubov Perelman asked, stepping out from behind her son. She wore thick glasses, and her cheery face puffed out beneath the beret.

"I'm embarrassed to say," I told her.

"Well?" she said.

I nodded toward the street. "I've been sitting in a car out there waiting for you."

"Really?" she said.

"It wasn't so bad," I said. "I had a book."

"How did you find out the address?" Perelman asked me.

"I have a connection," I said. "With the police."

His eyes went wide. "The police?" he said. "Are you Russian?"

"American."

He looked at me curiously. "Are you sure you're not Russian?" By all signs that I could interpret, Perelman was eager to speak with me, glad for human contact.

"Do you mind if I walk with you for a little bit?" I asked. Perelman shrugged and we

kept on. He had laughed once, I thought. Maybe he would laugh again. "I was nervous," I told him. "Everybody says you are frightening." Perelman squinted at the sky as if contemplating something I would never understand. A man passed in front of us, walking a cat on a leash.

Lyubov Perelman said, "If you're not getting an interview, what's the point of this?"

Perelman put his arm around her. "It's okay, Mother," he reassured her. "We're just walking."

Considering all I had learned about Perelman, this display of considerate behavior amazed me. And it emboldened me. No one had gotten this close to him in years. "I understand you're not practicing math anymore," I said. "Can you tell me what you are working on?"

"I have left mathematics," he said. "And what I'm doing now, I won't tell you."

I was ready with another question, but he had one of his own. "You're really not Russian?" he asked. "You speak like someone who was born in Russia and left at eight or nine, then came back as an adult. You have this sound."

Pressing my momentum, I asked him a few easy questions, hoping to open him up. "What are your plans for the May holidays?" "Did you enjoy your time in America?" "How often do you take these walks?" Each time, Perelman shrugged, stared into the sky and said nothing. I wasn't sure if he had heard me. I looked at his mother, and she raised her eyebrows as though she didn't know what to say either. A smile crossed her face.

We made our way toward the archway that led to his entry. I tried another serious question. "Considering your abilities and how young you still are, how might you return to science?" He wheezed. After a short silence, his mother asked if I was wearing a wire.

I resolved to draw him out once more. Trying to build common ground, I touched on the similarities between writing and mathematics, emphasizing the solitude that each discipline required. I looked at him with an open, friendly face. He stared again at the sky, a blank page.

We reached the archway and stopped. Perelman and his mother stared at me, wondering how this would end. I looked at Perelman and asked, "How's your Ping-Pong game?"

"I haven't played in a long time," he said. He laid an arm across his mother's shoulders. He was becoming agitated. We had walked and talked for 20 minutes, and what had I figured out? I had gotten a feeling for the man, but I had not solved the riddle. Would he help me do it? There was time for one final question. I put it to him in English, the single philosophical question that I hoped he would consider. "Where does your life go from here?" I said.

Perelman stepped closer to me. I saw that one of his upper teeth was dark brown, decayed. "What?" he said, his English skills apparently dormant. Perelman's face was focused in concentration as I repeated the question, and I thought that he might answer it. But when I finished speaking, his face went slack, as before. He understood what I wanted to find out, the path of this unusual life. He mumbled, "I don't know."

We said our good-byes.

Through the windshield of the rental car I watched Perelman and his mother approach their entryway, the bums and the kids and the new mothers of Kupchino going about their lives. Perelman and his mother retreated into the darkness of the vestibule. The metal door slammed closed behind them. Perelman was out; he was in. He had gotten some air.



"That was the best yet, Lori...who were you thinking of?"

SEX, DRUGS & VIDEO

(continued from page 142)

and his crew worked on the hardware, Bushnell knew he had to do more than make a game; he had to make it sexy enough to lure people over to play it. He sculpted something that seemed right out of *Barbarella*—a tall, sloping cabinet with a screen facing out the top. Shaped like a coffin standing on end, it set the standard for arcade games to come. When it was finished, he amped up the sex appeal, taking out ads featuring a comely model in a negligee posing seductively next to the machine.

In 1971 Bushnell released *Computer Space*, the world's first commercially sold arcade video game. Unfortunately for Bushnell, it was too odd and complicated to become more than an overlooked novelty. Still in his 20s, he set about creating his next game. That's when he launched his own company, Atari, along with business partner Ted Dabney.

After seeing a demo of a rudimentary tennis game on a home video system called the Odyssey at a trade show, Bushnell decided to have his new engineer, Al Alcorn, a self-described "anarchist from Berkeley," experiment with a tennis game of their own. They called it *Pong*. To make it accessible, Bushnell kept the rules as simple as possible. AVOID MISSING BALL FOR HIGH SCORE, he wrote on the machine. "Those instructions were kind of a joke," he says with a laugh. "You couldn't play the game without that as a given."

To test the product, they set it up in a Silicon Valley dive bar called Andy Capp's, charging 25 cents a play. Soon after, Bushnell got an angry call from the owner, telling him the machine was already broken. Bushnell dispatched Alcorn to check out the damage. When the engineer arrived and opened the cabinet, shiny coins spilled from the machine. Quarters had clogged the coin box and stopped the game from working.

Pong quickly became a hit. "It was an otherworldly success," Bushnell says.

Drive through the hills between San Francisco and San Jose today, and you'll find the streets dotted with familiar empires: Electronic Arts, Zynga, Sony Computer Entertainment America. Inside, the floors of tchotchke-lined cubicles teem with scruffy young gamers in jeans and hoodies—the default dot-com uniform. With the area's steady stream of newly minted millionaires (and billionaires) under the age of 30, they have reason to dream big. But they wouldn't be dreaming at all if it hadn't been for the geeks at the company that created this unique high-roller lifestyle in the first place: Atari.

When Bushnell arrived in the early 1970s, Silicon Valley was still dominated by the Orwellian group-think culture practiced by IBM and its ilk. "In those days, nobody in their 20s was a CEO," he recalls, "and every engineer in the Valley wore a white shirt and tie." But with orders pouring in for *Pong*, Bushnell set about changing that for good. In addition to launching the modern game industry, Atari pioneered something just as influential: the creative company culture that pervades the Valley to this day. "We said, 'The

heck with it,'" Alcorn recalls. "We'll excel at what we do—not how we look.'"

With only four employees and 500 *Pong* machines to build, Bushnell had to staff up fast or risk losing the deals and blowing his early success. Young and aggressive, he didn't want to wait four days to run a help-wanted ad, so he trudged down to the local unemployment office instead. There he found a room full of hippies and homeless people and trucked them back to his production plant. "What I didn't have them do is pee in a bottle," Bushnell says, "which is what I should have done."

Every day they churned out 10 *Pong* machines, each of which cost \$300 to make and sold for \$900—a huge markup at the time. They also had placed some of their own machines around town. To collect the coins from sketchy bars, Bushnell's workers began carrying hatchets in their cars, just in case. Before long, needing more production space and room for more employees, they moved the commune to an old roller-skating rink nearby. As pot smoke filled the air and hippies skated between arcade machines, Atari became an extension of the Haight-Ashbury scene up the road. "I wanted this company to be a perfect meritocracy," he says. "I wanted everyone to create and do wonderful things."

Bushnell looked out on his bearded and bell-bottomed crew and told them, "I don't care when you come to work. I don't care if you come to work. I don't care what you wear. I don't care if you bring your dog. I don't care if you bring a six-pack. Get your job done. You're an adult, and I treat you like an adult."

With *Pong* machines flying out the door and new games in development, Atari resembled the Valley's answer to Willy Wonka's factory, and Bushnell effusively embodied the lead role. Dressed in jeans and a bow tie and puffing on his (tobacco) pipe, he nurtured a work environment that was as fun as the games. To motivate his staff, he promised to tap a keg on the back dock each Friday when they hit their quota of machines. The beer-for-*Pong* promise worked, and Atari's keggers became the stuff of Valley legend. "We got a reputation as being the party company," Bushnell recalls.

Bushnell installed a vintage 1850s beer tap in his office and invited anyone who wanted to join him to drink and play dice after work. The party atmosphere spread across the Valley. "That was part of the culture, smoking pot and doing a lot of cocaine," Alcorn says. "Our attitude was work hard and play hard." But despite his carnivalesque flair, Bushnell didn't treat his business as just fun and games. "I always felt as though I was an ex-Mormon dressed up like a hippie," he says. "I felt I was a poseur. I was an engineer and a geek. What was more interesting to me was the technology and the creativity."

Before long he would need all the creativity he could muster.

Atari was going broke.

By 1974, *Pong* machines were popping up around the world, but they weren't Atari's. During his rapid rise, Bushnell had neglected to copyright *Pong*'s circuit boards, enabling other companies to rip off his design. "I was young and dumb," he says. Of all the *Pongs* being sold, only 25 percent of the machines

were made by Atari. An ill-fated plan to produce *Pong* machines in Japan brought Atari even closer to bankruptcy.

The financial pressures began taking a toll on the utopian company life. The festive atmosphere suddenly turned dark, and Bushnell felt himself sinking into despair. Line workers complained of low wages and showed up wearing shirts that read FUCK YOU. His stress turned into anger, and Bushnell wielded his ax as readily as he tapped a keg. "People who needed negative motivation, I would fire," he says. "I was insufferable." One colleague would later describe Bushnell as having "the attention span of a golden retriever." The pressure was also affecting his personal life at home with his wife and two young daughters. "The stress of business is difficult for a marriage," he says. The couple would soon divorce.

With Atari on the brink, Bushnell had to dig himself out of his hole fast. He hatched a business philosophy that became his guiding principle: the meta-game. Knowing Atari's hardware was being copied by competitors, Bushnell began to, as he says, "build in booby traps." It was the equivalent of printing a recipe with the wrong ingredients. Atari purposely mismarked chips so that when other companies tried to re-create the designs, their machines wouldn't function. The ploy worked, and Bushnell soon regained market share. "The whole success of Atari was really because of creativity," he says.

To inspire creativity, Bushnell began holding raucous beachside retreats and company meetings in the hot tub behind his hillside home. The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a profile of Bushnell along with a photo of him soaking in his tub with an attractive—and seemingly topless—woman. "It was a wild environment," he recalls wistfully. "It was post-flower revolution, women's liberation, no AIDS yet and lots of company romances." The engineers began code-naming their projects after women—including Darlene, a beloved employee who, according to Bushnell, "was stacked and had the tiniest waist."

"Darlene" was the project name for Atari's breakthrough home version of *Pong* for TV sets. While the Magnavox Odyssey was the first home console, *Pong* got a huge boost from a giant distribution deal with Sears, the great American department store chain. The pairing of Sears and Atari perfectly symbolized the transition from the old titans to the next generation of start-ups burgeoning in Silicon Valley.

Bushnell showed up for his first meeting wearing his usual jeans and shirt, only to find the Sears executives in suits and ties. For the next meeting, Bushnell showed up in a suit and tie, but the Sears guys were awkwardly dressed down in jeans. During a visit by Sears representatives to Atari's production plant, the teams broke the ice by riding around the conveyor belts in cardboard boxes.

The unlikely but dynamic pairing paid off. The home version of *Pong* became a runaway smash. By the end of the holidays in 1975, Atari topped more than \$40 million in sales. That success didn't come without a price. Bushnell split with his original partner, Ted Dabney. ("His ego was blowing out of proportion," Dabney later said about Bushnell. "He started doing really stupid things.") Ralph Baer, creator of the Odyssey, sued Atari for allegedly stealing the idea for *Pong*. Atari settled

out of court, with Bushnell maintaining that he had merely improved on a poorly executed idea. "I absolutely did see the Odyssey game," he said, "and I didn't think it was very clever."

Baer, now 90, is still bitter. Reached at his home in New Hampshire, he says of Bushnell that "whenever he's confronted with reality he takes off into some never-never land of imagined sequences that were drilled into his head by his lawyers. They never leave his cranium no matter how many times you quietly and politely explain the error."

With the lawsuit behind him, Bushnell wasn't dominating just the new home video game market—he was ruling arcades. Building on the success of *Pong*, Atari cranked out such hits as *Tank*, *Indy 800* and *Shark Jaws*, based on Steven Spielberg's hit film. To build a single-player brick-breaking game called *Breakout*, Bushnell tapped a gifted young hippie on his team, Steve Jobs.

Just 20 years old at the time, Jobs had been dropping acid, fasting, studying Eastern mysticism and working as a phone phreaker, manipulating phone systems to make free long-distance calls (including prank calls to the Vatican). Impressed by Jobs's out-of-the-box thinking, Bushnell made him a technician. Bushnell offered him a bonus if he could use as few of the costly computer chips as possible when making *Breakout*. Jobs hit up a friend at Hewlett-Packard, Steve Wozniak, to help him with the machine.

"Atari was getting all kinds of attention by then for having started the video game revolution with games like *Pong*," Wozniak later recalled. "Bushnell, well, he was just larger than life. Steve said it was a blast to work for him." Three months later (or four days, by Wozniak's account), the two Steves completed the game, which quickly became one of Atari's most successful hits, a classic. Then Jobs went to Bushnell with a breakout offer of his own: to invest in the personal computer company he and Wozniak were starting.

For \$50,000, Jobs said, Bushnell could own one third of Apple. Bushnell, however, was so busy with his own success (in addition to launching a series of Atari computers) that he passed. "Like an idiot I basically turned it down for the right reason," he recalls. But as Apple exploded, Bushnell saw the creative business approach he had nurtured at Atari go wider in the Valley. "Jobs and Wozniak carried that corporate culture to Apple," he says. "That's when the ties came off."

In 1976, another hot tub meeting at Bushnell's spawned Atari's ultimate conquest—the home video game that would pave the way for the consoles that dominate our living rooms today. Code-named Stella, the Atari Video Computer System became better known as the Atari 2600. By exploiting innovations in chip technology, Atari could create an interchangeable console that, unlike home *Pong*, could run a variety of games on cartridges.

To pull this off, the 33-year-old Bushnell needed more money to cover the cost of production. With an ego to match his creativity, he wasn't satisfied merely to have launched the video game business. He wanted to rule its future before the chance

slipped away. "I had a huge opportunity to dominate an industry, and if I didn't fulfill the destiny of the video game business, then somebody else would," he says.

He knew exactly what he needed to do: sell. With video games taking over a new generation, Warner Communications, the parent company of the movie and music behemoths, wanted to cash in. The corporation sent a private jet to pick up Bushnell and his team and bring them to New York City for a meeting. When Bushnell and his band of hippie geniuses climbed onboard, they saw a familiar face in the corner—Clint Eastwood, whom Warner was flying to New York with his girlfriend for a premiere. Kicking back in the jet alongside the Hollywood superstar, Bushnell thought, I can get used to this.

Warner put the gamers up on the top floor of the Waldorf-Astoria with a pool table and a grand piano and brought them along with Eastwood to see the film. This time Bushnell wore a suit to the meeting. The execs told him, "We think this is wonderful, and we want you to be the architect of the technology future at Warner." Four years earlier, Bushnell had launched his video game start-up. Now, in 1976, he was selling the company for \$28 million.

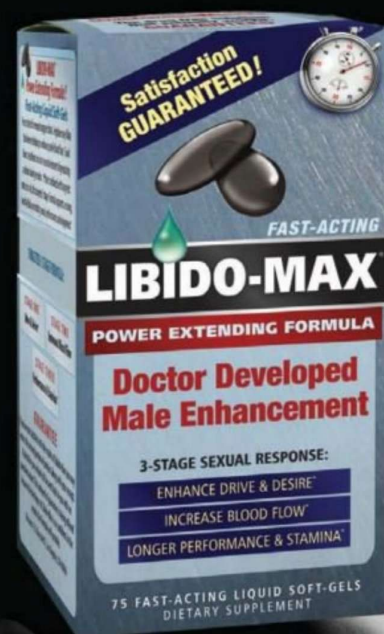
Bushnell remained Atari's chairman and pocketed an estimated \$15 million on the deal. He treated himself to a new home: a mansion formerly owned by the family behind the Folger Coffee Company. His moving in symbolized in many ways the arrival of a new generation of American moguls, the computer geeks who could build an empire on a chip and a dream. He also had his own private jet and a yacht named *Pong*.

The Atari 2600 defined a generation upon its release in October 1977, but it was the beginning of the end for Bushnell at Atari. A serial entrepreneur, he had other plans in the works: a pioneering online game network and a chain of family-friendly pizza arcades. Warner was pouring all its resources into the 2600—despite Bushnell's insistence that it was in danger of oversaturating the market. The battle grew epic and ugly, as Bushnell believed the baby he had nurtured for so long was being dangerously mismanaged. Ultimately Warner won, and King Pong was out. "In my brain at the time, I thought I'd quit," Bushnell says. "They thought they fired me. I'm not sure."

Free from Warner, Bushnell grew his next empire, Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatre, the pioneering restaurant chain—complete with life-size robotic singing animals. Suddenly, all the kids who had grown up on Atari games had a place to hang out, scarf pizza and beat the high score on the latest Atari games such as *Asteroids* and *Centipede*. In less than a decade, the video game industry had reached its golden age. By 1982 Atari was bringing in \$2 billion a year. Bushnell's oddball start-up had become one of the fastest-growing companies in American history. He had spawned not just a new industry but an entire generation of gamers—an impressive legacy.

"Hey, Nolan!" says a young guy with a strawberry-colored Mohawk. "When are we going to make those robots?"

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It's another bright blue day in Los Angeles. Bushnell and I are having lunch in a funky warehouse neighborhood downtown, where this local artist is eager to start a new project with the *Pong* master. Bushnell perks up as they talk about the cool new gizmos they want to build. It's moments like this that still inspire him more than anything—even more than the possibility of being portrayed by DiCaprio in a movie. "I may be bizarre, but I don't particularly revel in the provinance aspect," he tells me as he digs into a barbecued-pork sandwich. "I'm much more interested in stuff I'm working on."

Although he remains best known for his work in video games, Bushnell has made millions with a host of high-tech companies since leaving Atari. Always innovating, he created one of Silicon Valley's earliest incubators, Catalyst Technologies, which gave rise to little-known but highly successful start-ups such as Axlon (an electronic-toy company, later sold to Hasbro) and Etak (a pioneer in automotive-navigation systems that became the precursor to Google Maps and MapQuest).

"What's really striking about Nolan's career is how many different areas he's had a profound impact on," says Will Wright. "His work has significantly contributed to not just the gaming industry but also restaurants, location-based entertainment, toy design,

education and even mapping systems. I can think of few people who have had such a broad influence on so many different commercial fields."

Not every venture has been a success, and Bushnell has had his share of hard times. In 2010 his company uWink, a sort of adult version of Chuck E. Cheese's, shut down its last restaurant after failing to take hold. "When you're out on the edge, sometimes you don't know where the edge is and you step over and fall into the Grand Canyon," he says. "But the next time you're at the Grand Canyon, you know where the edge is. Everything is about learning. There's always something you learn that arms you more strongly for your next attempt."

