

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

DECEMBER 2015

The Hateful Eight

AN ILLUSTRATED
PREVIEW OF
TARANTINO'S
LATEST EPIC

2015
*Holiday
Gift
Guide*

MISS DECEMBER

Eugena Washington

Pure
Ecstasy
THE WILD LEGAL
DAYS OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY
PARTY DRUG

+

DE LA HOYA ON
MAYWEATHER
MEET THE COP
WATCHERS
THE INTERVIEW:
BRYAN CRANSTON
HALSEY
CHOOSING THE
PERFECT BOURBON
20Q WITH
BILLY EICHNER



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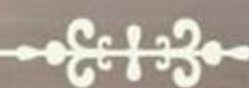
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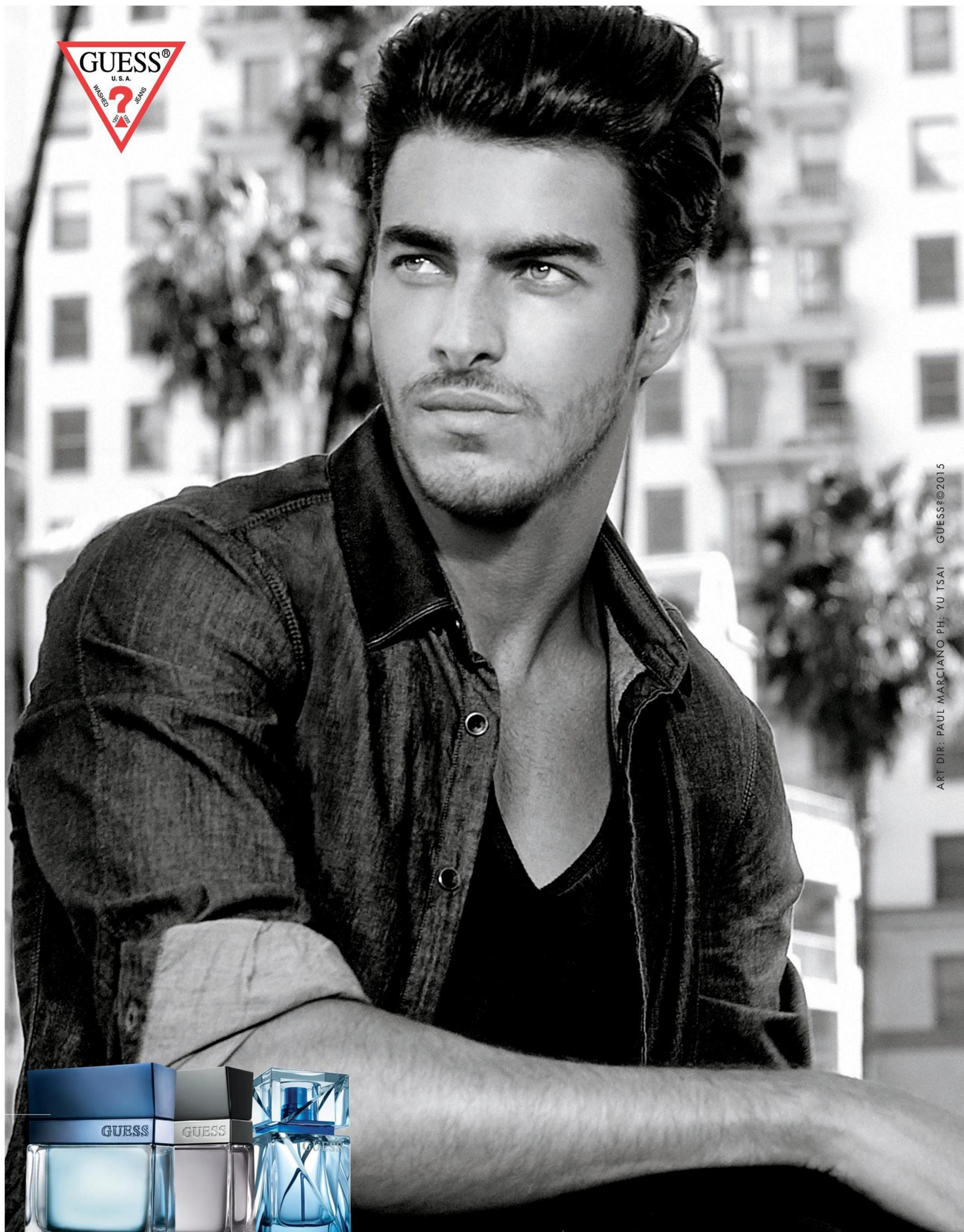
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How do you end unjustified police brutality in America? The deaths of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland and dozens more serve as tragic reminders of our nation's inability to answer that question. Antonio Buehler could hold part of the answer. In *Rise of the Cop Watchers*, **Frank Owen** profiles Buehler's Austin-based nonprofit, the Peaceful Streets Project, as well as other volunteers on the streets filming police encounters where they matter most: at the scene of the crime. Can they bring meaningful accountability to our troubled police state? One would hope so; in any case, their efforts are most welcome. Speaking of efforts, one of boxing's all-time greats, **Oscar De La Hoya**, questions those of another one of the greats. In "A Farewell to Floyd Mayweather," an exclusive *Talk* essay, De La Hoya says good-bye and good riddance to the highest-earning fighter in history, whose 49-0 record may not be as impressive as it seems on paper. Someone who is as impressive as he appears on paper is **Bryan Cranston**. He led one of the best TV shows of the century and then transitioned to box-office stardom—and he did it all after turning 50. His *Playboy* Interview with Eric Spitznagel confirms two truths: The man has perseverance and a wicked sense of humor (in an escalating series of pranks, Cranston forced his *Breaking Bad* co-star Aaron Paul to glimpse his ass). **Billy Eichner** doesn't need to unbutton anything for a laugh, though he wouldn't shy away from the chance. The *Difficult People* star explains in *20Q* how he turned his grouchy, manic self into an oddly charming character; inimitable photographer **Mary Ellen Matthews** captures his snarky persona. In *Forum*, **Thomas Page McBee** pens "Man in the Mirror," an ode to the American barbershop, both the dusty outposts of old and the nouveau joints of the barber renaissance, and relates how such shops helped him find his masculinity during his gender transition. **Quentin Tarantino** delivers a testosterone-packed graphic-novel treatment of *The Hateful Eight*, his psychopathic Western due out this month. Flanking him on this page is photographer **Josh Reed**, who shot the powerful image of burgeoning pop star Halsey for our *Becoming Attraction*. If a demented Western or youthful pop brilliance isn't your kind of high, turn to *Pure Ecstasy*, wherein **Peter Simek** recounts the stranger-than-fiction history of MDMA, from its unlikely roots in a Dallas nightclub to the schemers and prophets who would supply it to the world and fuel a revolution. It's one hell of a way to wrap up 2015, that's for sure.



Frank Owen



Oscar De La Hoya



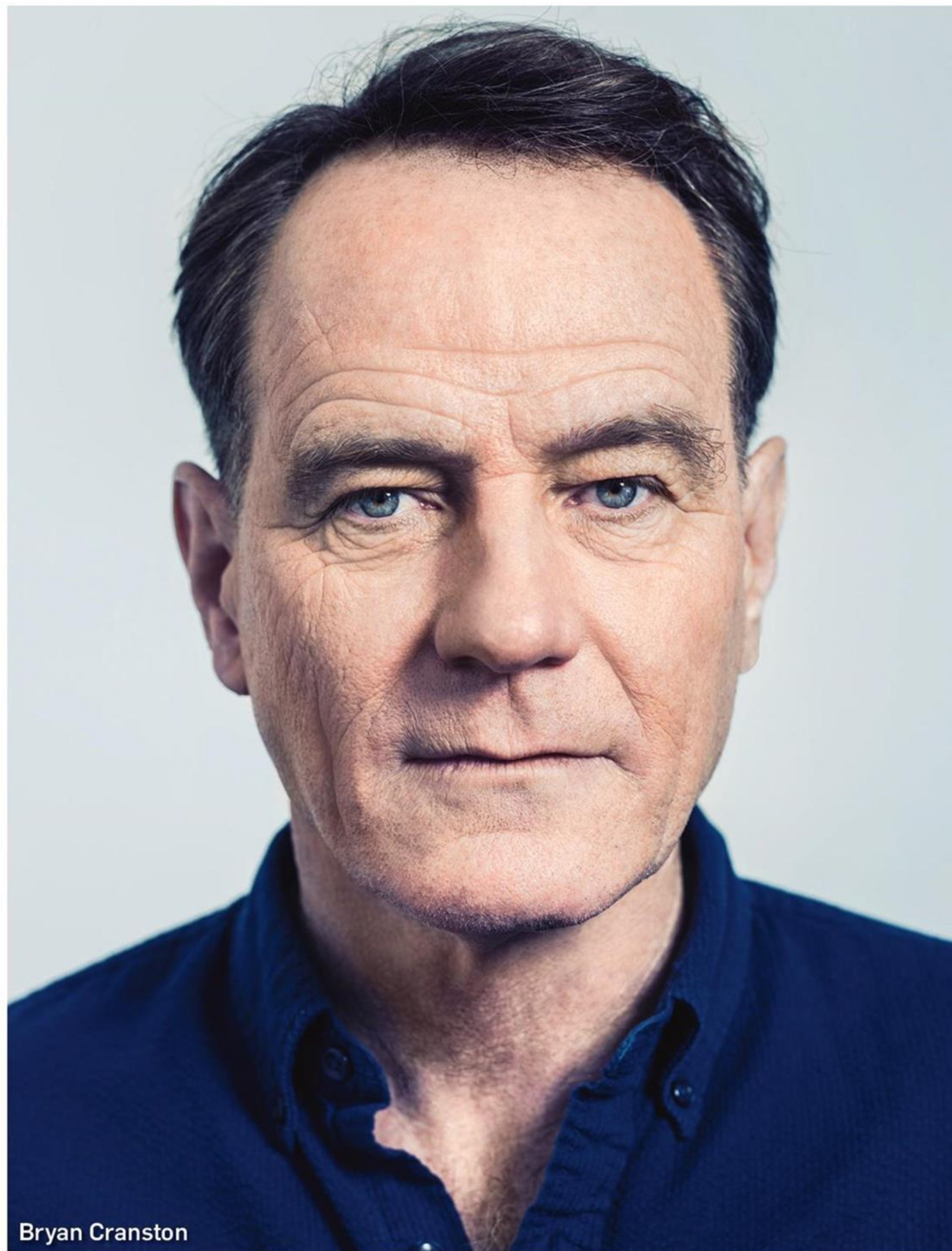
Mary Ellen Matthews



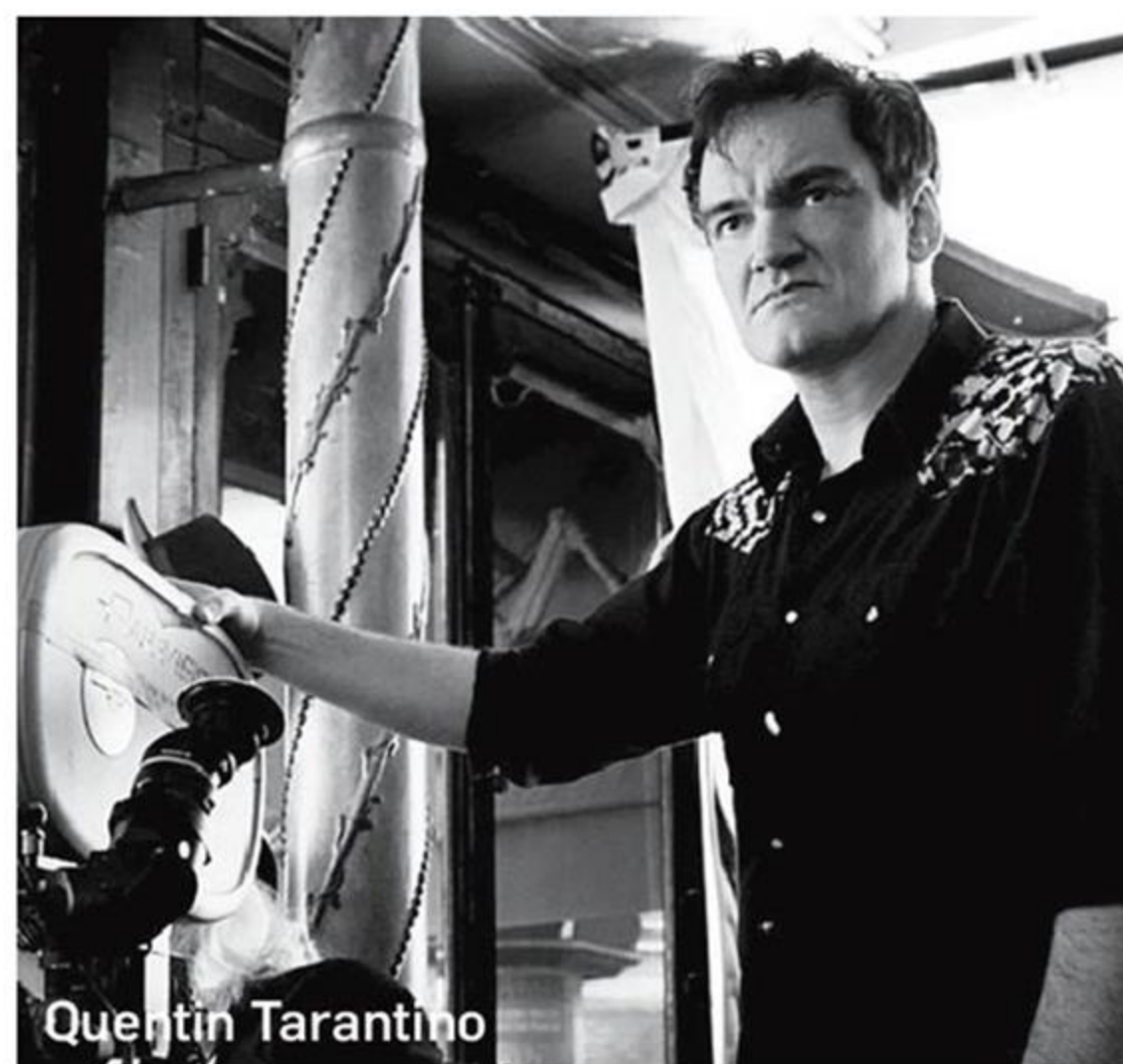
Thomas Page McBee



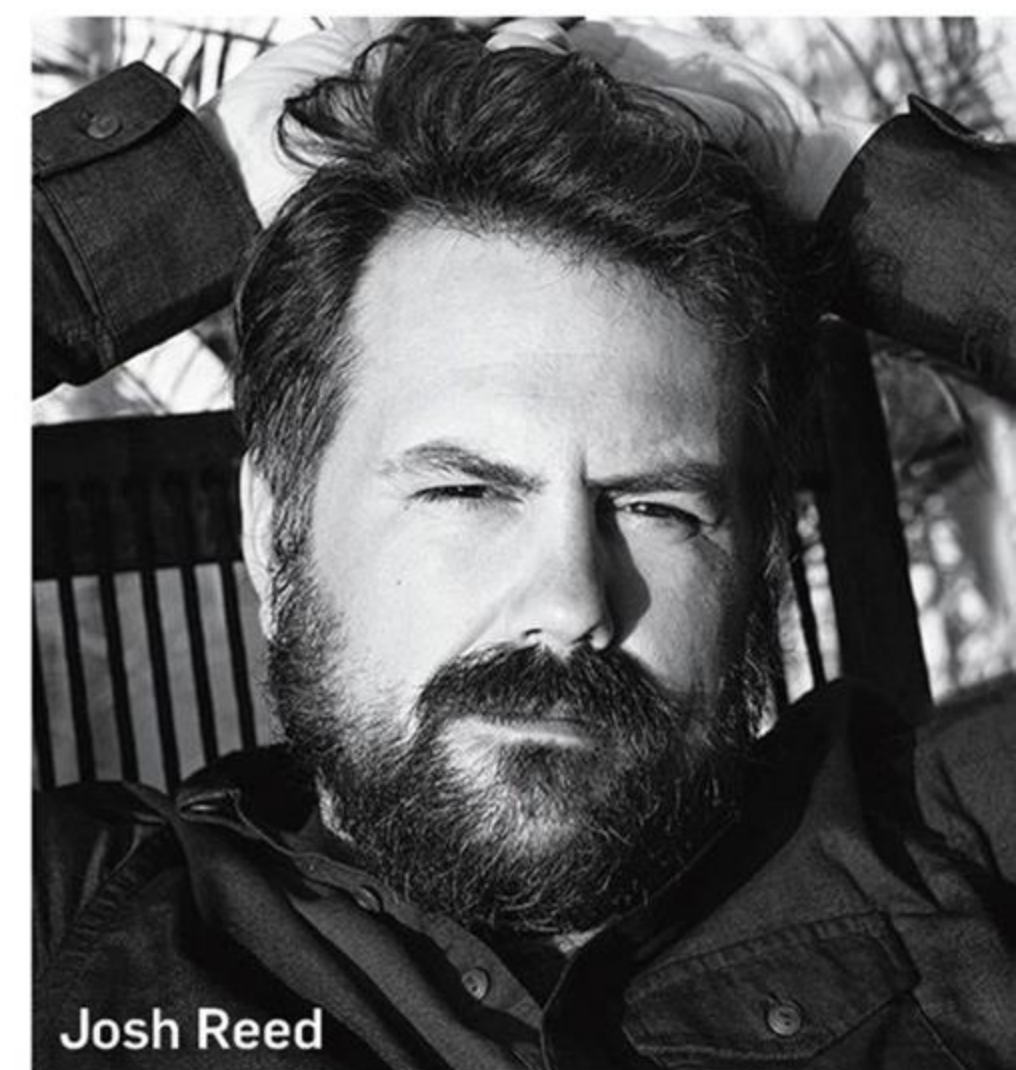
Peter Simek



Bryan Cranston



Quentin Tarantino



Josh Reed



Billy Eichner



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CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 58 RISE OF THE COP WATCHERS**
How do you check power-drunk police officers? **FRANK OWEN** trails activists who have a simple answer: Film them.
- 68 THE HATEFUL EIGHT**
Before **QUENTIN TARANTINO**'s latest blows you away in theaters, get a peek at a scene presented in comic book form.
- 92 PURE ECSTASY**
PETER SIMEK explores the stranger-than-fiction roots of our most potent modern drug.
- 98 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2015**
You've been good all year. Let these 14 uncommon gifts, selected by **VINCENT BOUCHER**, be good to you.

INTERVIEW

- 53 BRYAN CRANSTON**
Even before he found success, the actor lived a fuller life than most. **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** digs in to the past that brought Cranston to his incredible present.

20Q

- 76 BILLY EICHNER**
ROB TANNENBAUM traces how the most irascible man in Hollywood turned his grouchy disposition into comedy gold.

PAGE 102

COVER STORY

For Eugena Washington, a woman of ambition and boundless beauty, life's sexiest moments are when she's relaxed and unbuttoned, as she is on our cover—a moment our Rabbit would never miss.







JÖVAN

It's what attracts



PLAYBOY

CONTENTS

80



PLAYMATE: Eugena Washington

PLAYBOY FORUM

126 MAN IN THE MIRROR
THOMAS PAGE MCBEE explains how the boutique barbershop could redefine masculinity for the modern man, as it did for him.

127 LIFE, GAMES AND UTOPIA
When the work gets tough, the tough, like **JAMES SOMERS**, reconceptualize how they get working.

COLUMNS

44 THE PARENT TRAP
JOEL STEIN loves his mom and dad—as long as they’re nowhere near him, especially at Christmas.

46 THE SEARCH FOR “THE ONE”
How do you find the perfect partner? **HILARY WINSTON**’s answer: Settle in for the ride and let your significant other become “the one.”



DRINK

28 FIFTY SHADES OF BROWN
From favorites you know to rarities you may not, we present 13 bourbons to fend off the winter chill.

PICTORIALS

62 A SOUL AT SEA
With Swedish photographer and model Daniella Midenge as your captain, a sailing adventure takes on new dimensions.

80 GIRL’S NIGHT OUT
What does a woman without limits tackle once she’s done it all? In the case of Miss December Eugena Washington, you’re looking at it.

102 BODY WASH
Model Sasha Melnychuk is the girl we want to see in this classic American fantasy: a beautiful woman caring for a powerful car.



20Q: Billy Eichner

NEWS & NOTES

12 WORLD OF PLAYBOY
Summer Altice steals the scene (and Robert De Niro’s heart) in *Heist*; a tribute to a foundational PLAYBOY editor.

CARTOONS

96 CLASSIC CARTOONS OF CHRISTMAS PAST
If you’re low on Christmas cheer, look no further.

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 PLAYBILL**
- 14 DEAR PLAYBOY**
- 19 AFTER HOURS**
- 38 ENTERTAINMENT**
- 42 RAW DATA**
- 49 PLAYBOY ADVISOR**
- 90 PARTY JOKES**

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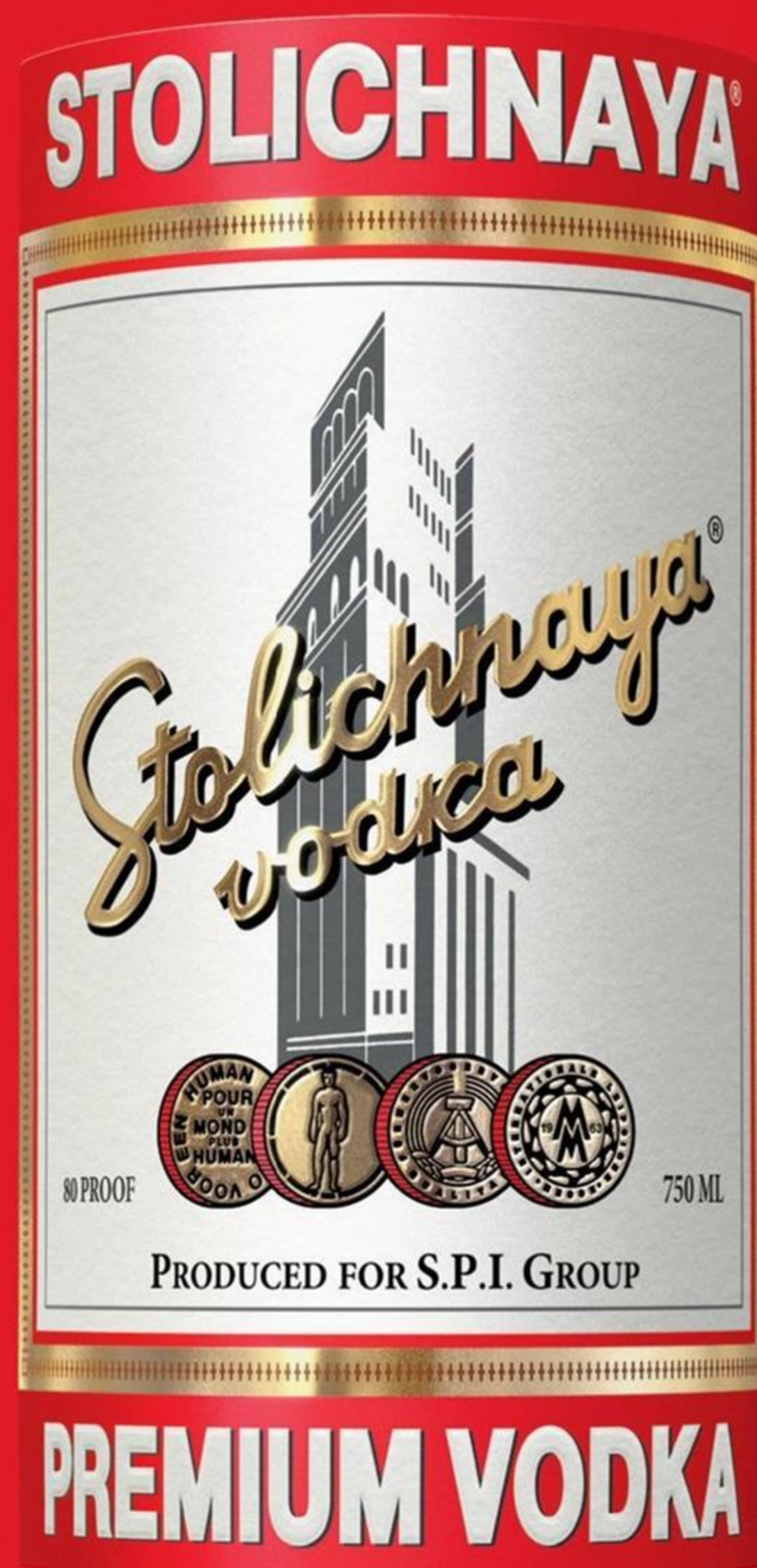
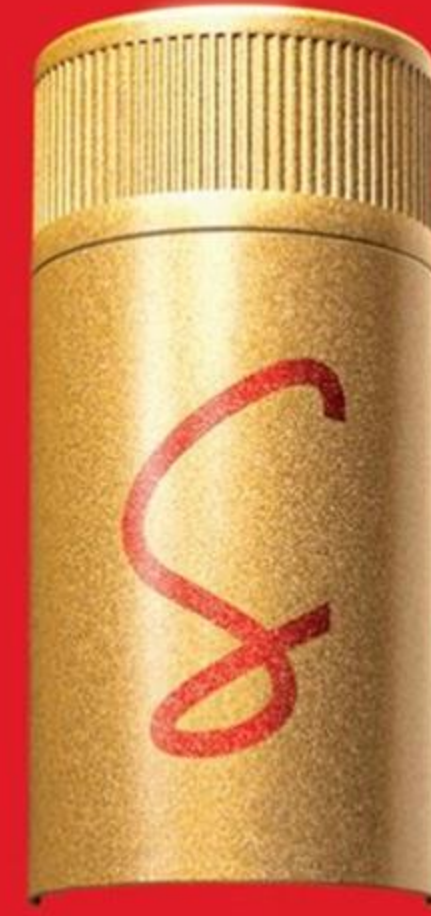
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WORLD of

PLAYMATE SIGHTINGS /

MANSION FROLICS /

NIGHTLIFE NOTES



SUMMER ALTICE STEALS OUR HEARTS IN *HEIST*

♣ Robert De Niro has charmed his fair share of beautiful women onscreen, including Michelle Pfeiffer, Rene Russo and Sharon Stone, but it's Miss August 2000 **Summer Altice** who woos the Oscar winner in *Heist*, a casino-crime thriller now playing in theaters and streaming on demand. "I play Cristal, who works in

the casino owned by De Niro's character. She's sexy and knows how to use that to get what she wants," says Summer, who will reunite with *Heist*'s screenwriter for a film starring Bruce Willis due next year. "Working with Bob was a dream come true. He is everything people read about him: kind, professional and a class act."

Playboy

PAST and PRESENT

• Twenty-five years ago, the Smithsonian declared the Playboy Bunny suit a "true national treasure" by inducting it into the National Museum of American History. The instantly recognizable ensemble, which debuted in 1960 at the original Playboy Club in Chicago, was also the first service uniform registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The cottontailed costume was soon making appearances beyond the Bunnies, with everyone from Barbara Walters to Paris Hilton donning the satin ears.



BREAKING NEWS

• Miss May 2015 **Brittany Brousseau** is the hostess with the mostest on *In Your Feed*, a weekly pop culture news show now streaming on Facebook.



STUNNING SHE IS

• What's more exciting than a new *Star Wars* movie finally hitting cinemas? PMOY 2007 **Sara Jean Underwood** channeling Yoda, Vader and more for Playboy.com.





PLAYBOY



BOARD APPROVED

- As a board member of the One Step Closer Foundation, Miss February 1999 **Stacy Fuson** uses her wits and fame to raise money for cerebral palsy research. This month the charity will hold its annual All-In Celebrity Poker Tournament, hosted by Cheryl Hines and Montel Williams, in L.A. With Fuson's support and appearances from her poker-faced Playmate friends, OSCF's tournaments have raised as much as \$100,000.

GRETCHEN EDGREN, 1931-2015

❖ In September we lost one of our longest-tenured editors, Gretchen Edgren, who contributed to this magazine for almost half a century. First hired in 1966 as an associate editor at *VIP*, the magazine for Playboy Club key holders, the Oregon-born, churchgoing journalist was later

named Senior Editor for *PLAYBOY*, where she conducted interviews with Clint Eastwood, Erica Jong and hundreds of Playmates. She also authored five coffee-table books including *Inside the Playboy Mansion*. "Gretchen was a very special part of Playboy," says Hef. "She will be deeply missed."



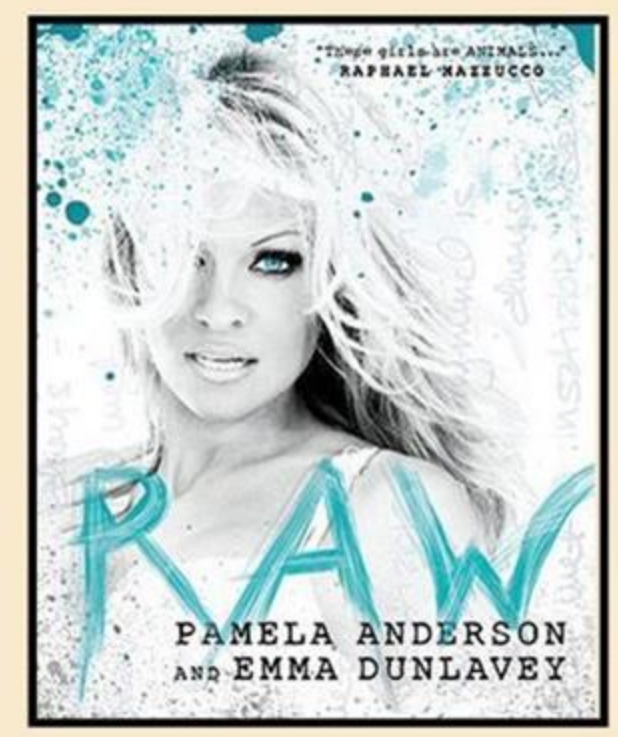

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1
SILLY BILLY
 • We turn the tables on question master Billy Eichner in 20Q. Hear what the know-it-all has to say about it from behind the scenes.

2
EUGENA WASHINGTON
 • Get a taste of the suite life with Miss December as she preps for a night on the town at a historic L.A. hotel.

3
HALSEY
 • She dropped a dope LP and solidified her place as music's breakout star. Meet Halsey on the set of *Becoming Attraction*.

PICTURE THIS
 • Miss February 1990 **Pamela Anderson** released her new book *Raw*, which comprises intimate behind-the-scenes photos alongside her prose and poetry.



BORDER BUMPIN'

❖ If a couple of the gorgeous volleyballers in the recent Carl's Jr. commercial for its Tex Mex Bacon Thick-burger look familiar, kudos to you. That's Miss

January 2015 **Brittney Ward** (second from right) and Miss October 2009 **Elle Evans** (third from left) bouncing on the beach with four other babes. Ace!





dear PLAYBOY

PRIVATE PARTS

Thanks for the great *Playboy Interview* with Joseph Gordon-Levitt (October). I've admired Gordon-Levitt since I first saw his work on *3rd Rock From the Sun*. He's a natural. It's nice to see he has managed to keep himself grounded as an adult and not turned down one of the standard Hollywood sad-ending pathways such as self-destructive addiction or self-absorbed assholery. I respect what he does as an actor and what he's trying to do with his production company HitRECORD. Plus, I think it's cool that he refuses to answer the interviewer's questions about his publicity-shy scientist wife but has no problem holding forth on his masturbation and pot habits. I'm looking forward to seeing him in *Snowden*.

Tish Joyce
Chicago, Illinois

I appreciate that Gordon-Levitt wants to "lubricate the conversation," but there comes a point when it's TMI.

Bob Hart
Los Angeles, California

I usually don't like to hear political arguments from celebrities, who generally come across as underinformed and overly enthusiastic. But Joseph Gordon-Levitt and his opinions on privacy are an exception. We have come to expect that our privacy will be invaded instead of expecting it to be respected. While the government and Google listen in on citizens without their permission (or understanding), not enough people are listening to those who say it's wrong. We need to open our ears.

Jon Barnes
San Francisco, California



SO BAD IT'S GOOD

The film *Manos: The Hands of Fate* holds a special place in my heart (*The Battle Over the Worst Movie Ever Made*, October). When my wife and I were first dating, we would often stay up late watching *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. The *Manos* episode was one of the first we watched together, and it quickly became a favorite. More than 20 years later, we still quote that movie and that episode of *MST3K*. It truly is one of the worst movies ever made, and that's what makes it so great!

John Lishamer
Batavia, Illinois

POPULAR WITH THE LADIES

My husband subscribes to PLAYBOY, but I look at the photos and read it more thoroughly than he does—and with much enjoyment. Yours may be my favorite magazine. On behalf of like-minded women everywhere, keep up the good work!

Christina Gallagher
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Thanks, Christina. We like you too.

BULL'S-EYE

In *The Perfect Weapon* (October), William Wheeler reveals a serious problem within the National Rifle Association: Its membership is composed overwhelmingly of responsible gun owners who use their guns for sport and/or for personal protection, but the NRA

board is controlled by gun and ammunition manufacturers, whose sole objective is to sell as many guns and as much ammo as they legally can. Most owners would welcome a gun that becomes useless if stolen and that their children could not use improperly, but it is in gun manufacturers' economic interest to make sure the weapons remain easy to steal and hard to trace. Wheeler estimates that 250,000 to 300,000 guns are



stolen each year, giving manufacturers the opportunity to sell that many more guns to replace the stolen ones. Reports of these thefts add to the climate of fear that causes other responsible citizens to buy guns for protection. These guns can also be stolen, and the circle keeps widening. It is time for the NRA membership to reassert control over their organization so it truly represents their interests and is not merely a marketing tool for selling guns.

Richard Kline
Williamsburg, Virginia

NOT TOO OLD TO RUN...

In "Why Jerry Brown Can't Be President" (*Forum*, September), Ashton Applewhite quotes Bill Maher as saying that Brown "took a broken state and fixed it." Bull! I've lived in southern California for 40 years. Brown took the Golden State and flushed it down the toilet. Brown doesn't deserve to be president, but not because of his age. He doesn't deserve to be president because he's incompetent.

John C. Vita
Huntington Beach, California

BODY BLOWS

It's really a pity that Dr. James Andrews (*The Most Important Man in Sports*, October) hasn't chosen to devote his considerable talent and resources, including a multimillion-dollar facility, to more socially responsible medicine. Instead he caters to people who willingly engage in dangerous, often injurious, activities, all in the name of "sport."

Jane Ramsay
Cambridge, Massachusetts

GETTING BUSY IN THE BIG APPLE

New York City is a great choice to top PLAYBOY's list of *America's 25 Sexiest Cities* (September). Let me add another explanation for why New Yorkers have such active sex lives: demographics. The under-30 population in Manhattan is disproportionately college-educated. Because women have been graduating

from college in much greater numbers than men since the 1990s, the millennial dating pool now has four college-grad women for every three college-grad men. That's nationwide. But in Manhattan, the dating pool for straight people is even more lopsided—three women for every two men. The reason: Gay-friendly cities such as New York, Los Angeles and Miami tend to have disproportionate numbers of gay men but not lesbian women. And sex studies show that straight people have more sex and better sex when men are in short supply. There's more foreplay and experimentation too.

For educated heterosexual women who put a high priority on marriage, lopsided gender ratios have a downside: It's harder to find a match (at least if they



won't consider dating a working-class guy). But shortages of men seem to spur better sex lives, even among married folks. Indeed, it's no coincidence that three other cities on PLAYBOY's list—Houston, Phoenix and Portland—also have many more women than men among under-30 college grads.

Jon Birger

New York, New York

*Birger is a journalist and author of *Datonomics: How Dating Became a Lopsided Numbers Game*.*

SCHOOLED

Playboy's Top Party Schools (October) is spot-on; the bashes at the University of Illinois are always more epic than those in Madison or Ann Arbor. But you describe Four Loko as the "infamous caffeinated alcohol." I thought the drink's recipe had changed.

Tom Marbano

Urbana, Illinois

You're right. Four Loko now has 12 percent alcohol and zero percent caffeine.

Joe Paterno may have turned a blind eye to sex-abuse allegations, but he did not actively help cover up a scandal. I'll drink Paterno beer in good conscience.

Stephen Van Eck

Lawton, Pennsylvania

WRITE ON

I expected *My Feet Are Fire* (October), the winning entry in the 2015 Playboy College Fiction Contest, to take a dark

turn toward violence and sensationalism, like so much of today's fiction. But Donnie Watson surprised me with his touching and life-affirming ending. He has a promising literary career ahead of him.

Winona Stewart

Newark, New Jersey

WORKING UP A SWEAT

Thank you, good people, for what is now my favorite pictorial: *Physical Attraction* (September) with Heather Depriest.

Luciano South

Columbus, Ohio

Let's get physical with Heather. She is totally hot.

William Turner

Massillon, Ohio

BOOTED AND SUITED

Maybe I'm a curmudgeon, but the turtleneck Ed Helms wears in *Savile Disobedience* (September) reminds me of Howard Wolowitz's on *The Big Bang Theory*. Whenever I upgrade from jeans, rugby jerseys and hiking boots, I prefer a blue or gray suit with a pin or chalk stripe. I don't own dress shoes; I match cowboy boots with my suits and sport coats. I suppose it's a Western thing.

Mike Gary

Fort Collins, Colorado

IMPRESSIVE FROM ANY ANGLE

Thanks for the gorgeous pictorial with Ana Cheri (*Ma Cheri*, October). She owns a business and is beautiful to boot—wow!

Joe Robertson

New York, New York



Ana Cheri: all-around alluring.

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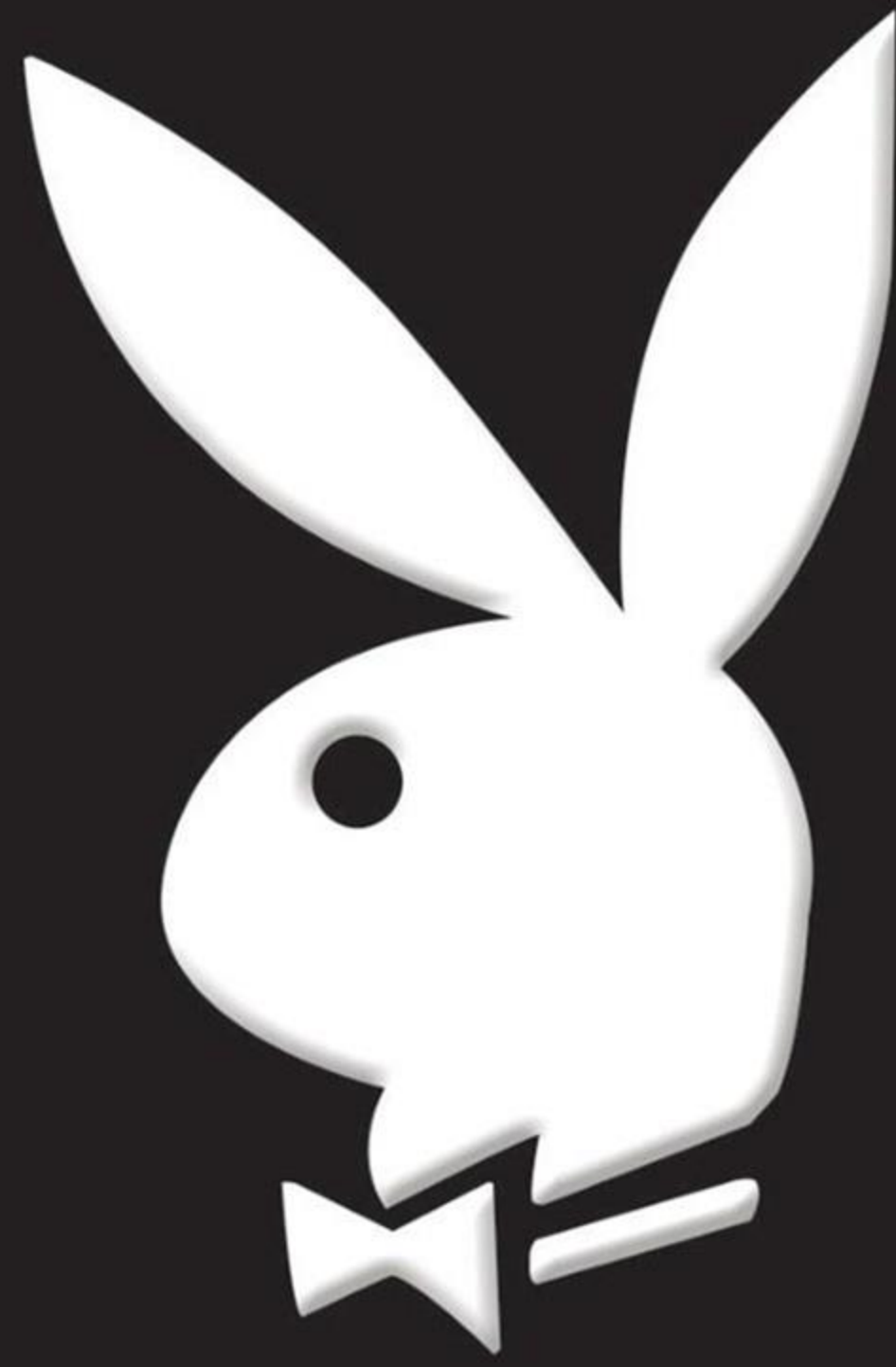
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DECEMBER 2015

AFTER HOURS

Photography by
JOSH REED

BECOMING ATTRACTION

Halsey

"I'VE LEARNED to pull confidence out of myself like I'm fucking siphoning water from 10 feet beneath the soil," says 21-year-old Halsey, whose music is a haunting amalgamation of Biggie, Alanis and the Cure. When her dystopian LP *Badlands* charted as 2015's second-biggest debut by a female artist, bloggers put her in a box: She's biracial; she's bisexual; she's this; she's that. But labels hardly inhibit Halsey, who is wrapping a tour with the Weeknd. "My confidence grew from being intelligent, from being sexual," she says. "Put me on stage in front of 100,000 people if you want. You can't scare me."



NOT JUST — ANY — ADVICE

FROM 2013 PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR
RAQUEL POMPLUN

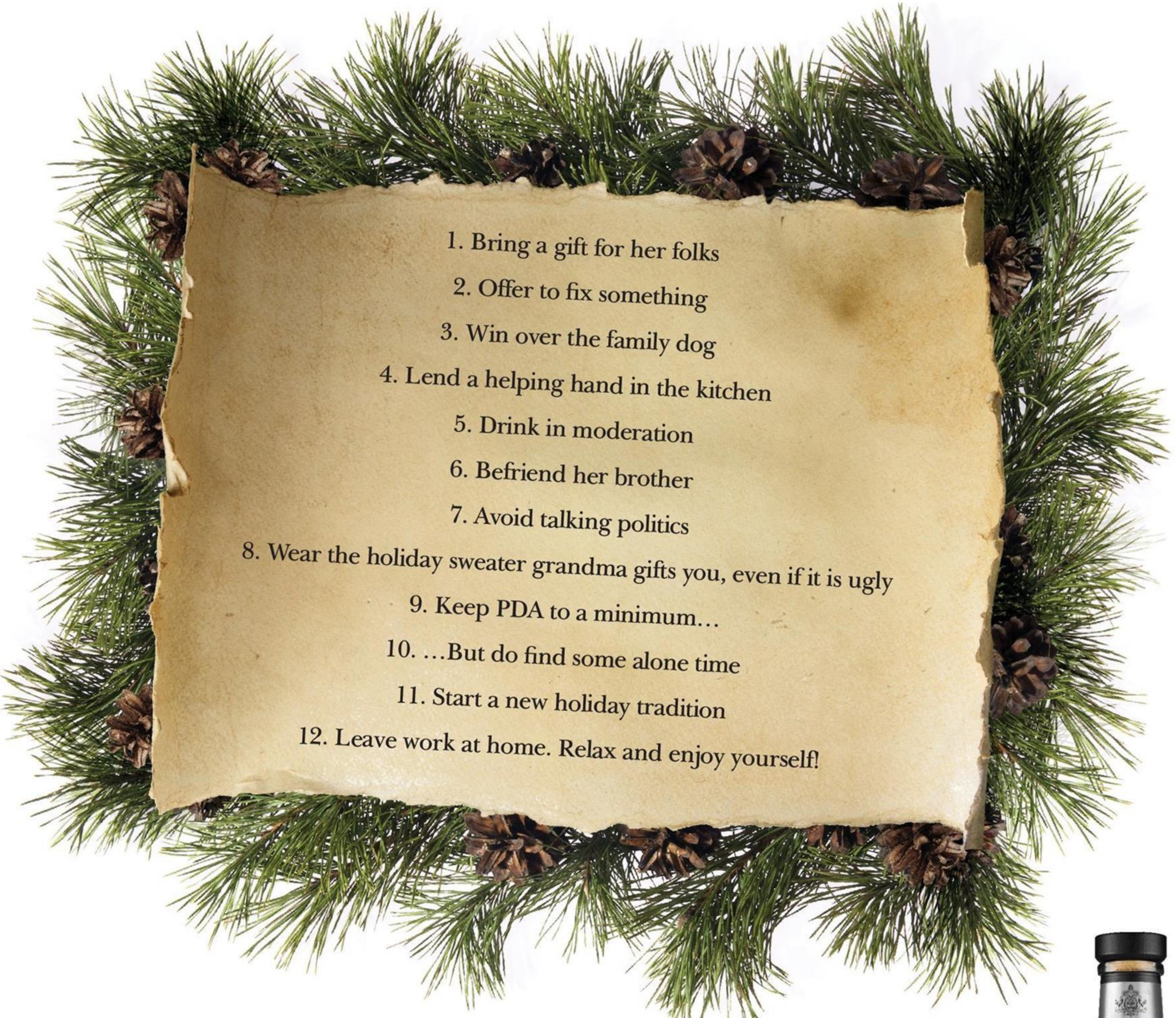


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BLACK BARREL
TEQUILA AÑEJO
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750 ML
40% ALC/VOL

100% PURO DE AGAVE
HORNITOS
PLATA
NUESTRO TEQUILA
HECHO EN MEXICO
CASA SAUZA
750 ML
40% ALC/VOL

How to
**SPEND THE HOLIDAYS
WITH HER FAMILY**

*Dealing with your own family is stressful enough.
Luckily, Raquel Pomplun is here with some helpful tips for surviving
her family and making the perfect impression.*

- 
1. Bring a gift for her folks
 2. Offer to fix something
 3. Win over the family dog
 4. Lend a helping hand in the kitchen
 5. Drink in moderation
 6. Befriend her brother
 7. Avoid talking politics
 8. Wear the holiday sweater grandma gifts you, even if it is ugly
 9. Keep PDA to a minimum...
 10. ...But do find some alone time
 11. Start a new holiday tradition
 12. Leave work at home. Relax and enjoy yourself!

