

# PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT

DECEMBER 2014

*GALA  
CHRISTMAS  
ISSUE*

*WITH MISS DECEMBER*

*ELIZABETH  
OSTRANDER*

*HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE*

*20Q WITH  
CHARLIE DAY*

*GHETTO GASTRO:  
THE NEW CULINARY  
COOL KIDS*

*THE NBA'S HEYDAY*

*AMERICA'S  
TOUGHEST LAWYER*

*THE INTERVIEW:  
JOAQUIN PHOENIX*



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DECEMBER 2014

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LITTLE NAUGHTY

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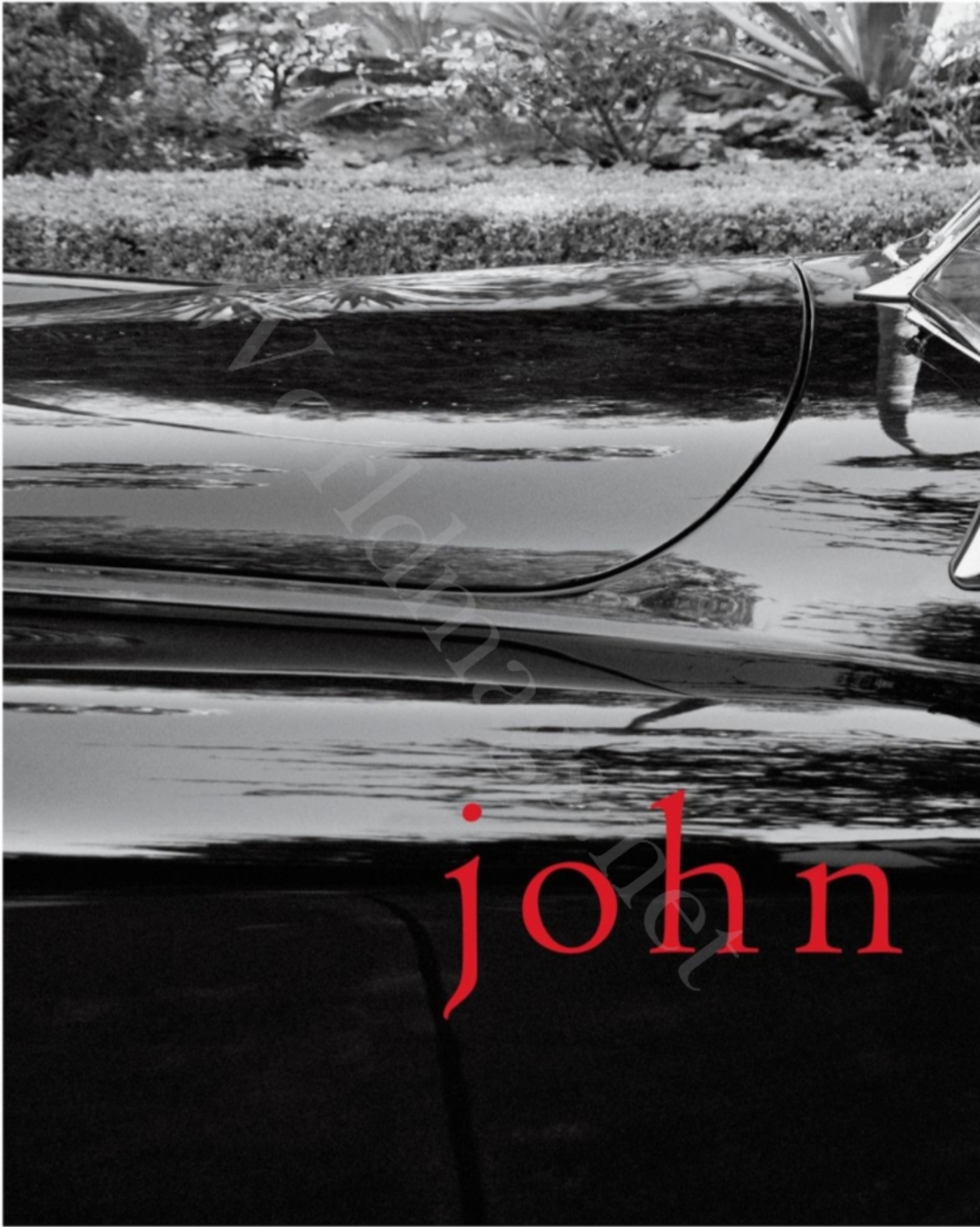
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# FOLLOW THE BUNNY



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# PLAYBILL

I'm trying to get better at being open to the mystery of it all," admits **Joaquin Phoenix** in his *Playboy* Interview, and at the close of a painfully tumultuous year in America, those are words to live by. In a world edging ever closer to uncertainty, this issue is for those who can embrace the unknown and plow on. Phoenix, for instance, explains how, after a childhood stint in the Children of God cult and a 30-year career with spells of artistic crisis and rebirth, he remains one of Hollywood's top actors. As he notes, that doesn't preclude him from feeling terrified on set. Then, **Neal Gabler** unravels the life of Michael Hausfeld, a lawyer dedicated to taking on the thorniest social justice lawsuits the world can offer. Despite poverty and catastrophes of his own, he has won more historic verdicts for the little guy than almost anyone else. No wonder the title of this article is *The Toughest Lawyer in America Is on Your Side*. **George Pelecanos** delivers a jolting short story, *Miss Mary's Room*, in which a troubled teen

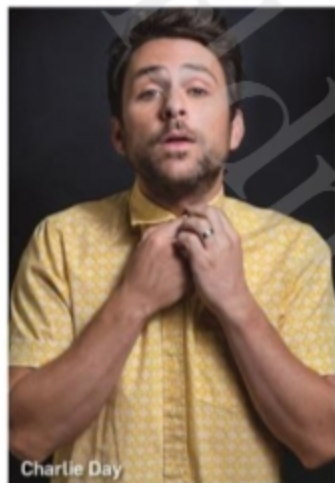


Neal Gabler



George Pelecanos

discovers that the consequences of mistakes seldom arrive as you might expect—especially when you're implicated in murder. The hilarious **Charlie Day** brightens us up in *20Q*, as the *Horrible Bosses 2* star theorizes why his voice sounds at once agitated and authoritative and how his show, *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, can get away with anything. Research Editor **Shane Michael Singh** casts a critical eye on Apple and its puritanical, contradictory App Store approval guidelines in *Forbidden Pleasures*. For *Straight Outta Comptoir*, Articles Editor **Hugh Garvey** travels to New York to meet Ghetto Gastro, a three-man culinary team upending the definition and sources of haute cuisine. In *Mission Out of Control*, **Pat Jordan** embarks for San Jose, where, from an abandoned McDonald's, a group of civilian space nerds pursue their lifelong dream—to touch outer space—through the recovery of a forgotten NASA satellite. From space we descend to Brooklyn, where the vivacious Lindsay Jones, as photographed by **Greg Manis** for *Art & Soul*, makes us forget the looming winter months by lounging on a sun-drenched rooftop. And finally, if anyone was open to the mysteries of life, it was **Shel Silverstein**, whose escapades for *PLAYBOY* in the 1960s, captured in his whimsical sketches, are resurrected in *Silverstein Around the World*. So come meet a few people we consider to be among the best we know (and a few wildly attractive women, to boot). Embrace the unknown and dive in. You won't regret it.



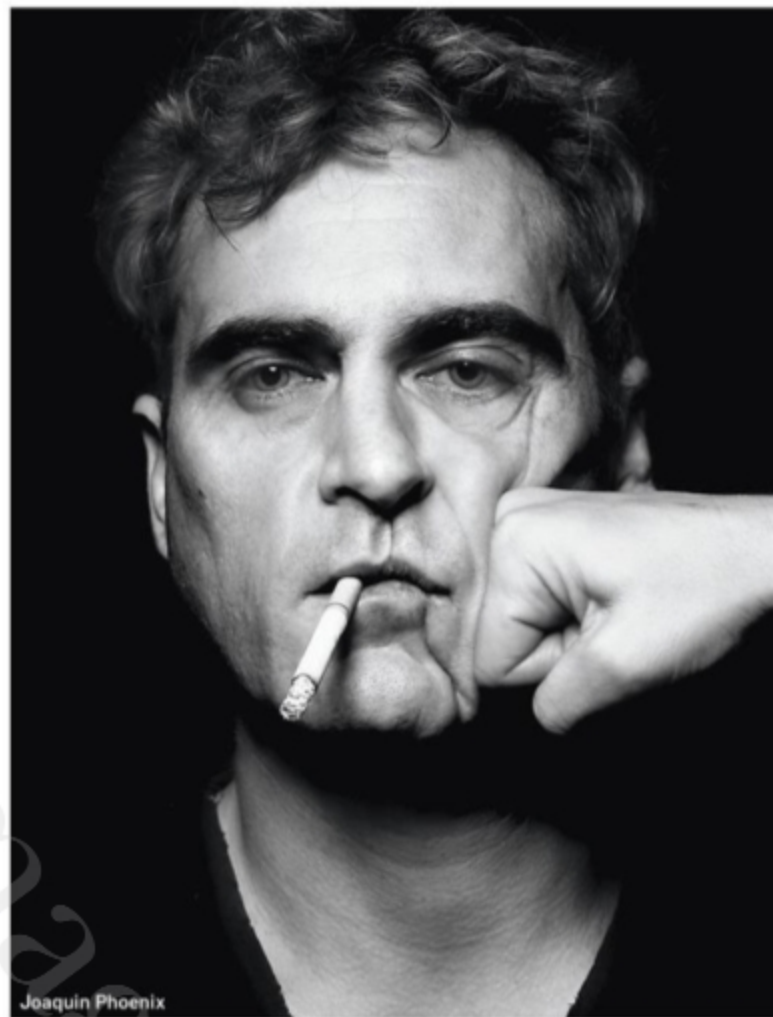
Charlie Day



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Pat Jordan



Joaquin Phoenix



Hugh Garvey



Greg Manis



Shel Silverstein



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**PLAYBOY**

## CONTENTS

**FEATURES****68 THE TOUGHEST  
LAWYER IN  
AMERICA IS  
ON YOUR SIDE**

Michael Hausfeld makes courtroom history, as **NEAL GABLER** reports, by defending and protecting the world's legal underdogs.

**78 MISSION OUT  
OF CONTROL**

**PAT JORDAN** embeds with a team of eccentrics seeking the impossible: contact an abandoned NASA satellite and bring it back to Earth.

**84 STRAIGHT  
OUTTA  
COMPTON**  
**HUGH GARVEY**

meets the chefs of Ghetto Gastro, who blaze more trails with their luxe cuisine than they do blunts.

**100 THAT '90S  
SHOW****KEVIN COOK**

relates moments from players and fans that defined the NBA's greatest era, from Magic's retirement to Jordan's comeback.

**104 SILVERSTEIN  
AROUND  
THE WORLD**

The writer-artist-genius traveled the globe for **PLAYBOY**, and the result is a uniquely skewed vision of life abroad.

**FICTION****110 MISS MARY'S  
ROOM**

Killing a man is one thing. Getting away scot-free is, as Sleepy discovers, the hard part. By **GEORGE PELECANOS**

**20Q****120 CHARLIE DAY**

After a decade on TV, the acerbic actor reveals to **TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER** the lessons he's learned about Hollywood, critics and himself.

**INTERVIEW****63 JOAQUIN  
PHOENIX****STEPHEN REBELLO**

uncovers the roving childhood, neurotic celebrity and Zen mind-set behind an actor who defies typecasting.

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MISS DECEMBER  
**ELIZABETH  
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# PLAYBOY

## CONTENTS

### PICTORIALS

#### 72 ART & SOUL

Lindsay Jones sunbathes as she pleases. On this Brooklyn roof, that's a blessing.

#### 88 FIRST MATE

Miss December's radiance does little to curb global warming in our Arctic fantasy.

#### 124 GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

Lauren Estrada and Polina Putilova give flowers a vision of beauty to aspire to.

### NEWS & NOTES

#### 16 WORLD OF PLAYBOY

PLAYBOY photographer Tony Kelly shows off his toys; Cooper Hefner bundles up for a good cause.

#### 155 PLAYMATE NEWS

Shelby Chesnes turns heads in *Horrible Bosses 2*; Crystal Hefner debuts a line of intimate apparel.

20Q: Charlie Day

### DEPARTMENTS

- 7 PLAYBILL
- 21 DEAR PLAYBOY
- 25 AFTER HOURS
- 46 ENTERTAINMENT
- 50 RAW DATA
- 55 PLAYBOY ADVISOR
- 98 PARTY JOKES

### CARTOONS

#### 118 CLASSIC CARTOONS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Good cheer abounds in our ode to the absurdities this season has to offer.



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PLAYBOY ON INSTAGRAM

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124



### GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

### PLAYBOY FORUM

#### 57 CLARENCE THOMAS'S THEOCRACY

MARK JOSEPH STERN dissects the befuddling opinions of a Supreme Court justice bent on rewriting our relationship with religion.

#### 57 READER RESPONSE

Merit and defect found in a theory about climate and capitalism; a Mafia insider's view of criminality.

#### 60 MAKERS INTO TAKERS

NCAA athletes generate billions but earn low wages. PATRICK HRUBY asks: Should taxpayers pay?

114



### SERVICE

#### 52 WHEN NERDS GO BAD

Why do dorks go power crazy? Who better than JOEL STEIN to answer that question.

#### 53 "LET ME EAT CAKE"

HILARY WINSTON wants to remind you: If you tell a woman what not to eat, she will destroy you.

#### 114 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

'Tis the season to give loved ones what they really want: not the latest or flashiest, but the best.

120





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# MARK WAHLBERG THE GAMBLER

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS ALL IN

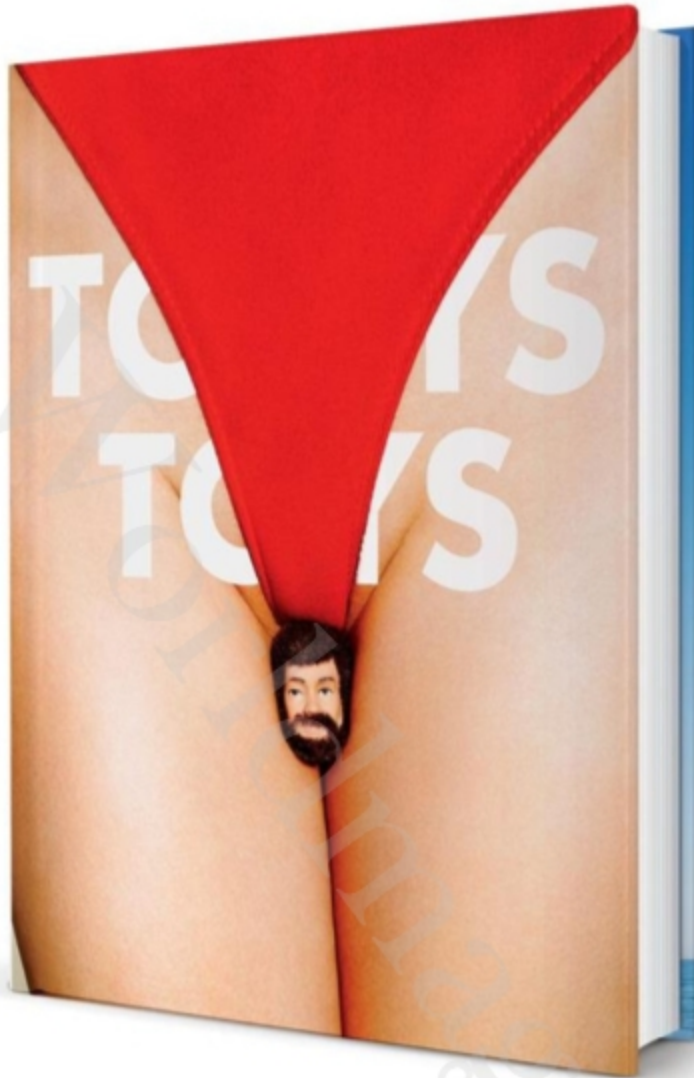


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## TONY KELLY'S ADULT TOYS

Senior Contributing Photographer Tony Kelly has conceived a new spin on babes in toyland. For a *PLAYBOY* shoot four years ago he juxtaposed little plastic men with real-life gorgeous women. Kelly kept playing and now has a 96-page collection called *Tonys Toys*. "It is a social commentary on a man's journey," he says. "Even the highest masculine form, the action hero, turns into a diminutive bendy toy in the presence of a striking woman." It's a tongue-in-cheek, G.I.-Joe-in-crotch meditation on the fairer sex holding all the power, using models and Playmates to illustrate Kelly's point of view. Self-published and hand-stitched, the collection comes in a limited print run of 1,000 copies and is available now. Kelly says, "This is not a book—it is an experience."



## EVOLUTION OF GENTLEMEN

Cooper Hefner designed a hoodie that he sold on *Booster.com* and donated the proceeds to the *HMH Foundation*. "I took the notion from the march of progress," he says. "Instead of evolution stopping at man, I continued to the modern gentleman, the *Playboy man*—an individual defined by reverence, sophistication and freedom."



## SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

*E!* News came to *Playboy* headquarters for the launch of the *Biofit x Playboy* intimates line. "Playboy has celebrated the feminine form for more than 60 years," says *Playboy* Global Licensing President Matt Nordby. "This line honors that tradition with its seductive aesthetic as well as the exquisite detailing and customized fit."

## QUICK, LIKE A BUNNY

Indy Lights driver Ryan Phinny admires *PLAYBOY* so much he placed our logo on his race car. "It created absolute pandemonium," says Phinny. "People were pushing and shoving to get their picture taken with the car. I've never seen anything like it." Call it mutual admiration: We tapped the

25-year-old, who has raced in the American Le Mans Series and will be moving up to the *IndyCar Series* next year, to host *Playboy.com's Playboy Garage*, on which Phinny and Playmates hit the Thermal Club racetrack outside Palm Springs to take high-end cars out for a spin.







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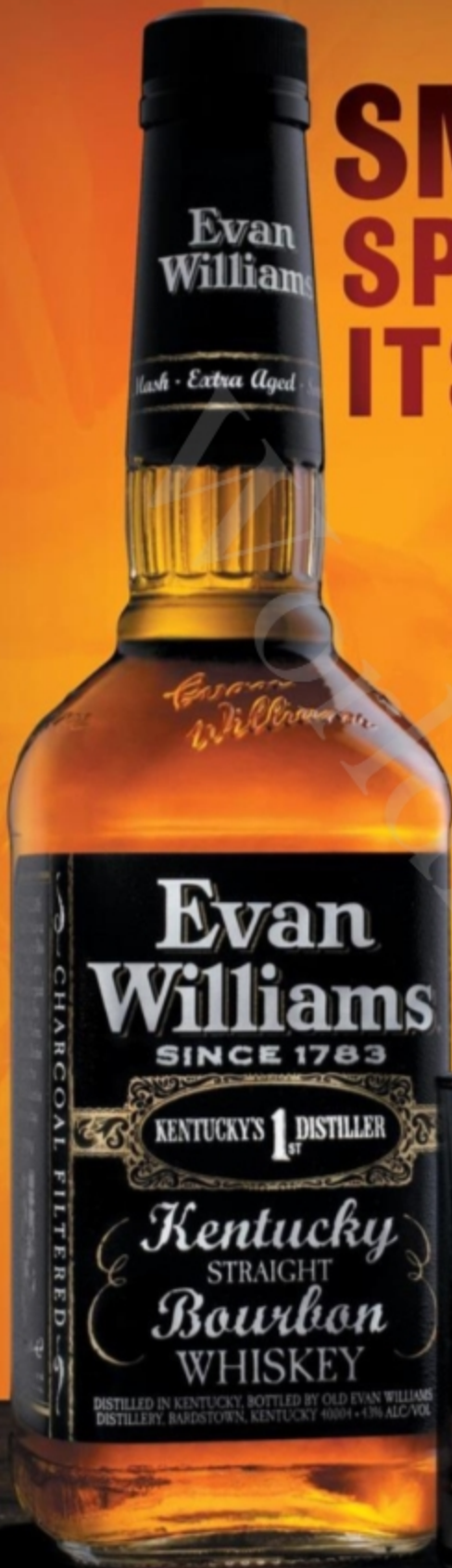
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## HIGHWAY TO THE DANGER ZONE

I greatly enjoyed your article about the Rickshaw Run (*Across India on Three Wheels*, October). Author Scott Yorko does an outstanding job describing the thrills and tribulations of running the subcontinent in a death machine. Having done the same trip myself—from Shillong to Jaisalmer—I greatly enjoyed reminiscing about the scary bits. Night driving, as Yorko writes, is a true terror. One time while my team was refueling at two A.M., a truck driver pulled up next to us and shouted orders to a nearby boy. The boy returned minutes later with a liter of beer, which the driver chugged in one pull. He paid the boy, returned the bottle and pulled out with his headlights off. The heavily potholed road had no streetlights and was populated by sleeping animals and truck drivers. When awake, these drivers frequently drove on the wrong side of the road with their lights off—though, honestly, there really is no “right” side. Our rickshaw’s sole headlight was powered by a dynamo connected to the engine, which meant that to make the light work we had to be constantly accelerating, head-on into the madness. God, it was fun.

Patrick Marsden  
Los Angeles, California

## A HARMON-IC TRANSITION

Dan Harmon (*Talk*, October) is the hairy, abrasive man-child that television needs. Listening to his *Harmon-town* podcast will make that clear, even if you’ve never seen an episode of his show *Community*. It’s fitting, then, that *Community* ended up online—all the good television is on the internet now anyway. Really, it’s just another sign that traditional media are dying: One of the cleverest TV programs ever will never be aired “on TV” again—and no one, including its creator, gives a shit.

Anthony Young  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## BRAINS AND BEAUTY

After reading “Foul Players” (*Talk*, October), I was pleased to see Amy Schumer included in the article. I’m quite a fan of Schumer’s, and not just for her comedic intellect and sharp wit. Schumer is the epitome of a blonde goddess. She is, in every sense of the word, *sexy*.

Drew Swanson  
Galesburg, Illinois

## THROWING LIGHT

I’m giving a standing ovation for Hilary Winston’s “But They’re My Dumb Things” (*Women*, October). She hits the nail on the head concerning what goes through women’s minds. Hopefully her column will show men that even we know it’s dumb. Apparently my obsession with throw pillows is quite normal; I’m also glad I’m not the only woman who admits my pillow obsession is com-

# DEAR PLAYBOY

## Hollywood’s Nutritionist

Honest and provocative, David Fincher (*Playboy Interview*, October) has never disappointed with his thought-provoking movies. He is the captain of captivating, and this interview proves it. Considering the many stale “Big Macs” the film industry has produced lately, Fincher’s refined palate, ingenuity and fearlessness earn him the title of head chef in Hollywood. Although some people say he is a perfectionist who is difficult to work for, to me these are characteristics of a true visionary. Keep doing what you are doing, sir. My taste buds are still tingling from *Gone Girl*.

Jared Smith  
Nixa, Missouri

Fincher refers to most movies as “Big Macs,” meals that are always the same no matter where you get them. And yet, Fincher always offers his movies to the same actors and always makes movies of the same genre. Did I miss something?

Via the internet

There’s a reason this man has my utmost respect and admiration as a director. He’s not afraid of digging a

pletely without logic. Winston’s article is 100 percent relatable.

Leslie Shelley  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

## THROWING SHADE

Joel Stein typically writes thoughtful pieces punctuated with comedy, but his *Men* column on fraternities in America is sloppy at best (“Please, Sir, May I Have a Brother?” October). Instead of using his word count to talk about real issues (say, by delving further into hazing, alcohol poisoning or, um, rape), he brushes over any topic of substance. He comes across as someone who has a boner for the boys who “do weird things to each other’s butts.” Stein seems unconcerned that frat guys will rule the world, because they clearly rule his.

Laura Beason  
Los Angeles, California

## PERFIDIA PUZZLER

I was baffled by some apparent discrepancies in James Ellroy’s latest fiction piece (*Perfidia*, September). When the cops are investigating the pharmacy robbery, the fat pharmacist tells them, “The gun had a silencer. It stuck off the end of the barrel.” The cops can’t find a shell casing and deduce that there are two options: “The robber picked it up or



knife deep into our souls to pull out something equally grotesque and sublime. Still, at the bottom of it, I bet he’s just a chill guy with some stellar (if a bit out-of-the-box) views of the world. Each film I’ve seen of his has made me reconsider my perspective on just about everything and refocus accordingly. Love it.

Via the internet

the gun was a revolver.” A silencer won’t work on a revolver. That’s a pretty big credibility hole in a detective story.

Larry Tucker  
Kansas City, Missouri

## MARTIAL ARTS DIPLOMACY

What does it say about the state of modern diplomacy when Steven Seagal (*Steven Seagal’s Fight for Mother Russia*, September) is legitimately involved in one of the world’s most troubling conflicts? Even more disturbing than the has-been Seagal is the quote from California Republican representative Dana Rohrabacher in which he describes congressional delegations as polite, pointless and drunken. I’m deeply unsettled by the idea that our diplomatic envoys’ meetings so closely resemble after-work drinks at TGI Fridays that they require the “star power” of Seagal to inch beyond that. It is notions such as this that have likely resulted in repeated and pointless international crises in which the U.S. seems helpless.

Luc Miknaitis  
Wellington, New Zealand

*Engrossing* is the word I would use to describe Lukas I. Alpert’s take on Steven Seagal and, in passing, on Gérard Depardieu and Jean-Claude Van



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Damme. *Moscopath* (similar to "psycho-path") is a word that describes someone of non-Russian ethnicity who develops an insane obsession with Holy Mother Russia. Moscopathes can be found in every field of endeavor, including politics, academia and talk radio. As for Seagal, it's bad enough that the poor soul sees the promotion of Russian weapons of death and destruction as one of his priorities in life. If he truly believes Vladimir Putin is "the greatest world leader alive today," then Seagal is not just a certifiable moscopath, he's just plain nuts.

Frank Semeniuk  
Brooklyn, New York

#### MIAMI HEAT

The University of Miami wins (*Girls of the ACC*, October)! I nominate Hannah Marti for MVP. Sign her up; we need more Marti.

Jeff Samson  
Fargo, North Dakota

After perusing *Girls of the ACC*, I am visually impressed with Miami's super-sexy Hannah Marti and the lovely all-American appeal of the University of Pittsburgh's Alicia Barton. Way to look great, girls!

T.R. Lazorishak  
Green Mountain Falls, Colorado

#### BETTER WITH AGE

After too many years of not seeing you and not thinking about you, PLAYBOY, you came back into my life this September like an old flame rekindled at a college reunion. I couldn't be happier. The magazine has always impressed me and gotten me hot, but somehow it has grown smarter and sexier over the years. Your appreciation of women has broadened and deepened. Of course you still love sex (who doesn't?), but you have gotten much better at expressing that appreciation and desire so I feel engaged instead of objectified. You make me laugh in new and unexpected ways. I get the feeling you understand me better than you ever have before, and you want to know what I think and feel and need. There is so much we have to talk about: culture, cooking, diets, politics, literature and the pleasures of the flesh. We've been apart too long, PLAYBOY. I look forward to seeing you and spending more time with you again—next month.

Magda Krance  
Chicago, Illinois

#### OUR WORK IS DONE

Well, it was a good run, but I think you've peaked with September's issue. It is perfect: a fantastic *Playboy Interview* with James Spader, a *20Q* with Frank Miller, the college football preview, a ridiculous bloody mary recipe, the jaw-droppingly gorgeous Stephanie Branton

and a dash of Steven Seagal. It was as if you made the magazine just for me. Good luck topping this one.

Michael Henry  
Houston, Texas

#### WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

I have been a PLAYBOY subscriber on and off for the past 20 years, and I must say I'm disappointed with the placement of the "hidden" Rabbit Head on recent covers. What happened? Years ago I would have to search and search for it. Today it's in plain sight. Come on, guys, keep it interesting.

AJ Baker  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

The October 2014 cover is nice, but I'm still waiting for more retro pictorials. Take us back to the 1950s. They were classic, elegant, tasteful, refined. Think Janet Pilgrim, Margaret Scott, Madeline Castle, Gloria Windsor, Ellen Stratton. Retro is the answer.

Bob Refo  
Ponte Vedra, Florida



No such hijinks in the Ivy League.

#### UPENN, SERIOUSLY?

I went to the University of Pennsylvania, and I can personally attest that when not attending lectures, I spent almost all my time at the library, including many Friday nights (*Playboy's Top Party Schools*, October). And the libraries were mostly full too. There's no way UPenn is more of a party school than 98 percent of the other schools across the United States.

Via the internet

I wouldn't say I studied all the time when I was at the University of Pennsylvania, but there was not much of a party culture on campus from Sunday to Wednesday—and almost none during finals. To say it is a bigger party school than Arizona, for example, is a joke of epic proportions. Students at schools like Arizona party seven days a week.

Via the internet







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A full-page photograph of Stephanie Corneliussen. She is wearing a blue and white vertically striped, long-sleeved button-down shirt that is unbuttoned and open, revealing her midriff. She is also wearing colorful, patterned bikini bottoms. Her arms are raised, with her hands behind her head. She has long, dark brown hair and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. In the top right corner, there is a red graphic element with white text.

hours

CEMBER -  
2014

## BECOMING ATTRACTION

### STEPHANIE CORNELIUSSEN

• "I'M AN ALPHA male stuck in a voluptuous female body," says the commanding Stephanie Corneliussen, a model-actress who can next be seen in HBO's *Hello Ladies: The Movie*. Born in Copenhagen, the Danish beauty speaks seven languages and is driven by curiosity rather than fame and fashion. "I'm a true believer in a free world," she says. "Everyone deserves to be happy."





# FORBIDDEN PLEASURES

AMERICA'S FAVORITE TECH COMPANY GETS AN F IN SEX EDUCATION

**W**hen 24-year-old designer Tina Gong submitted her self-created iPhone app HappyPlayTime to iTunes in May for Apple's approval, she knew she might run into red tape. "I know how strict Apple can be in its review process," she says, "but because HappyPlayTime is a sex-education app, I thought I could get in."

Gong's app features a grinning, anime-style cartoon vulva that users tap, swipe and glide their fingers across. The goal? Score points by making the vulva "very, very happy." In other words, simulate masturbatory motions to get the vulva off. The app also includes lessons on female anatomy, and Gong hopes to use the technology to educate women—both young and old—to become more comfortable with their bodies. "Masturbation is just the start of that process," she says.

Her process turned into a standoff with Apple when its review team rejected HappyPlayTime, calling it inappropriate. Gong kicked up the sug-

gested age rating from 12-plus to 17-plus and appealed the decision, to no avail. "They said it was rejected for pornographic reasons and crude content," explains Gong, "but nothing graphic happens in the app. There are just cartoons and connotations. It's meant to be tongue-in-cheek."

Apple's review process is notoriously fickle, a long-winded odyssey that requires beta testing and design contracts before a reviewer, tasked with auditing scores of new submissions, makes a decision. The content guidelines are frustratingly vague. To hear the company tell it, "We will reject apps for any content or behavior that we believe is over the line. What line, you ask? Well, as a Supreme Court justice once said, 'I'll know it when I see it.'"

That line is anything but absolute. Consider the sex apps that have been approved: Tinder is for hooking up, Hot Tips offers advice for "kinky fun" and "three in a bed," and iKamasutra lets you record your progress in Hindu lovemaking. So why is self-pleasure—particularly female pleasure—off-limits?



“Sex activates the moral foundation of sanctity and gets judged as bad, dirty and wrong,” says Emily Nagoski, a sex educator at Smith College and author of *The Good in Bed Guide to Female Orgasms*. “It seems Apple is conflating something that is sexually relevant with something that is sexually pleasurable or arousing. They are not the same thing.” Nagoski says that Apple’s murky methodology is emblematic of why few social advances have been achieved at the nexus of sex and technology. “Apple is making a moral judgment, not an intellectual one,” she says. Hence, good intentions—such as Gong’s goal of defusing the stigma of female pleasure—are ignored. “You need to grant people a space to approach sex education,” explains Nagoski. “Could there be any better medium than technology?”

Researchers have long demonstrated that sex education in any form can improve one’s sex life. A study in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* found that 90 percent of women who had difficulty reaching orgasm were able to do so more easily after receiving instruction on how to properly masturbate. A study in the *Annual Review of Sex Research* concluded that simply reading

“

*Apple is conflating something that is sexually relevant with something that is sexually pleasurable or arousing. They are not the same thing.*

”

a book about orgasms could be more effective than psychotherapy. “Education works,” says Nagoski, “and the platform through which it is delivered doesn’t matter.”

Tom Chen, founder of the China-based sex-toy maker Linkcube, wants to take digital sex education a step further with “smart” toys. Consider Skea, a Kickstarter-funded vaginal device based on Kegel exercises. Skea is designed to strengthen a woman’s pelvic floor by syncing with a smartphone game called *Alice in Continent*, based on the popular game *Temple Run*. Women squeeze their pelvic muscles around the Skea to make Alice jump, dodge and run. The idea, says Chen, is to help women achieve a better sex life and improve their well-being.

Chen says the response to the game has been positive and he anticipates huge demand worldwide when it hits the market early next year. He is also confident his game will meet Apple’s guidelines because he plans to market it as a medical tool rather than a recreational device.

Whether he’s right or not, sex-positive developers such as Gong and Chen are challenging Silicon Valley’s corporatists to promote sexual health through technology. “Arbitrary rules make it hard for people to innovate sex education for social good,” says Gong. “We need that to change and shift technology to support a healthier attitude.” Adds Nagoski, “The fact that this conversation is happening shows we’re moving in the right direction. I have a lot of hope.”—*Shane Michael Singh*



## HARD CORE

*Apple has wonky guidelines for sex-positive developers. Here are six examples that made it on—or off—the curious banned wagon*



**BANNED**

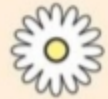


**NOT BANNED**



**Geometric Porn**  
*England*

- Designed by visual artist Luciano Foglia, Geometric Porn is just that: animated triangles and circles that mimic penetration. Foglia argued the app was not explicit and the images were “just an allusion,” but Apple rejected it for “excessively objectionable or crude content.”



**Luxuria Superbia**  
*Belgium*

- In this game of “touch, pleasure and joy,” users stimulate cartoon flowers with rhythmic slow and quick taps before being told to “stick it to my stigma!” One reviewer wrote, “This game is as close to sex with your iPad as you can get.”



**Sex Criminals**  
*USA*

- Apple banned the second issue of Matt Fraction’s controversial comic book, about a couple who stop time by having sex, from being sold on the comiXology app, an emporium of digital comics. *Sex Criminals* is still available on iBooks, however.



**Passion**  
*USA*

- The low-rated Passion app commandeers your iPhone’s mike and accelerometer to measure noise and movement during intercourse and to grade your sexual performance. It then ranks you against friends and strangers. Call it sexual networking.



**HappyPlayTime**  
*USA*

- Tina Gong created her app as a reaction to the parochial views of female sexuality she faced growing up in a conservative family and in college. Designed for a younger audience, Gong wanted HappyPlayTime to be “abstract and cute” without being graphic.



**iKamasutra**  
*Sweden*

- The holy bible of kinky sex is freely available on the App Store. More than 100 positions are candidly explained and illustrated in iKamasutra. Users can also track progress on their bends and balancing acts, improving from novice to grandmaster status.



Q A



# BENJAMIN BOOKER

THE NEW ORLEANS GUITARIST  
FUSES PUNK AND BLUES INTO ONE  
OF THE YEAR'S BEST DEBUTS

• Not much more than a year ago, Benjamin Booker was a 25-year-old kid working at a record store. These days his friends text him to say they heard his music at Starbucks. We may live in the information age, but Booker's rise to fame—which has included a stint opening for Jack White—is dramatic even by today's standards. It probably has something to do with the fact that he can talk excitedly about the Germs and Blind Willie Johnson in the same sentence, which, when you think about it, is a pretty good way to describe Booker's own music.—*Jonah Bayer*

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever play covers live?

**BOOKER:** We didn't used to, but while we were on tour with Jack White, I was backstage with him, talking. I was telling him that Ramblin' Jack Elliott does a song called "Falling Down Blues," which is a Furry Lewis cover. He hadn't heard that song before, so we started doing it on tour for that reason, and we've kept doing it.

**PLAYBOY:** So you turned Jack White on to a blues song?

**BOOKER:** [Laughs] I don't know about all that. The rest of the band seemed to like it, but I never heard what he thought about the song.

just hit me. I heard what I wanted to do and all of a sudden wrote a bunch of songs really quickly. I wanted to take the folk and punk guitar parts I came up with and combine them with the blues and gospel melodies that I also loved.

**PLAYBOY:** Your songs incorporate elements from a lot of different genres. When you started writing, did you consciously try to merge them?

**BOOKER:** I did. I'd been playing guitar for years but hadn't written any songs because I didn't really know what I wanted to do or what kind of material I wanted to write. Then one day, I don't know, it

**PLAYBOY:** What was your first show like?

**BOOKER:** It was at the AllWays Lounge in New Orleans in 2012. I was playing acoustic guitar with a band, and I was terrified. It was fine at first, because when I got up on stage there were maybe 10 or 12 people watching. But the venue also had a theater in the back. That show let out as soon as I started playing, and 80 people rushed into the room. [Laughs] It was horrifying. I played four or five songs and ran offstage.



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# DREAM WEAVER

A BROOKLYN ARTIST USES OLD-SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY TO CELEBRATE MODERN FEMALE SEXUALITY



• Brooklyn-based tapestry artist Erin M. Riley's studio is covered in photos of half-naked women—all in the name of art. For her large-scale wall textiles, Riley finds and re-creates online selfies—those ubiquitous images of young women on social media sites such as Instagram or Tumblr, where the more revealing the photo, the more "likes" it garners.

But while *selfie* is becoming a disparaging term in popular culture to describe a seemingly endless narcissism, Riley has an affinity for the women in her tapestries. "I know what it feels like, being excited to take a sexy photo," she says. "It is fun, but then there's always some level of disappointment. So much of how we communicate now is

image after image. One selfie just isn't enough."

In each of her textiles the faces of the women are made anonymous, blurred, giving the impression that each selfie is connected to something larger. Perhaps fittingly, Riley sometimes uses her own nude photos, lending the project a personal tone. Although some reviewers have focused on the erotic nature of her pieces, the tapestries also tell a darker tale about technology, the media's obsession with sexting and the judgment young women receive for being visibly sexual. "There is something strange about how early sexual encounters are now being documented," she says.

Growing up in the early 2000s, Riley experienced this digital sexual experimentation firsthand. She recalls with affection the pre-Facebook era of cybersex in AOL chat rooms, publishing fan fiction on *Literotica.com* and

flirting via instant message. "I think selfies are just a reflection of the times," she says, then sighs, acknowledging the sinister nature of the trend and the fact that some sexual images—possibly some of those used in her tapestries—are leaked online out of revenge. However, Riley hopes her work validates this specific female experience: It's about celebrating a feminine exploration of sexuality rather than condemning the women expressing it.