These days, his next venture is his ultimate: creating a new kind of school that uses the innovations and creativity of new technologies to empower kids. He calls the school Speed to Learn and says it will be built on the idea that "software should teach, and teachers should mentor." His plan is to open the first Speed to Learn as a private school in Los Angeles and expand from there. He eagerly shows me the new logo he's designed—a yellow smiley face with the eyes replaced by fast-forward icons. "I think of new technology as presenting me with a new sandbox," he says. "I love the process of innovation."

Innovation runs in the family. Nearby, his

son Brent (one of his eight kids from two marriages) has his own game-development company in the works. Brent says games are part of the Bushnell DNA; he recalls pulling his dad away from his cell phone games in restaurants. "He's just a big kid," Brent says.

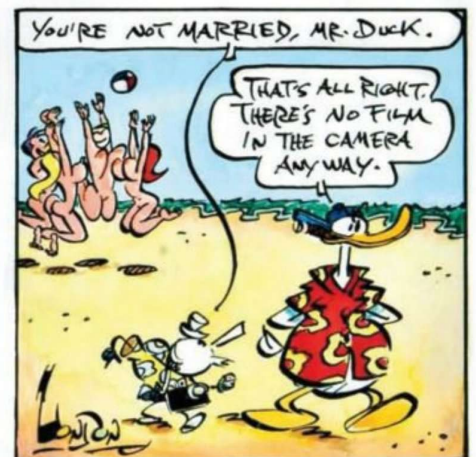
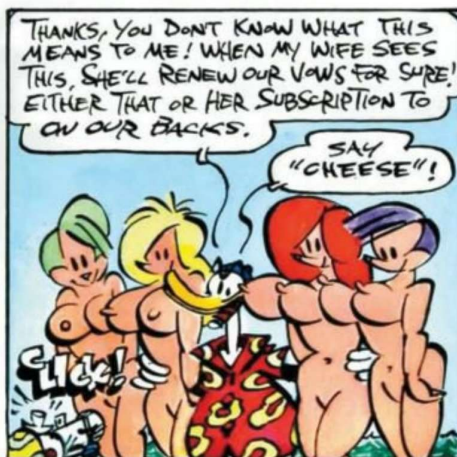
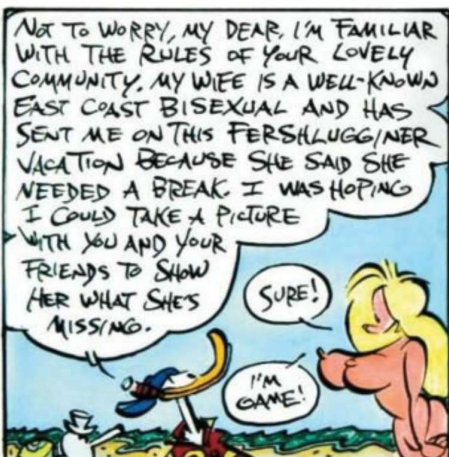
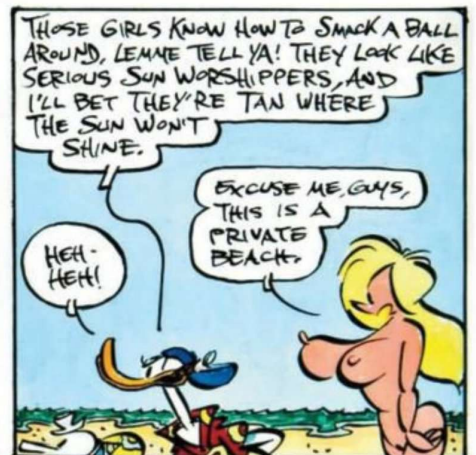
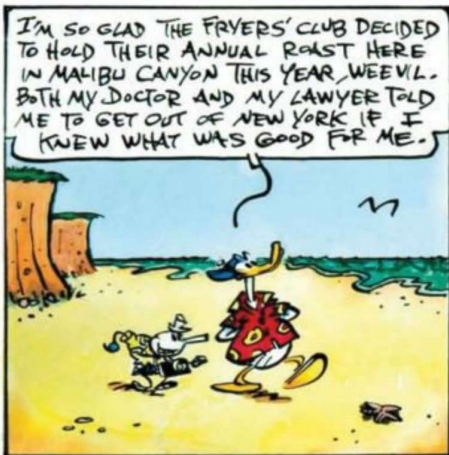
Indeed. After a game of *Pong* on my iPhone (I won), Bushnell tells me how he road-trips to the Burning Man festival every August. "I love the creativity of the place," he says. He's also working on his first science-fiction novel, which explores what he thinks is the inevitable singularity of computer intelligence surpassing that of human beings. In the meantime, he's always dreaming up something new.

"My feeling is that for creativity and innovation you always have to take the blinders off," he says. He gives an example: "If you ask how you can innovate professional football, most people would say, 'Design new plays; design new uniforms.' But if you really want to look at it, you have to say, 'What can I do differently in the parking lot?' You have to expand your horizons rather than focusing on the field. You have to focus on what's happening in the grandstands and the parking lot." Bushnell smiles wide. "That's the meta-game."

And as always, he's ready to play.



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BEYOND THE SKY

(continued from page 82)

the sky. I passed Stanford University, NASA's Ames Research Center, Moffett Federal Airfield and an aviation museum. An electric Tesla breezed by me on the highway without a sound. I followed my car's navigation system to the SETI Institute's headquarters in Mountain View. I expected to find the place teeming with scientists interpreting the latest data from *Kepler*. Instead, the parking lot was mostly empty.

The SETI Institute shares a building with a company called Jasper Wireless. I could see the Jasper guys through an open door in the lobby, working away at their computers. The institute's door was shut. A handwritten sign explained: SETI INSTITUTE CLOSED FOR WINTER HOLIDAYS. IN CASE OF YEAR-END GIFT RECEIPT, URGENT MESSAGE OR OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUE, PLEASE CALL MAIN NUMBER.

Maybe this was why the aliens hadn't made first contact—they kept trying to communicate during our winter break. I walked around SETI's half of the building, hoping for a glimpse inside. I climbed up into the planters and stood beside an old elm. I peered through the dirty window.

"Can I help you?"

I turned. Down in the parking lot a man stood beside his Toyota Prius, holding a cup of coffee. He'd parked in one of the SETI spaces.

"You work here?" I asked, climbing out from under the elm. "You mind if I ask you a few questions?"

He gave me a shy smile and walked me into the building. An astrophysicist with a doctorate from Cornell, Paul Estrada has a pronounced forehead and bulging eyes—as if his brain were so large, it needed an escape route. Estrada studies how planets form out of nebula dust. He took me through SETI's front offices, which were occupied by high-speed computers. They blinked steadily behind a wall of glass, interpreting signals from the powerful Allen Telescope Array up in Hat Creek—about 320 miles northeast of Mountain View. (Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, donated \$25 million to the project to keep this search for aliens alive.) The SETI Institute, Estrada explained, is pointing the array at stars with potential Earth-like planets that are being discovered by NASA's *Kepler* space telescope. These planets are relatively close, a few hundred light-years away.

"So if we heard a message right now," I asked him, "it would be hundreds of years old?"

"That's right," Estrada said. "And our reply would take hundreds of years to get back."

I wondered what kind of meaningful conversations were possible under such time delays. If I asked an alien for a five-letter word for *cornucopia*, would crossword puzzles still exist by the time I received an answer?

Estrada walked me upstairs and turned down a corridor of cubicles. The fluorescent lights flickered on. I glanced into the empty workstations. Instead of

pictures of family members, SETI Institute researchers hang pinups of black holes and supernovas.

"We can talk in here," Estrada said, leading me into the Carl Sagan conference room. The walls were covered with computer-generated images—a telescope beaming from the surface of the sun, a space base on Mars. Estrada settled into a leather chair.

"Can you tell me a little more about your research?"

"I study the origins of the planets by looking at how they form from the disk of gas and dust that surrounds their young parent stars." Estrada drank the rest of his coffee. "I model the structural and compositional evolution of Saturn's rings due to meteoroid bombardment."

I was at a loss for words. He sat forward, waved his hands and started to shout. "Do planets form out of nebulae that are turbulent or not turbulent? That's one of the key questions I am trying to answer. I do complex parallel computing to model the sticking and growth of dust particles into larger bodies in the nebula on a global scale."

I wanted to go back downstairs. I could have talked to the good people of Jasper Wireless or watched the computers tracking signals from outer space. I wondered if Estrada himself were an alien and if he had snuck into the SETI Institute to infiltrate the human race.

Estrada walked me out of the building. I walked to the parking lot, gathered myself for a moment, then turned on my car's navigation system to guide me home.



There are no easy answers to why we're here on this planet or if we're alone. We build rockets, fly men to the moon, guide robots around the surface of Mars, only to come crashing back to Earth, no less ignorant about the most important questions. How was the universe created? Is there a purpose to life? Are we really cosmic accidents, all by ourselves, or do we share our fate with some web-footed Greys in a distant galaxy?

Stephen Hawking, confined to his wheelchair and capable now of moving only a few muscles in his cheek, finds encouragement in the revelations of science. Recently he told *New Scientist* the most exciting discovery during his career was "variations in the temperature of the cosmic microwave background," which amounts to "quantum gravity written across the sky." (When asked what he thought about most during the day, Hawking admitted, "Women. They are a complete mystery.")

The cosmic microwave background, also described as the afterglow from the big bang, consists of a band of barely detectable thermal radiation, a remnant of the brief period of time when light and matter first separated. Because it holds such valuable clues to our beginnings, a full understanding of the CMB almost certainly means a Nobel Prize for whoever achieves it. I wanted to know where the best minds were investigating the CMB—and after some research, I headed south to Pasadena.

It was early January, and the day felt as warm as bathwater as I drove among the palm trees. A few Santa Claus sleighs lit-

tered the enormous front yards. I passed Orange Grove Avenue, where rocket scientist Jack Parsons blew himself up in his garage in 1952. The road rose toward distant mountains. Soon I reached a sign: WELCOME TO LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE, HOME OF THE JET PROPULSION LABORATORY.

JPL is the world's leading designer of robotic spacecraft. *Voyager 1* is a JPL craft, as are the flagship satellites of NASA's Deep Space Network, a worldwide array of communication facilities that support our missions in space. Back in the 1930s, rocketry was considered beyond the fringe of respectable science, deemed impossible by a popular college textbook. Parsons, along with a high school buddy and a few grad students at Caltech, conducted launches just north of Pasadena in an isolated area called the Arroyo Seco. His team steadily improved the design and precision of rockets and helped the Allies win World War II. He eventually co-founded JPL and the rocket manufacturer Aerojet. Parsons also followed the teachings of British satanist Aleister Crowley. Under Crowley's psychic guidance, Parsons lured men and women to jump nude over fire in his backyard. He thought sexual ecstasy lifted humans to higher planes of consciousness, recited pagan poetry and boasted of impregnating statuettes with his "vital force." Parsons also believed in the interconnection of fiction and future reality. He attended science fiction discussions alongside Robert Heinlein and L. Ron Hubbard—founder of Scientology—before Hubbard moved into Parsons' mansion and then ran away with his mistress. (After performing a ritual in the Mojave Desert, Hubbard and Parsons prophesied that a Faustian female messiah named Babalon would be born in nine months, a product of immaculate conception. Parsons went downhill soon after. He unloaded his Aerojet stock for about \$11,000—it would have increased in value to the tens of millions—and died at the age of 37 while cooking explosives in a washbasin. A crater on the far side of the moon is named after him.)

Security is tight at JPL's entrance. At the front gate, tanned armed guards in sunglasses examined my passport and waved me through. I had received clearance from the JPL's media rep, Priscilla Vega. I met up with her in the lobby.

"I've arranged for you to speak with Matt Kenyon, one of our top CMB researchers," Vega told me. She smiled and twirled her necklace. "Right now Dr. Kenyon is delivering a talk to his colleagues, so I thought I'd start you off on a tour with the Boy Scouts."

Vega pointed outside, where a group of Scouts waited under a canopy. I hurried out of the lobby and got into single file. The tour guide snaked us around cacti, scrub plants and research buildings, all the way to the Theodore von Kármán Auditorium. We took our seats inside. A scale model of the *Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter* stood beside a stage.

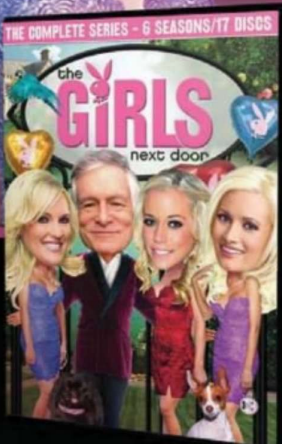
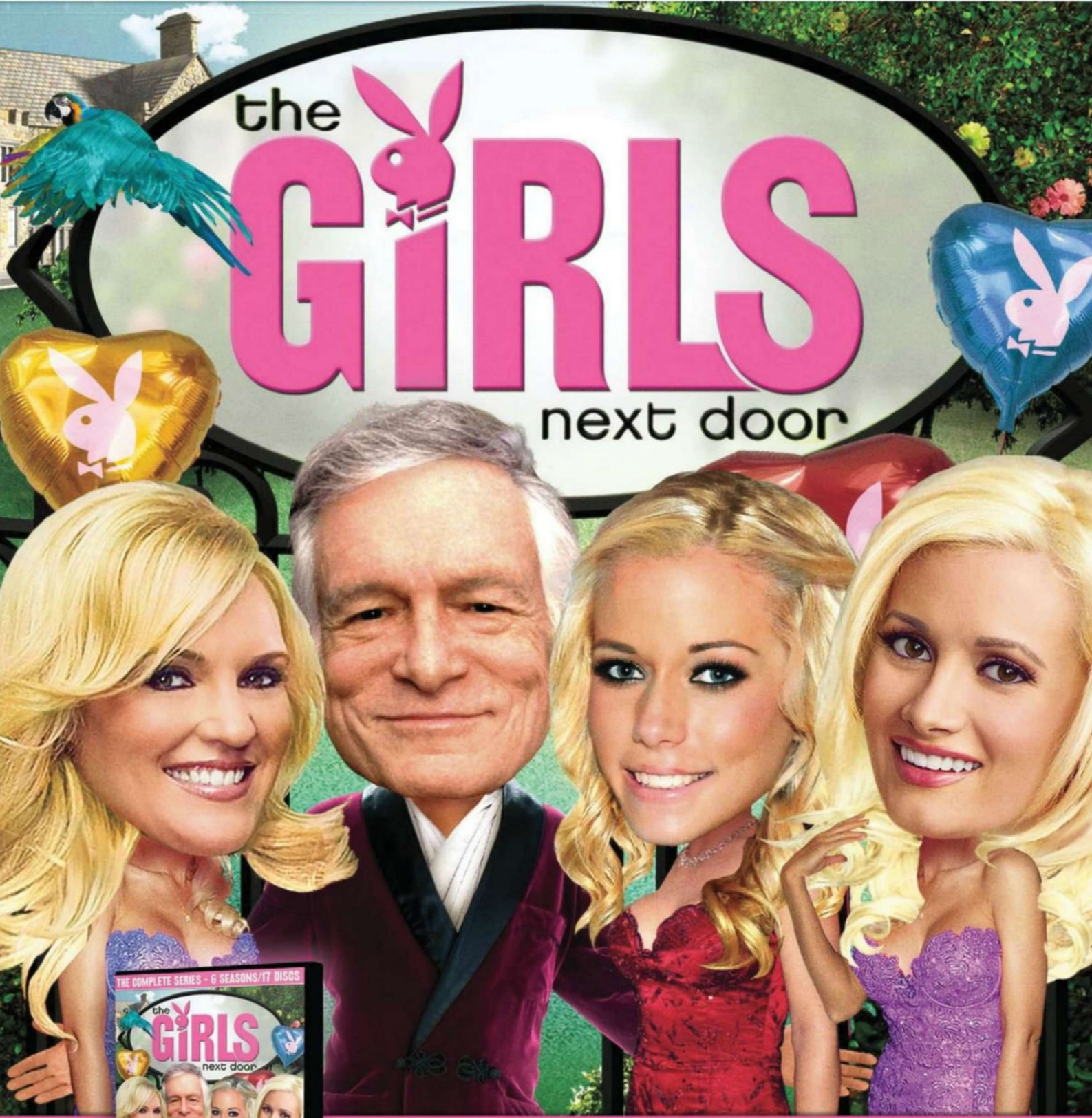
"We study Mars for signs of life 24/7, 365 days a year," the tour guide announced. "Any questions?"

A Boy Scout in the front row raised his hand. "This place is big," he said.

"JPL stretches 177 acres. Stay together. If you need to use the restroom, tell a parent."

The lights in the auditorium dimmed. A

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film came on, narrated by Harrison Ford, in which the clouds of Venus parted to reveal the planet's spectacular surface. I recalled the story of Leonid Ksanfomaliti, a scientist who worked on Soviet missions in the 1970s and 1980s. Recently he claimed that old photographs of Venus reveal a disk and a scorpion-shape creature. The disk and scorpion changed locations from one photo to the next. "Let us boldly suggest," Ksanfomaliti said, "that the objects' morphological features would allow us to say they are living." (NASA officials say the photos depict nothing more than the ejected lens caps of the landing craft, taken from different angles.)

After the film, I followed the Boy Scouts back outside. Our guide led us into the Space Flight Operations Facility—the mission control center for the Deep Space Network—where we gathered in the upstairs viewing room. The operations facility is a showcase for human exploration. Live tracking data from *Juno*, *Voyager 1*, *Voyager 2*, *Mars Odyssey* and *Cassini* scrolled across the monitors. A satellite feed showed each spacecraft in flight.

"Are those people real?" one of the Boy Scouts asked, peering down at the mission controllers behind their computers.

The tour guide chuckled, but before too long the kid's question might be plausible. "Any sufficiently advanced technology," Arthur C. Clarke said, "is indistinguishable from magic." Scientists are often the ones guilty of closed-mindedness. Back in 1894, future Nobel Prize winner Albert Michelson claimed all central laws of physics had been discovered. In 1928, Max Born, also an eventual Nobel laureate, said, "Physics, as we know it, will be over in six months." Even Stephen Hawking wrote, in *A Brief History of Time*, that we "may now be near the end of the

search for the ultimate laws of nature." If our smartest scientists often turn out to be mistaken, whom can we believe?

I drifted out of the viewing area and found Vega waiting to take me to the Microdevices Laboratory. In this lab alone, an estimated \$375 million in JPL projects has been enabled. Kenyon, Vega told me, has built devices for many spacecraft—including the *Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter* and *Mars Climate Sounder*. Something in her voice told me he wasn't the average researcher.

We waited outside the conference room where Kenyon was finishing his presentation. Soon the door opened and a gaggle of young men spilled out. They had long pale arms and wore T-shirts tucked into their jeans.

A man with a laptop under his arm walked over to us. Tall, with a distracted, almost indifferent air, Kenyon had wisps of blond hair that floated above his head like tentacles. I asked him what the title of his talk had been.