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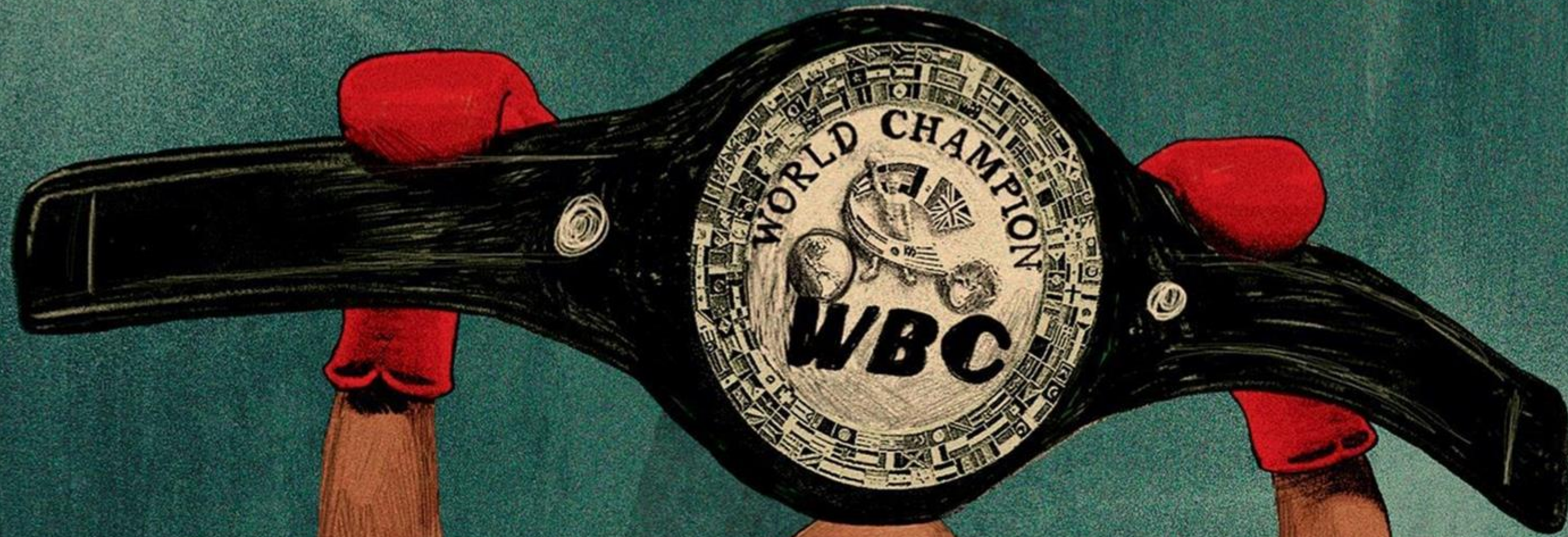
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TALK | WHAT MATTERS NOW



A FAREWELL TO FLOYD MAYWEATHER

HALL OF FAME BOXER OSCAR DE LA HOYA SAYS GOOD-BYE TO "MONEY" MAYWEATHER

Dear Floyd: You did it. You made it to the 49–0 mark, a milestone that you like to say only the great Rocky Marciano reached but that was actually achieved by others, including my idol Julio César Chávez—but who’s counting? And now you’re retiring. Again. (The first time was after our fight in 2007.) This time you say it’s for real. You’re serious about hanging up the gloves. On to bigger and better things. So I’m writing to you today to wish you a fond farewell. Truth be told, I’m not unhappy to see you retire. Neither are a lot of boxing fans. Scratch that. *Most* boxing fans. Why? Because the fight game will be a better one without you in it.

Let’s face it: You were boring. Just take a look at your most recent performance, your last hurrah in the ring, a 12-round decision against Andre Berto. How to describe it? A bust? A disaster? A snooze fest? An affair so one-sided that on one judge’s card Berto didn’t win a single round? Everyone in boxing knew Berto didn’t have a chance. I think more people watched *Family Guy* reruns that night than tuned in to that pay-per-view bout. But I didn’t mind shelling out \$75 for the HD broadcast. In fact it’s been a great investment. When my kids have trouble falling asleep, I don’t have to read to them anymore. I just play them your Berto fight. They don’t make it past round three.

Another reason boxing is better off without you: You were afraid. Afraid of taking chances. Afraid of risk. A perfect example is your greatest “triumph,” the long-awaited record-breaking fight between you and Manny Pacquiao. Nearly 4.5 million buys! More than \$400 million in revenue! Headlines worldwide! How can that be bad for boxing? Because you lied. You promised action and entertainment and a battle for the ages, and you delivered none of the above. The problem is, that’s precisely how you want it. You should have fought Pacquiao five years ago, not five months ago. That, however, would have been too dangerous. Too risky. You’ve made a career out of being cautious. You won’t get in the ring unless you have an edge. Sure, you fought some big names. But they were past their prime. Hell, even when we fought in 2007—and I barely lost a split decision—I was at the tail end of my career. Then later you took on Mexican megastar Saúl “Canelo”

Álvarez, but he was too young and had to drop too much weight.

Me? I got into this business to take chances. I took on all comers in their prime. The evidence? I lost. Six times. After 31 wins, my first loss was to Félix Trinidad, and I learned a valuable lesson that is true both in the ring and in life: Don’t run. I didn’t stop taking on the best of the best. After beating Derrell Coley, I took on “Sugar” Shane Mosley at the height of his powers—undefeated and considered by many to be the pound-for-pound best in the world. Again, I lost. After four wins against more top-ranked fighters I took on Mosley again. We can debate who actually won the rematch, but the judges had me losing that one as well.

YOU’LL BE REMEMBERED AS THE GUY WHO MADE THE MOST MONEY. AS FOR YOUR FIGHTS? WE’VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN THEM.

Did I go easy after that? No. I moved up to middleweight to win a belt and faced one of the greatest middleweights of all time, Bernard Hopkins. After a body shot that I’m still feeling took me out of the fight, I took on two more guys at the height of their power who, many years later, would finally face each other at the ages of 36 and 38—Manny Pacquiao and you. When fighters do that—when they risk losing—that’s when everyone wins. The mantra of my firm Golden Boy Promotions is simple: the best taking on the best. It’s too bad you didn’t do the same.

You took the easy way out. When you weren’t dancing around fading stars (show idea for you: *Dancing Around the Fading Stars*), you were beating up on outclassed opponents. A lot of your opponents were above-average fighters, but they weren’t your caliber. You’re a very talented fighter, the best defensive fighter of our generation. But what good is talent if you don’t test it? Muhammad Ali did. Sugar Ray Leonard did. You? Not a chance. You spent 2000 to 2010 facing forgettable opening acts like Victoriano

Sosa, Phillip N’dou, DeMarcus Corley, Henry Bruseles and Sharmba Mitchell. There were guys out there—tough scary opponents like Antonio Margarito and Paul Williams—but you ran from them. Were you ever on the track team in high school? You would have been a star.

Boxing will also be a better place without the Mouth. Your mouth, to be precise, the one that created “Money” Mayweather. I know you needed that Money Mayweather persona. Before he—and Golden Boy Promotions—came along, nobody watched your fights. You couldn’t even sell out your hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Mouth made you money. More money than you could spend in a lifetime. (Wait, I’ve seen those episodes of *24/7*. You probably will spend it all.) But the Mouth doesn’t have a place in boxing; save it for the WWE. Unless you’re someone like Ali, whose fights were as scintillating as his banter, the all-talk, no-entertainment model cheapens our sport. Boxers should speak with their fists and with their hearts. They don’t have to say anything to prove themselves. You’re going to have a legacy. You’ll be remembered as the guy who made the most money. As for your fights? We’ve already forgotten them.

Now that you’re stepping aside, attention can be turned to the sport’s real stars: the brawlers, the brave, the boxers who want nothing more than to face the best and therefore be the best. There’s Canelo, Kazakh KO sensation Gennady Golovkin, ferocious flyweight Román González, slugger Sergey Kovalev and a host of up-and-comers including Terence Crawford, Vasyl Lomachenko and Keith Thurman. Want to see what a monster fight looks like? Canelo takes on Miguel Cotto on November 21. It won’t do 4.4 million in PPV buys, but everyone who watches it will be thrilled. And that’s no empty promise.

You’re moving on to a new phase of life now, a second act. I’m sure it will be nice not to have to train year-round. To get out of the gym and spend time with your family. But I’m wondering what you’re going to do. You have a lot of time and, at the moment, a lot of money. Maybe you’ll put your true skills to work and open a used-car dealership or run a circus. Or maybe you’ll wind up back on *Dancing With the Stars*. It’s a job that’s safe, pays well and lets you run around on stage. Something you’ve been doing for most of your career. ■



Q+A



WAVVES

LIFE ADVICE FROM FRONTMAN NATHAN WILLIAMS

• “When I’m driving, I’ll just pull up Voice Memos and sing stupidly into it,” says Wavves mastermind Nathan Williams (at left above). “I’m constantly having ideas, and then there’s a process to it that comes later.” Williams may not think of himself as prolific, but he’s probably the only one. In 2015 alone he released a collaborative album with Cloud Nothings and put out the fifth full-length Wavves album, aptly titled *V*, which sees him taking the band’s punky brand of pop to infectious new levels. We caught up with the outspoken frontman to learn how he deals with critics and why you should never, ever listen to your guidance counselor.—*Jonah Bayer*

PLAYBOY: *The phrase “surf music” pops up a lot when people describe your music.*

WAVVES: That’s just something journalists say because I’ve lived in San Diego and Los Angeles. I guess my music sounds sunny, but I was never trying to make it sound like surf music. I don’t try to have a reference point for what I want something to sound like. I do like certain surf bands, but I mostly listen to, like, Young Thug. I guess it’s one of those things where people still call me a stoner/surfer/slacker, and it doesn’t really make a lot of sense.

PLAYBOY: *Do your critics bother you?*

WAVVES: I try to ignore them, because if I get upset or annoyed, what’s the point? When I first started doing this, I showed my dad something somebody had written where a guy called me a genius. My dad looked at me and said, “Just remember, if you believe that, then you have to believe the negative stuff they say about you too.” After that I realized that in the end it doesn’t really matter. I like to write songs, and it’s as simple as that.

PLAYBOY: *You started this project in your bedroom.*

WAVVES: It’s bizarre. I remember talking to a guidance counselor in high school, trying to figure out where to go to college. I didn’t have very good grades and I got in trouble a lot. He was like, “What do you want to do?” I said, “I want to be a musician.” His response was, “What real job do you want to do?” I dropped out of high school, and now I have a real job as a musician, so it just goes to show you.

DRONING ON

FROM DRAG RACING TO DRUG SMUGGLING, DRONES ARE DOING ALMOST EVERYTHING THESE DAYS. WE CHART THE LATEST IN UNMANNED AIRCRAFT





San Francisco company **Trees Delivery** aims to launch a marijuana delivery fleet by next year, pending FAA approval.

Meet **Lily**, the self-flying camera drone that's cooler than your selfie stick and captures what your GoPro can't.

Why not rent a luxury suite with champagne drone service at the Casa Madrona hotel in Sausalito, California? Price: \$10,000.

Fly your own **Millennium Falcon** with this *Star Wars*-themed drone that is sure to freak out your pets. Mini Han and Chewie not included.

FRIVOLOUS

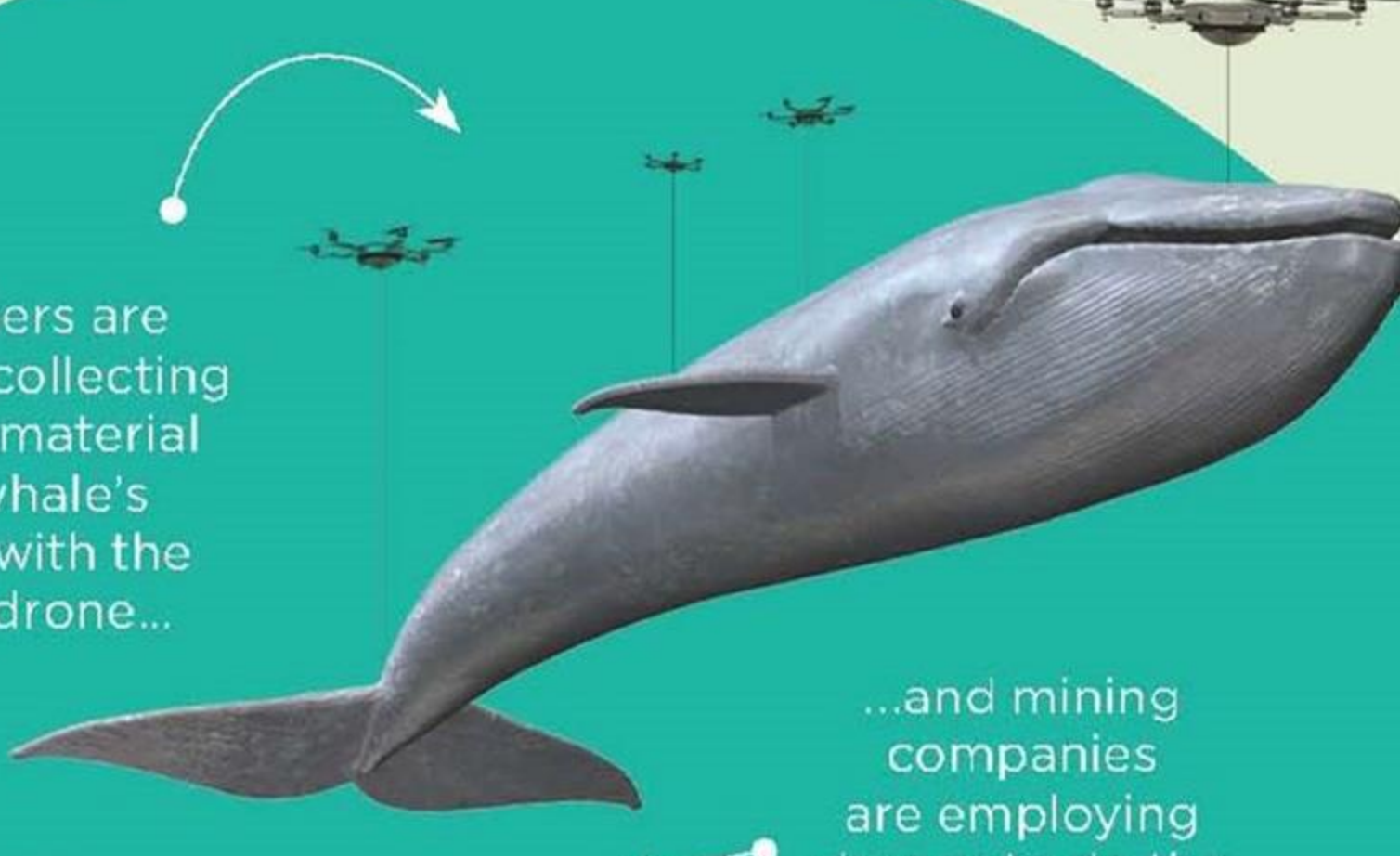

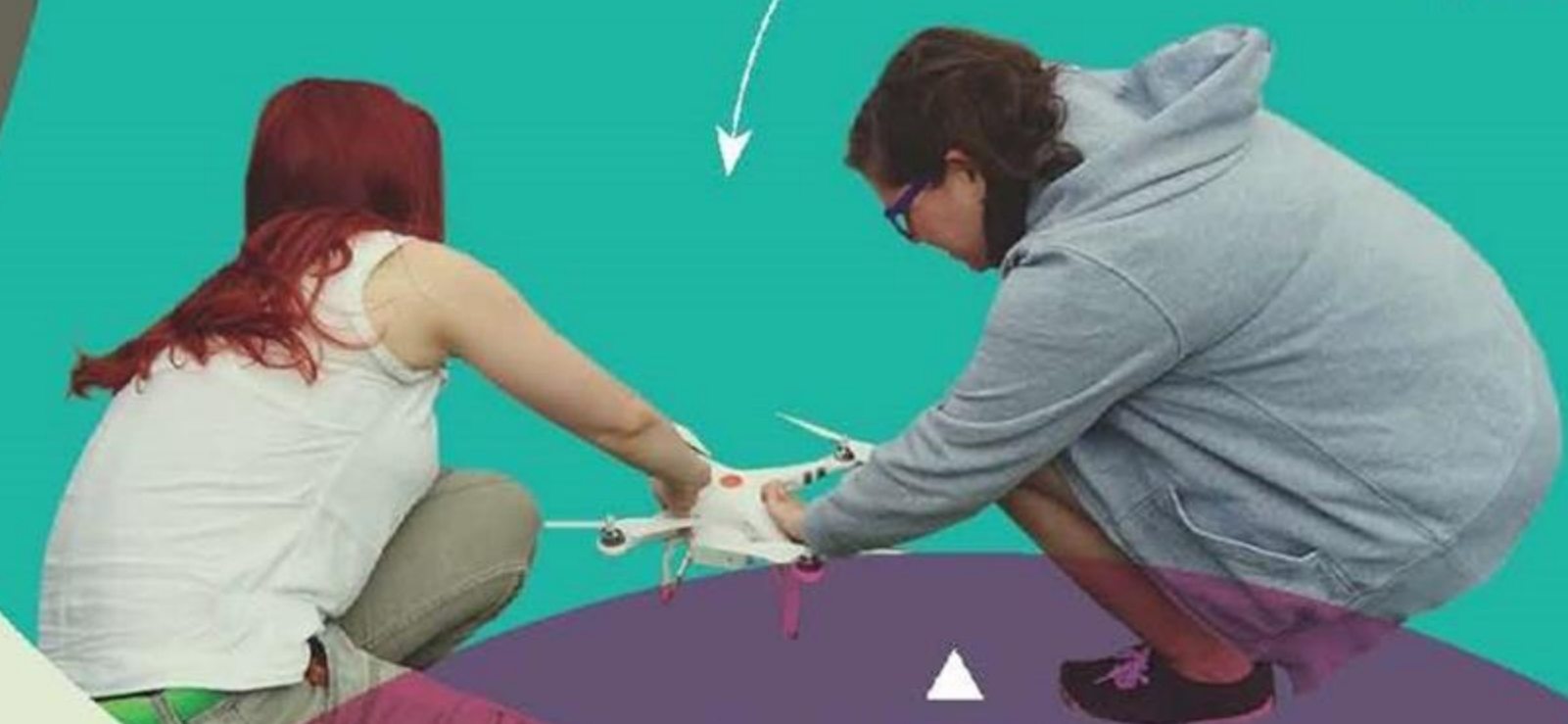
Researchers are harmlessly collecting biological material from a whale's blowhole with the **Snotbot** drone...

...and mining companies are employing drones to do the dangerous work.

Meanwhile, Dutch activists **Women on Waves** organized a drone army to successfully deliver abortion pills in Poland.

AWESOME

USEFUL

The world's first **Flying Robot International Film Festival** in San Francisco included a special category titled LOL WTF.

Ohio State's Braxton Miller arrived at Buckeye football camp with a drone cameraman documenting his final season.

Not just a bad pun: the **Game of Drones** fight club is real...

...and so are drone racing leagues.

AWFUL






BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU

Higher education? Anti-cheating drones in China busted nine test-takers last year.

Hello, worst nightmare: Engineers at the University of Illinois created **RoboBat**, an energy-efficient drone with simulated bat wings in place of propellers.

Two men pleaded guilty this year to picking up 28 pounds of heroin from a drug-mule drone traveling across the U.S. border.

AWFUL







LEGION OF SHROOM

THREE TOP CHEFS SCHOOL YOU ON HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE MUSHROOM (WITHOUT A BUTTON IN SIGHT)

Thank God for portobello burgers—they're just as satisfying as thick beef patties," said no one, ever. Mushrooms are flavorful, but they don't release those fatty juices onto your tongue that make your taste buds almost pulsate with pleasure. The digestive system may be happier with a fungal burger, but the palate is not fooled. The trick is to appreciate mushrooms for what they are: earthy, filling, umami-packed and full of variety beyond the button and the portobello. Each type of mushroom has its own flavor profile, and each takes well to seasoning and preparation. Here, three chefs show how to make the most of three different kinds.—*Julia Bainbridge*

SHIITAKE

Gabe Rosen, Biwa, Portland, Oregon

• "Mushroom yakitori is pretty typical in Japan," says Rosen. At Biwa, he cuts the stems off shiitakes and skewers them crosswise. Then he lightly brushes them with a mix of canola and sesame oils, salts them and grills them cap side down until just cooked through, about three minutes. "You get the pure and true flavor of mushroom with really great texture," he says.

MAITAKE

Justin Smillie, Upland, New York City

• "It's this generation's bloomin' onion," says Smillie. To prepare a maitake (pictured above), he heats canola oil to 350 degrees and fries the mushroom whole, moving it with tongs to submerge every side until golden and crispy, about three and a half minutes. Then he drains it on paper towels and salts it. At Upland it's paired with Cloumage cheese. "It's rather acidic and cuts the earthy pungency of the mushroom," Smillie says, adding that you could use crème fraîche or even ranch dressing instead. "I love ranch. I'm not going to deny my youth!"

LOBSTER

Nicholas Arnerich, Renata, Portland, Oregon

• "Lobster mushrooms bring a hint of the sea," says Arnerich. "There's a little brininess to them, and they have good depth and great texture." Chefs at Renata dot a big lobster mushroom with butter, season it with salt and pepper and then roast it at 475 degrees for about 15 minutes. Sautéed corn kernels and lovage greens serve as a kind of chunky sauce. "These mushrooms can be large and meaty, so this dish acts as a whole entrée."



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FIFTY SHADES OF BROWN

THE BOURBON BOOM CAN BE MIND-BOGGLING. HERE ARE THE TOP SIPS FOR EVERY TASTE



1 | KNOB CREEK SMOKED MAPLE, \$42
Peppery, rich and autumnal—and sweet as its name.

2 | BULLEIT RYE, \$40
A crisp and honeyed whiskey with both backbone and balance.

3 | ALBERTA RYE WHISKY DARK BATCH, \$30
A blended rye dosed with a bit of sherry makes for an earthy and alluring caramel complexity.

4 | WHISTLEPIG OLD WORLD, \$118
This 12-year-old whiskey is finished in Madeira, sauternes and port casks for added flavor.

5 | NEW YORK DISTILLING RAGTIME RYE, \$50
A mixology-ready rye from a favorite distillery of the cocktail cognoscenti.

6 | MAKER'S MARK CASK STRENGTH, \$65
This limited edition bottling is higher proof but just as smooth as its cousin.

7 | JIM BEAM RYE, \$22
A solid, peppery and incredibly affordable rye.

8 | OLD FORESTER BIRTHDAY BOURBON, \$80
This extremely rare and satisfying bottling is quickly snapped up by collectors.

9 | RUSSELL'S RESERVE SINGLE BARREL RYE, \$60
A spice-forward bottling from the best barrels in Russell's rickhouse.

10 | WOODFORD RESERVE SWEET MASH REDUX, \$50
A delicious limited release from Woodford's Master's Collection that starts sweet and finishes dry.

11 | ORPHAN BARREL RHETORIC, \$120
Twenty-one years in the barrel imparts an unmistakable woody note to this limited bottling.

12 | WILD TURKEY 101, \$26
The insider's smart buy that holds its own against more expensive bottlings.

13 | JEFFERSON'S OCEAN: AGED AT SEA, \$100
This bourbon is aged in barrels on a ship, adding deeper flavor and complexity beyond its years.



SWISS + MADE



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RIO: A Pocket Guide

1. The Hotel

→ The Fasano is a chic 89-room respite with a rooftop pool offering championship views of Ipanema. Downstairs at the Baretto-Londra nightclub, beautiful people dance on the tables until four in the morning on weekends.

2. The Coffee Shop

→ In Santa Teresa (Rio's eternal cool-kid neighborhood) the locals get their caffeine from Cafecito, where the patio provides the ideal spot for reading.

3. The Caipirinha

→ The ingredients may be simple (cachaça, sugar and lime) but you'll find no shortage of advice when making a caipirinha. Mixologist Paulo Freitas of Diageo—the luxury spirits company—has his own tips. “The secret is love. Don't get angry at the lime. If you are angry, you will over-muddle,” he says. Noted. He recommends Galeto Sat's, a dive in Copacabana better known for rotisserie chicken, as the best undercover caipirinha bar in Rio.

4. The Restaurant

→ At the Michelin-starred Lasai, chef Rafa Costa e Silva serves up a Basque-tinged tasting menu (inset) from an airy townhouse with views of *Christ the Redeemer*. Hashtag: blessed.

KEEPING IT RIO

WHY WAIT FOR THE OLYMPICS WHEN YOU CAN SHAKE OFF WINTER'S CHILL IN BRAZIL'S RELAXED PARTY PLAYGROUND?

It sounds like Snapple bottle-cap trivia, but the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro will be the first held on South American soil. Considering that Brazil has never won a gold medal in soccer—the national pastime—you'd expect the pressure to be on. Guess again. At press time, Brazil's president was under threat of impeachment (thanks to a pesky oil scandal); inflation is up; jobs are way down. And marine biologists found evidence of a “superbug” in the waters of Guanabara Bay—where the sailing races are set to commence—which sent the International Olympic Committee into a tailspin. When asked about the heavily polluted bay over lunch, Michael Nagy, director of Rio's Visitors Bureau, simply shrugs, saying, “You're from New York. Would you swim in the Hudson River?”

Welcome to Rio de Janeiro, the no-worries capital of the world and the perfect winter escape. This is the kind of city where sipping a bottle of Bohemia beer with your feet in the sand amounts to sightseeing. There are several iconic monuments in town—such as the massive art deco *Christ the Redeemer* statue perched atop Mount Corcovado, plus Sugarloaf Mountain, featured in the James Bond film *Moonraker*—but they're best seen the way Al Roker will see them: from the seat of a fancy helicopter. (A firm called Helisight offers 30-minute tours from the Lagoa neighborhood for about \$200.)

But your time is better spent on the sand at Ipanema, where the women are so beautiful they've been immortalized in song. The beach is organized by numbered posts; a trusted local tells me the

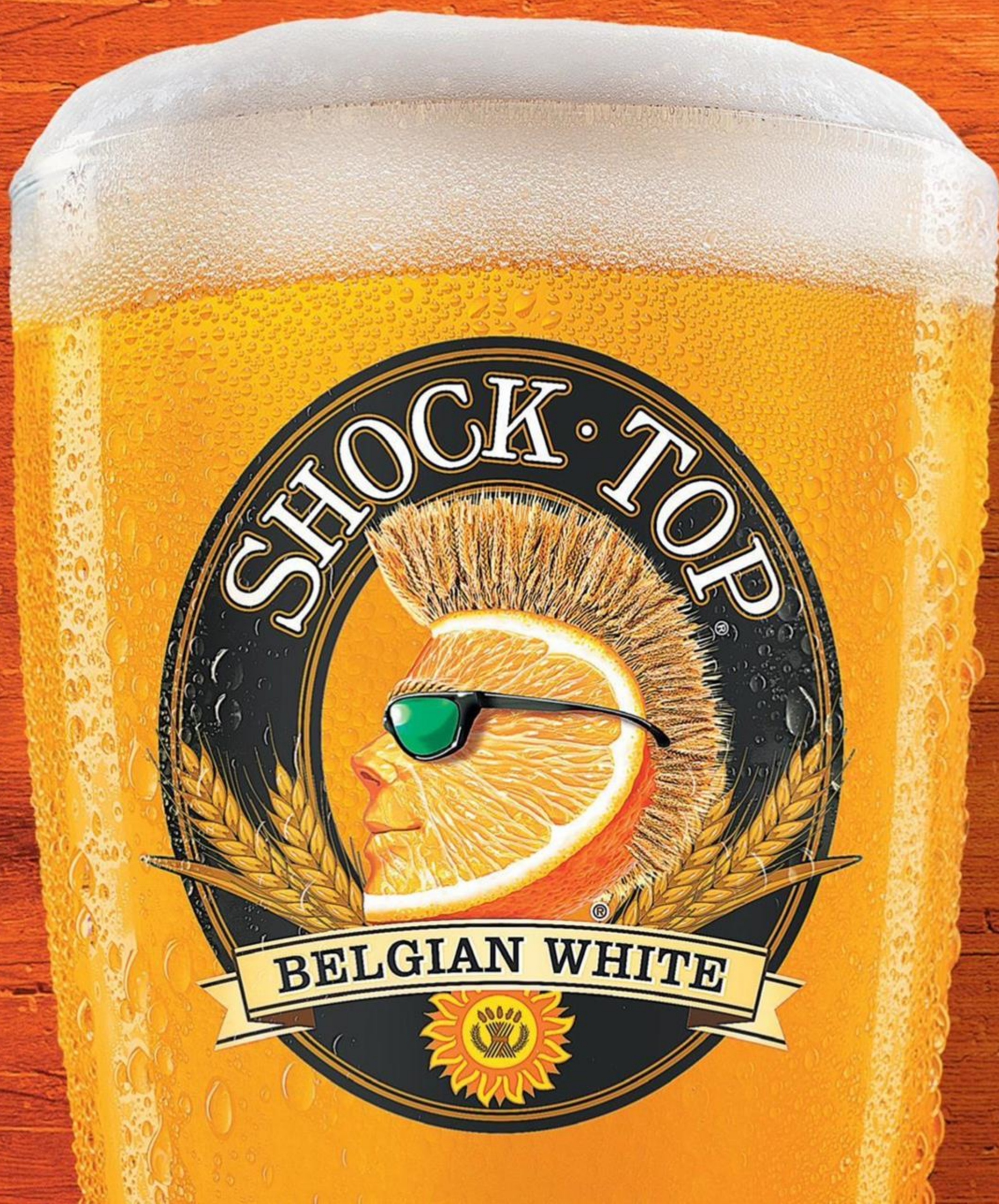
Gisele look-alikes hang out at *poste* number nine, and he isn't wrong. If surfing is more your thing, build your sand castle at Praia da Macumba.

Another joy of Rio is its meandering afternoons. Fresh from the beach, take a pub crawl through the revived Leblon neighborhood and test-drive the caipirinha—the mojito's cousin, made with the sugarcane spirit cachaça. Order off-menu at the Academia da Cachaças and mix it up with a caipira Providência, a local favorite made with brown sugar. Then hit Bar Bracarense, where the salt in the *bolinho de bacalhau* (cod croquette) complements the sweetness of the drinks.

Rio doesn't really wake up until midnight anyway. After a disco nap, hop a cab to Lapa for streetside live music. Sip a beer outside Circo Voador, a famous and worthy club where Bebel Gilberto is known to drop in for a song. For curiosity's sake follow the crowd to Rio Scenarium, a three-floor bossa nova club outfitted with antiques, before swiftly moving on to the more intimate Carioca da Gema. Order another round. Lose track of time. In the morning, the hotel bartender will crack open a coconut, which may be mother nature's perfect hangover cure. Says Cristiana Kastrup, general manager of the Fasano Rio de Janeiro hotel, “The coconut is the national drink. We give it to babies.” No worries.—Mickey Rapkin



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GET JUICED

A SLICE OF CITRUS ESSENCE GIVES MEN'S FRAGRANCES NEW ZING

• Fragrances across the board now come with a twist—from old favorites lemon and lime to grapefruit, green mandarin and blood orange. Choose from among these potent elixirs and juice up.—*Vincent Boucher*

1

VERTS THE RUB

• Fresh top notes of lime, grapefruit and bergamot kick off Citron Vert from Malin+Goetz.

\$150, 3.4 ounces, malinandgoetz.com

2

ORANGE CRUSHER

• A*Men Ultra Zest by Thierry Mugler jolts with a combo of mandarin and blood orange.

\$90, 3.4 ounces, muglerusa.com

3

3

COCKTAIL SHAKE-UP

• Paco Rabanne's signature scent lightens things up with a memorable citrus cocktail in 1 Million cologne.

\$82, 4.2 ounces, sephora.com

4

DAILY RIND

• D.S. & Durga's bracing Italian Citrus boasts rinds of blood orange, green mandarin and bitter chinotto.

\$145, 1.7 ounces, dsanddurga.com

5

IN THE GROVE

• The classic Tom Ford for Men lays Mediterranean citrus notes on an elegant amber and leather base.

\$78, 1.7 ounces, tomford.com



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• Selling a sports car is easier than building one. Finding the perfect balance of sophisticated looks and top-notch functionality is tricky—just ask any automobile designer. Car companies often sell a slick package with a glitzy marketing campaign, only for buyers to realize, after taking the wheel, that the auto falls short of the promises.

The 2016 Mercedes-AMG GT S, on the other hand, completely redefines the sports-car concept.

Inspired by more than 120 years of racing heritage, the hand-built two-seater is a no-compromise study in how to produce a luxury vehicle that is as breathtaking to behold as it is to drive.

If we seem overly impressed with the GT S, that's only because it delivers. The long-nosed coupe, which picks up design cues from the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG supercar, is a mind-bogglingly luxe vehicle with just the right touch

of practicality to sell you on the idea that at \$146,330 (as tested) it's actually a steal, at least when compared with the rival Porsche 911.

The profound beauty of the GT S doesn't hit you until you've settled inside. Touted as the latest expression of Mercedes-Benz's "aviation design," the

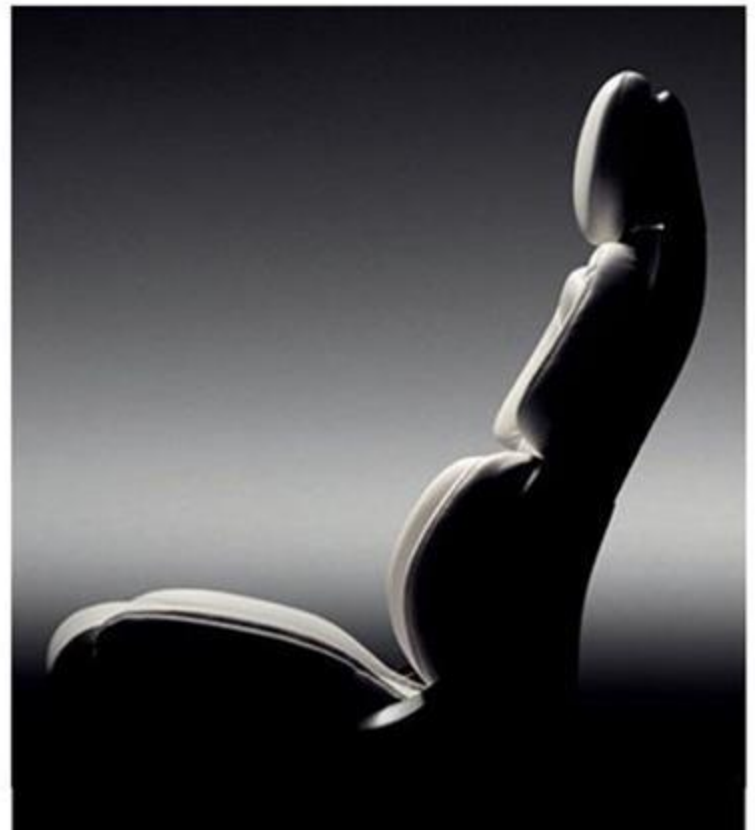
leather interior and 8.4-inch screen have been crafted to make simply sitting in the car exciting enough to briefly overshadow the experience of actually driving it.

But the most impressive characteristic of the 503-horsepower GT S is that it comes to life on the road. Features include five selectable driving modes that can quickly take a ride from mild-mannered splendor to growling beast, hitting a top speed of 193 miles an hour.

Our thrills were mainly limited to driving on deserted Wisconsin roads, where we learned the most powerful moments in the GT S are better reserved for the track. Still, the GT S is just as impressive idling in the valet lot as it is roaring on the wide-open highway.—*Marcus Amick*



STATS	
MERCEDES-AMG GT S	
Engine:	AMG 4-liter V8 bi-turbo
Horsepower:	503
Torque:	479 lb.-ft.
Zero to 60:	3.7 sec.
MPG:	16 city/22 hwy.
Price:	\$129,900 base



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→ There's no spot in an automobile more sacred than the cabin. Whether in a sports car or an SUV, the interior is where most people develop an intimate connection to a vehicle. That's the thinking behind Lincoln's new 30-way seating system. First showcased by Lincoln at the 2015 New York International Auto Show, the high-tech configuration was inspired by features of the high-end aviation and furniture-design industries with a focus on providing a feeling of wellness through improved body support, massage settings and increased adjustability. Johnathan Line, an advanced-seating expert who helped develop the system, says the options focus on reducing stress and improving blood flow in areas where the body needs it most. "We really wanted a seat that grabs your attention and is uniquely a Lincoln seat, so when a person gets into the vehicle it takes the whole experience of sitting in a seat to a whole other level," says Line. Look for the 30-way seating system to make its consumer debut in 2016 in the Lincoln Continental production model.

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HOLIDAY PARTY SURVIVAL GUIDE

EIGHT ESSENTIALS TO KEEP YOUR MERRIMENT IN CHECK

► Office parties demand a delicate balance: You have to keep it together but still show that you know how to cut loose. Maybe you missed the mark at last year's fete. Or maybe some would call your conduct epic, if by "epic" they mean a drunken, sloppy, kissy-faced, where-the-hell-did-I-leave-my-socks disaster. A repeat performance should be avoided. Here's how a little smart prep work can help the evening go down differently—or at least cover your ass when pandemonium breaks out.—*Corinne Iozzio*

START

8:00 P.M.

7:57 P.M. VOW TO AVOID A HANGOVER

→ Adults can party but still get it together for work the next day. And you're an adult, right? Right. As far as you see it, there are two paths to setting up a headache-free morning:

DRINK BUT STAY HYDRATED...

→ Water breaks help you pace your cocktails. Alas, not everyone is blessed with New York City tap water. The **Naked Filter water bottle** uses a nanofilter (essentially a microscopic spaghetti strainer) to trap 99.9999 percent of gunk. Unlike charcoal models, the Naked Filter lets the water flow freely, like a regular bottle. *From \$25, nakedfilter.com*



...OR GET BAKED INSTEAD

→ Ever heard of a pot hangover? Neither have we. Get ripped discreetly with a **Pax 2 vaporizer**. The lighter-size vape fits in your palm and heats herbs gently, so there's virtually no smell. A touch-sensitive mouthpiece manages the temperature automatically, so nothing gets overheated. *\$280, paxvapor.com*



9:48 P.M. WELL, CRAP, YOU'RE DRUNK ANYWAY

→ Sure, they're hilarious in the moment, but those blurry selfies aren't exactly dignified. Use the **Kaboom app** to make sure the evidence is destroyed. Posts and messages you've texted, e-mailed, tweeted or facebooked through the app can be set to automatically delete in days, hours or minutes. *Free, Android and iOS*

1:32 A.M. FOLLOW THE PARTY TO A SECOND LOCATION

→ The boss declares "last call" on the company card (buzzkill!), so you take the party elsewhere: the club. To prevent day-after ear ringing, pop in **Doppler Labs DUBS earplugs**. Two audio filters reduce the intensity of noise by a factor of 20, without making the music or people's voices sound muddy. *\$25, getdubs.com*



11:07 P.M. DROP YOUR PHONE IN THE PUNCH

→ Butterfingers—made worse by champagne or grease from those pigs in a blanket—have left your phone in dire straits. Putting it into a Kensington **EVAP Rescue Pouch**, filled with material that's seven times as absorbent as rice, should save it. A plastic indicator turns brown when the contents are dry. *\$15, kensington.com*



9:00 P.M.

10:00 P.M.

11:00 P.M.

12:00 A.M.

4:00 A.M.

5:00 A.M.

4:22 A.M. GET YOUR ASS TO BED

→ All right, party's over for real this time. You still have to work in the morning, but you might have gone one Patrón too far. Before driving yourself home, check your road readiness with the **BACtrack Mobile Pro smartphone breathalyzer**. The Bluetooth accessory uses a police-grade sensor to measure your blood-alcohol level. *\$100, bactrack.com*



THUMB A RIDE

→ No cab in sight? Ride-hailing service **Uber** is now available in more than 150 U.S. cities, and rival **Lyft** in 60. With wait times averaging around four minutes, you'll be passed out on the couch (or wolfing down Mickey D's) in no time.



3:00 A.M.

6:00 A.M.

2:00 A.M.

7:00 A.M.

8:07 A.M. (THE MORNING AFTER) INITIATE DAMAGE CONTROL

→ Despite the best game plan, imprudent decisions—say, hooking up with your co-worker's party-crashing roommate—happen. The **Cloak app** tracks the location of your Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and Instagram contacts, and gives you a heads-up when ones you've flagged are nearby, allowing you to avoid potentially awkward encounters. *Free, iOS only*



8:00 A.M.

FINISH





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MOVIE OF THE MONTH

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

By Stephen Rebello

• *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens* may turn out to be killer, *menza menza*, terrible or anywhere else on the spectrum. But once the \$200 million IMAX 3-D space epic invades theaters this Christmas, will movie diehards be talking about much else? Set roughly 30 years after the finale of *Return of the Jedi*, the J.J. Abrams-directed, John Williams-scored film centers on a new cast of characters played by Oscar Isaac, Lupita Nyong'o, Gwendoline Christie, Adam Driver, John Boyega, Daisy Ridley and Andy Serkis,

as well as—briefly, anyway—Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Anthony Daniels and Peter Mayhew. “J.J. came in because we were all in agreement at Lucasfilm that we wanted to get back to a tangible sense of real environments, creatures that could be built, no overabundance of digital effects and a story designed to facilitate that,” says Lawrence Kasdan, the movie’s co-screenwriter. Kasdan wrote *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi*, and he has already completed, with son Jon Kasdan, the second screenplay draft for a young Han Solo stand-alone action movie. “We know what we like about the original trilogy; we know what some other people missed when the second trilogy happened. Not only does the new movie have those, but it also has J.J.’s enormous dynamism. It’s full of the tradition of action and characters that are meaningful, clear and not frenetic. It’s also crazy, alive, with a screen that’s constantly moving and full. It’s *fun*.”

ALSO SHOWING IN THEATERS



SPOTLIGHT

→ In this fact-based newspaper drama that harkens back to *All the President’s Men* and *The Paper*, Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo and Rachel McAdams are center stage as the dogged *Boston Globe* rabble-rousers who, in 2001 and 2002, exposed decades of sexual abuse of children by predatory priests shielded by the Catholic Church, its followers, paid-off lawyers and the press itself.



I SAW THE LIGHT

→ Tormented country-music titan Hank Williams didn’t just write and sing such lacerating songs as “Cold, Cold Heart” and “Your Cheatin’ Heart.” He bled them. Tom Hiddleston stars as the scarily charismatic, whiskey-ridden fireball who was adored by fans and critics but was a monstrous pain to others around him before he died, at only 29, in 1953. Williams’s greatest work pulls us in.



MACBETH

→ A savage Michael Fassbender and a witchy Marion Cotillard as Shakespeare’s turbulently passionate, ambitious rulers make your hair stand on end in this swift, violent, haunting movie of one of the Bard’s bloodiest tragedies. The burial of a dead infant, sexy humping, horror-movie-worthy lighting, trippy stylized battle carnage—it’s a Scottish play for a *Game of Thrones* era.



VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

James McAvoy plays the man who pieces together a monster



Q: Was it tough to shake the image of other actors who have already played the titular character?

A: The only sort of Frankenstein I’ve seen is the very young, good one on *Penny Dreadful*, so I had no archetype to liken it to. I wanted to make him a real scientist. He’s obsessed with creating life because, after a childhood trauma, he’s terrified of death.

Q: What was the chemistry like between you and Daniel Radcliffe, who plays Igor?