Riley uses a traditional vintage floor loom and dyes all the wool by hand in her studio. Sitting down to weave, she pauses to note that producing selfies is a methodical process almost akin to the slow act of weaving. For each selfie a significant amount of time is spent primping, posing and editing. "I feel affection for the women in my pieces," she says. "I feel supportive and caring of them. I hope they are happy. I hope they are advocating for themselves and asking for orgasms."

—Rachel R. White



## FROM BEER TO THERE

→ Belgian beer is so good it's stopping traffic. That's the logic behind a recently approved plan in the Belgian city of Bruges to build a two-mile underground pipeline linking the historic De Halve Maan brewery to a nearby bottling facility. The proposal claims the polyethylene pipeline will keep 500 delivery trucks off the city's streets every year and be capable of carrying more than 1,500 gallons of beer per hour. Hopefully home delivery isn't far behind.





NOT JUST  
ANY DATA



MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

Playmate of the Year 2013 Raquel Pomplun makes us believe in the magic of the season with the greatest gift of all – Holiday spirit. This month Playboy unwraps 10 unexpected facts about the happiest time of year that are sure to keep you stirring with comfort and joy.

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of confetti are dropped on Times Square on New Year's Eve. That's an equivalent of 4 small donkeys (500 pounds each).



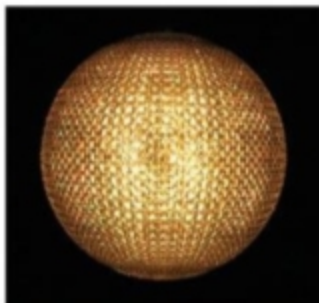
**0.8 lbs,**

the weight of a guinea pig and the average that Americans gain between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

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**Ingredients**

3 roma tomatoes, quartered  
 1 onion, quartered  
 2 jalapeños, halved lengthwise  
 2 garlic cloves  
 Olive oil  
 2 dried *guajillo* chilies, stems off  
 2 dried *arbol* chilies, stems off  
 2 duck breasts, skin on  
 Kosher salt  
 10 oz. cooked pinto beans (canned beans will work)  
 1 bag of your favorite tortilla chips  
 8 oz. shredded Manchego cheese  
 8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar

**Garnishes**

Sliced radishes, chopped cilantro, halved cherry tomatoes

# MACHO NACHOS

A TOP CHEF UPGRADES THE GO-TO GAME-DAY DISH...WITH DUCK FAT

**C**lassically trained chefs across the country have been recasting manly mainstays as something fresh and bold, and nachos are the newest target. We called on chef Eduardo Ruiz from the progressive pan-Latin restaurant Corazón y Miel in Bell, California to show us how duck fat and a bit of French tradition play into this masculine staple. "As chefs, it's in our nature to swag things out," says Ruiz. "The bar is set so low for nachos that anything seems possible."—Justin Bolois

Photography by CHARLES MASTERS

**Directions**

1. Preheat oven broiler to 500 degrees. Place tomatoes, onion, jalapeños and garlic on an oven-safe tray. Drizzle olive oil over vegetables. Place tray in oven for 15 minutes until vegetables are golden brown.
2. Place *guajillo* and *arbol* chili peppers in a saucepan and cover with water. Place pan over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer for 10 minutes.
3. While vegetables are in oven and chilies are cooking, rinse duck breasts and pat dry with a paper towel. Using a sharp knife, score each duck-breast skin about 10 times, creating a crosshatch pattern.
4. Warm a cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, then drizzle a teaspoon of olive oil in it. Place duck breasts in skillet, skin-side down, and

cook for 12 minutes, until skin is golden brown. Flip duck breasts and cook for five minutes. Turn off heat and let breasts rest in skillet.

5. To make salsa: Remove cooked vegetables from oven and place in a blender with chilies and remaining water. Add a tablespoon of salt and blend until smooth. Add water as needed.

6. To make duck-fat refried beans: Remove duck breasts from skillet and turn up heat. To the residual duck fat in the skillet add cooked beans and bean liquid. Once hot, smash beans with a spoon or fork. Remove from skillet.

**ASSEMBLY**

Place tortilla chips in cast-iron skillet and top with duck-fat refried beans, salsa, cheese and sliced duck breast. Place in preheated 450-degree oven until cheese melts (about five minutes). Top with fresh cilantro, sliced radishes and cherry tomatoes.



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DRINK

# TIKI TIME

ESCAPISM IN A CERAMIC MUG IS HERE TO STAY

If you find that whole mustachioed old-timey know-it-all mixologist thing a little too self-serious, you're in luck. The tiki bar is back in full force. Until recently, the dusty vestiges of the post-war tiki bar remained in our grandparents' basements. But several years ago, modern tiki bars opened across the country and sparked a revival that combines top-quality ingredients and exacting technique. Today, bars such as Hale Pele in Portland, Three Dots and a Dash in Chicago and Smuggler's Cove in San Francisco are thriving thanks to talented bartenders and rum enthusiasts at the helm. We asked Martin Cate of Smuggler's Cove to share his recipe for the expedition (pictured), a boozy delight that's light on the fruit juice and inspired by Don the Beachcomber, founder of the tiki movement. Men, it's time to embrace the finely crafted umbrella drink again.—Nora O'Donnell

Photography by  
CHARLES MASTERS

## Ingredients

2 oz. dark rum  
such as Coruba  
Original or  
Skipper  
1 oz. bourbon  
such as Buffalo  
Trace  
1 oz. fresh lime  
juice  
½ oz. cinnamon  
syrup  
½ oz. honey  
syrup  
½ oz. vanilla  
syrup  
¼ oz. Bittermens  
New Orleans  
coffee liqueur  
2 oz. chilled soda  
water

## Prep

Combine ingredients in a blender with 12 ounces crushed ice and pulse for two seconds. Pour into tiki mug. Garnish with mint leaves, a pineapple wedge and edible flowers.

## SYRUP 101

Much of the complexity of this drink comes from flavored syrups. For the cinnamon syrup, dissolve two cups sugar in one cup hot water, add two cinnamon sticks and let soak overnight. Do the same for the vanilla syrup, using two chopped vanilla beans. For honey syrup, heat one cup honey with one cup water. Store extra syrup in the fridge for up to a week.





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GOT AWAY**

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## TRAIL BLAZER

WHY YOU NEED A ONE-OF-A-KIND, OVER-THE-TOP BLAZER TO SET YOU APART FROM THE PACK

**S**omewhere between the classic blue blazer and the formal jacket sits a category we like to think of as the trail blazer—a jacket you won't find hanging in every man's closet or in malls across America, one you'll have a hard time not wearing over and over. Saint Laurent's metal-flecked tuxedo jacket has become the blazer to beat. Designed by Hedi Slimane, fashion genius and rock-and-roll obsessive, the jacket is as versatile as it is eye-catching. With slim jeans and a T-shirt it can convey stage-ready swagger. With crisp black pants, a white shirt and a narrow tie it can go semiformal. It ain't cheap (\$2,750 at [mrporter.com](http://mrporter.com)), but it's the ideal splurge for the man who has and wants everything.





paco rabanne

The new fragrance for him

INVICTUS



# TIN IS IN

LOOK SHARP WITH THESE PRODUCTS IN HANDSOME TINS

**W**hile plastic is an undeniably practical and affordable material for storing grooming products, nothing beats the cool factor and tactile heft of pomade, wax or balm in a low-slung metal container with an awesome design on the lid. Here are some of our favorite man-scaping products that look handsome while keeping you handsome.

## METAL HEAD

Tin doesn't mean what it used to. These cans are made with more readily available and practical aluminum.



## NICE CANS

### Pomp It Up

→ Johnny Cash is rumored to have used this pomade to preserve his pompadour.  
*Royal Crown pomade, \$5*

### Close Shave

→ Old-school vegetable shave soap that has been made in Germany since 1840.  
*Klar Seifen shaving soap, \$33*

### Give 'Em Lip

→ This rosemary-scented balm will keep your lips tastily moisturized.  
*Mr. Natty Pleasant Pucker lip balm, \$12.25*

### The Balm

→ Blast the ache out of muscles with this classic full-strength Chinese balm made with camphor and menthol.  
*Tiger Balm Ultra, \$15*

### Wax On

→ Keep your stache looking sharp with this gin-and-tonic-scented mustache wax.  
*Man's Face Stuff mustache wax, \$10*

### Beard Science

→ This multipurpose styling wax is designed to cover everything from hair to eyebrows to beard.  
*Man's Face Stuff beard balm, \$20*

### Dress for Success

→ The heavy hold on this pomade was formulated in the 1920s to control both straight and kinky hair.  
*Murray's pomade, \$3*

### Think Ink

→ Protect and soothe your new tattoo with this moisturizing balm.  
*Brooklyn Grooming tattoo balm, \$22*






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# VIVA VIENNA

CULTURE AND CLUBBING GO HAND IN HAND IN THE AUSTRIAN CAPITAL

• The same scene plays out no matter the season: Amid the grand historic buildings, vast plazas and prim parks, Vienna locals, young and old, lounge on marble steps or on the wide lawns, stroll riverside dining districts and seasonal markets, sharing philosophies, dramas and midnight kisses. It's no wonder Richard Linklater chose this city as the canvas for his Gen X classic *Before Sunrise*, in which Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy spend an evening strolling Vienna, doing exactly that.

## 1 An Evolving City

This cinematic city, one of the world's most musical, oozes creative inspiration, though not all its history is comfortable. After all, it was here in Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square) that Hitler delivered his famous 1938 speech marking the takeover of Austria and the beginning of a murderous blitzkrieg. The monolithic anti-aircraft towers the Germans built around the city remain, though some have been repurposed. One is now the Haus des Meeres (House of the Sea), a 300,000-liter aquarium with a

family of hammerheads swimming on the 10th floor, while rock and free climbers (members of the Austrian Alpine Club) take to the colorful ropes on the tower's exterior. Another houses the MAK Contemporary Art Collection, a gallery that moves forward from the artistic genius represented in the expressionist collection at the **Leopold Museum (B)**. All this proves that to focus on its darkest days is to ignore what Vienna has become: a wondrous, bustling, walkable, affordable and diverse city full of intellectuals, artists, new world-class chefs and a pleasure-seeking populace.



## 2 Holidayze

The holidays are a shimmering spectacle in Vienna as Christmas markets spring up around the city and more than 10 miles of streets are illuminated by 2.5 million bulbs. The best of the markets is set along the narrow lanes of Spittelberg, just behind the Museum Quarter, and the most visited is on Rathausplatz, against the imposing Gothic backdrop of city hall—a reimagined cathedral where you'll also find an outdoor ice rink and a 98-foot-tall tree. After Christmas, the plaza in front of Schönbrunn Palace becomes a New Year's market and the center of Vienna's famed New Year's Eve Trail, when the historic core is transformed into a

## 3 Night Moves

The Naschmarkt buzzes along the Wien River at any time of year. Here you'll find a variety of snacks, spices, wine and produce from the traditional to the exotic. Back toward the center you can grab a Viennese sausage at **Bitzinger's Würstelstand (D)**, a hip little jewel box of a sausage vendor near the opera house, or make your way to Engel in up-and-coming Leopoldstadt. Here, you can choose something from the seasonal and traditional menu handwritten daily in composition books. The decor is spare and vintage, the service is superb, and the hearty food delivers. After dinner, catch live jazz in the intimate

and funky environs of Porgy & Bess, or hit the **Volksgarten (C)**, a house-music playground with an expansive dance floor inside and an outdoor space, bathed in ambient yellow light, where tables are scattered deep into a garden adjacent to a park. When your night ends, sleep it off at **25hours (A)**, a circus-themed hotel in the Museum Quarter with a popular rooftop bar and whimsically decorated rooms. —Adam Skolnick





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**DODGE CHALLENGER SRT HELLCAT**

Engine: 6.2-liter V8 / Horsepower: 707 / Torque: 650 ft.-lbs.  
Zero to 60: 3.5 sec. / MPG: 13 city, 22 hwy. / Price: \$60,000

# THE DODGE HELLCAT, UNLEASHED

**THE SUPERPOWERED CHALLENGER COMES WITH SERIOUS CLAWS**

• Every man deserves an irresponsible toy, something for which the risk of shooting out an eye or spending a weekend in jail is part of the appeal. That's why we love the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat and its absurd 707 horsepower.

Dodge dropped off a TorRed-hued 2015 Hellcat for some unsupervised flogging, and, equipped with our lawyer's phone number, we dared to push the Hellcat's billet-clad throttle pedal to the floor. Pinning our backs to the high-bolstered, peanut-butter leather seats, the supercharged 6.2-liter V8 connected with the speed and brute force of

a young Iron Mike, roaring from zero to 60 in a mere 3.5 seconds. The 15.4-inch Brembo brakes allowed us to stop on a dime, while the engine's blower continued to purr with a muscular, intimidating dissonance.

Even in full SRT track trim, the Challenger resembles an oversize line-backer. Surprisingly, it can still carve a canyon. It's no roadster, but the car's well-honed suspension feels nimble for something its size. The interior is a step in the right direction from past models and includes a stout flat-bottomed steering wheel and an 8.4-inch color screen that handles infotainment.

For those who like to bring a crew along for the madness, the Hellcat's same devilish power plant is now available in the four-door Charger SRT, making it the fastest production sedan ever.—*William K. Gock*



## HOW MUCH FOR THAT HORSE?

WHAT'S THE GOING RATE FOR HORSEPOWER? WE DID THE MATH ON A FEW FAVORITE RIDES

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POWER: 887 HP  
MSRP: \$845,000  
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CHEVY Camaro 1SS  
POWER: 426 HP  
MSRP: \$33,505  
PRICE PER HORSE:

**\$78.65**



ROLLS-ROYCE Wraith  
POWER: 624 HP  
MSRP: \$284,900  
PRICE PER HORSE:

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JAGUAR F-Type V8 S  
POWER: 495 HP  
MSRP: \$92,000  
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# TUNE-UP TIME

NEIL YOUNG LEADS THE CHARGE FOR AN AUDIO REVOLUTION

It's time for the MP3 to fade away, according to Neil Young. The Godfather of Grunge recently revealed the PonoPlayer, a digital-music device he helped develop that plays high-resolution audio files that deliver up to 30 times the sound quality of MP3s. The growing high-resolution-audio movement hopes to upgrade the MP3 the way HDTV did television. To break it down: Default iTunes tracks deliver 256 kilobits per second of compressed audio, while a CD delivers 1,411 Kbps. High-resolution files can crank out a whopping 9,216 Kbps of uncompressed audio goodness. "High-resolution audio can finally deliver what music is about," says David Chesky, creator of the format and co-founder of HDtracks.com, the largest high-resolution-audio download site. "It's the real sound of what musicians sound like live, not

some watered-down version just to fit on some old-fashioned portable device." Here's how to tune in.



## HEAD CASE

→ Grado Labs has been creating high-quality audio equipment in Brooklyn since 1953. Grado's RS2e headphones (\$495, gradolabs.com) use handcrafted mahogany air chambers and 44-millimeter drivers to pump rich, warm sound ranging from deep bass to smooth high ends. Perfect for the high-resolution mix of Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*.

## TRUE PLAYER

→ With great audio quality comes great file size. Count on high-resolution files to be six to 10 times the size of standard MP3s. Store all that sound on the Sony HAP-Z1ES music player (\$2,000, sony.com), a one-terabyte hard-disc drive capable of handling high-res audio files. Transfer music wirelessly or via a cable, then dial up a tune on the full-color display.

## SOUND OFF

→ *Highway 61 Revisited* shouldn't be confined to the living room. Monster's SoundStage speakers can be connected wirelessly to deliver music throughout the house. The S3 (\$400, monsterproducts.com) includes wi-fi and Bluetooth connectivity, streams music from Spotify, Rhapsody and other services and can jam high-resolution audio files from the kitchen to the bedroom.

## PURE GOLD

→ Neil Young has long derided digital audio's lack of warmth as "underwater listening." To change our listening habits, Young raised \$6 million on Kickstarter, making it the fourth most successful campaign ever. The resulting PonoPlayer (\$400, ponomusic.com) includes 128 gigabytes of storage and plays sweet-sounding high-res audio as well as all your old iTunes tracks.





MOVIE OF THE MONTH

# THE INTERVIEW

By Stephen Rebello

→ In our social-networking-savvy era, movie stars James Franco and Seth Rogen hear firsthand when they're hated or loved. But it took the two actors' new bromantic action-comedy to spark a

full-on geopolitical war of words. In the movie, the CIA enlists a moronic tabloid-TV host (Franco) and his producer (Rogen) to assassinate erratic, nuclear-armed North Korean dictator Kim

Jong-un (Randall Park). In the real world, state sources in Pyongyang promised "merciless" retaliation against the U.S. if President Obama doesn't halt the release of what Korean officials have called a "wanton act of terror" by "gangster moviemakers." Rogen got ahead of the controversy, wisecracking on Twitter, "People don't usually want to kill me for one of my movies until after they've paid

12 bucks to see it." Sony appears to be taking North Korea's saber rattling seriously enough to make several concessions, including digitally altering buttons worn by the North Korean military and, maybe, changing a scene in which the face of Kim Jong-un gets melted off. As for Rogen, when Pyongyang announced the despotic film buff would see *The Interview*, the star tweeted, "I hope he likes it!"

## ALSO SHOWING IN THEATERS



### EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

→ Take director Ridley Scott at his word when he promises this biblical saga is "fucking huge." The epic features massive horseback battles, hailstorms, thousands of extras, a special-effects parting of the Red Sea and Christian Bale's Moses shepherding the Hebrews out of Egypt. Sigourney Weaver (who worked with Scott on *Alien*) adds to the spectacle.



### AMERICAN SNIPER

→ Clint Eastwood puts Bradley Cooper through his paces in this action-heavy drama based on the autobiography of real-life elite Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle. A conservative Texan, Kyle was deployed to Iraq for four grisly, high-stakes tours from 2003 to 2009 and is credited by the Pentagon with killing more than 150 people. Sienna Miller plays his wife.



### THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

→ Based largely on J.R.R. Tolkien's appendices in *The Lord of the Rings*—along with beefed-up roles for the elves, Ian McKellen's Gandalf and Luke Evans's dragon-slaying Bard—Peter Jackson's third and final installment of his Middle-earth adventure promises an epic clash of elves, trolls and orcs fighting a war to rule them all.

# ALLEN LEECH



THE DOWNTON ABBEY ACTOR GETS CRACKING IN THE WORLD WAR II-ERA IMITATION GAME

**PLAYBOY:** There's Oscar buzz for *The Imitation Game*, in which you play real-life Scotsman John Cairncross, one of a team of British experts who race to crack the Germans' Enigma code. What about this movie appealed to you?

**LEECH:** Alan Turing [played by Benedict Cumberbatch] single-handedly broke the unbreakable code, which had an enormous impact on ending World War II. Turing's name should be known all around the world, but it isn't. I was struck by the story of an unsung hero. So much of his life was covered up because of his homosexuality.

**PLAYBOY:** The actors on *Downton Abbey* look cool in vintage costumes, but what's it like to have to wear them?

**LEECH:** *Downton Abbey* is set in the 1920s, and people back then must have hated to hear that gong go off for breakfast, lunch and dinner, because it meant having to wear starched shirts and changing clothes three times a day. *The Imitation Game* is set in the 1940s, when clothes became more comfortable. But you still feel different wearing those than if you were sitting around in boardshorts.—S.R.



# 12 MEDIA MUST-HAVES

By Greg Fagan

## 1. SPARTACUS: THE COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY

• The statuette packaged with this Amazon exclusive depicts TV's favorite gladiator turned slave-revolt leader Spartacus kebabbing an opponent with a spear. All editions include new bonus material. \$200



## 2. STANLEY KUBRICK: THE MASTERPIECE COLLECTION

• Two new documentaries (one feature length) explore director Stanley Kubrick's life and enduring influence in this Amazon-only set, which also contains Blu-rays of eight of his films, from *Lolita* (1962) to *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). \$200

## 3. GHOSTBUSTERS 1 & 2 LIMITED EDITION GIFT SET

• A "class-five full-roaming vapor" in the original 1984 film and its 1989 sequel, Slimer attains team-mascot status in the animated spin-off. He's a numbered figurine in this set, which also includes new 30th-anniversary bonus material. \$150



## 4. THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 4 LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY

• In an especially creepy touch, the Walker statue's arm and head pivot when you remove the discs' case from the base. All editions include deleted and extended scenes, commentaries and other bonuses. \$130



## 5. X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST DELUXE EDITION

• The best X movie yet? Maybe. But the Magneto helmet included in this Amazon exclusive has no rival in the X-Men swag spectrum. If it fits on a kitten's head, expect to see it in your Facebook news feed over the holidays. \$130



## 6. HERZOG: THE COLLECTION LIMITED EDITION

• Sixteen films from German master Werner Herzog make Blu-ray debuts in this set, including the dramas he made with actor Klaus Kinski and several of his gleefully idiosyncratic documentaries. \$160

## 7. STAR TREK: THE COMPENDIUM

• This pairing of *Star Trek* (2009) and *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013) compiles bonuses that were split among various retailers in 2013 and weaves all the theatrical IMAX footage into the sequel's Blu-ray. \$45



## 8. THE SOPRANOS: THE COMPLETE SERIES BLU-RAY

• Does Tony Soprano survive the landmark show's ambiguous conclusion? Series creator David Chase still sidesteps when asked. Just enjoy one of TV's all-time best shows in high definition, and try to *fuhgeddaboutit*. \$280

## 9. TRUE BLOOD: THE COMPLETE SERIES BLU-RAY

• Released the same day as the final-season collection of HBO's vampire drama, this set rewards fans who waited for a single box that includes digital copies of every episode of every season. \$300

## 10. THE OFFICE: THE COMPLETE SERIES DVD

• Like *Cheers* before it, *The Office* evolved through cast changes while remaining fun and inventive. With 201 episodes from nine seasons and reams of bonuses, it's comedy comfort food served by Steve Carell. \$200



## 11. STEVEN SPIELBERG DIRECTOR'S COLLECTION BLU-RAY

• With *Duel*, *The Sugarland Express*, *Jaws*, *E.T.*, *1941*, *Always* and the first two *Jurassic Park* movies, this set traces Spielberg's rise from wunderkind to mogul. A booklet adds to the on-disc bonuses. \$200

## 12. JOHN WAYNE: THE EPIC COLLECTION DVD

• This deluxe 40-film compendium of the big man's films comes packed with 17 artifacts of memorabilia in a bound collector's book. Amazon's exclusive edition adds a Duke belt buckle that is absolutely perfect. \$150

## GAME OF THE MONTH

# SUNSET OVERDRIVE

By Jason Buhrmester



• A contaminated energy drink that turns the population into ravaging mutants is the best thing to happen to Sunset City, the futuristic setting for *Sunset Overdrive* (Xbox One). The year is 2027 and the "Awesompocalypse" transforms

the game's slacker protagonist into an action star who parkours, zip-lines and vaults across the sprawling city while spraying mutants with weapons that fire everything from harpoons and exploding teddy bears to vinyl records that

play as they spin. The snarky story line is a mash-up of *Futurama* and Philip K. Dick played out across a DayGlo world of rampaging mutants and warring factions as you try to escape the city. Wildly original. **YYY**

## MUST-WATCH TV

# MARCO POLO

By Josef Adalian

• Having already launched a prestige drama (*House of Cards*) and a hit comedy (*Orange Is the New Black*), Netflix aims to conquer another TV staple—the historical epic—with its new series *Marco Polo*. Although superproducer Harvey Weinstein is behind the project, no major names are in front of the camera. The 13th century Italian explorer, famous for his two-decade voyage to Asia and his relationship with Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, is played by Lorenzo Richelmy (pictured), an actor unknown to American audiences. But insiders report what Weinstein saved on casting he used for stunning visuals and *Game of Thrones*-level production values. Toss in martial arts action and the steamy sex scenes for which subscription TV is famous, and *Marco Polo* might be the perfect antidote to all that earnest holiday programming.





# WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FWENDS

By Rob Tannenbaum



• Warning: Lots of sanctimonious Beatles fans will despise *With a Little Help From My Fwends*, the Flaming Lips' remake of Sgt. Pepper's *Lonely*

*Hearts Club Band*. With an odd lineup of helpers ranging from Maynard James Keenan to Miley Cyrus, the long-standing Oklahoma cult

band wants to unfamiliarize you with the Beatles, taking their silly psychedelic treks to a digital extreme. *Fwends* is woozy, disjointed, dense, sometimes even off-putting. Forget marmalade skies; this is the brown acid of tribute albums. And it's better than *Sgt. Pepper*, which is easily the most overrated rock record of all time. Although, that's not a fair comparison—the Beatles didn't have Miley Cyrus by their side. ♣♣♣



# PULP: A FILM ABOUT LIFE, DEATH AND SUPERMARKETS

• "I like music that makes you think," a fan declares in *Pulp: A Film About Life, Death and Supermarkets*, director Florian Habicht's documentary about the clever U.K. alternative rock band. At the center of the film is wry, bespectacled singer Jarvis Cocker, whom a bandmate fondly describes as being "a little bit obsessed" with sex. As the group prepares to play a late-2012 hometown concert in Sheffield, Habicht portrays the city by chatting with a motley array of eccentrics: fans, tour crew, pensioners, a librarian. For HD viewers, a warning: Everyone in Sheffield seems to have hideous teeth.—R.T. ♣♣♣

## ❁ ❁ ❁ THIS WINTER'S BEST BOOKS ❁ ❁ ❁



### THROWN

→ Kerry Howley embarks on a quest for ecstasy delivered in an unexpected forum: MMA fights. This transfixing nonfiction narrative combines bloody play-by-play with philosophical inquiry, delivering serious punches. Welcome to the Octagon.



### BECOMING RICHARD PRYOR

→ Insightful and expansive, Scott Saul's remarkable biography of the now legendary comic chronicles how a sensitive, brilliant man with a hardscrabble past mined his personal life for America's entertainment, revolutionizing stand-up along the way.

By Cat Auer



### THE SECRET HISTORY OF WONDER WOMAN

→ William Moulton Marston, creator of the comic-book heroine, was a feminist inspired by his wife—and his live-in girlfriend. Jill Lepore explores the origin story of Wonder Woman, the "suffragist as pinup"—kinky red boots and all.



### VAPOR

→ World-weary Nick abandons city life to walk the desert, looking for inner peace. Spanish cartoonist Max's graphic novel is ambiguous but powerful, leaving readers to wonder whether Nick is going crazy or finding enlightenment—or perhaps they're the same thing.



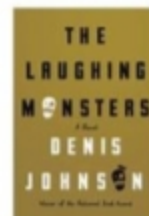
### GRANDVILLE NOËL

→ When a junkie unicorn with a Christ complex stirs up trouble in Paris, Detective Inspector Archie LeBrock brings his trademark tough-badger efficiency to bear. The latest installment in Bryan Talbot's *Grandville* series is perfectly timed for holiday gifting.



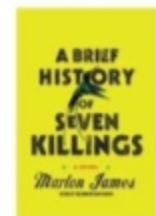
### CLOTHES...MUSIC...BOYS

→ Be a genius or have a penis—that's what Viv Albertine feared it took to be part of the London punk scene. She did it anyway, forming a band with Sid Vicious and then playing guitar for the Slits. An engrossing memoir from a woman who refused to give in.



### THE LAUGHING MONSTERS

→ Ambition, adventure and Africa mix volatily in Denis Johnson's latest novel. Antihero operative Roland Nair has many agendas, no loyalties (except to his pocketbook), a taste for danger and vague plans to score big. Things fall apart, riotously.



### A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEVEN KILLINGS

→ What happened to the rude-boys who tried to kill Bob Marley? That question forms the core from which Marlon James's masterful novel radiates, a character-driven tale that takes place in a maelstrom of guns, drugs and politics.



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The *Stauer Metropolitan* retains all the hallmarks of a well-bred wristwatch including a gold-finished case, antique ivory guilloché

face, blued Breguet-style hands, an easy-to-read date window at the 3 o'clock position, and a crown of sapphire blue. It secures with a crocodile-patterned, genuine black leather strap and is water resistant to 3 ATM.

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• Employees are happier and **15%** more productive in an office that features plants, according to a University of Queensland study.

**TAKE A HINT**

*Just 18% of women and 36% of men can tell when someone of the opposite sex is flirting with them.*



**TWO-FISTED ACTION**

• People who watch action-packed programs with many camera cuts and fluctuating sound levels eat almost twice as much food while viewing than people who watch "boring" shows.

**SCREEN SCENE**

• Hours per day that college women and men spend on their smartphones, respectively: **10 and 8.**

Average time spent per day, according to a Baylor University study:

- Texting: 95 minutes
- E-mailing: 49 minutes
- Facebook: 39 minutes
- Web surfing: 34 minutes
- Listening to music: 28 minutes

**60%** of the students felt they may be addicted to their phones.

**OPPOSITES DON'T ATTRACT**

• People are more likely to partner with others of similar genetic makeup and to be attracted to the body odor of those who share their political beliefs.

**SWEET DEAL**

**\$33,000**

*Amount New York City has to pay three men after cops mistook their Jolly Ranchers for crystal meth and arrested them.*

**HELLO**  
my name is

**AUTO**

Almost **20%** of car owners surveyed by YouGov name their car; **21%** imagine their car as male, **30%** as female (**49%** as neither).

**BE PREPARED**



Who provides the condom? **83%** of the time, it's the man.



For a first date, women are twice as likely as men to prefer a group date over a one-on-one setting.

**YOU'RE BREAKIN' MY BALLS, MAN**



**BILL ME**

• Number of Volvos North Korea bought from Sweden in 1974 but never paid for: **1,000**  
Amount owed: **\$390 million**

**TOUGH TO DIGEST**

WHAT FOOD SERVICE WORKERS SAY THEY DO WHEN YOU'RE RUDE TO THEM

- 79%** Make fun of you to others
- 65%** Make you wait
- 61%** Ignore you
- 52%** Act rudely
- 25%** Refuse reasonable requests
- 11%** Increase your credit card tip without permission
- 6%** Contaminate your food





DEAR EGGNOG,  
MOVE OVER.  
HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS.

**HORNITOS**

100% PURO AGAVE TEQUILA

NOT JUST ANY TEQUILA.







JUSTIN PAGE

# WHEN NERDS GO BAD

THE MEEK HAVE INHERITED THE EARTH. SADLY, THEY'RE NOT SO MEEK ANYMORE

**M**y people have let me down. I assumed that if one of those ridiculous 1980s movies somehow happened in real life and the nerds actually took over the world, we would be kind. Suddenly able to date women, we would gratefully treat them with respect. All too familiar with being picked on for no reason, once we ran companies we would give minorities the opportunities they never got from the jocks. Attractiveness and wealth would be subjugated under a meritocracy of intelligence and industry.

But instead the nerds have turned out to be assholes. In fact, we're meaner than the jocks. All those timid guys moms told their daughters to date because they were nice? Mom was wrong. As soon as we got a little bit of power, we showed ourselves to be sexist, ageist, selfish, materialistic dicks who disrespect everyone who isn't a fellow algorithm-writing, comic-book-collecting brainiac.

Mark Zuckerberg's first attempt at Facebook was Facemash, which let Harvard students vote on which female

students were hot. Only two percent of Google employees are black. Old people, no matter how qualified, have no chance at Silicon Valley jobs. Sean Parker, co-founder of Napster and Plaxo and first president of Facebook, was fined \$2.5 million for damaging Big Sur's redwood forest during his \$10 million *Lord of the Rings*-themed wedding. Steve Jobs denied paternity of his daughter, screwed his partner Steve Wozniak out of money, fired people in front of groups of employees and parked his Mercedes in handicapped spaces. Mahbod Moghadam was fired from Rap Genius, the site he co-founded, after he wrote that the misogynist manifesto of the guy who went on a killing spree in Isla Vista, California was "beautifully written." Most Silicon Valley engineers are slightly better-drawn versions of Artie Ziff, the software billionaire on *The Simpsons* who basically tried to rape Marge while yelling, "You can't resist my busy hands!"

We nerds simply lack the experience, which jocks have had since childhood, of getting exactly what we want, so as soon as we get a little bit of mojo we act like five-year-olds who demand everything we want right away. When we finally get a hot girlfriend in our late 20s, we don't marry her and have kids like a former frat boy would. No, we realize we now have *options* and a whole lot of not-getting-laid time to make up for. We feel we're owed for not getting any in high school. So when we finally get an attractive woman to go out with us, we use phrases such as "not ready to commit," "open relationship" and "Who's that friend of yours with the leather shorts?"

And while jocks at least acquired the people skills to say all this smoothly ("If you think the experience will add intimacy to our relationship, I guess I'd be open to a threesome"), we nerds have spent our whole lives talking to action figures still in their boxes. So the

same thought comes out as "My penis in more girl parts!" There's a reason George Clooney got away with sleeping around and Beaker from the Muppets did not. It's one thing to lie to a woman about cheating; it's a far worse crime to make her sit for hours while your spectrumy brain explains how sex and love are separate things conflated by the Judeo-Christian ethical system.

Jocks thought the hot chicks they dated were on the same level they were, as superficial as that level may have been. But nerd dudes don't want nerd chicks as attractive as they are. Young rich nerds are just like old rich men: They want hot club chicks they have nothing in common with. And they treat them horribly, since they feel superior to them because the nerds went to better colleges, make more money and know more about *Doctor Who*.

Worse, whereas jocks have been around women all their lives and know what to expect from them, nerds' notions of women have been formed by video games, anime and porn. So when a woman starts saying words and stuff after we come on her face, instead of just moaning with pleasure like she's supposed to, we are totally annoyed. We nerds believe real women wear high heels and underwear to have sex, and unlike jocks we're disappointed when they don't. Because unlike jocks, we have sex sober.

Soon this tech boom will be over and the good-looking sales guys, with their golf clubs and clothes without hoods, will once again control everything. We will regret that we didn't use our moment to build a new paradigm in which people respect one another for their minds that we supposedly revere above all else. But it will be too late. And we will again be squirming angrily, waiting for our chance to fire old people, dump hot chicks and drive Ferraris. But at least we'll write good teen comedies again. ■

BY  
JOEL  
STEIN



# "LET ME EAT CAKE"

IT'S THE HOLIDAYS. RULE NO. 1: NEVER STAND BETWEEN YOUR GIRLFRIEND AND DESSERT

**H**ooray! It's the holiday season! Deck the halls! Joy to the world! And hark! The herald angel... food cake! I love the holidays. I look forward to them the entire year. And to me, like a lot of women, the holidays are about food. They start with Halloween candy that creeps onto the shelves right after the back-to-school stuff comes down. Three-ring binders are replaced with candy corn and miniature boxes of Milk Duds (there are only three in a box, so we women can eat a dozen boxes and still feel okay about ourselves). But we can weather the tiny candy storm knowing the really good holiday stuff is coming. So we resist temptation (except on the actual day of Halloween—we're only human) and start preparing.

We are determined females. We are focused. In October and early November we tirelessly count calories, points, fat, carbs—pick your poison/mathematical-deprivation method. We set our alarms an hour earlier to give ourselves time to run. We actually get up when our alarms go off, and run. We pretend that fruit can be a dessert. We go to the movies and "treat" ourselves to a Diet Coke. We "mix it up" at dinner by making grilled fish instead of grilled chicken. We are incredible. We are the embodiment of self-control. And as the men in our life, you start to really respect us. All that talk the rest of the year about wanting to "eat healthy" and "finally take those extra pounds off" is happening right before your very eyes. No more talk, all walk. It's miraculous. We stop at five ounces of wine (which, sadly, is one serving) and we're actually Zen about it. We know everything is for the greater good. That's why I'm sure it's a shock to you when it all comes to an abrupt end.

Thanksgiving! It's a holiday. It's a celebration. It's a family tradition. With a delicious meal. A carb-filled, fatty, caloric meal. It seems to fly in the face of everything you've seen us working for

over the past six-plus weeks. But it comes and we don't even try to resist. You watch us pile our plates high with stuffing, marshmallow-covered sweet potatoes, buttered bread and Jell-O and then cover it all with gravy, even the Jell-O (don't knock it until you've tried it). And then you think we're done, but we go back for seconds. And you think, Oh, maybe she's going to skip dessert. And you are wrong, dead wrong. We go straight for that pumpkin-pecan-apple-pie sampler plate with some fudge to grow on. Then you think maybe it's just one cheat day. But it doesn't stop. The day after Thanksgiving is leftover city. And the day after that we want to get a pumpkin spice latte at Starbucks and make Christmas cookies. It's confusing, because you've just seen us be our best selves. You saw us have *one* chip and then put that Chip Clip back on with the self-righteousness of a Victoria's Secret model.

And now it's all gone and you want to say something. You do. Really really badly. Because you think we've fallen off the wagon we were so proudly on. And I get it. You just want to help.

One time my boyfriend just wanted to help. He leaned into me at a Christmas party when I was scarfing down some tortilla chips and dip after months of dieting and said, "Hey, don't fill up on chips." That was of course code, which I cracked. I knew what he really meant was "Stop pigging out." I learned something about myself in that moment: that I was capable of murder. I wanted to

grab the scruff of the beard I'd begged him to shave off and slam his face into the salsa and let him drown in it. I was furious, furious because he didn't understand me at all. He didn't understand that I'd worked so hard for those six to eight weeks so I *could* fill the fuck up on chips. The wagon I was on was built to fall apart just before the holidays.

The truth is that women lose weight to gain it back. When we look at that scale the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and we see we've lost seven pounds, it doesn't mean it's bathing-suit-shopping time. It means it's freedom time. We're free to gain back seven pounds. Seven whole pounds! It means we don't have to say no to our co-worker's Chex Reindeer Poop (if you haven't had it, have it) or that yummy...ish Hanukkah gelt. We can have that ambrosia salad (can we really call it a salad?) and not worry about how we're

going to calculate the Weight Watchers points later. It doesn't matter. We're just getting back to where we were in October. No harm, no foul.