"I don't know." Kenyon fumbled with his laptop. He finally got it open and scrolled down the page. "This one, maybe?"

He showed me the first slide of his PowerPoint presentation: THERMOPILE DETECTORS FOR PRIMITIVE BODIES. "That's just a fancy way of saying we're measuring radiation from various objects in outer space. Putting more pixels in the sky."

He walked us to the door of his research facility and held it open. The building was a beehive. The Microdevices lab includes particle-free clean rooms, sub-Kelvin refrigerators and electron microscopes. A sign outside one of the rooms warned DANGER WHEN RED LIGHTS ARE FLASHING: TOXIC GAS RELEASE. Kenyon stopped at a long glass partition. On the other side, workers in powder-blue hazmat suits carried silicon wafers.

"The origins of the solar system are locked in primitive bodies," Kenyon said. "Asteroids, comets, small objects floating in our solar system. Now the origins of the universe can be found in the surface of last scattering—in particular, the sphere known as the CMB. When our infrared detectors are placed on a telescope in space, they capture the conditions of the universe right after the big bang."

I stepped toward the glass and watched the technicians at work. One of the machines was the size of a small car. "Can you show it to me?" I asked.

"Show you what?"

"The CMB—what Stephen Hawking says is quantum gravity written across the sky."

Kenyon's hair tentacles floated toward me. "I can't show you that."

"Do the data from the CMB indicate if we're alone in the universe? Or if there's intelligent design? What about that sphere you mentioned—the surface of last scattering?"

Vega looked down at her shoes. Kenyon passed his eyes over me like a disappointed father. "Ideally, we'd launch a telescope with thousands of our detectors aboard, but there's not enough money in NASA's budget." He put his hand on my shoulder. "Do you want to grab lunch? We can go to the Athenaeum, where *Beverly Hills Cop* was filmed. We can have ahi salads among the high-society wives."

We walked back across the JPL parking lot to his Lexus. In the car, I asked how he first became interested in physics. It began, he said, with an out-of-body experience. "I was sitting on the couch one night. I must have been 15. I looked up and saw myself on the wall. There I was, looking down on the person I thought was me, Matt Kenyon. After that, I realized consciousness was nonlocal."

I buckled my seat belt as Kenyon whipped the Lexus around the strangely chaotic parking lot. Parallel lines were painted at odd angles, creating geometric puzzles. On the other side of a picket fence, a horse appeared. Its rider nodded hello and turned into a nearby equestrian center.

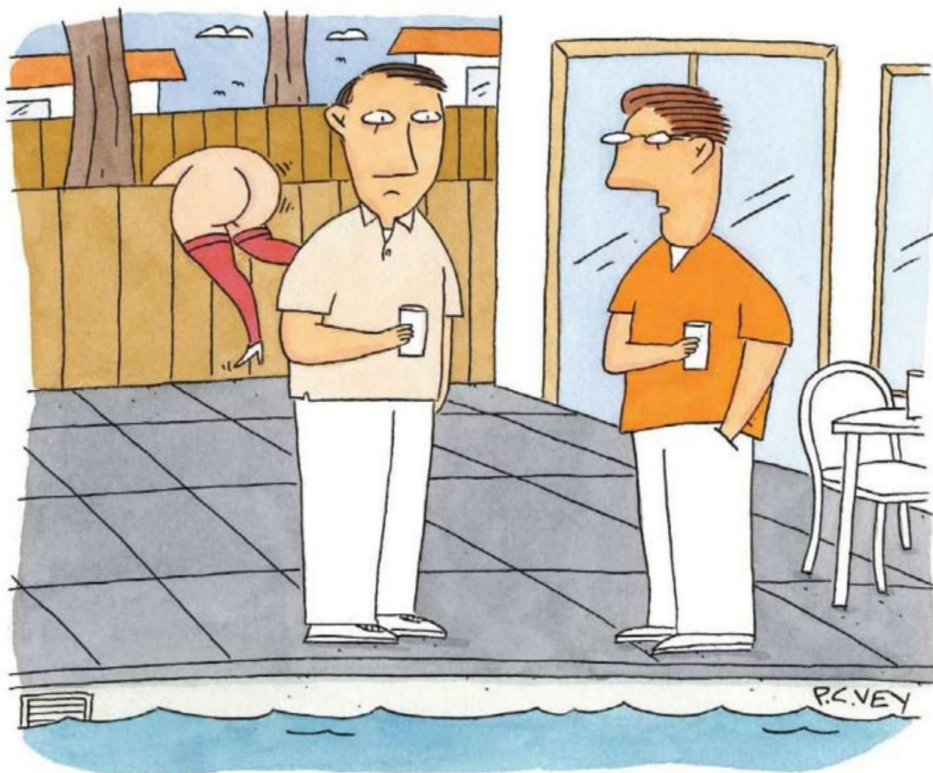
"Nonlocality is a quantum concept," Kenyon said as we left the front gates. "Things are intrinsically interlocked, even if it appears they are separated in space. This could include alternate life-forms."

"You mean alternate versions of people on Earth?"

"So far, the claims of aliens from outer space are not falsifiable. But there is plenty of research to support psychic phenomena, communications with disincarnate spirits. Nature is aware of our consciousness. She aligns us with these anomalies in such a way that we say, 'Wow, there is more to life than what we see and feel.'"

We rolled up to the valet outside the exclusive, members-only Athenaeum club on the Caltech campus. All JPL scientists are allowed in. The Athenaeum was envisioned by the astronomer George Hale, whose first guest for dinner was Albert Einstein. A hostess led us through the restaurant and out into a courtyard, where we were seated at a table under a palm tree. Waiters in crisp white aprons circled with goblets of iced tea.

Kenyon surveyed the room with his blue-green eyes. "I am convinced that we survive physical death," he said. "If you study the subject without bias, it's hard to deny it.



"If it weren't for your wife, I'd never come over."

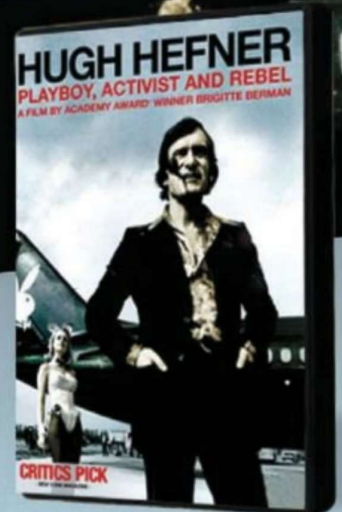
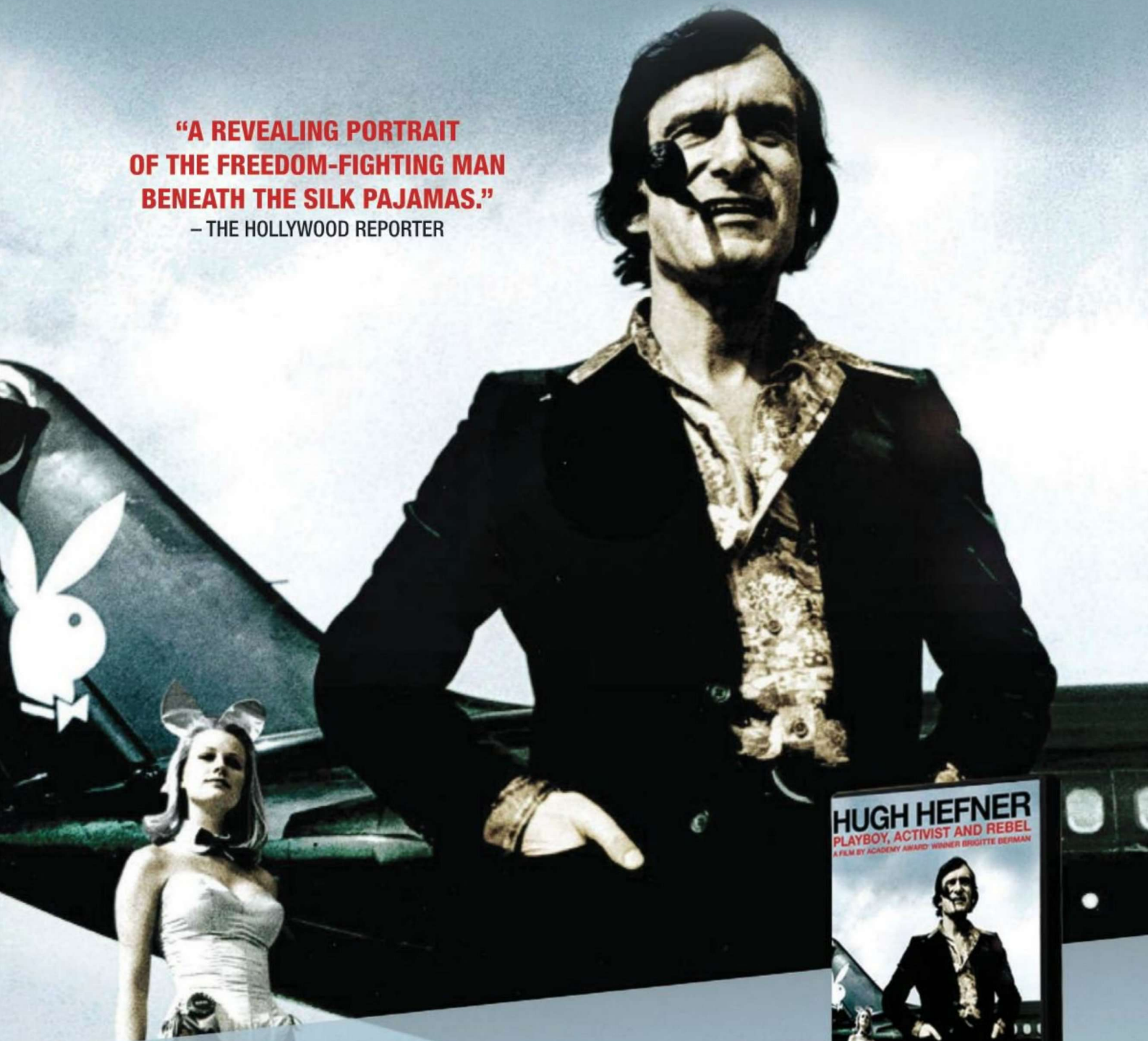
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There are patterns inside the CMB. The basic model of our universe is still fundamentally incomplete.”

“Patterns?”

“The earliest gravitational waves, imprinted on primordial plasma.” Kenyon lowered his voice to a whisper. “Nature shows us the surface of last scattering. She lets us peek behind the veil.”

Our ahi salads arrived. Kenyon sliced off a sliver of tuna and examined it on his fork. “We may have to alter our consciousness to interact with other intelligent life-forms. Perhaps there’s an internal equivalent to the surface of last scattering, where we peek behind the veil to understand our origins. If quantum physics is right, then every particle in the universe was once connected—and when we reach an understanding of that state, we’ll have access to realms we wouldn’t otherwise.”



The scale of our galaxy is unimaginably vast—more than 200 billion stars. Even if we assume only five percent of these stars host a habitable planet, that makes 10 billion habitable worlds. Beyond the Milky Way are billions more galaxies. Here on Earth, we struggle to make sense of the paradox. Where is everyone? We turn our ears to space and receive only what astrophysicist and astrobiologist Paul Davies calls, in his most recent book, an “eerie silence.”

We could be alone. If so, and our species eventually dies off, we will end a 13.75-billion-year evolution of improbable miracles leading to life. Dwelling on this possibility can make the little things—getting out of bed, brushing your teeth—seem downright absurd.

Some scientists believe primitive life almost certainly exists elsewhere—shadow biospheres, interplanetary volcanic germs, dormant microbes buried in Martian fossils. Others believe intelligent life-forms existed long ago, only to destroy themselves, as we might do, before obtaining the technology necessary to travel to other stars. The U.S. government is aware of the need for a space base in the event of cosmic catastrophe. Jupiter’s moon Europa, with a stable atmosphere and possibly three times the water of Earth, is a promising candidate. NASA takes the habitation of Europa so seriously that it deliberately crashed the spacecraft *Galileo* into Jupiter’s atmosphere to avoid contaminating Europa with “hitchhiking microbes.”

Life in the universe may turn out to be common but hard to find. What if Kenyon is right? What if a more sophisticated life-form is out there right now and we’re just looking in the wrong place? Our planet has been around for only 4.5 billion years. The rest of the universe is nearly 14 billion years old—which suggests that intelligent life, if it exists elsewhere, would be highly evolved. “Detectable extraterrestrials,” writes Seth Shostak, senior astronomer at the SETI Institute, “will be an older intelligence than ours.” Advanced civilizations typically expand the frontiers of transportation and communication in ways unforeseen by previous generations. Extraterrestrials could be nearby, watching us. If they are, why would they allow us to know about them?

Scientist Rupert Sheldrake has proved, in

a variety of experimental settings, that people tend to know when they are being looked at. This uncanny ability reliably manifests itself at long distances from the observer as well as in proximity to him. According to a Reuters Ipsos poll of 23,000 adults, 20 percent of people believe aliens walk among us disguised as humans. Is the belief in aliens a result of the sensation of being watched? To explain UFO sightings as mere hallucinations is to take the easy way out. Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, after interviewing people who claimed to have been abducted by aliens, concluded that abductees represent every social class, level of intelligence and degree of education. Alien abductees also proved to be no more neurotic than the rest of the population.

If we are being watched, where are these aliens based? Back in England, I met Paul Davies to ask him this question. Davies had just come from Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday party in Cambridge. Discussions at the party involved the possibility of multiple universes and a gravitational singularity located in the distant past. Davies is the current chair of the International Academy of Astronautics’ SETI Post-Detection Taskgroup, a select team assigned to organize our planet’s response to alien contact.

*Psychologist Carl Jung
concluded that UFOs were
semi-real projections of our
unconscious minds. We
“strive to fill the illimitable
emptiness of space.”*

We met in London on the upstairs floor of a café overlooking Covent Garden. I ordered a granola-and-yogurt parfait that came in a dessert glass. When the waiter brought it out, Davies regarded my choice suspiciously. “That might be nice to look at,” he said, “but it will be difficult to eat.”

With his brittle moustache, graying hair and permanently puzzled expression, Davies struck me as a man who has searched in vain for answers to the deepest questions of existence. In his writings, he argues that the technique of pointing a bunch of antennae at the sky is like searching for a needle in a haystack. His attitude toward the uncommunicative extraterrestrials has become almost combative. Aliens, he says, could be using wormholes to evade our detection. Or they could be sending self-generating probes to spy on us. Even more frustrating, they could be “post-biological machines.”

“Tell me what a post-biological machine looks like,” I asked.

“The aliens could be exploiting quantum physics. They could have a biologically different makeup from our own, one that we can’t even imagine. It’s a depressing thought.”

I looked up from my parfait. “Why is this depressing?”

“Because I’d like them to resemble biological organisms.”

I asked Davies about panspermia, the notion that life began on another planet or in another solar system, only to be carried to Earth in microbe form, possibly via a comet. (Panspermia was most recently advanced by Fred Hoyle, the astronomer and sci-fi author who coined the term *big bang*. Hoyle gave Davies his first job, and if his extraterrestrial theory of life is correct, we are all technically aliens.)

“Panspermia,” Davies said, sitting up and tugging his moustache. “Yes, it is true that dormant microbes can survive inside a comet for millions of years. But there is plenty of two-way traffic between Mars and Earth too. I believe it is entirely feasible that we are descendants of Martians. The microbes could have come to Earth in Martian rock.”

“And in your most recent article,” I reminded him, “you suggest aliens might be spying on us, right now, using the moon as a base.”

Davies gave me a bitter smile. “We should be analyzing all the data from the *Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter*,” he said, referring to JPL’s moon-mapping mission. “We could find robotic probes, alien technology, anything fishy. If you were sent to spy on another species, wouldn’t you want a remote observation post?”

“Absolutely!” Excited, I pounded the table. “But how would we know they were aliens if they can appear in any form?”

“In-your-face alien technology—a bridge or some other evidence of large-scale astro-engineering. Those aliens could have modified the lunar surface millions of years ago.”

Maybe Davies was truly speculative, like Carl Jung. The eminent psychologist was so taken by the credibility of eyewitness accounts of UFOs that he investigated them at considerable risk to his reputation. Why would independent UFO sightings occur, he wondered, especially among people who had no prior desire to believe in them? How do they show up on radars? Ultimately, Jung concluded that UFOs were semi-real projections of our unconscious minds. We “strive to fill the illimitable emptiness of space,” he wrote, and we create a form of “materialized psychism.”

Can we make something physically appear by longing for it? If everyone on Earth looked up at the sky and simultaneously wished for an alien, what would happen? It may be beneficial in the long run to push back against easy answers to this question. “The lesson of the UFO,” James Gallant wrote, “may be that those content with the little island of intelligibility on which the sciences have marooned us will be reminded forcibly of the sea of their unknowing.”

Outside our London café, the rain continued to fall. It was time for Davies and me to go home and face our remaining terrestrial lives. But Davies kept talking, and as he did he managed to raise all kinds of outlandish possibilities about alternate life-forms in the universe. I listened with what can only be described as hope. Holding on to the table and its predictably dead grains of wood, I felt myself floating above the café, then over the city of London itself, until I became a projection of my own mind looking down from the rain clouds.



FATHER

(continued from page 128)

social networks since before Mark Zuckerberg started stealing ideas from the Winklevoss twins, built a strong back end with profiles and chat functions and everything an online community needs to thrive. I took care of the editorial side, enlisting humorists, social commentators and personal bloggers, throwing together an interesting and random mix of voices, all of whom agreed to write for free. I'd pay them down the road, I said, if I could.

Offsprung launched modestly, riding on the back of whatever publicity *Alternadad* had generated. It was literate and funny, or at least I thought so. A few hundred people joined, and a few dozen of those started hanging out and exchanging baby photos. My complete control over this cultural sphere was taking longer than I'd planned, but it could still happen. Except that it couldn't. I already had strong competition.

Babble appeared on December 12, 2006, the second major web publication from a company whose first online magazine, *Nerve*, had set the standard for neurotic confessional online sex essays. I'd written a column called "Bad Sex" for the company for more than a year. Then they fired me and turned the column over to other writers. So the relationship was already a little fractured and raw. It became even more so when they approached me to do something with *Alternadad* before the book appeared. I told them I was working on my own thing, but thanks anyway.

One of Babble's first big articles was a book review called "The Ironic Thing: Why I Hate Parenting Memoirs Like *Alternadad*." "Neal obviously thinks he's so wild because he talks about shit-storms," the reviewer said. "But every parent of every child in the world, as well as dog owners and workers in various segments of the service industry, have experienced shit flung at inconvenient moments, eaten or worse." Babble, almost as desperate for traffic as I was, let me post a response essay. "I think ironic humor is a perfectly acceptable mode of expression when it comes to describing parenthood," I wrote. "When the first thing you do in the morning is deal with the fact that your son has just pissed in his Barrel of Monkeys, is there any other way to respond than with irony and humor?"

