

# PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

MARCH 2015

## *Cuban Drag Racing*

FAST AND FURIOUS  
FROM THE HEART  
OF HAVANA

## *The Resurrection of Lil. Boosie*

FROM ANGOLA  
PRISON TO  
THE STREETS OF  
FERGUSON

# *The LINGERIE ISSUE*

STARRING GIA GENEVIEVE  
BY ELLEN VON UNWERTH

## *Vince Vaughn Has Unfinished Business*

**PLUS**

—  
THE DENIM HUNTER  
THE INSIDER'S  
GUIDE TO TOKYO  
THE ART OF THE BRO HUG  
SPRING STYLE TIPS  
20Q: BEN SCHWARTZ  
REMEMBERING  
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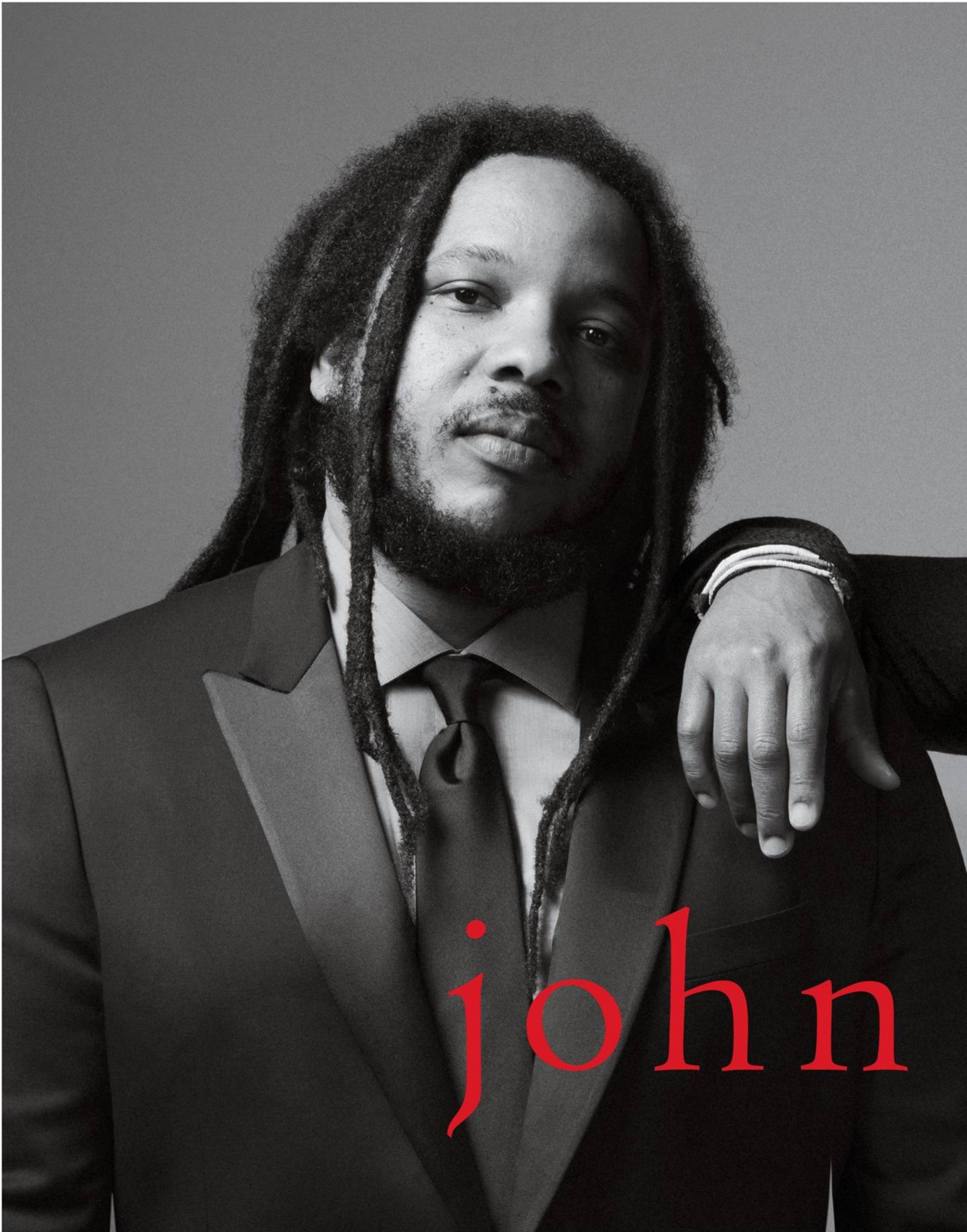
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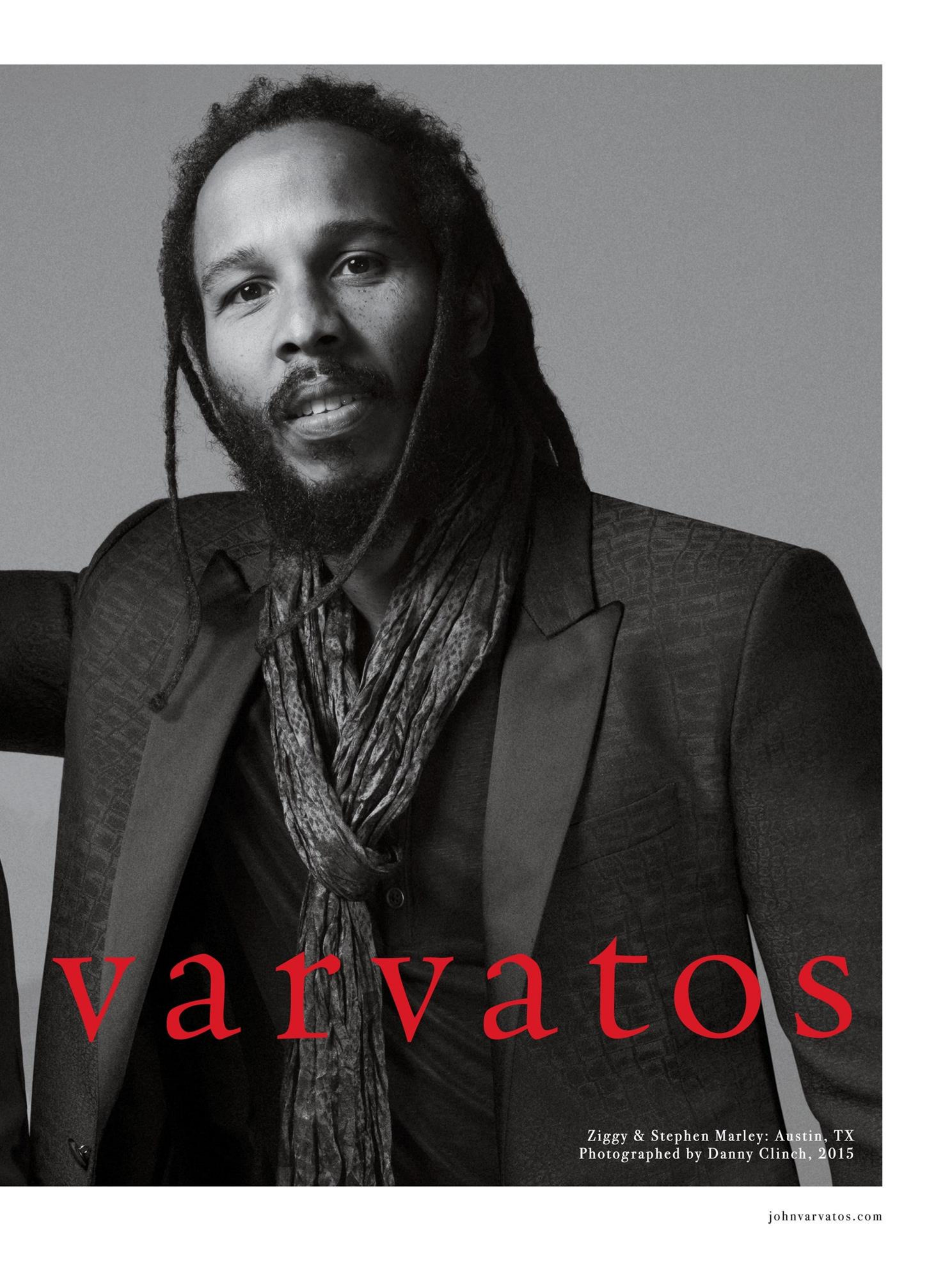






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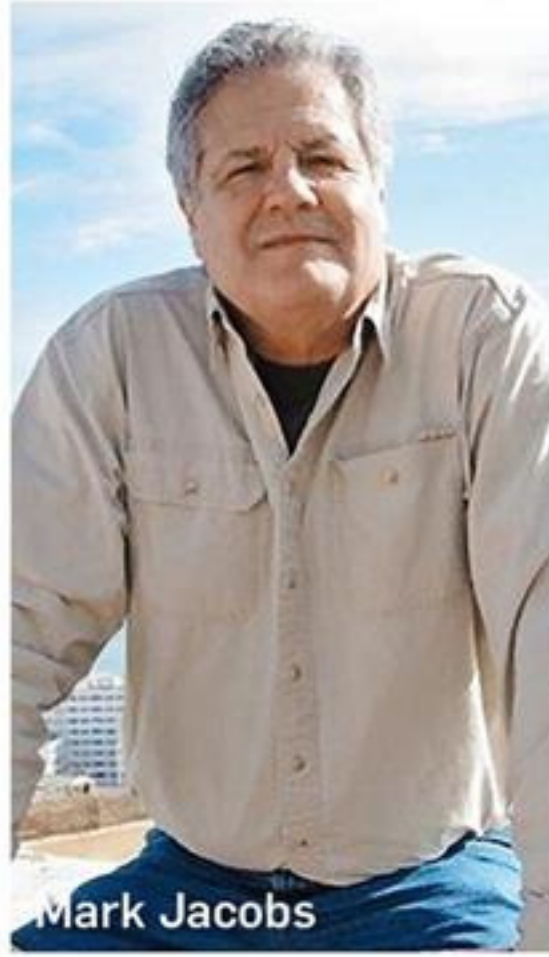


# PLAYBILL

**K**ee your friends close (which reminds us: Thanks for subscribing). You might not want to keep your enemies closer if they're anything like Hillar Moore, the Louisiana DA whom Southern rap legend Lil Boosie calls a "racist ass" for putting him on trial on a bogus murder charge. In *The Resurrection of Lil Boosie*, **Ethan Brown** unspools the story of an artist persecuted by Louisiana's infamous criminal justice system, which locked him up in one of the country's toughest prisons. After his release last March, Boosie became an icon for protesters in Ferguson, revitalizing a now skyrocketing career. In this month's fiction, **Mark Jacobs's** *The Bull You See, the Bull You Don't*, Alice sleeps next to her greatest enemy and closest friend—her husband. **Ben Schwartz** plays one of TV's supreme assholes, Clyde Oberholt on *House of Lies*; in a 20Q with David Rensin the comedian reveals the many other talents—networking, improvisation, writing, laundering—that led to his lucky breaks. **Vince Vaughn** thinks there's no such thing as luck; the actor's *Playboy Interview* shows he's as outspoken about his libertarian views as he is hilarious and reveals how he's balanced recent flops with a string of comeback successes, including *Unfinished Business* and the second season of *True Detective*. Speaking of success, how many jackpots have you hit? Any that flipped a dime into \$700? It happens frequently to Brit Eaton. In *Into the Blue*, **Mickey Rapkin** follows Eaton, the world's most obsessive vintage-denim hunter, through hoarders' basements, abandoned attics and the last frontiers of Americana on a quest for history-tinged threads. Ditch the Wranglers for our tennis date with Katrina Elizabeth. In *Match Point*, **David Bellemere's** camera work captures a jaw-dropping courtside view. Pinup fans will love *Home Sweet Home*, our sexy lingerie special, in which superstar photographer **Ellen von Unwerth** captures the voluptuous Gia Genevieve looking undeniably alluring in leather, lace, feathers and less. For *Engine Trouble*, photographer **Luiz Maximiano** traveled to Cuba to snap the souped-up vintage automobiles of the country's underground drag-racing scene. Car culture in the U.S. may soon be a thing of the past if **Matt McCue's** prediction in *The Great Car Breakdown* holds true: Millennials' shifting tastes will render our fancy-auto fetish obsolete. But let's focus on what's at hand: an issue of bombshell beauties, gripping stories and essential knowledge for the modern man. With a friend like PLAYBOY, you're set.



Ethan Brown



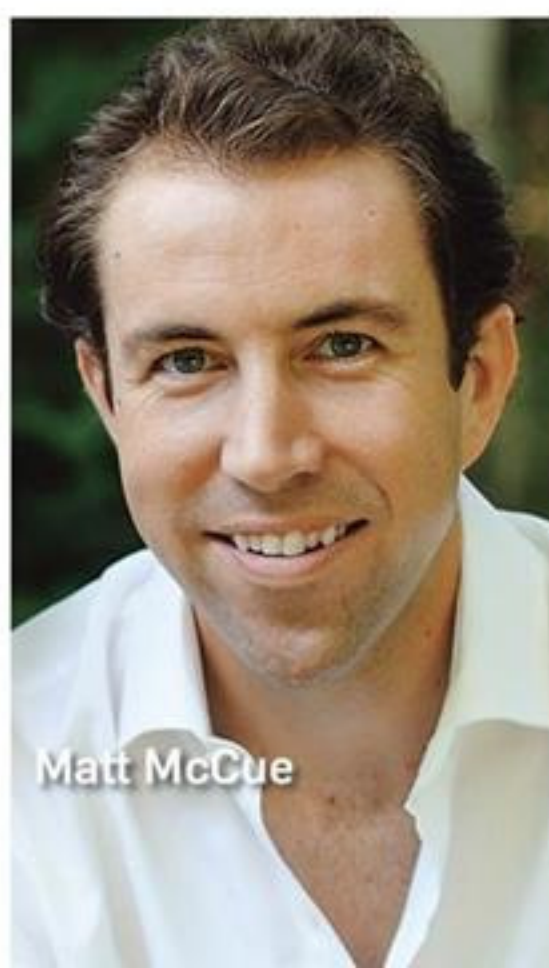
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# PLAYBOY



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**FOLLOW THE BUNNY**





# THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS,  
MANSION FROLICS  
AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

## NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE MANSION

To close out an extraordinary anniversary year that kicked off with Kate Moss helping us celebrate six decades, Hef and Cooper invited a few of their closest friends to the Mansion for the last bash of 2014. Guests included Playmates Gia Marie, Stephanie Branton, Marketa Janska and Kimberly Phillips. Todd Morse's band, Toddsplanet, kept everyone rocking before the countdown.