There is a method to our fatness. But don't worry; it's temporary. It's just for the holiday season. It too shall pass and soon enough it'll be January and we'll be trying to drag you on a walk or trick you into a jog ("Let's speed up; the light's about to change") and feeding you pureed frozen bananas and calling it ice cream. So for now, enjoy the holidays with your lady. Let it go and please just let her eat pie. ■

BY  
HILARY  
WINSTON



MIKE BERTINO



## PLAYBOY PICKS

HOLIDAY GIVING TO IMPRESS AND INSPIRE

2014



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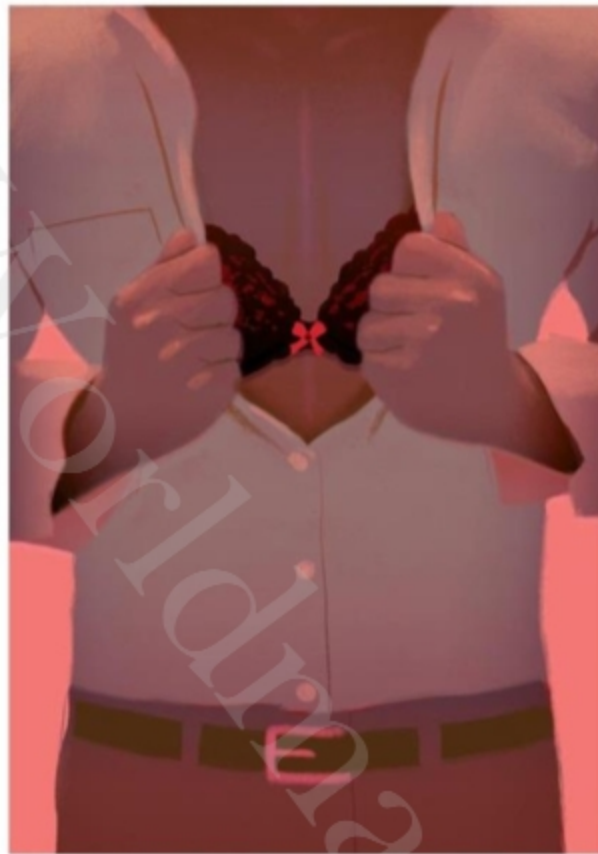
# PLAYBOY ADVISOR

I recently broke up with my boyfriend of six months. We are in our 20s and are both active on social media. He routinely posted pictures of us on Instagram when we were together, as did I. After we broke up, I noticed he had deleted the pictures of us from all his accounts—not just Instagram but also Facebook and Twitter. It pisses me off, but should I be upset? I've decided not to delete any pictures of him from my accounts, because while he may no longer be a part of my life, he will always be a part of my history. But the pain of literally being deleted from someone's life still stings. What does the Advisor have to say about post-breakup social-media etiquette? Is there even such a thing?—T.T., Chicago, Illinois

Your story makes us pine for the days when the exorcism of an ex was limited to comparatively private rituals such as burning old love letters and removing framed photos from your desk at work. Being scrubbed from someone's virtual time line is like having your existence publicly disavowed, so it's understandable you would feel insulted and hurt. Kudos to you for keeping evidence of your ex in your various online accounts. Such transparency is sadly lacking in the world of personal social media, where people tend to edit their lives to present a rosy, idealized picture of what's actually going on. We all know people who share only their sunniest and beachiest moments, posting flattering selfies that show only their good side and well-composed photos of perfectly plated restaurant dishes. To go back and revise what was already an essentially revisionist record of a life seems doubly deceptive and petty. You're right. Your ex is wrong.

There are a great number of supplements on the market that are designed to increase ejaculate volume. Can you recommend any of them as safe and effective?—A.L., New York, New York

You'll find vigorous debates in internet chat rooms about which supplement works best, with men measuring loads and listing volume and distance to an obsessive degree. This strikes us as a coldly clinical version of onanism and lacking in anything approaching sexual pleasure. Unless you're a budding porn star whose career could benefit from a consistently impressive amount of ejaculate, we're not sure what the point is. But if that's your thing, go nuts. We're old-fashioned when it comes to increasing ejaculate. Sexual fitness is like physical fitness, and a balanced



How can I explain to my wife that I am a heterosexual but enjoy cross-dressing? I am sick of suffering with my secret in silence. I love my wife and don't want to end up divorced, but I would like to be able to go home after work and get comfortable by changing into women's clothing.—H.C., Jacksonville, Florida

Being in the closet, so to speak, about cross-dressing is a profound struggle for straight men who like to wear women's clothes. The question of whether to come out (and if so, how) doesn't have an easy answer. Luckily there are numerous support groups for both cross-dressers and their spouses. [Lauras-Playground.com](http://Lauras-Playground.com) has an extensive list of online resources, and [CrossdressersWife.com](http://CrossdressersWife.com) is a blog that can give you insight into one wife's side of the experience.

diet, plenty of fluids, sleep and stress management do wonders on all fronts.

My doctor told me to drink a glass of red wine every day because my cholesterol was a bit high at my last physical. However, I really do not like red wine; I am more of a white zinfandel guy. I have tried several reds and even asked the rep at our wine and spirits store (such stores are state-controlled in Pennsylvania) for suggestions, but I have still not found a red wine I enjoy. I am getting frustrated. Would you suggest something

that might work for me?—R.H., Eagleville, Pennsylvania

We assume your doctor has recommended red wine because it contains a chemical compound called resveratrol, which some studies have linked to reduced risk of heart disease. Nevertheless, other studies dispute this claim, and still others say tannin is the potentially beneficial compound in wine. Whatever the case may be, white wine lacks both resveratrol and tannin, which is likely the reason your doctor said you should drink red. We're big fans of moderate drinking as a cure for many of life's ills, so we'll take the gamble that drinking a bit of red wine is good. As for what suits your palate, you're just going to have to continue with the trial-and-error approach. White zinfandel is typically fruity and slightly sweet; unfortified red wines that fit that description are few and far between. You might want to try lambrusco, a slightly sweet Italian red, or Australian sparkling shiraz, which can be difficult to find and isn't cheap. If neither of these suit you and it's the sweetness you're after, you could do as the Spanish do and make a tinto de verano—basically a red wine spritzer—by adding a splash of Sprite or some other sweet soda to your vino tinto. But then you'd be drinking soda, which we all know is bad for you in other ways. If you can't find a red wine that does the trick, your other option is to eat unsweetened dark chocolate, which contains resveratrol, and drink tea, which contains tannins. There's no guarantee this will help your heart, but there are worse regimens to endure.

I just started a new job that requires me to wear a white collared shirt the majority of the time. Normally I don't have to wear a tie (only occasionally). My problem is that I have oily skin, and the inside of my shirt collar gets dirty very quickly; I generally see a yellowish-brown stain after wearing the shirt even for a short time. What is

the best way to keep my shirts white? Should I shower in the morning or at night? Do I have them dry-cleaned or just put them in the regular wash? Should I put something protective on the inside of the collar? Is there anything else I can do?—Y.S., Newark, New Jersey

You should shower in the morning and take care to scrub the back of your neck with a washcloth to remove any dead skin cells and oils, which can darken a stain. Wash your shirts regularly, because dry cleaning can damage their fabric and shorten their life span. Before laundering your shirts, use an



*OxiClean stain-remover stick inside the collar; that should help keep the stains at bay.*

**M**y wife and I made a pact not to give each other presents this Christmas. Our decision was made partly to save money but also because we don't need any extra crap in our lives. We have tried to do this before, but both of us end up breaking down at the last minute and buying the other a gift. Each year I scramble madly and usually end up buying her some really nice jewelry—which she seems happy to receive. She claims this year will be different. We're seriously broke, and I'm thinking of keeping my word and holding her to hers.—S.C., Boise, Idaho

*Don't you dare show up empty-handed on Christmas morning. You've read the clues correctly in the past and haven't let her down. While we're all for doing away with ritualized conspicuous consumption, this is not the occasion to do it, and your wife is not the person to get coldly principled with. You don't need to break the bank; get her a nice bath soap or a gift certificate to a movie theater where you can go together to relieve the stress of being broke. No matter what she says, she still wants something.*

**I** was waiting in line at the supermarket when the woman in front of me dropped a bottle of malbec on the floor. It shattered and splashed all over my suede shoes. How do I get wine stains out of my favorite chukkas?—B.C., Seal Beach, California

*The best way to remove a wine stain is to act swiftly in the moments after the crime has been committed, when the wine is still wet. Pour table salt over the wet wine; it will absorb much of the offending liquid. With a clean toothbrush, gently brush off the now pink salt, without pushing it back into the suede. Douse the area with soda water and then blot it off. The trick is to remove the stain, not push it in, so anything that blots it up and lifts it out will work. You probably didn't have ready access to salt and soda water in the checkout line, but the soda-water technique can still be used effectively after the fact. If the stain is beyond the point of removal and your shoes are old, just keep spilling on them until they look perfectly destroyed. You could also take them to a good shoe repair shop and see if they can be dyed a darker color. If not, go back to the supermarket, buy a bottle of red, pour it over both shoes and call them burgundy.*

**I**'m a big fan of Italian food and have noticed a lot of fancy restaurants are serving a variety of mozzarella called *burrata*, which seems to cost twice as much as normal mozzarella. I've asked the waiters if it's imported, and they brag that it's made in America. Wouldn't that make it cheaper?—H.S., Libertyville, Illinois

*Not necessarily. But before we get to the value proposition, let's look at the evolution of mozzarella in the United States as a paral-*

*lel history of our ability to tap into pleasure. For decades we were a nation content to eat dry, salty, somewhat funky but always safe shredded mozzarella, mirroring our ability to find pleasure only in the conventional. Reliable and not without its virtues, it remained the missionary position of cheeses. Then came the advent of readily available, water-packed fresh mozzarella, with a shorter shelf life, a softer consistency and a silkier mouthfeel. It was an improvement, for sure, but we hadn't yet arrived at the pinnacle of cheesy bliss. And then, in 1993, the Di Stefano Cheese Co. in southern California introduced American foodies to a variation of mozzarella previously known only to those in the southern Italian region of Puglia: *burrata*. Inside that wonderfully stretchy mozzarella-like exterior was hidden a rich and creamy center, oozing, unctuous and satisfying like no other. So yeah, it's worth the extra money.*

**A**re the duty-free shops inside airports actually good places to find decent deals?—H.B., St. Louis, Missouri

*It depends on what you're buying and where you're coming from. Duty-free means tax-free, so you'll find the best bargains on heavily taxed goods such as alcohol and cigarettes. If you're a New Yorker and typically spend upward of \$12 on a heavily taxed pack of cigarettes, you'll likely find the tax-free smokes at an airport are a deal. You'll probably be able to find a bargain-priced bottle of liquor, but it may not be any cheaper than a bottle you can find discounted at a chain store. Don't assume the deep discounts on spirits and cigarettes also apply to the other products you find at duty-free shops, such as electronics, handbags, cosmetics and perfume. As in all retail situations, know what you want, be a comparison shopper and don't let the bargain booze and cigarettes seduce you into thinking everything else is a good deal.*

**M**y wife is 67 years old and postmenopausal. She has had multiple sclerosis for more than 35 years and is still able to walk, assisted with a walker. However, the MS has taken much from her sexuality, including her libido, vaginal lubrication and orgasmic capability. Her big fear is that she will someday completely lose her ability to have an orgasm. To prevent this, she has been on an aggressive course of strength and flexibility training since January 2012. She has reversed many of her problems in dramatic ways. Most surprising have been the sudden improvements in her near vision and sense of smell, and the striking return of her libido and orgasmic ability. Her libido had been at a three; it moved up the scale to a nine. Now we have sex once or twice a day, and she is multiorgasmic. We can't prove this is the result of her fitness training, nor can we rule it out. Does the Advisor know of any instances of libido and orgasm returning after a long absence caused by disease?—D.P., Scottsdale, Arizona

*We haven't come across a case identical*

*to yours, but your wife's experience backs up a lot of research about the connection between sex drive and physical health. Vision and smell are connected to vascular health, which is improved by aerobic and anaerobic exercise. Increased blood flow to all parts of the body, including the genitals, would make arousal more likely. Vigorous and regular exercise can also alleviate depression, which is common in patients struggling with MS. Congratulations on your mutual commitment to keeping your sex life thriving and healthy. Too few couples in less challenging situations tackle physical intimacy in such a unified and impressive way.*

**I**'m a monogamous man and have been in a faithful relationship for the past eight months with an openly bisexual woman. Recently she admitted that her fantasy was to have a threesome with a guy and a girl, and she wanted me to be the guy. I won't lie—I was flattered. But I was also hesitant and didn't think I could go through with it. She really wanted to and assured me it wouldn't be cheating and I'd enjoy it, so I decided to go along with the threesome. She brought a very beautiful friend of hers into our bed for an evening. Now the problem is my girlfriend wants this woman to join our relationship, making it a ménage à trois. I don't know if I'm ready for something like that. After the three of us had made love, my girlfriend complained that I'd gone down on the other woman twice and had fucked her one more time than I had my girlfriend. We both like the woman, but I'm afraid adding her to our relationship will drive a wedge between us. I think I love my girlfriend, but she's already showing signs of jealousy. I worry that if the three of us commit to one another, things could get really complicated. I don't want to lose either of them. What should I do?—J.T., Miami, Florida

*Many men dream of having a three-way, but your story is one of the numerous cautionary tales we've heard about the fallout from an ongoing ménage à trois—particularly how it can negatively impact a long-term relationship. When you have a three-way, you get more than three-way sex; you also get three-way resentment, three-way jealousy, three-way differences of opinion, three-way split attention. You should share your concerns with your girlfriend. Tell her you don't want to lose her because of the introduction of a third person. If she doesn't mind risking that, you need to ask yourself what you're willing to accept from this relationship and decide if it's the right one (or two) for you.*

*For answers to reasonable questions relating to food and drink, fashion and taste, and sex and dating, write the Playboy Advisor, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or e-mail [advisor@playboy.com](mailto:advisor@playboy.com). The most interesting and pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month.*





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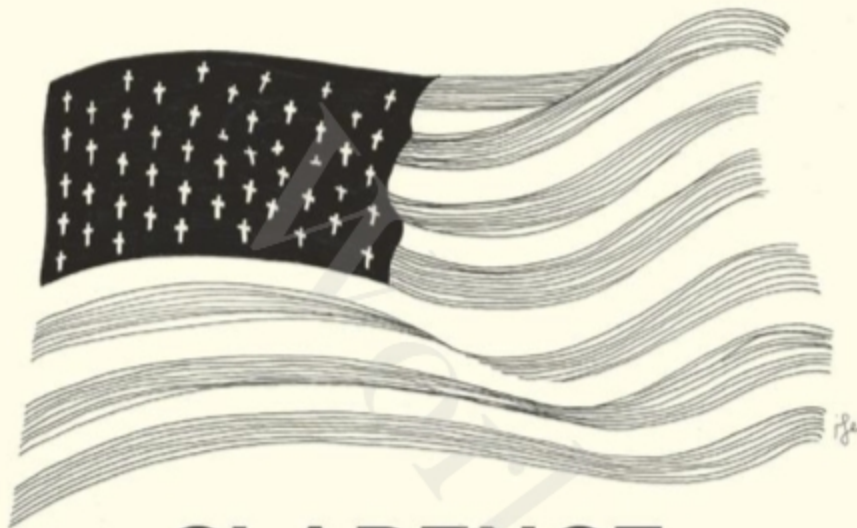
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Church v. state *Athletes on welfare*



## CLARENCE THOMAS'S THEOCRACY

*Is the Supreme Court justice laying the legal groundwork to establish official religions in the United States?*

BY MARK JOSEPH STERN

In last term's blockbuster First Amendment case, five Supreme Court justices ruled that town councils can open legislative sessions with a prayer without violating the Constitution. That decision in and of itself distorts the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment—that all-important phrase in the Bill of Rights that says “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” People may refer to the U.S. as a Christian nation, but because of this clause, that cannot be codified into federal law without first changing the Constitution. However, in a little-noted concurrence, Justice Clarence Thomas hoped to take it even further, writing separately to explain that the clause was actually designed to let states establish *their own* religions.

Thomas's opinion didn't surprise those familiar with his views. No Supreme Court justice in recent memory has been as dedicated to dismantling the wall of separa-

tion between church and state. From his earliest years on the Court, Thomas has painted—with nearly obsessive fervor—a picture of the Constitution that treads dangerously close to theocracy. There is, to his mind, virtually no limit on the amount of religion state governments can force into Americans' lives.

As radical as these ideas sound, they've edged closer to the Court's mainstream with each passing term. Justice Antonin Scalia has championed Thomas's dream of granting states a near-boundless ability to encourage and impose religion. Even Justice Anthony Kennedy, who supported some separation of church and state

early in his career, has grown increasingly pro-religion in the shadow of Thomas's jurisprudence. The notion that every state has a constitutional right to endorse religion was once considered a joke. Today, fewer justices are laughing.

Thomas's beliefs about the Establishment

*His radical ideas have edged toward the mainstream.*

## READER RESPONSE

### WHAT PRICE CAPITALISM?

Curtis White makes a convincing case for why the world's wealthiest have no interest in addressing climate change (“Designated Suffering,” September). But almost everyone who will be affected by a changing climate neglects it as one of the most pressing issues—if not *the* most pressing issue—of our time. Aside from the far-right attacks on the credibility of science generally and climate science specifically, there must be some reason for



our collective inaction. This is where psychoanalytic theory may help our understanding: In the same way that we disavow the inevitability of our own death, we act as though climate change is either not real or not close at hand. This is not simply a problem to blame on the wealthy; the rest of us must find a way to confront climate change as well.

Terry Winningham  
Los Angeles, California

Thank you for running White's insightful (and scathing) commentary. I found it inspiring





## READER RESPONSE

and ran right over to my public library for a copy of his book *The Science Delusion*. Some people snigger when anyone says PLAYBOY has brilliant articles, but it's true. This is "entertainment for men" at its best.

**Jan Chciuk-Celt**  
Portland, Oregon

Evolution is a scientific fact that explains biology—only biology. White has a misperception: Evolution is not meant to be applied to morals or ethics. A responsible person does not get his or her morals or ethics from the theory of evolution.

**Kaniksu Darwin**  
Charleston, South Carolina



Curtis White shows no willingness to discuss the issues; he has made up his mind that he and the Democratic Party know what's best for our citizens and we had better take heed. I am not a fan of either party; rather, I am a constitutionalist. I work for the good of myself and my family. I neither want nor need the government's intrusion into my life. The capitalism our country was built on made us the greatest nation in the shortest period of time in modern history. Our government does not seem to remember that. Politicians would have us believe we must change to move forward. I believe we must go back to basics to reignite our enthusiasm to govern ourselves, not blindly follow political agendas.

Clause arise from his conviction that the Constitution must be interpreted precisely how the framers meant it to be read. This task is a tricky one, since the framers were an opaque and self-contradictory crowd. But for nearly a quarter century, Thomas has cleaved to this style of so-called "originalism," relying on history rather than precedent to decide each case.

Because the Establishment Clause was added to the First Amendment with little debate, Thomas hasn't found much evidence to support his interpretation. But when Thomas can't reach his favored result through originalism, he turns to federalism—the principle that states must be largely free from federal interference. The justice's theory that the Establishment Clause protects states from Congress (and not people from religion) is just a federalist rewrite of the actual text.

Decades ago, Thomas's federalist-based interpretation of the clause would have had no serious takers. But federalism has experienced a renaissance in recent decades, and Thomas's opinions have long served as invitations for conservative advocates to press their case. From gun rights to health care, many of the Court's recent high-profile cases have sprung from a lone Thomas concurrence planted years prior. The Court's declaration of an individual's right to bear arms, for instance, grew out of a two-paragraph concurrence Thomas wrote in 1997.

Despite Thomas's considerable influence, his vision for the Establishment Clause has not found the success some of his other theories have. Still, it's not hard to guess how states would hawk religion once freed of constitutional limits, because many of them have already tried. Public schools around the country have endeavored ceaselessly, often with the state's encouragement, to reinstate school prayer ever since the Supreme Court struck it down in 1962. Each time, the Court has pushed back, insisting that schools can't coerce students into participating in religious exercises. And each time, Thomas has dissented, braying that the Constitution smiles upon schools foisting faith onto students.

But prayer is downright benign compared with states' efforts to exorcise Darwin from the curriculum. In 1968 the Supreme Court ruled that public schools can't be barred from teaching evolution, and in 1987 the justices weighed in again to add that science teachers can't be forced to mention creationism every time they teach natural selection. Thomas, of course, would reverse this ruling. In his view, state-funded schools have no con-



THOMAS IN FRIENDLY COMPANY.

stitutional impediment to inflicting faith-based pseudoscience on students.

He wouldn't stop there. How would you like to see the Ten Commandments displayed in a courtroom? Or a crucifix erected in your city hall? Thomas's Establishment Clause would permit states to dole out funds directly to favored religious organizations and houses of worship. States worried about declining church attendance could even pay priests' salaries. North Carolina's recent attempt to establish a state religion, presumably Christianity, would be only a timid first step toward the total entanglement of church and state that Thomas envisions and endorses.

Thomas asserts that his views arise from nothing more than a study of history; a fair-minded reading of the relevant record tells a different story. The authors of the First Amendment, many of whom were radical church-state separationists, never described their handiwork as enabling state-sponsored religion. And the authors of the 14th Amendment, which applies the First Amendment to the states, seemed keen to prevent states from imposing Christianity on their citizens.

The real history of these amendments cuts against Thomas's revisionism. The 14th Amendment was designed to keep Southern states from discriminating against newly freed slaves. One of the South's main modes of oppression was religious: Southern states routinely enacted

*He would permit states to dole out funds directly to favored religious organizations.*



laws recognizing only a version of Christianity that supported slavery and racism. (Anti-gay conservatives who use the Bible as a tool of persecution today continue a storied tradition.) Preachers who dared to call slavery unchristian were sentenced to prison, and sometimes death, for spewing blasphemy and inciting violence.

To the framers of the 14th Amendment, these practices threatened liberty. So long as states could propagate their own visions of religion, the "free exercise thereof" would be a hollow promise. Records from congressional debate over the new amendment reveal that its supporters understood it to apply a deeply secular vision of governance to every state in America.

It's not only his spurious reading of history, clearly designed to enable state-sponsored religion, that infuriates; his rank hypocrisy is even more galling. Thomas consistently couches his vision of the Establishment Clause in terms of "liberty," as though restricting state support of religion somehow reduces freedom rather than guaranteeing it. This rhetorical subterfuge is bad, but what's worse is that Thomas's support of freedom, so lavishly dispensed to religious groups demanding state assistance, suddenly dries up when the topic switches to personal rights.

Consider Thomas's view of constitutional "liberty," which the 14th Amendment guarantees. According to Thomas,

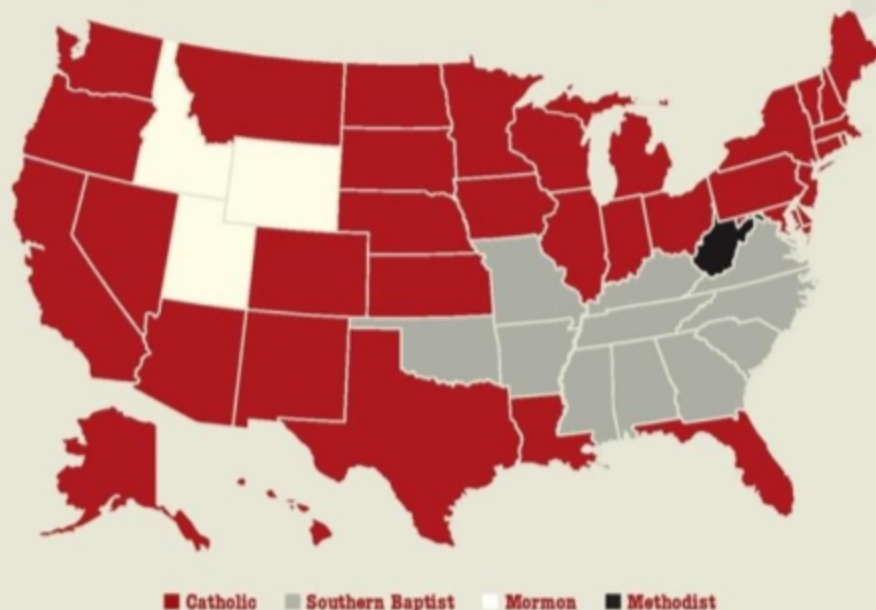
*Thomas's views are equal parts opportunism and bunk.*

this does not include a gay person's right to have sex or get married; a woman's right to use birth control, let alone get an abortion; or a terminally ill person's right to die with dignity. And based once again on dubious scholarship, Thomas is convinced that Americans under the age of 18 have absolutely no right to free speech, in or out of school. (Meanwhile, Thomas would give corporations the right to donate unlimited amounts of money to political campaigns—*anonymously*.)

Conservatives often praise Thomas's purism, claiming he has the most principled and consistent constitutional vision on the Court. In reality, Thomas's views are equal parts opportunism and bunk. The justice plays the liberty card when it fits his designs—such as, say, melding church and state—but suddenly turns stingy when the rights of women and minorities come into play. An America under Thomas would be a country where the majority can suppress the minority not merely by restricting its rights but by indoctrinating it with a fundamentalist vision of religion and morality. It's fine to call this perversion of the Constitution "principled," so long as your principles are reactionary, dishonest and intolerant. But if you happen to subscribe to the Constitution's promise of genuine liberty, don't mistake Thomas's jurisprudence for anything but fraud. ■

## One Nation Under God

State by state, the most practiced religions in the U.S.



Source: Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies; U.S. Census Bureau



## READER RESPONSE

Individuals need to take responsibility for their decisions; if people make bad decisions it is not the role of government to fix their problems. Failure is a great motivator.

**Gene Timberman**  
Needmore, Pennsylvania

You blighted the happy fantasy that is PLAYBOY with a pseudoscientific essay written by a gentleman with zero scientific credentials. White has had the last laugh. Now he can go swim with the manatees.

**Keith A. Lepak**  
Dallas, Texas

## GANGSTERS, GANGSTAS AND GETTING AHEAD

In "All Men Are Created Unequal" (September), Edward Tenner makes excellent points about the decline of the American community and the



dangers of radical individualism. Tenner draws from insightful social commentators from Christopher Lasch to Karl Marx, but one perspective is missing—the view from inside the underworld. I was an enforcer for the New Orleans underworld during what some have called the heyday of the American Mafia. I take issue with Tenner's analysis that the allure of criminality comes from some inherently American pioneer ideology. The ideology acclaiming what Tenner calls "the badass boasting hero"





## READER RESPONSE

was an invention of postwar Hollywood. So when Tenner implies that this culture played a major role in influencing people like Al Capone, I have to disagree. People in Capone's world viewed individualism as maybe the biggest threat to "our thing." Tenner writes, "Al Capone, one of the most violent and notorious interwar gangsters, wanted above all to be known as a dandy"—insinuating that Capone was unconsciously influenced by American radical individualism. On the contrary, Capone was one part of a very elaborate collective. His flashy antics might have been part of his personality, but he wouldn't have lasted two minutes in our world if he hadn't been part of a much larger collective project.

You can't pin the allure of the American gangster on a single reason. Here are the facts as I see them: As long as there are oppressed and desperate

people, they will idealize those who thumb their noses at the oppressor. The gangs of America emerged from Sicilian, Irish, Jewish and other poor immigrant communities. It wasn't ideology or "violent materialism" that created the gangster. It was the will to survive. That's what gives the gangster his allure and why so many "gangsta" rappers like to dress like cartoon versions of South Side Chicago gangsters from the 1920s. The best weapon for fighting gangsters is creating equal opportunity. Put food on people's plates, give them clean and safe places



# MAKERS INTO TAKERS

*Keeping college athletes poor is costing you money*

BY PATRICK HRUBY

**T**enny Palepoi never wanted to receive food stamps. College football left him with no choice. A former University of Utah defensive tackle and married father of two, Palepoi sometimes spent more than 60 hours a week practicing, studying, lifting weights and traveling to away games. His busy schedule forced his wife, Delaney, to give up her job—someone had to watch the kids. Rent and diaper costs ate up the \$785 stipend check that came every month as part of Palepoi's athletic scholarship; despite Utah's football program bringing in around \$30 million in annual revenue, National Collegiate Athletic Association amateurism rules prevented him from earning anything more. No signing autographs for cash. No gifts from boosters. Definitely no salary. And so his family had a choice to make. They could accept federal help aimed at the neediest Americans, low-income mothers and infants. Or they could go hungry.

"A lot of people, when they see college athletes, they see us on the field and all the glory we get," Palepoi says. "They really don't see the struggle we go through day to day, trying to find a meal or pay rent and bills. It's tough, man. It took a shot at my pride to use food stamps. But we had to."

From lawsuits brought by former athletes to an attempted unionization bid by Northwestern University football players, amateurism in big-time college sports is under siege. On one side of the debate,

the NCAA and its member schools insist that no-pay-for-play is a noble American tradition. On the other, critics and reformers call the megabucks collegiate athletic-industrial complex a rights-denying sham that cheats athletes while enriching their corner-office overseers, carrying what Pulitzer Prize-winning civil rights historian Taylor Branch calls "a whiff of the plantation."

As the fight plays out in federal courtrooms and on ESPN, one thing is clear: Amateurism itself is a moocher. A form of sports welfare. An economic arrangement all of us should care about because all of us end up paying for it.

Drexel University sports management professor Ellen Staurowsky calculates that the average shortfall between scholarship value and the full cost of attending school for major-conference college athletes in the 2011–2012 school year was \$3,285. She also found that more than 80 percent of the same athletes fell below the federal

poverty line. The hourly wage of Palepoi would have equated to \$3.27 an hour, far below the federal definition of poverty.

So how do players make ends meet? Often by turning to taxpayers. No school or federal agency tracks how many players use food stamps, and players themselves are usually too embarrassed to discuss the subject. However, Palepoi says some of his teammates also needed food stamps.

Pell Grants are a larger source of federal subsidy. Court documents from a

*Unpaid student players turn to food stamps and Pell Grants to make ends meet.*





THE ADULATION OF FANS IS GREAT, BUT IT DOESN'T PAY THE RENT.

2006 case against the NCAA revealed that in a typical year at UCLA, approximately 60 to 70 percent of football players and 30 to 40 percent of men's basketball players receive the grants, which are awarded to low-income students and have a maximum value of \$5,730. During the 2010–2011 school year, *The Des Moines Register* found that 1,064 football players at 23 schools in the Big Ten, Big 12 and Southeastern conferences received a total of \$4.7 million in Pell Grants—about \$4,420 per player. Similarly, sportswriter Jon Solomon reported earlier this year that 131 University of Alabama athletes received a total of roughly \$566,000 in federal aid, with half that going to football players. And 14 years ago, journalist George Dohrmann won a Pulitzer for his investigative series probing University of Minnesota athletics; his coverage included a story about two football players living in subsidized apartments.

The thing is, football and men's basketball players in the major conferences don't have to be poor. They shouldn't need taxpayer bailouts. After all, popular college sports are flush with television dollars. March Madness earns the NCAA roughly \$771 million annually. ESPN will spend approximately \$5.64 billion over the next 12 years to broadcast the new college football playoffs. Alabama reportedly made \$143 million in athletic department revenue in 2013—more than 25 NBA teams and all 30 NHL clubs made in the same year.

*USA Today* reports that top football schools pay their athletic directors an average of \$515,000 a year and that coaches' salaries rose 44 percent between 2007 and 2011, surpassing a 23 percent rise in CEO pay over the same period. NCAA president

Mark Emmert earns \$1.7 million and makes no apologies. Unlike athletes, administrators are not prohibited from making money. The businesspeople atop college sports enjoy a free market; the young men running and sweating and suffering concussions below endure wage suppression, with schools forbidden from making competitive bids for their talents. The result? Just 15 percent of athletic revenue in the major college football conferences goes to players by way of scholarships, according to University of Richmond economist James Monks. By contrast, more than 50 percent of total league revenue in the four major professional sports goes to athletes via salaries. If college athletes received the same percentage of revenue as their unionized pro counterparts, Staurowsky calculates, the average major-conference football player would earn about \$114,000; a men's basketball player would make \$266,000.

You know who *doesn't* need food stamps, Pell Grants, subsidized housing or a single cent of your money through federal programs intended to help the desperate? People who make six figures. Amateur-

ism turns makers into takers.

Last spring the group Americans for Tax Fairness released a report criticizing Walmart, the nation's largest private employer, for receiving tax breaks and subsidies worth nearly \$8 billion annually. Most of that amount, the group said, comes from the company paying its employees so poorly that they require food stamps, Medicaid and other forms of welfare just to survive. College athletes like Palepoi can relate. So could the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, which once passed a resolution insisting that its school drop football, in part because the sport "had become a business supported by levies on the public." The year of its fed-up demand? 1905. The worst was yet to come. ■

*College football had become a business supported by the public.*

## READER RESPONSE

to live, make sure their kids are healthy and able to get an education, and the iconic image of the gangster will disappear from popular culture.

David "Blackie" Giordano-Steece  
Midway, Arkansas

Income inequality doesn't exist in the way the left would like us to define it. People earn what they earn. *Earn* is the key word. There is plenty of everything. We do not need to take it away from one person in order for another to have it. People who do not earn enough to live on should earn more. That's not inequality. That's common sense.

Dachia Arritola  
Aiken, South Carolina

## CAMPUS SAFETY

The best way to lower campus crime is obvious: Go dry ("How Not to Fix the Campus Rape Crisis," October). A college campus is a petri dish of alcohol, experimentation and freedom.



College students should be learning how not to be victims in that big world they will enter after they graduate; college isn't the only place predators work their tricks. And predators aren't interested in changing their spots.

Geoff Gaspar  
Hebron, Connecticut

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





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# PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: JOAQUIN PHOENIX

*A candid conversation with the eccentric actor about dealing with fame, the truth about his hip-hop spoof and embracing the mystery of it all*

On-screen or off, Joaquin Phoenix isn't for the fainthearted. Known best for film roles that showcase his capacity for brooding intensity, idiosyncrasy, physicality, combustibility and raw vulnerability, Phoenix has impressed as a megalomaniac Roman emperor in *Gladiator* (earning an Oscar nomination), a country-music hellion in *Walk the Line* (another Oscar nomination), a traumatized World War II veteran in *The Master* (yet another nomination) and a heartbroken divorcé who falls in love with a Siri-like operating system in *Her* (an Oscar nomination that should have been). But after 30-plus years in the acting game, when he's not busy filming with top directors such as Ridley Scott, Paul Thomas Anderson or Spike Jonze, Phoenix's public image has been known to get murky. Or downright mind-boggling. Or ominous. Or darkly funny.

In 2005 he entered rehab for alcoholism; less than a year later he crashed and rolled his car and, as it filled with leaking gasoline, was saved by director Werner Herzog, who miraculously happened to be passing by. In 2008 Phoenix told the world he was bowing out of acting to become a hip-hop artist. His weight ballooned; he sprouted a bushy beard, donned sunglasses, dreadlocked his hair and played a couple of train-wreck gigs. Actor Casey Affleck,

Phoenix's friend and brother-in-law (married since 2006 to Phoenix's sister Summer), filmed it all—including Phoenix's romps with hookers and cocaine—for a 2010 movie, *I'm Still Here*, advertised as a documentary. Then, in front of 4 million TV viewers (and hundreds of thousands more on YouTube), Phoenix appeared to strike the final match in his career self-immolation with an infamous guest appearance on *Late Show With David Letterman* during which he seemed spaced and incoherent. It turned out to be a hoax, of course, an elaborately staged, drawn-out Andy Kaufman meets Sacha Baron Cohen-esque performance piece.

But something few people get about Joaquin Phoenix is that off screen, he's not a moody, egocentric, arrogant, volatile twit. He's a sardonic jester, a leg-puller engineered for fame but smart enough to see right through it. His parents, Arlyn and John Bottom, raised him that way. Searching, nomadic hippies, the two met as hitchhikers in 1968; by 1974, when Joaquin was born in Puerto Rico, they (with River and Rain, Joaquin's older brother and sister) had gravitated to the Children of God sect, a lightning rod for controversy. Watching TV and fraternizing with nonbelievers was discouraged. When Phoenix's parents fled Children of God in 1977, they boarded a Miami-bound

ship, then relocated to Los Angeles. To celebrate what they saw as a risen-from-the-ashes rebirth, they changed their last name to Phoenix.

Arlyn Phoenix got a job as secretary to NBC's head of casting. The Phoenix kids went to work. Billed as "Leaf Phoenix" throughout the 1980s, Joaquin scored roles on *Murder, She Wrote* and *Hill Street Blues*, leading to attention-getting big-screen stints in *Ruskkies* and *Parenthood*. By 1989, tired of what he called "banana in the tailpipe" roles, he stopped making movies, until something much better came along six years later in the form of *To Die For*, a smart, wicked, Gus Van Sant-directed bit of comic nastiness. Phoenix, hoping to show off his range in a wider variety of material, including big comedies, kept the dark stuff coming with such downers as *SMM* (as a character who sells porn films) and *Return to Paradise* (as a flower child awaiting execution for drug possession). But those flicks led to *Gladiator*, a box-office hit and awards grabber. *Accolades, fame and stardom have brought things Phoenix tolerates but probably hates, such as scrutiny and intense public curiosity—and interviews.*

We sent PLAYBOY Contributing Editor **Stephen Rebell**, who last interviewed David Fincher, to track down Phoenix at a Middle



"You lie to yourself all the time. If you didn't lie to yourself, it would be awfully lonely. Statistically, in all our affairs, the odds of failure are so high that if you didn't lie to yourself, you'd probably just give up."



"I don't know if I'm lazy, but I'm a sprinter. Endurance has never been my thing. I like acting because I can focus hard for three, four months and then walk away. I have hardcore commitment in the moment."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMANDA DEMME

"I think I know what it's like to be an attractive woman. I think that's basically what the experience [of fame] is, right? But that sycophantic energy is uncomfortable to be around. Nobody wants to experience that."



*Eastern restaurant in L.A.'s explosively hip East Side. Rebello reports: "I first met Phoenix in 2007 when I interviewed him for a PLAYBOY 20Q, during which he smoked and fidgeted a lot but was charming, kind and archly funny. That same guy turned up seven years later for this interview, minus the cigarettes. Arrogant? Combative? Uncommunicative? Please. He might rather have been doing something else—maybe anything else—but Joaquin was frank, talkative and endearingly off center."*

**PLAYBOY:** In three decades as an actor, you've received Oscar nominations for *Gladiator*, *Walk the Line* and *The Master*, won a best actor Golden Globe for *Walk the Line* and been nominated for dozens of other U.S. and international awards. You're most identified with isolated, intense, troubled characters in films by some of the most individualistic directors, including, most recently, *Her* by Spike Jonze, the upcoming *Inherent Vice* by Paul Thomas Anderson and a new dramatic film by Woody Allen. Aspects of your life and your off-screen behavior have caused some to think of you as eccentric, unfiltered, maybe even unhinged. Can we discuss what's real and what's not about that?

**PHOENIX:** Oh boy.

**PLAYBOY:** You announced in 2008 that you were giving up acting for a career as a hip-hop artist and infamously guested on *Late Show With David Letterman*, thickly bearded, twitchy, wearing dark glasses and mumbling in monosyllables. In the movie *I'm Still Here*, Casey Affleck filmed you apparently snorting cocaine, hiring a hooker and, during an embarrassingly bad hip-hop performance in Miami, hurling yourself into the crowd to brawl with an audience member. You kept this up for more than a year, later confirming what many had already guessed: It was a stunt, and the movie was a faux documentary. You said you did it as a comment on the disintegration of celebrity and because you were "frustrated with acting because I took it so seriously." Even so, it's the kind of stunt that could leave fans, critics, moviemakers and guys like David Letterman feeling as though they'd been chumped. When Letterman had you back on the show the next year, you apologized and claimed he wasn't in on it. But come on—was he?

**PHOENIX:** David Letterman was not in on the joke. My agents, my publicist Sue Patricola—she's really good in the movie because she seems so concerned, right?—they were all in on it, of course. But look, David Letterman is one of the smartest guys on television. There's no way that guy doesn't know what's going on in some way. That's what I'll say about it.

**PLAYBOY:** Is it true that Ben Affleck, Casey Affleck's brother, as well as Matt Damon urged you to come clean sooner because they thought the stunt could hurt your and Casey's careers?

**PHOENIX:** Maybe Casey had that conver-

sation with them, but I didn't. I can see how people felt like they'd been duped. I think I would have had a similar reaction. I totally understand people getting defensive and scared because they don't want to be taken advantage of. I think now everyone knows it was never our intention to attack people. We were clearly attacking ourselves.