This "debate" illuminated nothing other than my own desire to get publicity for my brand. In retrospect, the reviewer had some sharp, if overwritten, points to make. "As a generation," she wrote, "what we know for sure is how to be sarcastic and irreverent. Parenthood is bigger than that. It inspires thankfulness, humility, rage, unfixable guilt over what we may be doing to our children, unfixable sorrow over what we now understand for sure was done to us when we were their age, wonder and a quiet sense of sacredness."

At the time, though, I wasn't interested in thoughtful discussion. I was only interested

in the fact that Babble had something like a million dollars because it was part of an actual business that could bring in big corporate sponsors. It paid its writers. I had about \$1,000, thanks to Blogads, and could pay nobody. My Offsprung writers, understandably, moved on to other things, to be replaced by other writers who also moved on to other things. And yet the community continued. It was a nice group of people who believed in my brand and wanted to support it as best they could. Then Babble struck again, and I struck back.

We called our community section "Playground." In 2008 Babble launched its own community section, also called "Playground." In a blog post on Offsprung, I encouraged my members to go over to Babble's Playground and start talking about how much they preferred Offsprung's. It was clearly a measure of desperation. I got an e-mail from Rufus Griscom, the founder of *Nerve* Media, who referred to the behavior of the Offsprungers as "kinda tacky" and said, "We had no idea that you had social networking functionality on your site. I haven't been there in some time."

A blogger for *New York* found out about the flap—because I told him. He was somewhat sympathetic to my cause, writing, "Griscom has been a privileged person his entire life, after all, and he knows that when poor kids are mean to you, it is just because they are jealous." I continued to lash out on Offsprung, threatening lawsuits and writing, "I wish them luck in their sterile loft community and hope that no more 'kinda tacky' people darken their doorstep."

The branded snake had begun eating its branded tail. My partner, Ben, normally an easygoing, fun guy, sent me the most frustrated e-mail I've ever received from anyone. "Everyone else out there on the site who is still writing, they have worked hard with NO return," he wrote. "Yet you, the majority owner of this site and the person who would potentially benefit the most, are the one complaining about not making any money, complaining about the site not growing, complaining about our ENEMIES."

He was right.

The shadows had only begun to descend.

I took two paid *Alternadad* blogging gigs to support my branding habit. The first was with the website for *Parents* magazine, which refused to do anything related to search-engine optimization and buried its parenting bloggers deep within ugly pink graphics and shampoo ads. No one read that column. The other gig was with the food site *Epicurious.com*, which people did read.

My assignment was to write a column about kids and food. I did an entry, "Intro to Turophilia," that described a trip with my son, Elijah, then four years old, to Whole Foods, where we sampled cheese. He didn't like one sample, spit it out and said, "This cheese is too boring for me." In the end I decided that all the cheese was too expensive, and we went home.

A blogger for the website *Gawker* saw

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the post and wrote a response, titled "Elijah Pollack Is Going to Be a Horror." The writer quoted my post, using it as evidence to describe my son as "big, big trouble in the making" and said this about the kid: "He is essentially a formless mass that has been fashioned into what he is by his father. But if we were to come across a sculpture that resembled, for instance, a large penis, we would be remiss not to mention that fact simply because the statue was created by a sculptor and did not form itself."

The moment I read that, I lost my taste for the whole branding enterprise. I recognized that, largely by my own design, I was a public figure of sorts. And when I said something obnoxious in public, or even just *appeared* in public, I was fodder for snarky websites like Gawker. I didn't always like what they said, but for the most part I didn't mind the press. And I had certainly slung enough snark in my time to warrant what they dished. But when they started calling my sweet, innocent son a "horror" and "the worst" and barely even mentioned me at all, that's when I started to doubt the brand I'd tried to create.

I sent a self-pitying e-mail to various friends and media people. Gawker got hold of it, which I knew it would. The writer did a post in which he referred to "Elijah blowback" and made a snide reference to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. He started getting positive attention for attacking me. As such, he created a fake son character for himself named Mordecai, about whom he began to blog. After I made a few histrionic phone calls to the editors of *Epicurious*, they made the decision to "rotate me out" of their daily blog mix.

Everyone was leaving the Alternadad business.

In two years, I had taken a potentially lucrative media property and reduced it to an unread blog on Parents.com. But I still had Offsprung. I cashed in a couple hundred bucks of my ad profits and gave it to a local print shop in exchange for a box of glossy promotional postcards, which I took to the BlogHer convention in San Francisco.

BlogHer is a kind of consortium of mommy bloggers and one of the foremost proponents of the art of personal branding. Its support has brought along quite a few excellent writers who otherwise wouldn't have gotten much attention—as well as quite a few terrible ones. Every year, its members gather in large numbers to share strategies for generating online revenue, to talk about their kids and to drink lots of cocktails. Occasionally men get to attend, but the women run the show.

I rode buses to parties, passing out my postcards and trying to talk up an enterprise in which I no longer believed. Everyone was trying to brand herself, but it was all the same brand: I have a kid or kids, and I am manic-depressive/a for-

mer beauty queen/from Kansas/24 years old. It seemed like the world was vanishing into its own navel. The BlogHer crew didn't care about Offsprung. They had their own branded parenting empires to create, and they were doing it a lot more smoothly than I had. How had I let things get like this? How had we all?

My fellow BlogHer attendees, many of them nice, kind, smart and sincere, and some of them sleazy phonies who filled my soul with dread, made me sad. We were a mostly college-educated and largely middle-class group with no skills other than word processing and a little graphic design and no resources other than our wits and our amusing anecdotes. Our business cards bore retro logos and winky slogans that turned our adulthoods into small-batch branded products that most humans would never consume. I'd joined an army of Erma Bombeck clones all marching toward the same slender piece of leftover cherry pie. Arianna Huffington made millions aggregating content. We made hundreds doing the same thing to what passed for our lives. A generation had strip-mined its collective domestic memory for grocery money.

I returned home. Ben lost focus on Offsprung. It began to develop technical glitches, and he was slow to fix them. Members started sending me panicky e-mails, and I didn't know how to respond. Eventually, a kind Offsprung couple, Alan and Kathy, came to me with a proposal. They could see that my heart had gone out of Offsprung, and they offered to take the site off my hands. It was a relief to get the offer, like when you finally decide to put down an elderly pet.

They wanted to move Offsprung to a low-maintenance social-networking platform called Ning. I told them they'd have to pay for any transfer fees themselves, but otherwise they could have it for free. The transfer took about a month. Most of the community went with them. I agreed to contribute an "advice" column, to which I've submitted seven entries in two years. The brand died like a dog in the sun, and yet it still lives, in a way.

Last fall I was in Seattle on a book tour. A longtime Offsprung member attended my reading. Afterward, she came up to me. "I just want to thank you for what you did with Offsprung," she said. "It helped a lot of people through a lot of hard times."

I thanked her, but it felt bittersweet. My ego and greed had blinded me so much that I'd barely even considered the idea of establishing a site to *help* people. The fact that it had was a fortunate by-product. Offsprung is still out there, still limping along and still helping more or less the same people it was when I was in charge. It's not flashy or particularly interesting to nonmembers, and it's certainly not a brand. But it's a good thing. Knowing that I helped make it will have to be enough.



AYN RAND

(continued from page 125)

drifts at the mercy of random feelings or unidentified urges and is capable of any evil, because he is totally out of control of his own life. In order to be in control of your life, you have to have a purpose—a productive purpose.

PLAYBOY: If a person organizes his life around a single, neatly defined purpose, isn't he in danger of becoming extremely narrow in his horizons?

RAND: Quite the contrary. A central purpose serves to integrate all the other concerns of a man's life. It establishes the hierarchy, the relative importance, of his values, it saves him from pointless inner conflicts, it permits him to enjoy life on a wide scale and to carry that enjoyment into any area open to his mind; whereas a man without a purpose is lost in chaos. He does not know what his values are. He does not know how to judge. He cannot tell what is or is not important to him, and therefore he drifts helplessly at the mercy of any chance stimulus or any whim of the moment. He can enjoy nothing. He spends his life searching for some value which he will never find.

PLAYBOY: Couldn't the attempt to rule whim out of life, to act in a totally rational fashion, be viewed as conducive to a juiceless, joyless kind of existence?

RAND: I truly must say that I don't know what you are talking about. Reason is man's tool of knowledge, the faculty that enables him to perceive the facts of reality. To act rationally means to act in accordance with the facts of reality. Emotions are not tools of cognition. What you feel tells you nothing about the facts; it merely tells you something about your estimate of the facts. Emotions are the result of your value judgments; they are caused by your basic premises, which you may hold consciously or subconsciously, which may be right or wrong. A whim is an emotion whose cause you neither know nor care to discover. Now what does it mean, to act on whim? It means that a man acts like a zombie, without any knowledge of what he deals with, what he wants to accomplish or what motivates him. It means that a man acts in a state of temporary insanity. Is this what you call juicy or colorful? I think the only juice that can come out of such a situation is blood. To act against the facts of reality can result only in destruction.

PLAYBOY: Should one ignore emotions altogether?

RAND: Of course not. One should merely keep them in their place. An emotion is an automatic response, an automatic effect of man's value premises. An effect, not a cause. There is no necessary clash, no dichotomy between man's reason and his emotions—provided he observes their proper relationship. A rational man knows—or makes it a point to discover—the source of his emotions, the basic premises from which they come; if his premises are wrong, he corrects them. He never acts on emotions for which he cannot account, the meaning of which he does not understand.

PLAYBOY: According to your philosophy, work and achievement are the highest goals of life. Do you regard as immoral those who find greater fulfillment in the warmth of friendship and family ties?

RAND: If they place such things as friendship and family ties above their own productive work, yes, then they are immoral. Friendship, family life and human relationships are not primary in a man's life. A man who places others first, above his own creative work, is an emotional parasite; whereas, if he places his work first, there is no conflict between his work and his enjoyment of human relationships.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe that women as well as men should organize their lives around work—and if so, what kind of work?

RAND: Of course. I believe that women are human beings. What is proper for a man is proper for a woman. I would not attempt to prescribe what kind of work a man should do, and I would not attempt it in regard to women. Women can choose their work according to their own purpose and premises in the same manner as men do.

PLAYBOY: In your opinion, is a woman immoral who chooses to devote herself to home and family instead of a career?

RAND: Not immoral—I would say she is impractical, because a home cannot be a full-time occupation, except when her children are young.

PLAYBOY: Where, would you say, should romantic love fit into the life of a rational person whose single driving passion is work?

RAND: It is his greatest reward. The only man capable of experiencing a profound romantic love is the man driven by passion for his work—because love is an expression of self-esteem, of the deepest values in a man's or a woman's character. One falls in love with the person who shares these values. If a man has no clearly defined values and no moral character, he is not able to appreciate another person. In this respect, I would like to quote from *The Fountainhead*, in which the hero utters a line that has often been quoted by readers: "To say 'I love you' one must know first how to say the 'I.'"

PLAYBOY: You have denounced the puritan notion that physical love is ugly or evil; yet you have written, "Indiscriminate desire and unselective indulgence are possible only to those who regard sex and themselves as evil." Would you say that discriminate and selective indulgence in sex is moral?

RAND: I would say that a selective and discriminate sex life is not an indulgence. The term *indulgence* implies that it is an action taken lightly and casually. I say that sex is one of the most important aspects of man's life and, therefore, must never be approached lightly or casually. Sex must not be anything other than a response to values. And that is why I consider promiscuity immoral. Not because sex is evil but because sex is too good and too important.

PLAYBOY: Does this mean, in your view, that sex should involve only married partners?

RAND: Not necessarily. What sex should involve is a very serious relationship. I consider marriage a very important institution, but it is important when and if two people have found the person with whom

they wish to spend the rest of their lives—a question of which no man or woman can be automatically certain. When one is certain that one's choice is final, then marriage is, of course, a desirable state. But this does not mean that any relationship based on less than total certainty is improper. I think the question of an affair or a marriage depends on the knowledge and the position of the two persons involved and should be left up to them. Either is moral, provided only that both parties take the relationship seriously and that it is based on values.

PLAYBOY: As one who champions the cause of enlightened self-interest, how do you feel about dedicating one's life to hedonistic self-gratification?

RAND: I am profoundly opposed to the philosophy of hedonism. Hedonism is the doctrine which holds that the good is whatever gives you pleasure and, therefore, pleasure is the standard of morality. Objectivism holds that the good must be defined by a rational standard of value, that pleasure is not a first cause but only a consequence, that only the pleasure which proceeds from a rational value judgment can be regarded as moral, that pleasure, as such, is not a guide to action nor a standard of morality. My philosophy is the opposite of hedonism. I hold that one cannot achieve happiness by random, arbitrary or subjective means. One can achieve happiness only on the basis of rational values.

PLAYBOY: You attack the idea that sex is "impervious to reason." But isn't sex a non-rational biological instinct?

RAND: No. To begin with, man does not possess any instincts. Physically, sex is merely a capacity. But how a man will exercise this capacity and whom he will find attractive depends on his standard of value. It depends on his premises, which he may hold consciously or subconsciously and which determine his choices. It is in this manner that his philosophy directs his sex life.

PLAYBOY: Isn't the individual equipped with powerful, nonrational biological drives?

RAND: He is not. A man is equipped with a certain kind of physical mechanism and certain needs but without any knowledge of how to fulfill them. For instance, man needs food. He experiences hunger. But unless he learns first to identify this hunger, then to know that he needs food and how to obtain it, he will starve. The need, the hunger, will not tell him how to satisfy it. Man is born with certain physical and psychological needs, but he can neither discover them nor satisfy them without the use of his mind. Man has to discover what is right or wrong for him as a rational being. His so-called urges will not tell him what to do.

PLAYBOY: In *Atlas Shrugged* you write, "There are two sides to every issue. One side is right and the other is wrong, but the middle is always evil." Isn't this a rather black-and-white set of values?

RAND: I most emphatically advocate a black-and-white view of the world. What is meant by the expression *black and white*? It means good and evil. Before you can identify anything as gray, as middle of the road, you have to know what is black

and what is white, because gray is merely a mixture of the two. And when you have established that one alternative is good and the other is evil, there is no justification for the choice of a mixture. There is no justification ever for choosing any part of what you know to be evil.

PLAYBOY: Then you believe in absolutes?

RAND: I do.

PLAYBOY: Can't objectivism, then, be called a dogma?

RAND: No. A dogma is a set of beliefs accepted on faith; that is, without rational justification or against rational evidence. A dogma is a matter of blind faith. Objectivism is the exact opposite. Objectivism tells you that you must not accept any idea or conviction unless you can demonstrate its truth by means of reason.

PLAYBOY: You have said you are opposed to faith. Do you believe in God?

RAND: Certainly not.

PLAYBOY: You've been quoted as saying, "The cross is the symbol of torture, of the sacrifice of the ideal to the nonideal. I prefer the dollar sign." Do you truly feel that 2,000 years of Christianity can be summed up with the word *torture*?

RAND: To begin with, I never said that. It's not my style. I don't say I prefer the dollar sign—that is cheap nonsense. What is correct is that I do regard the cross as the symbol of the sacrifice of the ideal to the nonideal. Christ, in terms of the Christian philosophy, is the human ideal. He personifies that which men should strive to emulate. Yet, according to the Christian mythology, he died on the cross not for his own sins but for the sins of the nonideal people. In other words, a man of perfect virtue was sacrificed for men who are vicious and who are expected or supposed to accept that sacrifice. If I were a Christian, nothing could make me more indignant than that: the notion of sacrificing the ideal to the nonideal, or virtue to vice. And it is in the name of that symbol that men are asked to sacrifice themselves for their inferiors. That is precisely how the symbolism is used. That is torture.

PLAYBOY: Has no religion, in your estimation, ever offered anything of constructive value to human life?

RAND: Qua religion, no—in the sense of blind belief, belief unsupported by, or contrary to, the facts of reality and the conclusions of reason. Faith, as such, is extremely detrimental to human life: It is the negation of reason. But you must remember that religion is an early form of philosophy, that the first attempts to explain the universe, to give a coherent frame of reference to man's life and a code of moral values, were made by religion, before men graduated or developed enough to have philosophy. And, as philosophies, some religions have very valuable moral points.

PLAYBOY: In your early novel *Anthem*, your protagonist declares, "It is my will which chooses, and the choice of my will is the only edict I respect." Isn't this anarchism? Is one's own desire or will the only law one must respect?

RAND: Not one's own will. This is, more or less, a poetic expression made clear by

the total context of the story in *Anthem*. One's own rational judgment. You see, I use the term *free will* in a totally different sense from the one usually attached to it. Free will consists of man's ability to think or not to think. The act of thinking is man's primary act of choice. A rational man will never be guided by desires or whims, only by values based on his rational judgment. That is the only authority he can recognize. This does not mean anarchy, because, if a man wants to live in a free, civilized society, he would, in reason, have to choose to observe the laws, when those laws are objective, rational and valid. I have written an article on this subject for *The Objectivist Newsletter*—on the need and proper function of a government.

PLAYBOY: What, in your view, is the proper function of a government?

RAND: Basically, there is really only one proper function: the protection of individual rights. Since rights can be violated only by physical force, and by certain derivatives of physical force, the proper function of government is to protect men from those who initiate the use of physical force: from those who are criminals. Force, in a free society, may be used only in retaliation

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tion and only against those who initiate its use. This is the proper task of government: to serve as a policeman who protects men from the use of force.

PLAYBOY: If force may be used only in retaliation against force, does the government have the right to use force to collect taxes, for example, or to draft soldiers?

RAND: In principle, I believe that taxation should be voluntary, like everything else. But how one would implement this is a very complex question. I can only suggest certain methods, but I would not attempt to insist on them as a definitive answer. A government lottery, for instance, used in many countries in Europe, is one good method of voluntary taxation. There are others. Taxes should be voluntary contributions for the proper governmental services which people do need and therefore would be and should be willing to pay for—as they pay for insurance. But, of course, this is a problem for a distant future, for the time when men will establish a fully free social system. It would be the last, not the first, reform to advocate. As to the draft, it is improper and unconstitutional. It is a violation of fundamental rights, of a man's right to his own life. No man has the right to send another man to fight and die for

his, the sender's, cause. A country has no right to force men into involuntary servitude. Armies should be strictly voluntary, and as military authorities will tell you, volunteer armies are the best armies.

PLAYBOY: What about other public needs? Do you consider the post office, for example, a legitimate function of government?

RAND: My position is fully consistent. Not only the post office but streets, roads and above all schools, should all be privately owned and privately run. I advocate the separation of state and economics. The government should be concerned only with those issues which involve the use of force. This means: the police, the armed services and the law courts to settle disputes among men. Nothing else. Everything else should be privately run and would be much better run.

PLAYBOY: Would you create any new government departments or agencies?

RAND: No, and I truly cannot discuss things that way. I am not a government planner nor do I spend my time inventing Utopias. I'm talking about principles whose practical applications are clear. If I have said that I am opposed to the initiation of force, what else has to be discussed?