## BOWLING WITH BUNNIES

Twelve Playmates hit the lanes at Lucky Strike Live in Hollywood to benefit the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Lucky attendees, including *Entourage*'s

Jeremy Piven, practiced their curveballs alongside Playmates in full Bunny regalia while enjoying a musical performance by Sum 41's Deryck Whibley.



## BEYONCÉ'S BUNNY HOP

Always the ambassador of a good time, our Rabbit makes a cameo in Beyoncé's intoxicating music video for her single "7/11." Sporting a sweater from the Joyrich x Playboy collection, Queen Bey grinds and grooves with a gaggle of backup dancers in their skivvies. Flawless, indeed.



## MISSION FAIL?

I am the co-manager of the *ISEE-3* project, and I am disappointed in the way Pat Jordan describes it in his December article, *Mission Out of Control*. Jordan simply does not understand what we were doing. It seems his admitted lack of understanding reveals the gulf between baby boomers (like the author) and today's generation. Our project gained worldwide acclaim and interest. I believe there is a longing for stories about positive things, especially about space. When our team saved a 36-year-old spacecraft, it was both unprecedented and thrilling to millions around the globe, and it showed that space is no longer the province of nations alone. In my travels, I rarely find anyone in the younger, net-connected generation who does not know about what we achieved. That is our legacy: to bring hope to a new generation and to counter stories of beheadings, climate scares and future wars. We are part of a cadre of people who are cleaning up the mess that the baby boomers have left behind, and we are building a positive future by opening the space frontier for all mankind.

Dennis Wingo  
Los Gatos, California

Pat Jordan writes that "Dennis Wingo and his smaller cohort, Keith Cowing, run Skycorp Incorporated." This is factually inaccurate. Skycorp is owned and operated by Dennis Wingo. I do not work for Skycorp, do not have any investment in it, nor do I have any managerial responsibilities for that company or its employees. Skycorp, along with my company and many other government agencies, organizations, companies, observatories and individual volunteers around the world—including NASA and Google—all collaborated as part of the *ISEE-3* Reboot Project. Together we were able to crowdfund the project and then contact and command the *ISEE-3* spacecraft. However, it is accurate to say that I am "smaller," since I am indeed somewhat shorter than Dennis Wingo.

Keith Cowing  
Reston, Virginia

## HAUSFELD VS. NCAA

In *The Toughest Lawyer in America Is on Your Side* (December), writer Neal Gabler reports that lawyer Michael Hausfeld won a court case in which he argued that the NCAA is "a cartel that denied current and former student athletes the rights to their own images." Just a few pages away, author Patrick Hruby looks at the plight of college athletes who earn next to nothing, bound by the restrictive amateurism rules of the NCAA—an organization that rakes in money thanks to the athletes it apparently exploits ("Makers Into

# DEAR PLAYBOY

## Rise of the Phoenix

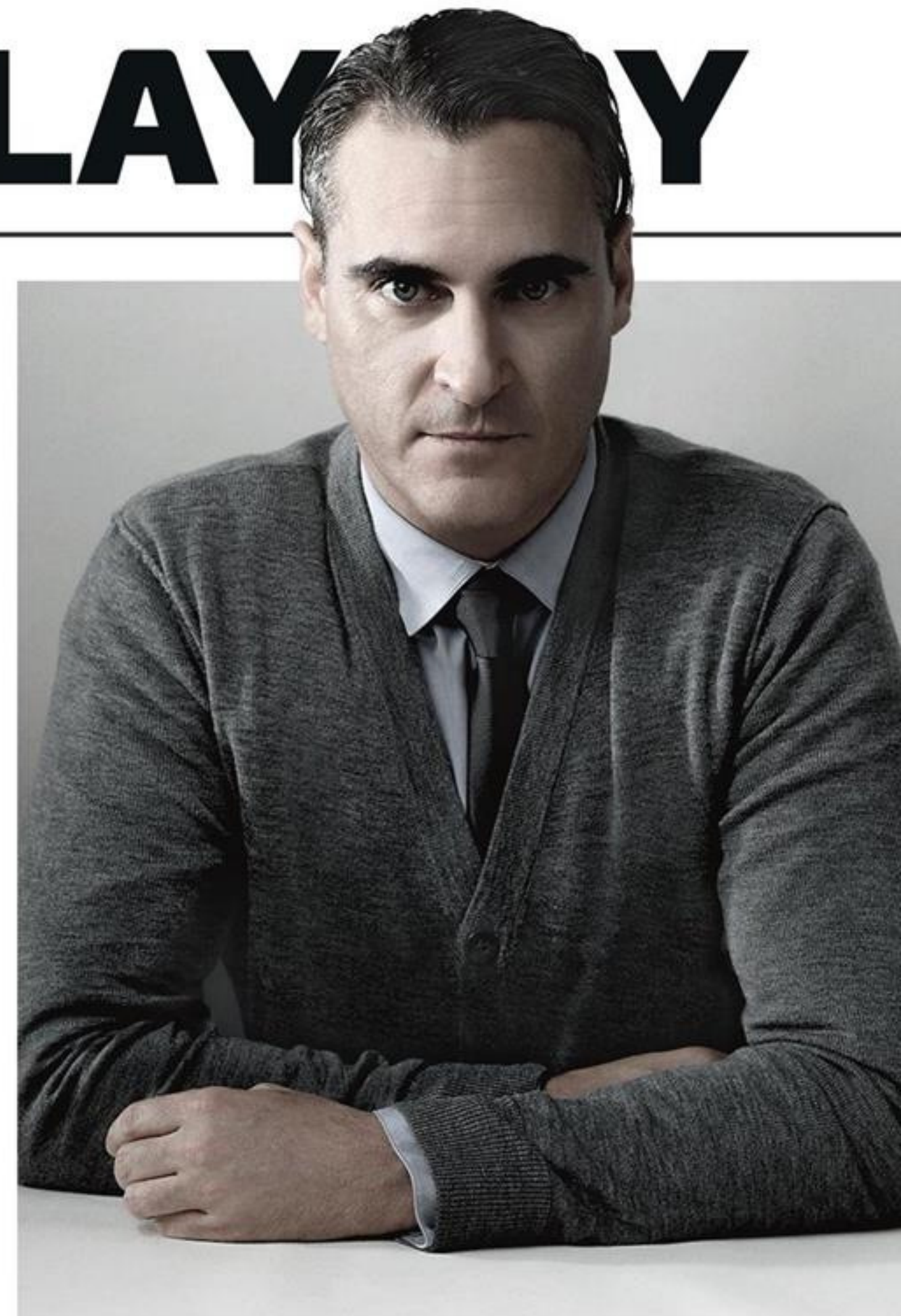
Men today are under an enormous amount of pressure from conflicting angles. We are constantly barraged with guides on how to be strong yet sensitive, successful yet grounded. Joaquin Phoenix (*Playboy Interview*, December) handles these pressures perfectly. He gave the middle finger to his boss and stormed out, making sure everyone knew what he was doing. This is an experience we can all relate to. He knows the liberating feeling of quitting a job to do whatever he wants to do. Your interview also highlighted his views on public relationships. I fail to see how a man who understands the importance of keeping his relationships out of public scrutiny is not doing things right. He is clearly more well-adjusted than most people.

Jowie Kerr  
Springfield, Missouri

Joaquin Phoenix has it all: unassailable integrity, colossal talent, unwavering ethics and smoldering sensuality. More, please.

Jennifer O'Connor  
Largo, Florida

I was stoked to see your *Playboy Interview* with my favorite actor, Joaquin Phoenix, but imagine my disappoint-



ment when the interviewer, Stephen Rebello, was so callous in regard to the subject of his brother. Can't Joaquin have an interview without being asked about River? Imagine if your sibling had passed away and every single time someone talked to you, they asked about your worst memory. I wish Rebello had asked more relevant questions.

Jessica West Sims  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Takers," *Forum*). Perhaps this could be Hausfeld's next case.

Richard Brown  
Boston, Massachusetts

## 50 SHADES OF MEH

Concerning an item in *Raw Data* (January/February), were the women who reported having stronger sexual desires after reading *Fifty Shades of Grey* living in a nursing home? I read the first book after overhearing a couple of female co-workers cackling about it. Imagine my horror after walking into a local adult boutique and finding a whole section devoted to these books. Seriously, women need to read *PLAYBOY*—it does way more for sexual desire and intelligence.

Victoria Ballantyne  
Mason City, Iowa

## THE AGE OF LEBRON

Kevin Cook suggests the best era of basketball has passed us by, but that's a load of nostalgic hooey (*That '90s Show*, December). If Twitter, TMZ and Gawker had existed back then, would Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson have fared as well in the public eye in

terms of their popularity? This is the age of LeBron James, and I'll take it over the 1990s any day.

David Smith  
Cleveland, Ohio

The ending of Kevin Cook's tribute to 1990s basketball threw me for a loop. While I agree it would be hard to relive the excitement experienced during the greatest time in basketball history, I don't see why it's necessary to mention the shortcomings of current players. Making a case for why LeBron James and others will never be Michael Jordan seems demeaning to them and to Jordan. First off, stating that LeBron's lack of Jordan-ness comes from his being too "street" suggests that a player's skill and hard work rank second to his likability. It's one thing to dislike a player but another thing entirely to judge his athletic career based on that. Will there ever be another Jordan? I don't know, but clipping wings based on a player's public image seems to be a stupid reason not to believe someone could ever fly again.

Jerry Maneman  
Richmond, Virginia



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### REVENGE OF THE NERDS

Joel Stein needs to cut nerds some slack ("When Nerds Go Bad," *Men*, December). They're no worse than any other oppressed group when they suddenly find themselves empowered. I learned this hard lesson in human nature back in the 1990s when I was the victim of sexual harassment in a female-dominated workplace. Psychologists call it the "victim mentality," and it no doubt spawned the crass expression popular in my childhood—a cynical perversion of the golden rule: "Do unto others before they do unto you." I guess the biggest challenge of human existence is standing up to bullies without becoming a bully yourself.

Jim Briscoe  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

### MONTANA PRIDE

This has to be the first *Playboy Interview* (November) of a fellow Montana native. Thank you for Jeff Greenfield's interview with former governor Brian Schweitzer. Like him or hate him, anybody who vetoes stupid Republican bills is okay in my book.

Robert Tomich  
Boulder, Montana

### CAKE BOSS

"There is a method to our fatness," says Hilary Winston at the end of her *Women* column ("Let Me Eat Cake," December). She talks about dieting for the sake of bingeing during the holidays and getting angry at her boyfriend (rightfully so) for suggesting she slow down. But I think she's missing the point: Promoting positive body image isn't only about not calling people fat. Positive body image is about being healthy. Don't diet just so you can fit into a little bikini or so you can stuff your face with pie at Thanksgiving. Lose those few extra pounds—if you feel you need to—because you love your body and want it to be the best that it can be. We are all beautiful. And damn it, if we want pie, then we can have pie, because we are in charge of us and no one else.

Karman Rosendahl  
Springfield, Missouri

### CHILDHOOD CONFUSION

When I realized that the Shel Silverstein featured in December's *Playboy Classic* is the same guy who wrote the children's books I grew up with, I had the same kind of momentary confusion I had when I heard my mom cuss for the first time.

Harold Cooper  
Columbia, South Carolina

### MEMORIES OF HUNTER

As a fellow journalist, I idolize Hunter S. Thompson. Your *Surviving Hunter S. Thompson* (July/August) article was great. Sadly he took suicide as his route, but

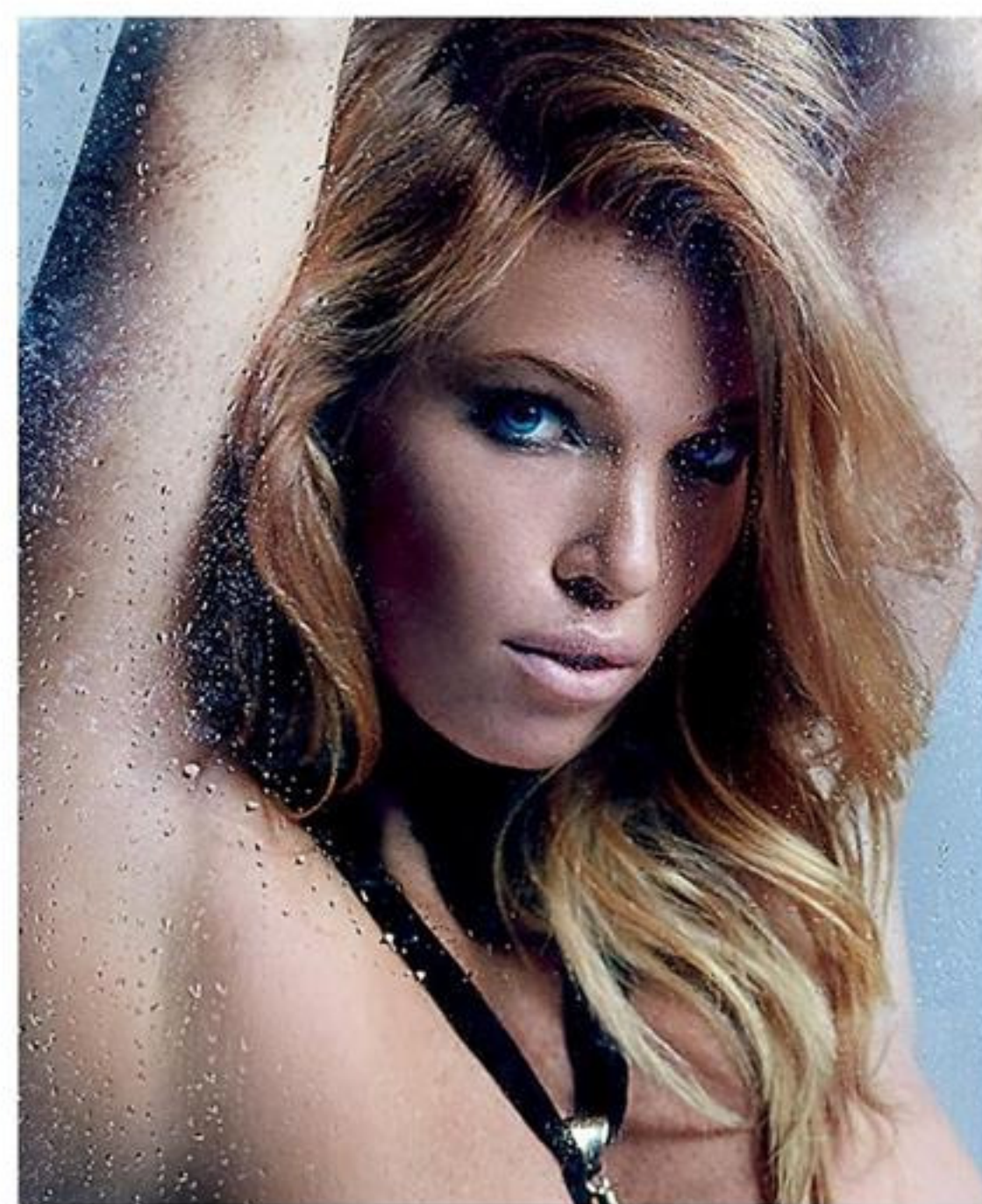
Craig Vetter's relation with Thompson sounded crazy yet humorous. I give props to Vetter for being able to deal with Thompson's drug-induced antics, and to *PLAYBOY* for giving him an expense account in Cozumel. Priceless. This issue will enter my Hunter S. Thompson collection.