**PLAYBOY:** Did the self-spoofing accomplish what you hoped it would?

**PHOENIX:** Well, I'm under the impression that it was a liberating experience for me. Unlike when you're acting and everyone is there to support you and you can do take after take, when I did those live music shows and the movie, the safety net wasn't there. Or maybe the safety net was there, but it was old, worn, full of holes and probably going to collapse.

**PLAYBOY:** Did it collapse?

**PHOENIX:** When you're dealing with a thousand people in a club and you're doing a fake fight everyone thinks is real except you and the guy you're fighting

*The spoof was a liberating experience for me. The safety net wasn't there.*

with, you don't know what's going to happen, and the outcome was very unclear. That was scary and also a great experience. I said it was done to experience a change. I don't really know what it did. Only time will tell. You try to analyze it on your own, or you do interviews and get asked questions about it, so you try to say something that sounds interesting and cool. But really, I don't know. Maybe it's just human nature to want to find some positive outcome in whatever it is you do. You lie to yourself all the time, right?

**PLAYBOY:** Do you think we all lie to ourselves?

**PHOENIX:** Yeah. This is actually true and proven. If you didn't lie to yourself, it would be awfully lonely. Statistically, in all of us, in all our affairs, the odds of failure are so high that if you didn't lie to yourself, you'd probably just give up. So maybe we're prone to wanting to see positive results based on our actions.

**PLAYBOY:** The incident had the press sift-

ing through old quotes of yours, looking for clues or explanations. One quote that was offered as evidence several times was this: "My significant other right now is myself, which is what happens when you suffer from multiple personality disorder and self-obsession." To us that sounds like you being flip and funny rather than literal.

**PHOENIX:** I definitely did not say that, or if I did, I didn't say it seriously. I could have been in a fucking mood and just felt like, "I don't want to talk to you," but felt pressured into doing something I didn't want to do. So it's totally possible someone might have been like, "He's an asshole," or whatever. But they're probably just doing their jobs.

**PLAYBOY:** Do fans approach you more cautiously now?

**PHOENIX:** It's no different. I think I know what it's like to be an attractive woman. I think that's basically what the experience is, right?

**PLAYBOY:** How do you mean?

**PHOENIX:** It's like when you notice somebody walk past you, then stop and turn around. I started to realize it's the same thing that sometimes happens to attractive women. They'll be like, "Just come up and say, 'Hey, how are you?' Talk to me." When someone is shuffling back and forth, it makes me uneasy. I'm definitely not interested. But if somebody comes up and goes, "Hey, how are you? My name is so-and-so"—great. I'll rap with you. If you're genuine in your curiosity about something, that's great. But that sycophantic energy is uncomfortable to be around. Nobody wants to experience that.

**PLAYBOY:** It's got to be uncomfortable for the person who's hemming and hawing about talking with you.

**PHOENIX:** Of course, and I understand that as well. A woman came up the other day in a store and said, "I'm really sorry, but can we take a picture?" I said, "You know what? I don't do that, but thanks so much for coming up. I mean, I'm here with two of my friends and you're alone and came up and said hi. That was really brave of you." Whatever energy she had was gone instantly. We chatted a bit. It was fun. Then she went and bought her fucking tube socks and I bought my stupid little sweatpants, and that was it.

**PLAYBOY:** Your first film after *I'm Still Here* and a four-year break from movie-making was 2012's stunning *The Master*, Paul Thomas Anderson's controversial epic that had a Scientology-like cult as its backdrop. Its release revived interest in how, in the early 1970s, your parents, John and Arlyn Bottom, and your siblings, River, Rain, Liberty and Summer, traveled through Central and South America as part of the Children of God religious group. The group has become highly controversial as ex-members continue to surface and publicly reveal the sexual abuse of young children and a



highly sexualized environment in which husbands and wives are expected to share their partners with others.

**PHOENIX:** As I understand it, you're on the outside of that group until you're accepted. I don't think we ever got to that point, because frankly, as it got closer, I think my parents went, "Wait a minute. This is more than a religious community. There's something else going on here, and this doesn't seem right." And so they left very early on.

**PLAYBOY:** How were they introduced to the group?

**PHOENIX:** Through friends. I think my parents had a religious experience and felt strongly about it. They wanted to share that with other people who wanted to talk about their experience with religion. These friends were like, "Oh, we believe in Jesus as well." I think my parents thought they'd found a community that shared their ideals. Cults rarely advertise themselves as such. It's usually someone saying, "We're like-minded people. This is a community," but I think the moment my parents realized there was something more to it, they got out.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever compared notes with Rose McGowan, who has talked about spending the first nine years of her life with her parents in an Italy-based version of the cult? She told the press about the sect's female members being perceived as existing only to serve their men sexually and having to go "flirty fishing" in bars to lure new recruits.

**PHOENIX:** We haven't, but I think a lot of what has been exposed about the group happened in the 1980s. She was there well into the 1980s, I think. It's kind of a typical progression of something like that, you know? It starts out one way and takes some time before it evolves into something else. When people bring up Children of God, there's always something vaguely accusatory about it. It's guilt by association. I think it was really innocent on my parents' part. They really believed, but I don't think most people see it that way. I've always thought that was strange and unfair.

**PLAYBOY:** With all the traveling you did with your family, was it tough to make friends and then have to say good-bye?

**PHOENIX:** Yeah. We were fun kids, so there were plenty of friends. I had some pretty solid friends at different times, sure. To be honest, most of my friends were my sister's friends and they were girls. It was much more fun to hang out with girls than boys.

**PLAYBOY:** When did you figure out that girls were as aware of you as you were of them?

**PHOENIX:** Well, that's immediate, isn't it? I don't know what age, but it's as soon as you all start becoming curious about each other. I don't recall sex being discussed in my family. You become a teenager and start having curiosity about it.

**PLAYBOY:** Your parents' disillusionment

with the group prompted them to celebrate a rebirth by changing your surname from Bottom to Phoenix and relocating to southern California. That's when your mother got a job at NBC and brought you to talent agents, who signed you at the age of six. Did you enter show business willingly?

**PHOENIX:** Oh yeah. We were always singing and playing music, and we were encouraged to express ourselves. When you're a kid, acting is an extension of playing. You have an imagination, right? If that's encouraged and you're in an environment where you're given these props and opportunities to express yourself, it's terribly exciting. I always loved it. In fact, I was thinking about it driving across the San Fernando Valley today. We used to live deep in the valley, and the station wagon would break down all the time when we'd go on auditions. But I loved those moments when you'd walk into an audition or onto a set and have an experience you didn't know

*Cults rarely advertise themselves as such. It's usually "This is a community."*

you were capable of and didn't really even know where it came from. It was so fulfilling to have that experience.

**PLAYBOY:** You sound pretty positive, but some actors who began their careers as kids harbor resentment or have real horror stories.

**PHOENIX:** It's weird that I never had that experience. If that stuff had ever come up, I would just have gone, "Fuck you," and that would have been it. But again, I had a great, supportive family. The most important thing was that I never felt I was put in a position where I had to endure something.

**PLAYBOY:** There was a four-year difference in age between you and your brother, River, but both of you got lots of TV and movie work right from the beginning. Was there much competition among your siblings?

**PHOENIX:** We were a team, and whoever was working, well, that was great. We're always supportive of each other. There wasn't competition. We just didn't have

that competitive streak in us the way we were raised.

**PLAYBOY:** You were homeschooled and were required by the state to be tutored while working in movies and on TV shows. Were you into it?

**PHOENIX:** No. I don't know if I'm lazy, but I'm a sprinter. Endurance has never been my thing. I just want to go to the next thing. I like acting because I can focus hard for three, four months and then walk away. I hate weekends. I would shoot seven days a week if I could; two days off is way too much. When I'm in it, I don't know if I'm lazy. Luckily, I don't think I've gotten that with acting, but if I had to stick with something for a year or two, I don't know if I could have that kind of commitment. I have hardcore commitment in the moment for a certain thing. I can get into it and give it my all, but I'm not going to last.

**PLAYBOY:** So you didn't give school your all?

**PHOENIX:** No, and I regret not giving it my all. I always had the feeling I can't be stuck here doing this; I have other things to do. You get old enough and realize there was plenty of time to invest yourself in several things. I've had a few blocks of four, five years off when I could have dedicated myself to a lot of stuff. For example, I've just started taking trumpet lessons. I tried to play trumpet when I was 15. I figured I would have to study five years before I could play decently. I took a couple of lessons, but five years feels like forever when you're 15, and I stopped. I bought a trumpet about six years ago and took another class. Same thing happened. And so then I was like, Well, now six years have fucking gone by, and if I'd only stuck with it.... Anyway, I took my first trumpet lesson two weeks ago, and I've been practicing half an hour every day since. I don't know if I'll progress that much because I'm easily satisfied.

**PLAYBOY:** How do you mean?

**PHOENIX:** I was doing the lesson and we were both just holding these notes together. I found it so enjoyable. I was like, "This is totally satisfying." I don't have this need to achieve greatness, like, "I want more! I want more!" I was totally satisfied running this scale.

**PLAYBOY:** As you mentioned in your December 2007 *20Q* interview in *PLAYBOY*, you've been a vegan since your third birthday. Is it true you refused to wear any leather in your costumes for *Gladiator* and *Walk the Line*?

**PHOENIX:** I don't know where that came from, because in *Walk the Line* there were definitely some vintage boots, and I'm sure there was leather in *Gladiator* too. I don't wear leather in my life, but with movies, there are some things I struggle with, like if there are budget constraints or a particular vintage thing they need. For food on set, vegan is pretty common now. There are veggie burgers at fucking



fast-food restaurants and shit. So I think people are pretty good with that.

**PLAYBOY:** When you're not getting veggie burgers at fucking fast-food restaurants, do you cook?

**PHOENIX:** Just white-trash vegan cooking. I can make a fucking sandwich, salad and pasta, but I'm not a proper cook.

**PLAYBOY:** As an up-and-coming actor, you reportedly lived with Liv Tyler for several years after co-starring with her in the 1997 movie *Inventing the Abbotts*. Some sources speculated that you dated Anna Paquin, with whom you made the 2001 movie *Buffalo Soldiers*. Do you have any rules for dating co-stars?

**PHOENIX:** It depends, right? I mean, love is love. I don't think your profession should affect your actions, but you shouldn't do anything that's going to distract you from the work.

**PLAYBOY:** Lately your name has been linked with Allie Teitz, a 20-year-old DJ. Romantic relationships can be tough enough; does the presence of press and photographers bump up the difficulties exponentially?

**PHOENIX:** Relationships are difficult, so adding public awareness is probably not a good thing. I've been fortunate, and my friends, like me, don't pay attention to that stuff. If you let it be a part of your world, it affects you. If you want to go online or look at yourself in a magazine, it'll probably fuck with you. Luckily I've never had an interest in that. Oftentimes now we have the experience of walking down Melrose Avenue right by the paparazzi, and they sometimes go, "Hey, Joaquin," or they don't say anything, but they don't take a picture. Sure, a couple of times in my 20s when I was dating an actress or some shit, they were curious. Now they mostly take pictures in the hopes that I'll get hit by a car or trip or somebody will throw something at me.

**PLAYBOY:** Having had such an interesting nomadic childhood and traveling so much while making movies, do you like to stay loose and uncommitted, or do you like putting down roots?

**PHOENIX:** When I work I usually travel, so when I'm not working I tend to want to just be at home. I can't recall the last time I took a vacation. When I was 20 I went with a girlfriend to some island. "Vacation" to me is getting to stay at home, and I'm fortunate in that I work for a few months, then take off for a couple of months and don't work at all.

**PLAYBOY:** You've definitely been working a lot lately. You play a permanently stoned, funny private eye in the upcoming *Inherent Vice*, Paul Thomas Anderson's screen version of the Thomas Pynchon novel. The movie is a kind of late-1960s Raymond Chandler-style film noir, except full of stoners, beach bunnies and eccentrics. It's also baffling, trippy and stylized.

**PHOENIX:** It's an experience, right? It's amazing you said that, because I think that's what you have to do. It just lulls

you into this experience. I wasn't aware of it until after the fact, when the movie was finished. I was walking around in everyday life, thinking, Wow, I was in this other place for so long; I have been taken away on this journey and this experience. As a director, Paul doesn't throw you right into it. He guides you so subtly that you don't even realize you've just been brought into this other world, this other time.

**PLAYBOY:** One of your co-stars, Josh Brolin, meant it as a compliment when he called making the movie "absolute fucking chaos every day," that the vibe was "crazy and nuts and created insecurity." Was it that way for you?

**PHOENIX:** Well, Josh is the best. *The best*. Yeah, working with Paul is such an immersive experience. Everybody on set is so committed to that experience. It doesn't feel like making a movie in some ways. Sometimes I don't even fully understand how he does what he does—how he gets you in this feeling

*Relationships are difficult, so adding public awareness is probably not a good thing.*

like you're watching a movie rather than being in one. Some days you're driving home and you go, "Wow, wait—I know we were on that set, but what were we shooting today?" It was dreamy.

**PLAYBOY:** *Inherent Vice* took so many years to launch that Robert Downey Jr., who was frequently mentioned as most likely to play the hippie detective, recently said Anderson had to break the news to him that he'd grown "too old" to star in it.

**PHOENIX:** When I get cast, I always think it's because their first choice wasn't available. Of course, who's going to admit that to you? But I don't have any problem with that. For me it's like, just get in where you can. I remember I told Paul, "Listen, man, I don't want you to feel any obligation." When we were filming I said the same thing, and he was like, "Yeah, no, I'll fire you if you don't..."

**PLAYBOY:** If you don't cut it in the role, he'd fire you?

**PHOENIX:** [Laughs] I don't know if he actually said that. I want the filmmakers I

admire, the people I work with, to make the best movie possible. If that includes me, great. If it doesn't, I understand.

**PLAYBOY:** Who hasn't called who you wish would?

**PHOENIX:** I'll always want to work for David Lynch.

**PLAYBOY:** Your first time working with Anderson was for *The Master*, in which you play a lost, almost animalistic World War II vet who comes under the sway of a charismatic Scientologist-type leader played by Philip Seymour Hoffman. Both of you got Oscar nominations. After working so closely with him, how did his tragic death affect you?

**PHOENIX:** I don't want to discuss this.

**PLAYBOY:** But having suffered such a high-profile loss as Philip Seymour Hoffman—not to mention your brother, River Phoenix, in 1993 at the age of 23—do you have a philosophy about what happens after death?

**PHOENIX:** I don't have a fucking clue, man. I mean, Jesus fuck. If you told me I'm a fucking video game that some aliens are playing somewhere, well, that seems totally plausible to me. Hey, you and I might be some kind of simulation from someone 200 years in the future. I don't fucking know. I mean, anybody's theory seems plausible. So I say, let go, man. Just let go.

**PLAYBOY:** How did starring in Woody Allen's new movie work out for you?

**PHOENIX:** He's not at all like what you think or like the characters he plays. He's very assertive and strong, knows what he wants. I liked working with him very much. His writing is so good, and he understands the rhythm of a scene so well, it's amazing to experience. You think of a scene and it seems all right, and then he'll make a couple of small adjustments, and it's like unclogging an artery.

**PLAYBOY:** Had you ever come close to working together before?

**PHOENIX:** My mom reminded me that I auditioned for him when I was 20 or something. I don't even know for what. Listen, he's the first filmmaker I was aware of. I remember seeing *Love and Death* when I was a kid. I always wanted to work with him, but I didn't think it was going to happen. So I was very pleased.

**PLAYBOY:** When you were in your late teens, you took four years off from movies because you were disenchanted with the roles available to you. You did it again in 2008 and didn't turn up in a movie for another four years, citing a lack of inspiration, among other reasons. Would you do that again?

**PHOENIX:** Believe me, it's hard not to be inspired and excited when you work with people like Paul Thomas Anderson, Spike Jonze or Woody Allen. I'm very open to giving myself to the process now and not trying to control it. I think maybe I did that when I was younger. I had specific ideas about how I wanted to play something, and I was quite rigid in a way. I used to try

(continued on page 157)



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**MICHAEL HAUSFELD IS NO CORPORATE STOUGE.**

**HE REPRESENTS THE LITTLE GUYS VS. GOLIATHS LIKE THE NCAA,**

**GERMANY, EXXON AND THE NFL.**

**AND HE KEEPS WINNING**





# THE TOUGHEST LAWYER IN AMERICA IS ON YOUR SIDE

By Neal Gabler

**I**n a cavernous conference room in the Treasury Building, Michael Hausfeld, arguably the most powerful lawyer in America, is sitting at a long wooden table facing half a dozen government officials, their eyes riveted on him. Hausfeld is there to discuss a potentially massive case involving bank fraud that came to him, as many of his cases do, through an e-mail from whistle-blowers he is now representing. Hausfeld is small and his speech is measured, but there is no question he exudes authority. When he says of the transgressing bank, "You've got an evil institution," he says it evenly but chillingly, like the aging gangster Hyman Roth in *The Godfather: Part II*. Watching him, you realize you wouldn't want to be that bank. And you realize Hausfeld will soon be gaining another enemy.

At the age of 68, Hausfeld is the preeminent plaintiffs' antitrust attorney in the country—the man who sues giant corporations on behalf of wronged consumers and smaller companies harmed by monopolistic business practices—and

he has acquired a lot of enemies as a result, enough of them that his wife, Marilyn, quips, "I used to say that if our house got bombed, there were so many people who were after him, they wouldn't know who to blame." Of course, there are the giant corporations he sues and those who make a living defending them. They have called Hausfeld a "glorified ambulance chaser" and a "corporate shakedown artist." And he may have even more enemies from the plaintiffs' bar, some

of whom have accused him of getting involved in too many of their cases and forcing them to split their fees.

He even had an enemy in a former partner who sued him for wrongful

termination and began his pleading, "This is a case about a bully," meaning, of course, Hausfeld. (An arbitrator denied the merits of the case and ordered the man to apologize publicly.) Perhaps worst of all, he made enemies of a majority of the partners at the old firm he'd founded and at which he'd worked for 37 years before they left a note on his chair one November day in 2008 telling him he was fired.

The enmity hasn't slowed him. Hausfeld has been

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIUS BUGGE





tremendously successful; *Washingtonian* magazine has said he “consistently brings in the biggest judgments in the history of law,” including \$1.25 billion in a case against a worldwide vitamin cartel, \$3.75 billion against diet-drug manufacturers, \$5 billion in punitive damages in the *Exxon Valdez* Alaskan oil spill and \$5.14 billion from the German government and German industries in a case he filed on behalf of slave laborers dragooned by the Nazis to run their factories and till their fields during World War II—more than \$20 billion in all.

But the thing about Hausfeld is that, for all the triumphs he has enjoyed and all the billions of dollars he has won, he is very different from just about every other high-powered attorney. That’s because he takes the sorts of cases most of them wouldn’t think of taking—cases that don’t necessarily end with a pot of gold but with social justice. Hausfeld filed the first sexual harassment suit in America—and won. He has filed dozens of racial discrimination suits, including one against Texaco in which he got his clients a record \$176 million. He filed a suit against Swiss banks for taking the dormant accounts of Holocaust victims. In fact, as early as 2000, *The Wall Street Journal* asked on its front page, “Is there a hot social issue that attorney Michael Hausfeld hasn’t turned into a lawsuit lately?”

That question is as relevant as ever. His eponymous firm, Hausfeld LLP, which

## “IS THERE A HOT SOCIAL ISSUE THAT HE HAS NOT TURNED INTO A LAWSUIT?”

he formed in 2008, has four offices—in San Francisco, Philadelphia, London and Washington, D.C. Hausfeld is headquartered in the last of these in a modern metal-and-glass building on K Street, which is best known as the reserve of lobbyists, making Hausfeld something of a fox in a chicken coop. It is, as law firms go, small, a boutique with 27 attorneys and anywhere from 30 to 50 active cases.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THIS FACE? YOU SHOULD BE. ACCORDING TO WASHINGTONIAN MAGAZINE, MICHAEL HAUSELDFELD “CONSISTENTLY BRINGS IN THE BIGGEST JUDGMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF LAW.”

Only a tiny percentage are pro bono—that is, cases that are done “for good” and for which the firm takes no fee—but they are the cases he clearly loves. Right now, Hausfeld is representing former NFL players in a suit to compensate them for traumatic brain injuries and, earlier, one to get them payment from the league for licensing rights; he has four separate actions pending to redress past wrongs in South Africa, including one against corporations that supported the military and police enforcement of apartheid and another against three gold-mining companies on behalf of black workers afflicted with lung diseases they contracted while toiling in the mines; and he is suing the NCAA, the organization that polices college athletics, to get compensation for athletes who suffered concussions while playing. This past year he made headlines as the lead attorney in another suit against the NCAA, this one to get royalties for athletes whose images have been sold by the organization; he won a stunning victory that will almost certainly change the face of college sports by eventually forcing institutions to compensate players. In effect, it is the end of amateur athletics as we have known them.

In a profession in which, as Hausfeld himself says, the *(continued on page 142)*





*"Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane...!"*









# art & soul

*Photography by GREG MANIS*

ON THIS BROOKLYN  
ROOFTOP, THE  
ARTIST—MULTI-  
TALENTED ACTOR  
AND DESIGNER  
LINDSAY JONES—  
BECOMES THE  
MUSE









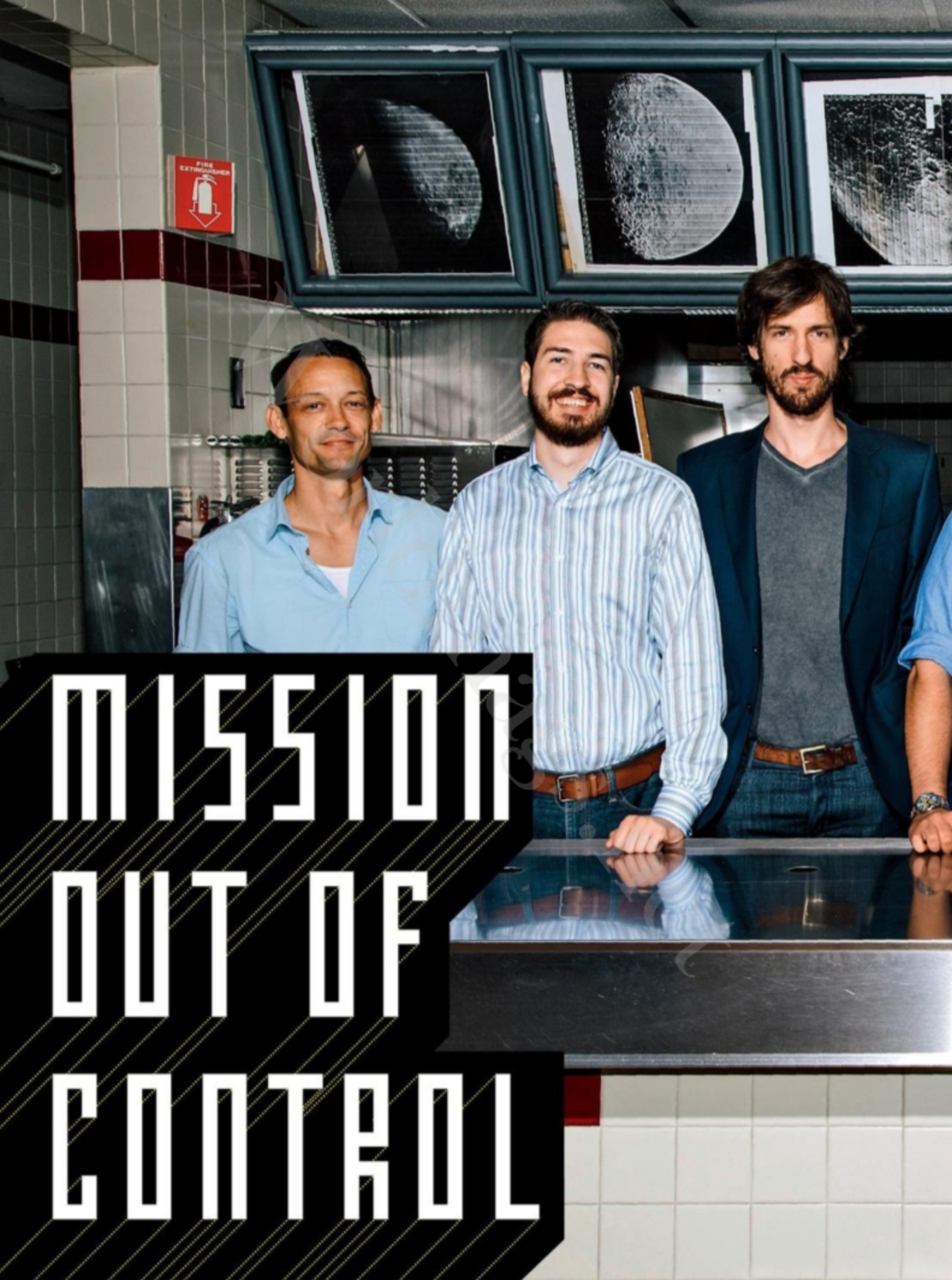












# MISSION OUT OF CONTROL





**SOMEWHERE IN SPACE WAS A FORLORN, FORGOTTEN SPACE-CRAFT AIMLESSLY ADRIFT. ON EARTH, IN AN ABANDONED MCDONALD'S, WAS A TEAM OF ROGUE SCIENTISTS INTENT ON BRINGING IT BACK HOME. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?**

**BY PAT JORDAN**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW HETHERINGTON**





1. A decommissioned McDonald's serves as headquarters. 2. When scientists try to contact a space explorer launched 36 years ago, they need equipment equally old, like Ampex tape machines. 3. One scientist keeps his pet boxer, Major, on guard outside the tape vault and former freezer.

### DAY ONE

The guard at the gate put his left hand up to stop my car. His right hand was on the pistol on his hip. "What's the nature of your business?" he asked.

"I'm going to McDonald's," I said.

"No problem." He waved me through.

I drove slowly through the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Ames Research Center, northwest of San Jose, California, past a vast complex of 1930s Spanish Mission-style buildings. There was a big grassy square with tents and hundreds of people milling about. I stopped, looked inside the tents and saw young men and women standing as if they were in front of their exhibits at a school science fair. They were explaining their areas of expertise to older men. "Development of Low Frequency Shield Device for Attenuation of Life Process in Space Flight." "Vintage Protein Modified Carbon Nanotube Electrodes for Biosensors Application." "Alegin Gene Expression in Clinostat Simulated Microgravity." I passed an abandoned spaceship hangar with steel girders, an F-18 fighter plane, a U-2 high-altitude plane and an abandoned nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile with a collapsible hose dangling from its belly like an umbilical cord. Behind the ICBM was the McDonald's, sans golden arches.

I drove past the outside menu signs and the drive-through order window,



parked and went inside. I said to the guy behind the counter, "Make mine a Big Mac, with fries and a Coke." He gave me a wise-guy smile and said, "Right, like we never heard that before."

The service counter had no cash register, the food warmer no burgers, the deep fryer no fries, the fry griddle no steaming grease, the milk shake machine no cups. This McDonald's looked as if it hadn't served a Happy Meal in years—seven years to be exact. It had been reconfigured into a low-rent office space. There were computers everywhere, ancient tape-drive machines







1. The International Sun/Earth Explorer 3 was state of the art in 1978. 2. The satellite's launch was a success, and NASA didn't give up on it until 1997.



## ISEE-3 HAD BEEN ORBITING THE SUN FOR 36 YEARS, SILENT AND IGNORED FOR THE LAST 17 OF THOSE YEARS UNTIL SKYCORP CONTACTED IT FROM EARTH AND BEGAN "TALKING" TO IT.

space stuff NASA has abandoned. They call themselves techno-archaeologists. They excavate ancient satellites that are drifting in space, unwanted, discarded by NASA. Skycorp gleans new data from satellites that 30 years ago NASA missed or deemed insignificant, passé or maybe just too expensive to bother with. Skycorp's *raison d'être* is data for its own sake. Its members are true believers who worship data like an ancient god, even if at the moment the data has no significance in the modern world. They believe all data will eventually mean something. On this day they were preparing to change the orbit of the *International Sun/Earth Explorer 3* satellite, better known as *ISEE-3*, which NASA had abandoned in 1997. It had been orbiting the sun for 36 years, silent and ignored for the last 17 of those years until Skycorp contacted it from Earth in May 2014 and began "talking" to it. What it told them was "I'm alive. I'm functioning. Doesn't anybody want me?" Skycorp replied, "We still love you." And in four days, if all went according to plan, Skycorp hoped to coax *ISEE-3* into returning home like a prodigal son—first into Earth's orbit and eventually to Earth itself. Apparently this was a big deal for Skycorp and for *ISEE-3*, because the group planned to have a big party at McMoon's for the scientists who had been instrumental in *ISEE-3*'s launch, including Robert W. Farquhar. At 82, he's the Muddy Waters of NASA, the rock star who, in 1978, gave birth to *ISEE-3*.

"NASA said it was impossible to bring it back," said Wingo. "It would cost \$6 million. We told them we could do it for \$150,000. So we raised the money from private investors, and NASA turned *ISEE-3* over to us." That was unprecedented. It was the first time any governmental space agency in the world had turned over one of its satellites beyond Earth's orbit to a civilian crew.

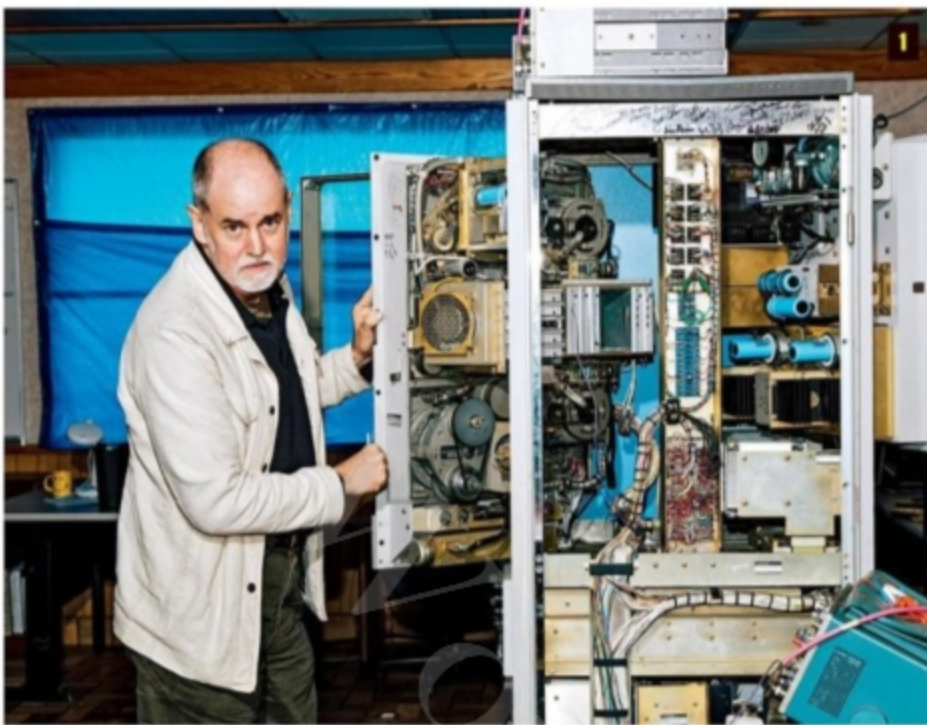
Cowing joined us while Wingo was talking. "By going back to the future we discover missed data," Wingo said. "In the 1960s NASA didn't have the technology to get all the data, but we

like metal high school lockers the size of a man. Hundreds of film drums that looked as if they were from old black-and-white sci-fi movies were stacked on the floor. Everything was old, dusty and in a state of disrepair. Machines were being taken apart, their guts hanging out, decayed wires dangling, duct tape holding them together. In the window was a big flag, the skull-and-crossbones pirate flag. There was a sign: MCMOON'S.

Two men in their 50s sat transfixed at their computer screens in the dining area. A tall lanky man with a silver beard stared at his Skype image while being interviewed. A small birdlike man with glasses stared at endless lines of numbers. Finally the tall man came over to me. I asked him, "What's with the pirate flag?" He said, "It's our symbol. We put smart people in a room to work on unauthorized projects in plain sight."

Dennis Wingo and his smaller cohort, Keith Cowing, run Skycorp Incorporated, a small group of civilian aerospace scientists who play with the





1. Dennis Wingo formed Skycorp to bring projects like *ISEE-3* back to Earth. 2. The cloud? No. Data was once stored on tapes. Lots of tapes. 3. RadioShack was the only place the team could get equipment from the right era. 4. Obsolete equipment gets a second chance at usefulness where condiments were once stored.



use modern computers to get data from NASA's old machines." He pointed to all the tape discs stacked on the floor. He said they were from *Lunar Orbiter 3* from 1967.

Cowing spoke up. "NASA told us the tapes would turn to dust. 'We don't need 'em,' they said. 'All these guys are dead now. Who cares? Go away. No way we can do this; we threw away all the tape drives, all the documents.' So we found them on eBay, at garage sales, in NASA Dumpsters." He showed me an old Boeing space pamphlet, yellowed, stained, its pages nibbled by rats. "We restored the drives until our images were clearer than NASA's." He pointed to three photos from the moon's surface from the 1960s. NASA's original photo was a dark blur. NASA's restored photo was minimally clearer. Skycorp's modern resolution was so clear that every rock and pebble was visible.

Cowing led me to an old tape drive as tall as he was. He held up his iPhone and said, "This has more capability than that." The old tape drive's innards were exposed. Cowing said, "See that blue



capacitor? We bought it at RadioShack. We attract old stuff, then fix it. Everything we do is to look back in history to see how our past shaped our present to show us where to go in the future. Most scientists just go from the present to the future. We study the past."

Cowing went back to his computer while Wingo introduced me to Skycorp's young staff. Cameron Woodman, 39, the wise guy at the counter, is as handsome as a male model, and Casey Harper, 18, is a black-haired beauty. She's been helping out at Skycorp since she was in middle school. "I'm like their golden retriever," she said. "I fetch things." Austin Epps, 28, with his brownish beard, is their earnest genius.

**THEY ARE TRUE BELIEVERS WHO WORSHIP DATA LIKE AN ANCIENT GOD, EVEN IF THAT DATA HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MODERN WORLD.**

Marco Colleluori, 29, round and soft with a hoop earring, is their nerd-hipster genius. Ken Zin, the old man of the crew, was in his office.

Wingo led me to two big walk-in food freezers in the back of McMoon's. The door to one of the freezers was closed and guarded by a snarling boxer. "Ken's rescue dog," said Wingo. "I guess Ken's busy. Don't want to disturb him." Zin is 69, the resident curmudgeon. Wingo said Zin doesn't invent things, "but his skill is to detect flaws in things and repair them. He knows nothing about anything else."

Late in the afternoon I checked in to Building 19, where I would be sleeping. The woman at the desk gave me a key attached to a metal disc with my room number on it, like a dog's rabies tag. I went down the narrow, musty hallway to my room. It looked as if it hadn't been touched in 80 years. There was an old white refrigerator with a 17-inch television on top. Its picture was fuzzy. The garbage pail didn't work. How could a garbage pail not work? It had a little lever on the bottom that you pressed with your foot to open the lid. The lever was broken. The bathroom was ancient. The towels were stiff and threadbare and the thin little bar of soap seemed to be made of sand. I took a shower in a tiny cubicle. I couldn't muster up a lather with the scratchy soap that reddened my skin like Brillo. When I dried myself with the towels (continued on page 149)





*"I don't feel fully dressed without my high heels."*



×  
Meet Ghetto  
Gastro, a  
three-man  
culinary  
team from  
the Bronx  
who just  
might be the  
coolest new  
crew in food

# Straight OUTTA Comptoir

By  
HUGH GARVEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYLAN PERRY





FROM LEFT:  
Malcolm Livingston II,  
Lester Walker  
and Jon Gray, a.k.a.  
Ghetto Gastro

**g**

hetto Gastro is ready to cook. It's an early autumn morning in New York City, and a batch of orgeat almond syrup simmers on the stove top as the sweet smell of chai perfumes the air. The aroma of freshly smoked cannabis wafts in from the patio, adding a funky bass note. Together it all smells positively culinary.

We're in the Hash House, the nickname of the Long Island City apartment that serves as makeshift headquarters for a group of guys who are

adding a solid dose of hip-hop to haute cuisine.

The three-man crew sits on a leather couch, the sole piece of furniture in an otherwise spartan apartment filled with chafing dishes, hotel pans and other catering gear. There's Jon Gray, self-described chief dishwasher, former Fashion Institute of Technology student and erstwhile apparel entrepreneur. There's Lester Walker, thickly muscled and generously tattooed. He calls himself "the cooker," which is an understatement for a guy who has worked as sous-chef at Michelin-starred restaurants Eleven Madison Park and Jean-Georges. Rounding out GG, as they call themselves, is Malcolm Livingston II, baby-faced, soft-spoken, the pastry chef at modernist cuisine temple WD-50 and winner of multiple honors in the industry. Today is Ghetto Gastro's day off. Five pounds of vacuum-packed flat iron steak is in the fridge, waiting to be cooked, and tonight they're throwing a party.

"Typically whenever we have leftover meat or produce from an event, we don't waste it," says Gray. "We Robin Hood it, invite friends over and cook it up." Gray texts friends and gets the word out on Instagram. Walker lays out the rough plan: "We're going to go to the Union Square farmers market for produce, hit Pino's in the Village for some meat, then the

Lobster Place for some ill crab. But mostly we're just going to go with the flow."

In the inadequate language of marketing, you could describe Ghetto Gastro as a creative consultancy that produces culinary pop-up events for brands. In person GG looks more like a rap crew—which it's sometimes mistaken for—than a group of guys schooled in the finer points of modern cuisine and brand development. The men are dressed in black, wearing matching T-shirts printed with their logo in the same reverse-type block letters as the parental-advisory stamp.

In its year and a half of existence, Ghetto Gastro has been busy. The crew has designed and executed parties for a Timberland boot release, catered a promotional dinner for an e-cigarette brand at South by Southwest and flown to Cannes to create "the South Bronx in the South of France," a Microsoft-sponsored dinner. In a villa in the hills above the Riviera, they draped sneakers over wires, repurposed 40-ounce malt-liquor bottles as water carafes and served a multicourse menu that featured *loup de mer* cured in that bodega staple, Lipton iced tea. "We create full experiences for you to immerse yourself in, sort of like theater," is how Gray describes their mission. "When you come into our world, we want you to eat this food and remember this shit for the rest of your life."

A strategic cluster of Post-its listing objectives and steps covers a wall of the Hash House and outlines the master plan: an animated web series called *The Food Gangs of New York*; a new headquarters and culinary-education center in the Bronx; an ice cream line called 36 Brix, inspired by the technical term for the sugar level in ice cream and the Wu-Tang Clan album *36 Chambers*. It's an ambitious set of objectives for the next year, but more than a few people think if anyone can hit these marks it's these guys.