PLAYBOY: What about force in foreign policy? You have said that any free nation had the right to invade Nazi Germany during World War II—

RAND: Certainly.

PLAYBOY: And that any free nation today has the moral right—though not the duty—to invade Soviet Russia, Cuba or any other "slave pen." Correct?

RAND: Correct. A dictatorship—a country that violates the rights of its own citizens—is an outlaw and can claim no rights.

PLAYBOY: Would you actively advocate that the United States invade Cuba or the Soviet Union?

RAND: Not at present. I don't think it's necessary. I would advocate that which the Soviet Union fears above all else: economic boycott. I would advocate a blockade of Cuba and an economic boycott of Soviet Russia, and you would see both those regimes collapse without the loss of a single American life.

PLAYBOY: Would you favor U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations?

RAND: Yes. I do not sanction the grotesque pretense of an organization allegedly devoted to world peace and human rights, which includes Soviet Russia, the worst aggressor and bloodiest butcher in history, as one of its members. The notion of protecting rights, with Soviet Russia among the protectors, is an insult to the concept of rights and to the intelligence of any man who is asked to endorse or sanction such an organization. I do not believe that an individual should cooperate with criminals, and, for all the same reasons, I do not believe that free countries should cooperate with dictatorships.

PLAYBOY: Would you advocate severing diplomatic relations with Russia?

RAND: Yes.

PLAYBOY: You are a declared anticommunist, antisocialist and antiliberal. Yet you reject the notion that you are a conservative.

In fact, you have reserved some of your angriest criticism for conservatives. Where do you stand politically?

RAND: Correction. I never describe my position in terms of negatives. I am an advocate of laissez-faire capitalism, of individual rights—there are no others—of individual freedom. It is on this ground that I oppose any doctrine which proposes the sacrifice of the individual to the collective, such as communism, socialism, the welfare state, fascism, Nazism and modern liberalism. I oppose the conservatives on the same ground. The conservatives are advocates of a mixed economy and of a welfare state. Their difference from the liberals is only one of degree, not of principle.

PLAYBOY: Are there any political groups in the United States today of which you approve?

RAND: Political groups, as such—no. Is there any political group today which is fully consistent? Such groups today are guided by or advocate blatant contradictions.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any personal political aspirations yourself? Have you ever considered running for office?

RAND: Certainly not. And I trust that you don't hate me enough to wish such a thing on me.

PLAYBOY: Throughout your work you argue that the way in which the contemporary world is organized, even in the capitalist countries, submerges the individual and stifles initiative. In *Atlas Shrugged*, [the protagonist] John Galt leads a strike of the men of the mind—which results in the collapse of the collectivist society around them. Do you think the time has come for the artists, intellectuals and creative businessmen of today to withdraw their talents from society in this way?

RAND: No, not yet. But before I explain, I must correct one part of your question. What we have today is not a capitalist society but a mixed economy—that is, a mixture of freedom and controls, which, by the presently dominant trend, is moving toward dictatorship. The action in *Atlas Shrugged* takes place at a time when society has reached the stage of dictatorship. When and if this happens, that will be the time to go on strike, but not until then.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean by dictatorship? How would you define it?

RAND: A dictatorship is a country that does not recognize individual rights, whose government holds total, unlimited power over men.

PLAYBOY: What is the dividing line, by your definition, between a mixed economy and a dictatorship?

RAND: A dictatorship has four characteristics: one-party rule, executions without trial for political offenses, expropriation or nationalization of private property, and censorship. Above all, this last. So long as men can speak and write freely, so long as there is no censorship, they still have a chance to reform their society or to put it on a better road. When censorship is imposed, that is the sign that men should go on strike intellectually, by which I mean, should not cooperate with the social system in any way whatever.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe that objectivism as a philosophy will eventually sweep the world?

RAND: Nobody can answer a question of that kind. Men have free will. There is no guarantee that they will choose to be rational, at any one time or in any one generation. Nor is it necessary for a philosophy to "sweep the world." If you ask the question in a somewhat different form, if you say, do I think that objectivism will be the philosophy of the future, I would say yes, but with this qualification: If men turn to reason, if they are not destroyed by dictatorship and precipitated into another Dark Ages, if men remain free long enough to have time to think, then objectivism is the philosophy they will accept.

PLAYBOY: Why?

RAND: In any historical period when men were free, it has always been the most rational philosophy that won. It is from this perspective that I would say, yes, objectivism will win. But there is no guarantee, no predetermined necessity about it.

PLAYBOY: You are sharply critical of the world as you see it today, and your books offer radical proposals for changing not merely the shape of society but the very way

in which most men work, think and love. Are you optimistic about man's future?

RAND: Yes, I am optimistic. Collectivism, as an intellectual power and a moral ideal, is dead. But freedom and individualism, and their political expression, capitalism, have not yet been discovered. It is significant that the dying collectivist philosophy of today has produced nothing but a cult of depravity, impotence and despair. Look at modern art and literature with their image of man as a helpless, mindless creature doomed to failure, frustration and destruction. This may be the collectivists' psychological confession, but it is not an image of man. If it were, we would never have risen from the cave. But we did. Look around you and look at history. You will see the achievements of man's mind. You will see man's unlimited potentiality for greatness and the faculty that makes it possible. You will see that man is not a helpless monster by nature, but he becomes one when he discards that faculty: his mind. And if you ask me, what is greatness?—I will answer, it is the capacity to live by three fundamental values: reason, purpose, self-esteem.



"And would you care for a wife away from your wife?"

LIVE BY NIGHT

(continued from page 65)

Tim Hickey, had assured him was owned by some harmless Greeks recently arrived from Maryland. But when they walked into the back room, they found a poker game in full swing, the five players drinking amber Canadian from heavy crystal glasses, a gray carpet of cigarette smoke hanging overhead. A pile of money rose from the center of the table.

Not one of the men looked Greek. Or harmless. They had hung their suit jackets over the backs of their chairs, which left the guns on their hips exposed. When Joe, Dion and Paulo walked in with pistols extended, none of the men went for the guns, but Joe could tell a couple were thinking about it.

A woman had been serving drinks to the table. She put the tray aside, lifted her cigarette out of an ashtray and took a drag, looked about to yawn with three guns pointed at her. Like she was going to ask to see something more impressive for an encore.

Joe and the Bartolos wore hats pulled down over their eyes, and black handkerchiefs covered the lower halves of their faces. Which was a good thing, because if anyone in this crowd recognized them, they'd have about half a day left to live.

A walk in the park, Tim Hickey had said. Hit them at dawn, when the only people left in the place would be a couple of mokes in the counting room.

As opposed to five gun thugs playing poker.

One of the players said, "You know whose place this is?"

Joe didn't recognize the guy, but he knew the guy next to him—Brenny Loomis, ex-boxer and a member of the Albert White Mob, Tim Hickey's biggest rival in the bootlegging business. Lately, Albert was rumored to be stockpiling Thompson machine guns for an impending war. The word was out—choose a side or choose a headstone.

Joe said, "Everyone does as they're told, no one gets so much as a scratch."

The guy beside Loomis ran his mouth again. "I asked you know whose game this was, you fucking dunce."

Dion Bartolo hit him in the mouth with his pistol. Hit him hard enough to knock him out of his chair and draw some blood. It got everyone else thinking how much better it was to be the one who wasn't getting pistol-whipped than the one who was.

Joe said, "Everyone but the girl, get on your knees. Put your hands behind your head and lace the fingers."

Brenny Loomis locked eyes with Joe. "I'll call your mother when this is over, boy. Suggest a nice dark suit for your coffin."

Loomis, a former club boxer at Mechanics Hall and sparring partner for Mean Mo Mullins, was said to have a punch like a bag of cue balls. He killed people for Albert White. Not for a living, exclusively, but rumor was he wanted Albert to know that, should it ever become a full-time position, he had seniority.

Joe had never experienced fear like he did looking into Loomis's tiny brown eyes, but he gestured at the floor with his gun nonetheless, quite surprised that his hand didn't shake. Brendan Loomis laced his hands behind his head and got on his knees. Once he did, the others did the same.

Joe said to the girl, "Come over here, miss. We won't harm you."

She stubbed out her cigarette and looked at him like she was thinking about lighting another, maybe freshening her drink. She crossed to him, a girl near his own age, maybe 20 or so, with winter eyes and skin so pale he could almost see through it to the blood and tissue underneath.

He watched her come as the Bartolo brothers relieved the cardplayers of their weapons. The pistols made heavy thumps as they tossed them onto a nearby blackjack table, but the girl didn't even flinch. In her eyes, firelights danced behind the late-December gray.

She stepped right up to his gun and said, "And what will the gentleman be having with his robbery this morning?"

Joe handed her one of the two canvas sacks he'd walked in with. "The money on the table, please."

"Coming right up, sir."

As she crossed back to the table, he pulled one pair of handcuffs from the other sack, then tossed the sack to Paulo. Paulo bent by the first cardplayer and handcuffed his wrists at the small of his back, then moved on to the next.

The girl swept the pot off the center of the table—Joe noting not just bills but watches and jewelry in there too—and then gathered up everyone's stakes. Paulo finished cuffing the men on the floor and then went to work gagging them.

Joe scanned the room—the roulette wheel was behind him, the craps table against the wall under the stairs. He counted three blackjack tables and one baccarat table. Six slot machines took up the rear wall. A low table with a dozen phones on top constituted the wire service, a board behind it listing the horses from last night's 12th race at Readville. The only other door besides the one they'd come through was chalk-marked with a *T* for toilet, which made sense because people had to piss when they drank.

Except that when they'd come through the bar, Joe had seen two bathrooms, which would certainly suffice. And this bathroom had a padlock on it.

He looked over at Brenny Loomis, lying on the floor with a gag in his mouth but watching the wheels turn in Joe's head. Joe watched the wheels in Loomis's head do their own turning. And he knew what he'd known the moment he saw that padlock—the bathroom wasn't a bathroom.

It was the counting room.

Albert White's counting room.

Judging by the business Hickey casinos had done the past two days—the first chilly weekend of October—Joe suspected a small fortune sat behind that door.

Albert White's small fortune.

The girl came back to him with the bag of poker swag. "Your dessert, sir," she said

and handed him the bag. He couldn't get over how level her gaze was. She didn't just stare at him, she stared through him. He was certain she could see his face behind the handkerchief and the low hat. Some morning he'd pass her walking to get cigarettes, hear her yell, "That's him!" He wouldn't even have time to close his eyes before the bullets hit him.

He took the sack and dangled the set of cuffs from his finger. "Turn around."

"Yes, sir. Right away, sir." She turned her back to him and crossed her arms behind her. Her knuckles pressed against the small of her back, the fingertips dangling over her ass, Joe realizing the last thing he should be doing was concentrating on anyone's ass, period.

He snapped the first cuff around her wrist. "I'll be gentle."

"Don't put yourself out on my account." She looked back over her shoulder at him. "Just try not to leave marks."

Jesus.

"What's your name?"

"Emma Gould," she said. "What's yours?"

"Wanted."

"By all the girls or just the law?"

He couldn't keep up with her and cover the room at the same time, so he turned her to him and pulled the gag out of his pocket. The gags were men's socks that Paulo Bartolo had stolen from the Woolworths where he worked.

"You're going to put a sock in my mouth."

"Yes."

"A sock. In my mouth."

"Never been used before," Joe said. "I promise."

She cocked an eyebrow. It was the same tarnished-brass color as her hair and soft and shiny as ermine.

"I wouldn't lie to you," Joe said and felt, in that moment, as if he were telling the truth.

"That's usually what liars say." She opened her mouth like a child resigned to a spoonful of medicine, and he thought of saying something else to her but he couldn't think of what. He thought of asking her something, just so he could hear her voice again.

Her eyes pulsed a bit when he pushed the sock into her mouth and then she tried to spit it out—they usually did—shaking her head, but he was ready for her. He clamped his hand over her mouth. She looked at him as if, until this point, the whole transaction had been perfectly honorable—a kick, even—but now he'd gone and sullied it.

"It's half silk," he said.

Another arch of her eyebrow.

"The sock," he said. "Go join your friends."

She knelt by Brendan Loomis, who'd never taken his eyes off Joe, not once the whole time.

Joe looked at the door to the counting room, looked at the padlock on the door. He let Loomis follow his gaze and then he looked Loomis in the eyes. Loomis's eyes went dull as he waited to see what the next move would be.

Joe held his gaze and said, "Let's go, boys. We're done."

Loomis blinked once, slowly, and Joe decided to take that as a peace offering—or the possibility of one—and got the hell out of there.

When they left, they drove along the waterfront. The sky was a hard blue streaked with hard yellow. The gulls rose and fell, cawing. The bucket of a ship crane swung in hard over the wharf road, then swung back with a scream as Paulo drove over its shadow. Longshoremen, stevedores and teamsters stood at their pilings, smoking in the bright cold. A group of them threw rocks at the gulls.

Joe rolled down his window, took the cold air on his face, against his eyes. It smelled like salt, fish blood and gasoline.

Dion Bartolo looked back at him from the front seat. "You asked the doll her name?"

Joe said, "Making conversation."

"You cuff her hands like you're putting a pin on her, asking her to the dance?"

Joe leaned his head out the open window for a minute, sucked the dirty air in as deep as he could. Paulo drove off the docks and up toward Broadway, the Nash roadster doing 30 miles an hour easy.

"I seen her before," Paulo said.

Joe pulled his head back in the car. "Where?"

"I don't know. But I did. I know it." He bounced the Nash onto Broadway and they all bounced with it. "You should write her a poem maybe."

"Write her a fucking poem," Joe said. "Why don't you slow down and stop driving like we did something?"

Dion turned toward Joe, placed his arm on the seat back. "He actually wrote a poem to a girl once, my brother."

"No kidding?"

Paulo met his eyes in the rearview mirror and gave him a solemn nod.

"What happened?"

"Nothing," Dion said. "She couldn't read."

They headed south toward Dorchester and got stuck in traffic by a horse that dropped dead just outside Andrew Square. Traffic had to be routed around it and its overturned ice cart. Shards of ice glistened in the cobblestone cracks like metal shavings, and the iceman stood beside the carcass, kicking the horse in the ribs. Joe thought about her the whole way. Her hands had been dry and soft. They were very small and pink at the base of the palms. The veins in her wrist were violet. She had a black freckle on the back of her right ear but not on her left.

The Bartolo brothers lived on Dorchester Avenue above a butcher and a cobbler. The butcher and the cobbler had married sisters and hated each other only slightly less than they hated their wives. This didn't stop them, however, from running a speak-easy in their shared basement. Nightly, people came from the other 16 parishes of Dorchester, as well as from parishes as far away as the North Shore, to drink the best liquor south of Montreal and hear a Negro songstress named Delilah Deluth sing about heartbreak in a place whose unofficial name was the Shoelace, which

infuriated the butcher so much he'd gone bald over it. The Bartolo brothers were in the Shoelace almost every night, which was fine, but going so far as to reside above the place seemed idiotic to Joe. It would only take one legitimate raid by honest cops or T-men, however unlikely that might be, and it would be nothing for them to kick in Paulo and Dion's door and discover money, guns and jewelry that two wops who worked in a department store and a grocer's, respectively, could never account for.

True, the jewelry usually went right back out the door to Hymie Drago, the fence they'd been using since they were teenagers, but the money usually went no further than a gaming table in the back of the Shoelace, or into their mattresses.

Joe leaned against the icebox and watched Paulo put his and his brother's split there that morning, just pull back the sweat-yellowed sheet to reveal one of a series of slits they'd cut into the side, Dion handing the stacks of bills to Paulo and Paulo shoving them in like he was stuffing a holiday bird.

At 23, Paulo was the oldest of them. Dion, younger by two years, seemed older, however, maybe because he was smarter or

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maybe because he was meaner. Joe, who would turn 20 next month, was the youngest of them but had been acknowledged as the brains of the operation since they'd joined forces to knock over newsstands when Joe was 13.

Paulo rose from the floor. "I know where I seen her." He slapped the dust off his knees. Joe came off the icebox. "Where?"

"But he's not sweet on her," Dion said.

"Where?" Joe repeated.

Paulo pointed at the floor. "Downstairs." "In the Shoelace?"

Paulo nodded. "She come in with Albert." "Albert who?"

"Albert, the King of Montenegro," Dion said. "Albert Who Do You Think?"

Unfortunately, there was only one Albert in Boston who could be referred to without a last name. Albert White, the guy they'd just robbed.

Albert was a former hero of the Philippine Moro Wars and a former policeman who'd lost his job, like Joe's own brother, after the strike in '19. Currently he was the owner of White's Garage and Automotive Glass Repair (formerly Halloran's Tire and Automotive), White's Downtown Café (formerly Halloran's Lunch Counter) and White's Freight and Transcontinental

Shipping (formerly Halloran's Trucking). Rumored to have personally rubbed out Bitsy Halloran. Bitsy got himself shot 11 times in an oak phone booth inside a Rexall drugstore in Egleston Square. So many shots fired at such close range, they set the booth on fire. It was rumored Albert had bought the charred remains of the phone booth, restored it, kept it in the study of the home he owned on Ashmont Hill and made all his calls from it.

"So she's Albert's girl." It deflated Joe to think of her as just another gangster's moll. He'd already had visions of them racing across the country in a stolen car, unencumbered by a past or a future, chasing a red sky and a setting sun all the way to Mexico.

"I seen them together three times," Paulo said.

"So now it's three times."

Paulo looked down at his fingers for confirmation. "Yeah."

"What's she doing fetching drinks at his poker games then?"

"What else she going to do?" Dion said. "Retire?"

"No, but..."

"Albert's married," Dion said. "Who's to say how long a party gal lasts on his arm?"

"She strike you as a party gal?"

Dion slowly thumbed the cap off a bottle of Canadian gin, his flat eyes on Joe. "She didn't strike me as anything but a gal bagged up our money. I couldn't even tell you what color her hair was. I couldn't—"

"Dark blonde. Almost light brown, but not quite."

"She's Albert's girl." Dion poured them all a drink.

"So she is," Joe said.

"Bad enough we just knocked over the man's joint. Don't go getting any ideas about taking anything else from him. All right?"

Joe didn't say anything.

"All right?" Dion repeated.

"All right." Joe reached for his drink. "Fine."

She didn't come into the Shoelace for the next three nights. Joe was sure of it—he'd been there, open to close, every night.

Albert came in, wearing one of his signature pin-striped off-white suits. Like he was in Lisbon or something. He wore them with brown fedoras that matched his brown shoes, which matched the brown pinstripes. When the snow came, he wore brown suits with off-white pinstripes, an off-white hat and white-and-brown spats. When February rolled around, he went in for dark brown suits and dark brown shoes with a black hat, but Joe imagined, for the most part, he'd be easy to gun down at night. Shoot him in an alley from 20 yards away with a cheap pistol. You wouldn't even need a streetlamp to see that white turn red.