Derrick Hoffer  
Madras, Oregon

### ALL ABOUT THAT BASS

November's *Raw Data* cites researchers' findings that listening to music with a heavy bass line can increase a person's sense of power. I can personally attest to this phenomenon. Every time I have been on the way to a job interview over the past two decades, I've listened to "Back in Black," though I ordinarily listen to NPR, not AC/DC. The song never fails to energize me—and I usually get the job. I knew the music had a positive effect on me, but I didn't attribute it to the heavy bass line. Thank you for verifying and clarifying my experience.

Leslie S. Gold  
Los Angeles, California



Elizabeth Ostrander melts our hearts.

### ALL-TIME FAVORITE

Even at my age, wow! I have been reading *PLAYBOY* for 60 years, and I must say that Miss December Elizabeth Ostrander is one of the most beautiful women ever to titivate your pages. Kudos to photographer Josh Ryan for his excellent work.

G.L. Zook  
Columbia, Pennsylvania

Your December cover floored me. Elizabeth Ostrander is an absolute knockout, and she is the perfect choice to cap off a stellar year of Playmates. I can't wait to see her Playmate of the Year cover in June.

Josh Fehrens  
Toronto, Ontario





MARCH 2015

# AFTER HOURS

Photography by  
JOSH REED

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## BECOMING ATTRACTION

**Christian  
Serratos**

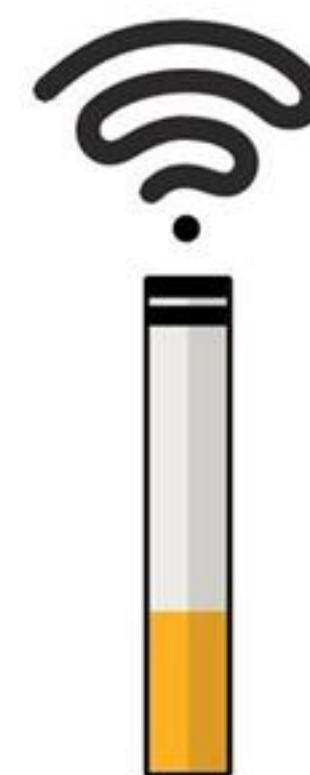
→ "I'M NOT THE kind of girl who goes hiking on a first date," says actress Christian Serratos. Can you blame her? As Rosita, a sexy

and strong-willed zombie slayer on *The Walking Dead*, Christian traverses enough rough terrain in her day job. A vegan and PETA

activist from Los Angeles, Christian calls herself an "open book" with an appreciation for the softer side of the female form. "I can be

ultrafeminine," she says. "That's why I love what PLAYBOY stands for. I love the idea of a woman being a woman." Christian, you slay us.





→ Time to rethink lighting up a joint next time you're in a hotel room or Airbnb rental. A new sensor developed by a Dartmouth College chemistry professor can detect both cigarette and marijuana smoke that previous smoke detectors would have missed. Marketed as the AirGuard by FreshAir Sensors, the device connects to a power outlet and uses a special polymer film to sniff out the presence of tobacco and marijuana vapor. Once alerted, the system uses a wi-fi connection to send a notice to the property owner or manager. FreshAir sees hotels as its initial customers but has had interest from condo boards, public housing developments, dormitories, jails and even nursing homes. The company also plans to release a handheld version that your mother—and your boss—will probably love.



# THE GREAT CAR BREAKDOWN

MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO LOVE EXPENSIVE SPORTS CARS. SO WHY DON'T THEY WANT THEM ANYMORE?

**M**ark Zuckerberg, a man worth \$33 billion, drives a Volkswagen GTI hatchback with a price tag of about \$30,000. The 30-year-old is no tightwad—he dropped \$100 million and change on a Hawaiian estate—but he does represent a new generation of young men who no longer view their set of wheels as a status symbol.

A 2012 study about Gen Y's automotive preferences found that fewer than half of those polled were impressed enough by someone else's luxury car to buy their own. And the interior feature the under-40s said they desired most was in-dash technology—not hot-stone-massage seats or hand-stitched leather. In 2013 an independent study by Zipcar and KRC Research found that 44 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds had made a conscious effort to replace driving with alternative transportation. The respondents also said that losing their computer or cell phone would have a more negative impact on their lives than losing their car.

“We’ve seen the end of the industrial economy requiring a sprawling landscape, with large homes spread out in the suburbs,” says Richard Florida, author of *The Great Reset*. “Now, with the rise of the creative economy, the city represents the fac-

tory of our age. Bikes and public transit are simply more convenient modes of getting around.” As more young men do without cars, their symbols of success have changed from a flashy Ferrari or Lamborghini to more experiential markers of taste and lifestyle, such as eating a blogged-about dish at a hot restaurant or participating in adventure races such as Tough Mudder. The intersection of the recession and the rise of ride-sharing services Lyft and Uber has accelerated the situation. Cars are lackluster investments, losing value as soon as they’re driven off the lot. If this generation is going to splurge on a pair of wheels, it will more likely be on a customized four-figure cruiser or racing bike than a car.

Photographer David Chen can afford a high-priced automobile, but he chooses to bop around his hometown of Seattle in a 2001 Toyota Corolla, price tag \$5,000. He spends more than that amount on camera equipment. “I consider myself a creator,” he says. “A camera will facilitate that a lot more easily than a vehicle.”

Owning a sports car used to be a way to show off to the neighbors, but social media have rewritten the metrics of achievement. A finely curated Facebook page or Instagram feed is often more prized than the vehicle a person drives. “And thousands more will see it,” says Chen.—*Matt McCue*



# PSYCHEDELIA'S SOFTER SIDE

A CROP OF YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS RUNS EROTIC ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH AN ACID WASH

• By Rachel Rabbit White



## Sarah Anne Johnson

Winnipeg, Manitoba

→ Sarah Anne Johnson's work depicts real-life couples having (real-life) sex. Each image is subverted through etching, collage and painting as a way of expressing the inner experience of sex. "It's about those moments of trans-

cence or insecurity, the times of both connectedness and boredom that can creep into any ongoing sexual relationship," she says. The result is a series of photographs that are sexy while offering an intimate portrayal of lust.

## Shae DeTar

New York, New York

→ "Music inspires my painting and the colors I use," says Shae DeTar. Her ritual is to listen to her favorite sounds while hand painting her photographs of landscapes and nudes with bright hues. "What inspires me is boredom

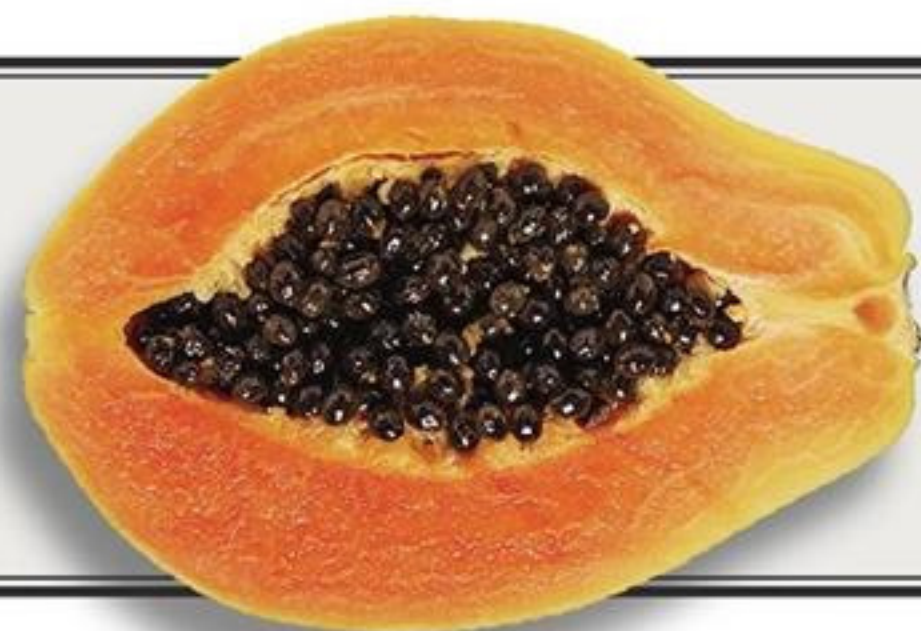
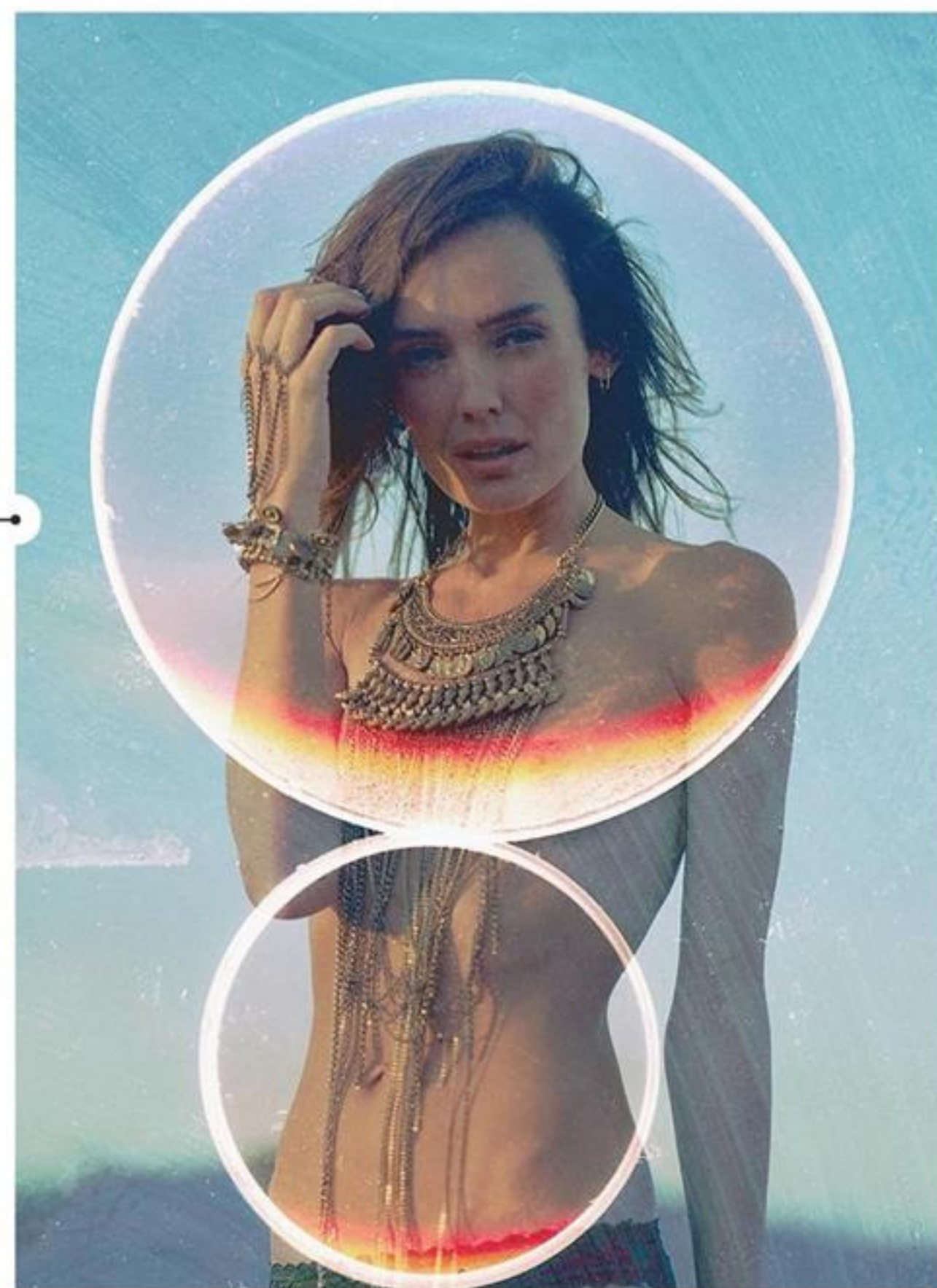
with reality. I want to exaggerate what exists in nature," says the artist, who describes her obsession with a color as being the same as an obsession with a song that one plays continually on repeat. "Right now I'm really into yellow and teal."

## Davis Ayer

Los Angeles, California

→ "I'm sort of a spiritual seeker," says artist Davis Ayer. "I'm inspired by the intangible, chaos, time, the metaphysical life questions that you can't really answer but can maybe engage through photography." To create the dreamlike pat-

terns washed over his images, Ayer paints directly on the negatives he shoots of female nudes. "A body that is unrestrained by clothing and completely free just seems to lend itself better to a more psychedelic experience."