It would be easy to say Ghetto Gastro stands out because it's a rare thing in the most privileged and foodiest elevations of the food world—an all-black operation that doesn't hide the



ghetto in its cooking. But the chefs also have the skills, the charm and that elusive and ineffable cool factor that diners and brands salivate for as much as they do GG's Kaffir lime churros. Or as one new fan tweeted after meeting them, "Still not sure exactly what they do, but they're cool as fuck."

When Joe McCann, former chief technology officer of the influential global advertising agency Mother, heard about Ghetto Gastro he instantly saw the possibilities it could bring to the South of France Microsoft event. "They taught the attendees how to play Cee-lo, a dice game popular in the hoods of New York," McCann says. "Jon also introduced the party to an original uptown drink, the nutcracker, that had the crowd properly tipsy by the end of the night. All this took place in a mansion so grandiose that Scarface would be jealous." McCann says Ghetto Gastro is "providing popular culture with something it has been deprived of for so long—originality." Matthew Orlando, the chef-owner of Amass in Copenhagen (latest stop on the global culinary world tour), worked with Livingston at Thomas Keller's Per Se. He acknowledges GG's raw talent and sheer originality. No stranger to the fickle trends of food, he says, "To me being different is the way forward." And he points out a crucial part of the crew's backstory: "Besides being supercool guys, they know where they come from, and they celebrate that."

Where they come from and what they celebrate is the Bronx. That's where Gray was kicked out of Catholic and then public school before getting a GED. He was busted for drug possession, then enrolled in classes at FIT and worked internships as part of a deal to have the charges dropped. The plan worked, and two years later he was a partner in two fashion lines selling at high-end department stores and streetwear shops. But his enthusiasm for fashion quickly cooled. "I wouldn't buy a Lanvin sweater and think I really needed it," Gray says. "But I would go to Eleven Madison Park and cash out without even thinking about it. I asked myself, How can I travel and eat and make that my life's work? That's how Ghetto Gastro was born." He hooked up with Lester Walker, an old friend from the Bronx who was the first person in his family to go to college, as a culinary student at Johnson & Wales University. Malcolm Livingston II played in the same basketball league as Gray.

The food they grew up eating in the Bronx informs their cooking, which can incorporate Caribbean spices, French techniques and Olde English malt liquor in a single menu. "We celebrate the cultures we grew up with: Ghanaian, Trinidadian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Puerto Rican," says Gray. "We try to fuck heads up and take food that's not approachable and make it more democratic." When they served KFC-inspired snack boxes at an event, guests found delicate biscuits and foie gras *torchon* inside. Walker adds, "It's a combination of high ingredients and low interpretations." If *artisanal* and *farm to table* are the catchphrases and ambitions of the food world, for GG *turnt* and *steez* are the goals. *Turnt*, as in "turned up" or "off the hook," is how Livingston describes their food events. "Just pure controlled anarchy." Gray says a crucial ingredient is *steez*—style with ease.

While Livingston has cooked in some of the best restaurants in New York City, he sees a market for diners who appreciate food and experiences but don't want them restricted to the confines of a proper sit-down meal. A Ghetto Gastro event is ideally a cultural equalizer. "I don't like to dress up, and I feel like when you go to a nice restaurant you have to," he says. "But at Ghetto Gastro events you can just come as you are. The food is going to be on a high level, but you can still have fun and think, I'm around people who look like me and dress like me."

If 10 years ago chefs were the new rock stars, today they're

the new rap stars, with Roy Choi, the Korean taco truck mogul turned restaurateur, and New York's Eddie Huang, Baohaus chef and sitcom inspiration, referencing Wu-Tang as much as Alice Waters. But that doesn't mean GG leaves the "farm to table" of it all behind. In Manhattan, at the Union Square farmers market, GG slows down and shops for the party. The men pick out carrots still caked with mud, bright rainbow chard and dusky black kale. They sample heirloom tomatoes, pondering the comparative virtues of Black Velvets and Brandywines. Gray points out that access to fresh produce is sadly limited in a city where the outer boroughs remain food deserts. "Most of the food in New York comes through the Bronx," says Gray. "While rainbow radishes are going straight to Eleven Madison Park, it's still hard to get a fresh apple in the bodega." At Pino's, an old-school Italian meat shop in the West Village, we pick up 30 pounds of duck fat, chicken wings and ground beef. As we're walking out, one of the counter guys asks, "Are those guys rappers?"

The guys say this is a common flash assumption. In Europe, says Walker, most people immediately assume they're rappers or ballplayers. "Within the first 30 seconds that stereotype is thrown out the door," says Orlando. "These guys are real, and if you don't see that when you talk with them, then you don't deserve to hang with them."

Back at the Hash House, the crew is joined by WD-50 line cooks, and Jan Warren, a bartender friend, makes a batch of Bronx-influenced mixology. "This was inspired by a drink Ellie, a roughneck Puerto Rican kid I went to high school with, used to make," says Warren. "He'd take a 40, drink about a fifth of it, pour in a small can of Coco López coconut cream, put the cap back on and gently mix it together. In a teenage brain, the explosion of sugar and high alcohol content was the best semi-legal high you could get."

Everyone hunkers down, and the unmistakable near-silent intensity of a pro kitchen staff at work settles on the room. Helping them prep is Pierre Serrao, a personal trainer and chef who has cooked in restaurants and as a private chef for Jay Z. "In the food game this is the crew I look to for inspiration," says Serrao. "So many guys take the same road. I love how they're all about word of mouth and collaboration." His reaction to Ghetto Gastro's collective approach to work is a common one. You don't want to be them so much as join them. And then the quiet

of the kitchen is shattered as Livingston boots up the Sonos and Wiz Khalifa thunders from the speakers: "We dem boyz, hol up, hol up, hol up, we makin noise."

Come nightfall, two cheap Chinese paper lanterns illuminate the patio, sous vide chicken wings are finished on the grill, and duck-fat-fried potato salad and melon, kale and quinoa salads are put out. Models, entrepreneurs and the collected friends and family of GG arrive. The malt-liquor-infused cocktails start to flow, and the apartment is transformed into a classic New York house party. Walker, loose and relaxed after a day of cooking, looks over the patio at people dancing and eating, the Empire State Building glowing across the river, and rhymes, "There's no shortage, Ghetto Gastro representing from Denmark to Shoreditch."

And the timing couldn't be better. With Vice producing a series with rapper Action Bronson visiting Michelin-starred New York restaurants, and the network sitcom *Fresh Off the Boat* centering on a hip-hop-obsessed Taiwanese American wannabe chef, the mash-up of hip-hop and food is trending big. Orlando from Amass has high hopes. "In the food world these guys are way outside the box," he says, "and that's why people are going to start to notice them. It might not be tomorrow, but I can assure you it will be very soon, and you are going to wonder why it took so long." ■

“

*If 10 years ago chefs were the new rock stars, today they're the new rap stars, with chefs like Roy Choi and Eddie Huang referencing Wu-Tang as much as Alice Waters.*

”





1. Ghetto Gastro in the South of France. 2. Sous vide chicken wings, jelly beignets and churros. 3. Guests party at the Ghetto Gastro Hash House. 4. Olde English stars in a Hash House photograph by Joshua Woods. 5. Chef Lester Walker shops the Union Square farmers market. 6. Chicken wings get finished on the grill. 7. DJ Loose Cannon and DJ A Wabbz at the turntables at the Hash House.






AS A SELF-  
PROFESSED  
ADVENTRESS  
WHO OWNS  
HER OWN  
YACHT, MISS  
DECEMBER  
FEELS AT  
HOME ON THE  
WATER. WE  
THINK SHE  
DOES JUST  
FINE WHEN  
THAT WATER  
IS FROZEN







## IRST MATE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSH RYAN

**M**iss December Elizabeth Ostrander lives for a good adventure. "I go headfirst into anything that's going to challenge or test me." Meet the final Playmate of our 60th-anniversary year. Elizabeth spent her younger years running with the guys as a competitive, surfing tomboy in St. Augustine, Florida. At 18 she went to Greece and became an international modeling sensation. In the past year and a half, she has upped the ante by sailing her own yacht, a 41-foot Islander Freeport, from San Francisco to Hawaii to Bora-Bora. "I'm a strong person who has always had intuitions that come true, and one of them was that I'd sail around the world—I knew I'd actually do it one day, so I mentally trained myself to be like a Viking." Another of Elizabeth's long-held inner feelings was that she was Playmate-bound. "I absolutely love being naked—it's beautiful, it's fun and it's sexy," she says. After she attended a casting call, it was all but a given to anoint her as our Miss December and cover girl. To showcase her exotic Nordic looks in the proper setting, we planted her on an iceberg—on a set in California. "It was perfect because I got to pretend I was in the Arctic while staying warm in sunny California," she says, laughing. "I want people to look at my pictorial and think of me as a sexy, mysterious gift to unwrap. Merry Christmas, everybody!"

PLAYMATES.COM/ELIZABETH-OSTRANDER

















Elizabeth Ostrander

NAME:

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HEIGHT:

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PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Elizabeth Ostrander  
BUST: 34D WAIST: 24" HIPS: 35"  
HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 119 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 12-7-88 BIRTHPLACE: Melbourne, Florida

AMBITIONS: To be a playful sex bomb for life and an actress along the way (Bond Girl!).

TURN-ONS: Men who are tough, bold, strong, fearless, stylish, adventurous and blond.

TURNOFFS: Negative, gossipy control freaks. I'm looking for positivity and a good time!

MUSICAL INSPIRATION: Lana Del Rey - she's vintage, bold and wild. She must be an old soul like me.

A TYPICAL DAY IN MY LIFE: Morning sex, breakfast, castings, the beach, workout, more sex, dinner, more sex. No wonder I love James Brown's song "Sex Machine" so much!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS: From being naked on my yacht to naked in Playboy - wish list answered.



Big flirt. ♡



Mahimahi for daus!



Mermaid moment.







# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

**M**y last boyfriend said he fantasized about having two girls at the same time," a woman told her sister.

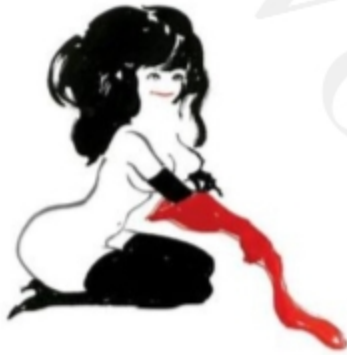
"Most men do," the sister said. "What did you tell him?"

"I said, 'If you can't satisfy one woman, why would you want to piss off another one?'"

**W**ho said that just because I tried to kiss you at last month's Christmas party you could neglect your work around here?" a boss asked his secretary.

She responded, "My lawyer."

**S**anta Claus has the right idea: Visit people once a year.



**F**ool me once, shame on you.

Fool me twice, shame on me.

Fool me three times, you're probably really good-looking.

**T**here are a number of mechanical devices you can give your lover for Christmas that will increase sexual arousal. Chief among these is an Aston Martin DB9 convertible.

**C**hristmas was rough when I was a kid because I believed in Santa Claus and, unfortunately, so did my parents.

**W**hat is the worst part of office Christmas parties?

Looking for a new job the next day.

**W**hy are there no nativity scenes in Washington, D.C.?

They can't find three wise men.

**T**he four stages of life:

You believe in Santa Claus.

You don't believe in Santa Claus.

You become Santa Claus.

You look like Santa Claus.

**A** woman walked into a tattoo shop and asked for a tattoo of a turkey to be inked on her right inner thigh and a Christmas tree on her left inner thigh. The tattoo artist said, "That's an unusual request. Why do you want those tattoos there?"

The woman answered, "Because my husband says I don't serve him anything good to eat between Thanksgiving and Christmas."

**T**wo women were admiring each other's Christmas gifts.

"How did you get a mink out of your husband?" the first asked.

The second replied, "The same way minks get minks."

**A** waitress was struck by how peculiar a couple at one of her tables was acting. She watched as the man slid down his chair and under the table. She approached the table and said, "Pardon me, ma'am, but I think your husband just slid under the table."

"Oh no he didn't," the woman said. "In fact, he just walked in the front door."

**A** man was pouring a cocktail for his female boss during a holiday party in the office. "Say when," he told her. She replied, "Right after this drink."

**A** fed-up wife asked her persnickety car-loving husband what he wanted for Christmas.

"Something that goes from zero to 220 in three seconds flat," he said.

On Christmas Day he unwrapped a bathroom scale.



**A** good friend will come and bail you out of jail, but a true friend will be sitting next to you, saying, "Damn...that was fun!"

**T**he human resources director of a large hospital remarked to the floor manager of the busy ICU that there seemed to be a lot of pregnant nurses in his unit. As they walked down the hall, passing nurses tending to patients in their rooms, the director said he was concerned about a possible staff shortage. He asked when each nurse was due, and at every room the manager would say, "She's due sometime in late September."

At the fifth room, the manager looked perplexed. "I have no idea about this one," he said. "She wasn't at the Christmas party."

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to [jokes@playboy.com](mailto:jokes@playboy.com).





*"It's my wife!"*



**THAT**

**900'S**

**SHOW**

**BIRD AND MAGIC WERE LEAVING. JORDAN  
HAD ARRIVED. A SLAM-DUNK ORAL HISTORY  
OF THE BEST ERA IN PRO BASKETBALL**



**BY KEVIN COOK**









A little over 20 years ago, the NBA was in transition. The league was shifting gears, moving from the age of Magic Johnson's Lakers vs. Larry Bird's Celtics to today's game. The Magic-Bird era made the NBA bigger and better than ever, but by the early 1990s it was over. Detroit's "Bad Boy" Pistons were aging into bad old men. Who got next?

It's easy to forget how different pro basketball was in the 1990s. Centers could still dominate. Guards could still hit half their jumpers. Defense was rougher, tougher and more honest, with less soccer-style flopping and moaning for a foul call. Rookies were seasoned by three or four seasons of college ball, not a one-and-done year that sent them to the pros before they'd finished growing. The annual Slam Dunk Contest still mattered.

In the 1990s you had Ace of Base on the radio, *ER* and *Home*



**Top:** The best team ever? Team USA dominated the 1992 summer Olympics in Barcelona. **Middle:** Michael Jordan gets the MVP award from NBA commissioner David Stern in 1991. **Bottom:** Shaquille O'Neal magically flies over Jordan during the NBA Eastern Conference semifinals in 1995.

## **MICHAEL JORDAN TRANSCENDED HIS HYPE. THAT WAS HIS GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT. HE WAS BETTER THAN PEOPLE SAID HE WAS.**

*Improvement* on TV and O.J. Simpson making a 35-mile-an-hour getaway in his white Bronco. You had *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans* on your PC and the first Air Jordan Retros on your feet. Best of all you had hoops for the ages, including not one but two candidates for Best Team There Ever Was. It's all re-played here in highlights vintage and new, starting with the 1991 press conference that changed everything.

**MAGIC JOHNSON**, Los Angeles Lakers point guard and Hall of Famer: [November 7, 1991] Because of the HIV virus I have attained, I will have to retire from the Lakers today. I will now become a spokesman for the HIV virus. Life goes on. Sometimes we think only gay people can get it, that it's not going to happen to me. And here I am saying it can happen to anybody, even me, Magic Johnson.... I'm going to beat it, and I'm going to have fun.

*We thought he was just being his usual self, good old upbeat Magic, suddenly facing a death sentence. In 1991, nobody beat HIV. Magic's diagnosis was final, his prognosis seemingly terminal. The idea that he would help pioneer the combination of drugs that would help others survive HIV was as outlandish as the thought that Magic would go on to make millions as a businessman and co-owner of the L.A. Dodgers—as crazy as the thought of a league without him. "I mangled some of my statement," he said later, "but you know (continued on page 132)*







*"Usually I don't do one-night stands, but for you I'll make an exception."*





Classic



# Silverstein

## AROUND THE WORLD

For much of the 1960s, a relatively unknown Shel Silverstein was PLAYBOY's "roving Renaissance man" and later became yet another of our gifts to the world of pop culture. He won a Grammy for writing the Johnny Cash song "A Boy Named Sue" and sold more than 35 million copies of his children's books (*Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in the Attic*, among others). He has remained one of our favorites, and we thought this was the perfect time to revisit some of his more memorable exploits.



# MEXICO

"I...I really can't find the words to express it. Here I am in Taxco, the most enchanting city in the world...a beautiful girl at my side...an orange sun burning in the clear azure sky...the rows of picturesque adobe houses set along a lazy street...a gentle breeze caressing our hot bodies...the romantic sounds of a guitar being played in the distance...and I think I'm getting diarrhea...."



"You Americans are never satisfied! I get us two good seats for the corrida and you complain because we're in the sun...so we exchange them for seats in the shade and you complain that we're not close enough to the bulls...so we get the closest seats possible, but now you still complain!!"

# ALASKA



"You see, you pack the snow into balls like this, then you choose up sides and...."





# AFRICA



"...And so the good kind lion let the little mousey go free and later when the lion was trapped in a big net and couldn't get loose, the grateful mousey came to his aid and gnawed through the net and saved his life and...."



"What do you mean you just remembered you can't stand the sight of blood?!"

# ITALY



"I don't know the exact address, but it's right behind a church...."





# SCANDINAVIA



Watusi children contribute to Shel's sketch pad. Keen-eyed Shel observes that adult Watusi "aren't as tall as they were in *King Solomon's Mines*."

# Silverstein

"You'll like Urla...she's a typical Scandinavian girl...blonde hair...blue eyes...nice figure...tall...."



# HAWAII



"Aloha, sir...and I hope you enjoy Hawaii, sir...and it's spelled l-e-i, sir...and I've heard that joke 3,227 times, sir..."



"You see, Mr. Silverstein—in the hula, the story is told with the hands...the hands, Mr. Silverstein...you have to watch the hands. The story is...uh, Mr. Silverstein... Mr. Silverstein..."





# SPAIN



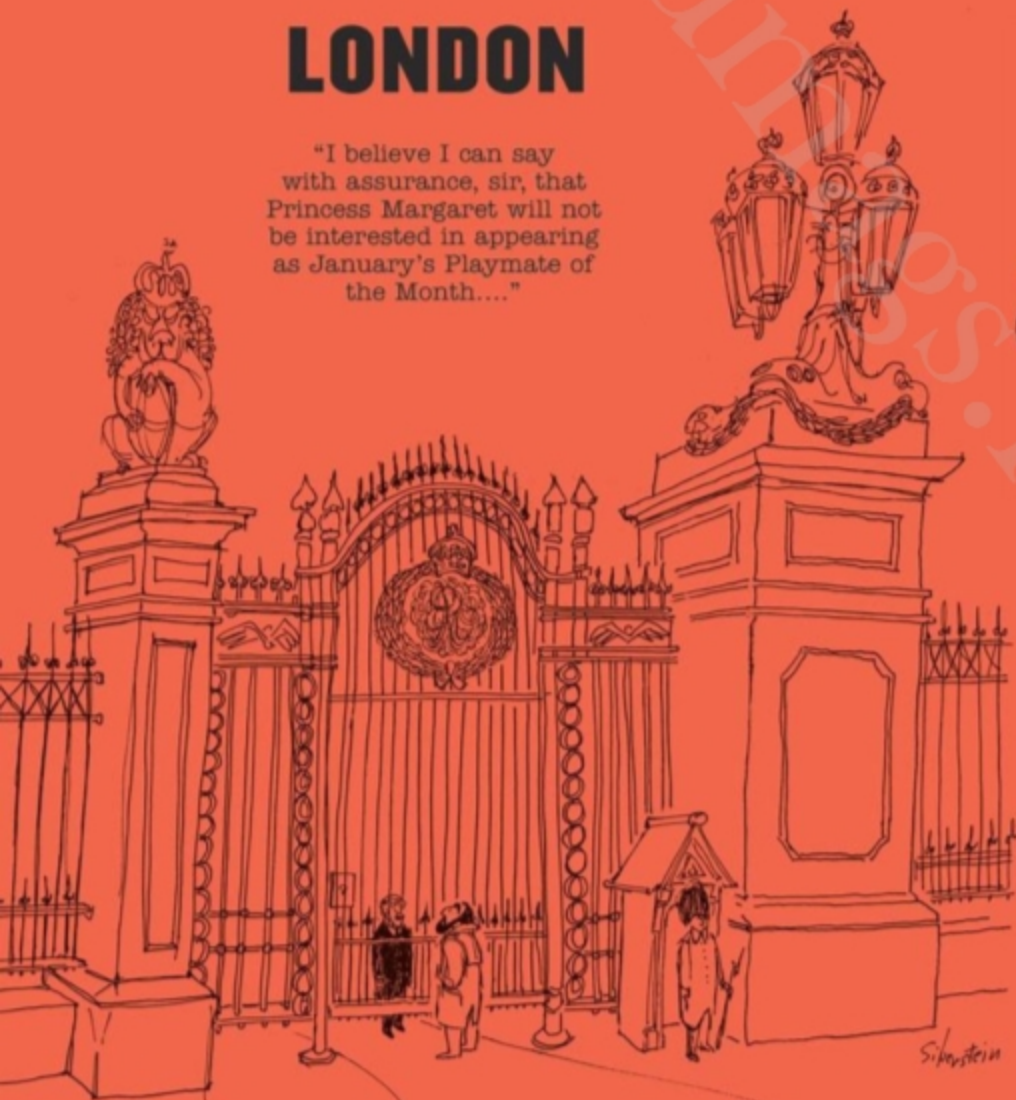
"Okay, but now let's look at it from the bullfighter's point of view!..."



In an inn of legendary Granada, Shel dances the traditional flamenco with a group of high-spirited gypsies. Wherever he roams, he trips the local fantastic, sings local songs.

# LONDON

"I believe I can say with assurance, sir, that Princess Margaret will not be interested in appearing as January's Playmate of the Month...."



"Well, they don't call them sentry boxes where I come from...! But it was an honest mistake...and I said I was sorry...and I will clean it up!"

# Silverstein

Silverstein





*"Too bad he couldn't hang on until the 25th!"*





WHEN A DRUG  
BUST DIVIDES  
SLEEPY FROM  
HIS BEST  
FRIEND, HE'S  
LEFT TO WEIGH  
THE SOURCE—  
AND PRICE—OF  
LOYALTY

Worlds.net



# MISS MISS MARY'S ROOM ROOM

**I** was always cool with Mrs. Sullivan. I been knowing her son, Pat, since we were in the same kindergarten class. His mom had one of those houses that were open to the kids in the neighborhood, and me, Pat and some of the other fellahs around our way hung out there often. Playing Xbox, going on Facebook to check out the females, shit like that. I spent the night a few times, and when I'd wake up in the morning, a blanket had been put on top of me by Pat's mom. She always asked after my mother, and when she talked about my younger brother she knew what grade he was in. She was thoughtful like that.

I called her Miss Mary, which is how we do around here to adults when we want to show respect. My name is Tim, but she called me Sleepy, the street name I got on account of my half-mast eyes. I guess I thought of Miss Mary like family. I mean that in a good way, not in the way that I think of family when I think of my own situation at home.

We had free rein in the Sullivan house. I mean, we knew our boundaries, but still. Miss Mary trusted us boys so much that she left her open purse and wallet on the kitchen counter when she visited a neighbor or went for a walk. I know for a fact that none of us ever took a dollar. A couple of times we snagged a

little liquor from that rolling cart she had and swiped beers out the refrigerator, but there was certain lines we wouldn't cross. Another one was, none of Pat's friends would ever go in her bedroom.

I remember it, though. From the hall, up on the second floor, I sometimes looked through her open door.

It was a small bedroom. It had a double bed that seemed to take up most of the space. I don't recall seeing no dresser. The wallpaper was busy with some old-timey pattern, looked like those ink tests the shrink gave me that time I set a trash can fire in our middle school. What I remember most, beside the bed, was a fireplace mantel with no fireplace underneath it. It was just sort of mounted on the wall, framing the wallpaper. On top of the mantel was some kind of candleholder thing, a snow globe and what looked like a painted rock. Above the candleholder was a crucifix, which had been mounted on the wall. Also on the wall, two icons: Madonna and the baby Jesus, and Jesus grown up.

Miss Mary was straight Catholic. One time, from in the hall, I saw her praying the rosary, holding those beads she had, looking up at the bearded Jesus picture on the wall. I had to look away. Didn't seem right somehow to be looking at her while she was doing that private thing.

This wasn't long after Pat's dad had died of a cancer. I don't even remember him much 'cause I was too young. Around that time, me and Pat were in a talent show together at our elementary. Up on stage, doing that "Jump" joint. Two tiny white boys in bow ties, lip-synching to Kris Kross. The crowd, kids and parents, went off. My mother was there, and one of her meth-tweak boyfriends too. Man with a ponytail and a skinny behind.

Me and Pat was tight all through elementary, middle school and high school, until I moved over to the tech high to learn the electrician's trade. We played rec league football and basketball as youngsters, but once we got to high school neither of us had the grades to qualify for athletics, so we stopped. The way it is where we live, there are smart kids and tough kids, and they get separated early on. The smart kids,



they get recognized as such in elementary. They're put in special classes and are protected all the way in magnet and AP programs on their paths to college and beyond. Dudes like me and Pat got identified way back as unmotivated students with behavior problems, and all the kids like us got thrown together in another group. We were put on what they call a different "track" than those nerd kids. Our track was the one that leads to nothing much. Those people at the schools wished it on us, in a way, and it became so.

Our neighborhood could be tough. A mix of colors, immigrant cabbies, on-and-off laborers, fathers who worked with their hands and backs if they were still around. Wasn't like us kids were gonna prove ourselves on the debate team, so what it came down to was, be willing to steal someone in the face or get stole, or be a punk and walk away. We did get tested and sometimes we were outnumbered. Pat had my back most times, and it wasn't easy for him to step up and fight. He did it, but he was on the soft side. That happened to some who didn't have a man around the house. Though I got to say, it didn't happen to me.

Me and Pat started smoking weed when we were 14 years old. This boy named Rollo, a dealer with a genuine rep who lived down in the apartments, turned us on to it. Rollo was 20 at the time. I guess I was ready to try marijuana. Ready or no, I wouldn't have turned Rollo's offer down. I didn't want to look like a faggot in his eyes.

As we got older, Rollo began to front us pounds of weed that we would split into ounces and off to our friends. In that way, Rollo expanded his business in our neighborhood, and me and Pat got free weed to smoke. It was a good deal for all of us.

Pat really loved being high. He'd get real quiet and happy after firing up. He was a big guy with black hair he kept shaved to the scalp. He had braces on his teeth, but he wasn't pressed by it. Matter of fact, he smiled a lot. Like his mother, Miss Mary, he had green eyes.

The deal between us was, I kept our scale and Baggies at my house, in my bedroom. My mother hardly ever went in my room, and if she had found anything, I don't believe she would have cared. Pat made the calls to kids we knew who were potheads, and both of us did what we called the transactions. Any conversations we had on our cell phones, we used codes. Money was Kermit, meaning green, an ounce was an "osmosis," marijuana was M.J., for Michael Jordan. We weren't stupid.

We never moved product through the Sullivan house. Pat's place was for relaxing and being up. Miss Mary must have known me and her son was blazed most of the time, because we were always eating stuff from out the pantry and watching TV and laughing at it even when the shit was not funny and the shows we were watching were, like, UFO shows and shit. I think she was all right with it because her son was safe in the house. Having lost her husband and all, I believe she feared losing Pat to the street. So she knew we were smoking weed. What she didn't know was that we were dealing it, and all the complications that come with that.

The police in this county here are all about catching kids in the act of smoking, like it's some kind of high crime. They even got plainclothes Spanish guys, young dudes who look like they could be in high school, busting Latino kids who smoke in the woods. Young black and white police who do the same to their own kind. Meantime, if you are one of those

nerd boys, you are pretty much safe, even if you partake in the sacrament yourself. The smart kids, the ones who been protected their whole lives, can go off to college and smoke all the weed they want in their dorm rooms. Shit is damn near legal for them. Just like it was for their parents.

Turns out, the police had been watching Rollo for some time. He had two possession charges on him. The first had been dismissed, but he had a court date coming up on the second and an expensive lawyer to represent him. We found out later from this same lawyer, he had been under suspicion as a known drug dealer by one of them county task forces they had. I'm thinking that some kid who got busted for possession identified Rollo as his dealer once the police got that kid under the hot lights.

The night the bad thing went down, we were driving around in Rollo's car, an old Mercury Marquis, which has the same platform as a Ford Crown Victoria and a Lincoln Continental. What they call the sister car. I didn't mention that Rollo is black. Means nothing to me, but it's part of the story. Police see a black dude and a couple of white dudes rolling around in a Crown Vic look-alike, they see, what do you call that, misadventure, and they are going to pull you over to the side of the road. That came later.

We had gone down to the Summit apartments, which people around our way called Slum It. Blacks and Spanish lived there, many females with their single mothers. There was this one trick I liked to bang whose name was Lucia, and we stopped by her spot. Lucia had told me her mom was out with her boyfriend for the night so it was a perfect setup. We all sat around in her living room and got smoked up, listening to go-go and some Latin stuff to make Lucia happy, and then me and Lucia went to her bedroom and Rollo and Pat stayed where they was at. Back in the bedroom, Lucia said she was on her period, so I told her to suck it. After I busted a nut, me and her went back out to the living room and I told my boys that it was time to go. I put a little weed on the coffee table for Lucia and we left out of there.

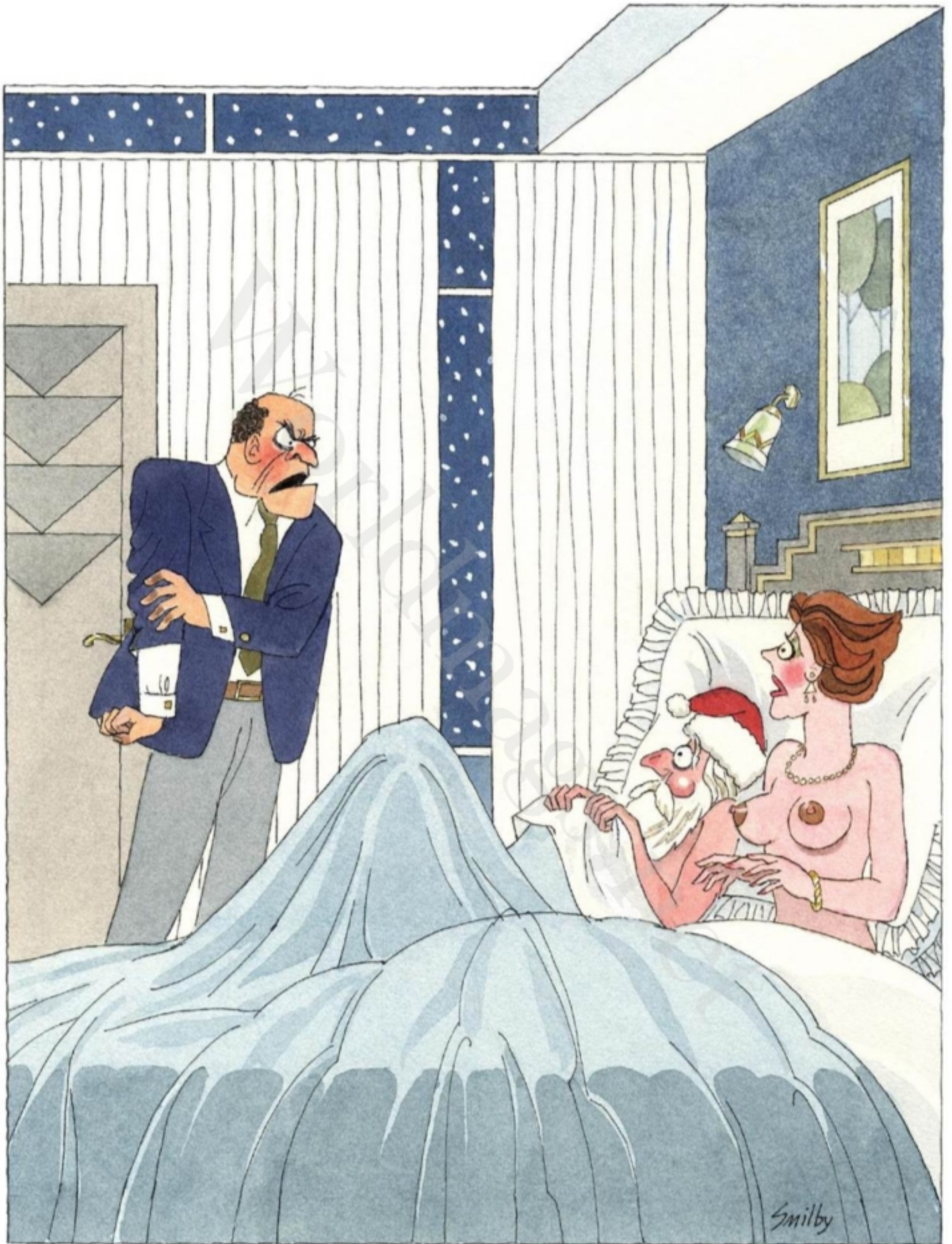
Rollo said he needed to make a quick delivery in the building. We got in the elevator, which smelled like fried chicken and cigarettes, went up a few floors and followed Rollo down a hallway, where he knocked on a door. Behind it someone said, "Who is it?" and Rollo said, "UPS man," which was the answer they had agreed on. The door opened and we went inside.

It was just one person in there, a dude named David, who went by Day. He was on the small side but cocky. Had braids, like most dudes do these days, trying to be Gucci Mane. He was wearing hundred-dollar jeans, Air Force 1s and a Blac Label T-shirt. It's like a uniform around here.

LYING FACE-  
DOWN ON  
THE STREET  
BESIDE ME,  
I HEARD PAT  
SAY, "MOM."

*(continued on page 139)*





*"And another thing—you never brought me that red bicycle when I was 12!"*





PLAYBOY'S

HOLIDAY  
GIFT  
GUIDE  
2014

WHETHER YOU'RE BUYING FOR YOUR BEST BUD OR WANT TO TREAT YOURSELF, GO WITH GIFTS THAT ARE BEST IN CLASS. HERE'S THE ULTIMATE LIST OF WELL-CRAFTED, DAMN GOOD-LOOKING PRESENTS TO GIVE OR GET

TYPOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER LABROOY





### 1. ROLL YOUR OWN

• Glamping is more glamorous with this field bed made from Italian selva denim that rolls up and ties down with a leather strap. Behind all that style is serious substance: The bed is stuffed with Climashield insulation and is rated to zero degrees Fahrenheit.

### 2. HAVE A MOSCOW

• Based on the vessel that held the original Moscow mule cocktail at the Cock 'n Bull in Los Angeles back in 1946, this 100 percent copper cup is the embodiment of old-school cocktail cool.

### 3. MILLION-DOLLAR SHAVE CLUB

• For those who find the ritual of shaving to be as meditative and artful as the Japanese tea ceremony, this genuine badger-hair shaving brush will lather up soap and make your bristles stand at the ready for a straight or safety razor.

### 4. STRONG MEDICINE

• Most exercise gear looks ugly as hell, but this American-made medicine ball is easily the handsomest version of a free weight we've ever seen. Its 12-pound heft comes from the shredded scrap-leather stuffing.



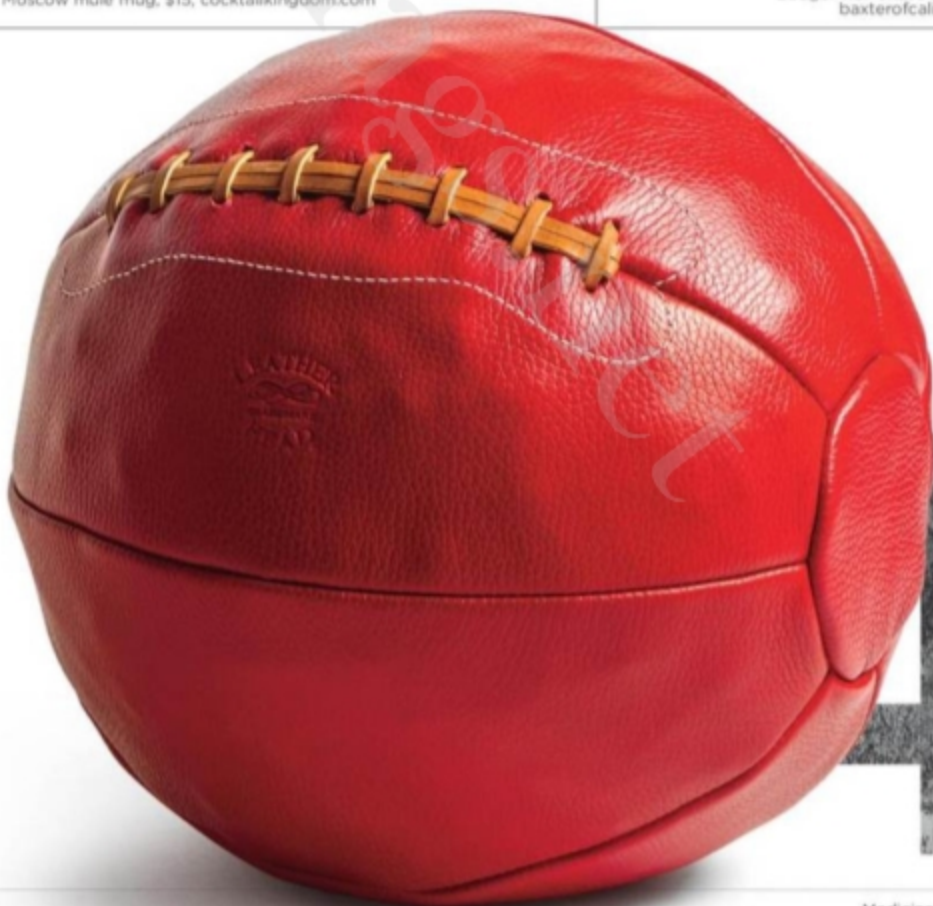
Scout field bed, \$712, scout-seattle.com



Moscow mule mug, \$15, cocktailkingdom.com



Badger-hair shave brush, \$90, baxterofcalifornia.com

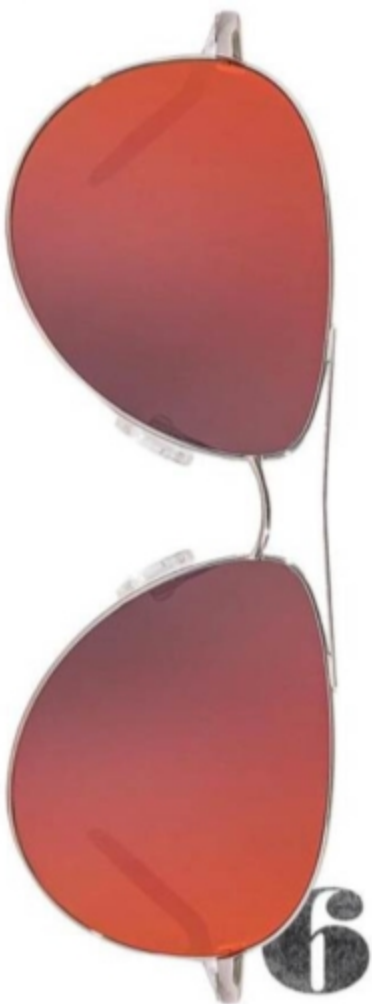


Medicine ball, \$350, www.leatherheadsports.com





Leica X Vario digital camera, \$2,300, leica-camera.com



Oliver Peoples Benedict sunglasses, \$435, oliverpeoples.com



Swobo Mutineer mountain bike, \$699, swobo.com



116 Jackson Cannon bar knife, \$80, murphyknives.com



## 5. SHUTTER TO THINK

• No smartphone can beat a dedicated camera loaded with killer optics and 16-megapixel capability. And few cameras look as good as this leather-clad Leica, which also shoots HD video in the social-media-friendly MP4 format.