A: We had a lot of fun, especially doing the action scenes. We took our cues from the great stuff in Max Landis’s screenplay, and we added to it.

Q: Do you think *Frankenstein* purists may object to the changes?

A: I hope they’re touched by deeper things that lie in the story. For people who’ve never read Mary Shelley’s ethical, existential novel, we’re introducing the whole story of man trying to supplant God and trying to deal with mad obsession and scientific advancement while the society around him is fascinated, terrified and inspired by technological advancement. It’s all there.—S.R.



12 MEDIA MUST-HAVES

By Greg Fagan

- 1 MAD MEN: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION**
• Binge-view or go on a bender? With every episode of Matthew Weiner's celebrated saga—plus two voluptuously rounded rocks glasses and a set of coasters—you don't have to choose. (DVD or Blu-ray) \$210
- 2 THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON FIVE LIMITED EDITION**
• Like an especially creepy Hess truck for fans of the flesh-eating drama, AMC's annual experiment in special packaging features a "walker" emerging from the asphalt. Bountiful bonus features add to the feeding frenzy. (Blu-ray) \$150
- 3 FAST & FURIOUS 1-7: LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY COLLECTION**
• A molded plastic tire opens up to reveal discs of each film in the progressively more popular series, with digital stream and download options for each. \$100 There's also a similarly packaged DVD-only version. \$80
- 4 BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE COMPLETE ADVENTURES BLU-RAY**
• Sure, you'll go for the light-up flux capacitor packaging, but the real fan lure here is a disc packing two hours of new bonus material, including original shorts, documentaries and episodes of the animated series. \$100

- 5 MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL: 40TH ANNIVERSARY LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY CASTLE CATAPULT SET**
• Nothing breaks up a siege like livestock vaulted over the castle walls and down upon one's enemies. The season's silliest swag allows you to do just that, on a tabletop. \$56
- 6 W.C. FIELDS: COMEDY ESSENTIALS COLLECTION**
• The patron sinner of today's comedic antiheroes, W.C. Fields displays his Promethean gift for booze-infused snark in *The Bank Dick*, *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break* and 16 more from his 1932-1941 glory years. \$100
- 7 MAD MAX ANTHOLOGY**
• A relentless spectacle that single-handedly vindicates Hollywood's remake-reboot-repeat cycle, *Fury Road* appears here with its three dystopian forerunners and *The Madness of Max*, a two-and-a-half-hour documentary that mainly focuses on the original 1979 *Mad Max* and its continuing influence. (Blu-ray) \$90
- 8 JURASSIC WORLD 3-D: LIMITED-EDITION GIFT SET**
• One of the top blockbusters of 2015 gets the year's most ferocious-looking Blu-ray package, featuring two dinosaurs locked in a jaw-to-jaw face-off. \$120 Another *Jurassic* set packs all four films, minus the dueling dinos. \$90

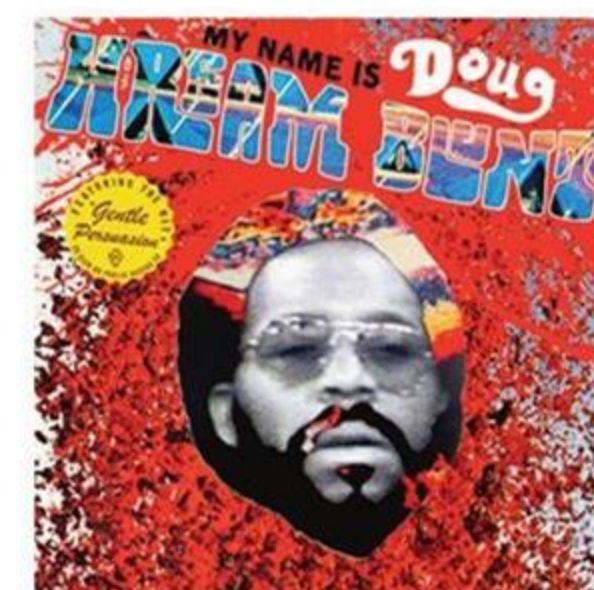
- 9 FRANK SINATRA: FIVE-FILM COLLECTION BLU-RAY**
• Dim the lights to celebrate Sinatra's 100th birthday with the Blu-ray debuts of *Anchors Aweigh*, *On the Town* and *Robin and the 7 Hoods*—plus *Guys and Dolls*, the Rat Pack classic *Ocean's 11* and a 32-page booklet. \$70
- 10 JUSTIFIED: THE COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY**
• This Elmore Leonard adaptation transcends its source material and finds *Deadwood* veteran Timothy Olyphant a modern Kentucky home as U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens. This edition packs a flask, for which we are much obliged. \$216
- 11 LOST IN SPACE: THE COMPLETE ADVENTURES BLU-RAY**
• With more than eight hours of bonuses—including vintage commercials, two documentaries and a 1980 table reading of an unproduced script reuniting the cast—this 50th anniversary set invites fans to get lost all over again. \$200
- 12 THAT '70S SHOW: THE COMPLETE SERIES BLU-RAY**
• A black-light-friendly cover with velvety high-lights encases this gem of retro nostalgia. Six of the eight seasons make Blu-ray debuts in this set, which includes an all-new interactive trivia game, commentary, cast flashbacks and more. \$150

MUSIC

DOUG HREAM BLUNT

By Rob Tannenbaum

• The ongoing vogue for private-press records—self-financed LPs heard by no one except family members until collectors discover them in junk shops years later—reflects a suspicion of mainstream culture and a romantic idealization of amateurism. Let's be honest: Most private-press records are cracked curios, deservedly obscure. But *My Name Is Doug Hream Blunt* is a grand exception. Blunt learned to play guitar in San Francisco by taking a class and made an album sometime in the 1990s (he doesn't recall when) with his teacher, the teacher's sister and girlfriend, and a few others, none of them skilled enough to play professionally. The music is spirited funk-rock; over two-chord grooves, Blunt plays Morse-code guitar solos that spin quickly out of tune and tempo as he sings about sex ("Like ice, your butt is like dice now, damn"), booze, beauty and circus clowns. We should all be as excited and joyful as Blunt. 🐘🐘🐘



GAME OF THE MONTH

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

By Harold Goldberg

• The galaxy far, far away is everywhere these days. *Star Wars Battlefront* (PC, PS4, Xbox One) is the most ambitious video game in Jedi history. The visuals offer a lifelike Endor with ferns blowing in the breeze and the shifting sands of Tatooine. Then—*rat-a-tat-tat*—guns blaze and you're under fire from a patrol of Stormtroopers. Online, you join a group of rebels to vanquish a gigantic Imperial Walker in the deep snow. Hide in snowbanks, shoot low and dodge Empire enemies while wearing your jet pack until that Walker topples over with a satisfying thump. Flying the X-wing in dogfight mode while shooting can induce dizziness, and the game's writing could be better. Still, playing as Boba Fett and Darth Vader or piloting the *Millennium Falcon* satisfies all our sci-fi fantasies. 🐘🐘🐘





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CHANGE UP

→ Eat, sleep, work, repeat; we've all been here at one point or another. Shift your work/life balance in your favor by trying an out-of-the-box hobby that will hold your attention in a good way. Learn to defend yourself empty-handed with martial arts, craft your own gear by leatherworking or find peace of mind at sea by sailing or fishing.



BREAK THE CYCLE

→ If going to bed early isn't part of your routine by now, it's never going to happen. Luckily, there's a hack for that. The app Sleep Cycle monitors signals from your body to wake you gently in your lightest state of sleep, increasing your chances of waking up refreshed and relaxed—something we all could have used in college. sleepcycle.com



GIMME THE JUICE

→ Right now, getting healthy is all about the detox. New Yorkers can hit up one of the 15 Juice Generation locations in Manhattan for an accessible and affordable juice bar experience. Not in NYC? Take advantage of the company's nationwide delivery service, which ships cold-pressed juices right to your door. juicegeneration.com



ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS

→ Digit is an automated savings service that handles the headache of socking away money for you. By analyzing your income and spending patterns, Digit saves only what you can afford, siphoning off amounts so small you probably won't even notice. Need that money? Simply text "withdraw" or "balance" to get what you need. digit.co

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CAREFUL, SANTA

Number of ER visits reported nationwide last year caused by...

Artificial Christmas trees:

3,084

Christmas tree lights:

3,311

Christmas decorations (nonelectric):

6,433

NOW THAT'S FAHRVERGNÜGEN

56%

of Germans say they've had sex in a car.

25%

have done it there at least twice.

DON'T COME A KNOCKIN' IF DAS AUTO'S A ROCKIN'

JONESING FOR A SMOKE?



Play Tetris for a few minutes; researchers say it reduces cravings of all sorts.

FIRE SALES

In the weeks prior to Burning Man in Black Rock Desert, nearby Home Depot stores experience increases in certain DIY festival essentials:

ROPE

220%

TARPS

404%

REBAR

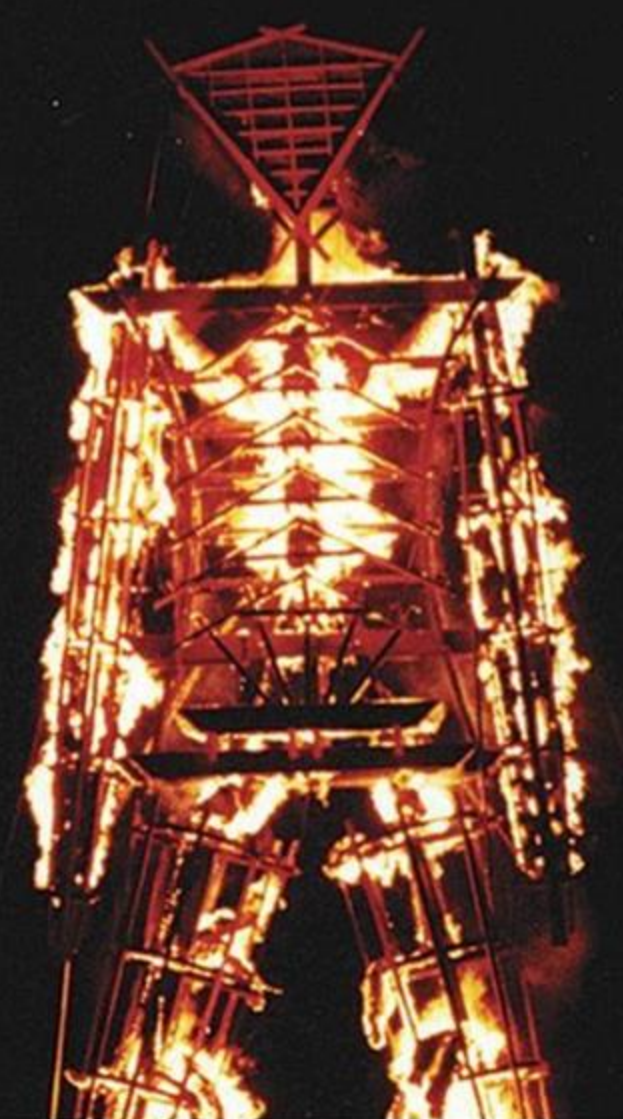
482%

DUST MASKS

521%

RUBBER BANDS

2,744%



WHO'S MAKING BANK IN 2015*



*According to Forbes.

WE'RE ONLY HUMAN



16 Number of accidents Google's self-driving cars have been involved in since 2009.

0 Number caused by the car (and not a human).

WAXING POETIC

300 Body measurements of Nicki Minaj that were taken to create a life-size wax figure of her (right) for Madame Tussauds.

20 Artists who worked on the figure.



14 Number of days after the exhibit debuted until the set had to be redesigned to prevent guests from posing inappropriately with the wax Nicki.

LOVE HANDLES

Match.com asked its Customer Care team about the most memorable user names they'd encountered. Their top 10 included **SkittleFartz**, **Hardworkingmilf**, **TwisDemNipples** and **Assless_Chaps**.



THE PHANTOM ROSE GOLD

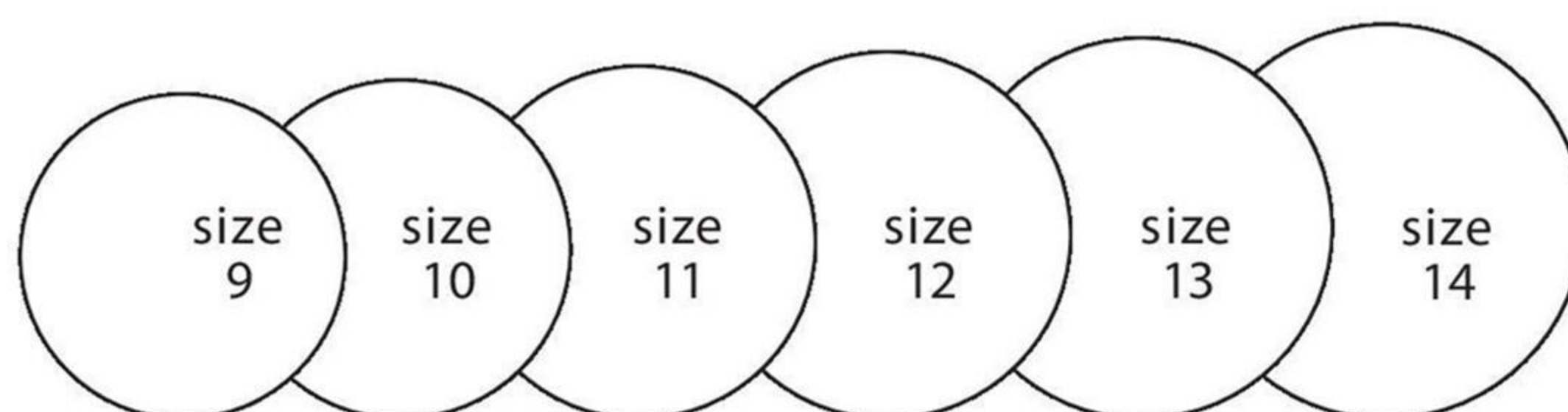
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THE PARENT TRAP

SURE, HOLIDAYS ARE MEANT FOR BEING WITH MOM AND DAD. IF YOU'RE 11

It's normal for tweens to be embarrassed by their parents. A little before puberty, kids learn to separate from their mom and dad and start to see them as annoying, needy, clueless, out-of-it losers. The only reasons they spend time with their parents are guilt, responsibility and financial need.

This is not a phase. This is how we see our parents for the rest of their lives. We thought they were amazing before we turned 11 only because we didn't know any other people.

I'm really lucky to have had great parents. I not only love them, but I like them. I don't, however, have any desire to see them, not even around the holidays. When I visit or call, it's mostly so I can feel like a good person afterward. I view my relationship with my parents as if I were a celebrity and they were dying. Which, if you want to stretch things, is pretty much true.

My parents have no idea I feel this way about them. When we get together, they think we're all having a great time. The strangest thing about this is they didn't love hanging out with their own parents. But they truly believe they've broken the millennium-long chain of parent toleration. They think that because they wear jeans and listen to rock music like we do, that exempts them from being annoying—even though they clearly wear the wrong jeans and listen to terrible old rock. It's way less embarrassing to have your mom show up at your office in a long dress than for her to strut in wearing faded baggy Lee's as "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" oozes out of her earbuds.

And parents have more ways to annoy us than ever before. Whoever thought it was cute to teach them to text was an idiot. Sure, I thought it was awesome when my dad would send texts that said, "I miss you, LOL" because he thought "LOL" meant "lots of love." But that small amusement does not make up for allowing them access to an instantaneous method of annoying us. Our parents' texts are so boring that if they'd had access to texting



back when they were dating, none of us would exist. Plus, they're lurking on our Facebook accounts, making creepy comments about our exes' creepy comments. And they're still calling, visiting in person and probably trying to send telegrams. This is why so many people still live at home: because wherever we are, our parents find us anyway.

They're annoying not just because they're old people. They're old people who have known us our entire lives. Back when we were prepubescent and didn't know any better than to trust them, we revealed all our weaknesses we've since worked so hard to hide. They're still trying to solve our problems, even though we've given up. No, we shouldn't eat that doughnut if we need to lose weight. Yes, we should fix up our résumé and leave our boring, comfortable jobs. And no, those aren't things I hear from my parents, because there's no way I'm revealing my insecurities to you.

Worse yet, unlike our friends, who just pretend they're rooting for us and secretly hope we'll fail, our parents really do want us to succeed. It makes them look better to their friends. But they have no idea how to give us advice, because the world has changed. They tell women to stop breast-feeding and use formula. They drink orange juice. They have cable TV and land lines.

I am 44 years old and successful enough in my field to have plenty of work, no money worries and a Wikipedia entry that lists four articles that horrified America. Yet every time I talk to my father, he gives me unsolicited career advice, despite not having any idea how the media industry works. Should I replace Andy Rooney on *60 Minutes*? (Did he just notice that Andy is gone?) Speak

to groups of businesspeople around the country for money? Write a TV show that's just like *Friends* but not *Friends*? Maybe. But none of the people who work for media companies want me to do that stuff. In fact, the people in charge don't even want me to do the little I'm doing now, so I can't push it by asking for more.

Your relationship with any human is frozen at the point when you first met. It's why all the rules in a romantic partnership are set in the first two months. It's why your parents will always drive you insane. Because even if it doesn't make sense, it still feels as though they get to decide whether or not we can have dessert. And no one should be able to tell

an adult he can't have dessert. If you offered me the best job in the world but told me my boss would get to decide how much ice cream I could have at night, I would run in the other direction.

When we hit puberty and first figured out our parents were gathering intel on us, we smartly started to stone-wall them by answering all questions with "I don't know." Then, as we moved out and their power waned, we started to throw them some crumbs about our lives. This was a huge mistake. No matter how old we get, we should never make the mistake of offering them any information whatsoever. Things, if they ask, are "going well" or "exactly the same." If something truly interesting happens that they're going to find out about, tell them months later, long after anything can be done about it. I recommend not introducing them to their grandkids until they turn three. Don't worry about it after that. Grandparents never drive their grandkids crazy. Why? They give them all the dessert they want. ■

BY
JOEL
STEIN

ILLUSTRATION BY SIANNA MISHEVA

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Name	Month
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail (Optional) _____

01-13465-001-E30201

THE SEARCH FOR "THE ONE"

THINK YOU'VE MET YOUR PERFECT MATCH? YOU HAVEN'T, AND HERE'S WHY

I went on a date with a guy I'd met online. We went to a dive bar. Not a cool dive bar. It was the kind of place you could pop in to for a meet-up under the cover of mostly darkness, minus a few blinking-neon beer signs. No hostess. No menu. No line at the bar. You could cut your losses pretty quickly if you needed to. But as it turned out, I didn't want to cut my losses pretty quickly. The drinks flowed along with the conversation. He made me laugh. I made him laugh. He was cute but more an undiscovered cute. Like finding an Eames chair at a garage sale. He was smart. He was interesting. He was interested in interesting things. He could appreciate a martini but really just wanted a beer. He liked to travel but at heart was a homebody. He had dreams but also a day job. I was shocked. He was the balanced, normal guy I'd had trouble locating. I had been on dates with everyone from my super-religious handyman (whom I had to date until he finished working on my house) to a newly unreligious man who had left an Orthodox

Jewish sect for shiksa-er pastures. So this guy at the dive bar felt like a pair of sweat-pants after a day in jeans I was trying to convince myself I still fit into. When the bill came, he did not pretend he forgot his wallet. Or tell me he was a feminist and ask to go dutch. He just paid. Normal. Easy. It all added up to "one" conclusion.

At my morning meeting, my co-workers asked how the date went. I took a deep breath. "Guys"—I looked around to make sure I had everyone's attention—"I think he might be 'the One.'" I repeated, for emphasis, *the* One. Now before you write me off as a complete nut job, I'd like to mention that one of my co-workers was my secret ex-boyfriend. We'd dated and broken up while writing on the same TV show. Nobody at the office was the wiser. He had moved on (many times) and I was still trying to. So I was playing it up a little for his benefit, but not by much. He was the first to chime in with "*The One? Really?*" I turned and smiled. "Really." Other co-workers I hadn't slept with congratulated me. I even got a hug, which I felt like I deserved after all the garbage guys I'd dated.

We took a break about an hour later, and I checked my e-mail. I had a new message. From my date. I assumed it was about our next rendezvous. Dinner. Maybe the Hollywood Bowl. Maybe even Paris! But not even a second e-mail was meant to be. He'd had a nice time—but not nice enough. He just wanted to be friends. I burst into tears. He was defi-

nately not the One, unless that referred to the number of dates we'd been on. I reported back to my co-workers. Nobody made any jokes, and that's how I knew just how sad it was.

I didn't use the phrase "the One" again until *after* I got married. (You can relax now; it all worked out.) And when I finally did use "the One" again, I realized how wrong I had been about what it meant. How wrong a lot of us are. Now, I know what you're thinking. Guys don't really throw around "the One." But let's be honest with each other: You're all basically saying it by *not* saying it. Men always say things like "She's okay for now" or "I'm just having fun." You might as well be saying "She's okay for now—because she's not the One."

"I'm just having fun—until I find the One." And when you meet the One, you usually say, "She's not like other girls...." You stop just short of saying "I think she might be the One." We all do it, just in different ways. And if you're single, you can't help but judge all dates against

the One. The One will do this. The One will definitely not do that. The One will love my cats as much as I do. The One will love my ass at any size. But the moment I realized I was with the One was not when my husband fell in love with my cats or my ass. (Warning: I'm about to get a little serious, but it's for your own good.) I had this incredible realization at my mother-in-law's funeral. I was holding my husband's hand, and I thought to myself, He's the One; he's the One who will be there during dark times. And good times too, of course, but I'd thought about that. I'd never considered the dark times. But in those moments, he's the One I reach for, and he's the One who is there.

All the ways in which I'd used "the One" as a single person had been completely wrong. The truth is, if my husband gains 50 pounds, loses his job, forgets his wallet, makes lame dad jokes or loses interest in the cats or my ass, he's still the One, because those things don't really matter. (Well, except my ass—he's gotta commit to that.) The One is not a cute guy (or girl) who's simply interested in interesting things. While I sat drinking in that dive bar with "the not-One," the One was 3,000 miles away living with his parents. So if you're still searching or questioning a relationship you're in, my advice is that a person becomes the One; they don't necessarily start as it. You'll never know if someone is the One immediately after a first date, no matter how many jokes of yours they laugh at. But when you know, you *really* know. ■

BY
HILARY
WINSTON

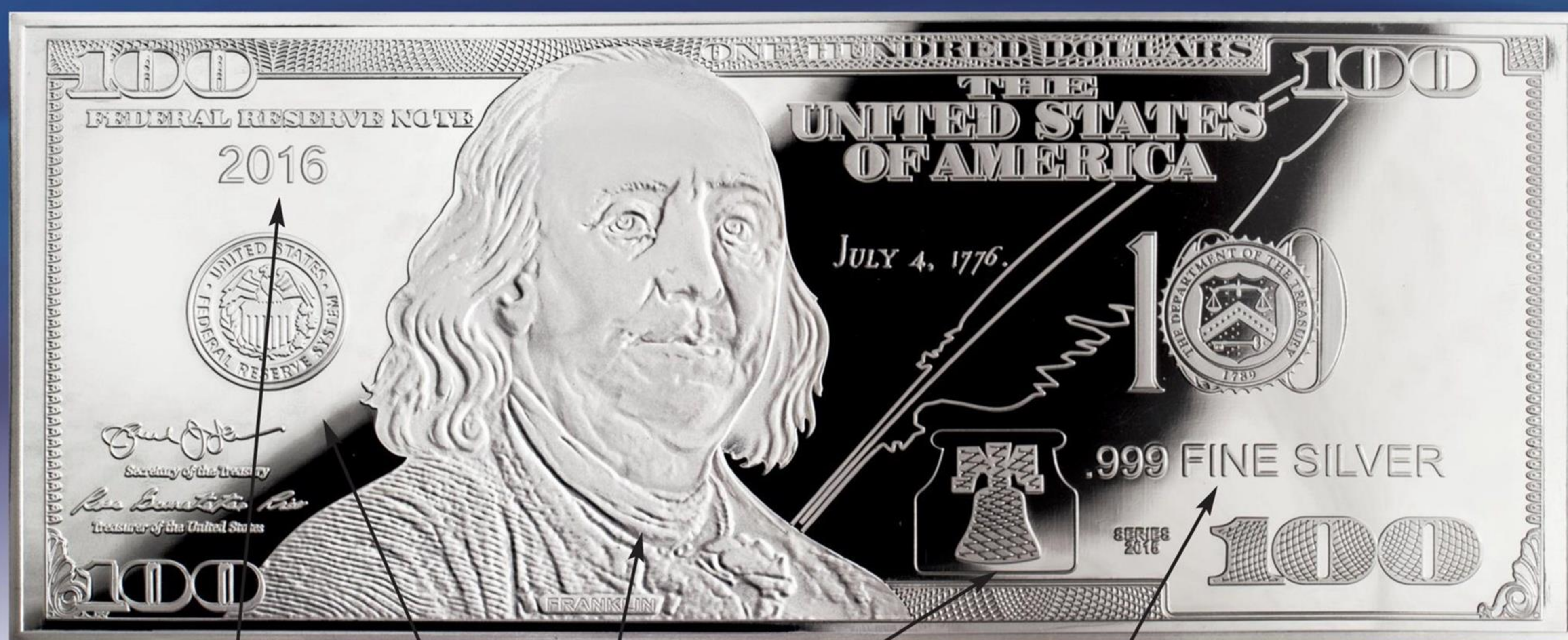


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PLAYBOY ADVISOR

For many years I have frequented swingers' clubs in various cities (Miami, Atlanta and Charlotte in the U.S. and Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia) with a number of different women as my dates. I find it interesting that most of these girls go swinging so they can be with other girls. Is it going too far to say that most women are bisexual?—P.E., Miami, Florida

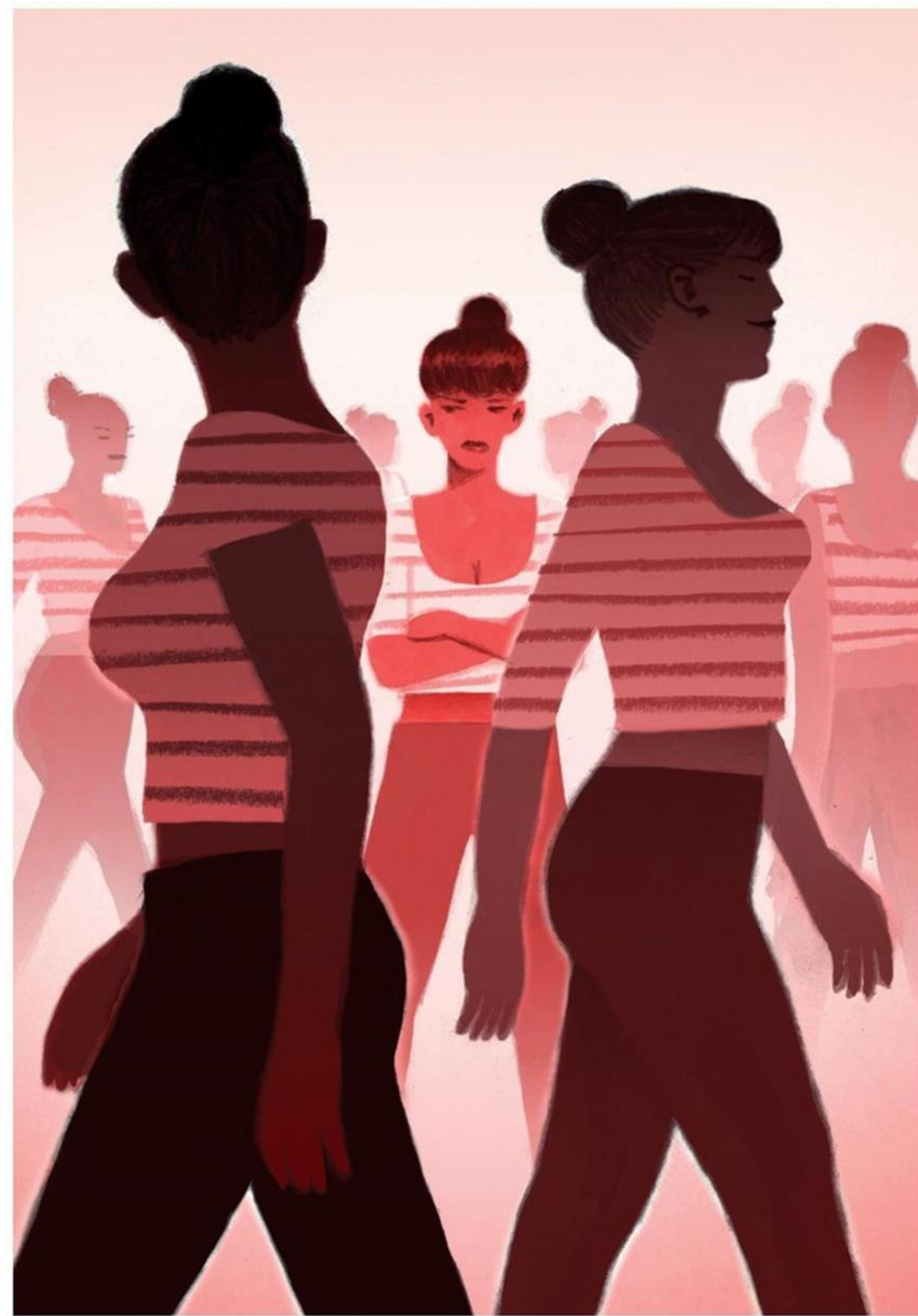
That is indeed going too far. Your experience at swingers' events doesn't qualify as a small-scale representation of society at large. As you no doubt have witnessed, swingers are a self-selecting group of like-minded people who by definition have a much more fluid attitude toward sexual activity, from fidelity to multiple concurrent partners to, as you point out, bisexuality. Perhaps being inside that world has colored your view of the world outside. Studies indicate that just one percent of the U.S. female population identifies as bisexual (that translates to 1.6 million women—several of whom seem to frequent your parties). It does appear, however, that there is a gender imbalance among bisexual Americans. According to a recently published study that surveyed 10,000 adults in the United States, women are three times more likely to identify as bisexual than men.

I've recently noticed a change in my sexual performance. I used to be able to keep going right through an orgasm without losing my erection. Now it seems that as soon as I climax, it's all over; I lose my erection and it feels like forever before I can get it back. What gives?—T.D., Washington, D.C.

You're getting older.

The other day I dropped my prescription sunglasses onto the top of my skateboard. The grip tape on my board is as rough as sandpaper, and—you guessed it—it scratched the hell out of both lenses. It wouldn't bother me if the scratches weren't in the dead center of my vision and extremely distracting. I read online that you can polish scratched lenses, and I'm debating whether I should try. What's your advice?—P.C., Santa Cruz, California

We think you have better things to do than spend your time playing amateur optometrist. Depending on the depth of the scratches and the lens material, you can in some cases buff out minor abrasions. But the multistep process requires various cleaning products, polishes and specialized fabrics, and it has a pretty dismal failure rate. If you



The other week I was browsing through my ex-boyfriend's Instagram images and noticed that his new girlfriend looks eerily like me. I'm a tall brunette, as is this new woman, who also has a lot of other features similar to mine. Could this mean he misses me and wants to fill the void by dating someone exactly like me? Or am I sadly just another woman who fits his "type"?—S.K., St. Louis, Missouri

Not knowing the nature of your breakup, it's tough for us to say, but it's probably a bit of both. As much as we'd like to claim otherwise, men do tend to gravitate toward types. If you really want to know if you fit his preference, you'd be better off scrolling through his Facebook timeline. That social-media platform has been around long enough for you to engage in a more in-depth study of his previous paramours.

factor in the time spent watching YouTube instructional videos, the time spent traveling to and from various stores to acquire the necessary products and the money spent on said materials, you could conceivably spend more of your labor and hard-earned cash than the \$50 to \$100 it would take for a professional lens replacement. Our money is on going with the pros in this case.

We already have the socioeconomic categories of blue-collar and white-collar workers. Shouldn't people who work in sex-related enterprises (jobs that involve

nudity or sex)—including porn stars, glamour or fetish models, erotic masseuses, prostitutes, sex therapists, strippers, webcam girls and escorts—have their own category called "red-collar workers"?—R.S., Toms River, New Jersey

We're guessing that members of the professions you lump together might take issue with each other's company, but we'll leave that to them. That aside, your logic doesn't hold. "Blue-collar" originated as a reference to the denim and chambray shirts commonly worn by manual laborers in the early 20th century, when the term was coined. "White-collar" refers to the typical white shirt that was de rigueur for office workers during the same period. "Red-collar" doesn't work for the sex-related professions you list because there is no standard dress code and, in some cases, no dress at all. As for a single term to describe those professions, "sex worker" has become the catchall.

I recently brought a bottle of cake-flavored vodka to a dinner party at a friend's house. All my friends gave me grief over my choice of booze, calling me a fool. But after trying it, everyone actually liked it. It was incredibly cheap and, when mixed with cranberry juice, went down easy. In fact, we polished off the bottle by the end of the evening. Should I feel ashamed for bringing it?—T.T., San Antonio, Texas

Not in the least. Despite the popular position that manly drinks need to be amber and strong, the truth is that most people don't want to be challenged by intense flavors. As long as a drink contains a little ethyl alcohol, they'll end up liking it, which is why vodka and light beer remain two of the best-selling alcoholic beverages in the United States. Let other men hide behind their mixology. You should let your flavored-vodka-loving freak flag fly.

My wife and I have had sex only one time since this summer. We used to do it as many as four times a week. She says she loves me, but lately her behavior makes me think she may be cheating. This has happened to me in past relationships, so I think I'm pretty good at reading the signs: She's always gone when I return from work, and she doesn't come home until late at night. I need some outside input. I want to trust her, but my gut feeling, along with the fact that we stopped having sex, is making me sick.—B.H., Lakeside, Ohio

A drop that precipitous in the frequency of a married couple's intercourse happens for a reason, and unpredictable, secretive behavior is a warning sign. Your wife isn't necessarily having an affair, but the gut is a primitive and often reliable indicator when something is amiss. As a private-detective friend of ours likes to say, "If you think your spouse is cheating on you, they probably are." That's a professional pessimist talking, but it's something to consider. Talk to your wife as soon as possible; don't let this fester. A measured and calm question is sometimes all it takes to open up an honest dialogue. If it turns out your spouse has been unfaithful, be prepared for the pain to get worse in the short term, but the only thing that will allow you to move forward is learning the truth. Infidelity is often destructive, but many couples can learn from it if both partners are committed to improving their relationship.

I'm a 28-year-old recently married guy who makes a decent middle-class salary in a large city. I've lived downtown since I was in college, including the past three years with my wife. Now she and I are looking to buy a place. I would like to stay in the city, but houses in the suburbs are less expensive than apartments downtown. I heard about this trend on the news: Couples around my age are opting to buy in the suburbs instead of the city—the opposite of what you would expect. Some of my best friends still live in the city, and I don't want to give up all the bars and restaurants downtown. Plus we don't plan to have kids for another five years. Is it worth it to pay more for a two-bedroom pad downtown, or should we admit we're old and find a house in the suburbs? If we head to the burbs, what would we be giving up?—W.M., Los Angeles, California

If you can afford a house now, go for it. Interest rates are historically low and won't hold forever. Owning a house gives you tax benefits that can make the cost equivalent to renting. Creating a real estate asset in a city with growth potential such as yours will serve you in the long run, while the longer you rent, the longer you miss out on building equity in that asset. We're just guessing, but after three years of cohabitation with your wife, you'll probably be heading into the potential kid years sooner than you think, so we say look for a house with at least one more bedroom than you need now. If you can buy in a good school district, do it. You can buy a cheaper house in lesser school districts, but the price of private education in the Los Angeles area is quite high and could reach six figures in less than a decade.

Recently I was waiting to board an airplane with a colleague. Before the plane departed, she offered me some ibuprofen, saying it relaxes her. I'm typically a somewhat nervous flier, so I said what the heck and swallowed two pills about 20 minutes before we took off. I think it truly calmed me down. Am I crazy, or

was it just the placebo effect?—S.T., New Canaan, Connecticut

Several studies have shown that both ibuprofen and acetaminophen blunt emotional responses to stressful stimuli, which could be interpreted as reducing anxiety. Using ibuprofen once in a while won't hurt, but you might instead want to use a widely accepted nonmedicinal treatment such as mindful meditation or cognitive behavioral therapy. Ibuprofen is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug. If you habitually use it or other NSAIDs above the recommended dosage, you run the risk of damaging your liver or stomach lining, especially if you drink after taking the pills.

What is cold-brewed coffee? I've noticed that Starbucks and Peet's offer iced coffee under that description. I've always associated brewing with heat, so I'm wondering how coffee can be "brewed" cold. And why even do it to begin with?—R.H., Wichita, Kansas

Cold brewing is the process of extracting flavor from ground coffee beans without heat. You grind the beans, soak them in water at room temperature and—voilà!—you've got a coffee concentrate full of roasty, rich, fruity coffee-bean flavor. (The \$40 Toddy system is the market leader.) One bonus is that the absence of heat means none of the harsh acids are extracted, just the deliciousness. Cold-brewed coffee is easier on the palate and on the stomach.

A friend of mine claims that taking Viagra makes it possible for him to have sex multiple times a night with different women. He doesn't fit what I'd call the typical Viagra profile; he's in his mid-20s, doesn't have erectile dysfunction and isn't in a committed relationship. I'm considering using Viagra with my girlfriend. Is this safe?—R.M., Atlanta, Georgia

After Viagra and its ilk (known by the sexy laboratory name phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors) hit the market, erectile-dysfunction diagnoses surged by 250 percent. While aggressive marketing of the drugs has helped destigmatize erectile dysfunction, it has also inspired a small group of men to use them for performance enhancement, if you will. (Adult-film actors use Viagra to remain erect during film shoots, for example.) Drug manufacturers explicitly warn against using PDE5 inhibitors if you don't suffer from erectile dysfunction because prolonged use can actually cause ED. If your penis is already in fine working order, we say don't mess with a good thing.

My car lease ends in a few months, and I'm having a hard time deciding what my next set of wheels should be. It seems that car design and technology are evolving by leaps and bounds. I'm worried that if I buy something now I'll be stuck with a soon-outmoded technology. Driverless cars are in the works, and some cars can already park themselves. Other options include automatic brak-

ing, electric fuel cells, hybrid cars, even hydrogen fuel. I can't keep up. A friend and I were debating whether it's wise to sit it out until the perfect car comes along. He said it would be cheaper to use a ride-sharing app than to lease or buy most midprice cars. What is the Advisor's take?—D.E., Oakland, California

The Advisor is seduced by the notion of having a chauffeur on call 24-7. One study we read analyzed the cost of car ownership versus the cost of using a ride-sharing app and essentially arrived at this: If you live in a city well served by such apps and your commute is less than 25 minutes in each direction, it's a toss-up between owning and apping. Then factor in all the hidden costs of true ownership: fuel, insurance, parking and maintenance, in addition to the lease payments and taxes—not to mention the vehicle license fee and the down payment required for a lease. Add in the fact that if you use ride-sharing apps you'll never be at risk for a DUI or a lawsuit for injuring someone or destroying property, and it's pretty appealing. Still, you have to ask yourself if you're willing to relinquish that primitive manly attachment to control that driving affords, not to mention the sheer pleasure of pushing the throttle open and feeling the torque of takeoff, the g-forces of a well-steered corner and the romance of the road. Don't underestimate the draw of owning your own transportation. We can't help but think of Shakespeare's King Richard, who was willing to trade his kingdom for a horse.

Say I'm on a beer-drinking binge at a crowded bar, I have to pee really bad, and the line for the men's room is a mile long. If I ignore the urge and keep drinking, will my kidneys halt (or slow down) production until my bladder is emptied? Or would I just be adding fuel to the fire? A drinking buddy says the kidneys react to the pressure in the bladder and stop creating more urine. I say it's just the opposite: The stronger the urge and the fuller the bladder, the faster the kidneys will keep on pumping more. Which one of us is right? A case of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer is riding on your answer!—E.T., Houston, Texas

Your kidneys will continue functioning and processing urine whether you hold in your pee or not. A full bladder doesn't send signals back to the kidneys; rather, it sends information to your most important organ: the brain. The main things that keep you from urinating are mind-set and willpower. Neither of you is right. You can send the case of PBR to the address below.

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. The most interesting and pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month.



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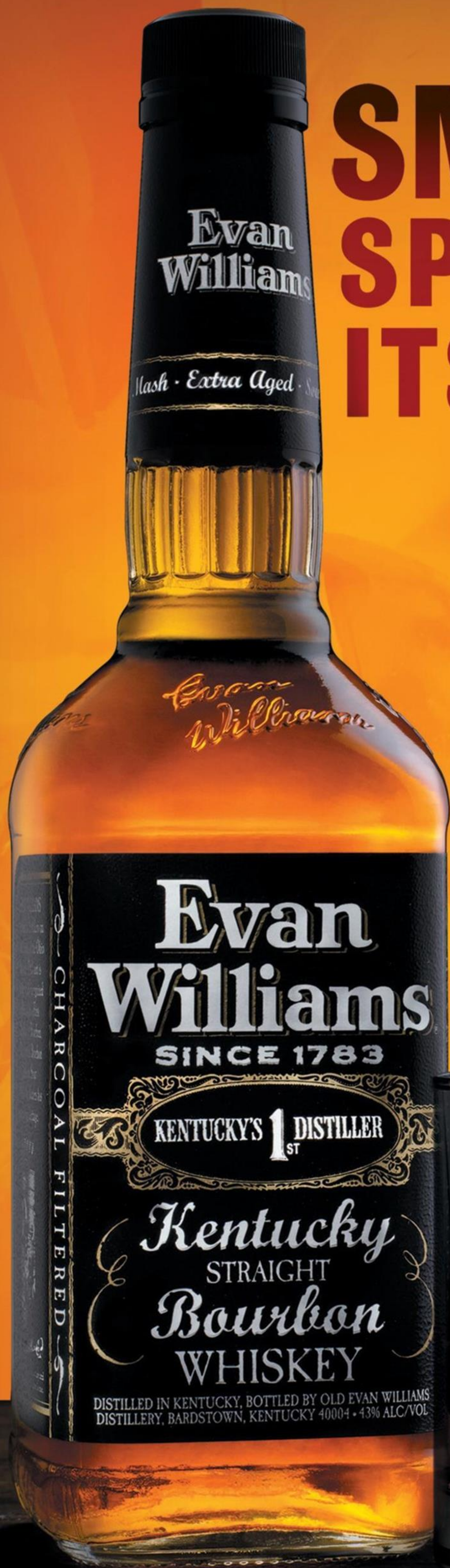
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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: BRYAN CRANSTON

A candid conversation with the versatile actor on his passion for flashing his ass, giving away dildos and why he will forever be known as Walter White

Last summer, Bryan Cranston demonstrated why he's one of the most popular actors in America. And he did it with a single line.

During a Q&A with fans at San Diego Comic-Con, an audience member from Albuquerque—where AMC's *Breaking Bad*, the series that made Cranston a household name, was filmed—nervously asked Cranston if he enjoyed his time in the city. Without skipping a beat, Cranston replied, "Yeah, I'd go and visit your mother once in a while."

The audience roared with laughter. Cranston stared back at the stunned fan. And then, with the swagger and sneer of a gangsta rapper, he dropped the microphone to the floor.

A video clip of the exchange went viral, and for good reason. Although he was clearly joking, Cranston had convincing menace. It was the same unblinking stare we recognize from *Breaking Bad* when chemistry teacher Walter White transforms into Heisenberg, the meth-cooking drug kingpin. It's a fierce, unrepentant expression that says, "I am the one who knocks!"

There's also a glimmer of mischievousness in his delivery. It's a skill he mastered on *Malcolm in the Middle*, the Fox sitcom that ran from 2000 to 2006. As Hal, the hapless dad, he endured countless indignities for the sake of comedy.

Rarely has an actor lived in both worlds so

comfortably. When someone asks, "Remember that brilliant scene Bryan Cranston did in his tighty-whities?" it's not unreasonable to reply, "You mean the laugh-out-loud funny one or the sad dramatic one?" (Yes, he's done it twice: once for *Malcolm* and once for *Breaking Bad*.)

It has been a long journey for Cranston, one that, in many ways, began in 1977, during a rainstorm in Virginia.

Cranston was just 21 at the time. He and his older brother, Kyle, had come from a broken home in middle-class Canoga Park, in southern California's San Fernando Valley. Their father, a struggling actor and former amateur boxer, had walked out on the family when Bryan was just 11. Their mother was an alcoholic.

They spent two years on the road, essentially homeless, finding work wherever they could. In Virginia, a storm forced them to seek shelter. At some point, Cranston began to read Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. Something about the play hit him like lightning. He realized then and there that he wanted to be an actor.

Cranston struggled during much of the 1980s and 1990s. He had bit parts on *Hill Street Blues*, *CHiPS* and *Seinfeld* and in commercials for Atari, *Preparation H* and *Coffee-mate*. But then came *Malcolm in the Middle* and *Breaking Bad*, and everything changed.