Albert, Albert, Joe thought as Albert glided past his bar stool in the Shoelace on the third night, I could kill you if I knew the first thing about killing.

Problem was, Albert didn't go into alleys much and when he did he had four bodyguards with him. And even if you did get through them and you did kill him—and Joe, no killer, wondered why the fuck he found himself thinking about killing Albert White in the first place—all you'd manage to do would be to derail a business empire for Albert White's partners, who included the police, the Italians, the Jew mobs in Mattapan and several legitimate businessmen, including bankers and investors with interests in Cuban and Florida sugarcane. Derailing business like that in a city this small would be like feeding zoo animals with fresh cuts on your hand.

Albert looked at him once. Looked at him in such a way that Joe thought, *He knows, he knows. He knows I robbed him. Knows I want his girl. He knows.*

But Albert said, "Got a light?"

Joe struck a match off the bar and lit Albert White's cigarette.

When Albert blew out the match, he blew smoke into Joe's face. He said, "Thanks, kid," and walked away, the man's flesh as white as his suit, the man's lips as red as the blood that flowed in and out of his heart.

The fourth day after the robbery, Joe played a hunch and went back to the furniture warehouse. He almost missed her; apparently the secretaries ended their shift the same time as the laborers, and the secretaries ran small while the forklift operators and stevedores cast wider shadows. The men came out with their longshoremen's hooks hanging from the shoulders of their dirty jackets, talking loud and swarming the young women, whistling and telling jokes only they laughed at. The women must have been used to it, though, because they managed to move their own circle out of the larger one, and some of the men stayed behind, and others straggled, and a few more broke off to head toward the worst-kept secret on the docks—a houseboat that had been serving alcohol since the first sun that rose on Boston under Prohibition.

The pack of women stayed tight and moved smoothly up the dock and Joe only saw her because another girl with the same color hair stopped to adjust her heel and Emma's face took her place in the crowd.

Joe left the spot where he'd been standing, near the loading dock of the Gillette Company, and fell into step about 50 yards behind the group. He told himself she was Albert White's girl. Told himself he was out of his mind and he needed to stop this now. Not only should he not be following Albert White's girl along the waterfront of South Boston, he shouldn't even be in the state until he learned for sure whether or not anyone could finger him for the poker game robbery. Tim Hickey was down south on a rum deal and couldn't fill in the blanks about how they'd ended up knocking over the wrong card game, and the Bartolo brothers were keeping their heads down and noses clean until they heard what was what, but here was Joe, supposedly the smart one, sniff-

ing around Emma Gould like a starving dog following the scent of a cook fire.

Walk away, walk away, walk away.

Joe knew the voice was right. The voice was reason. And if not reason, then his guardian angel.

Problem was, he wasn't interested in guardian angels today. He was interested in her.

The group of women walked off the waterfront and dispersed at Broadway Station. Most walked to a bench on the streetcar side, but Emma descended into the subway. Joe gave her a head start, then followed her through the turnstiles and down another set of steps and onto a northbound train. It was crowded on the train and hot but he never took his eyes off her, which was a good thing because she left the train one stop later, at South Station.

South Station was a transfer station where three subway lines, two el lines, a streetcar line, two bus lines and the commuter rail all converged. Stepping out of the car and onto the platform turned him into a billiard ball on the break—he was bounced, pinned and bounced again. He lost sight of her. He was not a tall man like his brothers, one of whom was tall and the other abnormally so. But thank God he wasn't short, just medium. He stepped up on his toes and tried to press through the throng that way. It made the going slower, but he got a flash of her butterscotch hair bobbing by the transfer tunnel to the Atlantic Avenue Elevated.

He reached the platform just as the cars arrived. She stood two doors ahead of him in the same car when the train left the station and the city opened up in front of them, its blues and browns and brick red deepening in the onset of dusk. Windows in the office buildings had turned yellow. Streetlamps came on, block by block. The harbor bled out from the edges of the skyline. Emma leaned

against a window and Joe watched it all unfurl behind her. She stared out blankly at the crowded car, her eyes alighting on nothing but wary just the same. They were so pale, her eyes, paler even than her skin. The pale of very cold gin. Her jaw and nose were both slightly pointed and dusted with freckles. Nothing about her invited approach. She seemed locked behind her own cold and beautiful face.

And what will the gentleman be having with his robbery this morning?

Just try not to leave marks.

That's usually what liars say.

When they passed through Battery-march Station and rattled over the North End, Joe looked down at the ghetto, teeming with Italians—Italian people, Italian dialects, Italian customs and food—and he couldn't help but think of his oldest brother, Danny, the Irish cop who'd loved the Italian ghetto so much he'd lived and worked there. Danny was a big man, taller than just about anyone Joe had ever met. He'd been a hell of a boxer, a hell of a cop, and he knew little of fear. An organizer and vice president of the policemen's union, he'd met the fate of every cop who'd chosen to go out on strike in September 1919—he'd lost his job without hope of reinstatement and been blackballed from all law enforcement positions on the Eastern Seaboard. It broke him. Or so the story went. He'd ended up in a Negro section of Tulsa, Oklahoma that had burned to the ground in a riot four years ago. Since then, Joe's family had heard only rumors about his whereabouts and those of his wife, Nora—Austin, Baltimore, Philadelphia.

Growing up, Joe had adored his brother. Then he'd come to hate him. Now he mostly didn't think about him. When he did, he had to admit, he missed his laugh.

Down the other end of the car, Emma Gould said, "Excuse me, excuse me," as she worked her way toward the doors. Joe looked out the window and saw that



"You're going to get lucky tonight. The woman who turns you down happens to be lousy in bed."

they were approaching City Square in Charlestown.

Charlestown. No wonder she hadn't gotten rattled with a gun pointed at her. In Charlestown, they brought .38s to the dinner table, used the barrels to stir their coffee.

He followed her to a two-story house at the end of Union Street. Just before she reached the house, she took a right down a pathway that ran along the side, and by the time Joe got to the alley behind the house, she was gone. He looked up and down the alley—nothing but similar two-story houses, most of them saltbox shacks with rotting window frames and tar patches in the roof. She could have gone into any of them, but she'd chosen the last walkway on the block. He assumed hers was the blue-gray one he was facing, with steel doors over a wooden bulkhead.

Just past the house was a wooden gate. It was locked, so he grabbed the top of it, hoisted himself up and took a look at another alley, narrower than the one he was in. Aside from a few trash cans, it was empty. He let himself back down and searched his pocket for one of the hairpins he rarely left home without.

Half a minute later he stood on the other side of the gate and waited.

It didn't take long. This time of day—quitting time—it never did. Two pairs of footsteps came up the alley, two men talking about the latest plane that had gone down trying to cross the Atlantic, no sign of the pilot, an Englishman, or the wreckage. One second it was in the air, the next it was gone for good. One of the men knocked on the bulkhead, and after a few seconds, Joe heard him say, "Blacksmith."

One of the bulkhead doors was pulled back with a whine, and then a few moments later, it was dropped back in place and locked.

Joe waited five minutes, clocking it, and then he exited the second alley and knocked on the bulkhead.

A muffled voice said, "What?"
"Blacksmith."

There was a ratcheting sound as someone threw the bolt back and Joe lifted the bulkhead door. He climbed into the small stairwell and let himself down it, lowering the bulkhead door as he went. At the bottom of the stairwell, he faced a second door. It opened as he was reaching for it. An old bald guy with a cauliflower nose and blown blood vessels splayed across his cheekbones waved him inside, a grim scowl on his face.

It was an unfinished basement with a wood bar in the center of the dirt floor. The tables were wooden barrels, the chairs made of the cheapest pine.

At the bar, Joe sat down near the end closest to the door where a woman with fat that hung off her arms like pregnant bellies served him a bucket of warm beer that tasted a little of soap and a little of sawdust, but not a lot like beer or a lot like alcohol. He looked for Emma Gould in the basement gloom, saw only dockworkers, a couple of sailors and a few working girls.

A piano sat against the brick wall under the stairs, unused, a few keys broken. This was not the kind of speak that went in for entertainment much beyond the bar fight that would open up between the sailors and the dockworkers once they realized they were short two working girls.

She came out the door behind the bar, tying a kerchief off behind her head. She'd traded her blouse and skirt for an off-white fisherman's sweater and brown tweed trousers. She walked the bar, emptying ashtrays and wiping spills, and the woman who'd served Joe his drink removed her apron and went back through the door behind the bar.

When she reached Joe, her eyes flicked on his near-empty bucket. "You want another?"

"Sure."

She glanced at his face and didn't seem fond of the result. "Who told you about the place?"

"Dinny Cooper."

"Don't know him," she said.

That makes two of us, Joe thought, wondering where the fuck he'd come up with such a stupid name. *Dinny*? Why didn't he call the guy Lunch?

She stared at him the way she had before, like she could see the intestines curled inside him, the pink of his lungs, the thoughts that journeyed among the folds of his brain.

"He's from Everett."

She wiped the bar in front of him, still not moving to get his drink. "Yeah?"

"Yeah. We worked the Chelsea side of the Mystic last week. Dredge work?"

She shook her head.

"Anyway, Dinny pointed across the river, told me about this place. Said you served good beer."

"Now I know you're lying."

"Because someone said you serve good beer?"

She stared at him the way she had before, like she could see the intestines curled inside him, the pink of his lungs, the thoughts that journeyed among the folds of his brain.

"The beer's not *that* bad," he said and raised his bucket. "I had some once in this place this one time? I swear to you it—"

"Butter doesn't melt on your tongue, does it?" she said.

"Miss?"

"Does it?"

He decided to try resigned indignation. "I'm not lying, miss. But I can go. I can certainly go." He stood. "What do I owe you for the first one?"

"Two dimes."

She held out her hand and he placed

the coins in them and she placed them in the pocket of her man's trousers. "You won't do it."

"What?" he said.

"Leave. You want me to be so impressed that you *said* you'd leave that I'll decide you're a Clear-Talk Charlie and ask you to stay."

"Nope." He shrugged into his coat. "I'm really going."

She leaned into the bar. "Come here."

He cocked his head.

She crooked a finger at him. "Come here."

He moved a couple of stools out of the way and leaned into the bar.

"You see those fellas in the corner, sitting by the table made out of the apple barrel?"

He didn't need to turn his head. He'd seen them the moment he walked in—three of them. Dockworkers by the look of them, ship masts for shoulders, rocks for hands, eyes you didn't want to catch.

"I see 'em."

"They're my cousins. You see a family resemblance, don't you?"

"No."

She shrugged. "You know what they do for work?"

Their lips were close enough that if they'd opened their mouths and unfurled their tongues, the tips would have met.

"I have no idea."

"They find guys like you who lie about guys named Dinny and they beat them to death." She inched her elbows forward and their faces grew even closer. "Then they throw them in the river."

Joe's scalp and the backs of his ears itched. "Quite the occupation."

"Beats robbing poker games, though, doesn't it?"

For a moment Joe forgot how to move his face.

"Say something clever," Emma Gould said. "Maybe about that sock you put in my mouth. I want to hear something slick and clever."

Joe said nothing.

"And while you're thinking of things," Emma Gould said, "think of this—they're watching us right now. If I tug this earlobe? You won't make the stairs."

He looked at the earlobe she'd indicated with a flick of her pale eyes. The right one. It looked like a chick pea, but softer. He wondered what it would taste like first thing in the morning.

Joe glanced down at the bar. "And if I pull this trigger?"

She followed his gaze, saw the pistol he'd placed between them.

"You won't *reach* your earlobe," he said.

Her eyes left the pistol and rose up his forearm in such a way he could feel the hairs parting. She sculled across the center of his chest and then up his throat and over his chin. When she found his eyes, hers were fuller and sharper, lit with something that had entered the world centuries before civilized things.

"I get off at midnight," she said.

From Live by Night by Dennis Lehane, available in October from William Morrow and Company.



MR. K

(continued from page 100)

defied everything his *confrérie* stood for. James Wynne awaited his arrival.

Rudy Kurniawan was born in Jakarta of Chinese descent. He first showed up in Los Angeles wine circles in 2002, when he began attending wine tastings and John Kapon's elite private dinners. Kurniawan described himself as a "rebel" in his family and told a tale of how, in his early 20s, when he tasted wine for the first time, he wanted to please his father by buying him a good bottle, which inspired him to learn as much as he could.

Mr. K amassed a collection that amazed his new friend Kapon. In 2003, with what he claimed was funds from his wealthy family back in China, Kurniawan began a legendary buying spree, then pouring his finds for his new high-roller friends.

He told those closest to him that he had a substantial allowance. By late 2003, the rapture was full-blown. In September of that year he hosted an elite dinner for 22 guests at Los Angeles's exclusive French restaurant *Mélisse*. Twelve vintages of pre-1970 Pétrus were served. He was known to drop \$80,000 or more at a single dinner.

It was not long before Dr. Conti began to sell large quantities of his miraculous wine collection through Kapon's Acker Merrall & Condit. "The owner is kind of like an artist painting a picture. He has this artistic side to what he's offering," Kapon noted.

Two groups had sprung up around Dr. Conti, thirsty for more from his elite cellar. On the West Coast they called themselves the Burgwhores; on the East Coast, the 12 Angry Men. Kapon, along with Kurniawan, was central to both groups.

Many of the guests at *Mélisse* that night would remain part of Mr. K's inner sanctum. Among the 22 diners sat venture capitalist Wilfred Jaeger. There was, as always, Kapon, as well as Hollywood business manager Matt Lichtenberg (whom Kapon called Uncle Matty). Lichtenberg created the idea for Kurniawan's DDB ("deaf, dumb and blind") tastings to dovetail with the activities of his Los Angeles-based Burgwhores.

At that September 2003 dinner, Edouard Moueix, sommelier extraordinaire, did the pouring. Kurniawan did the spending, with chef Josiah Citrin serving dishes perfectly matched to the wines, including 12 Pétrus vintages between 1921 and 1966, one of which wine critic Robert Parker once said he would "kill for." At the time, the wines, courtesy of Kurniawan, were going for up to \$13,000 a magnum.

Dr. Conti's relationships with the biggest-spending oenophiles in the highest echelons of Los Angeles society appeared to be well cemented, though he hadn't known them long.

On October 13, 2004 a "bacchanalian orgy," as Kapon described such gatherings, was in full swing at Cru. Situated on lower Fifth

Avenue, Cru was a new Manhattan hot spot and would become Dr. Conti's favorite haunt. "The wine list looks like my phone book," he noted. What Kurniawan meant, according to those who know him well, was that the purveyors of the most precious wines were his cronies. Mr. K participated in this four-night-long bacchanalia with his closest friends. It started at an Acker Merrall & Condit white Burgundy event at Manhattan's Warwick hotel and featured Allen Meadows, a Burgundy expert also known as the Burghound. Real estate magnate Rob Rosania, one of Kapon's inner circle, afterward invited the group to his house to enjoy more Burgundies.

In his notes, Mr. K shows that his touchstone of perfection was always Romanée-Conti, the reason Kapon and others began referring to him as Dr. Conti. Later it would become one of the wines Mr. K was said to have faked.

Following the tasting at Rosania's, around midnight Kurniawan and six of his friends showed up at Cru, after Kurniawan made a call to sommelier Robert Bohr, who "welcomed us though they are closed for the night."

There, the group enjoyed more of the most expensive wines, courtesy of Dr. Conti, as he narrated the experience. One rare 1953 wine they tasted had been "re-conditioned." That is the practice of topping off old wines that need freshening. Little did his friends know that their host would be accused of going much further than that, filling old, empty bottles of rare Burgundy with cheaper wine, expertly concocted to fool discriminating palates.

His followers were amazed at the extent of his knowledge. How had he learned so much so quickly? Kurniawan's attention to detail and to the impact of tinkering with original vintages shines forth in his blog postings and in the tasting-note records of Kapon, who seemed to hang on Mr. K's every word.

Mr. K's closing gesture at Cru that night—actually the wee hours of morning—was again for his favorite. "I ordered the 1971 Romanée-Conti—always one of my faves. RC. It was everything I wanted and remembered."

By the following night, Kurniawan would be enjoying numerous bottles from Domaine Dujac, vintages of Clos de la Roche and Clos Saint-Denis.

Two more nights of drinking followed, and on the last night so much had been consumed that Kapon could barely stand. Kapon, Kurniawan said, considered this the weekend he "tried to kill John Kapon." Mr. K seemed to be killing his friends and customers with kindness as much as with vino.

As 2004 came to a close, Dionysus had a full stable of satyrs with whom to prance, and prance they did, from the East Coast to the West Coast and back. It was only Kurniawan's immigration status, one could assume, that prevented him from showing up at wine cellars and festivities overseas.

Reviewing the evidence, James Wynne noted Kurniawan's ingenuity. He'd apparently been skillful enough to take a recent California pinot noir, worth \$250 a bottle,



"Of course I'm not suggesting a one-night stand...we'd be lying down."

and make it appear to be a 1940s or 1950s vintage of *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti*, the prized Burgundy. Among the materials confiscated from his home laboratory, federal investigators found a note Kurniawan had made to himself, right on a bottle, of its contents' suitability for "DRC," the abbreviation for his favorite wine. He wasn't called Dr. Conti for nothing.

Kurniawan had many credit cards and seemed to have many names and nicknames. He was called Mr. 47 for his love of 1947 *Château Cheval Blanc*.

The year 2005 was a watershed for Dr. Conti, a turning point of sorts. He was now considered Kapon's "trusted advisor," as Kapon stated in one of his tasting notes. It was also when he began ramping up his activities, perfecting his works of art.

In April 2005, Kapon woke up in Kurniawan's bed. He could not remember how he got there. The two were in Las Vegas, and Kurniawan had generously been sharing his 1945 *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti* with his friends.

"I took a quick look around me to get my bearings, only to find myself sleeping next to Rudy on his bed!" Kapon noted that he must have crawled in from the couch in Kurniawan's hotel suite, where he had crashed. "I was fully dressed on top of the covers, while Rudy was safely underneath," he wrote. "No spooning or cuddling."

At the FBI, Wynne was fascinated by Kurniawan's e-mails from that year. There had been dozens of dinners and tastings at Cru. Every time he had an event there, Kurniawan told the sommelier he wanted the empties sent back to him for a collection in his garage. Later, he said he needed the empties for a "photo shoot." In all, Robert Bohr sent via FedEx 13 packages containing empty bottles to Kurniawan in 2005 and 2006. Kurniawan complained when one of the shipments arrived with some broken bottles.

Still, Kurniawan made a show of his concern for counterfeiting. When drinking rare wines with his friends, he would cross out the labels. (The FBI later asked witnesses if

he always used the same pen, thinking he could have used disappearing ink.)

Back in the old days, manipulation of bottles to create fakes would not have been possible, says Simon Berry. Bottles are a relatively recent invention. If you wanted wine from a vineyard, you had to buy it in barrels. If you were wealthy, you'd have the bottling done for you by servants, who were called bottlers. From *bottler* the term *butler* evolved. The fraud of Kurniawan is "outrageous," says Berry. "Completely outrageous. Please shout it from the rooftops."