## 6. GLASS ACT

• The double bridge and red mirrored lenses on these Oliver Peoples sunglasses upgrade the classic aviator to first class.

## 7. GET DIRTY

• Get in touch with your inner wild child with Swobo's Mutineer, a trail-specific BMX tricked out with disc brakes. Sure, you could get it in matte black, but real men can pull off the hot pink (which looks even more badass spattered with mud).

## 8. BAR BLADE

• The first knife specially designed for bartenders: The sharp, short blade makes quick work of citrus, the flat tip removes fruit seeds easily, and the flat side of the blade can be used to scrape the bar clean after a long night of mixology.



9



Shinola Runwell chronograph, \$750, [shinola.com](http://shinola.com)

12



DJI Spreading Wings S1000, \$4,000, [dji.com](http://dji.com)

10



Orphan Barrel Rhetoric bourbon, \$85, [orphanbarrel.com](http://orphanbarrel.com)

13



Turk Criss-Cross pan, \$70, [kaufmann-mercantile.com](http://kaufmann-mercantile.com)

11



Burton Fish snowboard, \$600, [burton.com](http://burton.com)

### 9. SHINOLA ON

• No offense to Switzerland, but this handsome chronograph made in Detroit keeps perfect time while looking, yes, timeless—American. And the orange Super-LumiNova hands look strikingly sharp against the royal-blue face.

### 10. BOURBON RENEWAL

• This bourbon from Orphan Barrel (which specializes in old whiskeys) is a true micro-bottling of rare 20-year-old liquor. The long cask aging adds smoky vanilla flavor to notes of fruit, spice and herbs.

### 11. GO FISH

• Hit the powder at a radical angle this winter with Burton's Fish snowboard, which features a surf-inspired double-swallowtail design for control and speed. And the trippy multi-color pattern just looks awesome.

### 12. DRONE RANGER

• For budding aerial cinematographers, there's the DJI Spreading Wings S1000, a serious flying machine with retractable landing gear and enough oomph to pilot a digital SLR to new heights.

### 13. IRON MAN

• Hand forged in Germany by a company operating since 1857, this nine-and-a-half-inch iron pan has menacing good looks and a cool crosshatch pattern, and it's the ideal tool for searing a perfect salty crust on a steak.



# Classic Cartoons of Christmas Past



*"Now that's what I call hung by the chimney...."*



*"Just giving Suzette a hand with the Christmas baubles, my dear."*



*"Santa is on the fourth floor, Miss, but then again, he has a number of secret helpers scattered out in the field."*





*"Deck the halls with boughs of holly,  
tra la la la, la la la la...!"*



*"And then I realized I couldn't take another  
Christmas Eve staring up little reindeer asses!"*



*"See, I told you there was a Santa Claus."*



# 2Q

BY TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT HOYLE

## Q1

**PLAYBOY:** You star in *Horrible Bosses 2*. What have your real-life experiences with bosses been like?

**DAY:** I worked as a busboy and bar-back at this divey place in Manhattan. On Saint Patrick's Day I opened up the place at sunrise—four A.M., I'm there. By seven A.M. we were packed shoulder-to-shoulder with firemen and cops. I worked 24 hours straight, but the frat-boy bartenders didn't tip me out. They tipped me maybe 20 bucks. They're supposed to at least give me five or 10 percent—*something*. But they gave me nothing, and these guys made thousands of dollars. I was so furious, I was like, I have to fuck this restaurant over. So I'm thinking, I'm going to throw a brick through the big glass window. No, that's not me. Instead, I'll erase the blackboard with the menus and write "No blacks or Jews"—get them in some sort of heat. And then I thought, You know what I'm gonna do? I'm just never going to come back to work. And that's what I did. I just never went back there again.





# Charlie

The guy with the sunny disposition and unique voice talks about bad bosses, lucky breaks and getting fired





## Q2

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever been fired?

**DAY:** Sort of, from a Via Via Pizza in Newport, Rhode Island, where I grew up, because I was a really dumb employee. I showed up and I didn't bring a pen. I was supposed to have a pen for some reason. They were very upset that I didn't bring my own pen. I had long hair at the time, which they weren't into. I looked like a hippie who put a tie on. Everything they wanted me to do or learn, I didn't get right. They were like, "We got your number, right?" And I knew then they weren't going to call me. I felt humiliated. But in the long run it was good that I didn't find a career as a pizza waiter.

## Q3

**PLAYBOY:** You eventually got a job as the voice of the IFC network, which helped you break into bigger things.

**DAY:** I did that from maybe 2000 to 2003. Anytime you heard "Coming up on IFC" or "Tonight at eight, Dario Argento"—this was way back when it was actually a channel about independent films—I would announce them all. When my voice-over agent called me, he said, "I got this thing for you, for the Independent Film Channel." But I had a callback that same day with Curtis Hanson for the movie *8 Mile*.

## Q4

**PLAYBOY:** Was it the starring role?

**DAY:** No, but it was a good part. It was a good medium-size part for a guy who has a conflict with Eminem's character. So I called my agent and said, "I don't want to do this IFC thing." And he said, "Look, if you take this gig, you



I GUESS THE COOL KIDS  
ARE NEVER GOING TO  
INVITE ME TO THE PARTY.  
IT'S JUST HISTORY  
REPEATING ITSELF.



won't have to worry about rent." I said, "Oh, what are we talking about?" And suddenly I realized I was going to be financially secure just from doing those IFC promos. But I almost blew the whole thing off.

## Q5

**PLAYBOY:** Was getting the IFC job when you realized you had a unique



voice? You've described your voice as "a squeaky dog toy mixed with a bag full of rusty nails" and as that of "a 10-year-old who smokes."

**DAY:** I think it was when I started to read comments from people complaining about it. When I'm agitated in scenes it gets higher and scratchier and squeakier. I was slightly aware of it when I was starting out in the theater and certain people would say, "You need to work on that." I became more aware of it after we started making *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and I was on TV a lot, and one out of three people would have some comment about it. Of course you don't hear yourself the way other people do. But I certainly don't have a complex about it.

## Q6

**PLAYBOY:** You once said that if you don't establish yourself as a McDreamy type in Hollywood, then you don't have to live up to it. If you're not McDreamy, how have you established yourself?

**DAY:** I try not to know. When you start to know, that's when you're in trouble, because you have to live up to some idea of yourself. I also talked about how

many weights I'd have to lift to be that type. And I talked about tanning. It's a relief for me not to do any tanning.

## Q7

**PLAYBOY:** Yet you must be curious about the world of beefcake roles.

**DAY:** There are two sides to every coin. It would be great to be Brad Pitt for a day.

## Q8

**PLAYBOY:** What would you do if you woke up as Brad Pitt tomorrow?

**DAY:** I would fuck my wife. What would you do?

## Q9

**PLAYBOY:** That's a reasonable choice.

**DAY:** I probably know the reality of what he would do. He would wake up and then he would go deal with the kids. How many kids do they have? Thirty? He would deal with the 30 kids, and he wouldn't go anywhere near his wife, because they've been together for years.

## Q10

**PLAYBOY:** Your parents are music teachers. Was *(continued on page 148)*





*"Okay, gimme the bag and wait in the hall. I'll invite you in later—maybe."*



NATURAL BEAUTY  
ABOUNDS AS MODELS  
LAUREN ESTRADA  
AND POLINA PUTILOVA  
FROLIC AMONG  
THE FLORA

FloraMags.net







GARDEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KESLER  
TRAN

OF

EARTHLY

DELIGHTS





























## THAT '90s SHOW

Continued from page 102

what? I'm proud of that moment. My heart was in the right place."

**DOMINIQUE WILKINS**, Atlanta Hawks small forward and Hall of Famer: When Magic left, he left something behind, kind of an empty space where he used to be. Larry Bird was about to retire. Who was going to be the face of basketball? Well, we all had a pretty good idea.

Three months after his press conference, Magic Johnson came out of retirement to score 25 points in the 1992 All-Star Game. In June, he joined Bird, Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley and seven other future Hall of Famers at the summer Olympics in Barcelona, where the U.S. "Dream Team" avenged America's third-place finish at Seoul in 1988. The Dream Teamers' 117-85 crushing of Croatia in the gold-medal final was the closest game they played. Before that, Barkley had thrown an elbow that practically knocked an Angolan player off his feet, then barked at Sports Illustrated reporter Jack McCallum, "Hey, Jack, am I gonna be on the cover for this?" During a photo shoot of America's team, Bird asked McCallum, "Hey, Jack, later on, you wanna blow us?" In his 2012 book *Dream Team*, McCallum calls them "the most felled gang of warriors since the Spartan army."

**JACK MCCALLUM**, author of *Seven Seconds or Less* and *Dream Team*: Was the Dream Team the best basketball team ever? They'll do for now. And they came together at a time when there was a changing of the guard, from the Magic-Bird era to the Age of Michael, who transcended even his hype. To me, that might be his greatest accomplishment as he took over the game in the 1990s—beating his hype. Because how could you be better than people said Michael Jordan was? But he was.

**MICHAEL JORDAN**, Chicago Bulls shooting guard and Hall of Famer: [In 1997] I got my first scoring title in 1987. That was special because it pertained to, you know, proving everybody wrong. Which is one of my strong points. I used to hear the line, "Who's the only person to hold Michael Jordan under 20 points? [University of North Carolina coach] Dean Smith!" I said no. Wrong. I knew I could always score points. What Dean Smith taught me was the rest of the game, not just scoring but defense, passing, rebounds—aspects of the game I utilized in the pros.

Jordan had arrived on the national stage with a corner jumper that won the 1982 NCAA finals for North Carolina. He was a 19-year-old freshman.

**JORDAN**: I never saw the ball go in. The defense was coming; I was fading away, blocked out. But I knew from the noise. That was the real beginning of my career. After that, the toughest was living up to expectations.

Detroit's Bad Boys, back-to-back champs in 1989 and 1990, were almost done. Jordan's Chicago Bulls swept them in the 1991 Eastern Conference finals on the way to the title—a series that saw the Pistons surrender. They left the court as the last seconds ticked away, refusing to shake the Bulls' hands. Jordan reportedly said he was "shocked" that Pistons point guard Isiah Thomas "didn't play as hard" as he could have. Thomas would be left off the 1992 Olympic Dream Team, a snub that irked him ever after. By 1994, when the once-proud Pistons finished 20-64, Chuck Daly's once-feared Bad Boys were just plain bad.

**SEKOU SMITH**, NBA.com correspondent: The league was evolving from that Bad Boys black-and-blue period, with the Pistons delivering the lumps, to a more free-flowing game. I grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the heart of Bad Boys country, but I was a Lakers fan because of Magic and the wizardry he displayed running that Showtime attack. The shift from there into the 1990s was fascinating to watch.

**WILKINS**: The 1990s weren't as physical as the 1980s, which were just ridiculous, but they were a lot more physical than today. **SMITH**: It was still the league's WWE era. And not just the Bad Boys in Detroit—teams like the Knicks and the Heat wrestled as much as they played basketball.

**WILKINS**: I loved the contact. We did a lot of hand-checking, and you could reach out your elbow to slow people down. No zones allowed. You couldn't get across the lane without getting checked, getting screened—paying your dues. Another huge difference is that we finished our college careers, so we were more polished when we arrived. I came out of what was probably the best high school class ever. There was me, James Worthy, Isiah Thomas, Ralph Sampson, Byron Scott, and not one of us went straight to the NBA. I averaged 28 points and 19 rebounds my senior year in high school and didn't even think of going pro.

That era had some of the greatest players of all time. Great characters, even great nicknames.

Allen Iverson, a Philadelphia 76ers rookie with the world's quickest crossover dribble—a "Money Bagz" tattoo on the back of his left hand crossing over his right with its tat of a stack of money—was the Answer. Seattle's Gary Payton was the Glove because he covered you like one. Utah's Karl Malone was the Mailman because he delivered. The Portland Trail Blazers' Clyde Drexler was Clyde the Glide because he fled. Navy grad David Robinson, the Admiral, torpedoed San Antonio's foes. The 1990s roll call featured Mookie Blaylock and Mookie Norris, Reign Man Shawn Kemp and Thun-

der Dan Majerle, Penny Hardaway, the Round Mound of Rebound, Dennis "the Worm" Rodman, the Dream, the Big Dog, Pooh Richardson, Bimbo Coles and Tractor Traylor.

**WILKINS**: And I was the Human Highlight Film. I didn't like that name so much. Sure, I dunked, but it's not like I got all my 26,000 points on dunks. I had a mid-range game. I'd get to the line nine or 10 times a game, get the tough bucket in the last minute. That's the role of a team's number one player. Going to the basket to create contact, then you focus on hitting the shot for a three-point play.

Michael was great at that. He was the number one guy, top of the list. But let's not forget the most athletic of them all, the guy who came before us, Julius Erving. Dr. J was a son of a bitch—the son of a bitch who really created the modern era.

**SMITH**: Legions of hoops-heads became Jordan worshippers in the 1990s.

**WILKINS**: Remember how Magic and Isiah used to kiss before the tip? That wasn't Michael. He was more like Bird and me. When fans ask about highlights, they think of special plays, but we'd think games. Going up against Bird or Jordan or Magic and winning the game for your team, that's a highlight. I had 54 one night against Boston and 57 against Chicago. Do you think they said, "Nice game," afterward? Did we hang out on the floor and talk like we're friends, like they do now? No. You get a stony look as Jordan or Bird goes by. It's like, You kicked my butt today, but we're gonna meet again.

**SMITH**: Who thought of Chicago as a big NBA town? Fans had grown accustomed to the domination of the Lakers, Celtics and Pistons, only to have Jordan's Bulls take over a decade.

Chicago's NBA franchise didn't win a championship until 1991: Jordan's first finals and Magic's last. A year later the playoffs opened with Sports Illustrated hyping Portland's Drexler as Michael's "number one rival," the first so-called next Jordan. Coach Phil Jackson's Bulls took the series in six. Jordan won the MVP award to go with his sixth straight scoring title.

By 1993 Chicago was shooting for a three-peat—a term coined by the Lakers' Byron Scott and officially trademarked by Lakers coach Pat Riley during the 1989 season, when two-time champ L.A. failed to do what the Bulls later hoped to. After sweeping Atlanta and Cleveland, Chicago fell behind the New York Knicks two games to none in the Eastern final, only to sweep the last four from Riley, Patrick Ewing and, on the sidelines, director Spike Lee. Next came Bulls-Suns in the NBA finals, with Phoenix a slight favorite. The Suns were led by Charles Barkley, whose regular-season MVP award kept Jordan from three-peating in that department.

**CHARLES BARKLEY**, Phoenix Suns power forward and Hall of Famer: [To McCallum in 2013] Chuck Daly had told me [at the Olympics] that I was the second-best player in the world. "Who's better than me?" I said. I knew the answer. But I really believed, at that time, I was better than Michael. That changed during this series.







**PAUL WESTPHAL, Phoenix Suns coach:** [To McCallum in 2013] Next to Shaq, Charles may have been the worst player in history at defending the pick-and-roll. We're playing Utah early in the season, and Charles is in the wrong place again. I say, "Charles, just tell me what you want to do." He says, "I'll let the guy come through, then clothesline him. That's what I really want to do."

*At America West Arena in Phoenix, with the series at stake, Barkley was on Scottie Pippen. Barkley tried for a steal. Pippen found Horace Grant under the basket for a game-tying layup. Except that Grant chickened out. Instead of dropping the ball in the basket, he flipped it outside to guard John Paxson.*

**JOHN PAXSON, Chicago Bulls point guard:** [To McCallum in 2013] The key was when Charles gambled. The play was supposed to go to Scottie and Michael, but now it turned into something else....

*A do-or-die three-pointer. Paxson squared up and launched a rainbow that took 1.3 seconds to reach the hoop. Swish. The Bulls won 99-98. Three-peat complete. Paxson and Jackson exulted while Barkley sulked. Jordan copped his third straight finals MVP trophy as the curtain fell on the first act of 1990s basketball.*

*Four months later, Jordan held a press conference.*  
**JORDAN:** [Announcing his retirement, October 6, 1993] I've always stressed to people who have known me, when I lose the sense of motivation to prove something as a basketball player, it's time for me to move away from the game. I have reached the pinnacle of my career.

*He was 30 years old. The world asked why. Jordan mentioned his father—murdered by a pair of joyriding teenagers on the side of a highway that summer. Even to the fiercest competitor alive, the game seemed less important.*

**JORDAN:** It was just a matter of waiting until this time, when basketball was near, to see if my heart would tick for it. The desire was not there.

*It turned out he wasn't quitting sports, just basketball. Soon the world's greatest athlete was riding buses around the South, playing minor league baseball, chasing a dream of his father's, who had always hoped Michael might become a big-league ballplayer.*

**JORDAN:** [In 1997] The culture was different. I tried chewing tobacco and got dizzy. That didn't last long. And then there's how you dress. In a basketball locker room, you're putting a suit on. Maybe we're more fashion-conscious because we have to wear shorts on the court. In baseball, they wear jeans—at least in the minor leagues. And the players hang out more. They were inquisitive about my basketball life, my mental approach to the game. Their value to me was just the opposite: "Tell me what you think this pitcher will throw on a particular count. How do you pick up the spin on a screwball or a curve?"

I felt old. Things they were going through—I'd experienced the same things in my younger days in basketball. Kidding around, practical jokes, arguments about TV shows. And they could drink beer like water. They could stay up late and go three-for-four the next day. That's youth.

*As an outfielder for the minor league Birmingham Barons, Jordan batted .202 with three home runs, 51 RBIs and 30 stolen bases—not awful for a prospect but not enough to get a 31-year-old slap hitter promoted to the majors.*

**JORDAN:** It was fun, though. Playing cards, checkers and dominoes, doing crossword puzzles, passing the time during a rain delay. We'd spit sunflower seeds at a Gatorade cup—basketball with seeds. It took

me a year or so to get great at that. Baseball has the greatest camaraderie.

*While Jordan spat sunflower seeds and rode buses from Birmingham to Knoxville, Huntsville and Chattanooga, the NBA looked for new heroes.*

**MCCALLUM:** There was talk of a four-peat. The Bulls still had Pippen, but who's their second-best player now, Toni Kukoc?

**RICK TELANDER, Chicago Sun-Times reporter:** It was like all the air went out of Chicago. Three years of great joy, great success, abruptly gone. Nobody really thought Scottie Pippen could take MJ's role as team leader. He was a number two, not a number one.

**MCCALLUM:** They still took the Knicks to a seventh game in the 1994 Eastern semis, but that was the end of the first Age of Michael. And without him, the trophy's up for grabs. You've got a bunch of teams with a shot at a title. The Knicks, under Riley, with Ewing, John Starks and Charles Oakley. Hakeem Olajuwon and the Houston Rockets. The Utah Jazz with Malone and John Stockton, Seattle with Gary Payton. All of a sudden, with Michael playing baseball, you've got an open lane to the championship—if you can maximize right now. If you can step up and not just talk.

*It was the golden age of trash talk. Bird and Jordan, two of the frostiest competitors the game ever saw, had set the standard. Bird once told the Seattle SuperSonics' Xavier McDaniel, "I'm gonna take two dribbles to the left; I'm going to step back behind the three-point line and stick it," and then did just that. Jordan would score and then taunt the man guarding him, "Want to see it again? This could go on and on." After dunking on six-foot-one Stockton of the Utah Jazz and hearing the team's owner yell, "Pick on somebody your own size," Jordan dunked on six-foot-11 Melvin Turpin, then turned to the owner and asked, "Was he big enough?"*

**JORDAN:** A lot of times it's not even verbal. It's actions and reactions, the banging that goes on.

*Reggie Miller, another big talker, kept his mouth shut while guarding Jordan.*

**REGGIE MILLER, Indiana Pacers shooting guard and Hall of Famer:** [To sportscaster Dan Patrick in June] He was a polarizing figure, a transcending type of athlete. He ushered in the swagger, the tongue out. **WILKINS:** Michael never said anything to me. He didn't have to. When you tangle with him you're aware he may embarrass you. He might go for 40 or 60 points on you. I didn't talk at him either. You don't want to give him more incentive.

**JORDAN:** It got verbal with certain individuals. You dunk a ball and start getting into that person's head. "How many you want me to score tonight?" Just a competitive conversation. With Charles Barkley, if you had success over him, you'd never have to listen to what he says.

*Seattle's Gary Payton, one of the few guards in Michael Jordan's class as a defender and trash-talker, put the New Jersey Nets' Jamie Feick in his place, saying, "Man, you won't even be in the league next year." But Denver bounced Payton's top-seeded 1994 Sonics out of the playoffs in the*



"I hope you don't mind. They like to watch!"



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first round, leaving the second-seeded Houston Rockets a lane to the finals.

Riley's Knicks, coming off their victory over Pippen and the Bulls in the semifinals, were the class of the Eastern Conference. Ewing was their leading scorer, John Starks their leading mouth. In game five of the Eastern finals, the Knicks led the Pacers by 12 in the fourth quarter—Miller time.

**MARV ALBERT**, legendary play-by-play announcer: Here's Miller...yesss! Seventeen points for Miller, and the Knicks now lead by nine.

**MATT GUOKAS**, color commentator: And Reggie's starting to chirp with some people in the front row.

**ALBERT**: There's Miller, swings away, it hits! Reggie Miller is on fire!... Miller open again! That's a two-pointer, and Reggie Miller's in an animated discussion with Spike Lee, who is an ardent Knicks fan and has a courtside seat. I think Spike has him revved up!

Lee, waving his arms at midcourt, barked at Miller, who returned an icy stare and raised both hands to his neck.

**ALBERT**: Miller giving the choke sign to Spike Lee!

The rest of the quarter was a blur, starting with a 27-foot bomb from Miller and another dirty look at Spike.

**ALBERT**: And he hits it!... Pacers lead 75-72.... Here's Miller again! Miller for three. Yesss! And Pat Riley calls for time. Just an astounding shooting exhibition being put on by Reggie Miller.... Miller pops and hits again! Twenty-one of his 35 points have come here in the fourth quarter.

**AHMAD RASHAD**, sportscaster: [During post-game interview] Reggie, what about Spike Lee?  
**MILLER**: Spike who?

New York edged Indiana in seven games—Miller air-balling a last-gasp jumper—and

led the Houston Rockets in the finals, three games to two. Down by two points as the clock died, Starks fired a potentially game-winning, championship-winning three-pointer. Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon, switching off, got a piece of the ball...

**ALBERT**: Starks for three—came up short! ...sending the Knicks to hell, where they remain today.

**WILKINS**: Hakeem was a specimen, one of the great bigs. He never played basketball till he was a teenager. Growing up in Africa he was a soccer player, a goalkeeper, so he was light on his feet and he loved to block your shot. He got his title that year, him and that Rockets team. Could they have done it with Michael still playing? We'll never know.

In a world without Twitter or texts, a fax rocked the world on March 18, 1995. That was the day news outlets nationwide received a fax from F.A.M.E., the agency run by David Falk, Jordan's business manager. Two words: "I'm back."

**TELANDER**: Pretty cool! For a year and a half the lingering question had been, What the hell is MJ doing? Is it because of gambling? He can't really play baseball, can he? Are you really telling us he has no problem spending his time in Birmingham, Alabama with a bunch of minor leaguers, riding a bus with a bunch of yahoos? And so Bulls fans just waited. Everybody knew he had to come back. His father was dead, he'd tried his hand at something different, and now basketball loomed. The one thing he did better than anybody on the planet. It was a joyous day. Chicago was back!

Back but rusty. A week after quitting baseball's minor league Birmingham Barons, Jordan went seven-for-28 in an overtime loss to Miller and the Pacers. He soon lit up the Knicks for 55 but looked mortal in the semis against Orlando and 23-year-

old Shaquille O'Neal. That's when Jordan tried to change his luck. He defied the league by switching numbers—from 45 back to his retired 23.

**PHIL JACKSON**, Chicago Bulls coach: [To reporters in 1995] Michael said he was hitting .202 with a 45 on his back in baseball. I said, "You're shooting about the same percentage too. It's time you get back to 23."

Too late. The Bulls lost a playoff series for only the second time in the decade. They'd have to wait another year.

In game one of the 1995 Eastern semifinals, the Knicks led Indiana 105-99 with 18.7 seconds left. Safe enough? Miller nailed a three-pointer, stole the ball, retreated to the three-point line and hit another. The usually reliable Starks clanked two free throws. Miller rebounded Starks's second miss, got fouled and sank two of his own. He had just scored eight points in less than 12 seconds.

**ANTHONY MASON**, Knicks forward: [Years later] We were shell-shocked. We went numb after his second three. It was like a terrible nightmare that you couldn't wake up from.  
**MILLER**: [Postgame, explaining why he passed up a shorter shot for the second three] I wanted to drive a stake through their heart.

**MCCALLUM**: The Knicks had their chances. They were on the edge of that ultimate moment. Then they fell back, and where have they been since?

Indiana won that series, but for the second straight season, Houston won the war. Hakeem "the Dream" Olajuwon, joined by Clyde Drexler, his old teammate with the University of Houston Cougars, a.k.a. Phi Slama Jama, played underdog throughout the 1995 playoffs. First the sixth-seeded Rockets knocked off Malone, Stockton and the third-seeded Jazz, then Barkley and the second-seeded Suns, then the top-seeded San Antonio Spurs with Robinson, Sean Elliott and rebound machine Dennis Rodman, Madonna's boyfriend at the time.

**DENNIS RODMAN**, Spurs power forward and Hall of Famer: [In 1997] I don't score points. On offense, I don't know what the fuck is going on. But rebounds? You earn that shit. I study my craft. I can visualize the court, the ball and the action on the rim all at once. I study the people who shoot the ball—the way they like to shoot, where the ball likes to come off when they miss. You get a feel for it. It's like rolling dice. Sometimes you can feel a seven coming. The ball is funny like that. I'll watch the ball, even on TV, and know if it's going off to the right or to the left.

The Spurs' Rodman outrebounded Olajuwon in those playoffs, but the Dream dominated Robinson in the Western Conference finals and then O'Neal in the finals, where Olajuwon outscored Shaq in every game. The tone was set at the end of game one, when Orlando's Nick Anderson missed four straight free throws. With one second left in overtime, the Rockets' Drexler blew a layup—but Olajuwon tipped it in. Hakeem the Dream's team swept the Magic to win a second straight crown.

**MCCALLUM**: Everything changed because Jordan went away. Reputations changed. None more than Hakeem, who's remembered differently, I think, due to Michael's absence. Hakeem was maybe the most versatile center ever, on offense and defense, and he gets spoken of in the same breath as the greats. But



"I never give a patient a drug I haven't tried myself."



we wouldn't look at him the same way without those back-to-back championships.

What if Jordan had never quit to play baseball? Would we be talking about Hakeem now? Obviously it's a hypothetical, but in his prime Michael's mental and physical mastery of the league was so unquestioned, there's no reason his Bulls wouldn't have won in those two years. What set them apart was their day-in, day-out will to win. And not just win—it's a crappy night in Sacramento, and you could take a night off, but those Bulls teams don't just want to beat the Kings. They want to kill them, humiliate them and infuriate their fans, and that came straight from Michael.

**TELANDER:** We media guys used to play a game: What NBA teams would win the championship if you put MJ on their team? We settled on eight—eight teams that would have won. That's how dominant and crazy mean he was. Physically he was a panther. Mentally he was just relentless and cruel.

**MCCALLUM:** His absence gave everybody else a chance. The Knicks and Pacers, who got close. The Jazz, who would get another shot. Even Orlando with Shaq, a new kind of NBA character. Shaq wasn't a cutthroat like Jordan and Bird. He was more like Magic, with a smile and a sense of humor, and he had some huge games.

**JORDAN:** The hardest thing is consistency. Everybody's capable of having a good game, but on our level everybody is not capable of having a good game every game. That's the challenge.

**TELANDER:** Other players got compared to MJ, and they all fell short. It was the start of a time when midsize non-centers could dominate because of their athleticism and new rules that helped inside-outside players, a situation that holds to this day.

*A month before the 1995–1996 season the Bulls traded backup center Will Perdue to the Spurs for Rodman, the league's leading rebounder four years in a row.*

**TELANDER:** It was as if [Bulls general manager] Jerry Krause handed Jackson a Tasmanian devil and said, "Here you go, Phil. See if you can win with this thing." It may have been the greatest organizational feat Jackson ever had: keeping the team together with a nutcase in the midst.

*Rodman had once duked it out on court with Perdue. He had shoved Pippen off the court and even claimed he wasn't in awe of Jordan.*

**RODMAN:** I don't give a fuck about anybody in the NBA. Hanging with Michael Jordan is supposed to be big news? Please.

*But the Worm turned a corner in Chicago. He sweated to improve, spending extra hours in the gym rebounding for Jordan and Pippen, getting a feel for how their missed shots came off the iron, and was soon defending and rebounding better than ever.*

*In training camp, Jackson saw a difference in the 32-year-old Jordan. He thought playing minor league baseball had made Michael Jordan a better player, maybe even a better man. "Michael had rediscovered the joy of bonding with other men," the Zen master noted in his book *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success*. After years of "simply glaring at his teammates and expecting them to be just like him," the superstar adapted.*

**JACKSON:** [In *Eleven Rings*] Michael adopted a new way of leading. With some players, he decided, he would get *physical*, either by demonstrating with his body or, in Scottie's case, simply by being present. "Scottie was one of those guys for whom I had to be there every single day," says Michael. "If I took a day off, he would take a day off. But if I was there every single day, he would follow." With other players, Michael would go *emotional*. "You couldn't yell at Dennis," he says. "You had to find a way to get into his world for a few quick seconds so that he could understand what you were saying." With still others Michael would communicate on a *verbal* level. Example: Scott Burrell, a forward on the 1997–1998 Bulls. "I could yell at him and he would get it, but it didn't hurt his confidence at all."

*In one of the most colorful seasons in NBA history—including Rodman's vivid hair—the*

*1995–1996 Bulls outperformed everyone's expectations but Jordan's. They went 72–10, eclipsing the Jerry West–Wilt Chamberlain–Gail Goodrich 1971–1972 Lakers' record of 69 wins in a season—a feat no other team has approached. Jordan averaged 30.4 points per game to claim his eighth scoring title. Rodman threw his body all over the floor while leading the league in rebounds. Kukoc was named Sixth Man of the Year, Jackson Coach of the Year and Jordan MVP of the regular season, the All-Star Game and the finals against Payton's outclassed Sonics—though the Tasmanian Worm stood out in game six with nine points, five assists and 19 rebounds.*

**SMITH:** There used to be more anticipation for the finals, but that was evaporating. I don't know that I ever thought the Western Conference team facing them actually had a chance to knock the Bulls off, not once.

**WILKINS:** By then they were just about perfect, like a regular-season Dream Team.



"Got any carrots?"



And it wasn't just Jordan. They had the best role players—Rodman underneath, Kukoc off the bench. And look at Pippen. He and Michael really had the same game. Scottie was a great defender, passer and opportunity scorer. What a great complement to Michael he was after he accepted that role.

**RODMAN:** It worked out. It's like Forrest Gump says: Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what the fuck you're gonna get.

**TELANDER:** I thought Rodman had real emotional problems, dating back to his troubled past. The guy was a nobody, a janitor at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport who got in trouble for stealing some watches. Not a malicious guy, just intense and different. Then, abruptly, he became a star with Detroit, and it seemed to unhinge him. He went to the Spurs and was a total dick and a distraction. He came to the Bulls and MJ kept him straight on the court—mostly—but his ego took over and he started acting out, being a clown, a buffoon, yet a madman on the court with that one thing he did better than anybody: rebound. There were games when he wouldn't shoot at all. He'd get a rebound under the basket and throw it outside instead of shooting. It was weird. Phil called him "annoying" to the other team, and he was. Rodman had great skills to go with his great problems, but those Bulls were so good he could turn the whole thing into a circus and it didn't matter. Deep inside, Phil knew that.

**MCCALLUM:** Other teams had their chances. The Jazz got two chances.

*Utah featured power forward Karl "Mailman" Malone, who could always deliver, and point guard John "Too Vanilla for a Nickname" Stockton. Malone averaged 27.4 points, second in the league to Jordan, to go with 10 rebounds per game in 1996-1997. He shot .550 from the field. Stockton, with his blank expression and heart rate of 35 beats per minute—the pulse of a contract killer or a resting cow—was on his way to setting records that will never be broken: 15,806 assists (almost 4,000 more than Jason Kidd and 5,500 more than Steve Nash) and 3,265 steals (581 more than Kidd and 751 more than Jordan).*

**TELANDER:** Michael was in the process of destroying several good franchises. The old Bad Boy Pistons, the Sonics, the Brad Daugherty-Mark Price Cavaliers. And then the Jazz, with Stockton and Malone in their prime, got their hearts cut out.

*Late in game one of the 1997 finals on June 1, Pippen channeled Jordan. With the score 82-82, Rodman fouled Malone. The Mailman stepped to the line for two shots with 9.2 seconds left. Pippen sidled up to him and said, "Remember, the mailman doesn't deliver on Sundays, Karl." Malone missed both foul shots; Jordan dribbled out the clock before draining a game-winning jumper.*

*Rodman said he had trouble finding his rhythm during games three through five in Salt Lake City.*  
**RODMAN:** [Postgame] It's difficult to get in sync because of all the fucking Mormons out here.

*With the series tied at two, Jordan came down with a nasty flu. In the famous "flu game," His (woozy) Airness scored 38, including a last-minute three-pointer. The Bulls repeated as NBA champions after winning 90-86 in game six.*

**WILKINS:** When they beat Utah it was watching a legend happen before your eyes. You might be the number one player on your team, you might be an All-Star, but you'd look at Chicago and wonder if there was ever a team that could beat that team.

**TELANDER:** That October the Bulls went to Paris, and they were like the Beatles. It was nuts at all times: Scottie, Phil, the Worm and Air Jordan, like the last crazy sports rock band in a time before smartphones and the internet. Jordan and Rodman had bodyguards wherever they went, security guards and off-duty cops. What basketball team ever did that before?

**MCCALLUM:** And Michael being Michael, he finished it off right.

*Game six of the 1998 finals, a Bulls-Jazz rematch. Late in the fourth quarter, Bulls down by a point, Jordan slapped the ball from Malone's hands. Ten seconds, nine, eight...he shoved defender Bryon Russell and knocked down a 20-foot jumper.*

**JORDAN:** [Postgame] I never doubted myself. I never doubted the whole game.

**TELANDER:** What happened was, Malone had been named NBA MVP when Jordan was clearly better. That pissed him off. He just hated anybody who tried to take any-

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*Shaq wasn't the next Michael. Kobe turns people off. So does LeBron. He didn't stay with one team like Michael and Magic. LeBron is in your face.*

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thing from him, and so of course he steals the ball from Malone and makes that classic shot.

*The Bulls' second three-peat made them the best team in modern history. But what did that mean? The Jackson-coached Shaquille O'Neal-Kobe Bryant Lakers would three-peat from 2000 to 2002. The Tim Duncan-Tony Parker-Manu Ginobili Spurs under Gregg Popovich would win three titles between 2003 and 2007. In 2015, the Miami Heat could win their third in four years. But none of those champions repeated a three-peat or ruled the game like Jordan's Bulls in their heyday.*

**TELANDER:** Hakeem's Houston Rockets would not have won two crowns if Jordan hadn't called time-out to play baseball. The Bulls would have won eight in a row.

**MCCALLUM:** An eight-peat? Yes, I think they would have won in those two years between three-peats if they had Michael, and then if everything else falls the same way you have Jordan and the Bulls winning eight in a row. From a marketing standpoint, I doubt the league was pleased by those years between three-peats. Sports leagues say they love parity, but greatness sells better, and there was nobody bigger than Jordan. Even today, it astounds me how he transcends. I teach a class in sports culture, and when I

ask students who's their favorite basketball player, about half say Michael Jordan, as many as LeBron James!

Toward the end of his time it looked like he might pass the torch. The Age of Michael, the best and most marketable athlete of our time, might become the Age of Shaq. Shaq was very marketable at a time when the league wanted a crossover star, "the next Michael." There was Penny Hardaway too, and Grant Hill, but Shaq was the best candidate. He could have averaged 40 and 22 if he'd committed himself, but that's not who he was. He didn't always play as hard as he could. To be fair, he had a lot of nagging injuries. But he wasn't like Mike. He wasn't trying to be better than his hype.

*Shaq had his moments: four rings, an MVP award and the title role in Kazaam, the poor man's Space Jam. He grew up jumping off the family house, trying to prove he could fly. The seven-foot-one 325-pounder once broke a toilet with the sheer size of his deposit. He had a rap record, Shaq Diesel, that went platinum, and he was arguably the league's biggest star after Jordan.*

**MCCALLUM:** But Shaq wasn't the next Michael. Even now there's no crossover star remotely in his league. Kobe turns people off. So does LeBron, largely because of "the Decision." And LeBron's a very interesting case. He didn't stay with one team like Michael and Magic, and it's held against him that he had Dwyane Wade helping him, but there's something more than that. I think it's something that's not racist, but racial. LeBron is in your face—in white people's face—in a way that Michael and Magic never were. He comes across as too culturally street for a significant number of Americans.

*Jordan retired in January 1999 but then untired again to join the Washington Wizards in 2001. He averaged 22.9 and 20 in two seasons with them, but by then he was only excellent. Today Jordan, 51, is part-owner of the Charlotte Hornets. Last year, his "flu game" Air Jordans sold at auction for \$104,765. His old teammate Rodman, 53, fresh off a stint as unofficial ambassador to North Korea, checked in to rehab. Their old Zen master Jackson, 69, is the new president of the New York Knicks.*

**SMITH:** I don't know if it's a better or worse game today. It's certainly different—a prettier game, much more fluid and free-flowing compared to those days.

*The record book shows the Boston Celtics with the most NBA titles, 17, followed by the Minneapolis-Los Angeles Lakers with 16. Next come the Chicago Bulls with six, all in the eight-year span from 1991 to 1998, when they made six finals and never lost. No other team in the league's 68-year history has won more than five times.*

**MCCALLUM:** You want to know a strange thing about Michael? He's not that charismatic off the court. LeBron has real off-court charisma. He's a hundred times the actor Michael ever was. But who's the most important player? I guess we've learned that there wasn't going to be a next Michael. There was only one.







## MISS MARY'S ROOM

Continued from page 112

He said to Rollo, "You got it?"

Rollo said, "You got the Kermit?"

Day said, "I'm good."

And Rollo said, "Then I got it."

We sat around a cable-spool table had a bong on top of it, matches and ashtray, and a shoebox top Day used to clean the seeds away from the buds. Day wanted to try the weed. Rollo handed him the Baggie and Day kind of hefted it in his hand and said, "Feels light."

"You think so?" said Rollo.