In recent years the 59-year-old has reinvented himself yet again, this time as a bona fide movie star. His name appears above the title in everything from big-budget monster thrillers like *Godzilla* to historical dramas like the recently released *Trumbo*. There's already Oscar buzz surrounding his *Trumbo* performance—to go along with his five Emmys (for *Breaking Bad*) and his Tony (for a Broadway turn as Lyndon B. Johnson, in *All the Way*).

We sent writer **Eric Spitznagel**, who has interviewed Stephen Colbert and Jon Hamm for *PLAYBOY*, to talk with Cranston in West Hollywood. He reports: "Cranston showed up looking frazzled and exhausted. He'd been up all night, shooting scenes for the film adaptation of *All the Way*. 'This is going to be a terrible interview,' he growled at me. But it didn't take long for him to warm up. Cranston is seemingly incapable of having a conversation without performing, slipping in and out of characters. His hands are in constant motion, and he's quick to jump to his feet, acting out what he's trying to describe. Also, he does a spectacular Donald Trump impression."

PLAYBOY: *Breaking Bad* has been off the air for two years. Have we reached a point yet when every conversation about you



"I'm a closeted politician in my heart. I would love to be involved in politics, just for the altruistic feeling of making people's lives better. If I stop acting and am living in a little community, I might become a candidate for mayor."



"I had a bad situation at home. My father disappeared when I was 11. My mother was an alcoholic. I was reeling from all of it, because up until the age of 11, it was a good childhood. Then the rug got pulled out from under me."



"So we're standing there, naked and quiet. Normally in this type of situation you don't talk much. But I went the opposite way and talked way too much. They just looked at me like, 'We're really going to have a conversation?'"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL MULLER

doesn't need to begin with a reference to that show?

CRANSTON: Nope. [laughs] And I honestly don't expect that to ever happen.

PLAYBOY: You don't think you'll ever do something better than *Breaking Bad*?

CRANSTON: I may do something I'm as proud of, but I thoroughly expect *Breaking Bad* to be the lead line in my obituary.

PLAYBOY: "He was the one who knocked" could very well be on your gravestone.

CRANSTON: Oh yeah, I would love that. I have nothing but love for the show.

PLAYBOY: Do you wish it hadn't ended?

CRANSTON: Not at all. I don't miss it at all.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CRANSTON: Because we so thoroughly examined that character and that experience. I miss the people. I miss being around those actors and writers and directors and crew. And I miss Albuquerque.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you buy a house there?

CRANSTON: I did, and I still have it. I like New Mexico. It's a beautiful state with a rich culture, both Hispanic and Native American. They have a rattlesnake museum in Albuquerque. You can go see rattlesnakes on display and learn about the history of rattlesnakes. I just adore everything about that part of the world.

PLAYBOY: When was the last time you got out there?

CRANSTON: I haven't been in a while, because I've been working.

PLAYBOY: So why not sell the house?

CRANSTON: I didn't feel an urgent need to let it go. I guess it's my way of mourning. When the show ended, we had to deal not only with the end of this story and these characters, but also an end of the actors seeing each other on a regular basis. We'd become friends, and there were some deeply rooted emotions. I guess I didn't want to get rid of the house because that meant admitting it really was over. And also, I leased it to Bob Odenkirk.

PLAYBOY: Seriously?

CRANSTON: Oh yeah. He needed a place to stay while he shoots *Better Call Saul*. Odenkirk crawls into my bed every night.

PLAYBOY: If the stories are to be believed, you were something of a prankster on the *Breaking Bad* set.

CRANSTON: What have you heard?

PLAYBOY: You were always willing to surprise your cast mates with an unexpected dildo.

CRANSTON: [Laughs] Well, sure. There's nothing like a dildo to break the tension. I've found that's true in most situations.

PLAYBOY: How many dildos would you say you've used in pranks over your entire acting career?

CRANSTON: So many that I bought a dildo-manufacturing company. Proudly made in America.

PLAYBOY: But seriously, what is it with the dildos?

CRANSTON: I just think they're funny. And I think it's important to examine the tension levels or anxiety levels or exhaustion levels of your cast and crew.

Sometimes a release is exactly what they need to propel them through the rest of the day and get the work done.

PLAYBOY: You go out of your way to make your casts happy. On *Godzilla*, you brought in an ice cream truck that served Godzilla-themed treats.

CRANSTON: How do you know this?

PLAYBOY: We have our sources.

CRANSTON: I do that kind of stuff all the time. I just think it's necessary to show a little gratitude. It doesn't even have to be a big gesture. It can just be an acknowledgement. Like last night, we were shooting this big scene in *All the Way* where Lyndon Johnson wins the 1964 election and everybody's gathered at the ranch. All these background players—there are about 150 of them—are in high heels or hard shoes, standing all night, hopping and hollering and dancing. It's four, five o'clock in the morning, and we're doing take after take. To not recognize that, to just take it for granted, would be remiss.

PLAYBOY: Your *Breaking Bad* co-star Aaron

I expect Breaking Bad to be the lead line in my obituary.

Paul said something curious about you to Jimmy Kimmel once. He said, "Any time he can have the opportunity to show me his ass, he does."

CRANSTON: [Laughs] I guess that's true.

PLAYBOY: Just to make him laugh?

CRANSTON: Yeah. Like with the dildos, it's to break the tension.

PLAYBOY: Do you plan it in advance, or is it a spur-of-the-moment thing?

CRANSTON: No, it's planned. The very last shot we did for *Breaking Bad*—a flashback of Aaron and me cooking meth together—I'm wearing an apron. I'm supposed to turn away from him at one point, and I happen to be in sweats. So while they're setting up the shot, I kind of wiggle out of the sweats. I'm wearing the apron, so he doesn't even notice. But then we start shooting, and I turn around and just flash him my ass.

PLAYBOY: What a touching good-bye.

CRANSTON: It really was. It was the view I wanted to leave him with.

PLAYBOY: What about in *Trumbo*? Did anyone in that cast see you naked?

CRANSTON: Yeah, I'm fully nude in *Trumbo*.

PLAYBOY: As a prank?

CRANSTON: No, as part of the movie. It was full frontal.

PLAYBOY: Is that a first?

CRANSTON: I'm pretty sure it's a first.

PLAYBOY: Is it a little unnerving?

CRANSTON: It can be, but when I talked to the director, Jay Roach, about it, we both felt strongly that it had to happen. A lot of people have that nightmare of being naked in public and being vulnerable. That's truly what it is, and that's what we wanted to show. Here's this brilliant wordsmith and extraordinary writer, a family man and a crusader. And yet, when you take his clothes off, he's just like any other man.

PLAYBOY: So it's not a bedroom scene.

CRANSTON: Oh no, it's humiliating, especially the way it's treated in the scene, with this dispassionate prison guard saying, "Cough, turn around, spread your cheeks, lift your sack and pull it back." He's looking for contraband. "Move on!" Everybody's the same; nobody makes a distinction between one man and another.

PLAYBOY: What's the mood on the set when you're shooting a nude scene? Is it serious, or do you keep things light?

CRANSTON: I remember standing there naked with these three other men in a holding cell, waiting for our turn to come forward. We're being processed into the penal institution, and we're giving little looks to each other.

PLAYBOY: As part of the scene or——?

CRANSTON: No, just as people, as actors. You may take a glance at what the other guy has, just for comparison.

PLAYBOY: How did you stack up?

CRANSTON: You're grateful sometimes and sometimes a little disappointed. So we're standing there, naked and quiet. Normally in this type of situation you don't talk much. But I went the opposite way and talked way too much. It's a defense mechanism.

PLAYBOY: What did you say?

CRANSTON: Just the first thing that came to my head. I said, "How about those Saints?" And they just looked at me like, "We're really going to have a conversation?"

PLAYBOY: Nothing wrong with that.

CRANSTON: What's the big deal, right? Just some guys talking about football.

PLAYBOY: Who happen to all be naked.

CRANSTON: That's right.

PLAYBOY: Being naked or seminaked on camera is not exactly new for you. You have a history.

CRANSTON: I was naked a few times on *Breaking Bad*. And I've been in underwear a lot, for one desired effect or another, either comedic or sad. I also drop trou in a scene in *All the Way*. Lyndon used to go to the bathroom and [slips into a Texas accent] still be in a conversation, and he'd just start taking a shit. People would be backing away, and he'd be [leans over, pretending to be on a toilet], "What the hell are you saying? Get over here!" I went all out with it, just dropped my pants and underwear and sat down on the toilet.

PLAYBOY: In terms of mortifying things you've had to do onscreen, nothing comes close to *Malcolm in the Middle*.

CRANSTON: Yeah, we had some good times on that show. I told Linwood Boomer, who created *Malcolm*, "I'll do anything, as long as it makes sense to the story." I had 30,000 bees on me at one point.

PLAYBOY: Did you get stung?

CRANSTON: Twice.

PLAYBOY: Where?

CRANSTON: Once on my shoulder and once on my balls.

PLAYBOY: You got stung on the balls? How does that feel?

CRANSTON: Not terrible, in the sense that it was very informative to me. If a bee stung you right now, it would be [slaps neck], "What the hell?" It would be shock and surprise, and it would hurt more because of that. But if you're standing with 30,000 bees on you and are surprised when you get stung, you're an idiot. When I got stung, it was truly like, "Hmm, I think I got stung." It was that! Then the guy runs over with a credit card to scrape the stinger out.

PLAYBOY: You had a guy for that?

CRANSTON: Oh yeah. You don't cover an actor with 30,000 bees without having somebody on the production staff on bee duty.

PLAYBOY: And you really took it on the balls?

CRANSTON: The balls, baby.

PLAYBOY: Why did it have to be the balls?

CRANSTON: I guess I turned too fast and there was a bee up in my inner thigh who was like, "It's too crowded in here." I said to the guy with the credit card, "I got stung." He ran over, really enthusiastic, "Where, where?" And I'm like, "On my balls." And he's [backs away slowly], "Sorry, man. You're on your own there. Wish I could help you."

PLAYBOY: For some reason we can see you being the class clown in school. True?

CRANSTON: Not at all. I was introverted in high school. I was unremarkable. There was nothing special about me, nothing unique.

PLAYBOY: That's hard to believe.

CRANSTON: I was trying to fly under the radar. I had a bad situation at home. My father disappeared when I was 11, and I didn't see him again until I was 22. My mother was an alcoholic. I was reeling from all of it, because up until the age of 11, it was a good childhood. Then the rug got pulled out from under me. I lost the mother to alcoholism; I lost the father physically; I lost the home. Our house went into foreclosure. So then I was waiting for the other shoe to drop.

PLAYBOY: You thought if you weren't noticeable, trouble couldn't find you?

CRANSTON: Exactly. I was too shaken to be assertive. It felt safer to keep my back against the wall, to just observe.

PLAYBOY: How did your dad disappear? Was it one of those "he went out for a pack of cigarettes and never came back" moments?

CRANSTON: No, it wasn't that dramatic. It

was more like being weaned. Every day we saw a little less of him.

PLAYBOY: Where was he going?

CRANSTON: I'm still not sure. There was alcoholism and probably some drug abuse and just abject depression from never becoming the actor he wanted to become and whatever fights he was having with our mother. He had a lot of issues, a lot of anger.

PLAYBOY: He was a former boxer. Was he ever violent around you?

CRANSTON: Not toward me, but yeah, I've seen him hit three different people in my life. Once when he was driving, some guy cut him off in a hot rod type of car, and my dad was pissed. He pulls up next to him, starts honking the horn, yelling at him. And the guy shouts back, "What are you going to do about it, old man?" My dad had salt-and-pepper hair by the time he turned 30, so he looked older than he was. My dad yelled at him, "Turn the corner, I'll show you!" So they pulled over behind some stores. My

*I was
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brother and I are in the backseat, terrified, in each other's clutches. We're little boys. My dad gets out, and the other guy is leaning against his car, being all cool about it. And he's a big guy. My dad was five-10 at his tallest. He walks over to the guy and slugs him in the face. The guy hit his car and fell to the ground, and there was blood everywhere. My dad gets back in the car and is like, "It's okay. Calm down." And as we're driving home, he says, "We don't need to tell your mom about any of this. It'll just make her worried."

PLAYBOY: That's crazy.

CRANSTON: It really was crazy. These kinds of things happened before he left, when I wasn't even 11 years old yet.

PLAYBOY: You finally reconnected with him when you were in your early 20s.

CRANSTON: Yeah. We tried to talk about the past, about why he disappeared, but he wasn't interested in talking about it. He's of that generation that just likes to forget the past. "It was a bad time," he'd say. We kept trying, my brother and I, but we eventually realized he'd gone as

far as he was willing or capable to go. So that was it.

PLAYBOY: Have you forgiven him?

CRANSTON: To a point. I think so. [pauses] My father passed away last year, in October. He was 90. The night before he died, he found a scrap of paper and scribbled out in his shaky handwriting, "The best part of my life is when my children forgive me for the worst part of my life."

PLAYBOY: Did that surprise you?

CRANSTON: No, I knew he felt that way.

PLAYBOY: But were you surprised he wrote that for you?

CRANSTON: He didn't share it. We found it. I think he wrote it recently, because it was out. It wasn't in a drawer somewhere; it was out. He knew the end was coming. He was feeling so awful. He died of congestive heart failure. He was in a bad place. I think he knew it was going to happen.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you base Walter White on him?

CRANSTON: On the physicality of him. My dad had Walter's body shape. He carried the burden of missed opportunities on his shoulders, and therefore they were rounded.

PLAYBOY: Did your dad know?

CRANSTON: Yeah, I think I told him a couple of times. It wasn't insulting, because he's 30 years older than me. I wanted Walter to have the body of a man who was much older than him.

PLAYBOY: Did your dad watch *Breaking Bad*?

CRANSTON: He did.

PLAYBOY: Did he like it?

CRANSTON: He loved the show and was very complimentary about it.

PLAYBOY: In his younger days, your father not only wanted to be an actor, he was desperate to be a huge celebrity. You got the fame and adulation he always wanted as a would-be actor, but you did it by not chasing fame.

CRANSTON: I guess it's a little ironic, but I really think it's true that if you want something too much, it stays away. I was never the person giving an acceptance speech in the shower. That wasn't me. I think what broke my father's spirit was how much he really wanted stardom. That was always what my disgruntled, heartbroken mother talked about when she discussed our dad. He wanted to be a star; he always had to be a star. You either hit it big, or what's the point?

PLAYBOY: You never felt that way?

CRANSTON: I wanted to be a working actor. That is still, to this day, my highest professional achievement. From the age of 26 on, that's all I've done for a living. And that means a lot to me.

PLAYBOY: You gave yourself that goal during a cross-country motorcycle trip when you were in your early 20s.

CRANSTON: That's right. That's when I realized it. But at the time, it was mostly about running away. I didn't want to stay and fight for something I wasn't even sure I wanted.

PLAYBOY: You were on the verge of becoming a police officer, right?

CRANSTON: I'd taken police science courses in junior college and was doing well. I was going to transfer to a university before going into the LAPD. That was the plan. My brother was pretty much in the same position. He passed all his tests. He was very close to being an Orange County sheriff. All he needed to do was literally go down and pick up his badge and his gun.

PLAYBOY: What made you both change your minds?

CRANSTON: We just had doubts. It's interesting, because I think the great majority of people don't.

PLAYBOY: Don't have doubts?

CRANSTON: I think if they have a talent, friends or relatives or whoever give them affirmation. They're like, "Yeah, you're good at that. You're good at roofing. You could make good money as a roofer." And they just fall into it.

PLAYBOY: They don't realize they're making a decision for the rest of their lives.

CRANSTON: I think people kid themselves. They're like, "Okay, I'm going to do roofing for five years, save some money and then quit and go right into making music full-time." And what happens 15 years later?

PLAYBOY: They're still a roofer.

CRANSTON: And then they're like, "I've still got time. I'm in my mid-30s. I'm good. This is the new plan." But then 20 years have gone by, and they're 45 or 50, and they're like, "I'm a roofer. I guess that's who I am."

PLAYBOY: So are you saying young people should get on a motorcycle and ride around the country for two years to figure out what they really want to do with their lives?

CRANSTON: I don't think that's a bad idea.

PLAYBOY: How much money did you have when you left home?

CRANSTON: I had \$170 in my pocket. That was it.

PLAYBOY: How long did you think that was going to last?

CRANSTON: It didn't matter. We knew we could get jobs in coffee shops and carnivals. We could pick up jobs that paid in cash. "You want to work? Sure. Rake those leaves and I'll give you \$50. You can sleep in the barn." Okay, thanks, man.

PLAYBOY: That sounds dangerous.

CRANSTON: No, it's terribly exciting.

PLAYBOY: We're sure it's exciting. But "sleep in the barn"? That's how people end up disappearing.

CRANSTON: Well, I suppose. You're safer in numbers, and I was always with my brother. We depended on each other.

PLAYBOY: Is this something you'd recommend for your daughter?

CRANSTON: Working at a carnival?

PLAYBOY: Escaping. Driving around the country with no money and no plan.

CRANSTON: Absolutely. And she did it, in her own way. When she was in her

junior year of college, she went abroad for half a year to study. She blossomed over there. You have some structure, but you're in a foreign country. She went to Berlin and Prague and Scotland and Budapest. That was exactly what she needed to do.

PLAYBOY: Just hit the road with no plan?

CRANSTON: Go with girlfriends or boyfriends, and get lost. Figure things out. Go to youth hostels. Count your money out, share it, figure out what's fair and how to keep each other safe, and explore everything. Grow up! Figure things out.

PLAYBOY: See what you're made of.

CRANSTON: My daughter's generation, unfortunately, was raised with this world of instant gratification and immediate information. It's not to their advantage in many ways. When I was a kid, I remember being in the backseat of my parents' car and just being bored.

PLAYBOY: No cell phones, no tablets, no DVD players.

*We're going
to have a
generation
where
imagination
isn't valued.*

CRANSTON: None of that. And you're like, "Arrrrghhhh." You feel you could literally die of boredom. You either fall asleep or your brain kicks in and you start seeing shapes in the clouds. Or you come up with stories in your head. It's the mother of invention. You need to entertain yourself. When you let these little electronic devices create that entertainment for you, you lose something.

PLAYBOY: What will a generation raised on iPhones and tablets be like as adults?

CRANSTON: I think we're going to have a generation where imagination isn't valued. Artists will have less competition because there will be fewer truly imaginative people in the world. There will be more workers, more followers, more watchers, more information-driven people as opposed to substantive-driven. In this culture now, we're more informed, but that doesn't mean we're wise. We're less wise, more informed.

PLAYBOY: There was a moment during your motorcycle trip when you and your

brother were trapped in a rainstorm.

CRANSTON: In Virginia, yeah.

PLAYBOY: You were reading *Hedda Gabler*, and you had a moment of revelation: This is what you want to do with your life. This is where your passion was.

CRANSTON: That was it.

PLAYBOY: Fast-forward to a few years later, and you're doing Preparation H commercials. You're getting paid to say things like "inflamed hemorrhoidal tissue" and "oxygen action." This isn't what you wanted to do.

CRANSTON: It is what I wanted to do.

PLAYBOY: But it wasn't Henrik Ibsen or any other play. It wasn't immersing yourself in a complex character. It wasn't the vision of your future you had daydreaming in a Virginia rainstorm.

CRANSTON: It wasn't not the vision, though. My goal was to make a living as an actor. That's all I wanted. I wanted to be able to say, "This is my profession. It's what I do for a living." I'm very pragmatic. I don't fool myself. I'm not delusional. When I was doing a lot of commercials back in the early 1980s, I welcomed it, because it was doing several things for me. It was giving me the money I needed for rent, for acting classes, for head shots. It was creating a foundation for my health coverage and was contributing to my pension. It meant that I didn't have to look for a civilian job.

PLAYBOY: Not every struggling actor would feel lucky to do hemorrhoid commercials. They'd be like, "I'm an artist! Why am I doing this shit?"

CRANSTON: You don't get to be creative with everything. These commercials, they were perfunctory. You're there to deliver a task. You're there to do something specific and sell this product. If you can find an iota of creativity to infuse in this message, then great. But don't be disappointed if you can't.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel it was fortuitous that you didn't get any real attention as an actor until you were in your late 40s and early 50s?

CRANSTON: It happened the way it should. It would have been very different for me if I'd been thrust into the limelight when I was in my 20s. It was better to wait for it and to be able to recognize how much luck was involved. I got lucky. That's the one thing I always say to young actors. A career in the arts will not happen without a healthy dose of luck.

PLAYBOY: You're living proof of that. You got cast as Buzz Aldrin on the HBO miniseries *From the Earth to the Moon* only because the original actor was too fat for the spacesuit.

CRANSTON: That's right. Tom Hanks, who was the executive producer, called me up and said, "Are you still skinny?" I got the role just because of that.

PLAYBOY: You have to be ready when the opportunities come.

CRANSTON: That's exactly it. You can't plot for that. You *(continued on page 112)*

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The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principals of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequalled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

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PB/12/2015

RISE OF THE COP WATCHERS

BY: FRANK OWEN

**A NEW BREED OF ACTIVISTS ARE TURNING
CAMERAS ON THE POLICE. ARE THEY
EXPOSING MISCONDUCT OR MAKING A BAD
SITUATION WORSE?**



Good cop. Bad cop. Indifferent cop. The distinction doesn't much matter to police-accountability activist Antonio Buehler, who thinks most cops are bad by virtue of their badge. "Good cops do pop up once in a while, but they quickly become former cops," says Buehler. "If you're really a good cop, then you wouldn't stay silent when you see other cops abusing their authority."

He runs through a list of examples. Frank

Serpico, the New York City detective who exposed widespread graft within the NYPD in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was shot in the face. Adrian Schoolcraft, another NYPD cop who blew the whistle on police corruption, was abducted from his home on the orders of his bosses and forcibly admitted to a psych ward. Michael Wood, the Baltimore police officer who claims he witnessed his fellow narcs urinating and defecating on suspects' furniture during

ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTIN PAGE



1. April 2015: Police stand guard as rioters in Baltimore protest the death of Freddie Gray. 2. A cop watcher records the beating of William Cardenas in 2006. 3. Activist Antonio Buehler (right) with a Peaceful Streets volunteer. 4. Freddie Gray cries out in pain as officers drag him into a police van; a spinal cord injury led to Gray's death.

drug raids, quit the department last year. "That's what happens to good cops," says Buehler.

It's the first Saturday of August in Austin, Texas, and Buehler is standing on the corner of Sixth Street, a world-famous mecca for live rock and roll. The Dirty Sixth is throbbing with activity. A teeming crowd of pie-eyed 20-somethings packs the street, staggering from dive bar to dive bar in the withering heat. Stern-looking cops sporting military-style buzz cuts scope out the neon-lit parade, ready to spring into action if the fun threatens to tip over into mayhem. Buehler is instructing eight volunteers on the safety rules of the Peaceful Streets Project, an organization he founded three and a half years ago that regularly patrols the streets of Austin, looking to capture police misconduct on camera. Most of his team members wear red T-shirts with a peace sign on the front

and the mocking slogan "To protect and serve each other" on the back.

"We don't carry firearms," says Buehler. This being the Lone Star State, many in his group are pro-gun, but he doesn't want to give the police an excuse to shoot them. "No drugs or alcohol." Buehler expects each member of the team to be clearheaded in case trouble occurs, as it did in June when Austin cops snatched the cell phone of and pepper-sprayed a man (not affiliated with Buehler's group) for filming them. "Don't jump between a police officer and a suspect." There's no set distance a citizen must maintain to legally video the police, but get too close when cops are detaining a suspect and they can arrest you.

And maybe the most important safety tip: "Stay in buddy teams." In the event

a member of his crew is busted, Buehler needs at least one other person to record the arrest for publicity purposes and any subsequent legal proceedings.

"If you want to stand up for your rights by standing up to the cops, fine, but there's no bonus points for getting arrested," he tells the group.

Buehler is 38, tall and thin with an impressive head of thick jet-black hair and the upright posture and raised chin of someone used to being taken seriously. He has a sterling résumé: A graduate of Harvard, Stanford and West Point, he's a former investment banker and an Iraq War veteran who moved to Austin from New York at the end of 2010. When he's not monitoring the police, he manages Abrome Education, a for-profit company dedicated to helping homeschooled kids get into elite universities. Not bad for someone who grew up poor in a Pennsylvania coal-mining town and whose parents never graduated from high school. He didn't always hate cops. As a Republican turned libertarian (he's embarrassed to admit he canvassed for John McCain in *(continued on page 122)*

"GOOD COPS QUICKLY BECOME FORMER COPS. IF YOU'RE REALLY A GOOD COP, THEN YOU WOULDN'T STAY SILENT WHEN YOU SEE OTHER COPS ABUSING THEIR AUTHORITY."



“Well, as a matter of fact, it’s my favorite holiday tradition too!”

Soul

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ANDREAS KOCK

at Sea

Swedish photographer and model
Daniella Midenge puts down her camera
to captain the perfect maritime adventure













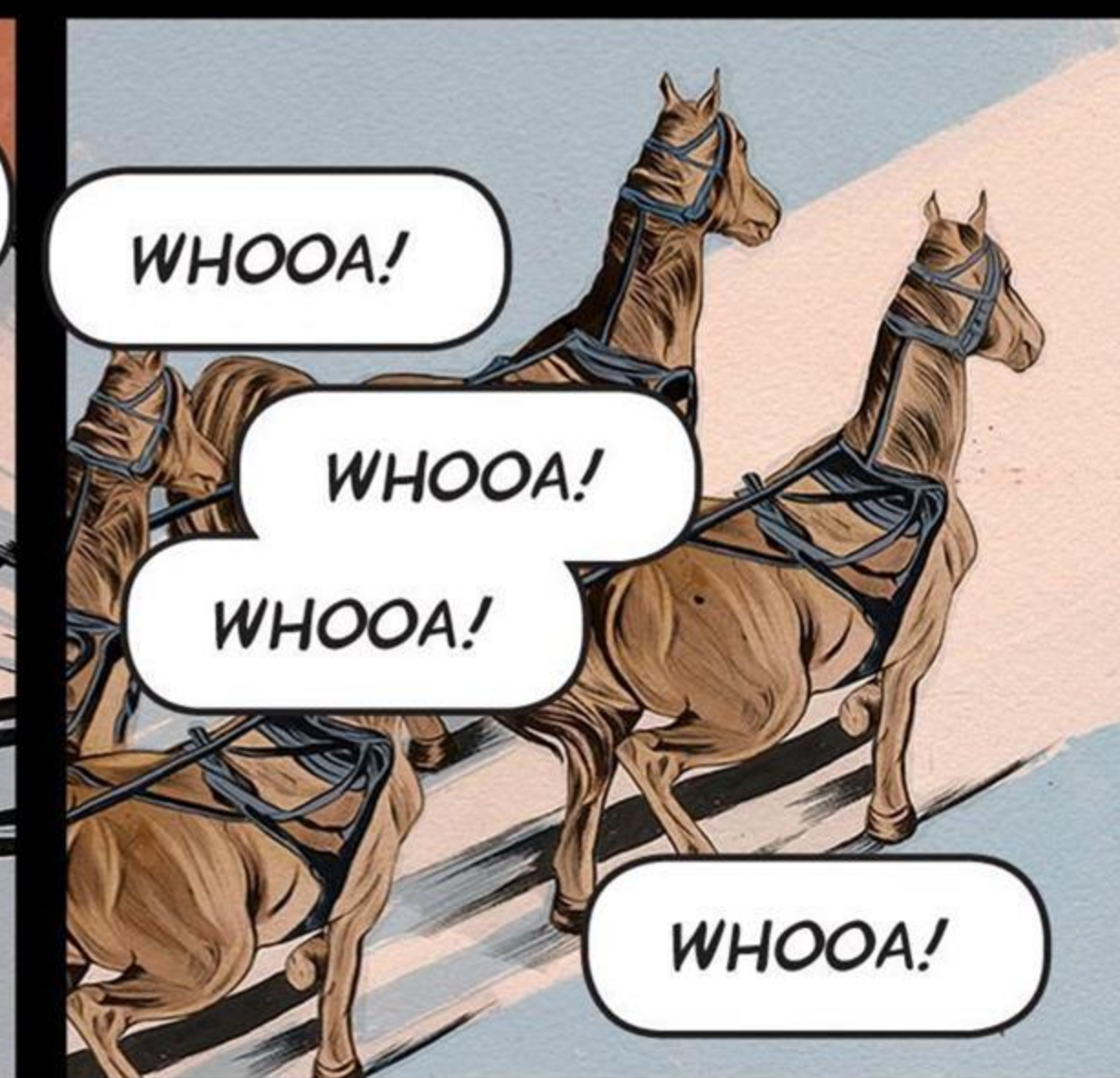
WYOMING, 1860-SOMETHING

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

WITH THE DEATH OF THE CIVIL WAR COMES THE BIRTH OF THE WILD WEST. THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE PRETTY

STORY AND TEXT BY QUENTIN TARANTINO

ILLUSTRATION BY ZACH MEYER



GOT ROOM FOR ONE MORE?



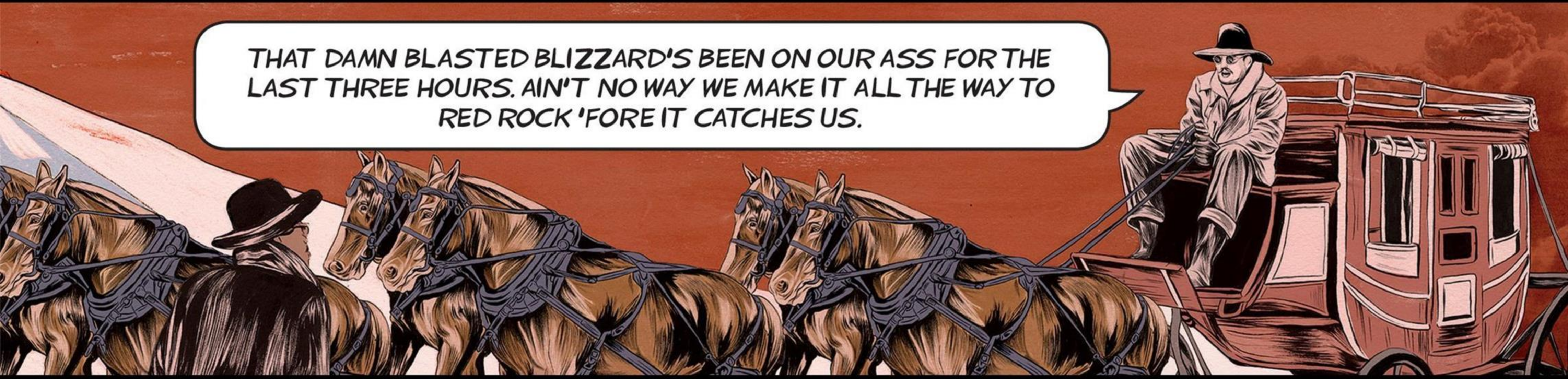
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU,
AND WHAT HAPPENED
TO THEM?

NAME'S MAJOR
MARQUIS WARREN,
FORMER U.S. CAVALRY.
CURRENTLY I'M A
SERVANT OF THE
COURT. THESE ARE A
COUPLE OF NO-GOODS
I'M BRINGING INTO
MARKET. I GOT THE
PAPERWORK ON 'EM IN
MY POCKET.

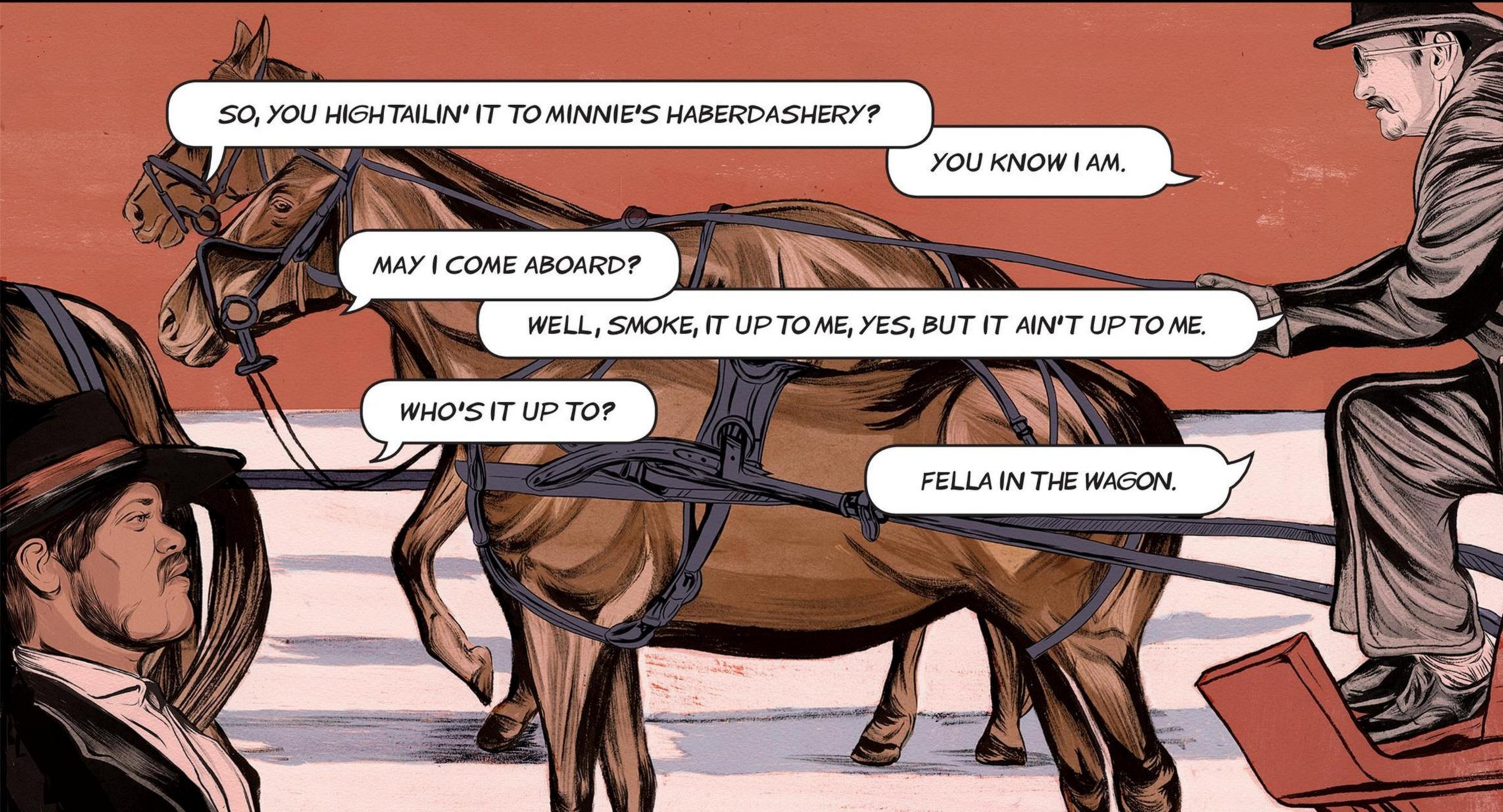


YOU TAKIN' 'EM INTO RED ROCK?

I FIGURE THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE GOING, RIGHT?



THAT DAMN BLASTED BLIZZARD'S BEEN ON OUR ASS FOR THE
LAST THREE HOURS. AIN'T NO WAY WE MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO
RED ROCK 'FORE IT CATCHES US.



SO, YOU HIGHTAILIN' IT TO MINNIE'S HABERDASHERY?

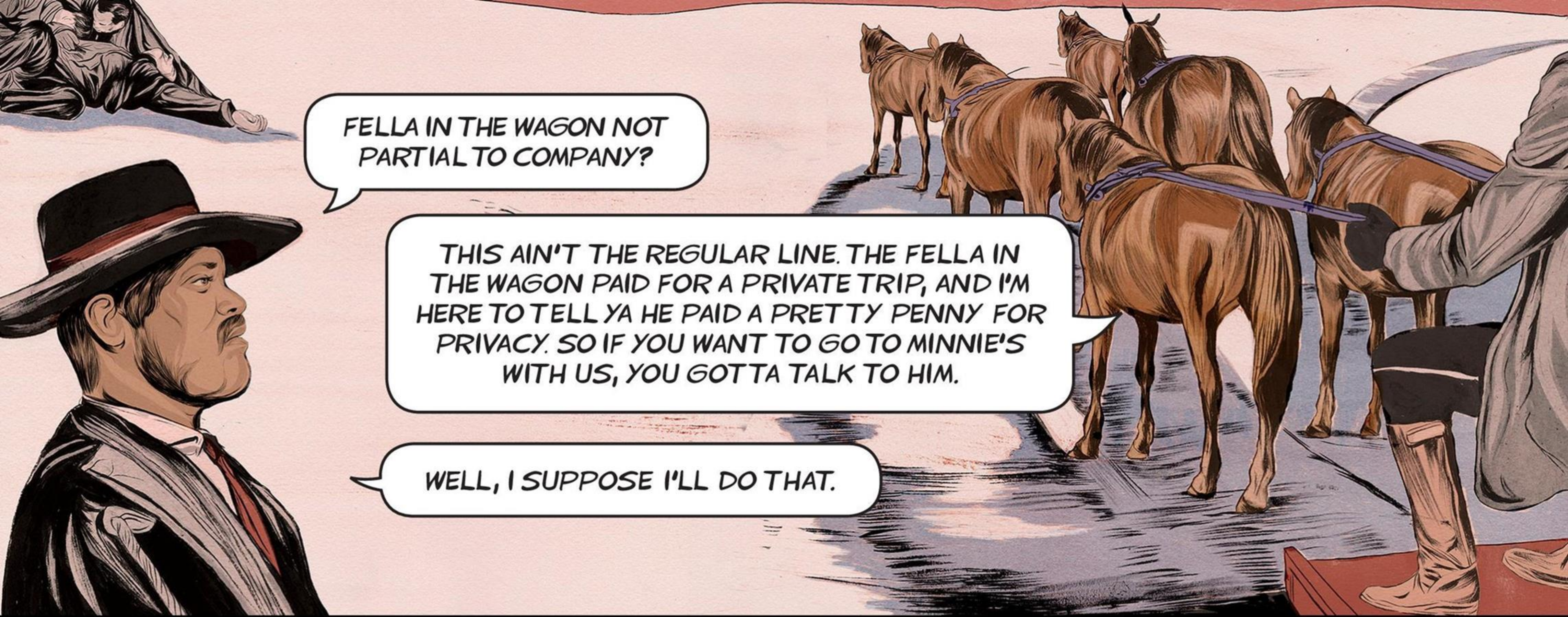
YOU KNOW I AM.

MAY I COME ABOARD?

WELL, SMOKE, IT UP TO ME, YES, BUT IT AIN'T UP TO ME.

WHO'S IT UP TO?

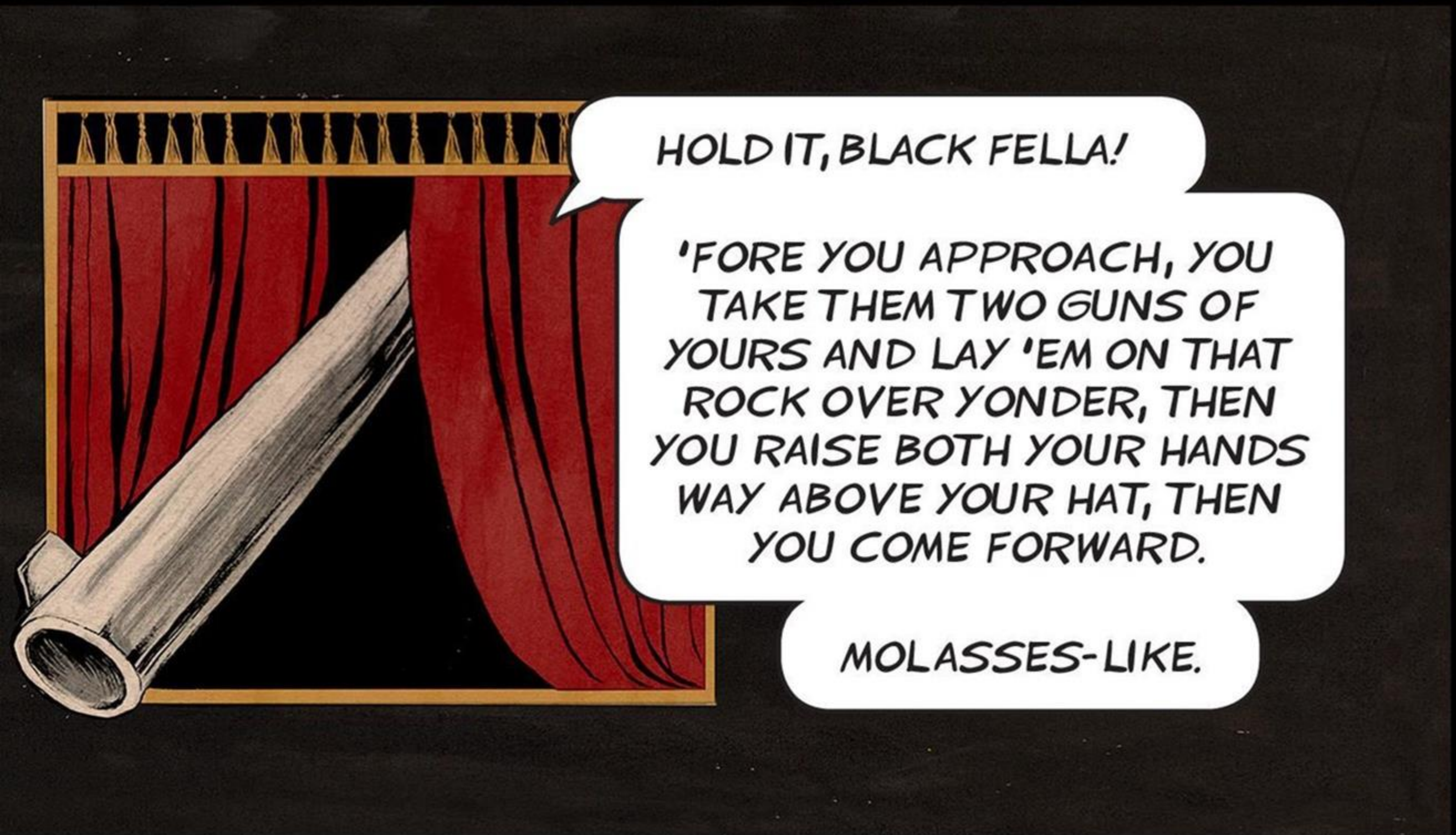
FELLA IN THE WAGON.



FELLA IN THE WAGON NOT PARTIAL TO COMPANY?

THIS AIN'T THE REGULAR LINE. THE FELLA IN THE WAGON PAID FOR A PRIVATE TRIP, AND I'M HERE TO TELL YA HE PAID A PRETTY PENNY FOR PRIVACY. SO IF YOU WANT TO GO TO MINNIE'S WITH US, YOU GOTTA TALK TO HIM.

WELL, I SUPPOSE I'LL DO THAT.



HOLD IT, BLACK FELLA!

'FORE YOU APPROACH, YOU TAKE THEM TWO GUNS OF YOURS AND LAY 'EM ON THAT ROCK OVER YONDER, THEN YOU RAISE BOTH YOUR HANDS WAY ABOVE YOUR HAT, THEN YOU COME FORWARD.

MOLASSES-LIKE.



REAL TRUSTING FELLA, HUH?

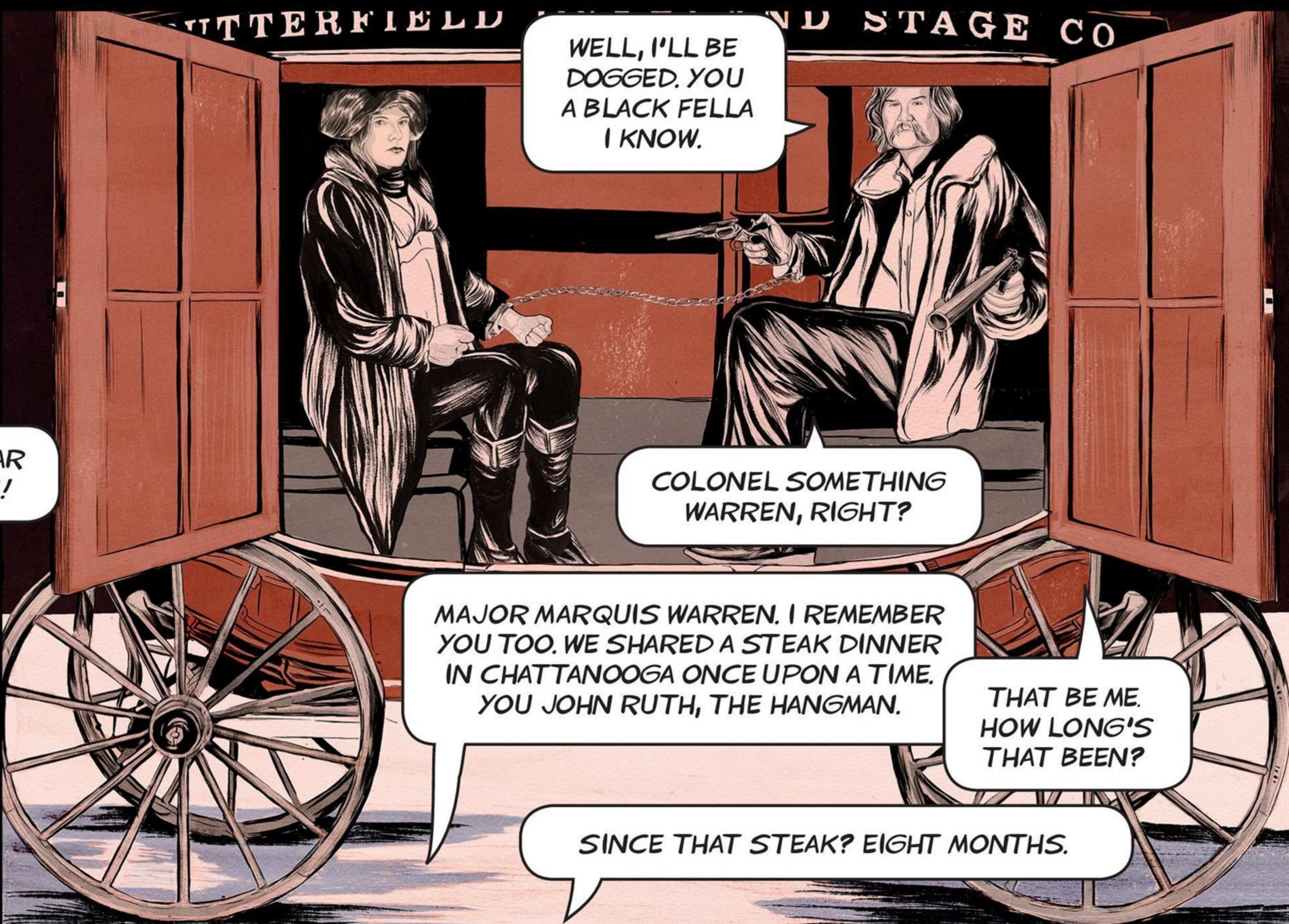


NOT SO MUCH.