By 2006 Kurniawan was still king of the hill, but trouble was afoot. The spectacle of the year was about to unfold. The Cellar auction, claimed Kapon, was to be the "auction that changed history," from a collection that represented "the greatest cellar in America." The unnamed owner was Rudy Kurniawan. The auction would comprise two events, the first taking place on January 27 and 28 and the second on October 20 and 21. The Cellar I and II auctions together would gross more than \$35 million.

By the time these events concluded, billionaire William Koch had purchased what he thought were two bottles of 1934 *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti* for \$25,850. A wealthy New York collector purchased six bottles of 1962 *Domaine G. Roumier Bonnes-Mares* for \$28,955. He also bought 10 bottles of Mr. 47's favorite, 1947 *Château Cheval Blanc*, for \$48,260.

As was customary for Kapon, a presale dinner was held on the Thursday night before the October auction. Guests were abuzz about the investment benefits of buying wine. It would cost \$24 million to buy every lot in the Cellar II sale, while a Jasper Johns could cost \$80 million, noted *Financial Times* wine writer Jancis Robinson, who was also present.

The next day, the "most spirited bidding came from those who knew the owner of the collection personally and have been treated to many wines from his cellar," noted Kapon. In the Cellar II sale, Acker Merrall

& Condit also offered seven magnums of estate-bottled 1947 *Château Lafleur*. It later came to light that the estate had bottled only five magnums that year. The New York collector purchased a jeroboam of 1962 *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti* for \$48,259. It was later determined to be a fake.

As Wynne pored over the record, he had many questions regarding the dealings of the owners of wine collections, the auction houses and the buyers. Weren't they all trying to serve the demands of the market? If a rare lot was auctionable, why not try to sell it? But how much were the auction houses in bed with their precious suppliers, the rich collectors?

The issue of provenance was clearly in play regarding not only wine but also Kurniawan. His mother's name is on the title to his Arcadia house. Most of his closest friends, who had met some members of his family at private dinner parties, couldn't tell you their names or where they came from. And they knew nothing about his brother who supposedly distributed family money to him. Kurniawan's allowance, however, seemed to have dried up. For almost a year he borrowed huge sums from Acker Merrall & Condit and others.

Kurniawan seemed to be spending money faster than he could make it. Between 2006 and 2011 he racked up more than \$16 million on his American Express card. Acker Merrall & Condit was now funding his purchases of rare wine, and Kurniawan was desperately looking for loans. According to the federal charges, he gave fraudulent financial data to acquire them. He allegedly pledged artwork to Acker Merrall & Condit as collateral to cover loans, but the art had already been pledged elsewhere for another loan.

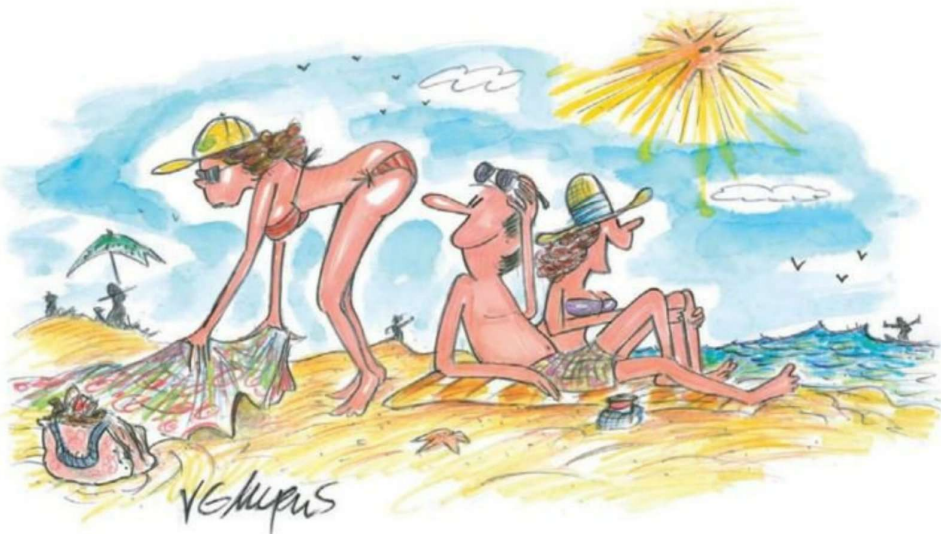
Meanwhile, Wilfred Jaeger had told him *Domaine de Montille* was looking to expand and that plots were available. Kurniawan would end up investing in one, dropping \$1 million on a 25 percent stake in the Burgundy vineyard. He'd also purchased a Bel Air mansion to renovate.

In spring 2007 Kurniawan offered Christie's vintages of *Le Pin* to auction. The sale was canceled after the château challenged the wine's authenticity. Kurniawan seemed to be leaving a trail of desperation. That year he would receive \$11.5 million in loans. But Kurniawan's followers still believed in him, and when suspicious bottles showed up in his collection, he presented himself as a victim.

This belief in an ideal version of Kurniawan reminds one of something F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote: "Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope."

One of the shrewdest businessmen in the world became Kurniawan's next customer. Andrew Gordon was among a small group of executives who had been at Goldman Sachs since the firm went public in 1999. He owned 0.2 percent of all shares at that time. Gordon was a wine connoisseur with a fabulous cellar.

Crime victims don't want to appear stupid for being duped. This may account



"Oh my God! Is that a spectacular view or what?"

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for the silence from some of those whom Kurniawan allegedly defrauded. So one can imagine the trepidation with which Gordon related his tale to Wynne. In 2007 the talented Mr. K had had a proposition for Gordon: He could purchase spectacular wines directly from Kurniawan's cellar. Kurniawan told Gordon the wines had been bought at auctions, private sales and other sources. He provided no receipts but offered to replace any wines that were not to Gordon's satisfaction. In May and November Gordon purchased \$2.2 million worth of wine from Kurniawan. Kurniawan signed an agreement with Gordon stating he'd buy back the wines at fair market value if Gordon was unable to sell the wines "due to the lack of traceable provenance."

Happy to share his prized wines with good friends, Gordon hosted a dinner party and served some of the wines he'd bought from Kurniawan. Wine professionals at the dinner took him aside. They suspected at least two of the bottles were fake.

By early 2008 wine auction sales had reached a peak. Between 2004 and 2007 the wine world's equivalent of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the *Wine Spectator* Auction Index, had risen more than 90 percent. With a recession beginning, there were signs of slowing sales. But Kapon still had high hopes for a spectacular auction he was readying.

Reading the catalog for the April 2008 Acker Merrall & Condit auction, New York lawyer and wine collector Doug Barzelay was surprised by the numerous offerings of old Clos Saint-Denis. He'd never seen Clos Saint-Denis that old. The oldest he'd ever tasted was 1985. He discovered that the farming agreement between the Ponsot family and the Mercier family, who owned the Clos Saint-Denis vineyard, started in the early 1980s. Simultaneously he received an e-mail from Burgundy expert Allen Meadows inquiring about the oldest Clos Saint-Denis.

Barzelay called another friend in New York. None of them had ever tasted or seen anything prior to 1985. It turns out Ponsot had started making the wine in 1982, but the wines before 1985 were not good vintages and weren't really in circulation. What mattered, however, were Acker's stupendous lots of Clos Saint-Denis, supposedly produced between 1945 and 1971.

That's when Barzelay e-mailed Laurent Ponsot, thinking perhaps his grandfather had an earlier arrangement with the vineyard that no one knew about. Ponsot was puzzled. Why did Barzelay want to know about old Clos Saint-Denis? Barzelay told Ponsot about the Acker Merrall & Condit auction. Ninety-seven bottles of Burgundy from Domaine Ponsot were for sale.

Ponsot looked at the catalog. In addition to the Clos Saint-Denis was a bottle presented as a 1929 Domaine Ponsot Clos de la Roche. His grandfather Hippolyte would have made it, but he didn't start estate bottling until 1934.

Ponsot called Kapon. When Kapon was asked to withdraw the wines from auction,

he refused. "He said the wine had been tasted by experts and belonged to someone who is knowledgeable," Ponsot says. That person was Kurniawan. Ponsot says, "John Kapon insisted the wines had been certified as real. I said there was no way."

That was the end of the conversation. A few days later Ponsot tried again. "I told him the Clos Saint-Denis cannot exist," he says. Finally Kapon agreed to withdraw the wine from the auction. "But it was the kind of yes that makes you understand no," Ponsot says. So Ponsot got on a plane.

A Christ-like figure made his entrance at Cru after the auction had already begun. Many in the room knew him, but Kapon had never laid eyes on the man before. Someone whispered to him, "Laurent Ponsot is here."

Doug Barzelay sat at a table with collector Don Stott and motioned for Ponsot to sit with them. He did.

The 22 lots Kapon withdrew from the auction would have been worth between \$440,500 and \$600,000—and perhaps up to \$1.3 million, according to Ponsot—had they been sold as the real stuff. Also auc-

In his house, Kurniawan had thousands of counterfeit labels for Bordeaux, Burgundies and Rhônes, spanning vintages from 1899 to recent years.

tioned off were other wines with labels that implied they'd been sourced by Berry Bros. & Rudd. Berry Bros., however, could find no record of ever having sold those wines.

Ponsot was about to embark on a crusade. On the day after the auction, Kurniawan had lunch with Ponsot, Kapon and Barzelay. Acker Merrall & Condit's customers had been shocked by the withdrawal of their favorite Burgundies. "It was the first time I met Rudy Kurniawan," Ponsot says. "He was embarrassed. I cannot say he was looking guilty at all, but he wasn't cooperative when I asked him to tell me who had sold him the wines. I asked both Kapon and Kurniawan. And the answer was 'I don't know. I buy so many wines, so many bottles, I don't know where these are coming from.'"

Ponsot says that during their lunch he received no help or information from Kapon or Kurniawan about the provenance of the wine. "Kapon wasn't comfortable," he says. "Both seemed to expect me to say, 'Oh, I'm so sorry.' But that was not the case. After lunch they were both trying to be my best friend." Ponsot laughs. He is not a man without humor.

"Kapon said, 'Anytime you come you are welcome,' and so on. Kurniawan said, 'I will look at my books and tomorrow or

the day after I will send you a note with the names of the providers.' They were kind at the end of the meal," Ponsot says and then laughs again. "I knew it was bullshit."

Kapon escorted him back to his hotel.

Ponsot was in Los Angeles in July 2008 and again invited Kurniawan to dinner. They met at an Italian restaurant, and Kurniawan gave him a name and two phone numbers in Jakarta. The name of the man who supplied him with the fake wine was supposedly "Pak Hendra."

Kurniawan brought bottles of wine from his collection, "as he always does," Ponsot says. "He seemed sure he would be my best friend again. I couldn't let on that I was his enemy." The phone numbers Kurniawan gave him were for a shopping mall in Jakarta and an Indonesian airline.

In May 2009 Ponsot returned to the U.S. and once again invited Kurniawan to dinner in Los Angeles. By that time Ponsot was openly showing his frustration and anger. "He no longer was trying to impress me," Ponsot says. "And I wasn't impressed with him. He wasn't that knowledgeable. He had huge culture on names, vintages and big culture on wine, for sure. But not knowledge. He wasn't a good taster. He impressed people because he was always carrying huge bottles and big names, big vintages." Ponsot believes that without the help of a real Burgundy connoisseur, the talented Mr. K was nobody. "This is why I say this guy is not alone," Ponsot says.

Corks, foils, labels and rubber stamps lay about Kurniawan's five-bedroom house when FBI special agent James Wynne and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Hernandez entered on the morning of March 8. They were greeted there by a slender 35-year-old Asian man. It was Dr. Conti himself.

There were also stacks of printed labels for the world's most expensive wines. In a sink, empty bottles were soaking. Kurniawan had thousands of counterfeit labels for Bordeaux, Burgundies and Rhônes, spanning vintages from 1899 to recent years. Among them were labels for Domaine Ponsot, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and Châteaux Lafite Rothschild, Mouton Rothschild, Latour, Margaux, Haut-Brion, Cheval Blanc, Pétrus and Lafleur.

Remarkably—according to the feds—Kurniawan kept notes on how to create fake labels for 1962 Domaine Ponsot Clos de la Roche and for DRC. Credit card statements indicate that Mr. K had purchased ink pads and 13 packages of Ingres drawing paper—"because of its antique appearance," according to feds—and then allegedly used these supplies to create labels on which he stamped fake vintages and bottle numbers. He used foil capsules and hardened wax, which he melted to seal his concoctions. To forge wooden crates of rare wines, he used stencils to imprint names and other identifying characteristics.

He sold one such crate of wine, of a rare 1955 vintage, for tens of thousands of dollars directly to a wealthy Hollywood collector who considered Kurniawan a close friend. That friend had bought the wine for a

birthday party at his Beverly Hills mansion: Author and wine expert Jay McInerney was turning 55. Later, Burgundy expert Allen Meadows identified the bottles as fakes. The FBI asked to see the remaining bottles.

In summer 2009, Andrew Gordon gave the fake wines he'd bought from Kurniawan to Christie's for auction. The decision to hold the sale went all the way up to the board level at the auction house, according to those involved, and the sale went ahead despite protests from a chorus of wine aficionados. Christie's was given documents showing the wines were suspicious and still proceeded with its auction. In September of that year, Christie's sold 60 lots from Kurniawan's cellar, including three magnums of his beloved 1947 Château Cheval Blanc.

Dr. Conti seemed to have slowed down, at least when it came to the most public sales at auction houses, until February 2012, right before his arrest. That's when he was offering, through a middleman named Antonio Castanos, wines at a London auction held jointly by auction house Spectrum and wine merchant Vanquish.

Wynne's evidence suggests this middleman had been selling Kurniawan's wines for years and that others in Kurniawan's inner circle had also been quietly selling wines for him. The Spectrum auction attracted attention after wine expert Don Cornwell began pointing out strange errors on labels and in the foils and bottles.

Many wonder why Dr. Conti did it. Was it his desire to please that went awry? Was it desperation when he ran out of money? Or did the alleged forgery come first? Did he need to show his family his independence, his business smarts? As of May, Kurniawan remained locked up in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. On May 9 a federal grand jury indicted him. In a letter asking a California judge not to allow Kurniawan to be released on bond—he was subsequently denied bail—the feds said he could face up to 100 years in jail, though he will more likely face 87 to 108 months, according to sentencing guidelines.

Owners of cellars everywhere were on alert. After all, Mr. K's wines had not been sold only at auction. He had sold them through brokers and retailers and directly to collectors around the world. Kurniawan's wines were also sold through *Robb Report*, a magazine aimed at the ultra-affluent, for some period of time.

"The markets for older Bordeaux, Burgundy and probably even champagne, since Mr. Kurniawan sold a lot of it, are absolutely awash in fakes," Don Cornwell says.

Laurent Ponsot, certain that Mr. K had accomplices and that their arrest was imminent, was in New York with Wynne hours before Kurniawan's indictment. After that, he was on to a New Orleans gathering of his brotherhood, the Knights of the Tastevin. Ponsot needed to make sure his American *frères* were doing it right.

KEROUAC

(continued from page 69)

home doing: watching a parade, attending a funeral, picking out a song on a jukebox, standing behind a lunch counter, sitting behind the wheel of a car, pulling over to the side of the highway. That the pictures—in the faces they capture, in the way people hold themselves, in dimming shadows or the glaring brightness of a room lit by a single, shadeless bulb—communicate more than anything else fatigue, resignation, anonymity, failure and wariness only reinforces the sense of fatalism that drives *The Americans* across the map it makes. You are seeing people in tune with themselves and their world, and with a stolid presence that implies a profound choice has been made about life or that there is no choice at all. It's this duality that makes Frank's pictures at once delicate and brutal, frightening and peaceful. They are pictures of people coming to terms with fate.

That same feeling moves through Frank's pictures of Kerouac. It's still 1959, at the height of Kerouac's fame, and you are in a room filled with quiet and doubt. Kerouac is at his desk, working on the sort of little notebooks he filled on his car trips with Cassidy. His face is slightly puffy. In one strong profile portrait, his hair is slicked back in a way that suggests a working-class model for characters Marlon Brando and James Dean have already played: someone who, having invented what turned out to have been a timeless American look, was there before *The Wild One* and *Rebel Without a Cause* and who, with not a hair out of place, is still here now. There's confidence and determination, and maybe an edge of defeat, in the way he looks down on what he's been writing. Another picture shows only Kerouac's hands on a notebook, and his hands seem weathered and old. And why not? This was Jack Kerouac at the end of his era, with a friend there to make pictures

that might seal their friendship—as you can see in the shot of Frank and Kerouac together reflected in a mirror, with the photographer seeing something his subject doesn't—or memorialize it. The photographs, and the tired, uncertain man they show, were a bet on the future. Kerouac had 10 years left.

In 1975 Robert Frank appeared in Wheeler Auditorium at the University of California at Berkeley to screen *Cocksucker Blues*, his banned, already legendary film, for the first time. "I made this film with the Rolling Stones in 1972," he told the audience. "It seems like 200 years ago. It was very difficult to make. I'm happy to show it, even if it isn't completely legal." He laughed, and Frank is not a man with laughter all over his face.

The film was banned by the Rolling Stones, who owned it, because—Frank told me at the time—the 16-millimeter picture, with staged scenes of groupies being stripped and having sex in the band's plane and junkies shooting up, did not celebrate anything. It wasn't a presentation of the Rolling Stones as the trademarked greatest-rock-and-roll-band-in-the-world. It was only a search for images. Faces on a billboard appearing and then disappearing as a car passed beneath it in slow motion. A hand waving from a jail cell as another car sped by. The film has since become slightly more visible than it was in 1975. Because of a legal settlement between Frank and the Stones, *Cocksucker Blues* can be shown, but only in a nontheatrical setting and only with Frank present.

This year, the movie version of *On the Road*—Kerouac, it's said, originally saw Brando as Cassidy and himself as himself—will finally appear, directed by Walter Salles and featuring Sam Riley, Garrett Hedlund, Kristen Stewart, Amy Adams and Viggo Mortensen. You can imagine that, that day in 1959, Kerouac and Frank might have talked about Frank doing it. But he already had, and he would do it again.



"We have a same sex marriage...whenever we have sex, it's always the same!"



SAMBERG

(continued from page 138)

the show together. Seth said, "Samberg, it looks like your hair was trying to eat your head." I could not disagree with him.

Q3

PLAYBOY: You're starring this summer in *Celeste and Jesse Forever*, a movie about the slow end of a relationship. Do you have a personal preference when it comes to breakups? Are you usually the dumper or the dumpee?