Day fired up a piece and poked it through the bowl with a thin rod. He sat back on the couch, holding his breath, and coughed out a stream of smoke. His eyes were already pink.

"Good funk," said Day.

"I know it," said Rollo.

"But light."

"Now you gonna negotiate."

"I could get my scale, you want me to."

"You prolly don't need a scale. With your superpowers and shit, you can just, you know, weigh the bag in your hand."

"I'm sayin'."

"It's an ounce. I scaled that shit my own self two hours ago."

"I don't think so."

"I'm lyin'?"

"We got a difference of opinion, is all. Thinkin' we can meet each other halfway."

"'Nother words, you want a discount."

"This here ain't no O-Z, Rollo. I just want to pay you for what it is."

"Okay," said Rollo, standing from his seat. "I'm a let you set the price."

"Ain't you want to discuss it?"

Rollo, his eyes empty, shook his head.

Day straightened his legs so he could get a hand inside the pocket of his jeans, then pulled out a roll of bills. He began to peel off notes, soundlessly counting with his lips. When he was satisfied, he held the bills that he had separated from the roll out to Rollo. That was when Rollo pulled a .9-millimeter Beretta from out of his dip.

Rollo swung the heater fast and hard. Its barrel connected high on Day's cheek. A worm of blood appeared immediately beneath his eye socket. Day touched the wound, split open wide, with his fingers. Rollo laughed.

"Take the money, Sleepy," said Rollo, snicking back the hammer on the .9. "All a that shit."

I went to Day and grabbed the money from each of his hands. I was excited, I got to admit. I had never robbed no one.

Pat had stood up and backed away. The color had drained out his face.

Rollo picked up the Baggie off the cable-spool table, resealed and rolled it, and stuffed it into the pocket of his jeans.

"Now you gonna take that too," said Day in a low voice. He was trying not to cry. He looked small on that couch. "You not gonna leave me anything?"

"Leave you with your life," said Rollo. He eased the trigger down and holstered the Beretta behind his back. He pulled his shirttail out to cover it and said, "Let's go."

We were out of that building quick.

On the way to the Marquis, Pat said, "Why'd you do that, Rollo?"

Rollo shrugged and said, "That little muthafucka just aggravate me, man."

"Bad for business," said Pat. He was still real nervous, you could tell. "I'm sayin', if it gets around."

"Day ain't gonna say shit to anybody," said Rollo. "Day's a bitch."

When we got into the downtown area of where we lived, where they got the restaurants, pawnshops and movie theaters and shit, we saw lights flashing behind us and heard the burst of a siren. We were being pulled over by the law.

Rollo cut the Mercury to the curb and killed the engine. He put the gun under the seat. He handed me the bag of weed and I laid it up under the dash where he had a small space for it in a cradle of wires.

"They just gonna talk to us," said Rollo. "It'll be all right."

But the police officers in the patrol vehicle didn't get out and approach our car. They sat where they were and waited, and soon many other squad cars, their light bars afire, began to appear from different directions. Several uniformed officers came upon us then, their weapons drawn. They screamed at us and ordered us out of the car, telling us to keep our hands raised, and then we were pushed down on the ground and cuffed with plastic bands.

Day had called 911 on us. I couldn't believe it. You always left the police out your business. I mean, that shit was just not done.

The officers found the weed. They found the gun.

Lying facedown on the street beside me, I heard Pat say, "Mom."

All of us were arrested and spent the night in the county lockup. We were charged with drug possession, unlawful possession of a firearm and using a firearm in the commission of felony robbery. Me and Pat were 18, so we were charged as adults. The felony gun charge carried a five-year mandatory sentence if we were convicted of it. Because of the gun thing, the commissioner set our bails high. Rollo stayed in jail several days until his supplier bailed him out with drug money. My mother got a bond somehow. Pat's mom, Miss Mary, had to put her house up for collateral to get him released.

I was assigned a public defender. When I saw how young he was, and his cheap suit and wrinkled shirt, I knew I was in trouble. Rollo had his expensive lawyer who he was more and more in debt to by the day. I heard from this fella I knew that Pat had got some well-known criminal defense attorney in the county, a man Miss Mary knew from her church.

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I say "I heard" because I had not spoke to Pat since the night of the arrest. Well, not more than a few words. Once we were released, I had called him on his cell.

"Can't speak to you, Sleepy," said Pat. "My lawyer says we shouldn't be talkin' to each other. 'Specially not on a cell. Could be our phones are tapped."

"What are you gonna do?"

"Huh?"

"You ain't give no statement or nothin', did you?"

"Nah, man...."

"Did you?"

Pat said, "I gotta go," and the cell connection went dead.

That was our conversation. He sounded scared.

Time passed and nothing happened. That is how these things go. You get charged and then you wait. We didn't even have a trial date. But I couldn't relax. Personally, I felt that I was in a tight spot. I wasn't gonna cut no deal with anybody, 'cause that meant I had to roll over on my boys. And yet, I didn't trust my rookie lawyer to make a good case for me at a jury trial. I could do prison for a short stay, but I didn't know if I could do the full nickel.

One day I saw Rollo out on the street, sitting curbside in his idling Marquis. I slid into the shotgun seat and dapped him up. Rollo had that skunky smell on him. He had been getting his head up, but his high had not taken him to a good place. His face said grim.

"What you think, Sleepy?"

I knew he was talking about our chances. "I don't know."

"I need money," said Rollo. "My lawyer's costin' me. My man put up my bail and I owe him big too. What I got to do is, I got to be back in business so I can get in the flow."

"You can't do that now."

"I know it. But I can't get back to doin' what I do best if I'm incarcerated."

"Maybe we'll walk. If Day don't show up to testify, they got no case."

"I'm tryin' to take care of that. What I'm stressed on is Pat. If he flips on us—"

"Pat's my boy."

"I'm sayin', if he does testify against us, to keep his self out of the joint—"

"He wouldn't. He'll stand tall."

"Okay," said Rollo, looking at me full for the first time, his eyes flat and waxed. "I'm bringin' it up, is all."

"Pat's straight," I said, but my voice sounded weak, like I didn't believe my own words. Rollo had put a cold seed in my stomach.

Not long after, I was walking through the business district of our neighborhood, when I saw Pat, Miss Mary and their attorney, a slick-looking dude in pinstripes, sitting in the local coffeehouse at a window-side table. Pat had grown his hair out some, which made him look less hard. He was wearing khaki pants and a blue button-down shirt. He looked like one of those prep school boys the two of us had hated on all our lives. He was smiling. I stood on the street,

watching him. It was September, still warm out. But I felt cold.

Later in the evening I tried to phone his cell, but he didn't pick up. He had caller ID, and he knew it was me. It was plain to me that he didn't want to talk to me no more. I got the feeling that, far as he was concerned, we were through.

He was coming home from work, this hardware store they got downtown, the next time I saw him. This was in November. He was on foot. Since our arrest he had gotten a job, his first. Under his North Face fleece he was wearing a red shirt with the store logo on the front of it and he had his head down, his arms pumping at his side, the way he had always moved since we was kids. I had gone to the store earlier in the day, looked through the plate glass that fronted it and seen him in there, talking to a customer. I figured he was on till closing. And I knew the way he'd walk home after he got off. Through that alley that cuts down toward his mother's house.

I was sitting beside Rollo, who was under the wheel of his Marquis. In the backseat was JoJo, this man Rollo knew from where he grew up, in the housing units deep in the city. JoJo had been in lockup for a time, but he was home now. Me and Pat had got smoked up with him before a while back.

When Pat saw Rollo's car in the shadows of the alley, he stopped walking. He didn't back up or nothin' like that. But he didn't come forward neither.

"Fellahs," he said with that easy smile of his. Like he had done no one dirt.

"Waitin' on you," I said, leaning out the window. "Let's get our heads up, man."

"I'd like to," said Pat. "But I can't be dropping a positive if they make me pee."

"I got some shit can fix that," I said, meaning this drink I got up the health store that could erase the marijuana in your urine. Pat knew what it was. He had told me about it originally.

"I better not."

"Come on and visit, son," said Rollo, his booming voice coming genially from inside the car.

Pat shook his head, relaxed his shoulders and walked to the Marquis. He got in the backseat, next to JoJo. Pat recognized him and they pounded fists.

"How you doin', young?" said JoJo.

"Working," said Pat with a shrug. "You know what that's like."

"Not really," said JoJo, and everyone laughed.

"You been all right?" said Rollo, looking at Pat in the rearview.

"I'm straight," said Pat.

"Nothin' to report?" said Rollo.

"My lawyer said I ain't supposed to talk about the case with you guys."

"Uh-huh."

"I'm a listen to my lawyer," said Pat.

"Right," said Rollo. "You should. I guess what I'm askin' is, though, have you heard anything about our chances? 'Cause none of us have heard shit."

"I don't know any more than y'all do," said Pat with a shrug.

Looking at him, knowing him as long as I did, I almost believed him.



"Hey, Doug. You'll never guess what, on the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me."



"Thought you guys had some pieces," said Pat.

"I got some bud will make your dick hard," said JoJo.

"We can't smoke it in my car, though," said Rollo. "I ain't tryin' to get pulled over again."

"I heard that," said Pat.

"Let's go over to the school," I said.

Rollo pulled down on the transmission arm and gave the Mercury gas. We rolled down the alley with the lights off until we hit the main road.

It was full night. Rollo parked in the lot of a garden-style apartment building. We looked around, saw no one and got out of the car and crossed the street. We passed under a lamp and then into shadows. Then we went up a grassy hill covered in fallen leaves and into the woods that bordered the elementary school where me and Pat had gone to kindergarten and beyond.

In the woods it was plenty dark. There was not much of a moon overhead, but our eyes adjusted quick. The branches of the trees were damn near bare. JoJo had freaked a Black & Mild with his weed and he lit it from a Bic and passed it around. It wasn't long before we got up on JoJo's hydro. We started laughing and stuff. Pat got to giggling, like he did when he got blazed.

"Hey, Sleepy," said Pat. "You remember that time, in elementary, when we got up on stage and did that song?"

"Yeah," I said.

"Kris Kross," said Pat, blowing off the embers of the blunt. "What happened to them?"

"They grew up," I said.

"We were wearing bow ties, man," said Pat. "My mom was there, watching us. Yours was too. Remember?"

"I do." My voice cracked some when I said it. The branches above us were like black arms. Rollo nodded his head, just a little. Pat didn't notice, but I did.

"We were kids," said Pat, as if in wonder.

JoJo shot Pat in the back of the head. Pat said "Uh" and fell forward. His blood, like one of them ink drawings, bloomed in the night. There wasn't no gunshot sound. JoJo had one of those suppressors screwed into the barrel of his heater. He was a professional. He owed Rollo a favor and now his debt was erased. Rollo put another one into Pat's head and we walked real quiet out the woods.

Days later, at the funeral home, there was police in vans, taking pictures from out in the lot. It was an old scheme of theirs, trying to see if the killer would show up at the viewing for his victim. Me and Rollo had been questioned right away, but they had nothing. What they needed was a weapon or a witness. The gun was gone forever, and we damn sure wasn't gonna talk. So on the murder they had no case.

It was a big turnout for Pat, kids from our high school, relatives, people from the Sullivans' church. Miss Mary was in the viewing room, standing by Pat's casket. I avoided her at first, but I had to go up there. Pat did not look as bad as I thought he would. They had done a good job on him with make-up and shit. He was wearing a suit.

I stood before Miss Mary, stepped into her arms and gave her a hug. She looked wasted, her skin the color of putty. Her hair

was tangled and lipstick was uneven on her mouth. She stood back from me and took my hand and squeezed it.

"Sleepy."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Look at me, Sleepy," she said, staring deep into my eyes. "Do you know who did this?"

"No, ma'am," I said. "But I'm gonna find out."

"I want you to promise me something," she said.

"What?"

"I don't want any retribution for this. I don't want another young man to die. I don't want you or your friends to murder someone over my son and go to prison for it. This all...this has to stop."

"Okay."

"Do you promise?"

"Yes."

I couldn't believe it. In spite of all that had gone down, she was thinking of me.

Funny thing is, I don't even know for sure if Pat was gonna flip. It might not have mattered, because Rollo had been right all along about Day. He turned out to be a straight

bitch. Day did not show up to testify in court, and the hard felony charges against me and Rollo were dropped. I got probation on the possession and walked out of that courtroom free. Rollo got a little bit of time.

I should be relieved, but I'm not. I can't stop thinking on Miss Mary. She was always real kind to me, and it hurts to picture her now. 'Cause in my head I can see her, sitting on the edge of her bed. Praying the rosary, up in her room.

I am writing this down now for her. I ran into Rollo once or twice since he been out, and I did not like the look he had in his eyes. In case something happens to me, I want Miss Mary to know that I was involved in this thing. The truth is, I got no deep remorse for what got did to Pat. Pat was in the game, and he knew what time it was. But I'm real sorry for what I took from his mom.

*From the short story collection The Martini Shot, to be published this month by Little, Brown and Company.*



"Now, Mr. Rafferty, what about this head you wanted to give me?"





## THE TOUGHEST LAWYER IN AMERICA

Continued from page 70

main objective is to make money, and in a world in which status is largely measured by material success, the most powerful lawyer in America is not a corporate shark; he is a "Goody Two-shoes"—a term he both raises and blanches at—who is determined to bring the mighty to justice. In that vein, he recalls a meeting at Washington's Hay-Adams Hotel, overlooking the White House, with legendary Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal just as Hausfeld was embarking on his campaign against the Swiss banks. Wiesenthal told him, "Michael, always remember: Don't let the *momzers* [Yiddish for "bastards"] rest." He hasn't. The question is why: Why has Michael Hausfeld dedicated his life to bedeviling the *momzers* when so few other attorneys have?

It didn't start out that way. It started out in Brooklyn, where Hausfeld was born in 1946 to a lower-middle-class Orthodox Jewish family. His father had escaped Poland in his 20s, shortly after the Nazi invasion, and arrived in New York on the last boat out of Europe before the U-2 blockade. Two brothers had preceded him, and

another came with him. But a fifth brother, Michael David, stayed behind with the rest of the family. Michael David, Hausfeld's namesake, was rounded up and shot in the woods by the Nazis. The other Polish Hausfelds disappeared into the Holocaust.

Hausfeld says his father never spoke of his time in Poland or of the Holocaust. He worked as a furrier in Manhattan's garment district, where Michael assisted him on weekends from the time he was eight years old. It wasn't Michael's only responsibility. His maternal grandfather suffered a stroke, and Michael, as the oldest of three children, was charged with living with and caring for him—at first in a separate apartment and later, when his parents moved to larger quarters, in his own room. This lasted from the time Michael was eight until he was 16, when his grandfather died. And even that was not the last of his duties. One brother was eight and a half years younger, and Michael became his babysitter, even dragging him along on dates when Michael was a teenager because there was no place to leave him.

Hausfeld describes his youthful self as a "nerd extraordinaire" who carried a briefcase to school and wore a pocket protector in his shirt. He didn't grow up dreaming of justice. His parents wanted him to be a doctor, and he had a flair for science. But when Hausfeld was in middle school, he and a partner made an analog computer for the New York State Science Fair; as it turned out, the computer failed to function just as the judges came by. So Hausfeld vamped, telling the judges how the computer *would* work. He was so impressive that one of the judges told him, "Forget science. You should go into law." It turned out to be fateful.

He had superb verbal skills and a quick intelligence. He organized the debate team in his high school, where he dreamed of

Princeton, though his parents could only afford Brooklyn College, which was free. In the summer after his high school graduation, a friend and he planned a motorcycle trip across the country. His father wanted to know why. "So I can find myself," he said. His father clamped his hands on Michael's shoulders and told him, "I found you. You're right here." And that was the end of the trip.

He didn't find himself in college either. He was something of a grind—a straight-A student studying political science and Russian history. It was the 1960s, a time of campus radicalism, but the future legal flamethrower was hardly a radical. He spent his Friday and Saturday nights in the library reading, typically novels. By the time he graduated, he had settled on law, but he always tended to overthink things, just as he does now, so he did poorly on the LSAT, the standardized law school entrance exam, and was rejected by every one of the 10 law schools to which he'd applied, save one: George Washington University, where he was warned he would have to work hard to keep up.

In fact, he was a natural. At GW Law, Hausfeld was still the kid who wore a suit to class every day, but he was also the kid who kept peppering the professors with questions—"stupid questions," one of his classmates said, until the fellow discovered that Hausfeld was one of the top students in the class. But what intrigued Hausfeld even then was not just the nuts and bolts of law; it was the distance between law and principle. He says that when fellow students would compare answers and crow after an exam, he would think, "That's not what I wrote.... So I saw things differently." What he saw was that the written law often had to be stretched to fit the higher principles of justice. He just had to figure out how.

Although Hausfeld is known as a legal crusader, it's not always easy to square the mission with descriptions of the man. Stuart Eizenstat, President Jimmy Carter's chief domestic policy advisor and the special envoy recruited by the State Department to help resolve the Swiss bank and slave labor reparations cases, once wrote, "Hausfeld could be sweetness and light at one moment and anger and darkness the next." Others have described him as being known as difficult. One judge called him a "bulldog" in the courtroom after Hausfeld had joked with a witness and then, having disarmed him, suddenly pummeled him with penetrating questions. There were also tales of Hausfeld in his younger days screaming at associates.

But that is not the Hausfeld you see now. For one thing, he has undergone a physical transformation. The young Hausfeld was short and cherubic, and there was a period in his early career when he grew out his hair, sprouted a beard and wore aviator glasses and loud, baggy suits. The older Hausfeld hasn't aged, despite the loss of that hair, so much as he has been purified. He is thin to the point of being gaunt. His skin is like parchment, his eyes a very pale blue, his features delicately handsome.



"Wilma, are you all right? You were moaning and groaning!"



And there is his demeanor, which is regal. If he was once a yeller, he isn't anymore. His manner is preternaturally calm and deliberate. The word that comes to mind is *impeccable*. His words are impeccably chosen, his gestures are impeccably economical, his nails are impeccably manicured, his glasses are impeccably silver-framed. He dresses impeccably in dark suits and starched white shirts (he is color blind) so crisp the creases are like blades, and his impeccably matched ties bear an impeccably perfect dimple. You can understand why opponents find him formidable, because there is something intimidating, even terrifying, in this quiet, self-possessed, imperturbable, impeccable man who is somewhere between a rabbi and a consigliere. You can sense, as Anthony Maton, the head of Hausfeld's London office, says, a "core of steel."

He lives impeccably too. He gets up at six every morning and carpools to his office, an airy warren of white cubicles that is every bit as quiet and dignified as its proprietor. His own office, with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking K Street, is tastefully decorated with family photos of his wife and three grown children on shelves behind his large walnut desk and a framed quote from Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel: "Indifference to evil is worse than evil." On the wall facing him is a large photograph of the Lincoln Memorial, which he got from a photographer in Alaska during the *Exxon Valdez* case.

The photo is a reminder of his firm's enterprise. Hausfeld admits, "If you want a firm just to make money, this is not necessarily it." No doubt he is a millionaire many times over, but you would never know it. "He's not one of these trial lawyers with a \$5,000 suit, slicked-back hair and lots of jewelry," says one partner. He has been married for 46 years to his college sweetheart—an actress who is as vivacious and voluble as Hausfeld is reserved and laconic. He lives in the same modest house they bought in 1975 in Fairfax, Virginia, and he hasn't added a foot to it since. For more than 30 years he has gone to and from work in that carpool. Even his impeccable suits are off-the-rack and come in a cardboard box sent by a friend, a Detroit haberdasher he met years ago during one of his and Marilyn's yearly stays at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Florida when the man complained about the fit of Hausfeld's clothes. He travels extensively—eight to 10 trips to Europe alone each year—but only for work. He drinks abstemiously—so little that when the officials of the countries he represented in the slave labor reparations case celebrated the settlement by toasting their capitals with glass after glass of vodka, they did so hoping, they later admitted, to get Hausfeld drunk. His closest friends are people he has known for years. His only indulgence is a country home in West Virginia.

That is because it was never about money for Hausfeld, or even glory. It was always about something else.

When Hausfeld left law school, he joined a large firm, Arent, Fox, Kintner, Plotkin

and Kahn, that specialized in defending accused antitrust violators. At Arent Fox he learned a few things. He learned that very little in the law was black-and-white, that there was a lot of gray, which meant there was potentially a lot of flexibility—flexibility to get courts to interpret the law in more expansive ways. He learned he had lost his "fervor for any kind of defense law" because he was always writing memos on how companies could avoid antitrust scrutiny, and he realized how much easier it was to maintain the status quo than to challenge it, as he wanted to do. And he learned that a staid defense firm such as Arent Fox wasn't going to put up with him for very long when he began to express some of the things he wanted to do. In fact, it put up with him for six months before giving him notice.

But what a six months they were. In the midst of the civil rights movement and at the height of the Vietnam war, young Hausfeld—the long-haired, bearded, aviator-bespectacled Hausfeld—counseled draft dodgers, women's groups and African Americans who had been discriminated against, including bringing a case against the D.C. chief of police for denying promotions to black officers. He even brought a complaint to the Federal Trade Commission on behalf of several feminist organizations protesting that *Women's Wear Daily* had colluded with the fashion industry to stop making miniskirts and begin making midi dresses instead, thus forcing women to wear what the industry dictated. It may have seemed like a loony argument, but the FTC agreed with him. "Retailers had to eat a large inventory of dresses they could no longer sell," Hausfeld says.

And then it ended. Facing unemployment, he grudgingly accepted a job with a Michigan law firm. But just before he was to leave Washington, he got a call from an attorney he'd interviewed with six months earlier—an attorney who had not been in touch with him all that time. His name was Jerry Cohen, and Cohen asked if Hausfeld was still interested. A former marine, six-foot-five and broad-shouldered with great, bushy black hair and an extroverted manner that matched his appearance, Cohen was a force of nature. He had been the chief of staff for Michigan senator Philip Hart's subcommittee on antitrust and monopoly before becoming one of the icons of plaintiffs' antitrust law—suing companies rather than defending them—which was the law Hausfeld wanted to practice. When he accepted Cohen's offer, after Cohen had already called the Michigan firm to tell them he needed Hausfeld more than they did, Hausfeld began the most important relationship of his professional life.

Twenty years Hausfeld's senior, Cohen became his partner, his friend and his father figure. He also became Hausfeld's facilitator. All the wild cases that Arent Fox had discouraged, Cohen encouraged. More important, Cohen, who shared Hausfeld's sense of injustice, was willing to use his successful antitrust practice to finance Hausfeld's social justice crusades. That was the whole idea. They were quite



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a contrasting pair to see—the hulking, animated Cohen and the tiny, reserved Hausfeld—though they were kindred spirits, peas in a pod.

The duo knew they were condescended to by the so-called white-shoe law firms whose attorneys came from Harvard and Yale, while Hausfeld came from Brooklyn College and GW, and Cohen came from the blue-collar city of Hamtramck, adjacent to Detroit, and Wayne State University Law School. "There was always the sense that we didn't have the pedigree," Hausfeld says. He remembers standing around with Cohen and some of those upscale attorneys one September day when the white shoes were talking about where they were putting up their boats for the winter, then turning to Cohen and Hausfeld and asking where they were putting up their boats. Hausfeld mused for a moment and said, "I'm taking it out of the bathtub this year."

The condescension only increased when Hausfeld began to take on cases he hoped would change the law. He represented a group of black workers at the Library of Congress who were fired after staging a sit-in in the reading room because they were denied promotions even though many of them held master's degrees in library science. It was his first class-action suit—that

is, a case in which he represented not just one plaintiff but a whole class of plaintiffs. He won, though it cost him his beard and long hair when the judge called him into chambers and said, "You sound very reasonable, but you look like Jesus Christ." Hausfeld took the hint. After he won the D.C. police case, he was approached by a former Department of Justice employee named Diane Williams, a young single mother who was looking for an attorney. One of Williams's supervisors had been making sexual advances toward her, and when she rejected them, he fired her. At the time there was no legal concept of sexual harassment, and Hausfeld was ridiculed by others in the bar for bringing the case. Still, Hausfeld felt it was an obvious violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited employment discrimination. Against the odds, he won. And in winning, he stretched the law.

By this time Hausfeld was beginning to gain a reputation for taking difficult cases involving social justice. Cohen told him that if he looked up what Hausfeld was doing in the phone book, it would be listed under *W* for "weird." These were cases other attorneys didn't want—strange cases, unwinnable cases, cases that required a new slant on old laws. Hausfeld took them. He was, as Cohen

said, the "lawyer of last resort." And most of the cases were from people who would have been overlooked by the legal system if it weren't for Hausfeld—the poor, the disenfranchised, women and minorities. Cohen would occasionally answer the phone, then hand it to Hausfeld. When Hausfeld asked who it was, Cohen would say, "I don't know, but they don't speak English, so it has to be for you." Hausfeld was ecstatic.

But eventually he felt trapped even in Cohen's firm, which his friend owned with another senior partner. In 1978, Hausfeld says, he cajoled Cohen and yet another partner, Herbert Milstein, into leaving and forming a new firm with him: Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld. It was a huge gamble. Cohen's senior partner kept most of the clients. Still, Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld continued to practice plaintiffs' antitrust law, and Hausfeld was, if anything, even more energetic on issues of social justice: a case against the Smithsonian to recover Cheyenne artifacts; a case that argued bullets were hazardous to one's health and should be banned by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (the bar howled in laughter, but when a judge ordered hearings, Congress immediately passed a law exempting bullets from the commission's purview); and a case on behalf of Orthodox Jewish

# Dirty Duck <sup>®</sup> by Bobby London





twins, one a valedictorian, to change their high school graduation ceremony in Fairfax County, Virginia from a Saturday so they could attend. He lost, then worshipped at services with them on their graduation day. Two weeks later, the county decided to move future graduations to a weekday. "In losing, we won," he now says.

He admits it wasn't easy. Nearly every penny the firm had went to subsidize the social justice cases. "There were years Marilyn and I and Jerry were living hand-to-mouth," he recalls. "There literally wasn't any money." And it wasn't just money that made things difficult. There were the cases that broke his heart. After getting a call from a group who had been so-called comfort women—Asians who were enslaved as prostitutes by the Japanese during World War II and returned to their own countries after the war as pariahs—Hausfeld took up the cause. This time he even lobbied the American government to intervene diplomatically, but to no avail. You can hear the disappointment in his voice. He calls the Japanese government the most intransigent defendant he has ever faced.

But over time Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld began to have its triumphs, and a few shook the legal world. Several of Hausfeld's neighbors came to his house in suburban Virginia and asked him to investigate whether a nearby Texaco tank farm could be polluting their water and making their children sick. One Sunday morning he took a stroll to the farm, where a few engineers volunteered that there was a much bigger problem than the public knew. Hausfeld took the case and won a settlement, which was unprecedented at the time.

But the settlement was only the beginning. A woman named Bari-Ellen Roberts had heard of Hausfeld's victory and phoned him in 1992 to discuss a complaint. Roberts worked for Texaco as a senior financial analyst. Her superiors praised her work, but they did not promote her because, one of them confessed, they thought she was too "uppity." Roberts arrived at the inescapable conclusion that she and other workers with whom she discussed the issue were being denied promotions because they were black.

Hausfeld investigated her charges for nearly a year—he always does—then filed a suit on Roberts's behalf. Texaco fought them "tooth and nail," Hausfeld says. He realized something was grievously wrong when one of the company's outside counsels told him, "What do you want us to do—just throw money at a bunch of monkeys?" If that was the outside counsel's attitude, Hausfeld thought, imagine what the attitude of Texaco's executives was.

It didn't take long for him to find out. Hausfeld says he got a call from an attorney representing a disgruntled Texaco employee, and the lawyer offered him tapes of Texaco executives making racially insensitive remarks. (A Hausfeld associate later said Hausfeld was obsessive about getting those tapes, screaming at him at one point, "If you don't get me those fucking tapes, this case is going to go on for another 10 years!") As it turned out, *New York*

*Times* reporter Kurt Eichenwald had also been alerted about the tapes and begged Hausfeld to share them. Hausfeld said he did so reluctantly, though critics have accused Hausfeld of doctoring or misinterpreting them, then tricking the *Times* into publishing the transcripts. He claims both he and the *Times* subjected them to expert analysis and came to the same conclusion: The Texaco executives were closet racists. In any case, once excerpts of the transcripts were printed, the suit exploded. Texaco couldn't settle quickly enough. The plaintiffs received \$176 million. Moreover, at Hausfeld's insistence, Texaco agreed to hire an outside ombudsman to oversee the company's hiring practices. That set another precedent.

It was over the Christmas holiday in 1995, while Hausfeld was on vacation in Alaska with his family, that he got word Jerry Cohen had dropped dead of a heart attack in Sun Valley, Idaho, and a huge hole opened in Hausfeld's life. He filled it with a case. Years earlier, he and a close attorney friend, Martin Mendelsohn, had brought suit on behalf of Jewish immigrants against a vicious former Croatian interior minister named Andrija Artuković, the so-called Butcher of the Balkans, who had been a Nazi puppet during the war. Since members of the Croatian fascist terrorist group Ustaše were still alive, this was, says Hausfeld, the only time he feared his life might be in danger. Now Mendelsohn approached him with another daring gambit to help victims of the war: filing a class-action suit against Swiss banks on behalf of Holocaust survivors and their heirs for dormant accounts the banks had appropriated.

"Nobody gave us a chance of recovering," Hausfeld says. But he locked himself in his conference room with stacks of books, including transcripts of the Nuremberg war crime trials, and with all the documentation his researcher had gathered, and spent weeks, eight to 10 hours a day, reading through all of it before filing his complaint, which added complicity with the Nazis for good measure. The banks vowed to fight, and the president of Switzerland publicly fulminated. When one attorney asked Hausfeld how much he was looking for in a settlement and Hausfeld said, "At least a billion dollars," the man spluttered, "With a *b*?" Hausfeld got his clients their billion. He took no fee for the case, and he is furious with the attorneys who did.

"Once we started the Swiss case," he says, "it opened the floodgates." And that led to the slave labor reparations case. Even Mendelsohn, his eventual co-counsel, told him he was crazy to sue the German government and prominent German companies on behalf of millions of people the Nazis had conscripted for their factories and fields. But Hausfeld had a plan, a wild plan, and he took it to the Polish ambassador to the United States. "Let's see if I get this straight," the ambassador asked. "You want the five Eastern European countries that were occupied by Germany, which

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now dominates the postwar economies of those countries, to band together to pursue reparations?" He paused. "I like it!" Hausfeld not only got a \$5.14 billion settlement, but he enlisted a prominent German historian to force the government to acknowledge its complicity not just for the Holocaust but for enslaving millions more, Jew and non-Jew. Hausfeld called the settlement the apex of his career.

Then came the nadir.

After Jerry Cohen's death, nothing was ever the same at Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld. "I was alone," is how Hausfeld describes it. He remained the firm's chief breadwinner with his antitrust cases, but most of the remaining partners didn't share his zeal for social justice or his interest in rewriting the law. The animosity simmered until Hausfeld began to push for a London branch of the firm to pursue his cause of bringing class-action suits to the European Union, where the courts had not recognized them—a pursuit based in part on his fear that an increasingly conservative judiciary would gut plaintiffs' antitrust suits in the U.S. The partners reluctantly agreed, spending millions on the new office, but the European courts were not immediately receptive to Hausfeld's cause. And that's when the simmer among the partners turned to a boil. They derided him. He derided them. "I lost it every once in a while," Hausfeld concedes. "I was angry at the animosity. I was angry at the adversity. I was angry at the cowardice."

As the warfare dragged on, Hausfeld approached his partners about negotiating an amicable separation. Instead, Hausfeld's adversaries essentially pulled a fast one, which showed how much they had come to resent him. Meeting clandestinely, they unilaterally reduced Hausfeld's share of compensation from 28.95 percent to 14 percent and that of another partner and Hausfeld ally by enough to push their combined shares below the 33.3 per-

cent threshold that would have allowed Hausfeld and his supporters to block his termination. And having rejiggered the shares, the partners fired him the next day, November 6, 2008, by placing a note on his chair, after 37 years, and ordering him to leave the building immediately or be arrested for trespassing.

Hausfeld thinks the partners must have thought he would retire quietly, but that only shows how little they understood him. Social justice isn't a job for Hausfeld. It is a life fed by deep wellsprings, which brings us to the *whys* of Hausfeld's commitment. One of those wellsprings no doubt is his family's destruction by the Nazis. Another, he says, came from maturing in the 1960s, when he saw a "lot of inequities," and his realization that his father's motto, "Love everybody and everybody will love you," simply wasn't true.

Perhaps more important were the personal realizations. He remembers a psychology experiment in college when he and four other students were called to the front of the class and asked their opinion of a new campus curfew. After the first four students expressed support, Hausfeld suppressed his own opposition and agreed with them, only to learn that those students had been ringers designed to show that people confronted by large groups will not stand by their convictions. From that point on, Hausfeld resolved, he would always follow his conscience. He would be the exemplar of rectitude in a legal world where rectitude didn't matter much. He would be different.

And among those wellsprings are wounds that surface in a comment one of his clients, a Navajo, made when he engaged Hausfeld to bring suit against Hispanic Americans who had discriminated against him: "Michael, everywhere there's a totem pole, and everywhere there is someone on the bottom." Hausfeld hated when, during settlement discussions with Shell Oil for the inhabitants of a trailer park that had been contaminated by chemicals, Shell's counsel asked sneeringly,

"How much do you want us to pay trailer park people?" just as he hated it when Texaco's executives had called Hausfeld's black clients "porch monkeys," or when the lawyers at the top of the totem pole would laugh at him for his strange legal theories. It hurt. But it also helped him identify with the others at the bottom of that totem pole. He had been there himself. In some ways, he admits, he still is—still the lawyer without the Ivy League pedigree. "No matter how many times I've been vindicated," he says, "I'm still not used to people laughing at me."

So instead of retiring on that awful November afternoon, Hausfeld walked immediately to a friendly law firm, Venable LLP, and began strategizing to start a new firm. Within days, more than a dozen of his former associates from Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld were crammed into a Venable conference room, passing around the only computer with Adobe, sharing cell phones, tracking cases on large white sheets of paper and conducting business amid what one partner called "controlled chaos." Hausfeld conveyed his usual calm, but underneath he was terrified. To get a line of credit to set up an office and pay his attorneys, he had to stake everything he owned as collateral. In a way, he was right back at the beginning: broke.

Most of the associates and partners say the unruly start of Hausfeld LLP was a bonding experience. Meanwhile, courts awarded Hausfeld virtually all the cases for which he was counsel at the old firm, and he quickly started getting new ones, including the NCAA case, in which he successfully argued that the organization was a cartel that denied current and former student athletes the rights to their own images—rights, thanks to Hausfeld, the court has now granted. Even his decade-long crusade to bring those plaintiff class-action suits to Europe is finally panning out, and he fully expects the principle to be established there soon, which would be a crowning achievement. "People are definitely watching us to see what we're going to do next," says one partner.

All of this seems to have reenergized Hausfeld. His wife jokes that when she reminded him that no one on his deathbed ever said he wished he had spent more time at the office, he countered, "I'll be the only one." The firm is expanding—the London branch alone has doubled in the past 18 months—and he is forever searching for new wrongs to right, though he says ruefully that no one has ever approached him to see how Hausfeld LLP might serve as a model for other firms. So he must trudge on—that lonely man of rectitude. Asked when he might retire, he points to a framed cartoon on a side table in his office with the caption "God put me on this earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now, I am so far behind that I will never die." That is close to a framed quote from Deuteronomy 16:20 one sees upon entering the adjacent conference room: JUSTICE, ONLY JUSTICE, SHALT THOU PURSUE.



"Jiggle bells, jiggle bells, jiggle all the way...."







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## CHARLIE DAY

Continued from page 122

there a lot of music in your home when you were growing up?

DAY: I remember a pile of records, and I know I'm dating myself. I remember I was really into the Al Jolson records—you know, the most racist records of all; not the lyrics but the blackface makeup he wore. Somehow I'd also gotten the *Star Wars* music, and I would put that on and run around the house and pretend I was fighting people. Right now I'm into James Booker, a New Orleans jazz musician. I've been on a New Orleans jazz music kick. And I like mariachi music. I don't speak a word of Spanish, but for some reason I love the music.

### Q11

PLAYBOY: On *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, your wife, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, plays the object of your unrequited desire, identified only as "the Waitress." How does your character's relationship with the Waitress reflect your relationship with your wife?

DAY: It doesn't reflect it at all. I got my wife the day I met her.

### Q12

PLAYBOY: *Sunny* has been on for nearly 10 years. It's been called *Seinfeld* on crack, with episodes that address cannibalism, transgender people, crack addiction, lots of cancer. Is there anything that could come up in the writers' room that would make you say, "Whoa, too far"?

DAY: No, not really. If you have a unique point of view or approach, you're able to get away with subjects that could, from an outside standpoint, be perceived as edgy. Some of the episodes are tragic or shocking, but the characters are so self-serving, they're blind to what would be edgy, and that's what's funny about it. During season four, my character writes a musical called *The Nightman Cometh*. It's this elaborate marriage proposal to the Waitress. The whole musical is a metaphor about a boy becoming a man, but the character doesn't realize all the lyrics sound like they're about a little boy being raped. There's nothing funny about that—I'm a parent; there's nothing funny at all about that. That a man is oblivious to it because he thinks his work is great is what's funny.

### Q13

PLAYBOY: Do the characters have any kind of moral code?

DAY: They have their weird moral codes when it serves them, and then they're quick to drop them. So the answer really is no.

### Q14

PLAYBOY: It's one of the longest-running sitcoms on TV. Do you feel you've gotten the respect and attention you deserve?

DAY: We don't get a lot of attention. Our fans have kept us on the air. The industry hasn't necessarily kept us on the air, and the press hasn't necessarily kept the show on the air. We've never been on the cover of *Entertainment Weekly*. We've never been nominated or even talked about on any of the awards shows. We're almost completely ignored by the Huffington Post. For some reason we've never quite clicked into that mainstream. It's so crazy to me that everywhere I go, I'm no longer a person who can just walk around and not be recognized, and 99 percent of the time it's because of *Sunny*. It's not *Horrible Bosses*, and it's not *Pacific Rim*. Sometimes it's all that, but more often than not it's people who just know and love *Sunny*.

### Q15

PLAYBOY: And what are your feelings about that?

DAY: It makes me disgruntled. A *New Yorker* critic wrote a wonderful piece on the show last year, and it was really nice, maybe just to validate it in my parents' eyes. But constantly seeing the Emmys and the Golden Globes and another actor or another writer, and you're not invited—it can't help but feel a little bit like high school. I guess the cool kids are never going to invite me to the party. That was my high school experience, so it's just history repeating itself.

### Q16

PLAYBOY: What was your childhood bedroom like?