THAT'S FAR ENOUGH!

KICK!



WELL, I'LL BE DOGGED. YOU A BLACK FELLA I KNOW.

COLONEL SOMETHING WARREN, RIGHT?

MAJOR MARQUIS WARREN. I REMEMBER YOU TOO. WE SHARED A STEAK DINNER IN CHATTANOOGA ONCE UPON A TIME. YOU JOHN RUTH, THE HANGMAN.

THAT BE ME. HOW LONG'S THAT BEEN?

SINCE THAT STEAK? EIGHT MONTHS.



SO WHY DON'T YOU EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT AN AFRICAN BOUNTY HUNTER'S DOING WANDERING AROUND IN THE SNOW IN THE MIDDLE OF WYOMING?

I'M TRYING TO GET A COUPLE BOUNTIES TO RED ROCK.

SO YOU STILL IN BUSINESS?

YOU KNOW I AM.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HORSE?


CIRCUMSTANCES FORCED US TO TAKE THE LONG WAY ROUND. MY HORSE COULDN'T MAKE IT.

YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT THIS FILLY HERE?

NOPE.

NOT EVEN HER NAME?

NOPE.



WELL, I GUESS THAT MAKES THIS ONE FORTUITOUS WAGON.

I SURE HOPE SO.



MAJOR MARQUIS WARREN, THIS HERE IS DAISY DOMERGUE. DOMERGUE, TO YOU, THIS IS MAJOR WARREN.

HOWDY, NIGGER!

SHE'S A PEPPER, AIN'T SHE? NOW, GIRL, DON'T YOU KNOW DARKIES DON'T LIKE BEING CALLED NIGGER NO MORE?

I BEEN CALLED WORSE.

NOW THAT I CAN BELIEVE.



HEARD OF HER?

SHOULD I?

WELL, SHE AIN'T NO JOHN WILKES BOOTH, BUT MAYBE YOU HEARD TELL 'BOUT THE PRICE ON HER HEAD.

HOW MUCH?

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS.

DAMN. WHAT'D SHE DO, KILL LILLIE LANGTRY?

NOT QUITE. NOW THAT TEN THOUSAND'S PRACTICALLY IN MY POCKET. IT'S WHY I AIN'T TOO ANXIOUS TO BE HANDING OUT RIDES, ESPECIALLY TO PROFESSIONALS OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

WELL, I SURE CAN APPRECIATE THAT, ONLY I AIN'T GOT NO DESIGNS ON HER. ONE OF MY FELLAS IS WORTH FOUR THOUSAND, ONE'S WORTH THREE THOUSAND AND ONE'S WORTH ONE. THAT'S DAMN SURE GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

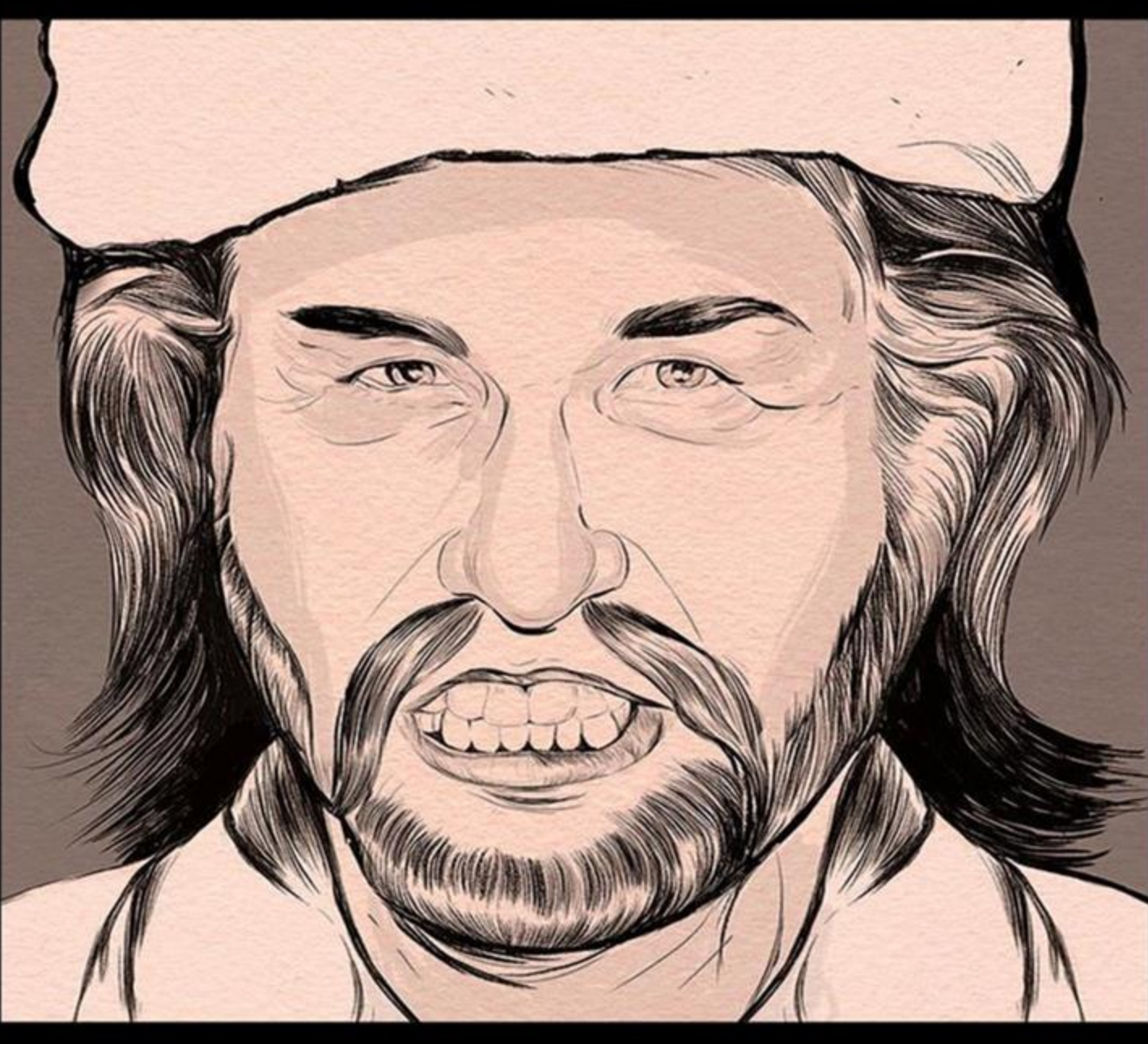
LOOK, I HATE TO INTERRUPT Y'ALL, BUT WE GOT A DAMN COLD BLIZZARD HOT ON OUR ASS WE TRYIN' TO BEAT TO SHELTER.

I REALIZE THAT! NOW SHUT YOUR MOUTH AND HOLD THEM DAMN HORSES WHILE I THINK!



OKAY, BOY, WE'LL GIVE IT A TRY. BUT YOU LEAVE THOSE PISTOLS OVER THERE WITH THE DRIVER.

YOU AIN'T REALLY GONNA LET THAT NIGGER IN HERE, IS YA? I MEAN MAYBE UP THERE WITH O.B. BUT NOT IN HERE.



HOW YOU LIKE THE SOUND OF THEM BELLS, BITCH? REAL PRETTY, AIN'T THEY? YOU OPEN YOUR TRASHY MOUTH AGAIN, I'LL KNOCK OUT THEM FRONT TEETH FOR YA. YOU GOT IT?

YEAH.

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY "I GOT IT."

I GOT IT.

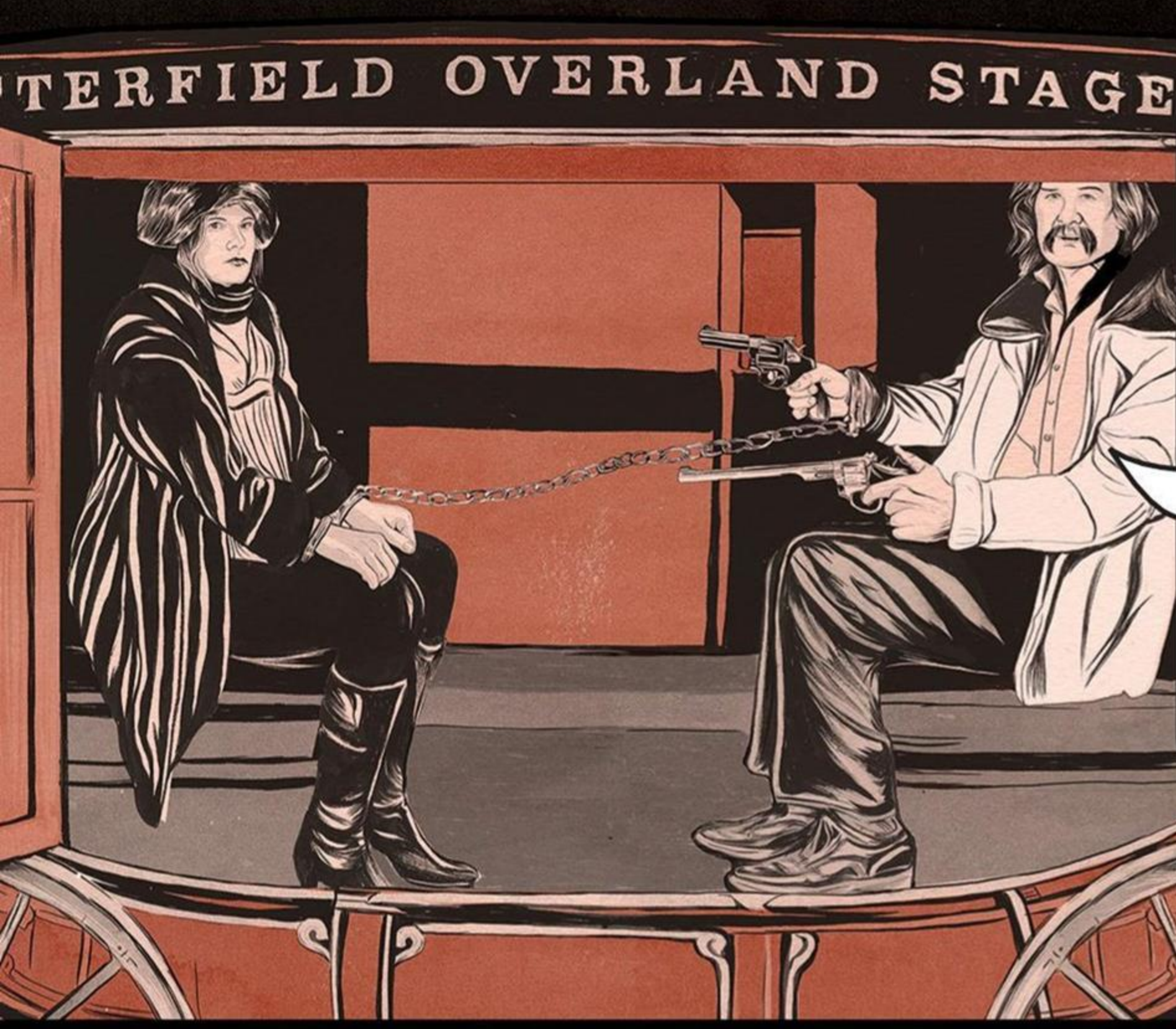
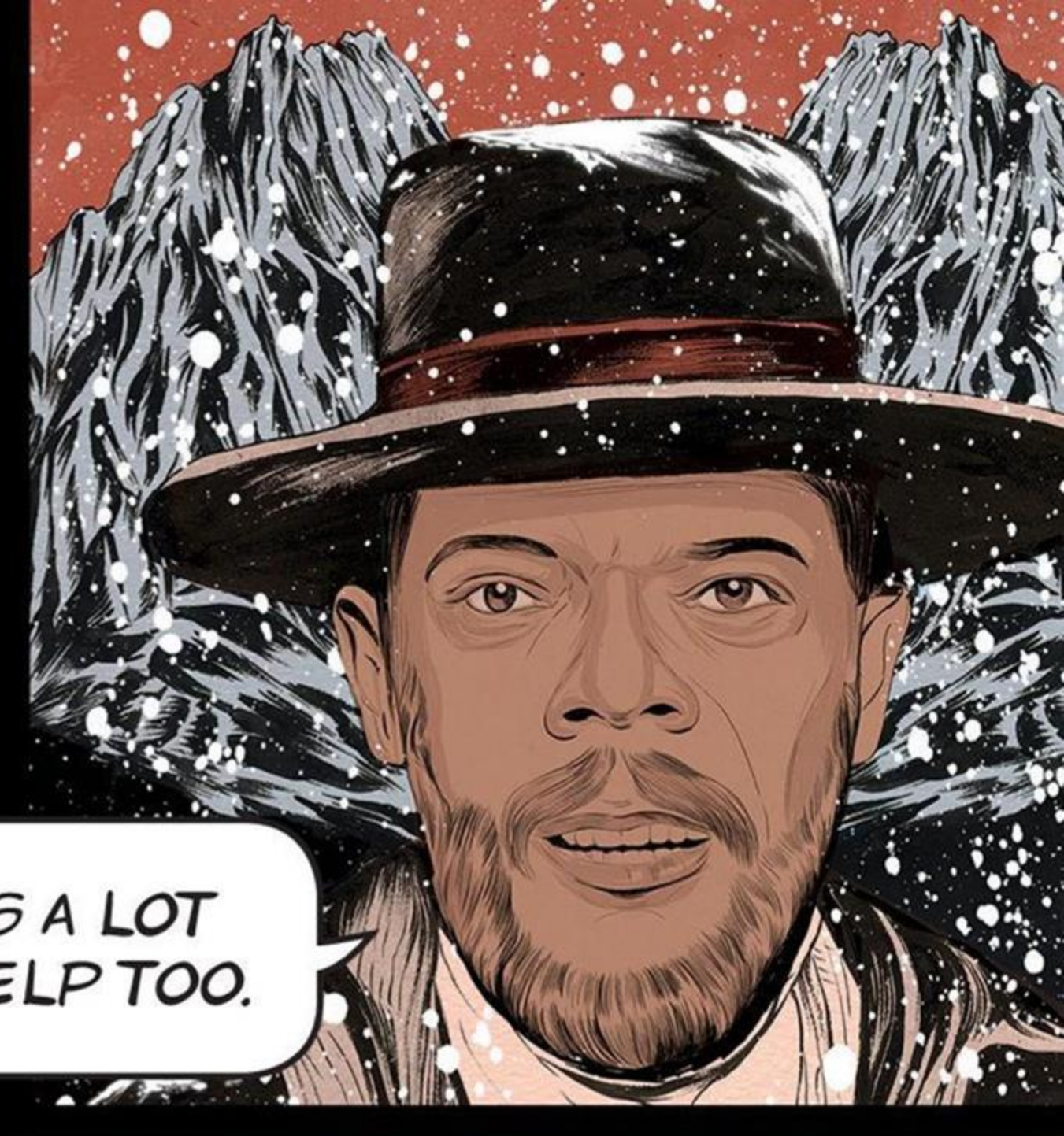
YOU DAMN WELL BETTER.



I'M GONNA NEED SOME HELP TYING THESE FELLAS UP ON THE ROOF.

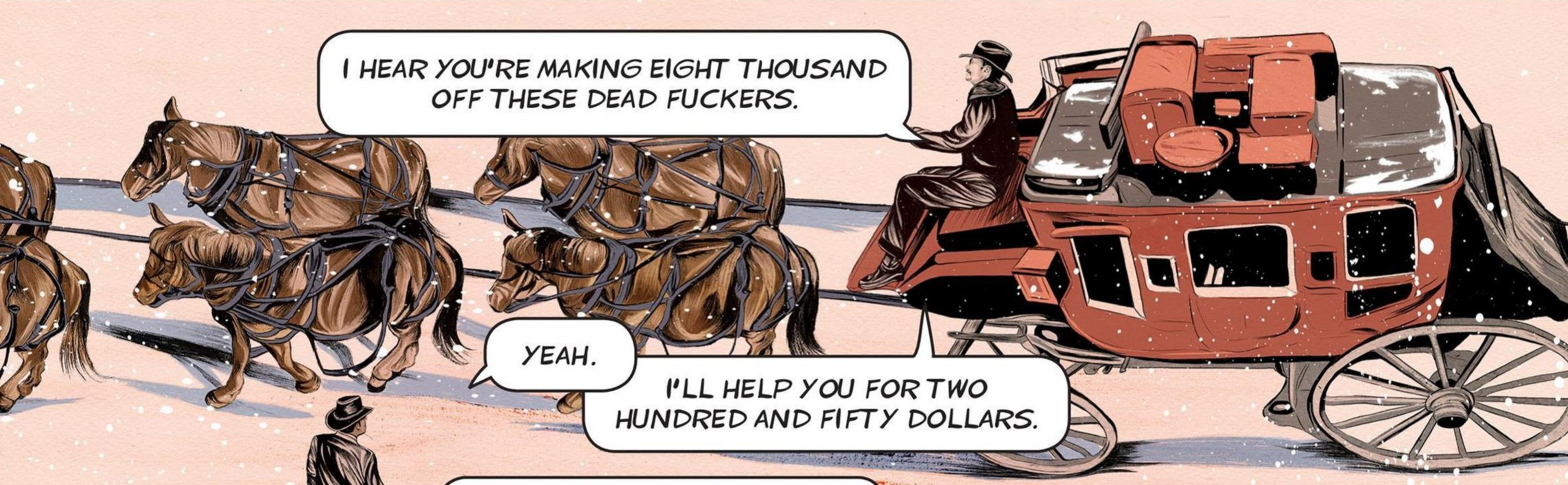
GIVE O.B. FIFTY DOLLARS WHEN WE GET TO RED ROCK. HE'LL HELP YOU.

WE GET GOING A LOT FASTER YOU HELP TOO.



GODDAMN IT TO HELL, I'M ALREADY REGRETTING THIS! NOW I CAN'T LIKELY HELP YOU TIE FELLAS TO THE ROOF WITH MY WRIST CUFFED TO HERS, AND MY WRIST IS GONNA STAY CUFFED TO HERS AND SHE AIN'T NEVER GONNA LEAVE MY GODDAMN SIDE UNTIL I PERSONALLY PUT HER IN THE RED ROCK JAIL. NOW, DO YOU GOT THAT?

YEAH, I GOT IT.



I HEAR YOU'RE MAKING EIGHT THOUSAND OFF THESE DEAD FUCKERS.

YEAH.

I'LL HELP YOU FOR TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS.

HOW ABOUT A HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS AND FIRST TWO DAYS WE IN RED ROCK I PAY FOR ALL YOUR BOOZE. THEY GOT A SOCIAL CLUB IN RED ROCK?

WHY, YES THEY DO.

I'LL STAKE YOU A NIGHT THERE TOO. NOW THAT'S A GOOD DEAL, SON.



SHITFIRE! THAT'S A DAMN GOOD DEAL, SMOKE! NOW LET'S GET TO IT.

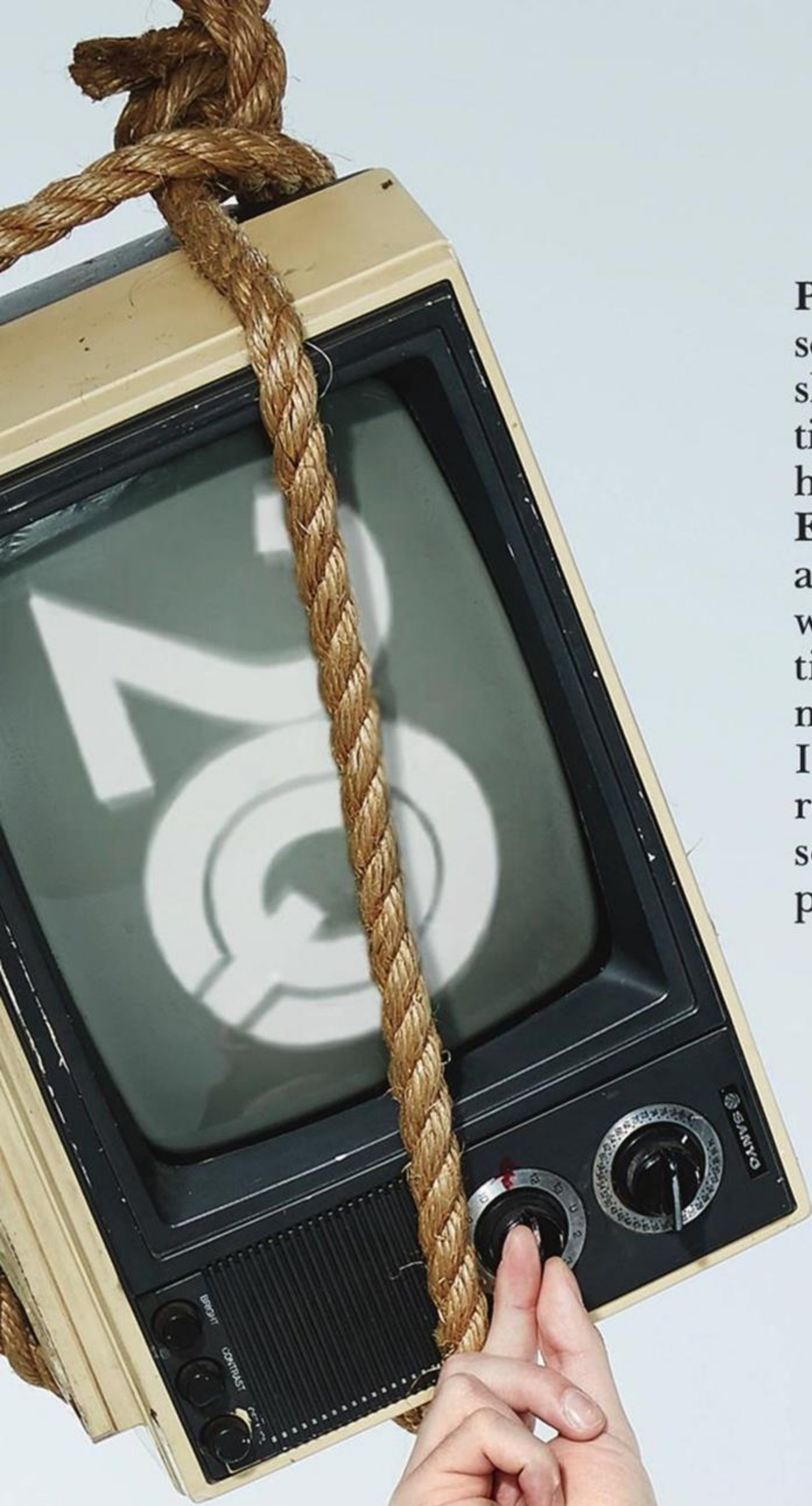


FIN



THE FAST-TALKING STAR OF *BILLY ON THE STREET* AND *DIFFICULT PEOPLE* PRIDES HIMSELF ON BEING ANGRY AND UNLIKABLE. WHY DON'T MICHELLE OBAMA, NICK OFFERMAN, JULIE KLAUSNER, CHRIS PRATT, TINA FEY AND AMY POEHLER AGREE?

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARY ELLEN MATTHEWS



Q1

PLAYBOY: When you filmed the new season of *Billy on the Street*, the impromptu quiz show on which you shout pop-culture questions at strangers on the streets of New York, how was it different from previous years?

EICHNER: It's a big change from our first and second seasons, when no one knew who the hell I was. I was just a crazy lunatic on the street. A lot of people recognize me from *Parks and Recreation*, even though I was only on the final two seasons. The roster of celebrity guests we have this season is insane. The first season, the only people I could get were two I knew: Joan

Rivers and Rachel Dratch. This year, we have Chris Pratt, Tina Fey, Will Ferrell and Julianne Moore. We shot a show with the first lady last season. We were nominated for an Emmy two years ago. But in a strange way, the show hasn't changed. I'm still walking down the same streets, asking the same types of absurd questions. Yeah, more people know me, but there are plenty of people who don't. [laughs] Sometimes I can even get material out of people who recognize me. A few seasons ago I walked up to a girl, and she said, "Oh my God, my friend is obsessed with you." I said, "Oh, shut up," and walked away. It's



funny for me to get angry even at people who love me. Who does that?

Q2

PLAYBOY: You do. Now that you're known for yelling at people, do you get a lot of requests from people who want you to yell at them?

EICHNER: Happens all the time. I get tweets like "Will you come to my wedding and scream at me?" "My eight-year-old loves you. Will you come to his birthday party and scream at him?" No! I'm not screaming at you. It's a character. When I'm doing *Billy on the Street*, yeah, I scream. We were shooting the other day and a young straight dude yelled, "Hey, will you harass me?" What a strange request. Well, I don't know that he was straight. For all I know, he's as gay as Rupert Everett in the 1990s.

Q3

PLAYBOY: You also co-star on the Hulu series *Difficult People* with your good friend Julie Klausner, who

created the show. You both play people who are mean, petty and not very successful in their artistic careers. The unsuccessful part aside, are you playing yourselves?

EICHNER: Julie and I are prickly, opinionated people—especially on the show. It's an exaggerated version of who we are. In the first few episodes it's established that they're snarky and bitter. Julie likes to hit people over the head with the fact that they're unlikable and unattractive. But the show wouldn't work if they weren't likable on some level, I think. People find the show cathartic in a way—they live vicariously through these intensely blunt, cutting characters who have no social graces and say things other people think but don't say out loud.

Q4

PLAYBOY: So your good friend Julie thinks you're unattractive?

EICHNER: Yes. She says the show is like *Will & Grace*, if one of us were a six and the other were a seven.

[laughs] We argue about who's the seven—that's going to be a cliffhanger at the end of the season. Let's be honest, it depends on the lighting.

Q5

PLAYBOY: You shot the *Difficult People* pilot for USA Network. How did it end up on Hulu?

EICHNER: Amy Poehler is the executive producer. We pitched it, and USA green-lit the pilot. The network had just bought the *Modern Family* reruns and was looking for original half-hour comedies with a bit of an edge to pair with them. Because of my schedule and Amy's schedule with *Parks and Rec*, a year went by between selling the pilot and filming it. In that year—how can I put this diplomatically?—the *Modern Family* reruns didn't explode as anticipated. USA literally disbanded its entire scripted-comedy department. The great thing is, we got USA to produce a full pilot, which we took to other networks. It's a much better fit for Hulu than for USA. We can be ourselves and not be watered down. There's no sense doing *Difficult People* if we're going to get notes from the network that say "Be friendlier."

Q6

PLAYBOY: They're not friendly people—in fact, they're clueless idiots. In the first episode there's a joke about R. Kelly peeing on Blue Ivy, Jay Z and Beyoncé's toddler, which a lot of people found offensive. Do you expect some people to hate the show?

EICHNER: Some people may dislike it for the most obvious reasons: It's too bitter and extreme. But what they dislike about it is the reason we made the show, in a way. I remember when *The Comeback* came out, reviewers said, "Oh, this makes me uncomfortable." But *The Comeback* is the greatest show of the past 10 years, in my opinion. If you do an extreme show, it elicits extreme opinions. I'm more surprised that 90 percent of the critics like it than I am that a handful of people find it too toxic.

Q7

PLAYBOY: What was 13-year-old Billy Eichner like?

EICHNER: For my 13th birthday, in addition to my bar mitzvah, my two presents from my parents were Madonna's *Sex* book and tickets to see Nathan Lane in *Guys and Dolls* on Broadway. Gay much? But I stand by those as good gifts. I grew up in Forest Hills, Queens, which is an interesting environment. You're very close to Manhattan geographically but so far away (continued on page 110)





"Why? Because we believe Christmas shopping should be a joyous occasion."

GIRL'S NIO



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JOSH RYAN

GET IT OUT

Miss December sheds the haute couture she showcases on the catwalk and reveals her true nature

Ask Miss December Eugena Washington why she made many decisions and she's likely to deliver a firm, four-word answer: "Why the hell not?" That mantra led the accomplished fashion model, who has appeared in commercials for CoverGirl, Clinique and Lexus, to skydive from 19,000 feet on her birthday, wearing only a zebra bikini and a harness. ("It was the closest I could come to skydiving in my birthday suit," she says.) And it's why she's using her stature on New York's fashion runways to launch her own organic hair-care line, DTMH by Eugena, due this winter. And best for us, it's why the avid reader with a flair for fantasy football decided to pose for PLAYBOY, crossing off yet another item on her seemingly endless

bucket list. "I don't give myself boundaries," says Eugena, who was born in South Carolina to a pair of civil rights leaders. "I begin every morning by taking a mental inventory of the positive things in my life and saying my thank-yous. Then I tell myself to forget fear. If you're asked to be a Playmate, it's like, why the hell not?" With that in mind, it may come as no surprise that this isn't Eugena's first time baring all—but it has been the most satisfying, she says. "In fashion, you're constantly working to portray someone else. Shooting for PLAYBOY, I had the freedom to be in my own element, without the constraints of clothing. It was one of the best shoots of my career. For once, I didn't have to be anyone except myself."

PLAYBOY.COM/EUGENA-WASHINGTON









MISS DECEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



eugena washington

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: EUGENA WASHINGTON

BUST: 34B WAIST: 25" HIPS: 37"

HEIGHT: 5'9 1/2" WEIGHT: 129 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 10/8/84 BIRTHPLACE: COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

AMBITIONS: ALL I WANNA DO IS WAKE UP EVERY MORNING KNOWING I'M LIVING LIFE TO ITS FULLEST POTENTIAL.

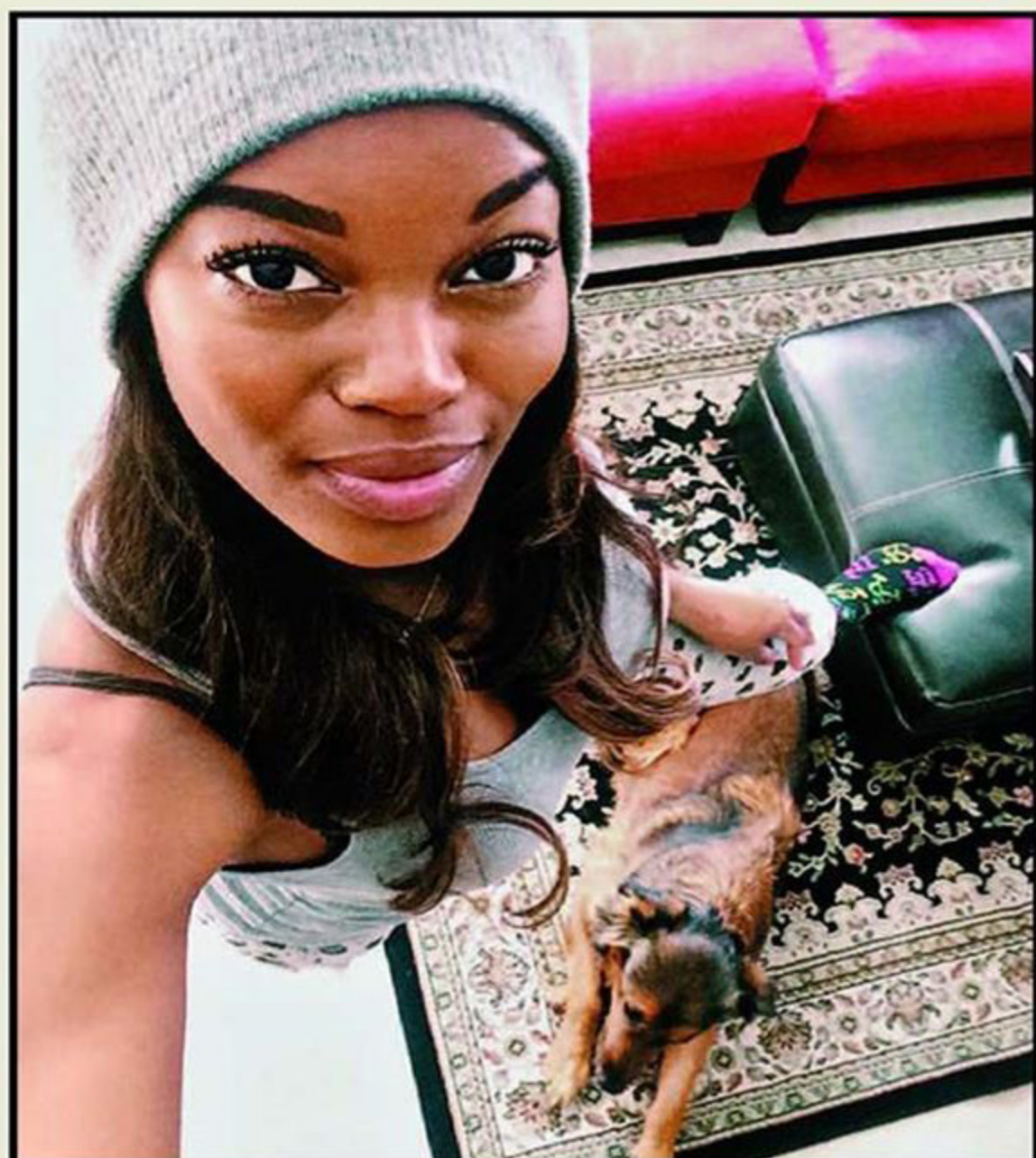
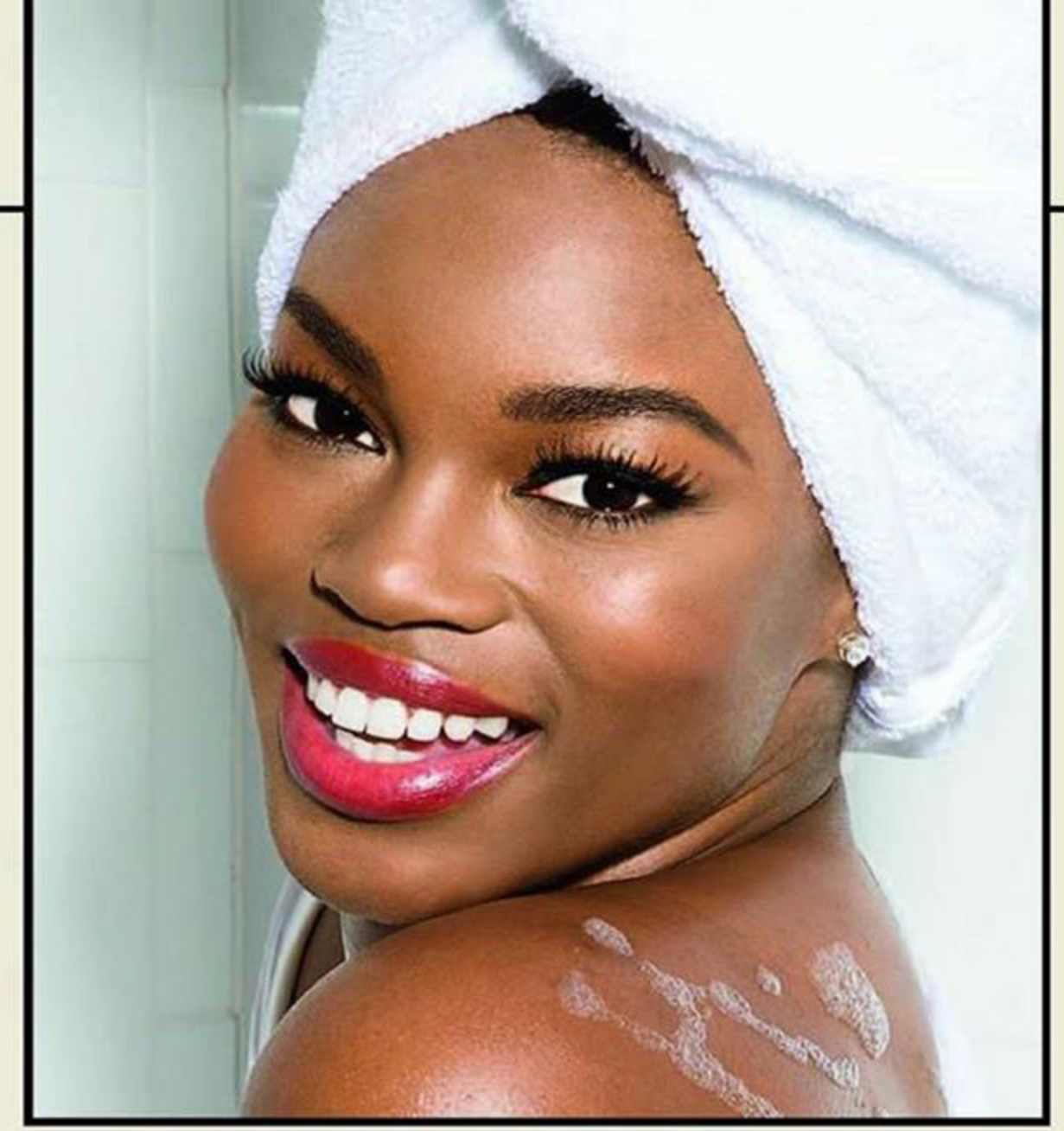
TURN-ONS: WHAT'S SEXY IS A MAN WITH GREAT STYLE. I LOVE A RISK-TAKER WHO IS POWERFUL BUT NOT AFRAID TO BE VULNERABLE.

TURNOFFS: A MAN WHO IS INTIMIDATED BY LITTLE OLD ME. ACTUALLY, I'M A BEAST, SO IT'S KINDA HARD NOT TO BE... BUT MAN UP!

THE PERFECT GIFT: I'M ABSOLUTELY OBSESSED WITH MAKEUP. IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN MY FOUNDATION SHADE AND FAVORITE LIPSTICK, WE'RE GETTING MARRIED, HANDS DOWN!

HOW I ROLL: I LOVE MY FREEDOM, SO IT'S HARD FOR ME TO STAY IN ONE PLACE. I FLY BY THE SEAT OF MY PANTS AND FIGURE THE REST OUT LATER. AS LONG AS I DONT DIE, I'M GOOD!

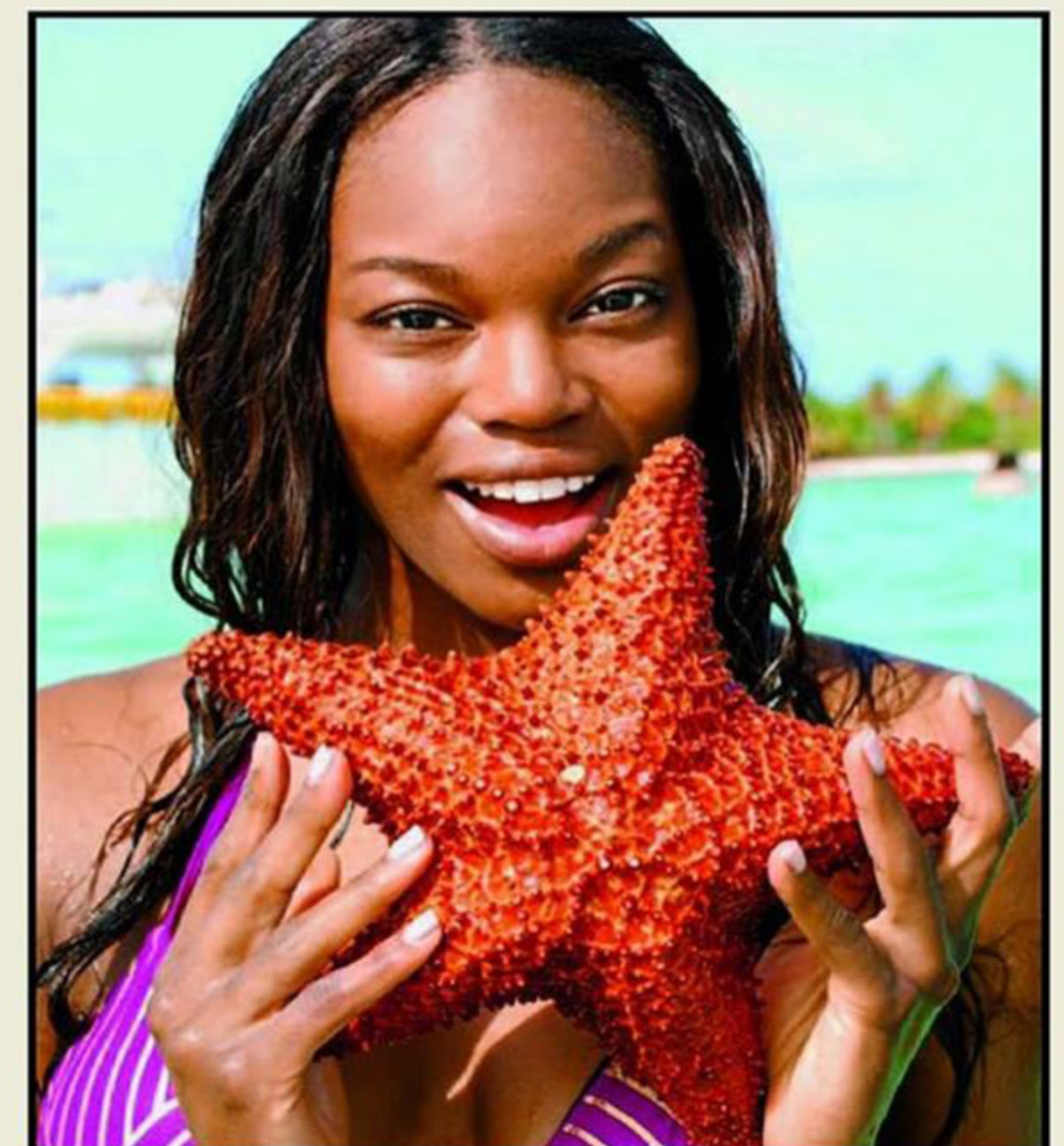
MY CHRISTMAS TRADITION: I HAVE SEVEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS, SO WE LOVE TO DO A WHITE-ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE EACH YEAR.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ANGLES! ☹️



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LOCATION. 😊



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LIGHTING! ♥️



MAKEUP BY SARA CRANHAM; STYLING BY LISA BAE FOR THE REX AGENCY;
HAIR BY JORGE SERRANO FOR THE ONLY AGENCY; PHOTOGRAPHED AT CULVER HOTEL

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

A man went into Staples and began to chat up the stunning blonde sales clerk behind the counter. "By the way," he asked her, "do you keep stationery?"

"I try to," the woman replied, "but at the last second I just go crazy!"

Why is air a lot like sex?

Because it's no big deal—unless you're not getting any.

While making love to his wife, a man suggested, "Let's do a 68."

"What's that?" his wife asked.

The husband replied, "You give me head and I owe you one."



PLAYBOY CLASSIC: Three men who died on Christmas Eve were met by Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. "In honor of the season," Saint Peter said, "you must each possess something that symbolizes Christmas to get into heaven on this holy day."

The first man fumbled through his pocket and pulled out a lighter. He flicked it on. "It represents a holy candle," he said.

"You may pass through the Pearly Gates," Saint Peter said.

The second man reached into his pocket and pulled out a set of keys. He shook them and said, "They're bells."

Saint Peter said, "You may pass through the Pearly Gates."

The third man started searching desperately through his pockets and finally pulled out a pair of women's panties. "What do those symbolize?" Saint Peter asked.

The man replied, "They're Carol's."

What do you get when you take the drug molly along with birth control?

A trip without the kids.

Dear *Playboy Advisor*: Should one have children after 40?

No. Forty children is more than enough.

Advice to college students: Choose a major that you love and you'll never work a day in your life—because that field isn't hiring.

Our Unabashed Dictionary defines *capital punishment* as "when you are out too late with your friends and your lady continuously texts your phone in ALL CAPS."