## MYTH BUSTERS: ORGASM EDITION

• Vaginal orgasms and the G-spot? Poppycock, says a new study published in *Clinical Anatomy*. Researchers explain that the majority of women do not climax during penetrative sex and that the key to female orgasm is the proper stimulation of the clitoris. Ladies across the world responded with a resounding "Duh."—Nora O'Donnell





**PLAYBOY:** You majored in computer science in college, and now you play Dinesh, a talented programmer, on *Silicon Valley*. Art imitating life?

**NANJIANI:** Not exactly. After college, everybody who graduated with me would have looked down on my job. I was basically glorified tech support. There was no real computer science to it. I would just say, "Hey, did you try restarting it?" I asked that question for five years.

**PLAYBOY:** How's the feedback from the real Silicon Valley?

**NANJIANI:** Everyone says they know people like our characters. If the most tech-savvy people didn't like us, they could destroy us on the internet. They tweet about the show.

**PLAYBOY:** You tweet a lot yourself. Would it be difficult for you to unplug?

**NANJIANI:** It sounds like a horrifying idea to me. When I'm out of the country, I'm fairly disconnected, but I don't have the willpower to impose that on myself. I feel like I never have a quiet moment when I just look at a tree.

**PLAYBOY:** We look at our phones instead. Speaking of phones, do you have a favorite app?

**NANJIANI:** Shazam is amazing. I can't believe that's a real thing. It's crazy. What does it know?

**PLAYBOY:** The little robot in your phone knows everything.

**NANJIANI:** It knows when you're not looking at it because it pauses the video when you look away. And when you take a photo with your phone, the robot knows where the faces are. How does it know where the faces are? When the robots come, that's the technology they will use to kill us. They're going to shoot us in the face.

## KUMAIL NANJIANI

THE COMEDIAN AND SILICON VALLEY STAR TALKS TECH AND THE IMPENDING ROBOT APOCALYPSE

- Unless you've been living under a pile of unreturned Netflix DVDs for the past three years, chances are you've come across Kumail Nanjiani—perhaps as the scene-stealing waiter on *Portlandia*, the voice of Prismo on *Adventure Time* or the co-host of Comedy Central's stand-up show *The Meltdown*. His latest undertaking, as a logical and lovable programmer on HBO's satirical hit *Silicon Valley*, is to date the greatest showcase for his deadpan delivery. "The real Silicon Valley is a specific ecosystem where some of these entrepreneurs are like gods and kings," he says. "When one of them walks into a room, it's like he's Michael Jackson. I'm like, I don't know who this older white guy is. I've never seen his face."—Nora O'Donnell



# SNAKE RIVER REDUX

EVERYONE REMEMBERS EVEL KNieVEL'S FLOPPED ROCKET RIDE. FOR ONE MAN, THOUGH, IT HAS DEFINED HIS LIFE



**T**win Falls, Idaho is a God-fearing town, a place framed by long drags of strip malls, fast-food joints and tire centers, where semitrailers stacked high with potatoes and antlers (yes, antlers) rumble in traffic. Few things reach skyward, save for the spires of the Mormon temple and the hands of its 12,000-some followers.

Last fall, a bright white rocket mounted on an 88-foot-tall ramp built on the edge of Snake River Canyon joined the skyline. It was put there by 47-year-old Scott Truax, who had stood in this place in 1974 and watched daredevil Evel Knievel attempt to cross the chasm in a rocket. Knievel failed, pointing the finger at the “egotistical, know-it-all little bastard” aerospace

engineer who’d built it. That engineer was Scott’s father, Bob Truax, who swore until his death in 2010 that his rocket wasn’t to blame; it was the parachute.

Today, Scott Truax has put his life on hold to prove his

father’s design was perfect. It’s why he lives in a tin-can trailer filled with flies, why his dating life is shit and why he drives a \$300 Ford Festiva that looks as though it’s had more than one crash landing. This is the life he has chosen until the day his business partner, *Transformers* stuntman and Charlie Sheen body double Eddie Braun, pilots the rocket at a speed of 400 mph and a distance of one mile over the canyon, where—God help him—it will land like a 1,300-pound lawn dart.

For Truax, a twice-divorced Mormon dad and avid Rush fan, this is about more than avenging his father.

“Guys tend to be nostalgic for the times before the divorces and the child support and all the terrible things that life hits you with,” he says. “You want to go back to a time when you were more optimistic. And what’s more optimistic than jumping in a rocket and flying it across a canyon?”

In town—at the Taco Bell where Truax eats breakfast, at the Arby’s where he has lunch and at the hardware store where he buys screws—that optimism has caught on. Truax and Braun are heroes in a place

where most people work long shifts at factory and farm jobs.

Some city officials, however, haven’t caught the fever, including Chris Talkington, a city council member who was here in 1974 when Knievel arrived in town, a “halo of fleas” and Hells Angels in tow. “We hadn’t lost our innocence,” Talkington says, recalling angry bikers rocking cop cars, crowds holding all-night keggers and “a lot of bare-breasted women running around. For this little Mayberry town, it really opened some eyes,” he says.

But it’s a big canyon, and Truax and Braun built their rocket just outside the Twin Falls city limits so they could re-create the jump without the council’s blessing.

For Truax, Knievel defined a generation of kids, making them believe America was the fastest, the bravest. “Everything is slipping away,” he says. “It kills me. Something Evel Knievel did, in his own way, was make us all believe America was the greatest place on earth and Americans could do anything they set their minds to.” —Leah Sottile

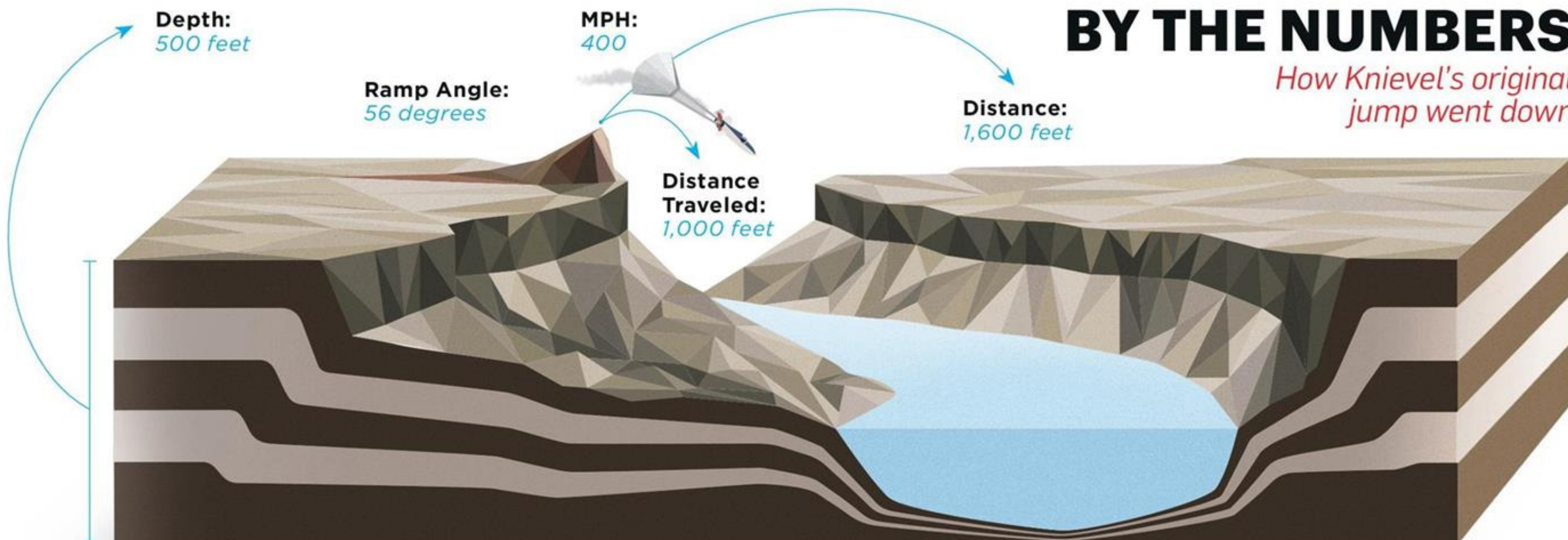


ILLUSTRATION BY ASHLEY GARCIA



# RAISING THE STEAKS

WITH CHEFS TAKING STEAK TARTARE TO NEW TERRITORY, IT'S TIME TO REBOOT THE BEEF

**J**ust because steak tartare is having a renaissance in restaurants doesn't mean it's out of reach for home cooks. The country-club classic is infinitely interpretable and can be spun any which way if you use the best ingredients and techniques. Pulling off the basic formula is actually no trickier than whipping up a batch of guacamole. Let guests mix the ingredients to taste, and serve on toasted artisanal bread.



2,3



## Chop Shop

1. **Stay Sharp**  
→ A razor-sharp blade is crucial; precise chopping is what makes a great tartare.
2. **Chill Out**  
→ Keep everything cold as you prep: the ingredients, your mixing bowl, the serving plates and particularly the beef.

3. **Beef Up**  
→ The foundation of tartare is exquisite beef. Get a thick, fresh organic New York strip steak (not hamburger!) from a butcher. Sear it in a hot pan and slice off the cooked exterior to reveal the pristine beef within. Firm it up in the freezer for 30 minutes to make it easier to dice into perfect quarter-inch cubes. A pound of beef will serve four as an appetizer.

4. **Crunch Time**  
→ The vegetables are where the tartare enters new territory. Use tangy and crunchy components to contrast with the rich beef. Go classic with chopped onions, capers and pickles, or spin it Asian with pickled daikon radishes and beets. Dice half a cup of each.

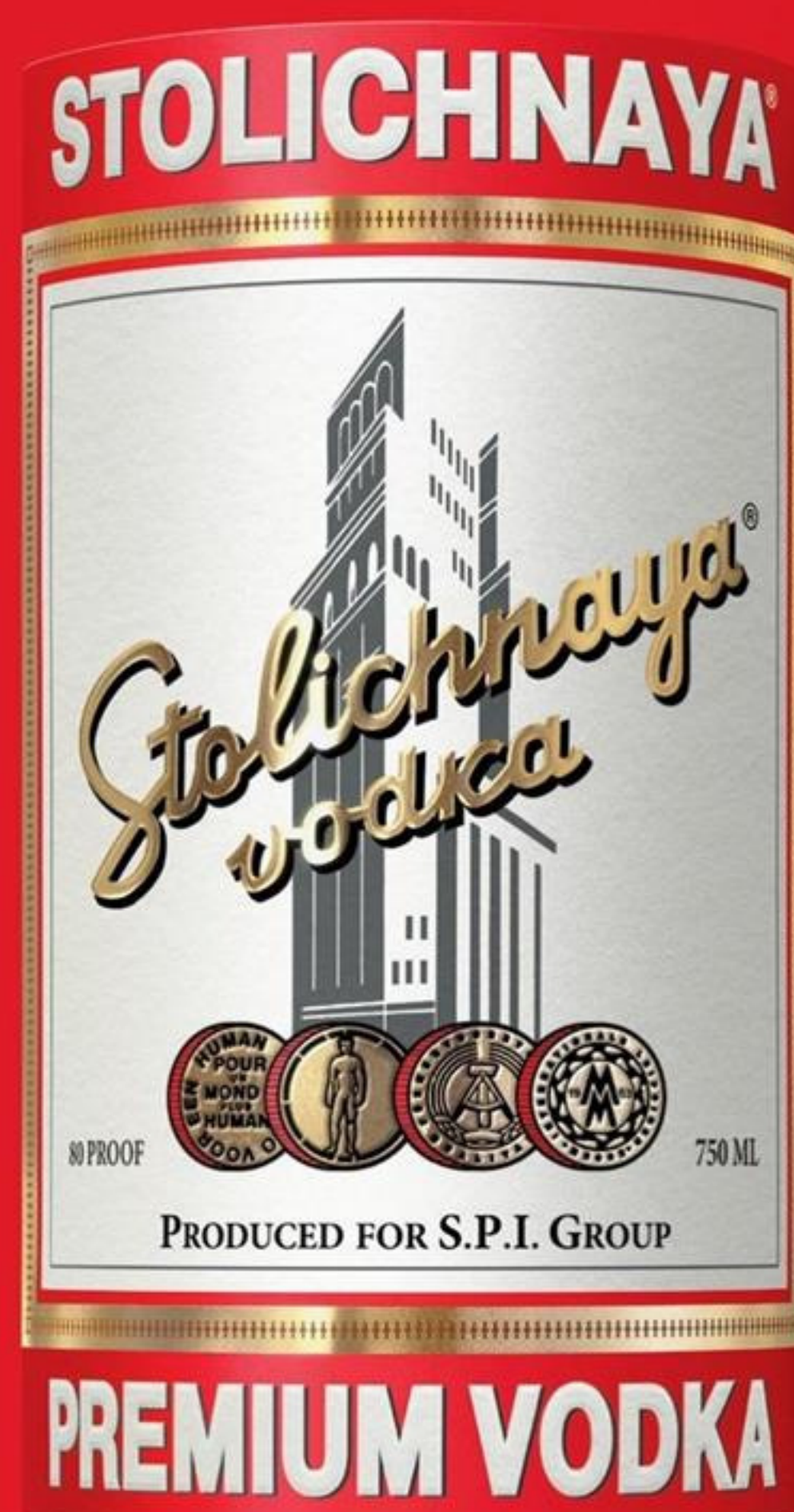
5. **Get Saucy**  
→ Traditional tartare uses mustard, mayo, Worcestershire and Tabasco. Offer those along with alternatives such as sriracha, soy and Korean *gochujang*.
6. **Go Green**  
→ Fresh herbs add color, complexity and brightness. Put out small bowls of chopped cilantro, parsley and chives.
7. **Hail Quail**  
→ Substitute two fresh quail egg yolks for the chicken egg yolk used in classic tartare. If you're squeamish about eating raw egg, use more mayo for added richness.
8. **Now Serving**  
→ The main rule is there are no rules for mixing up a batch to your taste. Tartare Tuesdays, anyone?