DAY: It was wall-to-wall baseball posters. I loved Rickey Henderson. Even though I grew up in New England and was a Red Sox fan, I was a gigantic fan of Rickey Henderson. I don't know why I selected him. I think maybe when I was really young my grandmother gave me a baseball card or a sticker or something, and it was this guy Rickey Henderson. I would have dreams that I'd meet him at the park and he would be like, "Hey, dude, you want to have a catch?" I loved Wade Boggs too. We wrote a part for him on *Sunny* this year, and he came and did it. He was fantastic. Wade Boggs is a Hall of Fame third baseman for the Red Sox, and he would allegedly drink 50 to 100 beers on these cross-country trips—it's been backed up by his teammates. He told me it was something like 107. So we decided we would do an episode where we'd see if we could break his beer-drinking record. He came in and played himself in a hallucination my character has. After we shot it I asked him if he wanted to have a catch, and so we had a catch. I had my catch with Wade Boggs, so it was pretty fun.

### Q17

PLAYBOY: Many actors who do mostly or

only comedy are also stand-ups. But you're not. Did you always know you wanted to do comedy?

DAY: I did not always want to do comedy. I started out at a place called the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and it was great. You did whatever. You did a drama, you did a comedy, you did whatever you could get a role in. My career goal was to be like Al Pacino or Dustin Hoffman, people I saw doing amazing work in all sorts of different roles. They were just great actors. My first gigs, aside from commercial work, were things like the junkie younger brother on *Third Watch* or *Law & Order*. I would always come close to getting cast in television comedies, but I couldn't get over that hump. And then we made *Sunny* and it just changed everything. I just wanted to act, so whatever opportunity came up first I would have done. I have never considered myself a comedian. I'm just an actor who can be funny.

### Q18

PLAYBOY: After almost 10 years doing a show you have complete creative control over, you started to act in other people's movies. What is it like to have to do what you're told?

DAY: It's a mixed bag. On one hand, sometimes it's like a paid vacation for me because I don't have to stress about what the set looks like. It doesn't fall on me. Guillermo del Toro is an amazingly creative, brilliant original director, so with *Pacific Rim* it was great because I could just plug into his vision and not have to worry. And then I could enjoy the movie as a spectator and only have to worry about whether between "action" and "cut" I did a good job.

### Q19

PLAYBOY: Is there anything you wanted us to ask? Anything we haven't covered?

DAY: It's over? I wanted to have my Gary Oldman moment.

### Q20

PLAYBOY: You want to get in the type of trouble he did when he said some controversial things in his *Playboy Interview*? Okay. You could get in something anti-Semitic or racist under the wire. Or you could make a strong case for a Mel Gibson resurgence. Or maybe just say something against unions.

DAY: Yeah, stupid unions ruining our country. [laughs] The truth is, I'm not smart enough to have an opinion on those things. It's funny, talking about people you forgive for their talent. I was just back in Rhode Island, and Woody Allen was shooting a movie. I love his movies so much, I wanted to just go to the set and be like, "Hey, you know, I'm a guy who's in the business." Most likely Woody Allen would have said, "I have never seen *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*," and that would have killed me, so I avoided it.







## MISSION OUT OF CONTROL

Continued from page 82

they became immediately drenched and I could see through them like gossamer.

At six P.M. I went outside to wait for Wingo to pick me up for dinner. I sat on the front concrete steps and stared at the square little lawn that had no grass, just hard-packed dirt. A ceramic snail was stuck in the dirt, along with a plastic zebra-striped parrot, the parrot tilting over as if dying. I felt as though I were in an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. Everything was old and mysterious, preserved in aspic like all those UFOs in Area 51, insect-headed space aliens in formaldehyde.

Wingo and I drove to an Italian restaurant in his SUV. He drove like a madman, weaving in and out of traffic, speeding through lights as he talked. He told me his crew was idealistic, yet they believed in the reality of space. "The lunar community is obsessed with Mars," he said, "and the moon, ever since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on it."

I asked Wingo what he thought about UFOs and Area 51, where UFO fanatics believe the government has sequestered space aliens. (Area 51 is the U.S. Air Force's top-secret aircraft-development site. It's so secret, planes are forbidden to fly over it. It's like a black hole in the sky and the ground whose existence the government has denied for years.) He said, "We're not like those UFO conspiracy guys. They don't want to know the truth about space and destroy their fantasies. If NASA knew there were UFOs they'd tell everyone so they'd get money." But he admitted he liked space movies and TV shows. His favorite was *Star Trek*. He looked across at me and grinned. "The kids used to call me Spock," he said, "because I have a pointy ear." He grabbed his left ear with his thumb and forefinger and pulled it forward to show me its little point.

During dinner Wingo told me about his life. He was born and raised in rural Alabama, "just a rednecked kid who thought a bagel was a Jewish McDonald's." He was sickly as a boy, and his mother babied him. No sports, lots of sick days. "I couldn't go outside, so I read the encyclopedia," he said. "When I got outside I looked for fossils in the woods."

He first became aware of space and rockets when he was four and China exploded its first nuclear bomb. The radiation fallout was supposed to reach Alabama during a snowstorm, and all the kids were

warned not to eat the snow. "What's the bomb, I wondered," he said. When he was six his uncle took him to Cape Canaveral, where he saw the *Gemini 12* launch. "I fell in love with space and the future," he said. "I thought, You can go to the moon. My new heroes became George Wallace, Bear Bryant and Wernher von Braun, who helped build the *Saturn 5* in Huntsville. We called it the Redneck Rocket Ship."

By the time he was a teen, in the 1970s, Wingo had also fallen in love with sex, drugs and rock and roll. He hung out in biker bars because that's where the action was. "I dated loose women," he said. "One of them was the prostitute Jimmy Swaggart was caught with. She was 25. I was 17." He smiled at me. "Then, when I got my degree in engineering physics at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, I learned there were a lot of space groupies out there." I looked confused. He grinned and pointed to his head. "Brains." It seems for some women intelligence is just as much an aphrodisiac as money, power and rock and roll.

At UAH he worked on a number of NASA space missions and became obsessed with the idea that the U.S. should turn the moon into an industrial park and way station for manned flights to Mars. The moon is a more convenient jumping-off station for Mars because its gravitational pull is so much weaker than Earth's. This means spaceships would need less fuel to go from the moon to Mars than they would if they left from Earth. "I thought we'd go to Mars in the 1980s and bring our civilization there, but we couldn't colonize Mars without industrializing the moon," he said. "In the 1960s we thought we'd colonize Mars in 20 years, but after all the race riots and the Russians dropping out, the government decided to spend its space money on stupid shit rather than Mars." Now, more than 40 years later, the possibility of colonizing Mars is at least 40 years away, and Wingo is afraid he won't see that moment. So what drives him to keep going?

"I want to commercialize the aerospace industry so we can make money," he said. "What I'm doing now at Skycorp helps build my credibility for future commercial projects, like building a satellite in space instead of on Earth. If you build it on Earth it has to be stronger, heavier, more powerful to escape our atmosphere. If we build it in space it can be lighter, cheaper and need less fuel."

To build his brand, Wingo chose to put Skycorp in a McDonald's and not in a NASA barbershop, his other option. "McDonald's destroys all its restaurants when it decommissions them," he said. "But NASA owned this one and gave it to us. It's an American icon. Being in McDonald's has given us a ton of media play."

I returned to Building 19 at nine P.M. I asked the woman at the desk if she would do me a favor. "But I'm doing my paperwork now," she said, flustered. "It will only take a second," I said. "Could you just go online to check Delta flights from San Jose to Atlanta?" She looked up at me. "Oh, I can't do that. I'm forbidden to go online." "By whom?" I asked. She said, "By NASA, of course."

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DAY TWO

Cowing fluttered into McMoon's and went straight to his computer. I went over and said hello. He was talking to himself while he stared at lines and lines of numbers on his computer screen. I said hello again. I waited. Nothing. Five, six minutes passed. Finally he noticed me. "What?" he said. Cowing has a reputation. His website, NASA Watch, has been described as "notorious." Cowing's notoriety rests on his habit of caustically berating anyone—NASA, Congress, the global space community—who dares challenge his space assumptions. If Cowing claimed the moon was made of green cheese and NASA refuted him, he would attack NASA as viciously as a predatory bird would a squirrel. He is, after all, according to his personal website, "webmaster, astrobiologist, journalist, former rocket scientist and recovering ex-civil servant." He describes himself as a "space nut," which may be one word too many. Cowing fell in love with space in the 1960s when he saw with his own eyes that space travel was real, not a movie. In the 1940s and 1950s space movies were comically science fiction, Buck Rogers and his little gray football-shaped spacecraft wobbling across a black screen with a barely visible string tugging it along. Cowing was unquestioning in his belief in the 1960s that men landed on the moon and not in a movie studio as some conspiracy-minded debunkers had claimed. He was, from the age of five, always a true believer. Now he might be called an obsessive.

I said, "I'd like to ask you some questions." He yawned at me, tapped his open mouth with the flat of his hand and went back to his numbers.

Just then Wingo entered, trailed by a group of young admirers, nerdy-looking college kids for whom he is the pied piper

of space. He led them around McMoon's, showing the equipment, talking to them about what Skycorp does. They listened to him with rapt attention and beatific smiles. I saw Woodman at his computer, looking at the kids, so I went over to him.

"Dennis's tour is the most popular tour at NASA," Woodman said. "It's real. It's something these kids can envision themselves doing." Woodman had joined Skycorp a few months earlier because Wingo had given him "this crazy, fascinating opportunity to unravel the mysteries of the future." Skycorp is an avocation for Woodman. It has given him something to be a part of. "I was a loner, shy as a kid," he said. "I didn't fit in. I never had a place I could latch on to. I never married. I had trouble with relationships." His father died when he was six and his mother raised five kids by herself. When he was old enough he would go to Moffett Field, the airbase at NASA, and watch the submarine-hunting planes take off and land. The sub hunters are gone now, and so is Moffett Field, but they left a lasting impression on the young Woodman. Flight. The mysteries beyond land. He enrolled at the University of Texas and got his master's degree in aerospace engineering.

"I wanted to explore the unknown," he said. "I'm fascinated by mysteries. Working in aerospace gave me a link to that unknown. It's all about playing around with things that give you a sense of control, power, fun."

Woodman especially liked that Skycorp used "old stuff" to explore space. All those prehistoric machines that constantly have to be fixed, taken apart, put back together with wires, screws, mechanical things. "I like mechanical things," he said.

Marco Colleluori and Austin Epps were at their computers. Woodman said, "Austin's the most important person here." Epps's job on *ISEE-3* is to control its compulsion

system. He uses his software code to figure out how to make the satellite respond to his radio signals. First he had to work backward and decode *ISEE-3*'s hardware. This is where the term *techno-archaeologist* came from. Epps researched how the satellite had been built and programmed. The problem was, none of that information was in computer form. *ISEE-3*'s history was in old handwritten notes and incomplete records, the penmanship sometimes indecipherable, all the codes like ancient hieroglyphics. Skycorp called these "napkin notes." Once Epps had decoded all the old programs, he had to figure out how to reactivate them from Skycorp and make *ISEE-3* respond to their instructions.

Epps was born near Dallas, "a nerdy but competitive kid," he said. "I built things. Fixed cars. Built a rocket ship. Here, I like to help Ken Zin make parts." He had wanted to be a military pilot, but his eyesight wasn't sharp enough, so at 16 he immersed himself in aerospace engineering. Six years ago he joined Skycorp because he liked that "everyone here had to wear many hats. I saw space engineers at Boeing who worked 10 years on a project for NASA. And then, after 10 years, it never got built."

Wingo's lemmings were gone, and he was alone at his computer. I told him I'd like to talk to Zin if he was around. Wingo led me back to the two food freezers. Zin was in his freezer with the big metal door shut. Major, his boxer, was on a blanket in front of the door. He snarled at me. I stepped back. Wingo said, "Ken must be working on something."

Wingo told me he'd brought Zin into Skycorp because Zin had fallen on hard times. His wife had died and he'd lost his house and his job, so Wingo let him live in a trailer home behind McMoon's, shielded by trees from NASA's roaming eyes. "Ken's been acting weird lately," Wingo said. "The other day his dog attacked one of the visiting kids, and Ken laughed at it. I think he's losing it because he's not part of the *ISEE-3* project. He feels left out." Zin would probably not show up for Sunday's party, he said, so my best bet was to try to talk to him tomorrow, Saturday, when few people would be around.

"What about Dr. Farquhar?" I said. "Will he be here Sunday?"

"Oh yes. He's flying in. He's done amazing things in his career. He took a spacecraft not designed for interplanetary flight and got it to land on Eros, an asteroid. He deserves the Nobel Prize." Wingo paused, as if contemplating whether he should warn me about something. "But Dr. Farquhar is getting on in years. He's in his 80s." Another pause, then Wingo blurted out, "He's a little bit nuts." I thought he meant dementia. Wingo shook his head. Then he joked, "He's a pussy hound."

DAY THREE

I went to McMoon's early on Saturday. From the outside it looked deserted, but the door was open, so I went inside. I heard the sound of galloping feet, sharp claws on the hard floor. Major came



"I always wondered what he did after all the toys were delivered."



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charging straight at me, growling and baring his teeth. Before he could leap on me, a gruff voice screamed out, "No, Major! No!" Major sat down, suddenly docile, and wagged his stubby tail at me. I petted him. He purred. A big, disheveled, white-haired man came lumbering out from the back. Zin growled, "What are you afraid of? He won't bite." I said, "You know that. I don't." He flapped a hand at me in disgust.

He was carrying a big plastic trash bag. He began to go around the room, dumping the contents of little garbage pails into the big bag. Skycorp uses a lot of paper. I asked if I could talk to him. He grumbled, "When I come back from the dump. Someone's got to do it." Then he hoisted the big bag over his shoulder and went outside, followed by Major. He waited while Major took his morning piss and defecated in the grass. Then they both went to a white truck and got in. Major sat bolt upright in the passenger seat, looking out the window as they drove off.

While Zin was gone I wandered around McMoon's, doing my own archaeology. There were old metal filing cabinets crammed with paper files. There was an octagonal McDonald's dining table surrounded by stools. There were holes in the floor where Cowing had gone down on his knees to saw off the other stools that had dotted the room. On Cowing's computer space I noticed a black-and-white school composition notebook. It was opened to reveal Cowing's notes in a perfect and elaborate cursive script in aqua-blue ink.

Behind Woodman's computer was an old McDonald's microwave that Zin used to dry out the moisture on the lunar tapes. Beside it was a stack of books and loose-leaf binders. The books were an eclectic mix. *Beta Mathematics Handbook*. *Francis Bacon: The Temper of a Man*. *Linear Systems Theory*. *The Selected Writings of Herman Melville*. A hardware-store stack of shelves was filled with boxes of screws, washers, bolts. There was a gray metal safe from the 1930s.

I decided to go outside to wait for Zin. On my way I almost tripped over a metal box screwed into the floor. It was an electrical outlet box to operate the McDonald's deep fryer. It was like a tree stump and, like most tree stumps, was too expensive to dig out, so they'd left it there, covered in plastic bubble wrap.

I wandered around outside, staring at the ICBM, and then, behind the McDonald's, I saw Zin's mobile home. Small trees hid it from prying eyes. On its rear was written HOLIDAY RAMBLER, ALUMA-LITE TRAILER.

Zin came back with Major. The dog galloped toward me but without growling this time. He put his paws up on my chest and wiggled his stubby tail. I petted him, my buddy now. We all went inside McMoon's.

I followed Zin to the back, where he washed his hands at the sink. He went to the towel rack for paper to dry his hands. It was bare. He grumbled, "Fucking kids couldn't even put in fresh paper." He wiped his hands on his baggy jeans. "I feel like a babysitter." We walked back to his freezer-office. Major lay down on his doggy bed and went to sleep at the sound of our

voices. Zin told me that over the years he had worked for Lockheed Martin, NASA, Memorex and Sony. His job description was "demultiplex interceptor equipment repairman." Most of his jobs were classified, he said, because he worked on machines that eavesdropped on Russian and Chinese communications.

"What did you do?" I asked.

He grinned at me. "I can't tell you," he said. "That's why they call it classified." He said his father, his daughter and his son-in-law also worked on top secret stuff. I asked him what stuff. He grinned again. "I can't tell you. That's why it's called top secret."

He told me he began working for Skycorp because it had gotten harder to find work at NASA without a Ph.D. "I was raised on a cotton ranch," he said. "I learned how to fix things on my own. You know, like that Russian guy, what's his name?" I said, "Kalashnikov." He grinned at me again. "Good boy."

I asked him how he liked working at Skycorp. He said, "Well, Austin and Marco are smart guys. They know how to make things work." What about Cowing and Wingo? He said, "Dennis knows how NASA works so he can get things. And he tells a good story. Keith is a shit disturber. He opens his mouth and irritates people, and they pull back from us. Dennis gets the money, but he doesn't tell us what it is. He just spends it on stuff that doesn't work and I have to fix it. You get the idea?"

He said that Wingo's *modus operandi* was to try to drag a job out for as long as possible, the way guys who get paid by the hour rather than by the job do. He said, "He's like the guy driving a truck with 200 tons of canaries in it and the truck can carry only 100 tons. So he stops every few miles and beats on the side of the truck." He paused. I bit. "Why?" I asked. Zin laughed. "To keep half the canaries flying."

I asked him about Sunday's big day with *ISEE-3*. What was it all about? He said, "Usable data." I said, "You mean data just for data's sake?" He shook his head and said, "Data's important. Some people think there's no benefit to space, but everything we did to get to the moon in the 1960s benefited mankind. That's why *ISEE-3* is important. The closer it gets to Earth, the more data we can retrieve. But there's a problem. No one's studied the sensors on *ISEE-3* to see if they're accurate after 30 years. It's like when you think you're running a car on 97-octane gas but it's only 70."

"So what's Sunday really all about?" I said.

"Bullshit, to publicize Skycorp. But it's not my deal. I was involved with the lunar tapes. I have nothing to do with this flying saucer."

#### DAY FOUR

By nine A.M. McMoon's was crowded with people, most of whom I hadn't seen before. They were an odd-looking lot, scurrying around self-importantly in anticipation of the bewitching hour, 10:30 A.M., *ISEE-3*'s homecoming. Cowing fluttered about the room like a bird in heat, taking pictures of everyone with his iPhone. He stood on



his tiptoes, held it high over his head and aimed it down on groups of people. Wingo was moving through the crowd, greeting people with his amiable smile. He was dressed for this momentous occasion in a yellow T-shirt with a smiley face on the front. The rest of the Skycorp crew were at their computers, except for Zin. He was nowhere in sight.

I went over to a tall, hunched-over man with pale skin and thick glasses who was talking to a little round old man who looked like Elmer Fudd. I introduced myself to the little man, Robert W. Farquhar, the 82-year-old father of *ISEE-3* and notorious "pussy hound." He shook my hand and said, "Want to see a picture of my Russian girlfriend? I have two. One's 34 and the other's 26. I had a third one a long time ago, Natasha One. Here's a picture of Natasha Two." He showed me his wallet with a photo of a beautiful blonde Russian woman with a fur collar pulled up around her neck.

"I met Natasha Two when I gave a speech to the Russian Space Research Institute in Moscow," Farquhar said. "After the speech I looked down from the second floor and saw all these girls dancing with each other. I wanted to go down to the floor, but everyone was pulling me back. 'No, Bob, no! You can't go there!'" All the girls were Russian spies, of course, waiting to get their claws into one of America's most renowned NASA space scientists.

Farquhar stared at Natasha Two's photo and said, "We're madly in love. Oh no, we can't get married. I'm already married. If I could, I'd marry Natasha Two just so she could get the survivor benefits from my government pension. That would punish Uncle Sam big-time." Then he said to me with a mischievous smile, "I can't tell you too much, because you might tell my wife. I told her my Natashas were just good friends. I can't do anything with them anymore, not even with Viagra."

He showed me a picture from a distant time of himself in uniform, a young, handsome man at a table with other young, handsome American soldiers. "I was a paratrooper during the Korean War when I was on R&R in Tokyo," he said. "I was only in Korea for a few weeks before the armistice was signed, but I single-handedly won the war." This was news, because nobody seems to have won that war, which is still in a state of uneasy truce.

He reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a gold medal on a colorful ribbon. He hung it around his neck and said, "The South Koreans gave me this medal. It says Bob Farquhar single-handedly vanquished the entire North Korean Army." Then he excused himself. He had many people who wanted to meet him. But before he left he leaned toward me and, sotto voce, gave me his best advice for picking up women.

"I hit on women every day," he said, "the grocery store, the bank. But the best place to hit on women is at a CVS pharmacy. That's where they go to pick up their meds." He wandered into the crowd with his medal around his neck. Everyone

smiled at him and shook his hand. I saw him reach for his wallet with the photos of Natasha One, Two and Three.

I wandered around the crowded room. A group of men and women in identical black shirts and pants were sitting at banks of computers. They worked for Pixel Corps, which would be feeding Wingo and Cowing's *ISEE-3* interview around the world.

The octagonal dining room table in the center of the room was crowded with young tech people hunched over their computers. They were slim young men with scruffy beards they'd seen on *GQ* models, as well as a number of Asian women—Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani—with furrowed brows, very earnest.

Wingo and a tall, bald albino man were intently studying a chart on a big board. A Japanese man was watching them, smiling and nodding his head. Nearby, Farquhar was showing the girlfriends of Epps and Colleluori photos of his Natashas. Then he posed for photos with them, his arms around their shoulders, pawing them. Cowing stood on his tiptoes, held his iPhone over his head and took their picture.

The tech people were now scurrying around the room with spreadsheets of numbers, showing them to people who didn't seem to be interested.

Wingo and Cowing went into a small room set up with a camera and a computer screen. They sat facing these while a technician fitted them with microphones. The computer screen showed them as their mikes were being fitted, and Cowing raised his iPhone and took a picture of the screen. Wingo called out to me, "Pat, go find my wife and make sure she brought the lemon pies."

I went into the crowded main room to see if I could find someone who looked like she'd be Wingo's wife. Her name was Nikki. No last name, like Cher, Beyoncé and Madonna. Nikki had her name legally changed in California to simply Nikki. The Social Security Administration sued her for that and lost. I saw a big woman in tight jeans who looked like she might be a one-name person and certainly didn't look like anyone else scurrying around McMoon's. I went up to her and introduced myself. She laughed and said, "So you're the one who told Dennis he was an egomaniac. That's so 1950s." I told her I didn't realize the word *egomaniac* was particularly 1950s-ish.

I asked if she'd brought the lemon pies, and she had. They were laid out on the old McDonald's service counter with pastries and coffee. We talked for a few minutes. I told her Wingo had said there were a lot of groupies around space scientists because their brains were an aphrodisiac for certain women. "Is that true in your case?" I asked.

"Someone else asked me that, and I said yes," she told me. "But I got beat down for that, so now I say, 'The most attractive qualities in a man are kindness and a sense of humor.' As for intelligence, whatever. Get over it."

It was after 10:30 A.M. and no one seemed much interested in where in space

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*ISEE-3* was wandering. They were having too good a time taking photos, chatting, making plans for dinner.

I went back to the small room to tell Wingo that Nikki had brought the pies, but he and Cowing were already being interviewed via satellite by a man from England. They seemed to want to talk mostly about how the McDonald's had become McMoon's. When the interviewer was finally able to ask them about *ISEE-3*, Wingo said, "We're just waiting to receive the data. It's all good."

At 11:30 A.M. the party was winding down. People were standing around talking and drinking coffee or beer. I saw Casey Harper standing by herself at her computer, so I went over to her. She wore a blue satin blouse with a thick gold chain around her neck, tight jeans and sandals that showed off her painted toenails. She was, at 18, a riveting beauty. I asked her how it felt to be the only woman at Skycorp. She said it was no longer strange to have a girl in the aerospace industry. "My mother worked with NASA," she said. "My father worked for NASA and Lockheed Martin. I've always been mechanically inclined. As a little girl I took things apart to see how they worked, then put them back together. When we got a VHS tape player I put a piece of toast in it because it was the same shape as a tape. I used to draw a lot too. I drew mostly television remotes. When I went to the hardware store with my older brother and the guy asked him what he was looking for, my brother pointed at me and said, 'Ask her.'"

I asked Harper if guys were threatened by her mechanical prowess. Did it affect her dating? "No," she said. "I didn't date much in high school. It wasn't really my area of interest. You know, all that 'Everything revolves around you, honey' stuff. I'm too independent for that."

Before I left I asked if she was going to get an aerospace degree in college. She said no, that she would get a mechanical engineering degree. She wanted to design prosthetic limbs and hands so people could have the same dexterity and speed they would have with real hands. "I want them to be able to play musical instruments or draw with their prosthetic hands," she said.

"A good friend of mine, a musician, told me he'd be devastated if he lost his fingers and couldn't play his guitar."

I saw Wingo talking to his wife. I went over and asked him what had happened with *ISEE-3*. He told me I should ask Colleluori. I looked around for Colleluori and saw him outside smoking a cigarette. On my way out I stopped at a table piled with what looked like graduation certificates. They were titled "Certificates of Appreciation for *ISEE-3* Reboot Project." They were signed by Wingo and Cowing and had various people's names on them. None of those people had bothered to pick them up.

I went outside and asked Colleluori about *ISEE-3*. He told me his Skycorp job title was "altitude and orbit control systems engineer" and his job was "to steer it, like a rowboat." He said, "It has 12 thrusters, and my job is to figure out how many oars to use, on what side of the boat, so we can change its trajectory from around the sun to around Earth. What happened was, we started rowing, it looked good, we were excited—after all, it hadn't been turned on for decades—and then it failed. It had lost the nitrogen in the tanks that pushed the fuel out, like a spray-paint can with no air. So essentially it's back in the same orbit around the sun." He smiled and added, "But all is not lost. That lost nitrogen is going to be my college thesis. It could be a design issue. In space, you never over-design something. You design it only for what you want it to do at the moment. It's about the present, not the future."

Colleluori stubbed out his cigarette on the sidewalk with his shoe and said he had to go in and find his girlfriend. Last he'd seen her she was taking a picture with Farquhar. Colleluori said, "You know, I was so excited to have my picture taken with Dr. Farquhar, but all he wanted to do was kiss my girlfriend."

I was about to leave when all of a sudden everyone came pouring out of McMoon's, 30 or 40 people laughing and celebrating as if something momentous had happened that I'd missed. They all assembled in rows on the small grassy area in front of McDonald's where Major

did his business. One man looked down at his shoe and began furiously pawing at the ground with the sole. Cowing stood in front of them like a bandleader. He moved back a few feet, then flapped his arms for them to get closer together. They all bunched up. Cowing stood on his tiptoes, raised his iPhone high over his head and called out, "Now!" On cue, everyone smiled at the clear blue sky and waved their hands as if bidding someone up there good-bye, or maybe hello.

Cowing filmed them for a few minutes. Then they stopped waving at the empty sky. Cowing made a patting motion with the flat of his hand as if he wanted them to get on the ground. He got on his tiptoes again and held up his iPhone. Everyone bent over at the waist and began to wave at the grass as though gesturing at some barely visible creature from a great height.

It was a strange reaction by a group of strange people. They had raised money, twisted NASA's arm to gain control of a rogue satellite, given up any semblance of a normal life (though it's unlikely any of them had normal lives to begin with) and spent most of their waking hours in a McDonald's that couldn't even muster a decent Big Mac. And more important, they had failed in their mission. *ISEE-3* was in no shape to obey their commands. Thousands of man-hours had been wasted (unless through some miracle the data they'd collected and the data they might still collect yield some sort of scientific dividends). It was like a wedding party at which the bride and groom never showed. But the party went on regardless. Far from being broken and depressed, they were happy. Briefly, they had done the impossible. They had connected with *ISEE-3*. They had talked to it, and it had answered. Their childhood dreams had come true, and they had done it totally on their own.

Off to my right I saw Zin emerge from his mobile home with Major on a leash. He quickly hustled the dog across the parking lot before anyone saw them. Then they both disappeared behind another building.





## SOCIAL STAR

**SHELBY CHESNES IS A SCENE-STEALER IN HORRIBLE BOSSES 2**

**M**iss July 2012 Shelby Chesnes can attest that the benefits of Instagram reach far beyond knowing what your cousin ate for lunch yesterday. After the producers of *Horrible Bosses 2* came across the brunette beauty's account, she was cast in a small but fairly pivotal role. In the sequel to the dark comedy, Shelby's character catches the eye of Kurt Buckman (Jason Sudeikis) as she jogs past him. This throws a wrench into a plan to kidnap Rex (Chris Pine)...and we'll leave it at that to avoid spoilers. "I brought my sexy jogging skills to the set," Shelby jokes of her addition to the celebrated cast, which also includes Christoph Waltz, Jennifer Aniston, Charlie Day (subject of this month's *20Q*), Jason Bateman and Kevin Spacey. Despite all that star power, Shelby's favorite on-screen talent was her jogging partner Paco—Sudeikis's dog—who is the former mug of Old Navy.



## CUSTOM CRYSTAL

• Hef has his signature robes, and now Mrs. Hefner is proud to announce the line of intimates, athleisure and loungewear she designed with Rhonda Shear. The wares, which reflect her style, are available at [CrystalHefner.com](http://CrystalHefner.com). "Whether lounging on a rainy afternoon or cuddling up for movie night," Crystal says, "it's the perfect balance of simple and sexy to fit any lifestyle."



### Social Shutterfly

Miss July 2014 Emily Agnes (@missjuly emilyagnes) is taking some liberties with business wear: "Another day in the office!"

## Girl Talk

■ Miss February 2014 **Amanda Booth** is now the proud mom to baby Micah. She gave birth to the little guy in July and recalls the last moments of labor: "He had a strong, loud cry. He was our baby, and he was ready for the world."



■ Giving the *grito* in a black BCBG dress and Giuseppe Zanotti stilettos, Miss February 2009 **Jessica Burciaga** hosted a Mexican Independence Day party at Las Vegas's Crazy Horse III.



■ Talk about a trade. Miss September 2014 **Stephanie Branton** autographed her issue of *PLAYBOY* for the legendary Stan Lee (co-creator of *Spider-Man*, *X-Men*, *Iron Man*, etc.) at his comic-book signing.



## Irina's Got Looks That Kill

Miss January 2001 Irina Voronina stars in the indie movie *Scramble*. Her character, V (for vengeance), is on a mission with her lover, Harry (Damien Puckler from *Grimm*), to kill everyone who has crossed her in the past. "They are a modern Bonnie and Clyde," Irina says. "I hope it will be a cult movie that is the most downloaded in 2015."



## PLAYMATE FLASHBACK

Ten years ago Miss December 2004 **TIFFANY FALLON** became an instant classic. She later competed on *Celebrity Apprentice* and married Joe Don Rooney of Rascal Flatts.





## JOAQUIN PHOENIX

Continued from page 66

to map things out from start to finish. That started to change a few years ago when I got to work with these wonderful directors who weren't afraid of uncertainty or of discovering something in the moment. I don't really know anything about surfing, but I imagine surfers interact with something that's constantly changing, that feels like it's alive. I'm after that experience. I've been fortunate to work with directors who seem to enjoy that experience as well. I don't have much ego when it comes to work now.

**PLAYBOY:** You've won a lot of respect from fans and critics for taking risks as an actor, doing high-wire stuff in your roles—stuff that, if it didn't work, could be pretty embarrassing. Do you see it that way?

**PHOENIX:** It's not really a high wire. Or maybe it is a high wire but with a strong net and a huge soft mattress underneath. I mean, you're just making a movie. I look at these kids who are fucking 22 years old and playing in the World Cup finals, where you get one shot, no second take, and all the time the opposing team is screaming at you and waving stuff in your face to make you lose. Everyone on the movie is supporting the actors. Everybody wants one another to succeed. We're all working together.

**PLAYBOY:** So your adrenaline never pumps on a movie set?

**PHOENIX:** No, I still find it terrifying, and that's crazy, isn't it? In some ways, it's fucking ridiculous that I've literally been doing it for 30 years and still feel like it's the fucking first time I'm making a movie every time I go in. It's probably good, though, just because it means I still care and it matters so much to me. But I think it's a motivating anxiety and fear, as opposed to a debilitating one. Maybe sometimes it's debilitating, and it can get in the way. Hopefully I've gotten better at not fighting it, knowing it's there and just allowing myself to walk with my fear.

**PLAYBOY:** When you're not working, what do you do to get the adrenaline surging?

**PHOENIX:** I'm a total fucking coward. In some ways that's probably why I'm an actor. I have fear. I've never had the desire to bungee, to jump out of a plane, to zip-line or anything like that. I find it terrifying. I don't think I'm risky in that way. If anything, I've eased off. Four or five years ago I used to ride motorcycles, but you can't really ride without riding fast, and I don't know if that's worth it. It's great fun, but fuck, it's so dangerous. I think I've probably gotten even softer.

**PLAYBOY:** But you look healthy and in shape these days.

**PHOENIX:** I meditate, mornings at eight and again at night. I really don't know what the fuck that's about or why it works, but I

don't really know how Tylenol works either. Maybe it's a placebo. Whatever you do to take time out of your day and just stop for a while, I think is beneficial. At least it has been for me. I just started Iyengar yoga, something I'd avoided because I think it's boring.

**PLAYBOY:** So you're pushing through the boredom?

**PHOENIX:** For the Woody Allen movie I was very sedentary and out of shape, with a bit of a gut. By chance I was talking to somebody I'd known for some time but didn't know what he did. I asked him, and he said, "I teach yoga." I said, "Great, I'm coming tomorrow." After the first class I told him, "I'll be honest, I don't think I'm coming back. This is miserable, and I used to like you very much, and now I hate you. I don't want this to alter our relationship too much." But I've stuck with it because I like the idea of pushing myself. It's fun to break yourself mentally, give in to something and give up control. That's something I've had a hard time with before.

**PLAYBOY:** There was a rumor that you might be getting in shape to star in the Marvel Studios superhero epic *Doctor Strange*. But those negotiations seem to have faltered.

**PHOENIX:** I can't talk about it. I've met on all sorts of movies throughout the years. What seems appealing about some of them is the idea of pushing myself in a way that's out of my comfort zone. But really, it's what I'm always looking for—good characters, big ideas and a passionate filmmaker. If those things line up with any kind of movie, I have interest in it.

**PLAYBOY:** Were you into comic books growing up?

**PHOENIX:** There's some great Batman stuff and classic Frank Miller *Dark Knight* stuff and *Arkham Asylum*. But I was always a big Wolverine guy. I love Wolverine—big fucking great dramatic character. They're all conflicted, and they're really interesting.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever regretted saying no to a big movie, maybe even a Marvel movie?

**PHOENIX:** There's only one movie I regret saying no to—except the person who ended up doing it was so good and was absolutely meant to do it, so I don't have any regrets. I'm not going to say which one, but it was a really big hit. It's getting to the point where they're making some pretty decent movies. I thought *Iron Man* was fantastic.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you vote?

**PHOENIX:** Sure, the cowardly approach to voting—some pathetic, lame-ass way of voting for the better of two evils. I wish I were more involved politically. I vote, but I certainly don't know much about the issues. I don't say that with pride. It's terrible. I ought to.

**PLAYBOY:** What do you know now that you didn't know when you talked to *PLAYBOY* seven years ago?

**PHOENIX:** All I know is that I've been fortunate, and my good fortune continues. Other than that, the older I get, the more I know that I don't fucking know anything at all. I feel like I just make up shit, like, "I try not to have any rules," but maybe I do have rules. I don't fucking know. I'm trying to get better at being open to the mystery of it all.



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## NEXT MONTH



DOUGLAS PUMMELS TYSON AGAINST THE ODDS.



THE CRIMINALLY FUNNY NICK KROLL.

**LEADING LADIES**—IN OUR ANNUAL *PLAYMATE REVIEW* WE REVISIT THE 12 STUNNING LADIES WHO MADE 2014 A YEAR TO REMEMBER. WHICH OF THEM SHOULD BE CROWNED PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR? WE NEED YOUR HELP. PERHAPS **MAGGIE MAY** (ABOVE), THE JET-SETTING BRUNETTE WITH A LUST FOR LUXURY. OR IS IT **MISS MAY DANI MATHERS**, WHO EVOKED PAMELA ANDERSON IN HER SEXY, SANDY PICTORIAL? IT'S NOT AN EASY DECISION, GENTLEMEN. CHOOSE WISELY.

**THE MASTER OF SEX**—SINCE 1991 **DAN SAVAGE** HAS ADVISED AMERICANS ON THEIR CARNAL CURIOSITIES IN HIS SYNDICATED SEX COLUMN. FOR THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW*, **DAVID SHEFF** SITS DOWN WITH SAVAGE TO DEMYSTIFY RELATIONSHIPS, DISCUSS HIS ROLE AS AN ANTI-BULLYING, GAY-RIGHTS SPOKESMAN AND REVEAL HOW HE HUMILIATED A PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL.

**KROLL MODEL**—ON HIS EPNONYMOUS COMEDY CENTRAL SHOW, **NICK KROLL** PLAYS MEATHEADS, TOOLS, GUIDOS AND DOUCHEBAGS. BUT THE REAL MAN AIN'T HALF BAD. IN 20Q, KROLL TALKS TO **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** ABOUT HIS MULTIPLE PERSONAS, INCLUDING HOW AWESOME IT IS BEING AMY POEHLER'S BOYFRIEND.

**SEXUAL AWAKENINGS**—RELIVE 2014'S MOST SCINTILLATING AND JAW-DROPPING HEADLINES IN *THE YEAR IN SEX*, PLUS OUR FAVORITE BARED-SKIN SCENES FROM FILM AND TELEVISION.

**BRAWLERS AND BLOWS**—FEBRUARY 11, 1990, TOKYO. A HEAVY-WEIGHT TITLE IS ON THE LINE. **MIKE TYSON** ENTERS THE RING UNDEFEATED. **BUSTER DOUGLAS** FOLLOWS, ALREADY WRITTEN OFF BY PUNDITS. (HIS ODDS TO WIN? 42-1.) THEN DOUGLAS DELIVERS A MASSIVE, GAME-CHANGING BLOW. IN AN ORAL HISTORY FEATURING **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**, **JIM LAMPLEY**, **KEVIN ROONEY** AND MORE, **ERIC RASKIN** REMEMBERS ONE OF THE BIGGEST UPSETS THE WORLD OF SPORTS HAS EVER WITNESSED.

**FULL RIDE**—IN 1962 A REVOLUTIONIST GOVERNMENT BANNED DRAG RACING FROM THE STREETS OF CUBA. THE BAN HAS NOW BEEN LIFTED, AND A TROOP OF LOCAL SPEEDSTERS DREAM OF RIDING THEIR GORGEOUSLY RESTORED CLASSIC CARS TO GLORY. **WILLIAM WHEELER** REPORTS ON THE MAYHEM FROM HAVANA.

**THEFT AND OTHER ISSUES**—AFTER A MAN'S CAR—ALONG WITH HIS GOLF CLUBS AND A GERIATRIC DOG—IS STOLEN, HE BECOMES AIMLESSLY OBSESSED WITH FINDING THE CULPRIT. IN A NEW SHORT STORY, **T.C. BOYLE** TAKES US ON A JOURNEY THAT IS PART DETECTIVE WORK, PART SELF-DISCOVERY.

**PLUS**—**TYLER GRAHAM** ON BIG PHARMA'S LUCRATIVE MALE ENHANCEMENT DRUG, THE MOST-ANTICIPATED SHINY NEW AUTOS OF 2015, RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH **MISS JANUARY** AND **MISS FEBRUARY** AND MORE IN OUR HOLIDAY DOUBLE ISSUE.



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