SAMBERG: I've had my share of both. Actually, I don't feel I've ever dumped anyone. It's never been, "You know what? I've decided I don't like you." It's usually about the circumstances. I had a girlfriend in college, then I transferred because I wanted to go to film school, and the long distance made our relationship impossible. Things like that tend to happen to me. Not that I haven't had some brutal breakups. One time I was dating somebody and she told me, "Hey, I thought I was going to be on location for a film shoot for the next six months and now it looks like I won't be, so we should break up." I was like, "Okeydokey. I can tell I was really important to you."

Q4

PLAYBOY: In *Celeste and Jesse Forever* you have sex with Rashida Jones after trying to put together an Ikea dresser. What is it about Scandinavian furniture that makes people horny?

SAMBERG: Ikea's directions don't make any sense, and you get a tiny little ice pick to assemble it all. I've put together a few pieces in my time, and it feels as though you're moving in a slow-motion nightmare. That's sexy, right? Any time frustration builds up about anything, it leads to sex. Sex is the great frustration reliever.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Adam Sandler plays your father in the recent film *That's My Boy*. What type of father would he make?

SAMBERG: He's more of a godfather figure. Once you're rolling with him, he just calls and tells you you're doing stuff. I'm in an animated movie with him called *Hotel Transylvania*, and I literally found out about it by getting a phone call from him. He said [in an Adam Sandler voice], "We're doing a movie about monsters, and you're gonna be the guy." And I said, "Okay, sure." I remember when I first got the job at *SNL*, I was a few shows in, and he called me at the office. He was like, "Hey, buddy, I figured I should say hello since our names are so similar."

Q6

PLAYBOY: You've kissed a lot of hosts on *SNL*, from Scarlett Johansson and Paul Rudd to Bryan Cranston and Jason Segel. Who was your favorite?

SAMBERG: I prefer not to do any kissing on the show unless it's for a laugh. I feel like there was an era on *SNL* when it had kisses just to make the audience go "Woo-hoo!"

And I always hated that. Scarlett was my favorite because it was funny and gross. It was that scene where I play Kuato, the head from *Total Recall* that's coming out of Bill Hader's stomach, and she's the female Kuato in Maya Rudolph's stomach. It wasn't so much a kiss as licking each other's tongues. It was a kiss the audience definitely didn't want to see happen.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You were raised in Berkeley, California by parents you've described as hippies. Were they pot-smoking, bell-bottoms-wearing, long-haired peaceniks?

SAMBERG: No, not quite that far. They both had long hair and wore bell-bottoms, but my dad also wore leather pants, leather boots and a leather jacket. He wasn't a touchy-feely hippie. He just thought, I'm going to grow my hair long because that's what they don't want me to do. He likes to brag that he came of age in a time when you could walk through the wrong part of town and they'd chase you and beat the shit out of you for having long hair. But he's a dad, so who knows how much of it is self-aggrandizing and how much is true? It was tough to rebel against my parents because of their hippie past. They're really chill. They let us listen to N.W.A in the car.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You have two older sisters. Were they kind to you, or were you mercilessly tormented?

SAMBERG: They tormented me but in girly ways. They would dress me up. Until I was five or six, my sisters were still making me put on diapers. They'd put my hair in pig-tails and carry me around and make me pretend to be a baby. And I never fought back. I looked up to them and wanted them to include me in stuff. But it wasn't so bad. You can suffer worse humiliations at that age, right?

Q9

PLAYBOY: You were voted the class clown in your high school. Did that title come with bragging rights?

SAMBERG: Remember, I went to Berkeley High, and being voted the best at anything was not something you bragged about. I had a friend who was six-five, superbuff, the blond quarterback. We all made fun of him for being the quarterback. Berkeley is the inverse of the rest of America. We'd be like, "Oh great, you're the quarterback. How cliché. We get it, you're so handsome and talented." Nobody got more ripped on than the quarterback at our high school.

Q10

PLAYBOY: As a film major at New York University you made some bizarre experimental films, such as the short *Monkey vs. Robot*, which eventually showed up on YouTube. Are there any more cinematic gems from your past?

SAMBERG: That are better than *Monkey vs. Robot*? I highly doubt it. That was our high-water mark. One of my favorites, and one of the dumbest films I ever made, was a fake Calvin Klein commercial for a cologne

called Cock. It was shot in black and white, very whimsical, with lots of arty shots like a man looking off a balcony while the wind blows through his hair. At the end, a woman's voice whispers the name of the cologne, "Cooooock." [laughs] I made the *ck* of Cock bigger on the label so it looked like the Calvin Klein logo. My film professor at the time hated it.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Why did he hate it?

SAMBERG: I had a few professors who gave me bad grades because the subject matter of my films was silly or stupid. They thought I was goofing off. If you weren't doing dramatic narrative or message-based films—statements about youth or whatever—the professors thought you weren't trying. But I would argue that it would take me just as many hours and just as much work to write, shoot and edit these things as it did anybody else. They saw it as not taking the class or them seriously, when in fact I was taking it seriously. It was the most focused I'd ever been in my life.

Q12

PLAYBOY: You became pals with Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook CEO, after impersonating him on *SNL*.

SAMBERG: He's a nice guy, and I like him a lot. I don't know if my impression of him is all that good. If you look at us, we could basically be cousins. And we both have *berg* in our last names. I've played three guys with *berg* in their last name on *SNL*. There's Zuckerberg, Jesse Eisenberg and Mark Wahlberg. Sooner or later I'm going to have to do Ryne Sandberg from the Chicago Cubs so I can say I've done all the *bergs*.

Q13

PLAYBOY: One of your first digital shorts for *SNL*, *Lazy Sunday*, became a huge hit on YouTube. Is the internet still the best source for original comedy?

SAMBERG: I think it is, yeah. Most of my inspiration comes from YouTube. The digital short *SNL* did with Jonah Hill getting hit in the nuts repeatedly with a tennis ball—that came from something we saw on YouTube. We jacked the whole thing. Also, I did a short called *Seducing Women Through Chess*, which was a complete rip-off of an amazing video I saw called *How to Seduce Women Through Hypnosis*. It's one of the most unconvincing things I've ever seen in my life—poorly edited, poorly acted. It's just fantastic.

Q14

PLAYBOY: In the digital shorts you've made over the years, you've somehow managed to convince Natalie Portman to rap about her sex life and Maroon 5's Adam Levine to sing about having romantic feelings for an Iranian dictator. What's the secret to coaxing celebrities to sing less-than-flattering lyrics?

SAMBERG: With Natalie it was easy. It was all her idea. She loves filthy rap. She's a big Lil' Kim fan. She saw *Lazy Sunday*, and when she came to host *SNL*, she said, "I really want to do one of those raps." We were skeptical because we thought of her the same way everybody (concluded on page 193)



PLAYMATE NEWS



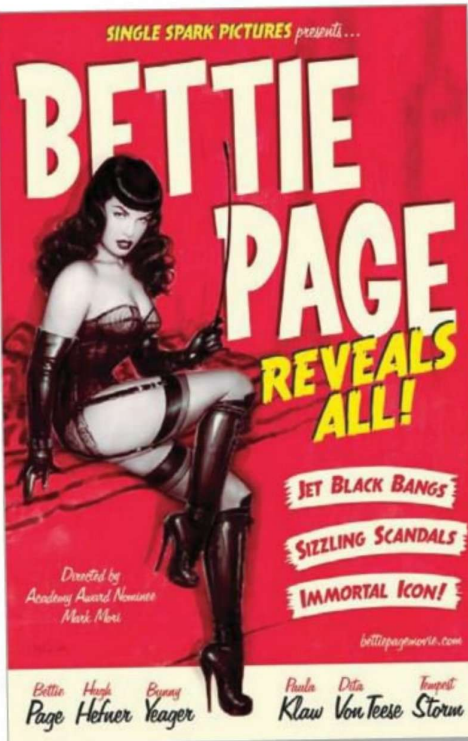
PAMELA ANDERSON: START YOUR ENGINES

“Fast cars and fast women go together,” Miss February 1990 Pamela Anderson said when announcing her foray into motor sports as owner of a racing team. The racy blonde first launched Downforce1 into the European Le Mans and International GT Open series with drivers Marcus von Anhalt and Markus Fux behind the wheel. The team’s blue and white (Pam calls them her signature colors) Aston Martin Vantage GT2 is powered not only by its V8 engine but also by partnerships with Dunlop Tires, Aston Martin Racing and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Pamela next set her sights on bringing Downforce1 to the Sprint Cup NASCAR series. “I’m thrilled to be a part of this incredible racing team,” she says. “It will be a wild ride.”



THE REAL NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE

Some think Mona Lisa is the most photographed woman in history. If that’s the case, then Miss January 1955 Bettie Page must be a close second.



Bettie was gritty but glamorous, the Queen of Curves and the Tease From Tennessee. Even after all the articles, books and movies based on her life, the complete story of Bettie herself, not the pinup, hadn’t been told until the film *Bettie Page Reveals All!* premiered in Las Vegas in April (as of May it was still courting wide distribution). Oscar-nominated director Mark Mori included interviews with photographer Bunny Yeager, pinup artist Olivia De Berardinis and Hugh Hefner (“I love the iconic Bettie, but I also love Bettie the person”), as well as words from behind the raven bangs of Bettie herself. In fact, according to Robin Leach, the film is the only biography authorized by Bettie, who died in 2008.

FLASHBACK



Thirty years ago **Cathy St. George** went from beautifier to beautiful August Playmate. She was a makeup artist on PLAYBOY sets when we asked her to step out from behind the scenes and into the Centerfold. It was a successful launch of a career that included acting roles in *CHiPs*, *Beverly Hills Brat*, *Star 80* and *The Man Who Loved Women*. A few years ago, Cathy played muse for comic-book artist Ken Kelly, who used her sparkly image as inspiration for issue #33 of *Red Sonja*.

DID YOU KNOW?

A hawk snatched one of Miss December 2001 **Shanna Moakler**’s Chihuahuas from her backyard in California.

The smell of a bookstore is one of Miss January 2010 **Jaime Faith Edmondson**’s favorite scents.

Recent college grad Miss May 2012 **Nikki Leigh** claims she “always wanted to be a sex symbol with brains.”

Miss May 2010 **Kassie Lyn Logsdon** is the fairest of them all. "I



despise being tan! I don't want leather skin when I'm 60, and fake tanner smells gross."

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY D.W. MOFFETT

—actor, *Switched at Birth* and *Friday Night Lights*

"My favorite Playmate is Miss November 1976 **Patti McGuire** because she married Jimmy



Connors and validated every high school tennis geek who ever had the shit kicked out of him for playing on the junior varsity tennis team. All I had to do was point to her and say, 'She married a tennis player.'"



HOUSE PARTY X

The party of the century—nay, the millennium—can come to your house on DVD starting June 19. *Project X* centers on high schoolers trying to raise their status by hosting a rager. The party blows up through social media—even beauties like Miss January 2011 Anna Sophia Berglund show up. Of course, the difference between the *Project X* party and a Playboy party is that nobody drives their car into the Grotto, and there's maybe a little less pyromania.



FROM THE PRODUCER OF THE HANGOVER

PROJECT X



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Two years ago, PMOY 2007

Sara Jean Underwood, Rosie Jones, Emma Glover and Victoria Moore put on lingerie and



baked for Victory Poker. The foursome made a tiered chocolate cake that they smeared on one another. "We're doing a cake fight because we just joined the Cake Network," Sara said. Now the photo shoot has lit up the internet.... Here's PMOY



2002 **Dalene Kurtis** dazzling at will.i.am's (of the Black Eyed Peas) Trans4mation Experience at the Hollywood Palladium. The event celebrated the collaboration of the i.am.angel Foundation, College Track and the California Endowment to help kids in will.i.am's hometown of Boyle Heights through educational programs. In more Dalene news, she became engaged to Fletcher Jones.... PMOY 2008 **Jayde Nicole** knows how to live it up. For her

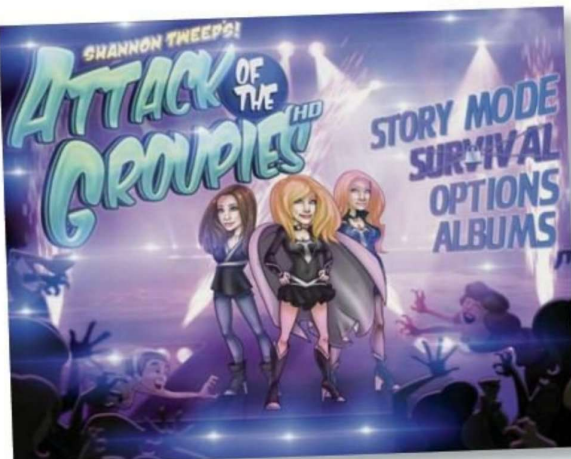


26th birthday, she and her gal pals hit Gallery Nightclub in Las Vegas. Looking resplendent in a white ABS dress, Jayde, along with her cadre, took over the club, even jumping into the DJ booth and working the wax. The only time the music stopped was when the club rolled out a gold-colored cake and everyone sang "Happy Birthday."... As basketball teams sent their elite to Orlando for the All-Star Game, we dispatched some of our best Bunnies to host the Playmate All-Star Party at Terrace 390. Here's our squad: Miss July 2010 **Shanna Marie McLaughlin**, Miss June 2006 **Stephanie Larimore**, Miss June 2011 **Mei-Ling Lam**, Miss February 2012 **Leola Bell**, Miss August 2010 **Francesca Frigo** and Miss March 2010 **Kyra Milan**.



GROUPIES MAKE THE SIMMONSES REAL ANGRY BIRDS

In a game based on her life with now-husband Gene Simmons, PMOY 1982 Shannon Tweed, along with daughter Sophie, must fend off harlots trying to bed their men. Download *Shannon Tweed's! Attack of the Groupies* and suppress an onslaught, including an alleged baby mama and a drunken hot mess.



WANT TO SEE MORE PLAYMATES?

Or more of these Playmates? You can check out every one of them in the full magazine archives at iplayboy.com.

SAMBERG

(continued from page 190)

else did. She seems so sweet and innocent. But she was like, "No, you don't understand." And then she broke into some Lil' Kim song and started rapping verses for us, the filthiest lines I've ever heard. We were completely taken aback.

Q15

PLAYBOY: One of your most popular *SNL* videos, *Dick in a Box*, made a convincing case for gift-wrapped genitals. As far as you know, has anybody ever tried that?

SAMBERG: I heard a guy got fired from his job for doing it to a female co-worker. People were asking me, "Do you feel responsible?" Absolutely not. If it wasn't that, it was going to be something else with that guy. He was going to do something stupid eventually. The only thing I witnessed personally was one Halloween a guy in a bar came up to me, totally hammered, and was like, "Dude, check it *oooooooooout!*" He had a box attached to his waist, and there was a huge, realistic-looking dildo inside it. I said, "Hey, man, you probably shouldn't show that to people." He got all sad about it and was like, "Yeah, man, you're probably right." That's the closest I've come to seeing an actual human penis inside a box, thank God.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You've done several music videos for *SNL* with Justin Timberlake, mostly as a pair of R&B-singing best friends. Is that fictional relationship analogous to your real relationship with Justin?

SAMBERG: I think the characters are better friends than Justin and I are. They're about as close as two men can be, if you know what I mean. I consider Justin a friend, but those guys are inseparable. The funny thing is, Justin and I have become inextricably linked because of those videos. We've come to terms with the fact that in every interview we ever do for the rest of our lives we're going to get asked about *Dick in a Box*.

Q17

PLAYBOY: In the *SNL* short *3-Way (The Golden Rule)*, you and Justin entertain Lady Gaga with something called the "helicopter dick." Did you have to explain to Gaga exactly what a helicopter dick is?

SAMBERG: Yeah, I explained it. But she's not easily shocked. And I think most people know what that is, right? It's when you're naked and you gyrate your hips and make your dick swirl around like it's the blade of a helicopter. Every man, whether he admits it or not, has done the helicopter dick.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Your song "I'm on a Boat" was nominated for a 2010 Grammy in the best rap/sung collaboration category, pitting you against such noncomedic performers as Rihanna and Jay-Z. Did it feel like validation, or were you worried Jay-Z was going to kick your ass for pretending to be a rapper?

SAMBERG: I would've kicked my own ass if

we'd won. We thought it was kind of a joke that we got the nomination at all. I was pretty sure there was no way we'd win. And if we did, then the academy was obviously racist. Luckily, Jay-Z won.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Your feature-film debut was in 2007's *Hot Rod*, in which you play an inept amateur stuntman. Did you do any of your own stunts?

SAMBERG: None of the crazy shit, but I was going to do the pool jump. There's a scene where I ride a moped off a ramp, straight up into the air and then straight down into a pool. It seemed easy enough at the time. I told everybody, "I'm just landing in water, right?" But they explained that if I went even three feet too far, I'd hit the other edge and die. Looking back on it, I'm like, Oh my God, of course I shouldn't have done that. Back then, I felt a lot more confident physically than I do now. Now if you asked me to do a stunt like that, I'd be like, "Nooooo!"

Q20

PLAYBOY: How often do strangers tell you they have a great idea for a comedy scene?

SAMBERG: All the time. And it's not just strangers; everyone is always pitching me sketch ideas. The thing that's most common—and everyone who works at *SNL* commiserates about this—is when you're at a family reunion or the doctor's office or somewhere, and somebody says, "Careful! Next thing you know this is going to be an *SNL* sketch." Yes, of course it is. Just wait till I pitch Lorne Michaels a great sketch idea about a normal conversation about politics at a family dinner. It's going to kill. I don't believe anyone gets it worse than Lorne. I think everybody Lorne meets knows somebody who is perfect for the show. "I've got a cousin! I went to college with this guy! I know this girl who spoke at a bar mitzvah, cracked everybody up! My doorman is the funniest!"





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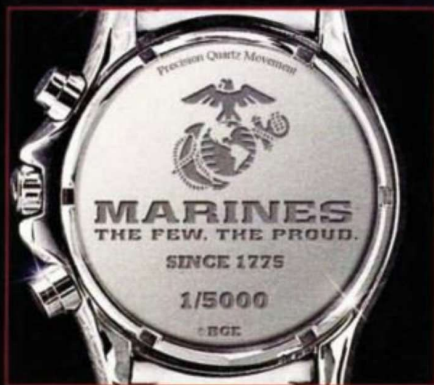
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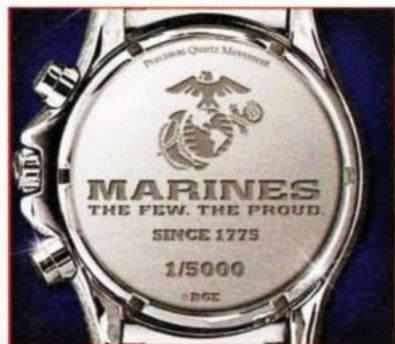
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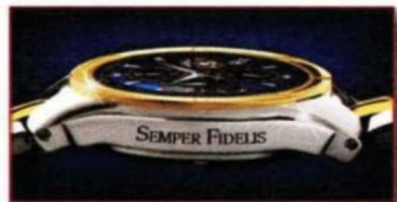
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