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: Late one night, just blocks from the Capitol, a mugger jumped into the path of a well-dressed fellow and stuck a gun in his ribs. "Give me your money," the thief demanded.

"Are you kidding?" the man said. "I'm a United States congressman."

"In that case," the mugger growled, cocking his weapon, "give me my money."

A man called the front desk of his hotel. "Please send someone over," he said. "I'm having an argument with my wife, and she's threatening to jump out the window."

The hotel manager replied, "I'm sorry, sir, but we cannot intervene in what seems to be a private issue."

"Damn it, man, this is a maintenance issue," the man said. "I can't get the window open."

A drunk man staggered into a Catholic church, entered a confessional booth, sat down and said nothing. The priest coughed a few times to get his attention, but the man sat silently. Finally the priest pounded three times on the wall. The drunkard mumbled, "Ain't no use knocking—there's no paper on this side either."



Sally Neiman

Hearing suggestive noises coming from a sophomore's dorm room, the resident advisor knocked and asked the student if he was entertaining a lady.

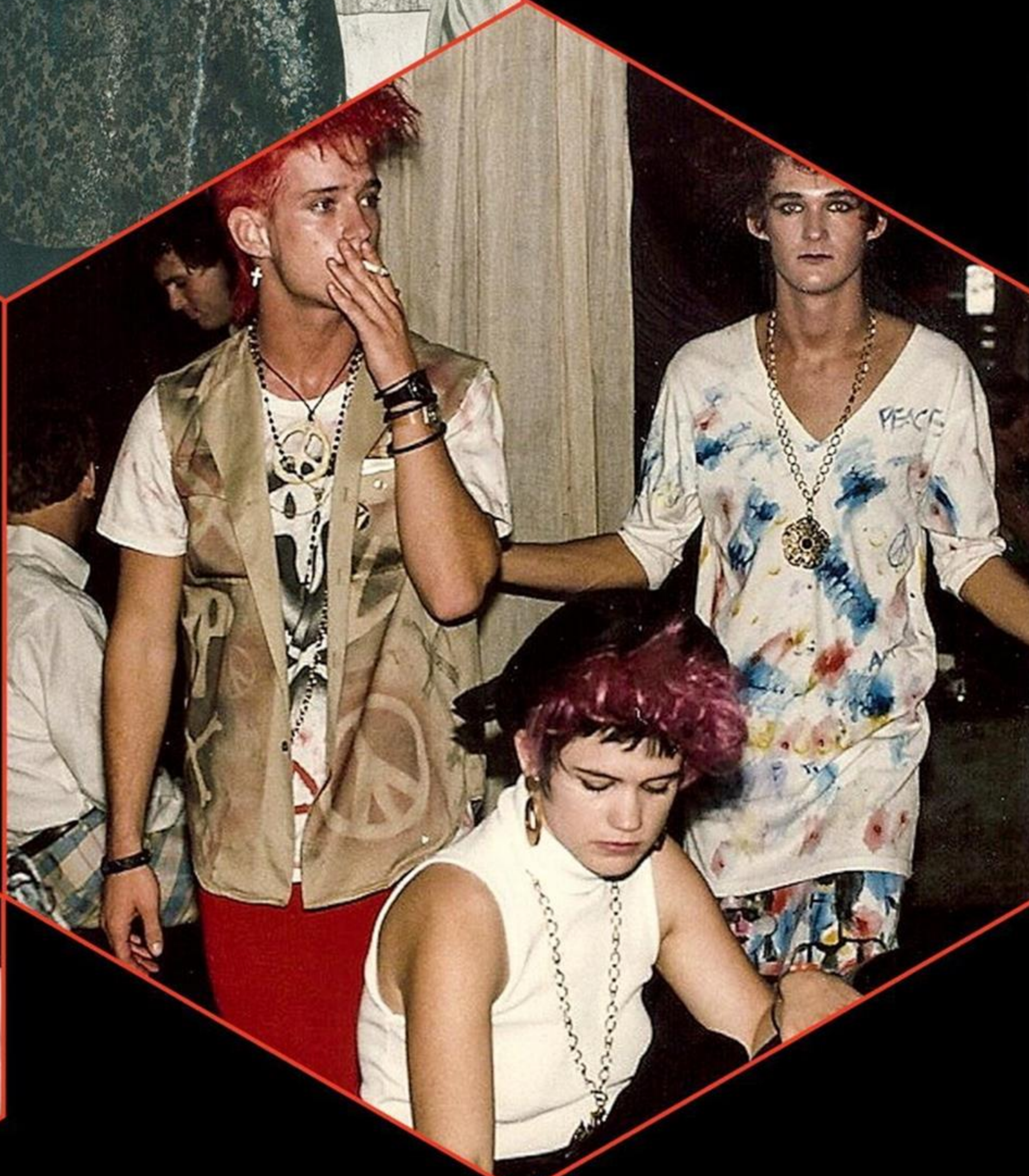
"I don't know," the college kid replied. "Let me ask her."

Next season on *Game of Thrones*: The new king suspects the King's Hand of having an affair with his queen, so he has her wear a "guillotine" chastity belt. When he returns from a long journey, he has all the men in the castle line up and strip. Every last one is missing his penis, except for the Hand. The king falls to his knees and cries, "My protector, you are the only true knight here. What can I do to regain your trust?" The Hand replies, "Mppphfgggll."

Send your jokes to *Playboy Party Jokes*, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com.



"That's the problem with Christmas help. They can't learn a simple rule like no mommies on the lap."



NEW ORDER



N

H
N



GRACE JONES



PURE ECSTASY

THE WILD LEGAL DAYS OF THE BEST DRUG EVER AND HOW IT ALL ENDED BY **PETER SIMEK**



Kerry Jagers is one of drug history's greatest bit players. He deejayed at gay discos in San Francisco in the 1970s and did lighting and sound at clubs for New Order, the Smiths and Moby in the 1980s and 1990s. Over the years he has come to know everyone—a sort of omnipresent, Forrest Gump-type character in the club world. In turn, everyone loves him. And so it was not out of the ordinary when, on an otherwise unremarkable morning in May 1984, Jagers received a phone call from Grace Jones.

The disco diva was in Dallas. Along with Stevie Nicks, Jones had headlined the opening of a flashy new club called the Starck the night before, but the

house DJ never showed and the club had no one to spin the second night. Now she was doing the owners a favor by ringing her friend in New York. Jagers was the one DJ she knew who happened to be from Texas and who would fly halfway across the country if she snapped her fingers. Sure enough, Jagers hung up the phone, packed his bags and headed for the airport.

On the way, he swung by a friend's apartment on Washington Square. The two were regulars at the Saint, a superclub in the East Village that served as the city's mother hive of gay culture before being snuffed out by the heavy onset of AIDS. Sex was found on the balcony,

NEW YORK



LONDON



Scenes from club playgrounds around the world, 1988 to 1999, including New York's Tunnel nightclub (right).



MANCHESTER



IBIZA



LONDON

YOU WANTED TO FEEL HANDS ON YOUR BODY, THE BREATH OF A STRANGER IN YOUR EAR AND THE THUMPING OF BASS IN YOUR RIB CAGE.

drugs in the locker rooms. A carefully managed diet of PCP, cocaine, LSD, Special K and qualudes drove the night through peaks and valleys.

His friend dealt drugs, and Jagers needed supplies for the road. The dealer produced a fist-size sandwich bag of a new designer drug called Adam. A teaspoon of the white powder—often dissolved in a cup of coffee—was enough to flood your brain with serotonin and dopamine. Physical sensations intensified and thoughts became crystal clear. Your jaw muscles seized up and your body rapidly dehydrated, but you felt more honest, confident, powerful, compassionate, joyful and sexy. You wanted to feel hands on your body, the

breath of a stranger in your ear and the thumping of bass in your rib cage.

Jagers stuffed the bag into his luggage. He had no idea that the powder he carried, as inconspicuous as cornstarch, would spread like a contagion through Texas and turn frat boys into drug dealers, sorority girls into sex fiends and the rich sons of oil barons into dance-club freaks. He didn't feel like a drug prophet on a mission to unleash a new cultural and sexual revolution.

Jagers touched down in Dallas with his little bag of whatchamacallit three months ahead of the Republican National Convention where Ronald Reagan would accept the presidential nomination. When Jagers arrived at the club, a thousand people were already lined up outside. He met one of its owners, Christina "Sita" de Limur.

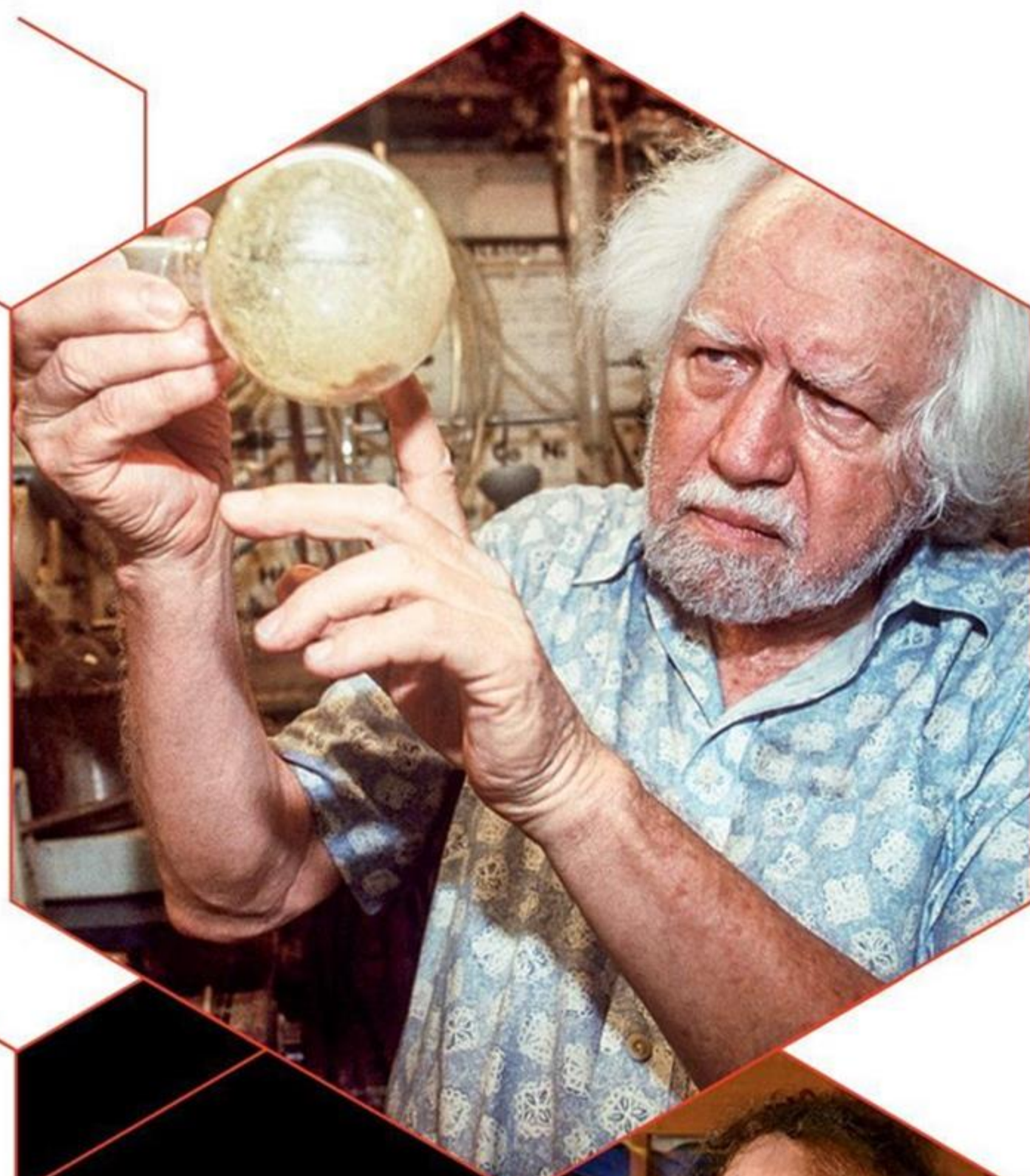
"Here," Jagers said, handing de Limur the bag. "Have some fun."

The drug Adam would go on to be rebranded as ecstasy and banned by the Drug Enforcement Administration, but in 1984 it was entirely legal. A chemical compound originally synthesized in 1912 in the labs of the German pharmaceutical giant Merck, ecstasy was rediscovered in the 1970s and circulated through psychologist circles as MDMA (an acronym for its chemical name, methylenedioxy-methamphetamine) before landing on the

doorsteps of such New York clubs as the Saint and Studio 54. But it was in Dallas, at the Starck, that the drug truly turned into a phenomenon. If you could tap into the core of the Starck and liquefy its mood into substance, ecstasy would flow out like sap. By 1985, rumors out of Texas trumpeted that MDMA had gone recreational in a big way. Gays mingled with straights on dance floors. Parents panicked over dilated pupils. Politicians demanded action. Soon, DEA agents turned away from cocaine cartels to chase a new substance they privately derided as "that kiddie drug."

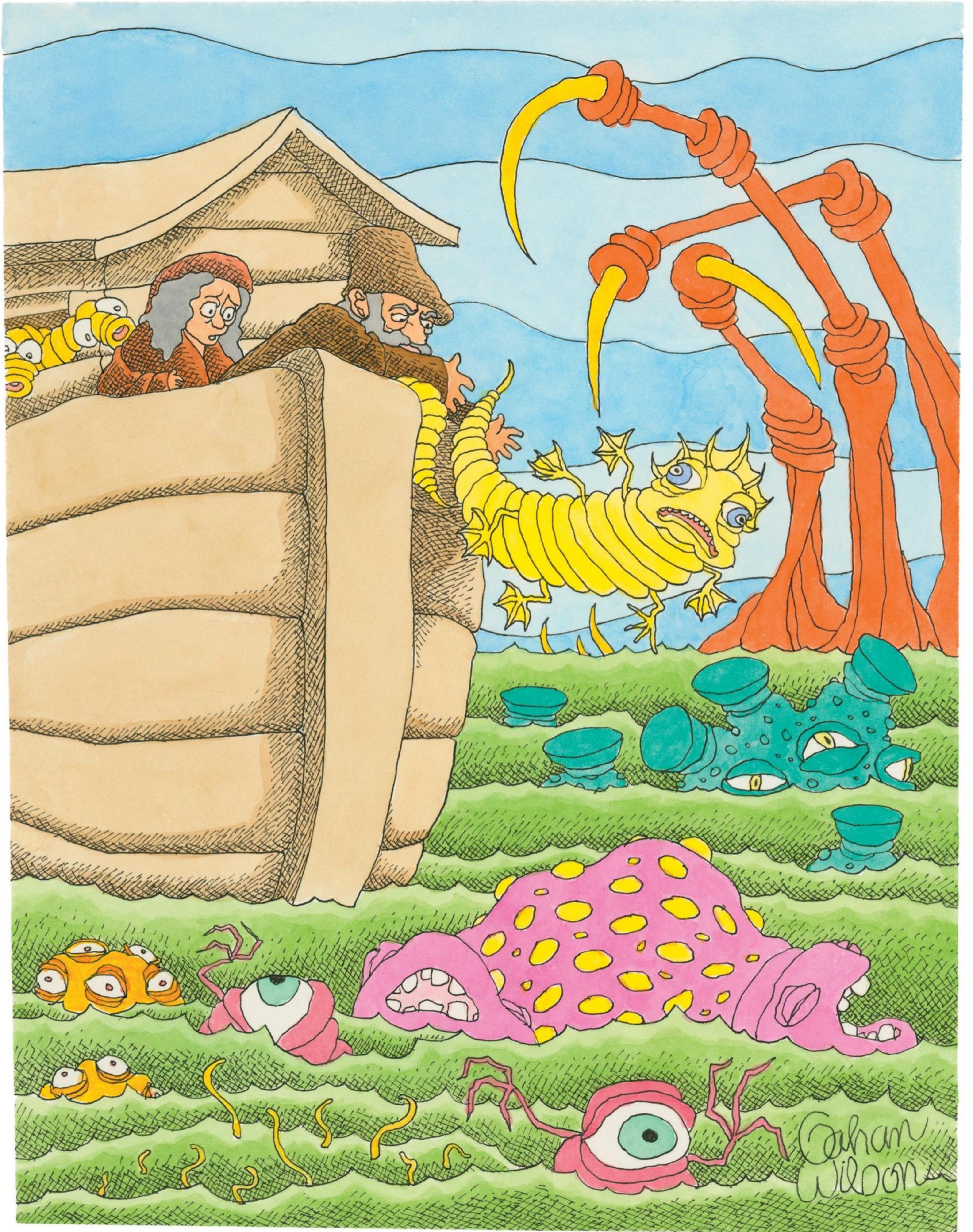
On July 1, 1985, the DEA classified ecstasy as a Schedule I substance, officially making it illegal. On July 9, just a year after the Starck's opening, Dallas cops made the nation's first ecstasy-related arrest. Those charges were later dismissed because police had misspelled the 29-letter chemical name, but more arrests followed, including a massive raid on the Starck that left its floors littered with a collection of pills and powders.

Thirty years later, the popularity of electronic dance music has catapulted ecstasy, now known as molly, into the mainstream once again. Today's global EDM business boasts an estimated value of \$6.9 billion as massive music events attract more and more attendees every year. Between 2007 and 2012, attendance at the five largest EDM festivals grew by 41 percent. Las Vegas's Electric Daisy Carnival drew 400,000 fist-pumpers in 2014 alone—an 8,000 percent (continued on page 114)



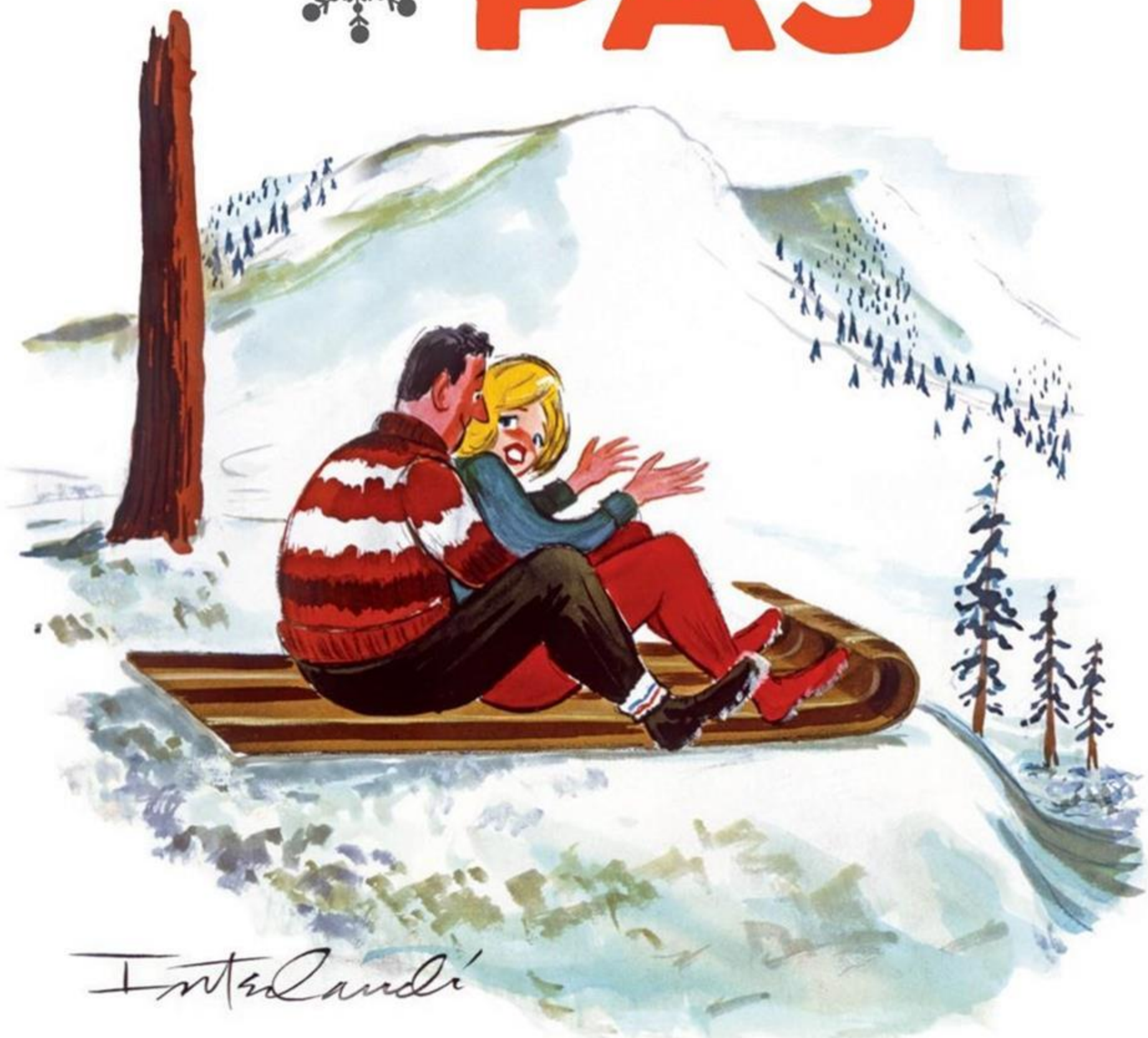
Ecstasy advocates and architects of psychedelics research Alexander Shulgin (above) and Rick Doblin (right).





"All the really interesting ones are dying off!"

CLASSIC CARTOONS of CHRISTMAS PAST



"That's all very well for you, but what do I hang on to?"



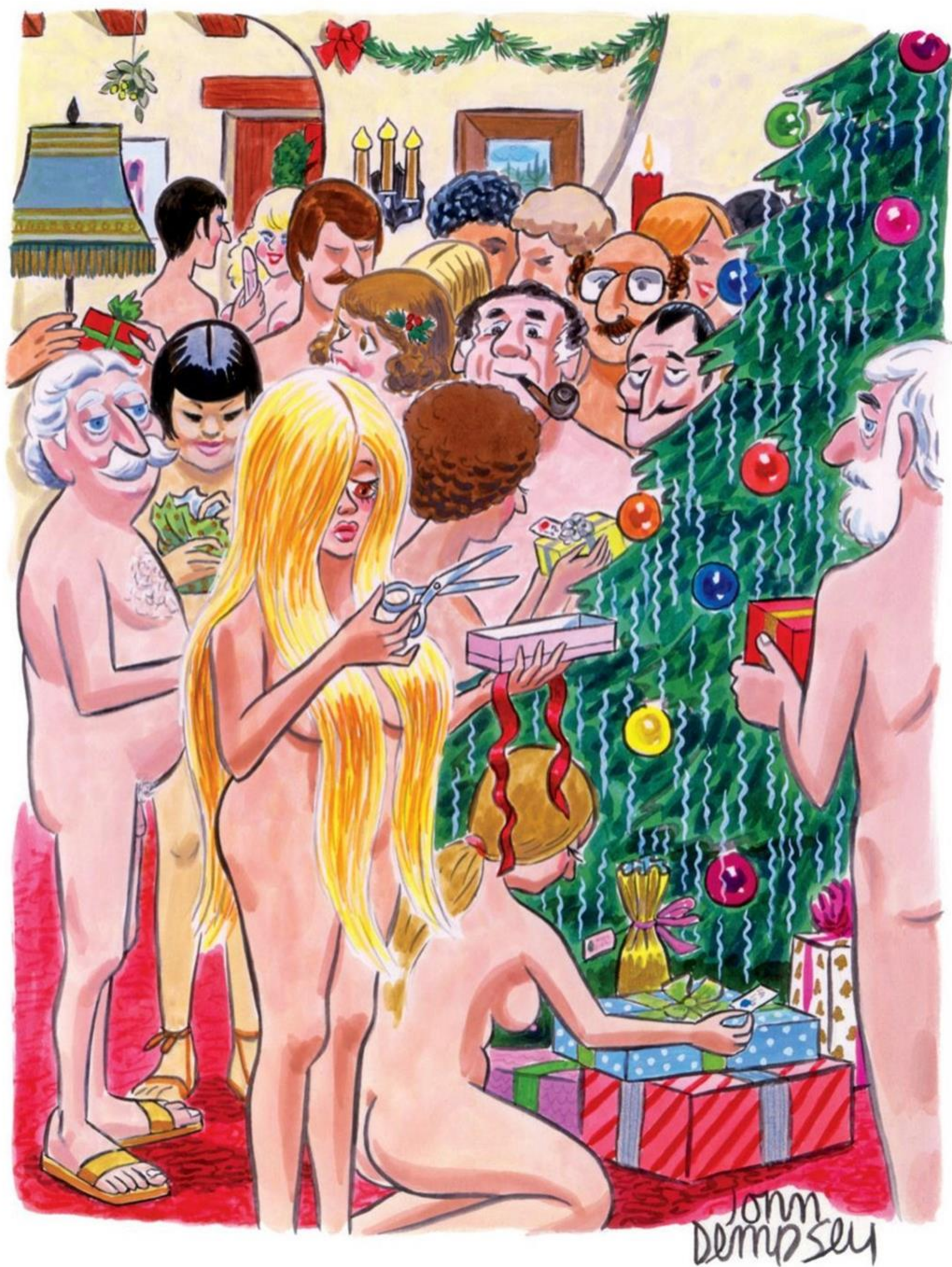
"Evidently you're not the little boy who wrote that he wasn't getting anything...."



"We've had it with wage earning—we're all going out and becoming small businessmen."



"You're right, Helen—it is Phil Gronquist."



John Dempsey



B. Wilbur

*"I'm not bringing presents this year...
I'm bringing insults!"*



Dedman

*"They're from the Santa Claus Clone Works
in upstate New York."*



Graham Wilson

*"But I can't arrest him, lady—
not on Christmas Eve!"*

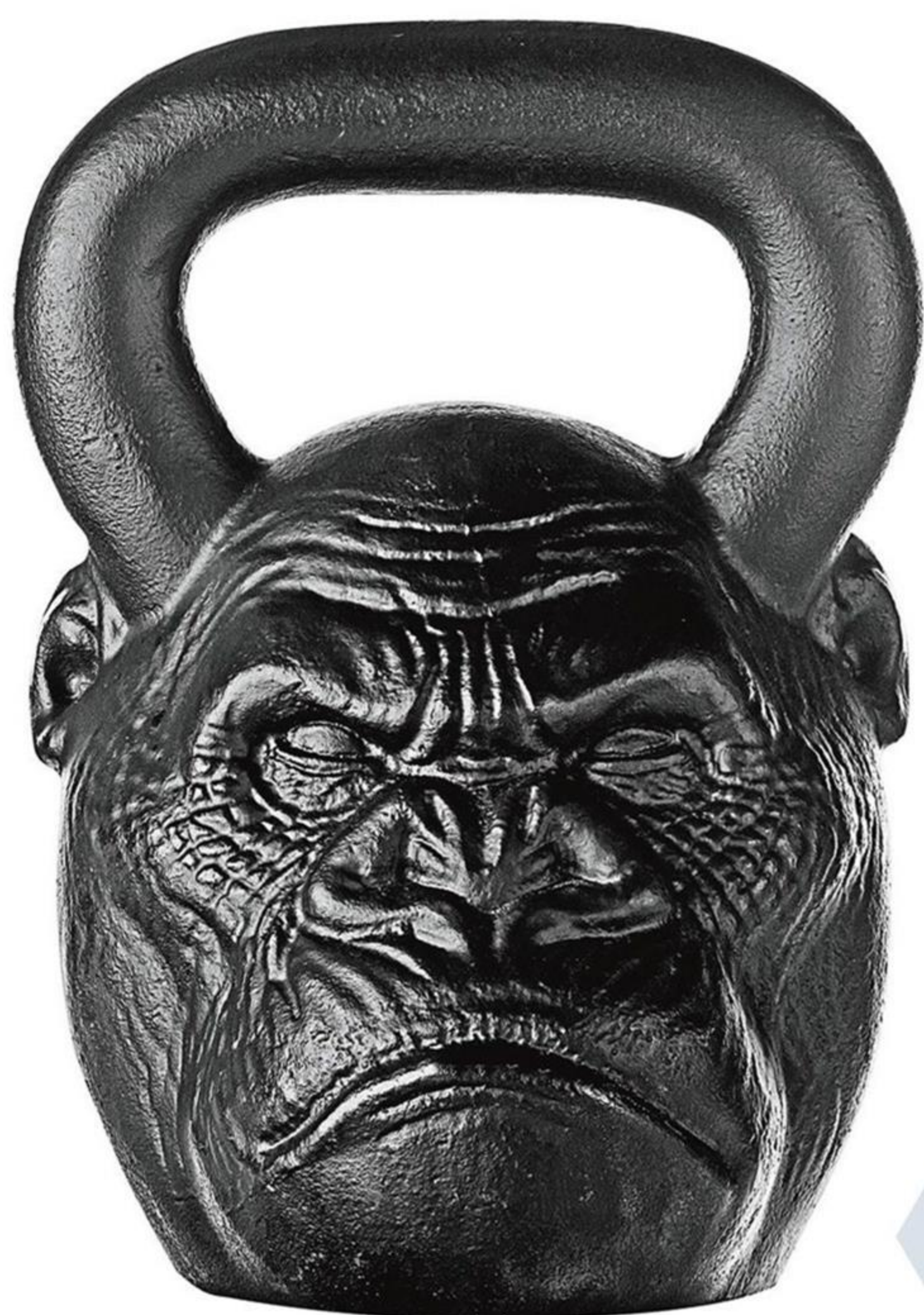


H O L I D A Y

GIFT GUIDE

2 0 1 5

THIS YEAR'S GIFT GUIDE IS ALL ABOUT SOLID CONSTRUCTION, GOOD DESIGN AND JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FLAIR, FROM A KETTLE BELL WITH ATTITUDE TO BOURBON-BARREL SUNGLASSES TO A BLUETOOTH SPEAKER WITH TIMELESS GOOD LOOKS
BY VINCENT BOUCHER



1

Brute Strength

• Onnit's burly Gorilla Primal kettle bell is made of hand-sculpted iron to resist chips and rust. The enlarged handle offers a better grip, and the broad base helps with stability during floor exercises.

\$170, onnit.com

Shell Yeah

• Call technical-apparel specialist Aether's Fusion snow shell a smart jacket. The vents can be adjusted for heat retention depending on the weather, and the ergonomic fit allows an extended range of motion. Plus the hood can fit over a helmet—snowboarding, bike or other.

\$675, aetherapparel.com

2



3

Style Distilled

- These Maker's Mark X Woodzee sunglasses are made from hand-charred wood recycled from used whiskey barrels and kitted out with black polycarbonate lenses.

\$150, woodzee.com



Glass Acts

- Sempli glassware's Monti collection includes this set of four lead-free crystal beer-tasting glasses specifically designed for IPAs, pilsners, pints and 12-ounce bottles.

\$100, sempli.com

5

Bling Ring

- If you're going to rock a pinkie ring, let it be this one. David Yurman's Petrus signet ring in regal 22-carat yellow gold is set with a carnelian carved in a scarab motif inspired by ancient coins.

\$6,400, davidyurman.com



6

Tools of the Road

- The MT21 multitool from classic cycle brand Brooks England includes a variety of steel wrenches, three screwdrivers, a handy bottle opener and a knife, and comes complete with a leather case.

\$70, mrporter.com



7

On Edge

- Bison Made and Max Sprecher Customs joined forces to create the Bison + Max Sprecher straight razor with a precision-machined carbon-steel blade and carbon-fiber handle, housed in a sleek leather sheath.

\$895, bisonmade.com



8



Tie One On

- Luxe lightweight Italian wool in a spray-painted duotone translates to rugged good looks in this John Varvatos artisan-collection scarf.

\$228, johnvarvatos.com

9

Passing Fancy

- Detroit-based Shinola's premium leather football, in merlot and navy with rawhide lacing, is individually hand-cut and sewn in the USA.

\$150, shinola.com



10

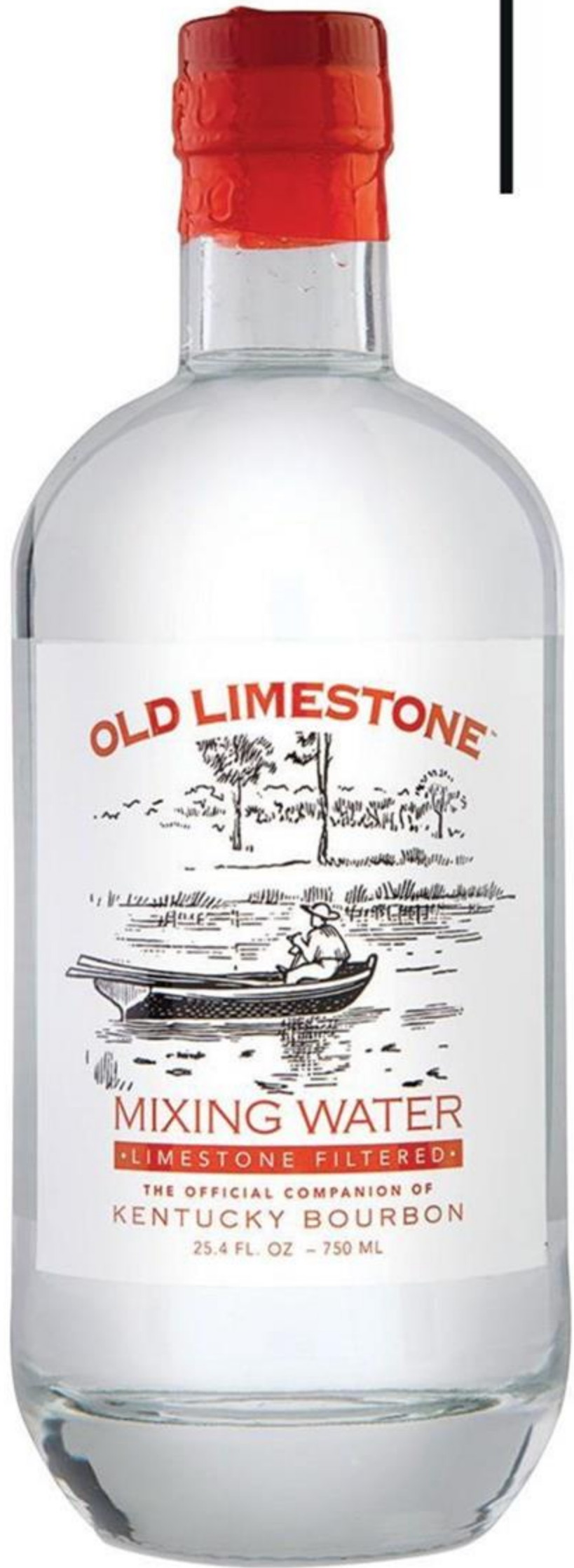
Made to Measure

- This Leopold copper-plated stainless steel spirits jigger is inspired by vintage 1930s barware from the golden age of American cocktail culture.

\$25, cocktailkingdom.com



11



Mix Master

• Old Limestone's iron-free mixing water, from the same Kentucky aquifer favored by distillers, is the splash of choice for those who savor premium bourbon.
\$10, oldlimestone.com

12

Stay Golden

• The high-top can't go any higher than Maison Margiela's Future sneakers. Made of metallic gold leather stamped in a coin-dot pattern, they're beefed up with a padded ankle strap.
\$1,155, barneys.com

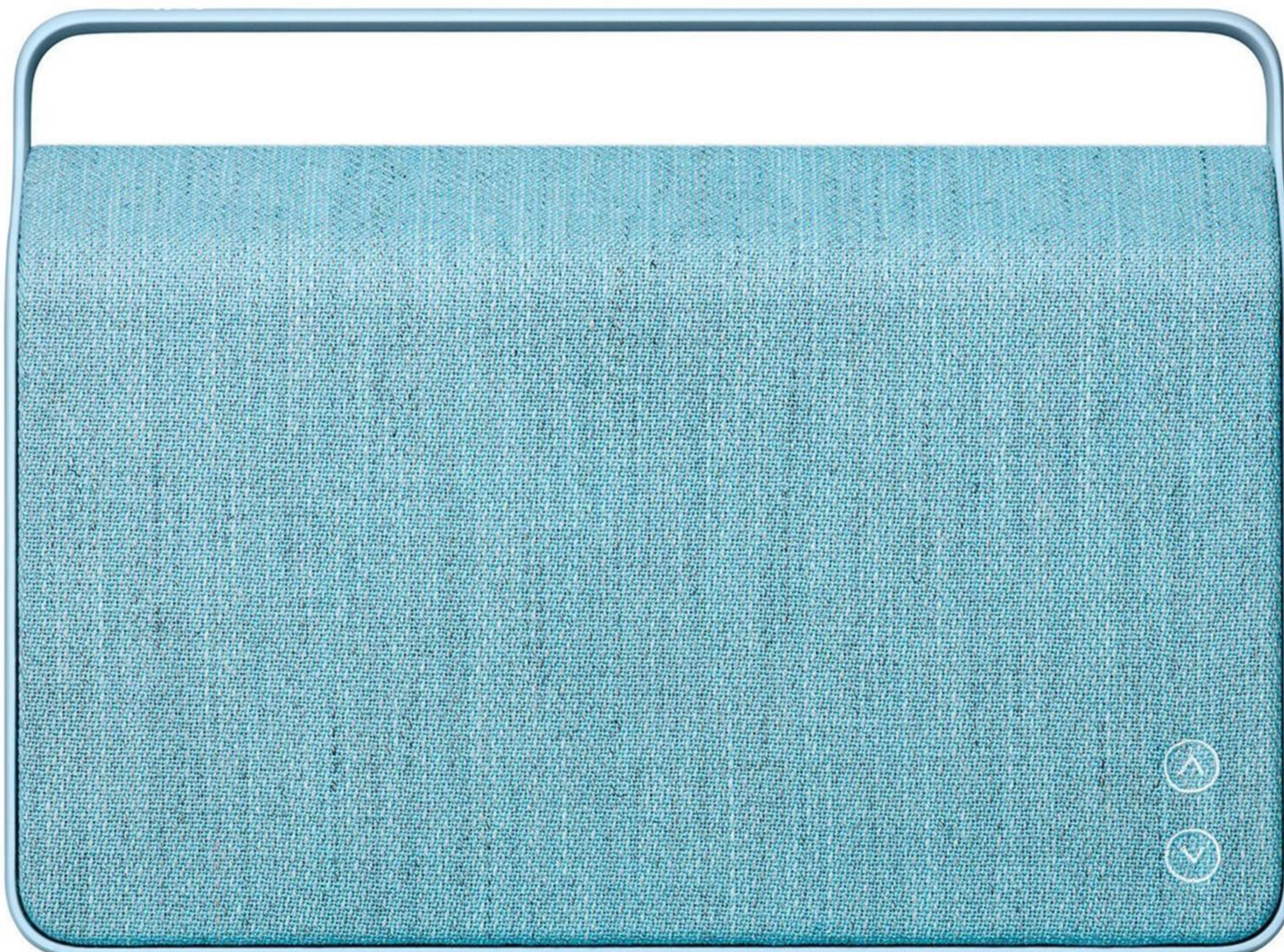


13

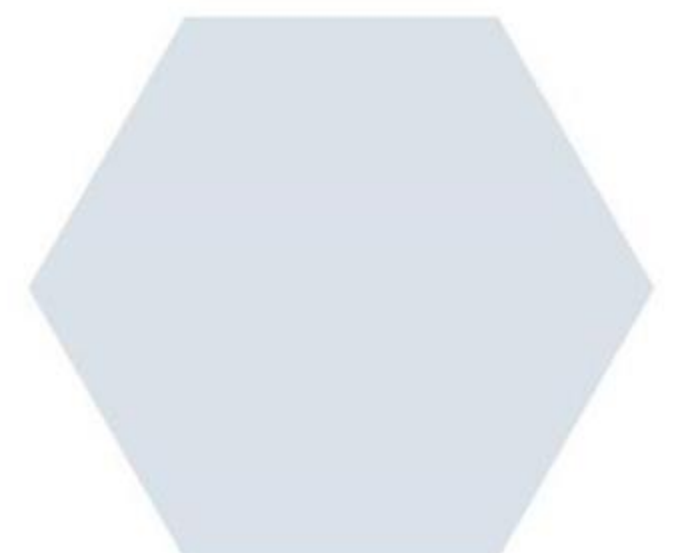


Big Time

• Michael Kors goes typically bold with this oversize stainless steel chronograph with a carbon-fiber finish and a bright red silicone wristband.
\$350, michaelkors.com



14



Sound Design

• Vifa's Copenhagen wireless die-cast aluminum speaker supports Bluetooth, Apple AirPlay and Wi-Fi Direct, all in minimalist Danish style.
\$700, aplusrstore.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
HENRIK PURIENNE

BODY WASH

WE ENJOY FEW ACTIVITIES MORE THAN POLISHING A CLASSIC SPORTS CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON—UNLESS MODEL SASHA MELNYCHUK FEELS LIKE SUDSING UP, IN WHICH CASE WE'RE HAPPY TO HAND OVER THE SPONGE



















BILLY EICHNER

Continued from page 78

culturally and intellectually. I felt like a Manhattan person who was stuck in Queens. We had one newsstand that sold *Billboard* and weekly *Variety*. The *New York Post* published the top five weekend box-office movies, but when I discovered *Variety* had a list of the top 50, it was orgasmic. I'm an encyclopedia of unnecessary information. *Variety* was like my *Dianetics*.

Q8

PLAYBOY: When did you come out to your parents?

EICHNER: I haven't yet. That's what this interview is for. "See? I'm gay, but it's in *PLAYBOY*." No, I came out to my parents when I was 20. I was lucky—I never feared coming out to them. They said they had discussed the possibility that I was gay. But parents are funny. They were still like, "Maybe he's not gay. Maybe he just likes culture."

Q9

PLAYBOY: Emmy, Grammy, Oscar or Tony: Which award would mean the most to you?

EICHNER: An Oscar. It has the stature. On a personal level, a Tony would mean just as much, because I grew up loving theater. But I'm a sucker for any awards show. Except the Teen Choice Awards.

Q10

PLAYBOY: As you mentioned, you were nominated for a Daytime Emmy as the host of *Billy on the Street*. Was it fun to be around so many celebrities?

EICHNER: I lost to the guy who hosts *Cash Cab*. Then his show got canceled and I got to work with Michelle Obama. [laughs] End of story.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Did you meet anyone exciting at the awards?

EICHNER: The Daytime Emmys were so depressing. It used to be great; now it's in an attic in Pasadena. I was doing a bullshit interview with a reporter on the red carpet, and I heard all this commotion. I was like, "My God, who's here?" And it was Kris Jenner. It was as if Sophia Loren had walked in. I looked at the reporter and said, "I

don't want to be at any awards show where Kris Jenner is the big draw."

Q12

PLAYBOY: How was doing a *Billy on the Street* segment with Michelle Obama different from doing one with Lindsay Lohan?

EICHNER: We couldn't be out on the street with the first lady because of security reasons. When they came to us and said they were interested in doing a video, I was thrilled but also a little worried. Am I going to have to water it down? At first they asked to see all the questions in advance. We said no. It relies on her being able to go along with it. We need real reactions. The day before, we went to the supermarket where we shot the segment, and the Secret Service, which was there the whole time, needed to know where she was going to go. Everyone had to be cleared by the Secret Service. I was shocked they cleared me. They must have missed something.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Except for the first lady, you treat all the guest stars the same. What's your strategy with them?

EICHNER: I encourage them to engage with people on the street, and some of them take to that more than others. Whether they engage or not, it's good, because I'm there. They're the sidekicks, which is funny. The classic thing people said about Johnny Carson was that he let his guests be the stars. I won't do that. It's the opposite—you're coming on my show, but I'm still the star, and you're going to do what I tell you to do.

Q14

PLAYBOY: If you had to be stranded on a desert island with one of your *Parks and Recreation* co-stars, who would it be?

EICHNER: Who was on that show again? I'm just kidding. If I don't say Amy Poehler, I'm going to get in a lot of trouble. She's done a few of the most popular *Billy on the Street* segments, and now she's producing *Difficult People*. She's become a huge part of my life. Or maybe I'd take Nick Offerman, who is the greatest person. He played—who the fuck did he play?

Q15

PLAYBOY: He played Ron Swanson.

EICHNER: Right. I was going to say Ron Burgundy. There are aspects of Nick that are like Ron Swanson. He's a man, you know? He's a woodworker. He likes building furniture. If I'm on a desert island, I ain't doing shit. I'd be trying to get wi-fi or taking a nap, one of the two. I'm like, "Nick, build me a fucking canoe."

Q16

PLAYBOY: Is being successful better than being unsuccessful? Have you changed your lifestyle?

EICHNER: It's way better. I got rid of all my poor friends. I went to Northwestern University, and I still have friends who are unemployed actors with rich parents. I'm like, "I'm on three TV shows and I'll never be as rich as you. This sucks." [laughs]

Q17

PLAYBOY: Before you picked the name *Billy on the Street*, were there other ideas of what to call the show?

EICHNER: We argued about that so much before the first season. We couldn't figure out a name. One idea was *Street Cred*. Or maybe it was *Street Talk*. Terrible names. One of the games we play on the show is called "Quizzed in the Face." People at the network were like, "That's a raunchy title. That'll get some attention." No, I'm not calling my show *Quizzed in the Face*. My face is not going to be on posters that say "Quizzed in the Face"—which ended up happening anyway, because it became the tagline for the first season.