**THE  
VODKA  
THAT  
GOES  
WITH  
BLACK  
TIE OR  
BLACK  
T-SHIRT.**

*Stoli*

**THE  
VODKA**





**THE**  
**VODKA**  
**ALMOST**  
**AS**  
**TANTALIZING**  
**AS**  
**MISS**  
**MARCH.**

*Stoli*

**THE**  
**VODKA**







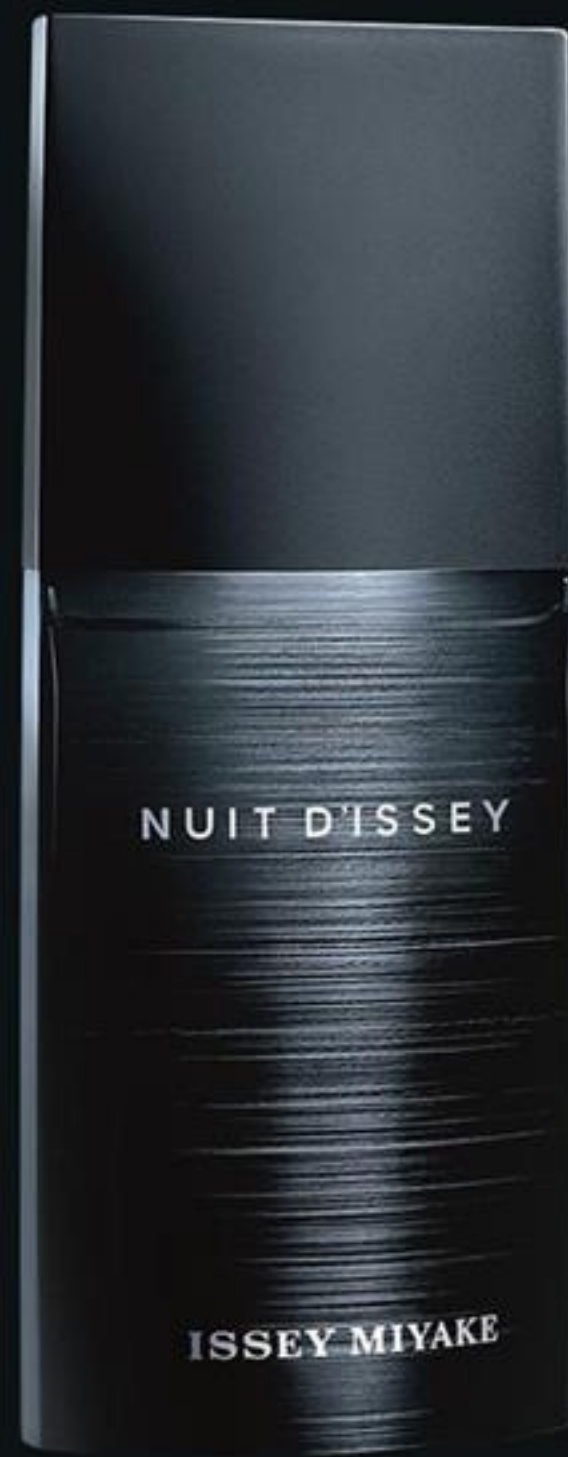


# NIGHT AND DAY

THE ONE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COLOGNES IS THAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED TWO

**K**nowing how to dress for the occasion is essential—and wearing the right cologne is no exception, especially in spring, when longer days and warmer nights revive social calendars. For this reason you need two colognes: one for day, one for night. Thankfully, designers give cues to guide you. Fragrances in bright or flashy bottles often work best when the sun is up, while words such as *nuit* and *intense* denote an after-hours scent. Here's what (and when) to spritz this spring.

1.



2.

3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



NIGHT  
DAY

→ 1. A magnetic mix of bergamot, wood and black pepper, **Issey Miyake Nuit D'Issey (\$87)** can be worn anywhere a leather jacket can. 2. The sweet

intermingling of patchouli and rose in **Maison Francis Kurkdjian Lumière Noire (\$175)** is ideal for champagne brunches. 3. **Carolina Herrera 212 VIP Men (\$80)**

is a cocktail of vodka, mint and ginger. Spray before a night on the town. 4. The zest of lime and green leaves in **Lacoste Live (\$69)** befits the man who crushes CrossFit

before his morning cup of coffee. 5. For date night at a Michelin hot spot, use **Jimmy Choo Man (\$82)**, an elegant union of lavender, pink pepper and melon. 6. **Fossil**

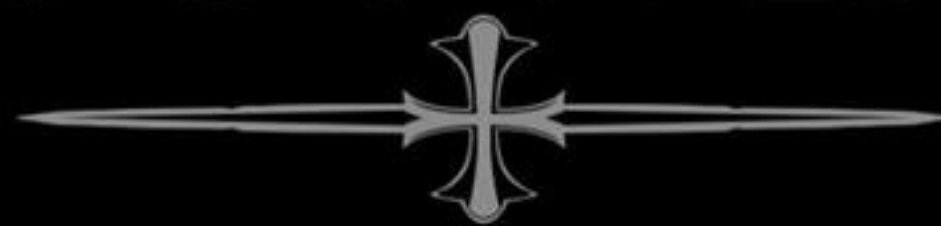
**1954 for Men (\$60)** is a vintage-inspired aroma of cardamom and sage, understated enough for the office. 7. The black-tie-ready **Givenchy Gentleman Only Intense**

**(\$88)** has notes of cedar, leather and tonka bean. 8. Subtle and citrusy, **Nautica Aqua Rush Gold (\$65)** is perfect for dining alfresco, on land or at sea.





MARK NASON.  
FOOTWEAR



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# CUBISM

ICE IS THE FOUNDATION OF A GREAT COCKTAIL. HERE'S HOW TO FREEZE WITH EASE

If you're serious about making a perfect drink, don't blow it with the ice. Bagged ice melts too fast, watering down a cocktail before you can finish it. Ice that has been sitting in your freezer can transfer the flavors of leftover pizza to an otherwise meticulously made manhattan. Yes, ice makes a drink cold, but proper dilution is how you dial it in. Here are the essential shapes and how they can up your cocktail game.



## Spheres

→ This is the go-to ice shape for scotch drinkers. An ice sphere's large mass and minimal surface area chill a drink down fast but dilute it slowly. This allows you to taste the nuances of a super-premium spirit as it mixes with water over time and the flavors and aroma evolve.

• Ice sphere molds, \$13, [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)



## Crushed

→ Juleps, pain-killers and other crushed-ice cocktails can be watered down too rapidly by ice made in a blender or food processor. Make like a pro mixologist and crush your cubes in a cloth Lewis bag. The fabric absorbs excess liquid.

• Canvas Lewis bag, \$6, [cocktailkingdom.com](http://cocktailkingdom.com)



## Collins

→ You know how a gin and tonic tastes good for only about the first three sips? That's because you're using the wrong ice. Long and rectangular collins ice looks cool and melts slowly, thereby extending the life of the ideal booze-to-mixer ratio.

• Collins ice mold, \$8, [cocktailkingdom.com](http://cocktailkingdom.com)



## Cubes

→ If you're going to invest in only one custom mold, a cube tray is best. Fill it with bottled or filtered water to ensure clean taste, and use the cubes when shaking up cocktails or drinking bourbon on the rocks.

• 1¼-inch ice cube tray, \$7, [cocktailkingdom.com](http://cocktailkingdom.com)

## In the Bag

• Many bartenders use a muddler and a Lewis bag to crush ice. Originally for holding coins, the bags are made of canvas and won't split like plastic bags.





# TUNE IN TOKYO

THE WORLD CAPITAL OF SPECTACLE IS THE ULTIMATE ESCAPE

• Let's be real: There hasn't been a lot of good news lately. But there's nothing like a trip to Tokyo, the ultimate escapist metropolis, to clear the mind. When you're craving *ossu* (translation: spectacle), this is the place to be. The key to understanding the city is to accept that the coolest spots are nearly impossible to find. As the general manager of the new Andaz hotel puts it, "The best way to see Tokyo is to get lost." Dude has a point.

Start your jet-lagged visit with a hit of caffeine at Omotesando Koffee, a tiny pop-up café in a residential space that serves a perfectly frothy cappuccino. Just follow your nose. Tokyo is also home to a killer vintage-clothing scene. (Designer Steven Alan acknowledges finding inspiration here.) We fell hard for the offerings at Tarock With Ricco, a well-edited shop with only a side door, on the border of the Harajuku district. Here, a Take Ivy-inspired collection of collegiate tees from the 1950s and 1960s begs to be brought back home. You'll also want to hit the basement at nearby Berberjin for denim.

Nighttime in this hedonist playground is even more of a treasure hunt. Worth a search is Bar High Five, a craft-cocktail gem on the fourth floor of a nondescript office building in trendy Ginza. This



pin-quiet space has just 17 seats. The legendary owner, Hidetsugu Ueno, wasn't there the night we visited, but a bartender dressed in a crisp oxford shirt and a necktie whipped up a potion as adeptly as Hermione Granger, mixing Templeton rye with hints of citrus and a touch of syrup. "Does the drink have a name?" we asked. She thought for a long time, then uttered one word: "No." It didn't need one. It was perfect.

Skip the hostess bars (you don't need to pay women to flirt with you) and get thee to Golden Gai—six twisty alleys of microbars, some with as few as three seats. It looks like a place Bilbo Baggins would go to get drunk. Admire the cosplay on the street on your way to Bar Martha, a temple of sound hidden behind a wooden door where DJs spin vintage rock from a collection of 10,000 LPs broadcast through a McIntosh amp and speakers the size of a Mini Cooper. For God's sake (or *sake*, as the case may be), keep your voice down. *Sake* is said to have restorative powers, and maybe Tokyo does too.—Mickey Rapkin

## Tokyo: A Pocket Guide

### 1. The Neighborhood

→ Nakameguro is Tokyo's answer to hipster Brooklyn and the perfect spot for an afternoon walk. Cow Books is a grab bag of out-of-print titles from the 1960s and 1970s. Clothing shop **Hollywood Ranch Market** (A) feels like the best Los Angeles flea market. Hungry after your tour? Duck into **Afuri** (B) for a perfect bowl of *chuka soba tsukemen* ramen.

### 2. The Hotel

→ The check-in desk at the new **Andaz Tokyo** (C) is on the 51st floor of a high-rise in Toranomon Hills, and the views from its glass-walled lap pool seem infinite—and infinitely stunning. Start your morning with a *schvitz* and some miso soup.

### 3. The Sushi Joint

→ Kyubey in Ginza is a 10-seat *omakase* sushi bar (and a favorite of Calvin Klein designer Italo Zucchelli). It's an exceptional dining experience that's both unassuming and explosive.

### 4. The Worthwhile Tourist Trap

→ The tuna auctions at the Tsukiji market date back to 1935 and begin at five a.m. Where else can you see a chef act like Wolverine, pulling a fish out of an aquarium and turning it into sashimi? Visit soon, before the market relocates to a bigger space in 2016.

### 5. The Surprise

→ Emperor Meiji had a thing for French cuisine; if he were still alive, he'd worship the 12-seat bistro **Beard** (D) in Meguro, where chef-owner Shin Harakawa (who interned at Chez Panisse) serves roasted deer with Camembert.



The Day Trip:  
**KYOTO**

• Hop the bullet train to Kyoto, the city of 10,000 shrines. Start with the **Fushimi Inari Shrine** (E), a holy photo op that doubles as a pulse-racing hike. Then check in at the just-opened Ritz-Carlton (we spotted chef Eric Ripert in the lobby), a rare five-star retreat that honors its surroundings. Refreshed and hungry, tuck into the nine-course tasting menu at Gion Yata (a steal at \$60).





# DESIGNED FOR A COMEBACK

THE MUSCULAR RC F SUPER COUPE LURES US BACK TO LEXUS

• Lexus, the once dominant Japanese luxury offshoot of Toyota, has spent the past few years spinning its tires in a muddle of oatmeal blandness. But the marque—which in its heyday garnered more hip-hop name-drops than many European rivals—is again gaining traction, thanks largely to the all-new RC F, a rear-wheel-drive super coupe that rockets away from the mire of SUVs and overpriced hybrids that had us losing hope that Lexus could ever again move us.

Borrowing cues from the LFA supercar, the new Lexus street fighter is outfitted in aggressive styling that's almost boy-racer in nature. The vehicle's graceful liquid curves don't translate well in two dimensions, yet every element of its functional

STATS
<i>2015 Lexus RC F</i>
<b>Engine:</b> Five-liter V8
<b>Horsepower:</b> 467
<b>Torque:</b> 389 ft.-lb.
<b>Zero to 60:</b> 4.4 seconds
<b>MPG:</b> 16 city, 25 hwy.
<b>Price:</b> \$63,325 base

form—from massive grille to towering front-fender vents—flows together in exemplary fashion. Inside, high-backed racing bucket seats add track flair while coddling passengers with buttery-rich leather. The optional navigation package adds a full-color LCD screen and touch pad complete with a suite of apps including Pandora and Yelp.

Around town, we found the naturally aspirated five-liter V8 to be a smooth spirit, and bypassing the

Sport mode for Sport+ uncovered a pleasantly short-fused temper. Its 467 horses are angry and, if not for the car's almost 4,000-pound curb weight, may be rather untamable. Flaws aside, the new RC platform is exactly what Lexus needed to get us all rapping again.—*William K. Gock*



## DEATH OF THE DASHBOARD

### AUDI RETHINKS THE COCKPIT

→ The jet-fighter-to-car comparison has been made ad nauseam, but Audi's latest technological breakthrough takes the link to new heights. In conjunction with Nvidia, maker of the powerful Tegra 3 line of processor chips, Audi is about to roll out instrument clusters with zero spinning parts. First revealed in 2014, the automaker's virtual cockpit is set to debut in the all-new 2016 TT coupe. The system combines the dashboard instrument cluster with the infotainment center typically found in the center console. The result is a fully digitized, highly configurable thin-film transistor screen that puts vehicle controls and info—from performance dynamics and speedometer to GPS and entertainment—squarely in the driver's sight line. Mission-critical stats such as time, temperature and mileage remain fixed as the rest of the 12.3-inch panel displays rich, colorful graphics and 3-D impressions for additional functions, including the video feed for the reverse camera. Consider this cockpit the wingman you never knew you always wanted. ■





# TRUE BLUE

THE BEST SPRING GEAR COMES IN LIVING COLOR

## BORN FREE

→ Cut loose with a beat—and from your iPod—with wireless headphones. The Solo2 Wireless from Beats by Dr. Dre (\$300, [beatsbydre.com](http://beatsbydre.com)) uses Bluetooth technology to deliver tunes and phone calls up to 30 feet from a device and has built-in buttons to skip tracks and adjust volume. If 12 hours of playback isn't enough, connect the rechargeable battery and keep on rocking.

## LET'S DANCE

→ Bring David Bowie to your next barbecue. The Bose SoundLink speaker (\$130, [bose.com](http://bose.com)) is just five inches tall and can crank out eight hours of Ziggy Stardust on a single charge. You don't even need to set down your drink: The palm-size speaker connects via voice prompts and remembers the last eight devices it paired with.

## SHOOT-OUT

→ Camera phones cut it for Instagram, but real photography requires more muscle. With a 20-megapixel sensor, built-in shake reduction and a shooting speed of 5.4 frames per second, the Pentax K-S1 (\$700, [pentax-webstore.com](http://pentax-webstore.com)) is a serious step up. Swap the 18- to 55-millimeter lens for a telephoto, wide-angle or other lens capable of taking something more serious than a selfie.

## BIG BUSINESS

→ Google built the Nexus 6 (\$700, [google.com/nexus](http://google.com/nexus)) for big pockets. The whopping six-inch screen is a tight squeeze in your favorite jeans, but the payoff includes a quick processor, a 13-megapixel camera and the latest version of Google's Android software. Try one in midnight blue, since you'll be carrying it everywhere.

### PIECE BY PIECE: YOUR NEXT CELL PHONE



The future of cell phones is being built one piece at a time. Google's Advanced Technology and Projects division is developing a modular cell phone that will allow users to upgrade components such as the display, camera and memory by snapping on a new module. The technology offers endless possibilities (medical modules, credit card readers) and will increase device longevity—no more camping out for iPhones.





MOVIE OF THE MONTH

# IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

By Stephen Rebello

• Based on a real-life 19th century sea adventure in which a giant whale struck and sank the Nantucket whaling ship *Essex*, *In the Heart of the Sea* stars Chris Hemsworth, Ben Whishaw, Cillian Murphy, Benjamin Walker and Tom Holland as sailors stranded more than 1,000 miles from shore and forced to endure starvation, dehy-

dration and little hope of rescue. The incident inspired Herman Melville to write *Moby-Dick*, so it's fitting that this huge-scale action movie has epic written all over it. "This movie was hard on everybody, physically and emotionally," says director Ron Howard, who, for the sake of realism, required his actors to subsist on diets of no more than 600 calories

a day. "As the director making those actors lose 30 or 40 pounds, I didn't want them to hate me any more than they already did, so at lunchtime it was 'Put down that bagel in front of the starving actors.' All I managed to lose was five or so pounds, but the camaraderie of those actors was great to behold. They are so proud of their work,

as they should be. *In the Heart of the Sea* is based on historical events from the 1820s, but because we brought a very contemporary, visceral, *Deadliest Catch* feel to it, you're going to be in that boat with those guys and what they're going through. I brought to it every moviemaking lesson I've learned going back to Roger Corman in 1977."



DAVID CRONENBERG

Could *Maps to the Stars* be the influential director's final film?



**Q:** *Maps to the Stars*, with Julianne Moore, John Cusack and Robert Pattinson, presents Hollywood as a creepy land infested with egomaniacal monsters. What made you want to direct Bruce Wagner's screenplay?

**A:** It's an interlocking family drama with a capital *D*. The characters all do terrible things and aren't likable. The Hollywood setting adds a layer of complexity, because these characters are people who need to be seen in order to exist.

**Q:** What do you make of critics who have knocked the film for being anti-Hollywood?

**A:** A studio executive came over to me at Cannes and whispered, "Your movie scared the shit out of me. I couldn't sleep all night, and when I woke up and went to a party, all I could see were scenes from the film." I thought that was a good review.

**Q:** You published your first novel, *Consumed*, in 2014. What consumes you now?

**A:** I'm not turning my back on film, but it would take a really compelling project with compelling people to get me to make another movie. Mostly I'm excited to write another book.—S.R.

BLU-RAY OF THE MONTH

# GAME OF THRONES: THE COMPLETE FOURTH SEASON

By Stacie Houglund

• By now it's clear that any character on HBO's *Game of Thrones*, no matter how important, can get the ax (we're looking at you, Red Wedding). It stands to reason then that the tagline *Valar morghulis* ("All men must die") perfectly describes season four, in which no one is safe. The shocks and surprises come fast and furious, including a grisly and gratifying death fit for a king in episode two, followed by a disturbing brother-sister encounter in episode three. While Tyrion Lannister (Peter Dinklage) is imprisoned, another major villain meets his demise, and Daenerys Targaryen (Emilia Clarke) grows in power and struggles to control her dragons. But it's the quiet scenes with little Arya Stark (Maisie Williams) and the Hound (Rory

McCann) as they travel the countryside that reflect some of the season's best writing. Creators David Benioff and D.B. Weiss have said the show won't always follow the books, and hardcore fans have been furious about several omissions. Still, it continues to be one of TV's finest programs, and the epic finale sets up season five, which can't come soon enough. **Best extra:** *The Fallen* features interviews with many of the characters killed off this time around. 🍷🍷🍷



## TEASE FRAME

Christine Bently

→ From *Shark Night 3D* to *Ghost of Goodnight Lane* (pictured), actress Christine Bently has a tendency to get wet and wild on-screen. Next, she's sure to get a good soaking along with Adam Scott and the guys in the time-travel comedy *Hot Tub Time Machine 2*.





BOOK OF THE MONTH

# TOO BAD TO DIE

By Cat Auer

• Before writing James Bond into existence, Ian Fleming was a desk-bound British intelligence officer in World War II. In his 1964 *Playboy Interview*, he says he “couldn’t possibly have had a more exciting or interesting war.” But what if he’d been

MUST-WATCH TV

## AMERICAN CRIME

By Josef Adalian

• ABC’s latest Thursday night drama—from Oscar-winning *12 Years a Slave* writer John Ridley—can’t exactly be called entertaining. The grim story opens with a father (Timothy Hutton) identifying the brutalized body of his murdered son, a military

vet attacked in his home alongside his wife (who is on life support). While there’s a mystery here about who done it and why, Ridley is equally interested in exploring the role race and class play in both the criminal act and our justice system’s response: The prime suspects in the attack on the seemingly squeaky-clean white couple are all minorities. *American Crime* sometimes tries too hard to come off as a Very Important Drama, but ferocious performances from Hutton, *Desperate Housewives* alum Felicity Huffman and relative newcomer Richard Cabral turn what could have been a preachy mess into often riveting television. 🐾🐾



ALBUM OF THE MONTH

## TRANS-FIXIATION

By Rob Tannenbaum

• Many people say the electric guitar, along with pay phones and Blockbuster video stores, has been obliterated by better technologies. Oliver Ackermann, leader of the New York trio A Place to Bury Strangers, isn’t ready to read the obituary. On the new album *Transfixiation*, he shows off his ability to create mutant versions of guitar sounds—Ackermann’s palette of noise and distortion can evoke a drone attack or a finger rubbing a balloon. In APTBS’s rampaging mix of Goth, New Wave and psychedelic rock, his shouts of grief (“What have I become?”) turn into celebrations of release and invention. 🐾🐾🐾

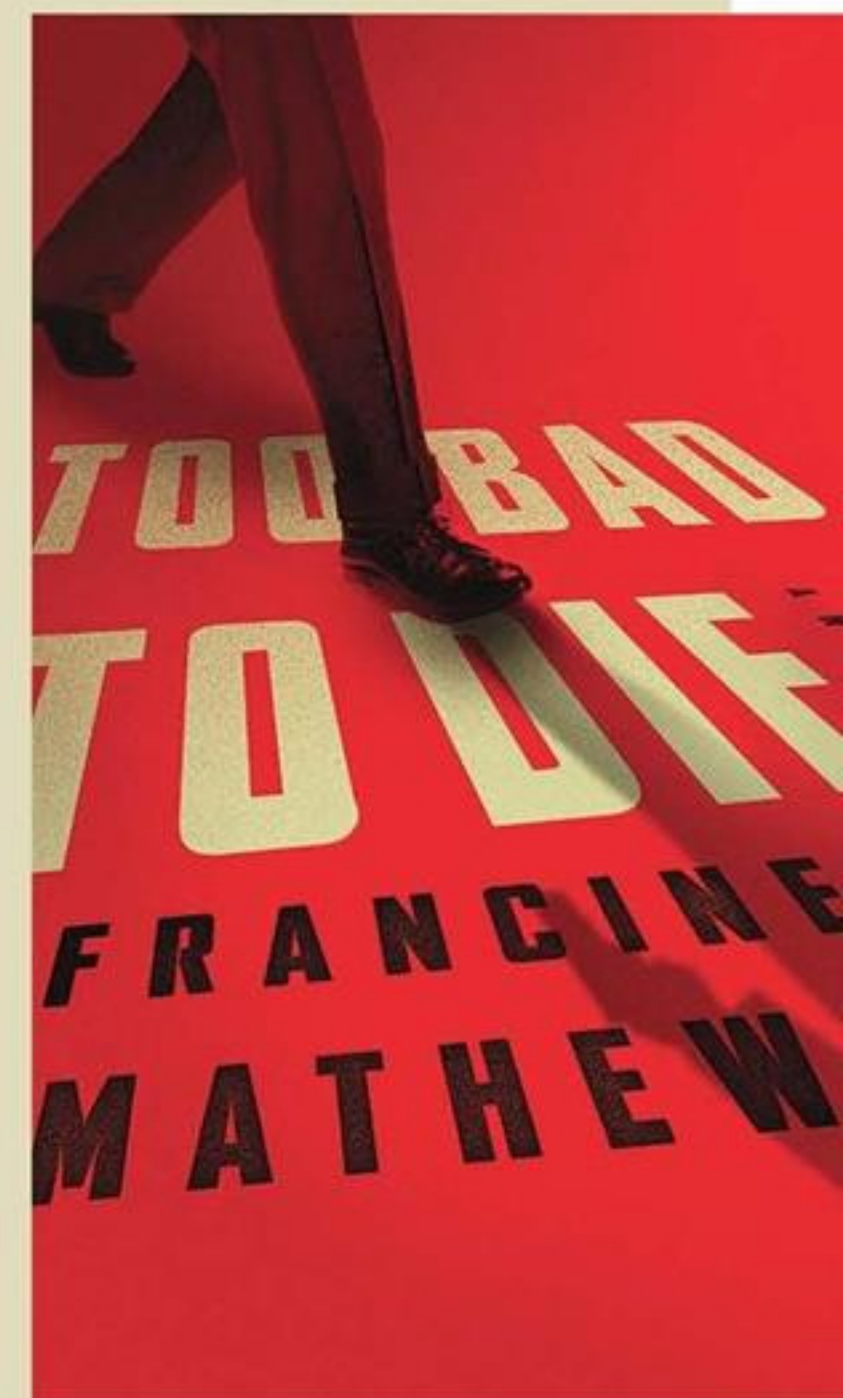
GAME OF THE MONTH

## EVOLVE

By Jason Buhrmester

• It takes a village to kill a mega-monster. That’s the concept behind *Evolve* (PC, PS4, Xbox One), a wild new multiplayer game that pits a squad of four players against a Godzilla-size beast controlled by another player. Build a team of hunters, from trappers to medics, then track and take down enormous beasts such as the tentacled Kraken or the razor-clawed Goliath. They

aren’t easy to stop, and the clock is running; take too long and the monster will grow bigger, stronger and even harder to kill. As the monster, you elude the hunters through sprawling environments, lure them into traps or corner them, making it easier to pummel them into pulp or roast them with fireballs or electric bolts. Switch to Rescue mode and save civilians before the monster can devour them, or put the beast on the defensive with Nest mode and make the Kraken defend her eggs. She won’t be happy. 🐾🐾🐾



an actual spy? That’s the fantasy Francine Mathews pursues in *Too Bad to Die*, a fast-paced historical-fiction thriller set in 1943. Having discovered a Nazi plot, the fictive Fleming must expose “the Fencer,” a deadly spy who has penetrated the Allies’ inner circle. Along the way he dreams up the nascent 007. A former CIA analyst herself, Mathews seeds the intrigue with believable spycraft and references to Bond lore—vodka martinis, testicle torture, shady SMERSH operatives—that make the reading especially fun for Bond fans. 🐾🐾🐾





**FUNNY BUSINESS**

**117**

• Number of clown-related incidents Metropolitan Police were called to deal with in London in one year.

**FINAL SALE**

• Going rates on black market website Silk Road 2.0, before the feds shut it down:



• **\$98**  
*Fake New Jersey driver's license*

• **\$2,414**  
*Fake Danish passport*

• **\$4,555**  
*100 grams of Afghanistan heroin*

**THAT'S THE SPIRIT**

• Number of barrels of bourbon currently aging in Kentucky: more than **5.3 million**. Average salary for a Kentucky bourbon distillery employee: **\$91,188**.



**\$2 MILLION**

• Price tag for the submarine sports car inspired by James Bond's submersible Lotus and sold by Hammacher Schlemmer. It can descend to depths of 33 feet and move at two knots.

**FEAR FACTORS**

ACCORDING TO A CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY STUDY ON AMERICAN FEAR:



• 21% agree "Bigfoot is a real creature that has yet to be discovered by science."

• 27% of Americans surveyed have consulted a horoscope; 11% have sought advice from a psychic.



• 40% agree "some UFOs are probably spaceships from other worlds."

• 16% of Americans would not trust the police for help.



• People who have a limited education and who watch talk shows and true-crime TV programs have significantly higher levels of fear.

**PALING IN COMPARISON**

• The more sexual partners a woman has before she's married, the less likely she is to be happy with her marriage, according to a recent University of Virginia report; researchers theorize this is because a more experienced woman has a "stronger sense of alternatives"—that is, she knows what she's missing.