Q18

PLAYBOY: You couldn't do *Billy on the Street* if you didn't have some anger, could you?

EICHNER: I disagree. *Billy on the Street* is an idea I had. A guy getting really worked up about Meryl Streep and Holly Hunter is funny to me. Someone screaming about what's in *Entertainment Weekly* is funny to me. The love of pop culture is what's reflected on *Billy on the Street*. The anger is a joke. It's like any acting job.

Q19

PLAYBOY: You were already in your 30s when *Billy on the Street* debuted. During your lean years, were you eating food out of garbage cans? Bouncing checks?

EICHNER: There might have been a little of that. I will not say I was eating food out of a garbage can. Once I started getting into comedy, I did a show called *Creation Nation*, a live talk show, and the *Billy on the Street* videos started there. *The New York Times* wrote a huge piece about me and the show in 2005. I was in a few TV pilots and had a big agent, and slowly but surely it all fell apart. Everyone was telling me I was funny, but I couldn't get a job. When there's a lean year, you think, Well, the *Times* wrote about me. That's something. And Joan Rivers thinks I'm funny. Joan said it took seven years for her to get on TV. She encouraged me to stick with it. *Billy on the Street* happened just at the right moment. If it hadn't, I don't know what I would've done.

Q20

PLAYBOY: You would've been eating food out of the garbage.

EICHNER: Yeah, but still from a good neighborhood.





MARTY
MURPHY

"Of course, my dream is to someday open a brothel somewhere other than the North Pole."



BRYAN CRANSTON

Continued from page 56

just have to be open to luck when it happens. You have to be good and you have to be persistent and you have to be patient.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe in fate?

CRANSTON: I do.

PLAYBOY: So it's not entirely in your control?

CRANSTON: I think it's a combination. Fate is one half luck and one half determination.

PLAYBOY: What about true love? You've been married to your wife, actress Robin Dearden, since 1989. Does a marriage work because two people are meant to be together or because they work their asses off to make it work?

CRANSTON: I don't believe in either one of those. I'm somewhere in the middle. It's conditional. Love for a child, that's unconditional. I will always love my child. I may not like the decisions she makes, but I will always love her. I would die for my child. I would die for my wife too. But it's conditional.

PLAYBOY: How is it conditional?

CRANSTON: It's conditional for both of us. If I found out she had this secret life as a prostitute, or if she found out that I do in fact murder people, yeah, I think that's a deal breaker. But we don't work our asses off to keep the marriage going. I think if you have to really work, work, work at it, there might be something systemically wrong with the marriage. There has to be some ease.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe in love at first sight?

CRANSTON: I don't know if that's always the case, but I certainly had that with Robin.

PLAYBOY: You met her on a job, right?

CRANSTON: Yeah. We were doing a TV show called *Airwolf*, with Jan-Michael Vincent, Ernest Borgnine and a helicopter. It was a terrible show, but I'm grateful for it because I met my future wife there, and that was 20.... God, that was almost 30 years ago.

PLAYBOY: You've rarely talked publicly about your relationship with Robin, but you shared something really sweet about her with the blog Humans of New York.

CRANSTON: Oh God, what did I say?

PLAYBOY: You told them your favorite thing about her is that "she still gets giddy when she sees a firefly."

CRANSTON: That's true. She sees a firefly and she's like a child. It's mystical and magical. She's well past middle age, but she still retains a sense of girl-like wonder. I love that about her. She has never lost that sense of wonder and joy at the simple things. She'll see a sunset or a dolphin swimming by, and she'll be like, "Look, look, look, look!" It may seem a bit saccharine, but when you live with a person like that every day, it's an upper.

PLAYBOY: Was that what you first noticed

about her on *Airwolf*, her childlike wonder? Was that the reason you were drawn to her?

CRANSTON: No, I just wanted to bang her.

PLAYBOY: Okay!

CRANSTON: What? I'm being honest.

PLAYBOY: No, no, that's sweet, in a weird way.

CRANSTON: I was a young guy and she was hot, and I wanted to take her clothes off. We'll have time to discover all the other stuff later, after the banging.

PLAYBOY: That's how guys operate.

CRANSTON: That's right. It starts with "Wow, she's hot."

PLAYBOY: You start at the boobs.

CRANSTON: It starts there, right? We're simple beings. Women are so clearly the superior sex. Men are simple people. You put food in front of us, we'll eat it. You show us cleavage, you've got our attention. If you see a woman scratching her leg, and she pulls up on her skirt in just the right way and you catch a glimpse of her calf muscle, oh my God, you just lose your mind. You see the smoothness of it. I'm powerless against that.

PLAYBOY: You're going to be a great dirty old man.

CRANSTON: Absolutely. What I love and appreciate about my wife is that she still takes really good care of herself. And I'm still very sexually attracted to her. She has beautiful legs, an amazing body. I truly appreciate that. I think she wishes it was reciprocal. *[laughs]*

PLAYBOY: You don't return the favor?

CRANSTON: Well, look at this. *[grabs his belly and jiggles it]* I gained 15 pounds to play Lyndon Johnson. I'm not padded; that's really me.

PLAYBOY: And Robin doesn't appreciate that?

CRANSTON: She looks at my stomach, and she's like *[sighs]*, "Boy, that's uh...that's not good." I just pat my belly and say, "This is work, Robin. This is my investment. This is how important my work is to me. Okay? More cheesecake, please!"

PLAYBOY: But you're not being flip. You are doing it for work.

CRANSTON: Exactly! Will you talk to her? Robin and I were discussing another project I'm considering, another movie, and she said, "You know, in that movie I think the character would be in great shape, don't you?" *[laughs]* And I was like, "I think you may be right."

PLAYBOY: During your Emmy acceptance speech last year, you said that acting is something you'll be doing till your last breath. Do you still feel that way?

CRANSTON: Well, my daughter always tells me, "You're never going to stop acting." But I don't know. My mother died of Alzheimer's. If I ever struggle to remember lines or get confused about what's happening in a shoot, like if I can't remember the names of the other characters, that might be enough to make me stop. The minute it stops being fun, I'm out.

PLAYBOY: Would you rather go out like Redd Foxx?

CRANSTON: *[Laughs]* Just drop dead in the middle of a rehearsal?

PLAYBOY: People would think you were doing a bit.

CRANSTON: Or maybe go out like Dick Shawn.

PLAYBOY: How did he go?

CRANSTON: Onstage. I think he was in San

Diego. The story I heard was that he was doing a stage show, and one of his bits was pretending to be a politician. He said something like "If elected, I will not lay down on the job." And he had a heart attack and fell down. The audience was laughing, like, "Oh my God, that is so funny!" And they just sat there and watched him lying on the stage for several minutes. The dark irony is that maybe he could have been saved if somebody had gotten to him earlier. *[laughs]*

PLAYBOY: It still sounds better than dying in bed.

CRANSTON: Oh yeah, absolutely. That's no way to go. I'd rather be onstage. Yeah, I could be okay with that. If you have to leave, that's the way to do it.

PLAYBOY: Would you do another Broadway play? Maybe a one-man show?

CRANSTON: I've thought about it. *All the Way* came close, but that wasn't a one-man show. I might be tempted if it was the right person, the right subject. If the man was extraordinary.

PLAYBOY: Maybe Donald Trump?

CRANSTON: Yes, he's fascinating. What a man. The things he says. *[impersonates Donald Trump perfectly]* "I love women. Look at my wife. She's hot. She's super hot. And I imagine some Mexican women are pretty too. Some of them. When they're not being criminals."

PLAYBOY: You're joking, but that's not far off from what he actually says.

CRANSTON: It's just insane! The way he brags about being rich. Why would he do that? Why would he tell the world how much money he has? What is he lacking?

PLAYBOY: Well....

CRANSTON: *[Laughs]* Okay, we all have our guesses. But for him to need to tell the world, "I'm very, very rich. I'm extremely rich. Look, here are my financials. Here's how rich I am." It's like, oh my God. It's certainly narcissistic. Even people who like his politics must say, "Well, sure, there's narcissism flowing through his veins."

PLAYBOY: Is he hiding something, do you think?

CRANSTON: See, that's why it's fascinating to me. As actors, we have to be students of human psychology. And Trump, the man who needs to spew and tell people how much money he has, it's so obvious that underneath that veneer of protection there's a volcano of complicated emotions.

PLAYBOY: Could you ever see yourself getting into politics?

CRANSTON: I could, actually. I'm a closeted politician in my heart. I would love to be involved in politics, just for the altruistic feeling of making people's lives better. I know realistically that it's never that easy. Politics is about compromise and bureaucracy, and it's kind of sticky and murky. It's no longer about "I'm going to devote four years to my country or my municipality and then go back to being a farmer." Now it's a career. People's egos are wrapped up in it, and there's a tremendous amount of money involved. It's hard to sustain the purity of the concept.

PLAYBOY: So why do you still entertain the idea?

CRANSTON: Because I'm fascinated by it. I think at some point in my life, if I stop

acting and am living in a little community, like a town of 700 people—nothing as big as Los Angeles—I might throw my hat in the ring and become a candidate for mayor.

PLAYBOY: Give us a taste of your political platform. If you ran for office, would Fox News endorse you?

CRANSTON: [Laughs] I'd be too small potatoes for them. We're talking a small town, not a major city. And that town, if I became mayor, well... [pauses] First of all, prostitution is legal. Pot is legal. Tax it all. Have a surplus.

PLAYBOY: You'd legalize prostitution?

CRANSTON: Without hesitation.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever had sex with a prostitute?

CRANSTON: Just once. I lost my virginity to a prostitute in Austria. I was 16.

PLAYBOY: Was it a good experience or a bad experience?

CRANSTON: Fantastic experience. The sex was horrible in retrospect. Of course, at the time I had no comparison. It was like, "Wow! That was amazing! Nobody in human history has had sex as well as we just had sex." But then you grow up and mature, and you're like, "Oh wait, no, that was terrible sex. Now I get it! This is what sex is supposed to be like."

PLAYBOY: So you'd open up legal whorehouses in your town?

CRANSTON: Sure. We'd use the money to take care of the homeless and pay for the schools. But I wouldn't throw it in families' faces. You don't put the whorehouse in the mall, next to the yogurt shop. There would be areas—keep that stuff far, far away from children.

PLAYBOY: What about gay rights?

CRANSTON: Equality, man. It's all about equality. These people freaking out about gay marriages, what the hell difference does that make? It's tough enough finding love. So you're in love with another guy. What do I care? Anybody who thinks gay marriage is a threat to their own marriage is fooling themselves.

PLAYBOY: The people who oppose it seem to think that homosexuality is a choice.

CRANSTON: That's ridiculous. Anyone with even a modicum of understanding of their own desires knows that's ridiculous. Your desires are there from birth, and that's who you are. I would be a terrible gay man, because I'm just infatuated with every little nook and cranny of a woman.

PLAYBOY: The idea that those desires could be changed...

CRANSTON: It's just ludicrous! "Pray out the gay." Oh, come on! You love what you love. Just let everyone love what they love. There are simple rules. The only exception is no children. Ever.

PLAYBOY: And no animals.

CRANSTON: Right, right. Other than that, have at it. Do what makes you happy.

PLAYBOY: So when you run for mayor, it's all about personal freedom.

CRANSTON: Yeah. I'm a pure libertarian, I guess. As long as you're not hurting anybody, you should be left alone.

PLAYBOY: You still own that house in Albuquerque. Is that a small enough town?

CRANSTON: That's true, I do. Maybe I'll run for mayor someday.

PLAYBOY: Odenkirk is living there. That's one vote.

CRANSTON: It's funny. Every time I've even entertained this idea, I remember that I couldn't do any of it without talking to my wife. And I can already see her reaction. She's just going to shake her head and say, "You're out of your mind."

PLAYBOY: "Can't you go back to getting fat for movie roles?"

CRANSTON: [Laughs] Right? That's at least a little less traumatic.

PLAYBOY: Does she like living in L.A., or would she rather be on some secluded ranch in Montana?

CRANSTON: She's not a ranch girl, not in the least. We were both raised in southern California. I wouldn't mind not being in Los Angeles, though. I've been here for many, many years. The density of it is not very conducive to harmony, at least for me.

PLAYBOY: Would you describe yourself as mostly happy?

CRANSTON: I would, yes. Why, do I seem unhappy?

PLAYBOY: No, but sometimes the more brilliant the actor, the bigger the demons. Guys like Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robin Williams seemed happy from the outside.

CRANSTON: I sometimes wonder, not whether I'm clinically depressed but why I work so hard. I've never worked more in my life. I have more opportunities now than I've ever had, and I'm able to pick and choose, but I just want it all. I want to experience it all. I'm getting better at saying no. I hear about something and I go, "What's that about? I should try that."

PLAYBOY: Didn't you once dabble in Scientology?

CRANSTON: That was back in the 1980s. I had a friend who was a Scientologist. He recommended a class, and I was like, "Fine, I'll go check it out." It was at one of the Scientology centers in L.A., I think in the Valley. It was pretty good, a communications class, I think. So I took one more class; I forget what it was about. They wanted me to continue, obviously, but I was like, "Nah, I got what I needed. Thanks!"

PLAYBOY: You got the gist of it?

CRANSTON: Yeah, I got the basic idea. It was helpful, actually. And then I was, "Okay, I tried that. What's next?" I think I tried EST after that.

PLAYBOY: You sound like Scientology's worst nightmare.

CRANSTON: I just don't have an addictive personality. I'm more interested in what else there is to learn. What's next? Transcendental meditation? Tantric yoga? Oh, I want to try that!

PLAYBOY: So you don't have any demons?

CRANSTON: I have demons. I have anger issues. I have abandonment issues. I'm working through that. Running helps a lot. I like to run. It's a way to expel the tension and anxiety and toxicity, whether physical or emotional.

PLAYBOY: Is that your way of chasing away demons?

CRANSTON: [Laughs] I don't chase my demons. They chase me.



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PURE ECSTASY

Continued from page 94

increase since the fest began in 1997. From August 2014 to August 2015, the world's top DJ, Calvin Harris, raked in \$66 million.

The rise of EDM culture has in turn caused an ecstasy resurgence. A 2013 study showed that one in 10 people between the ages of 18 and 25 have tried some version of molly; with that, the DEA reports a 100-fold increase in arrests, emergency-room visits and overdoses attributed to the drug between 2009 and 2012. The number of molly-related deaths has also risen.

And yet, the DEA reports that only 13 percent of the molly it analyzed in New York between 2009 and 2013 contained traces of actual MDMA. Most of what passes for ecstasy today is a cocktail of drugs that may include cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, Sudafed and God knows what else. In fact, for all its popularity, pure MDMA, the stuff that sparked a national hysteria 30 years ago, is almost impossible to find.

“It was Dallas. I expected two-by-fours, plywood, black paint, crummy lights and crummy sound,” says Jagers of pulling up to the Starck for the first time in 1984. “But this was beautiful. I was shocked.” The hottest new nightspot in Dallas had been carved out of an old warehouse under a highway interchange and named for Philippe Starck, a French designer whom a group of wealthy Dallas 20-somethings hired to create the most lavish club in the world. Indeed, the Starck looked as if it had been plucked by a helicopter and flown in from France. Everything was impec-

cably appointed. There were push-button flushers and automatic sinks in the unisex bathrooms, alternating rows of black and white matchbooks on the bar and an endless supply of Romanian crystal champagne glasses. “We chose them by listening to which one sounded best hitting the terrazzo,” says Starck manager Greg McCone. “At one party we lost \$7,000 worth of champagne glasses.”

Edwige Belmore, a veteran of the London and Paris punk scenes, guarded the front door. She was part of Andy Warhol's inner sanctum at Studio 54, had been photographed by Helmut Newton and counted Yves Saint Laurent as a friend. You had to meet Belmore's standards to get into the club, and few in Dallas at the time could. Those who did walked through a pair of massive, half-moon-shaped black steel doors

baggy pants, shoulder pads, purple skirts and oversize T-shirts lined up outside and waited for hours.

The Starck's dance floor was too small for a club its size, but that only added to the sweat and fervor. It was a pit of throbbing music and bodies driven by a new drug that accentuated every dancer's touch and every beat of the steady soundtrack of synth pop, New Wave, Euro techno and Italo disco.

A month after opening, the Starck overflowed with ecstasy. Bartenders kept pills for sale in the quarter slots of their registers; at the end of the night, management would notice \$200 tabs with \$800 tips. They knew their staff was selling ecstasy, but it was legal, so there was no reason to stop it.

Stories seeped out of people having sex with strangers in the unisex bathrooms and coked-out Republicans running around the dance floor with drag queens. Management relaxed the door policy and began to stay open till eight A.M. People of all sorts—gay hairdressers, young Texas punks, rich debutantes, West Texas oil tycoons, Luxembourgian princesses and, eventually, Hollywood celebrities—flooded in. Rob Lowe was a Starck regular, as was the cast of *Dallas*. Oscar-nominated actor Thomas Haden Church was a college student at the time, working the concierge desk at an upscale Dallas hotel. When celebrities visited town, he would drag them to the club. Julian Lennon, Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Dee Dee Ramone and members of New Order were all spotted at the Starck. “I was there at nine P.M. on a Saturday night one time. I look at the bar and

John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page are standing there, drinking Heinekens,” McCone remembers. “Hey, half of Led Zeppelin, this is cool, I thought. Half an hour later, Robert Plant comes walking in, and I'm like, Fuck.”

When Ronald Reagan came to town in August 1984, there was so much ecstasy in Dallas, one thing was certain: It wasn't all coming from Kerry Jagers.

Michael Clegg stood under the stars on a beach in Tulum, Mexico and slipped a pill into his mouth. His brain flooded with serotonin and dopamine, his body tingled and his mind cleared. As he looked out across the black-molasses mass of ocean heaving

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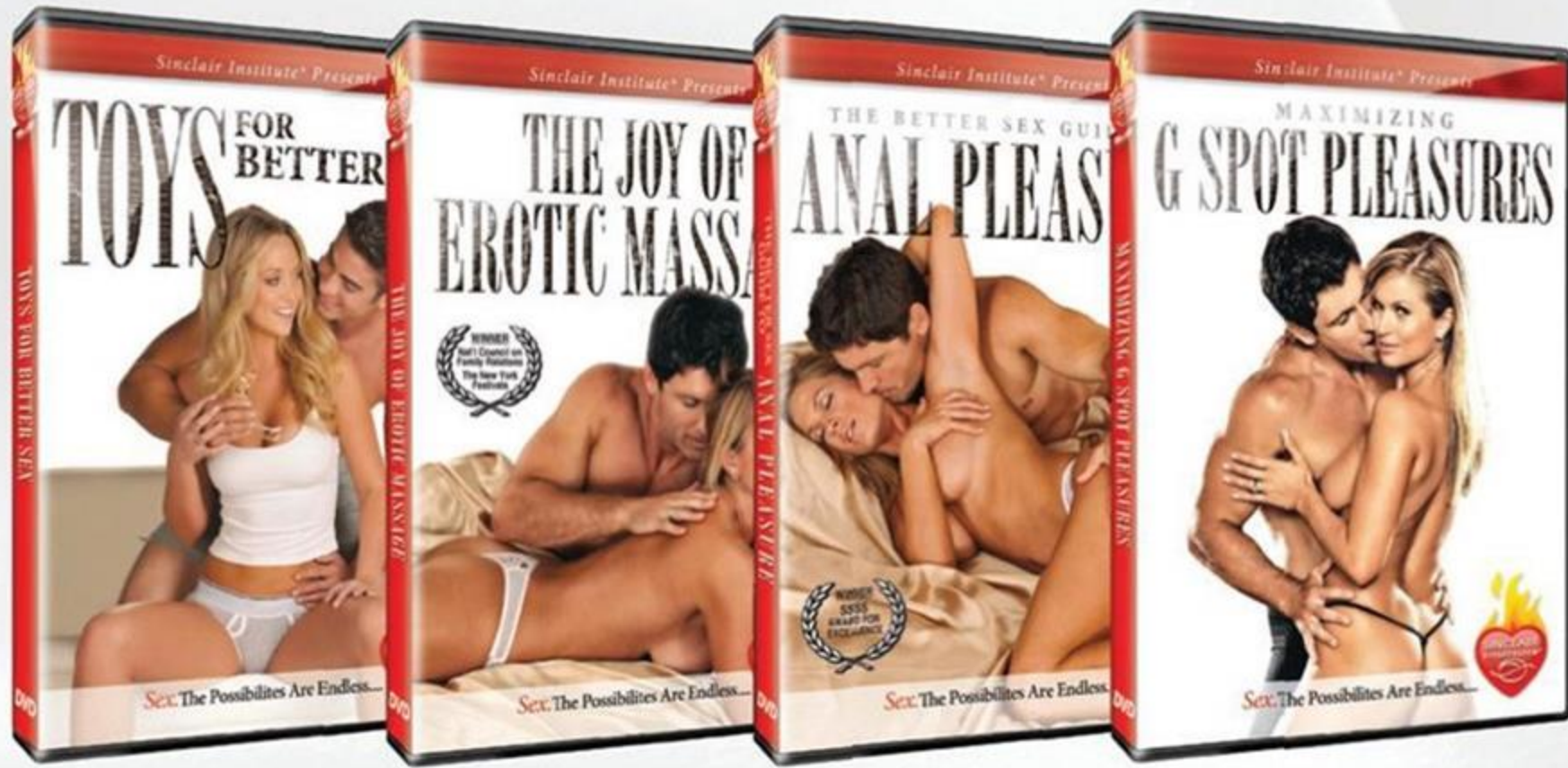
and entered a room of polished black terrazzo floors, shimmering gauze drapes and a grand staircase that led to a sunken dance floor. The room was lit like a movie set—no disco balls here—and the air was thick with cigarette smoke, sweat and cologne. There they found ecstasy—and plenty of it.

For six months, Jagers flew back and forth between New York and Dallas to play weekly gigs. Each time he brought more and more ecstasy with him, and as the drug spread, the notoriety of the Starck grew. On any given night the scene looked as if Whit Stillman's urban haute bourgeoisie were auditioning for a Pat Benatar video. A cacophony of shiny animal-print jackets, wide-brimmed hats, blonde pompadours,

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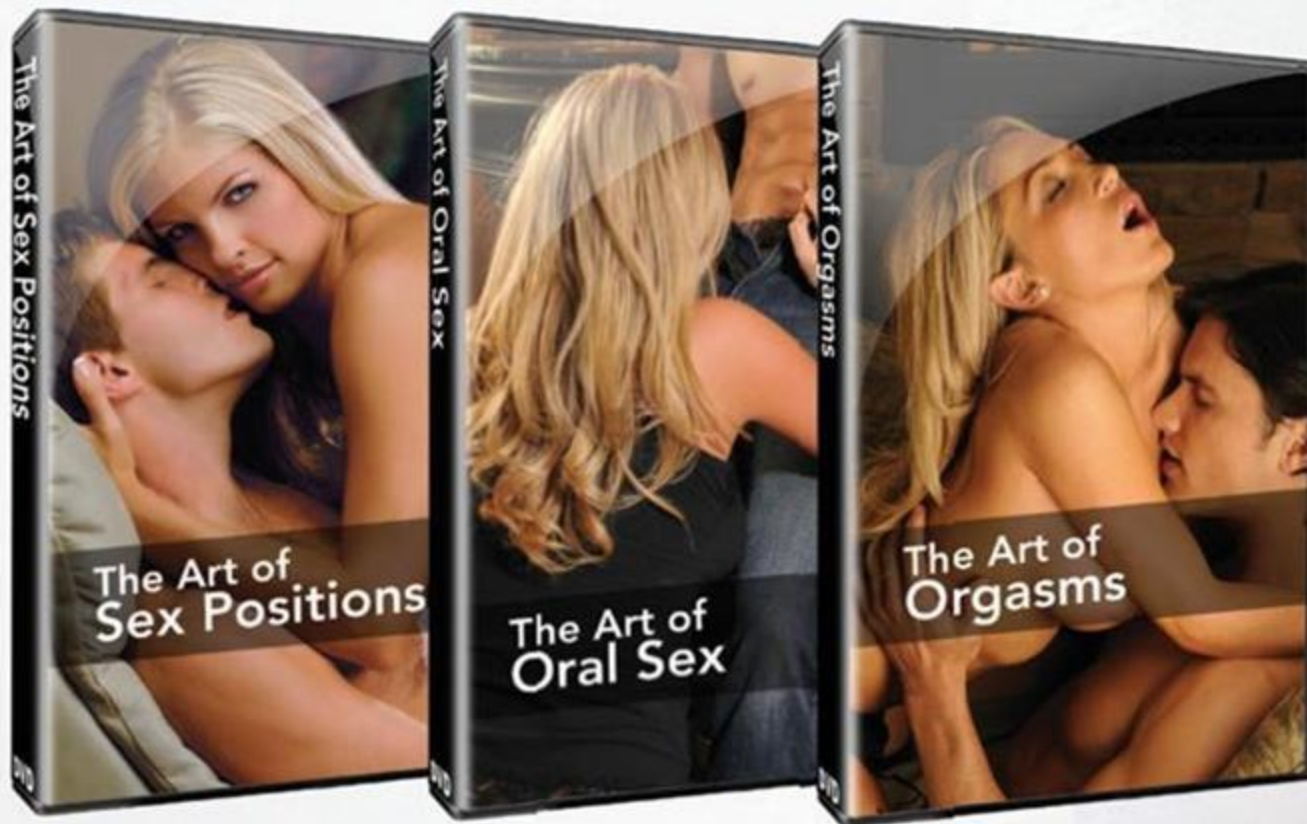
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under the glittering night sky, Clegg knew his life had changed forever. It was 1978.

“The night I took my first hit on the beach in Mexico, I said to myself, My mission in life is to get this to the entire world,” Clegg remembers. “If anyone was ever ordained with a mission, I was that night.”

How Clegg came to be standing on a Mexican beach, so moved by a drug that he would appoint himself its prophet, is a strange story of all-American self-realization and personal reinvention.

Clegg grew up on the South Side of Chicago; at the age of 12 he entered a Catholic seminary, where he studied Spanish, theology, psychology and tennis. In 1965, when he was 26, Clegg decided the priesthood wasn't for him. Former priests often find it difficult to readjust to society, but Clegg was likable and funny, with a breezy demeanor and a keen mind. He had a natural feel for people. He shed the collar but couldn't shake the priestly impression he left on people, a shamanistic charisma characteristic of natural-born salesmen.

Clegg also had a knack for spotting opportunity. After reading about a new technology, he built a security company that sold motion-sensitive alarms that automatically phoned police. To boost business, Clegg paid a night-watch captain in the Los Angeles Police Department to slip him burglary reports. Whenever someone was burglarized in L.A., Clegg's sales staff was on the phone with the victim the next day.

He sold his business for \$3.2 million in 1968 and spent the next few years drinking and screwing his way through a small fortune. When he ran out of money, he found ways to earn it back: a mercury mine in Nevada, imported microwaves from Japan, resorts in Texas and Mexico.

By the mid-1970s he was teaching yoga and tennis at an upscale residential development in tony north Dallas. Rich, attractive, bored housewives perusing the Yellow Pages found a photo of a spry, good-looking man with rosy cheeks and athletic legs offering “Zen tennis therapy.” Clegg promised clients more than a workout, but he didn't know he was also building a network of people with untapped appetites for a pleasure-inducing designer drug.

Clegg was splitting his time between a condo in Dallas and his yoga resort in Mexico when a friend insisted he try a new drug called Adam. He immediately understood what a powerful product he had on his hands. “For the first time in your life there is no fear of anything,” Clegg says. “That is such a freeing sensation. You aren't concerned with the details of life on earth. Health, business, relationships—none of it matters. Everything looks beautiful.”

After trying MDMA, Clegg wanted more. The only source of the drug, however, was the Boston Group, an underground legion of medical chemists in Massachusetts who produced the drug primarily for therapeutic use. So Clegg decided to make his own. He tracked down Alexander Shulgin, a towering figure in the history of psychedelic drugs who had rediscovered MDMA in the 1970s and turned psychologists on to it, but Clegg couldn't win an introduction.

He did, however, make contact with someone who had access to the formula. Then he found a chemist. Armed with those, Clegg purchased a house in the remote mountains of northern California and had his brother-in-law learn how to make the compound. The lab began to produce MDMA, and Clegg threw parties in his Dallas condo where he handed out the drug for free. But there was a problem—it needed a name.

“When I first got it, I remember calling it Adam,” Clegg says. “I thought, This isn't something I can market. What is the true experience of this? I had to convince people who didn't do drugs to try one no one had heard of. I was telling people it would let them see God. Then it came to me: It was pure ecstasy.”

He invited friends, psychiatrists, former yoga pupils and tennis students to his place, where he coached them through their first trips. It wasn't long before everyone wanted in on Clegg's tantalizing experiments. “We had a big Jacuzzi,” he says. “People who were uptight and modest would suddenly shed their clothes. There was something freeing about it.”

By 1984, production at his California lab had ramped up to a million pills a month and still couldn't meet demand. As soon as a batch came off the pill presser, it was packaged and sent out via UPS or FedEx. The pills landed in clubs and psychologists' offices, but they also filled the mailboxes of average, middle-class Americans who'd heard about the drug through an ever-widening word-of-mouth network. Clegg's was a multimillion-dollar drug operation, and cash poured in quickly. He stuffed it in suitcases and shoved it in his garage rafters. He even bought a Cessna jet he piloted solo, flying shipments of cash to depositories in Switzerland.

Michael Clegg never went to the Starck. He never met the club kids who were passing out pills or the bartenders who openly sold his product over the counter. But by February 1985, he knew things were getting hot. Ecstasy had taken over Dallas, and it was spreading.

Saxon Hatchett was 14 in 1984 when he started going to clubs in Austin and first heard about ecstasy. There weren't a lot of options for punk alternative kids like Hatchett, who felt out of place in the city's beer joints and redneck bars. Hatchett and his friends gravitated toward the music and attitude of gay bars and clubs in Austin's Warehouse District. They started doing ecstasy, which produced more than a high. It changed how he and his misfit friends understood their place in the world. “It was almost like the needle got picked up off the record player and put back down,” Hatchett says of the drug. “As corny as it sounds, it solidified us with a common identity.”

One night someone handed Hatchett a pack of 20 ecstasy pills and told him to pass them out to his friends. He sold the pills for five bucks apiece and ended the night with two or three for himself—and a pocket full of cash. Hatchett wasn't the only club kid selling legal ecstasy. Student dealers



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popped up on the college campuses in Dallas and Austin. The drug spread from clubs to fraternities to college parties and eventually trickled into high schools. Concerned parents began calling the Dallas Police Department, asking about the new drug.

In February 1985, Phil Jordan was reassigned to take control of the DEA's Dallas office. A decorated agent from El Paso, Jordan had tracked Mexican cartel networks through the streets of Guadalajara and Juárez, but now ecstasy, the "kiddie drug," was his top priority. Even though it was legal, Jordan cased it like any narcotic. His agents went undercover, looking for dealers and buying large enough quantities to work up the distribution chain. The drug wasn't difficult to find. *The Austin Chronicle* had ads for mail-order doses on its back page. But Jordan's distribution trails led only to amateurs, club kids like Hatchett selling to large networks of friends. As far as Jordan could tell, the vast majority of ecstasy was coming from outside Texas, from a lab somewhere in California. He notified the DEA's Los Angeles office, but nothing came of it. Once it left Dallas, Jordan's ecstasy trail went cold.

The country was in the throes of Reagan's war on drugs. In October 1984, Congress passed an amendment to the Controlled Substances Act that gave the DEA emergency power to temporarily reclassify a drug as Schedule I. Seven months later, in May 1985, Texas senator Lloyd Bentsen asked the acting administrator of the DEA for an emergency ban on ecstasy. Citing a study that linked a related chemical, MDA, to brain damage in rats, the DEA announced on May 31, 1985 that MDMA would be illegal on July 1.

As Saxon Hatchett saw it, the DEA's ban was good for business. He recognized a production vacuum and decided to set up his own ecstasy lab. He recruited an organic-chemistry graduate student from the University of Texas and over the next four years built one of the largest ecstasy production operations in the state. At its height, he moved 50,000 pills a month. Hatchett bought a new car, skied in Aspen, lived in a downtown condo and hung out with members of New Order, who liked to spend downtime on Lake Travis outside Austin. "I was the first kid I knew with a cell phone," Hatchett says.

But finding the ingredients to manufacture MDMA had become increasingly difficult. The DEA tightened restrictions on key chemicals such as safrole oil, and as demand for Hatchett's product increased, he was forced to outsource production to Mexico, which meant dealing with drug traffickers. "I didn't watch *Scarface* and think, This is what I want to be," Hatchett says. "I remember the first time I went to a meeting, there was a gun in the room. For three years it was great, but I woke up one day and thought, This isn't fun anymore."

By 1989 Hatchett wanted out of the business. Then a cash drop with some cocaine dealers in Houston went wrong. It was supposed to be simple: 120,000 pills

for half a million in cash. But the dealers' runner took all of it. Hatchett wanted to brush it off. It was a big loss, but it didn't put him out of business. His two partners, however, insisted they get their money back. Increased contact with the cocaine dealers landed Hatchett's group on the DEA's radar. In April 1989 Hatchett was arrested and served seven years in jail.

With the DEA focused on ecstasy, Michael Clegg knew it was time for an exit strategy. He purchased an old pharmaceutical company in Brazil and retrofitted it into a giant lab. To shore up capacity, he secured 15 55-gallon drums of safrole oil. "It was enough oil to produce ecstasy forever," Clegg says. From Brazil, he continued to produce and export to the European market. Clegg's ecstasy flooded Ibiza, England, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands.

By the time the DEA banned MDMA, in 1985, Clegg had already shuttered his lab in California and retreated to the Cayman Islands, where he purchased a yacht and sailed it through the Panama Canal and up the coast of Central America to Costa Rica. There he bought some land on the top of a mountain and settled down, well outside the grasp of the DEA.

Illegality hardly curbed ecstasy's takeover of the club scene. By the winter of 1987 the drug had made its way to Ibiza, where British DJs discovered it and brought it back to London. There the happy little "hug drug" helped spark Britain's so-called second Summer of Love, in 1988. The drug followed the youth-culture trajectory, becoming synonymous with the emergence of acid house, the Madchester dance scene and warehouse rave parties on the outskirts of London. In the 1990s raves were eventually reimported, along with ecstasy, to New York, where it became the drug that defined a generation of club kids. Now a knockoff called molly is attempting to do the same.

A few people can still get their hands on the same kind of legal MDMA that took the country by storm 30 years ago, thanks to Rick Doblin, an advocate for the psychedelic wonder drug.

Doblin first encountered MDMA in 1982 in the secluded confines of the Esalen Institute, atop the cliffs of Big Sur in northern California. Esalen was the birthplace of the New Age movement and a coastal highway for true believers of the 1960s psychedelic revolution. It was there that he heard about a new drug called Adam that had piqued the interest of psychotherapists at the institute. Adam was all the buzz, but Doblin was unimpressed. "It just looked like people were talking to each other," he says. But when he tried Adam himself, he couldn't believe what he had stumbled on: a powerful psychedelic that didn't create hallucinations. It made his mind feel crisp and clear. It also offered a vision of what he should do with the rest of his life.

He formed a nonprofit, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, that conducted research intended to prepare for the inevitable legalization of the drug. Part of that included sending

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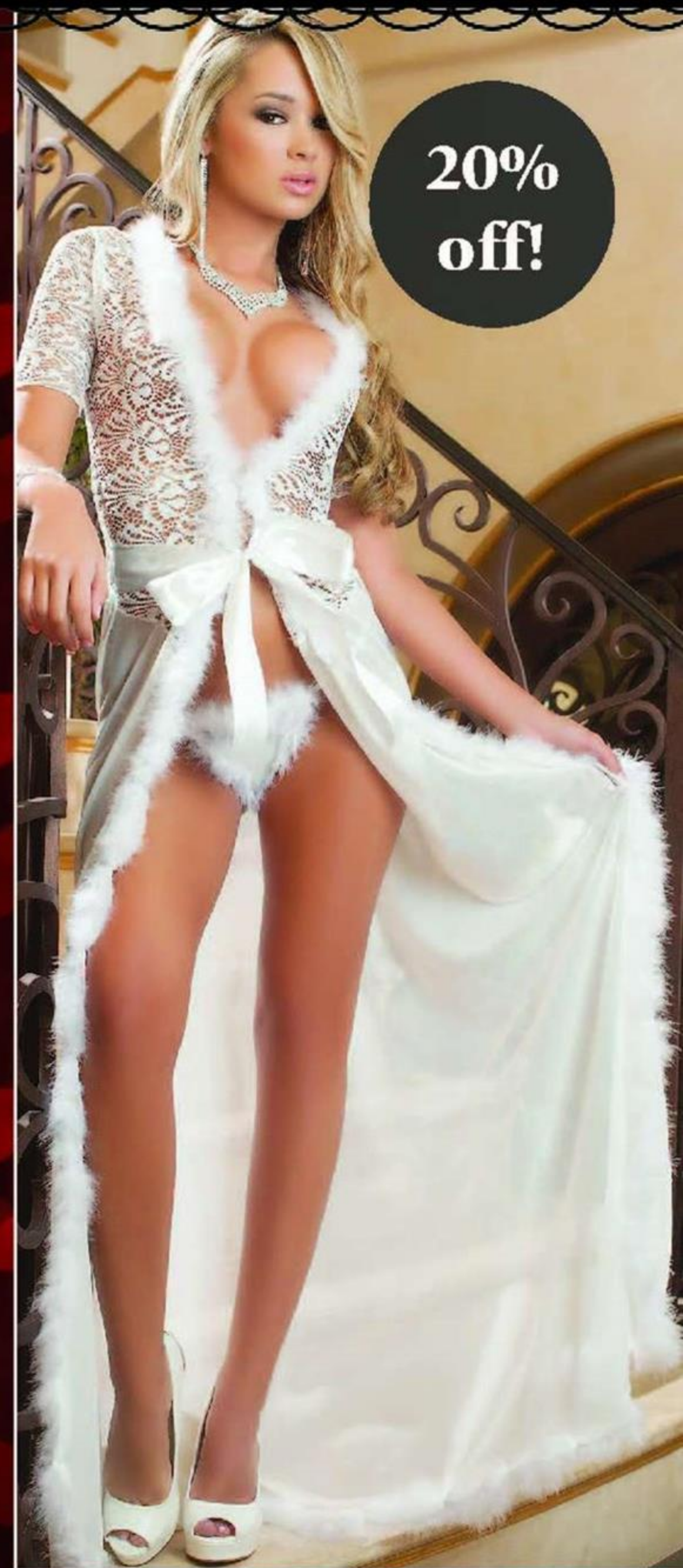
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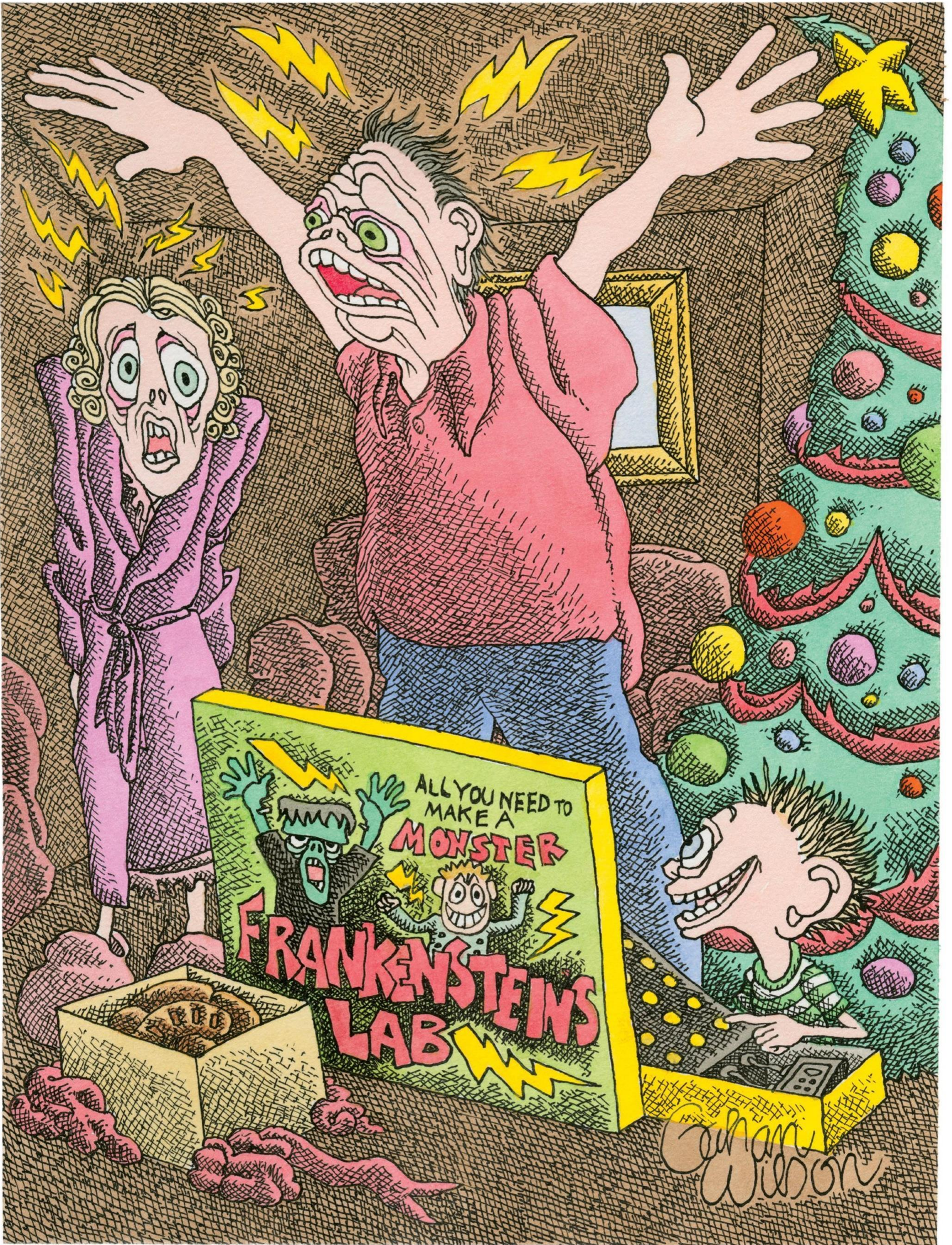
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"We should...never...have given him...that mad scientist kit!"

letters and samples of MDMA to Polish rabbis, Austrian Zen Buddhists and American Benedictine monks. In the summer of 1984, Doblin conducted his first clinical trials of MDMA, keeping the results secret while quietly building a network of advocates.

When the DEA published its intention to ban MDMA in July 1984, Doblin flew to Washington to deliver a petition that would force a hearing on the ban. "Previously I had only thought of myself as a counter-culture drug-using criminal," he says. "But this was my movement into the mainstream. The American legal system allows nonprofit organizations to exist, and you can use them to fight the government." He drove the issue through the courts in an effort to reclassify the drug as a Schedule III substance, which would allow doctors to use it for therapy. A federal judge ruled in his favor in May 1986, but after a series of appeals, the DEA ultimately overruled the judge's decision and kept MDMA on Schedule I, citing its lack of FDA approval. In the process Doblin realized that his passion lay not in the psychology behind the MDMA experience but in the fight to change the legal structure around drug prohibition in the United States.

Doblin earned a doctorate at Harvard, and MAPS became instrumental in organizing clinical studies of MDMA. In 1992, the FDA approved the first clinical trials of the drug. Today, MAPS oversees much of the research, which involves Iraq War veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and people suffering from clinical depression. A study in 2010 found that 83 percent of subjects with PTSD who underwent MDMA-assisted psychotherapy expressed a significant drop in their symptoms. A follow-up study in 2012 showed that these benefits were sustained on average for 45 months.

With these kinds of results, Doblin hopes his organization can steer MDMA toward legalization the same way medical marijuana has become legal. He believes MDMA could be approved for PTSD treatment by 2021 and dreams of total legalization by 2032.

I ask Doblin if there is a place where fringe believers in MDMA therapy are continuing their work in secret, quietly and illegally. Doblin chooses his words carefully. "There are still underground therapists doing a lot of work," he says.

It's 2015, and I'm with Kerry Jagers backstage at a concert in Dallas. I also meet Hatchett, who earlier in the day palled around with New Order's Peter Hook, working out together at Life Time Fitness and catching up over smoothies. Hatchett, like Hook, is now sober. He's married, runs a tattoo-removal business in Austin and has a teenage daughter. As far as Hatchett is concerned, there is no more MDMA—at least not the pure stuff he made back in the 1980s. But you can find the culture he believes the drug helped spawn: the music, the sense of style and a certain sensibility, an increased sensitivity and broad-mindedness he doesn't remember seeing in the world as much before. "If you weren't there, you don't get it," he says. "We were the creators of this movement that's no longer a subculture."

The Starck closed its doors in 1989, killed not by the outlawing of ecstasy but by the natural entropy of cool that eventually claims all hot spots. The shell of the space still stands underneath that highway overpass, mostly vacant but occasionally used for nostalgic parties at which former Starck regulars seek to recapture the feeling, if only for one night.