**HELLO, MY NAME IS**

	+		=	<b>SCAPTIA BEYONCEAE</b>	Horsefly with an oversize golden posterior, named after Beyoncé.
	+		=	<b>LOUREEDIA</b>	A genus of velvet spiders that live underground, named for Lou Reed.
	+		=	<b>13123 TYSON</b>	Asteroid named after astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson.
	+		=	<b>SYLVILAGUS PALUSTRIS HEFNERI</b>	Marsh rabbit named after Hugh Hefner, who funded the research of the scientist who discovered the animal.
	+		=	<b>JAGGERMERYX NAIAD</b>	Extinct hippo species with unusually large and mobile lips reminiscent of Mick Jagger's.

**PLAYING PERCENTAGES**

• Men who use the dating app Tinder swipe "like" for **46%** of the images they see; women swipe "like" only **14%** of the time.





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Treadmill	1.6X
Stepper	1.2X
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# BRO-HUG BUDDIES

WHY HAVE MEN EMBRACED THE EMBRACE?  
OUR WRITER MISSES THE HANDSHAKE

In 1994 my friend Ross picked me up from the airport and hugged me. I didn't know what to make of this. Was he gay? Did he have cancer? Did he think I was about to fall? Was he very, very cold? Had he been in some freak accident that had caused the muscles in both his hands to wither away so dramatically they were unable to grip mine?

No, Ross had moved to Los Angeles to become a director and therefore was early to the bro hug. In the following two decades grown men would undergo a massive cultural shift, casually greeting one another with hugs—and not just when they returned from war, lost a parent, won the World Series or ordered a Mafia hit on you, but just as a way of saying hi. It was weird enough at the airport, but now men I see all the time in my own city hug me hello. Within a year, productivity will plummet, because we'll spend the first 10 minutes of every day walking around the office, hugging everyone good morning.

Like American men of every generation up until now, I'm not fond of touching strangers. This is why I like Asian cultures, which are so averse to unnecessary contact they have utensils that barely touch their food. For me, touching comes in only two categories: pain and sex. It's why I don't understand the point of massages. I spend the entire time trying to figure out if the masseuse and I are going to fuck or fight. It's why I like to spoon women but hate being spooned; at least when you're spooning there's a chance it might accidentally slip in. As a kid watching *Three's Company*, I thought all men felt the same way. After all, when Jack Tripper got a consoling hug from Chrissy Snow or even Janet Whatever, he pushed on the small of their back to make their breasts rub against his body. Then they hit him.

The continuum of body contact is way too complicated for me. Once we start hugging, I'm easily confused. Fake cheek kiss? A couple of pats? Some kind of relaxing exhalation? Nestle into the



shoulder? These are habits I associate with being in a sexual partner's arms, and they may be hard to break once the friend hugging begins. The summer after 10th grade I slow danced with a girl while wearing parachute pants and got a raging boner that made me feel humiliated around her for the rest of my life. Who's to say that thing won't come back during a hug moment?

My problem with hugs is not homophobic. I hate male hugs, female hugs, dog hugs, robot hugs, angel hugs and self hugs. I just expect more from men, who should understand my plight. Sure, there are creepy hugging therapists and those virgin dudes at ComicCon with the pathetic FREE HUGS sign, and I'm fine with them. Those guys need hugs. But alpha men are the ones propagating the bro hug. When former White House press secretary Jay Carney, whom I've known and liked for years, resigned, he made an uncharacteristically unsmooth move at the podium, ducking a good-bye handshake from President Obama and going in for the hug. It looked ugly because hugging is part of the lingua franca of douchebags who commingle their chest colognes at clubs and on the set of *Entourage*. There's no dignity in a hug. Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee didn't meet at Appomattox to end the Civil War by hugging it out. The handshake had a purpose: to show you had no weapon in your hand. The only purpose of a hug is to show you have no dick.

I once sold a sitcom idea to a major studio, and when I nervously went to present the idea to the president—whom I'd never met—he greeted me with his two arms fully outstretched. It rattled me. For the rest of the meeting I had no mojo, having been made both uncomfortable and submissive while wrapped in his big arms like a small child. The man had mastered the power hug. He had made me his hug bitch.

That's because the hug is actually a power move, a gesture of magnanimity. The hug initiator is like Queen Elizabeth offering up her hand. "Yes," the hugger says, "for the next few seconds you may touch my body." Unlike a handshake, which renders both parties equal, a hug involves a hugger and a huggee, the offerer and the accepter, the one with his hands over the other's shoulders and the one left holding his counterpart's waist like an awkward teenage boy at a high school dance.

Besides, if the hug is to become the default American greeting, how do we show we actually care about someone? I once felt that hugging my parents and my sister was enough, but now I feel I have to give them something more, like that thing when you grab both their shoulders and look at them for a second, or when you punch each other in the arm afterward, or maybe that thing when you lift them up and twirl them, which sounds dangerous. I'm going to need something. Maybe I'll shake their hands. ■

BY  
JOEL  
STEIN

JASON LEE



# EXES AND OOHS

DEALING WITH A BOYFRIEND IS HARD ENOUGH. RUNNING INTO YOUR EX IS WORSE

**M**y first instinct when I run into an ex-boyfriend is to hide. If there's an easy exit, a bathroom, a closet, an unlocked car—I'm gone. But no matter how crafty you are, sometimes you just can't avoid an ex. I once ran into one at a movie theater. After we'd talked for a few minutes about how annoying the parking lot can be, he told me he was on his way out. But his full bucket of popcorn betrayed the truth. Then there was the Halloween party where I ran into an ex dressed in normal attire while I was in a head-to-toe furry zip-up bunny costume (at least he couldn't tell I'd gained 10 pounds). We talked about how packed the party was and then went our separate ways (my way was straight to the bar). Another time, I ran into an ex on the street. He was wearing Texas, so I'd already won. Then he told me, "You were right. I *am* gay!" That encounter was pretty satisfying, but it gets to the root of what's so awful about running into exes.

A few years ago I ran into an ex at a small-plates restaurant. *He'd* broken up with *me*. He was waiting for a date, which was a little awkward, kind of like "I'm still looking for *the one*, but I sure as hell know it isn't you." The previous time I'd seen him we'd already broken up but he'd called me late at night to "hang out." I assumed he was racked with guilt for throwing away the best thing that had ever happened to him. Because the way you handle that is to instant-message the perfect girl at midnight in the middle of the week and beg her to come over "with snacks." That's the modern equivalent of Richard Gere showing up in a limo outside a Beverly Hills hotel, right? Right. I think you see where this is going. We had what I thought was makeup sex but was really just nope-we're-still-broken-up sex. The next morning I woke up a little early. He did too. I stared into his eyes. He stared back.

We were both silent. I thought he was planning a future for us, but instead he took my hand in his and said, "Are you leaving for work soon? Because I need to take a shit, and I can't do it with you in the apartment." My Prince Charming! I mean, the fact that he didn't even try to lie was insulting. I thought he'd realized he'd made a mistake breaking up with me, but alas, the only mistake he'd made was being a shy pooper. He also told me before I left that I should add more ball play into my routine. So when I ran into Mr. Romance at the small-plates restaurant, we hugged, we talked about how cute the place was, where he was living, etc. Sounds harmless, right? *Wrong*. It was torture. The thing that makes running into exes so bad is small talk. I was making small talk with a guy who at one point had been comfortable enough with me to confide that he needed to take a shit (but not comfortable enough to have me stay). I didn't want small talk; I wanted honesty. I wanted him to say he needed all the restaurant patrons to leave so he could take a shit on a small plate.

When I was living on the East Coast I ran into an ex on the subway. I was safely inside the train car with no exes when the doors started to close and I jumped a long-haired ex (probably on his way to a drum circle). He landed with a thud right in front of me. Using the only exit would have caused an alarm to go off and the entire train packed with commuters to be delayed. In retrospect, it would have been worth it. We

talked about the weather. "Rain! Can you believe it?" "We needed it." "I do like rain." "Not when you're walking!" Polite laughter. And the whole time I was thinking, I've seen this guy naked. This guy has seen me naked. He's seen me naked and happy. Naked and sad. Naked and mad. And now we're fully clothed talking about the fucking rain.

Small talk is a betrayal of the intimacy you once shared with someone. When they were the only person whose call you would actually answer. They were your number one, and you were theirs. The person you'd call with bad news ("I got fired") and good news ("I got fired") and neither was real until they'd heard it. There should be a special kind of talk for exes. Let's stop pretending we're two people who don't know each other on a train. We're two people who really *really* know each other on a train. Instead

of small talk it should be *ginormous* talk. Skip the weather and go straight to "So did you add more ball play to your routine?" Next time I run into an ex I'm going to try ginormous talk. And you should too. "Hey, have you dealt with your paralyzing fear of commitment yet?" "Have you stopped watching movies in bed...with your mom?" "Do you still want to cryogenically freeze yourself so your head can be attached to a robot body for eternity?" Maybe it'll be good. Or maybe it will just make everyone horribly uncomfortable. At least then when you're in proximity to an ex they might do a better job finding somewhere to hide. ■

BY  
HILARY  
WINSTON



DIEGO PATIÑO



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# PLAYBOY ADVISOR

**M**y husband and I have a great relationship. We're good friends and have had a healthy sex life. Lately, the friend thing is still going well, but not so much with the sex life. He wants something different but won't give me any insight into what exactly it is. I don't think he really knows, and I can't figure it out. We have done bondage on me, domination on both of us and just about every position man or beast has conceived. He hasn't cheated on me, but I'm starting to become concerned about how much porn he's watching and how little sex we're having. He once told me, "Sex is sex." This makes me worry that having sex with me is becoming a chore for him. I understand that men have desires, and I'm willing to fulfill his every need, with one exception: no sex with anyone else—no cheating, no group sex. I don't care if he fantasizes about other women as long as he still desires me and that trumps any need to stray. My anxiety about him cheating stems not from anything he's done but rather from reading too many articles about unhappy and unfaithful men who have children under the age of two (which we do). I don't want to become one of those women whose husbands are disloyal. I also want to reward him for his fidelity in an adulterous society.—A.T., Youngstown, Ohio

*You should tell him exactly what you told us. You sound like an incredibly generous partner, and he's lucky to have you. To put some of his behavior in context, it's worth pointing out that having young kids ranks high on the list of things that can put a damper on a couple's sex life. There's the sleep deprivation, the diminished energy, the reprioritization of every family member's needs and less time for the two of you as a couple. And that's just the abridged laundry list of reasons couples with young children in the house become unhappy. In addition, one frequent culprit in a man's diminished desire for his wife post-kids is that for the first time in the relationship he sees her not so much as a sexual partner but as a mother; her breasts, previously an erogenous and erotic inspiration, are now figuratively (and literally) meant for someone other than him. Your husband's increased porn consumption and waning interest in sex with you are likely related to the fact that women in porn are pure sex objects whose scripted behavior is removed from the conditions of the real world, with none of the*



**M**y wife is hesitant to have sex underwater because of health concerns. Are there any significant risks associated with having our genitals fully submerged during intercourse, such as exposure to harmful bacteria, changes in her pH level or a possible piston effect caused by forcing water inside her vagina? Do the risks vary by location—pool, spa, lake, river or ocean—based on water quality, temperature and salinity?—K.F., San Diego, California

*She's right. Lakes, rivers and oceans contain bacteria, along with irritants such as salt and sand; chlorinated pool or spa water can alter the vagina's natural pH level. What's more, water washes away vaginal lubrication, which can make thrusting difficult. It can also cause condoms to slip off or become prone to breakage. When it comes to sex, stay out of the Blue Lagoon.*

*stress of families, jobs, sleep loss, emotional needs and so forth. That said, you're doing the right thing by making it clear you still desire him and see him as a lover as much as anything else. You should remind him how fortunate he is to have a wife who's willing to experiment in bed in wilder ways than most. If you lay this out explicitly, he should realize how good he has it.*

**D**oes the Advisor have any suggestions for ways I can increase my testosterone without causing me to fail an NCAA drug test? I'm a student athlete, and my

sport demands that I be as powerful and strong as possible. "A friend" told me that consuming your own sperm boosts your testosterone level. Is this true?—C.N., Riverside, California

*No, it's not. At least he didn't tell you that consuming his sperm would increase your testosterone.*

**I**'ve been contemplating purchasing a pair of the classic black-and-silver Playboy Rabbit Head cuff links. I have a few weddings and other celebratory events coming up where I could add a little spark to my outfit by accessorizing with the cuff links. However, I'm unsure what color tie I should wear with them. My instinct is to pair them with a black tie (that is, a regular tie that's black, not black tie as in a tuxedo), but I have been taught that the only place one should wear a black tie is at a funeral. What's the Advisor's take on this? What color tie would you suggest I wear with the cuff links?—A.A., Helsinki, Finland

*In this case, a solid-black tie would be ideal with the Rabbit Head cuff links. If you wear the tie with a gray suit, there will be nothing funereal about the look. But you don't need to limit yourself to a black tie. As long as it is black or has black in it, a striped, plaid, checked or polka-dot tie would also match the cuff links. And a tie isn't the only thing you can pair with them: Black eyeglass frames, black shoes and a black plaid or gingham pocket square would nicely balance your outfit too.*

**M**y wife and I have been married for 13 years, and we have two lovely children, ages 12 and 11. It has been challenging working our sex life around the little cock-blockers all these years, but now I'm faced with a new obstacle: my wife's dogs. In the past year she has become so obsessed with her two dogs that even the kids complain about

it. Of course this means I'm on my own when it comes to romance and sex. I'm only 45 and not ready to be done with intimacy for the rest of my life. We have discussed the situation several times, after which she pays attention to me just long enough to talk me off the ledge and then goes right back to neglecting our relationship. I'm at a loss and won't settle for bronze much longer. I don't think she'll be down with going to couples therapy. What's a husband to do?—P.C., Seattle, Washington

*We never thought we'd say this, but you*



need to get into the doghouse—and no, we're not suggesting canine polyamory. We mean you need to ask your wife to let you into that world that clearly gives her comfort, a place of simple pleasures: staring into understanding eyes, letting your face be licked, giving tummy rubs, awarding treats, taking long walks and playing the occasional game of Frisbee. When you think about it, hanging out with dogs is sort of like the early days of a romance (minus the sex). We jest, but only partially. Your wife probably focuses on the dogs because they offer an escape from the complexities of long-term noncanine relationships. Obviously, she needs to start doing her part to rejoin the human world. It might be time for a family intervention where you and your children collectively tell her how much you miss her and that you are justifiably jealous of her pets. She needs to hear that you are all suffering as a result of her misdirected affections.