As they had with Hatchett, the feds caught up with Michael Clegg. In 1992, after more than a decade running what was perhaps the largest ecstasy-production company in the world, Clegg was arrested at an airport in Palo Alto, California. Federal agents slipped a tracking device onto his plane before he left Costa Rica, and when he landed to refuel on his way to Vancouver, they were waiting for him. His plant in Brazil, his cash in Switzerland and his barrels of safrole oil were all seized by the DEA. After a complicated legal battle, Clegg managed to save his resorts and reduce his sentence to four years in a federal penitentiary.

I find Clegg at his home in northern Georgia, overlooking a wooded ravine in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We sit in overstuffed leather chairs, drinking espresso from ceramic cups and listening to a New Age music station on DirecTV. Clegg says that jail—not ecstasy—was the best thing that ever happened to him. It prompted an authentic epiphany. When he left prison, he was no longer Michael Clegg, ecstasy kingpin, but Satyam Nadeen, an enlightened spiritual teacher on the path to spiritual awakening. He hands me a copy of his book, *From Onions to Pearls*, which boasts a Deepak Chopra endorsement on the cover. After years of drugs, he explains, he has found a spiritual happiness that far exceeds anything any drug produced.

"I spend eight hours a day blissing out now," he says.

After lunch on the porch of his yoga resort up the road, Clegg takes me back to his house, where he produces a pyramid-shaped crystal tied to a string. He waves it over a piece of paper printed with black numerals. When the crystal comes to a halt, he tells me encouragingly that my consciousness level—the extent to which my inner being is tied into the all-infinite being of the universe—is above average. He won't tell me his own reading but suggests that it approaches Buddha levels. Toward the end of the day, I ask him the question: After manufacturing millions of MDMA pills, the purest, most perfect ecstasy the world has ever known, does he know if there's any left?

Clegg doesn't think so. He tells a story about a woman in Seattle who, right before ecstasy became illegal, purchased 10,000 pills and buried them in her yard. Maybe they're still there. Then he tells of a time a few years ago when his brother-in-law showed up with a handful of pills he'd been saving for two decades. They took them together, and to Clegg's surprise, the quality hadn't waned one bit.

"It was pure bliss," he says, "exactly like I remembered."



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RISE OF THE COP WATCHERS

Continued from page 60

the 2008 presidential election), he was more concerned about the growing power of the federal government than police misconduct.

That changed in the early hours of New Year's Day 2012 when Buehler witnessed an incident involving a DUI check. As he filled up his truck at a gas station in downtown Austin, he heard a scream puncture the chilly night air. An officer named Robert Snider was violently pulling a young woman, 28-year-old Norma Pizana, out of the passenger side of a dark sedan. Snider was angry because Pizana had ignored his order to stop texting on her cell phone. After throwing her to the ground, he and another officer, Patrick Oborski, twisted the petite woman's arms behind her back to handcuff her. They then yanked her up by her wrists, a move Buehler knew from his Army training could easily have dislocated her shoulder.

"What are you doing that to a female for?" Buehler shouted at the cops. "She's not a risk to you guys. She's not doing shit to you."

"Don't worry about it," Oborski replied. "Worry about yourself."

A tearful Pizana pleaded with Buehler, "Help me, help me. Please take video."

Buehler whipped out his battered BlackBerry. The phone was so old it didn't have video capability, so he began to snap photos of the arrest. After Pizana was dragged into the back of Snider's cruiser, Oborski trooped over to Buehler and shoved him. "Who do you think you are?" Oborski yelled in Buehler's face. "I told you to back off. You're interfering with an investigation."

The officer reached for Buehler's wrist as if he were about to handcuff him, but Buehler pulled away.

"You just spit in my face," Oborski grinned. "You're under arrest."

According to Buehler, he was frogmarched to a police wagon, where Oborski leaned in and threatened him. "Keep your nose out of cops' business," Buehler claims Oborski said. "You fucked with the wrong cop. Now you're going to pay."

Buehler was angry and confused. What did Oborski mean when he said he was "going to pay"? He found out when he arrived at the Travis County Jail. As well as being hit with the relatively minor infraction of resisting arrest, he also faced a much more serious charge: harassment of a public servant, a third-degree felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Unbeknownst to Buehler, however, someone else was recording the incident that night. An Austin resident, Carlos Amador, had videoed Buehler's arrest on his cell phone. The

video appeared to show that, contrary to what Officer Oborski wrote in his after-action report, Buehler didn't spit in the police officer's face. "I would testify in a court of law that at no point did Buehler spit at the officer or make any sort of aggressive or inciting gesture toward him," Amador told the TV station KVUE. Oborski was apparently lying. The district attorney was forced to drop the most serious charge after the grand jury refused to indict.

A less stubborn, more fearful man might have let the incident slide. Not Buehler. After he appeared on local television, he was inundated with calls and messages from people who claimed to have been roughed up by Austin cops. He was so fired up about the way he'd been treated that he formed the Peaceful Streets Project. He has since been arrested four more times on a variety of charges ranging from disorderly conduct to failure to obey a lawful order to interfering with public duties. Each time, the activist has beaten the rap.

Not surprisingly, cops can't stand Buehler. In a confidential report he obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, the Austin Police Department labeled him a domestic terrorist. In 2013, Austin Police Association president Wayne Vincent blasted the Peaceful Streets Project when he told Fox News station KTBC, "We are fully afraid that this thing is going to turn violent before it's over because Buehler keeps escalating the harassment. These people we're talking about get in our officers' faces, follow them around, constantly walk into the scene and are constantly talking to the people we're trying to deal with. This isn't about police accountability; this is about provoking and harassing officers to try to get the officers to react."

Buehler is an example of an emerging breed of activists known as "cop watchers." The Peaceful Streets Project, along with larger organizations such as the libertarian-leaning group Cop-Block and the left-wing Copwatch, are part of a nationwide network of self-appointed cop monitors who see their job as policing the police and filming officers on duty, looking to document police wrongdoing. It's a multiracial, mostly youthful coalition that includes gun-toting Ron Paul supporters who despise the federal government and want to privatize the police; anarchists and progressives who want to abolish the police altogether and leave policing to the community; and Black Lives Matter activists demanding that cops stop killing unarmed African Americans.

The proliferation of video-recording devices combined with the popularity of video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Facebook means that anybody can be a cop watcher. According to the Pew Research Center, approximately two thirds of Americans own smartphones. The American Civil Liberties Union released an app called Mobile Justice that allows cell phone users to document instances of police wrongdoing and upload the video directly to an ACLU affiliate. This ubiquitous technology has transformed the public perception of police brutality and proved to be a key factor in the rising tide of anti-cop sentiment in America, the likes of which haven't been seen since the 1960s. The viral video taken by cop watcher Kevin Moore of Freddie Gray, last seen alive screaming in

agony as he was dragged into the back of a police van, helped spark the Baltimore riots earlier this year and played a major role in the subsequent indictment of six Baltimore police officers for Gray's death. In another recent case, the shooting death of Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina, prosecutors quickly brought murder charges against the cop who killed him, due in large part to video evidence that directly contradicted the officer's initial version of events.

Cop watching even received a seal of approval from the Department of Justice. "As the ability to record police activity has become more widespread," said the scathing DOJ report on the Ferguson Police Department that was released in March, "the role it can play in capturing questionable police activity, and ensuring that the activity is investigated and subject to broad public debate, has become clear."

While filming the police is protected by the First Amendment, that hasn't prevented law enforcers from ordering activists to turn off their cameras. Cop watchers have had their cell phones confiscated and footage deleted and been arrested on trumped-up charges such as disorderly conduct or interfering with an investigation. Cop watchers call these "contempt of cop" charges, which they claim police officers know won't stick in a court of law but use anyway to retaliate against civilians they think haven't shown enough deference to their authority.

"Cops make up shit all the time," says Carlos Miller, founder of Photography Is Not a Crime, a news website that documents police brutality. Miller started it in 2007, the same year the iPhone debuted. "They lie to protect their jobs," he says. "They lie to protect fellow officers. They lie under oath. That's why they hate cameras. For the longest time, they were able to go back to the office and type up an arrest report and spin what happened. And by and large, juries would believe them. Now that most people have cell phone cameras, it's a lot more difficult for them to lie. They say we're interfering with their investigations. No, we're not. We're interfering with their ability to lie. What we're really doing is forcing cops to tell the truth."

Cop watching is a new idea with an old pedigree that stretches back half a century. Then as now, many poor and minority communities felt under siege by excessively aggressive law enforcers. In the aftermath of the Watts riots in Los Angeles in 1965, groups called Community Alert Patrols sprang up. Black militants would tool around the ghetto in cars outfitted with two-way radios. When word came over the airwaves of possible police harassment, they would dash to the scene, cameras ready.

A year later, in Oakland, California, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton formed the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The Black Panther Party modeled itself on the Community Alert Patrols but upped the stakes by adding a new element: The Panther patrols carried loaded shotguns and rifles. California law at the time allowed the Panthers not only to observe police arrests, as long as they didn't interfere, but also to openly display firearms. Carloads of armed Panthers would trail police cruisers and jump out if they spotted an arrest, often shouting legal advice to the person being arrested.

By the late 1970s the Black Panthers had

largely collapsed due to infighting and an aggressive, sometimes murderous, campaign by local law enforcement and federal authorities to destroy them. During the Reagan 1980s, criminal justice policies shifted rightward. As murder rates skyrocketed, politicians competed with one another to see who could be the toughest on crime, ramping up the militarization of law enforcement equipment and tactics. Police brutality didn't disappear. It was still a very real issue for those on the receiving end, but cases were rarely prosecuted.

In March 1991, America awoke from its decade-long slumber when a shocking video popped up on the nightly news. A 31-year-old plumber named George Holliday rose from bed when he heard sirens outside his Lake View Terrace, Los Angeles apartment. From his balcony, Holliday used a new Sony Handycam to record four LAPD cops pummeling a black male during a routine traffic stop. The footage of the Rodney King beating—America's first viral video—outraged a nation. Even more outrageous, three of the four officers were acquitted of all charges at trial. L.A. burned in what is to this day the worst riot in the city's history.

A year before the Rodney King beating, 400 miles to the north in Berkeley, California, a new police-monitoring group called Copwatch debuted. Formed as a coalition of activists, students and lawyers, Copwatch began videotaping police who were in the process of cracking down on the homeless people, panhandlers and runaways living on the streets in the Telegraph Avenue area, the Berkeley equivalent of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury. Chapters spread to other cities on the West

Coast. In 2006, Copwatch L.A. filmed two police officers repeatedly slugging alleged gang member William Cardenas as he lay on the ground. In the video, he can be heard crying, "I can't breathe, I can't breathe," an eerie foreshadowing of last year's Eric Garner cell phone video, which depicted Garner being choked to death by NYPD officers.

Then two things happened: YouTube exploded in popularity and Barack Obama was elected president. "After the election of Obama there were a lot more angry young white men posting videos on YouTube," says Photography Is Not a Crime founder Miller. "During the Bush years, they were law-and-order types. But after Obama was elected, the police all of a sudden became symbols of government tyranny."

Over the past few years, YouTube has become a giant repository of damning evidence indicting American law enforcement. Cops beating up grandmothers. Cops beating up handcuffed young women. Cops dog-piling on the homeless, the drug-addicted, the mentally ill. Cops pulling guns on teenage pool partyers. Cops working themselves up into a full-tilt fury over minor traffic infractions. Thousands and thousands of videos, so many of them they practically constitute their own genre: cops gone wild.

Even accounting for the fact that the videos don't always reveal the complete context of an arrest, given the sheer volume of incidents captured by cell phones, camcorders, dash cams and surveillance cameras, it's hard not to come away with the impression that it's not just a few bad apples, the traditional excuse used to

whitewash police brutality, but a widespread problem: This wanton use of excessive force is not so much a bug in America's sprawling criminal justice system as it is a built-in feature.

Probably the biggest posters of police-misconduct videos on YouTube are members of CopBlock. The controversial libertarian organization was founded in 2010 by Pete Eyre, a former intern at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, and Adam "Ademo Freeman" Mueller, after Mueller was busted for selling marijuana. Eyre has a reputation as the sensible one, while Mueller is the wild-eyed true believer who denounces America as a police state, seemingly oblivious to the irony that if America really were a full-fledged police state, CopBlock wouldn't exist.

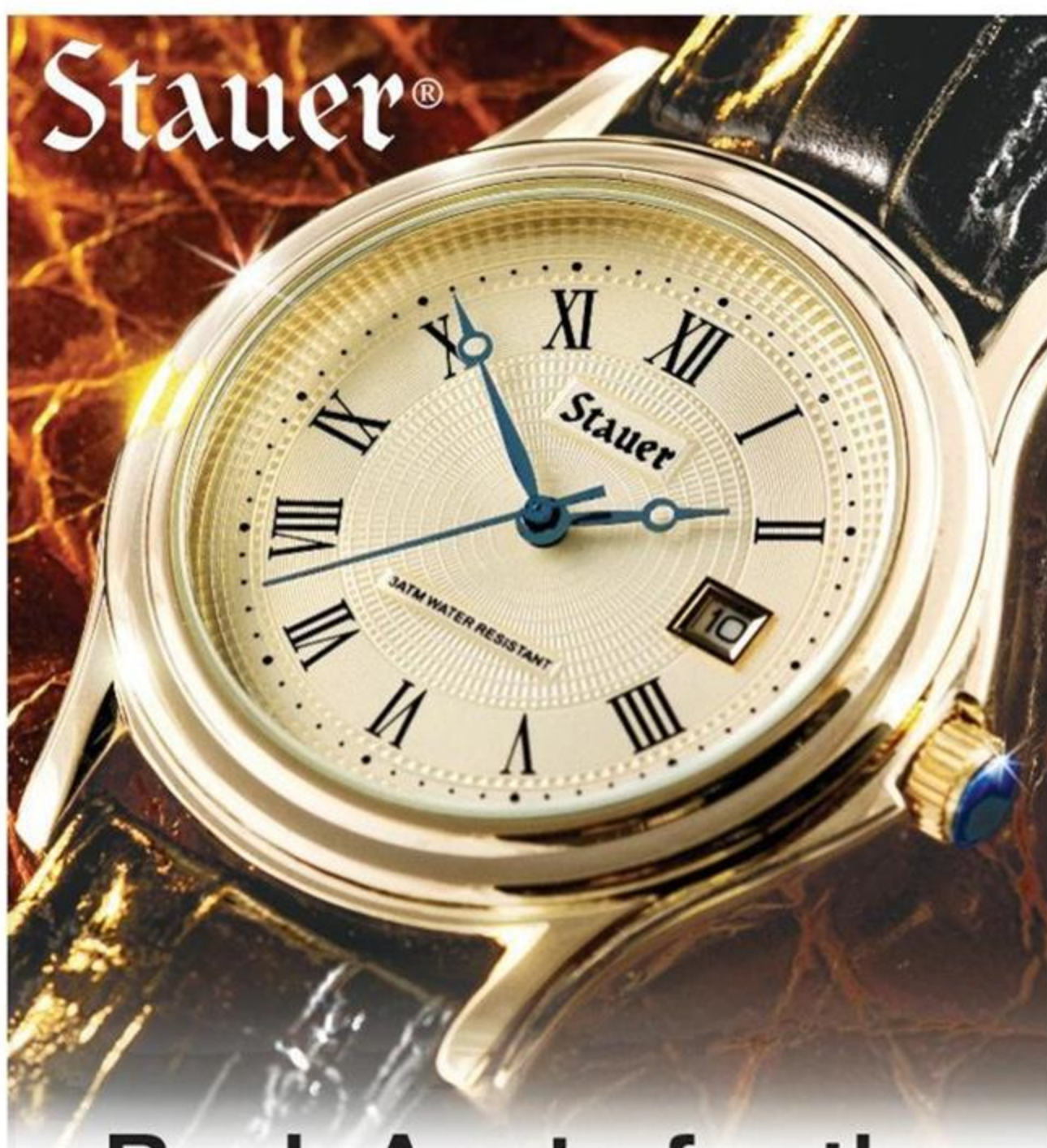
Initially, CopBlock and Copwatch formed an uneasy alliance despite their differing political philosophies. That changed last year. "Because they're libertarians, CopBlock is very pro-property rights," says Miller. "When the riots broke out in Ferguson over the death of Michael Brown, some of the CopBlock people took the side of the private property owners. The Copwatch people were like, 'Fuck private property. This is the only way black people can get attention.' So a rift developed between CopBlock and Copwatch." The rift turned into a chasm after the Baltimore riots that followed the death of Freddie Gray. In May, WeCopwatch, an offshoot of Copwatch, cut all ties with CopBlock and denounced it in a press release as a racist organization.

Not all CopBlock members are fringe fanatics. Their basic philosophy—summed up by their slogan "Badges don't grant extra

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rights”—is a sound one. Few would disagree with the premise that police officers should be held to the same standard civilians are. But a disturbing number of its members spout wildly irresponsible and incendiary anti-cop rhetoric that not only celebrates the death of police officers but sometimes calls for their assassination. At least one member, Dustin McCaskill from Colorado, has been arrested by the FBI for making death threats against cops. For all their purported devotion to the U.S. Constitution, CopBlock members don't seem to realize that credible threats of violence against individual police officers (or civilians) are not protected by the First Amendment. That hasn't stopped the circulation of a YouTube video popular among CopBlock members entitled "When Should You Shoot a Cop?" that argues, "If you have the unalienable right to speak your mind, à la the First Amendment, then if all else fails you have the right to kill government agents who try to shut you up."

"An overwhelming majority of the articles on our website highlight the inhumane treatment of minorities at the hands of law enforcement," says Mueller. "To suggest that CopBlock is racist is completely absurd. As for the video, it was posted by one person and does not reflect the opinions of other CopBlock members. The video never made a call for violence against any officer, but rather was designated to initiate a discussion about when, or if, you should protect yourself against corrupt law enforcement officers."

Because he once was a bad cop himself, cop watcher Alex Salazar understands better than most why some people hate the police. "I can understand the anger, because many of these people have been beaten up by police," says Salazar. "I used to be one of those doing the beating."

Salazar didn't start out that way. "I was very idealistic when I joined the Los Angeles Police Department," he continues. "I genuinely wanted to help people. I swore I wouldn't become jaded and cynical like a lot of the older officers I met, but that's precisely what happened to me."

I meet Salazar for the first time on an unseasonably chilly Monday evening in late June on the Venice Beach boardwalk. Salazar is 49, casually dressed, stocky with a bit of a gut and a wide friendly face. He has invited some of his buddies to go cop watching with him tonight. There's Daniel Saulmon, a.k.a. Tom Zebra, a short, unassuming guy who's a bit of a legend in police-accountability circles for taking cop watching to new heights—literally—by using a camera-equipped drone to monitor police checkpoints. There's Felipe Hemming, a big barrel of a man with a beard who holds the title of chief investigator at Photography Is Not a Crime and acts as a kind of unofficial counsel for cop watchers who get arrested in the Los Angeles area, even though he's not a trained lawyer. Also present is Dylan Avery, director of the 9/11 conspiracy movie *Loose Change*, who has just completed a new documentary about police brutality with Salazar, entitled *Black and Blue*.

Not much is going on tonight. Cop watching is a bit like police work—long periods of intense boredom interrupted by sudden flashes of violent action. We head over to Windward Avenue,

just off the boardwalk, to the spot where in May a 29-year-old homeless black man, Brendon Glenn, was shot dead by an LAPD officer after Glenn got into an altercation with a bouncer at the Townhouse tavern. Los Angeles police chief Charlie Beck viewed security-camera footage of the killing taken from a nearby restaurant and said he was "very concerned." He refused, however, to release the video to the public. Salazar smells a cover-up.

"Cops hate cameras," he says. "A camera to a cop is like a crucifix to a vampire."

Salazar's journey from good cop to bad cop to cop watcher began in 1989 when, fresh out of the Air Force, he joined the LAPD. He was 23, hopelessly naive, a handsome Latino kid who grew up in a stable two-parent home in a lily-white suburb. "We were like the Mexican Brady Bunch," he says, laughing. He had high hopes for his new profession. That's why he was so perturbed during his training at the Los Angeles Police Academy when an instructor taught him how to "testi-lie"—shading facts, inventing details, shaping the narrative on police reports so the district attorney would pick up the case and run with it. By May 1990 he'd finished his training and begun working in the infamous Rampart Division. He remembers his first day as a rookie patrolling a black neighborhood when an older officer approached and asked him, "So what do you think of these FUNs?" Salazar was puzzled: "What's FUNs?" "Fucked-up niggers."

A few months later he watched his fellow officers roll up in a mattress a man who was going through cocaine psychosis after ingesting an eight-ball and then beat him to death with their batons. Salazar was appalled, his idealism sorely tested. The guy was violent and threatening his family, sure, and he needed to be restrained, but he didn't deserve this.

On September 28, 1991, Salazar, now working in the Wilshire Division, fully surrendered to the darkness. He was driving through the jewelry district in downtown Los Angeles on his way to buy a suit for a friend's wedding when he spotted a Latino man snatching a gold chain from a woman's neck. Salazar jumped out of his car and slammed the suspect against a wall. Out of nowhere, six of the suspect's friends surrounded Salazar and began to beat him with their belts. Salazar drew his backup gun, a snub-nosed .38, but the gang kept coming at him. "Shoot me, shoot me," one of them kept taunting him. Scared for his life, Salazar backed up into the road and was hit by a passing car that sent him somersaulting into the air.

Lying on the ground with his anklebone sticking through the surface of his skin, Salazar cursed his stupidity, thinking, Why didn't I shoot those motherfuckers dead?

"That's exactly the moment when I became an angry, pissed-off cop," says Salazar today.

Four months later, Salazar returned to the job a different man. Although physically healed, he suffered recurring nightmares, replaying the attack in his head. He began to drink heavily, then divorced his wife and started sleeping with so-called "badge bunnies," or cop groupies. He hung out at the Short Stop, an infamous cop bar on Sunset Boulevard in Echo Park that was decorated with police memorabilia. Detectives swapped war stories, and officers from the Rampart Division held "kill parties" there to celebrate every time they shot someone dead.

Then Salazar joined the South Bureau Narcotics Undercover Buy Team. It was a high-stress job, an endless churn of buying dope, busting dope dealers, hitting the street again to buy more dope and bust more dope dealers. Sometimes the team would arrest as many as 40 suspects a day. Once, during a drug buy in San Pedro, a teenager Salazar describes as “a little homey” kicked the side of his car. Salazar snapped and blew his cover when he jumped out of the unmarked vehicle and pulverized the teenager with his police radio.

Still, he was a choirboy compared with some of his colleagues. He didn’t murder anybody or frame anybody for murder, a not uncommon practice back then. He didn’t, as one of his former partners did, rob drug dealers at gunpoint and then sell the product to other drug dealers. Still, things got so bad, he seriously considered taking his own life. “I felt like life was meaningless,” says Salazar. “There were points when I took my service gun and put it in my mouth, thinking about committing suicide. Then I’d look at my kids playing in the yard and say to myself, Not today.”

Six of Salazar’s former colleagues did pull the trigger. One was his former instructor at the police academy. After he testified against the cops in the Rodney King beating, he was labeled a rat and ostracized by his fellow officers. He fell into a deep depression and took his own life.

Salazar was shot at by dealers, saw dead bodies with their guts hanging out lying in the street, was forced to smoke crack with a gun pointed to his head to prove he wasn’t a narc, watched the city descend into chaos and nearly burn to the ground during the riots. Only after he quit the LAPD in 1998 to become a private investigator did he find out what was wrong with him. He went to see a shrink, who told him he had post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition common among combat veterans characterized by flashbacks, nightmares and hyperaggressive vigilance.

“The fact of the matter is that right now, at this very second, there’s a police officer out there who is a ticking time bomb waiting to go off,” says Salazar. “He’s angry, pissed off, fighting with the wife, fighting with the kids, and the next citizen he meets might be the next victim.”

Some cop watchers give Salazar a hard time. “Once a pig, always a pig,” they tell him. “Fuck the police.” He doesn’t take it personally. “I get why they’re so angry, because they see cops commit terrible crimes, and they get off again and again,” he says. He just wishes more cop watchers would understand what drives otherwise good cops to crack.

Salazar sees cop watching as an important tool for police accountability. He also knows it’s more a symptom than a long-term solution. “We need to create an environment where good police officers can report their partners without being ostracized,” he says. “We need civilian oversight with subpoena power, because the system will never police itself. We need to rein in prosecutors who put cops on the witness stand, knowing they’re going to lie. We need to disband the police unions that protect bad cops. We need to teach cops how to confront their own racism. We also need to deal with the mental health issues that affect so many cops. And if all else fails, we need to nationalize the police force, make it federal.”

He pauses for a moment.
“We need to do a lot of things.”

Back in Austin, the witching hour has arrived. Hundreds of rowdy revelers stream out of bars on unsteady feet. Mounted police patrols in tight formation trot down the middle of the street, scattering the drunken throng.

Antonio Buehler has spent most of the evening tracking one particular cop, Sergeant Randy Dear, a bald, gum-smacking, comically obese figure who bears a passing resemblance to the character Vic Mackey from the TV show *The Shield*, plus a hundred pounds. Buehler denies he’s hounding the sergeant. He says he shadows the corpulent cop because he knows from experience that Dear is likely to violate someone’s civil rights.

Just then Buehler spots Dear and a group of other officers lumbering toward a possible crime in progress, a report of a fight outside a bar a couple of blocks away. He and his team chase after them, annoying Dear, who accuses Buehler of slowing the police response time. “If you get in our way again on the way to a scene, we’re going to arrest you,” an irritated Dear warns him.

Minutes later, Dear approaches Buehler again and orders him to move. Buehler argues, claiming he’s not interfering with any investigation since the incident the cops initially responded to is already over. The sergeant is not in the mood for a debate. “I’m asking you one more time to back up,” he says. Buehler turns to leave the area but not quickly enough for the Austin police, three of whom tackle him from behind and wrestle him to the ground. At the nearby processing center, when the cops find out that in the chaos of the arrest, Buehler managed to hand off his iPhone to a colleague, two of them run into the street to track down the cell phone to confiscate it as evidence.

A YouTube video taken by one of Buehler’s team members appears the next day and clearly shows Buehler walking away when the cops jump him and equally plainly shows that Dear is the one who gets in Buehler’s face, not the other way around.

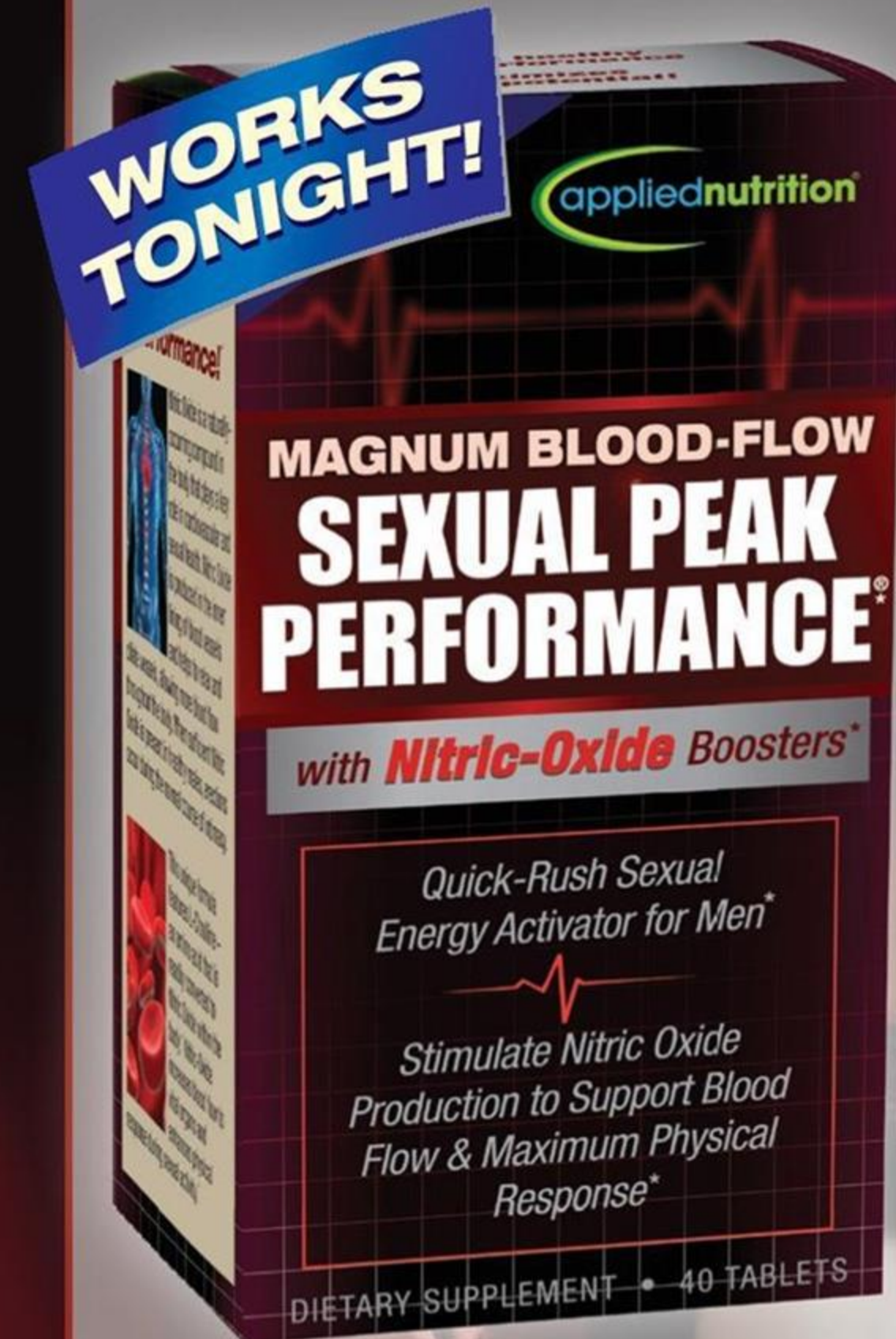
Doesn’t Buehler ever get tired of being arrested? “Everybody should go to jail at least once in their life,” he says a couple of days after his release. “It’s not like in the movies. Most of the people in jail are not bad people. They’re just poor people who don’t have a voice.”

Buehler no longer identifies as a libertarian. In the nearly four years since he was first arrested by Austin cops, his politics have moved leftward. He thinks black lives do matter. White privilege is real. Social class is the great divider. And the job of the police is not to prevent crime but to control marginalized populations.

“Part of the power the police have,” he muses, “is that they promise, ‘We protect you from the mentally ill, we protect you from the homeless, we protect you from the Arabs, we protect you from immigrants and black people. And that means we’re going to have to crush these people. We’re going to have to violate their civil rights. We’re going to have to shoot some of them.’” Buehler’s voice sounds a little weary. “In a racist society, you’re always going to have to break some eggs.”



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BRIAN STAUFFER

MAN IN THE MIRROR

The barbershop renaissance prompts a deep question: Who is the modern man?



“All things change except barbers, the ways of barbers and the surroundings of barbers,” wrote Mark Twain more than a hundred years ago.

Yes, there is something primal about a barbershop, down to the swirling red-and-white pole, a nod to barbers’ medieval duties as surgeons and bloodletters. Wherever you are in this country, you can count on a barbershop for the rough smell of talcum, newspaper and Barbicide, the

glint of a straight razor as it skims your Adam’s apple and even the inevitable bummer of the guy down the row with his disquieting mirror stare.

But Twain wasn’t exactly right. The American barbershop has transformed dramatically, from the advent of black barbershops in the 19th century, when freed slaves adopted the craft and were forced to codify a racial divide that still remains, to the metrosexual 1990s, which sent well-heeled men to salons and further subdivided haircut class distinctions.

Today the barbershop is experiencing a renaissance that would knock Twain’s socks off. From New York to San Francisco, high-end hipster outposts are on the

rise, offering slick cuts and an experience not so much American as Americana. The trend was born in 2006 at New York’s Fellow Barber, where a cut runs \$45 and antique chairs are filled with predominantly white, tattooed, well-dressed men who look, in truth, a lot like me—creative types young enough to appreciate the 1990s hip-hop humming overhead and old enough to remember the lyrics from the radio. Shops like Brooklyn’s Blind Barber (haircut: \$45) are attached to bars for those who prefer to get tanked after their cleanup; others operate out

of tastefully rugged men’s stores, like Boston’s Ball and Buck (\$48), where “America koozies” (\$5) and handmade fishing nets (\$98) are on offer just a

few steps from your chair.

These shops sell, more than anything else, the experience of masculinity, and it’s a sexy one. For the cost, they prove that manhood has become a consumer good, sold alongside mounted

BY
THOMAS
PAGE
MCBEE

hunting trophies and beer served on tap. They offer an interesting by-product too: They allow men to choose which masculine ideals they want to reflect and which they want to reject.

Some would argue that the overwhelmingly white and well-to-do men who frequent such shops have become caricatures of themselves, with their “lumbersexual” beards and hand-engraved gold flasks. More likely, these men have come to a crossroads and have the opportunity to wrestle with an important question: What does it mean to be a man?

“Men today are being marketed masculinity in ways never seen before,” says Kristen Barber, assistant professor of sociology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale and author of the forthcoming *A Cut*

These shops sell, more than anything else, the experience of masculinity, and it’s a sexy one.

Above the Rest: Women, Work and Inequality in Men’s Salons. Barber’s research follows men who frequent salons over traditional barbershops, which she notes are a dying breed; according to the 2012 census, only about 3,700 remain registered across the U.S., clustered primarily in black and Latino neighborhoods.

Barbershops have always been charged spaces in this country, often divided along race and class lines. The new breed of barbershop offers an opportunity to flatten those divisions in ways not possible before and “create space for people to critique traditional notions of masculinity,” Barber says. “But men are very skilled at ignoring the revolutionary possibilities they offer.”

I’m a collector of the

nouveau-barbershop experience. In surf stores, side alleys and tattoo shops, from Manhattan (\$45) to San Francisco (\$45), Oakland (\$25), Brooklyn (\$45), Boston (\$48), Nashville (\$45), Austin (\$22), Rome (\$100) and London (\$40), my barbers have been expectant fathers, weekend surfers, small-town escapees, jerks and sweethearts, each a rough, sensitive, brainy, loud-mouthed combination all his own. The weave of our conversation is intoxicating as we test out the kind of men we want to be while staring at our reflections. I'm the bearded, gray-speckled 30-something

I learned that being a man had a price and a shift's worth of busboy tips could purchase it.

in the collared shirt, my masculinity visible because I've purchased it, synthetic like the testosterone I inject weekly. The other "real men" and I talk fatherhood, boxing and life goals. I treasure that hour twice a month, using it to echolocate who I'm becoming as much as I work to remember who I've been.

My first barber experience, 20 years ago outside Pittsburgh, was a revelation despite the humble location: a sad-sack strip mall, between a RadioShack and a photo developer. The clipper shop lacked any romance, but its flinty masculine mystery drew me into a slow orbit until the day I walked in, at the age of 14.

I was not a boy—at least I wasn't born Thomas. Not that

► Sometimes a haircut is much more than just a haircut.



it mattered. I'd learned that the dissonance of my body could be resolved if I walked with my shoulders and not my hips. I learned that masculinity was a collection of signals that allowed me to translate myself: a certain way of talking, a specific kind of shirt, a square sideburn. I learned that being a man had a price and a shift's worth of busboy tips could purchase it.

The shop was tumbleweed-empty but for two geriatric barbers on the day I pushed open the door and asked for a shave and haircut (\$15). I tried not to flinch as the barber turned me toward him and then away, running the electric razor along the side of my skull, my hair peppering his floor, the cracked red leather chair sticking to the soft underside of my thighs.

He must have felt bad, because he asked if I'd ever shaved before and if my dad had taught me how, and when I said no on both counts he showed me in the mirror, positioning me so I could watch him run the blade over my jaw. He didn't need to say he was a father himself or that he grew up without one, because barbershops are not places where men have to explain themselves.

"What one experiences in a barber's shop the first time he enters one," Twain noted, "is what he always experiences in barbers' shops afterward till the end of his days." The truth is, like the barbershops popping up on our corners, men my age are aspiring to a reimagined masculinity, one in which being a man isn't defined by measuring up to our fathers as much as being a better father to our own kids, even as we're not quite pulling it off. The barbershop is still a place divided, whether by class, race or fraternity, by dick jokes and our grasp toward the "real men" we want to be and what we're willing to pay to achieve that.

Sitting down in front of that mirror is an opportunity to reflect on what's before us. Masculinity doesn't exist unless we buy into it. And for the first time in modern history, we know that we have only to look at ourselves to see how much it costs. ■



LIFE, GAMES AND UTOPIA

How do you justify the crushing grind of capitalism? Change your idea of "work"

A

About a year ago, investors gave \$40 million to the 20-person software firm I work for. The deal was

typical of Silicon Valley in that no one would make out unless the company became worth about 10 figures; anything less would be a failure. So the arrival of the money felt less like a windfall than a hand grenade: Act fast or it all blows up. It had the effect, in other words, that capital is supposed to have in capitalism. It manufactured urgency.

Until that point, my job as a programmer had felt

more like high-minded play, a series of tough puzzles to take on with a small team of co-workers I liked. We were building a website founded by three college friends that explained rap and other lyrics with line-by-line annotations; then the website grew to annotate texts of all kinds, from Shakespeare's plays to CEOs' letters of resignation. We worked out of a block of New York apartments and held our meetings in each other's living rooms.

Initially, the investment came as a relief; my first thought was that we wouldn't have to fight anymore. It felt like a guarantee that we would have our cushy jobs forever. I did some back-of-the-envelope math and saw that when you split \$40 million among 20 people, you have enough to pay each person a six-figure salary for 20 years. I thought that's what we might do—dole it out slowly. Go on walks, shoot the bull and, on occasion, create. A mini utopia.

But in an instant, the project took on an urgency so out of proportion to our work that it felt unreal. We'd been trying to make our website a little better day by day; now we were challenged to make it part of the fabric of the internet itself, to create something worth a billion dollars.

As it turns out, it's nearly impossible to create something worth a billion dollars. Getting an enormous check that makes the day's idle tasks seem to suddenly matter—to be caught up in the sweep of something big—may sound like every white-collar worker's fantasy. But maybe all it did was complicate a perfectly pleasant game.

In *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, philosopher Bernard Suits defends the idea that if we were free from having to meet basic needs such as food and shelter, what we'd mostly do is play games. Suits defines games broadly as "the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles." Golf is a game because the fastest way to get a golf ball into a 4.25-inch hole is



"I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life. When men fear work...they tremble on the brink of doom."

—President Theodore Roosevelt

by hand; instead, golfers use clubs and tee off from hundreds of yards away. When you buy into the arbitrary rules that make a game possible—when you accept a game's illusion—you "adopt the lusory attitude," as Suits puts it. The lusory attitude

is strong magic. It compels adults to swing metal wedges at grass as if their lives depend on it, and it transforms wastepaper baskets into sites of

high challenge with Olympian stakes. For those of us whose jobs involve no tangible building, no obvious service to people we can see and touch, it may also be what gets us up in the morning for work.

It's hard to admit that work is nothing more than a Suitsian game, one in which the score is kept in dollars, because that estranges us from the carefully guarded fiction that all the stuff we refer to as our "work" is important. The problem is that we take our jobs both too seriously and not seriously enough—too seriously to admit that jobs are, more

or less, a series of arbitrary obstacles; that for many of us, the hundreds of actions obscured by the word *work* are elaborate ways we've invented to pass the time. But we don't take our work seriously enough to realize just how much of ourselves we give to it, that passing time is all life is. We choose our jobs because we think that through them we will garner greater respect or higher pay or because they seem to be jobs that successful people do. We invest our work with high-flown notions of progress and purpose, duty and strain. But if we're serious about how we're spending our time alive, we should pick the job that offers the game we most like to play, the one whose goals and rules we most believe in.

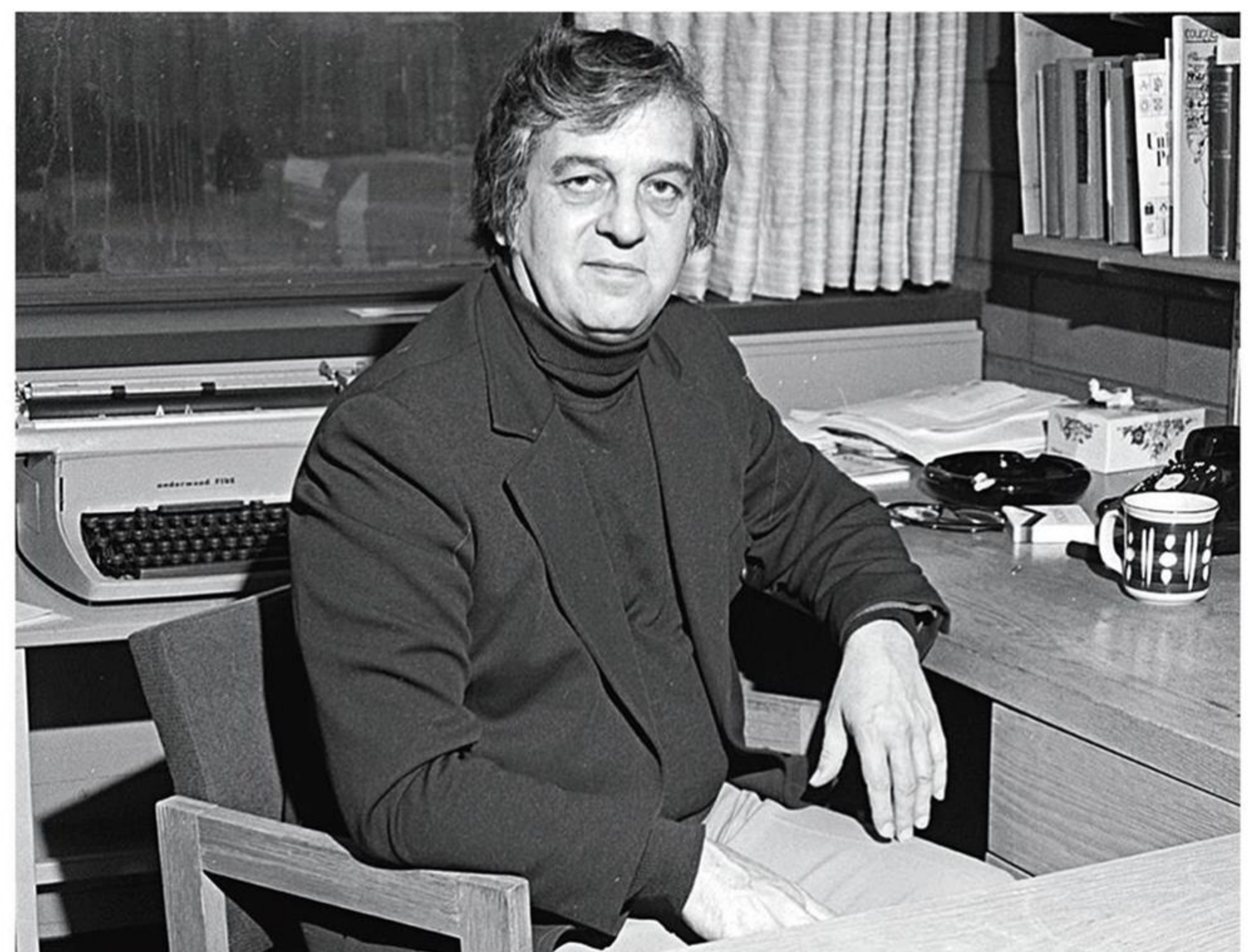
That much can be hard to justify when the stakes of your job ratchet up as suddenly as mine did. My company now has a fast metabolism. It's willing to fire people. A countdown clock was hung in the lunchroom; it was reprogrammed several times, each time targeting a day we were supposed to unveil something new. We are constantly unveiling new things but never quickly enough, and what we unveil is never good enough. These days I worry a good deal about work. Did I forget to remind our recruiter about that candidate? Should I have spent three days doing that project? Is my code sloppy? I spend my days indoors, slightly agitated, under pressure, with the

dread of failure in my heart. And I'm one of the luckiest people in this economy.

It's tempting to find fault with a system that never lets you relax. Capitalism is restless. It presses always to the edge. It works only when—and because—firms outdo and outbid one another. The result is that no matter how much wealth you have, there's always some reason to get up in the morning and feel stressed out. When someone invents a way to make twice as much in half the time, nobody gets twice the vacation. We get harder problems. But that turns out to be the saving grace, because harder problems make for better games.

If you imagine a job without any stress—a game with no stakes—you're imagining one you quit. "I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life," began Theodore Roosevelt in a famous speech to the Hamilton Club. "When men fear work...they tremble on the brink of doom." If you think a \$40 million investment in your company is a ticket to utopia, then you have missed the point of life, games and utopia. Forty million dollars is not a retirement fund—it's a ticket to a game almost no one gets to play, the privilege to be stupidly ambitious. When you work for a website and you say, "We're going to become an indelible part of the culture," you are deluded. But it's one of the best delusions money can buy. ■

BY
**JAMES
SOMERS**



► Bernard Suits offers a subtly radical idea in equating work with games.

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