**N**ow that I'm in my early 40s, the years are starting to catch up with me, and I've begun to see gray hairs. I'm not ready to look my age. What does the Advisor think about men dyeing their hair? Do you have any tips?—G.F., Tustin, California

If you're going to dye your hair in the spirit that most men do—which is to say, by pretending that you're not dyeing your hair—don't. While some women boldly go from platinum blonde to jet black to brunette and play with outfits around the shifting hue, men tend to be timid and not very good at it. If you think you'll be the first guy to fool everyone, think again. Even men with unlimited resources and access to the best hairstylists in the world have failed to pull off an inconspicuous dye job to obscure their graying hair: Witness John Travolta, Paul McCartney and Ron Burgundy. We won't mislead you into thinking that going gray will suddenly catapult you into the category of John Slattery, George Clooney and other silver foxes, but there's no shame in embracing your natural color. If you still insist on dyeing your hair, don't ever lie and claim you haven't—that's just downright unattractive.

**I**n my opinion, the colors that come standard on most cars sold in the U.S. are boring. Are there any issues with buying a new car and having it custom painted?—R.W., Oxford, Mississippi

Cost is the biggest issue. A quality paint job that will last several years and look as impressive as premium factory paint on a new car will cost at least several thousand dollars. The price tag could climb into the tens of thousands, depending on the make and model of the car, the colors and any additional designs. If boring is your biggest beef with factory paint, an increasingly popular customization option is a vinyl wrap, which is removable and can last up to seven years when properly cared for. Wraps can run into the thousands of dollars, but they give you infinite design options: You can swathe your car in matte black, blaze orange, even dozens

of camouflage patterns, from woodland to winterland. What's more, installation takes several days, not weeks as with a good paint job, and if you tire of the wrap or want to sell your vehicle you can have the vinyl removed without damaging the paint below.

**I** fly quite a bit for business and always try to book my flights early so I can get an aisle seat as close to the front as possible. Sometimes I pay extra just to reserve that seat. With airliners flying at fuller capacity lately, I'm frequently asked to move to accommodate a family group. When I say yes, I feel like an idiot for having paid extra for my seat. When I say no, I get treated like a jerk by the flight crew and everyone else onboard. What does the Advisor think is the proper etiquette in this situation?—W.L., Intervale, New Hampshire

Air travel is hard enough these days, and planning ahead and paying more for better seats is just about the only recourse we have to reduce the stress of increasingly cramped cabins and full flights. While it would be gracious to accommodate a family that wasn't able to book seats together, it's by no means your responsibility to help them out. Try not to sound self-righteous or defensive when you tell them you planned ahead and paid extra for your seat. As in many other social situations, the right delivery goes a long way toward not making you look like a jerk. Even if you're not actually sorry for defending your hard-fought-for perch, saying you are could help minimize the stink-eye and make your already difficult flight that much more bearable.

**M**y wife likes to let her pubic hair grow, and I'm not a big fan. She loves to receive oral sex, but I refuse to give her cunnilingus when she has a full bush. She lets me shave it—reluctantly—but claims it burns and itches afterward. She says she doesn't like the feeling of being bald. I shave her pubic hair with the same shaving cream and razor I use on my face because I find it arousing. What can I do to make her feel better post-shaving so she doesn't resent the loss of her pubic hair?—P.M., Madison, Wisconsin

You shouldn't ask her to do anything that makes her uncomfortable or resentful. If she doesn't like the feeling of hairlessness, you should respect that. But there's a middle ground awaiting you that doesn't involve shaving, baldness or a full bush. It could be time for you both to dive into the Bermuda Triangle—currently voted one of the most popular pubic hairstyles by both men and women readers of the blog Pubic Style ([pubicstyle.wordpress.com](http://pubicstyle.wordpress.com)). Smaller than a 1970s-style bush but not as radical as a full Brazilian, it's a neat triangular shape you can maintain with an electric trimmer on a low guard setting. The style tames a wild bush and lets you breathe a little easier down below. If your wife is comfortable with it, she could get her bikini line (the sides of her bush) waxed, which is less likely to produce ingrown hairs. Since it sounds as though

she's sensitive, waxing is one of those don't-try-this-at-home projects. She should definitely go to a salon—your treat.

**A**fter losing 50 pounds through dieting and running, I was delighted to find I had gained size in my penis. However, my girlfriend now says I'm too big for her. She claims it hurts when we have sex. Is there any way she can adapt to my new size? And what can I do to help her?—M.H., Mount Morris, Michigan

While exercise and a better diet could help your circulation, which could lead to more rigid erections, it's highly unlikely you gained width or length. What's more likely is that you lost belly and groin fat that had been acting as a sort of sex bumper, preventing you from putting your entire penis inside your girlfriend. Keep your thrusts from going all the way to the hilt and experiment with positions that let her determine how deep you go. Modified missionary, with her legs together, can keep you from going too deep, as can having her straddle you on a chair.

**W**hy do women seem to feel cold when the temperature drops below 60 degrees, while men seem not to be bothered?—M.G., Kunkletown, Pennsylvania

"Seem" is the operative word here. Although women's core body temperature is actually higher than men's, their hands and feet run three degrees colder.

**I** plan to travel to Europe soon and have heard that credit cards with a magnetic stripe don't work there. How can I get a chip card in America?—D.K., Buffalo, New York

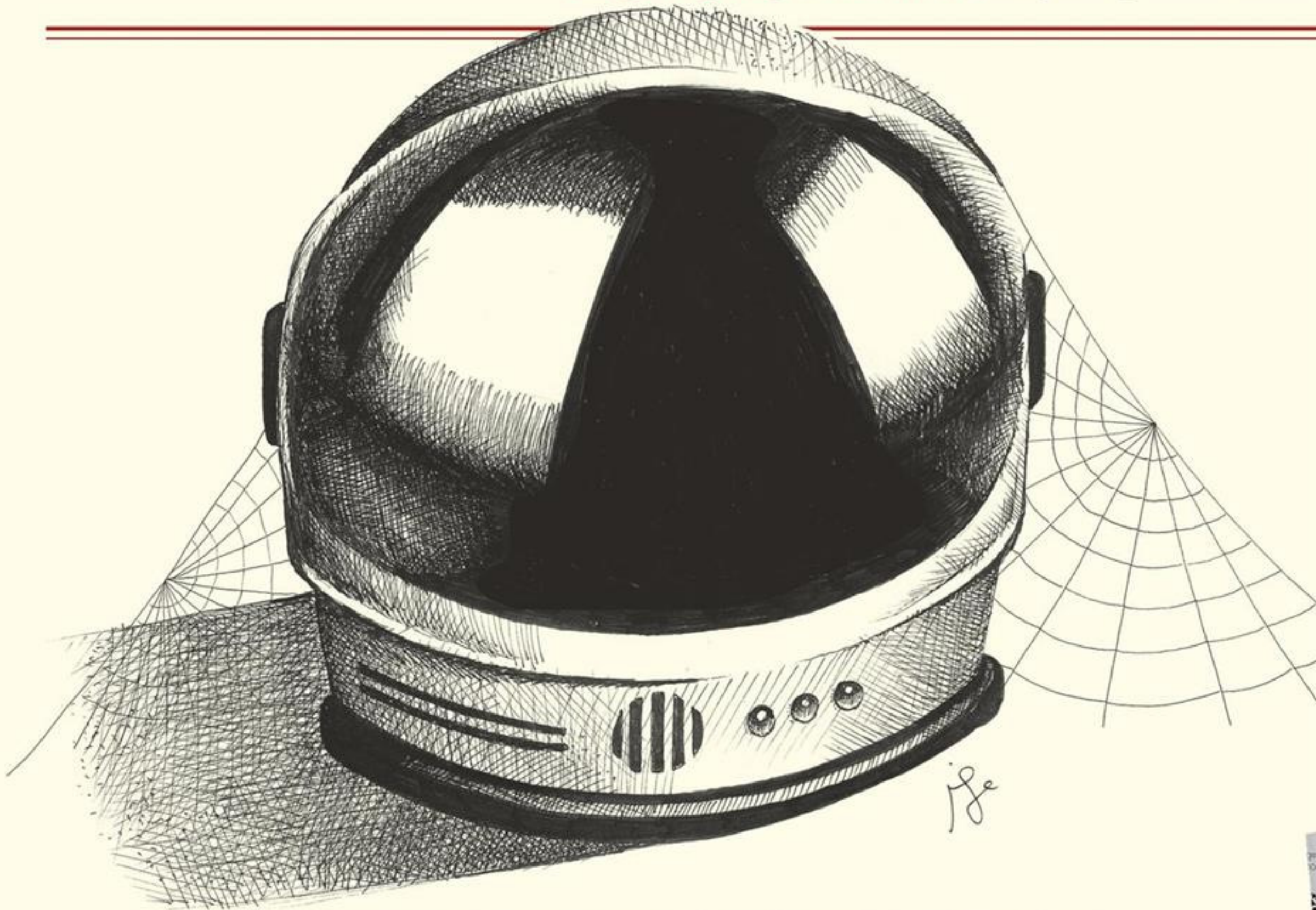
You're right, up to a point. For the time being in the U.S. we're stuck using the outdated and easily counterfeited magnetic-stripe credit cards, while Europe is well on its way to making the more secure microchip-and-PIN credit card technology the standard. Travelers to Europe can still use their magnetic-stripe cards at ATMs, as well as at restaurants and hotels that cater to U.S. tourists and business travelers. But magnetic cards won't work at most automated kiosks—the types that allow convenient access to parking, train tickets, gas pumps, museums and other goods and services. This can be a major hassle and can cut into the enjoyment of your trip. U.S. banks are slowly catching up and are beginning to offer microchip-secured cards, but you'll need to explicitly request them from the card issuer. Be sure you get a "chip and PIN" card, not a "chip and signature" card, which in Europe still requires a human to complete the transaction.

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





*Sky-high space travel Myth of meritocracy*



# YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO SPACE

*Hollywood and bold new companies have made civilian space travel trendy. But don't be too quick to book your flight*

**BY ALYSON SHEPPARD**

**L**et's be frank: Contemporary space travel is sexy. It's dangerous, alluring and dominated by dashing billionaires, from Tesla's Elon Musk to Virgin's Richard Branson to Amazon's Jeff Bezos (okay, Bezos isn't as dashing). These men have promised to build lavish spacecraft and open the heavens for the paying masses.

"This whole market is predicated on people who are affluent," says Dale Ketcham, chief of strategic alliances at Space Florida, the state's economic agency tasked with developing space-related businesses. "Once flights become reasonably routine and reasonably safe—which inevitably they will—spacecraft will become like private jets or yachts."

But the truth is, you'll probably never

leave this atmosphere. There are very real reasons why sci-fi spaceflight will not become as routine, safe and affordable as booking a ticket on an airliner.

Right now and into the distant future, the cost of spaceflight will be prohibitively expensive. To go into outer space today you would have to pay up to \$70 million and do as NASA astronauts do: fly Russian. Since 2001 seven private citizens have traveled into orbit, and all of them booked their seats on a Russian Soyuz flight out of Kazakhstan. Pri-

ivate American companies are promising suborbital and orbital rides for a lot less money—around \$250,000—but until a craft is ready to launch, which still may be years away, the no-frills Soyuz is the only viable ride off this planet.

Many of these American companies

*To go to space today you'd have to pay up to \$70 million.*

## READER RESPONSE

### JURIS IMPRUDENCE

Mark Joseph Stern is spot-on when he writes about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas's desire to see not only the states but also the federal government establish a national religion ("Clarence Thomas's Theocracy," December). What is even more shocking is how Thomas misinterprets history and believes the



founding fathers wanted to establish an official religion, when in fact many of them were champions of religious freedom. The founders would be chagrined by Thomas's efforts.

**Andrew Bejarano**  
*Las Cruces, New Mexico*

### OF RISING IMPORTANCE

"Surrendering to Global Warming" (November) does your readers a service by drawing attention to sea-level rise—the most important issue that coastal communities will have to deal with in the immediate and not-so-immediate future. However,





## READER RESPONSE

“Refugees at Six Feet,” the chart published alongside the article, is based on a May 2014 White House report that indicates sea levels will rise as much as four to six feet by 2100. No one knows how much the sea will actually rise by that year, but the probability of a six-foot increase is so low as to make it an unrealistic criterion for planning purposes. The probability that even the low end of the range you cite—four feet—will be exceeded is less than five percent. The best currently available scientific information on the subject can be found in “Climate Change 2013,” a report (available online) from the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change that is the result of three years of work

can offer cheaper tickets because their programs were initially funded under NASA contracts. After the space shuttle program ended in 2011, NASA subsidized private industry’s efforts to develop commercial “space taxis” capable of transporting American astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station and beyond. The private companies believe additional money can be made selling seats to adventurous civilians.

“If your colleagues at all your damn cocktail parties are talking about how exciting it was to see the curvature of the Earth and the blackness of space, then you’ll need to see it too,” Ketcham says.

Eric Stallmer, president of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, believes businessmen such as Branson and Musk are set to make billions. “They’re investing their money in their dreams,” Stallmer says. “And their dreams are shared by millions and millions of other people. That’s a fantastic thing.”

But insiders say current ticket prices are artificially low and will start to go up because of astronomical insurance rates and R&D costs. A typical space industry refrain is that once commercial spaceflights become routine, competition will force prices down. “It’s a matter of scale,” says Jane Poynter, chief executive of World View Enterprises, a company that intends to take tourists into near space in a capsule strapped beneath a helium balloon. “When you’re doing only one flight per week or month, prices are going to be expensive. But once you get the flight rate up, everything gets more efficient. Then you’ll start seeing prices fall. I can’t put a date on that, but they will; there’s no question.”

Many experts estimate that regular flights will begin within the next decade, but no one can pinpoint what will trigger a downward trend in prices. Once the initial vehicles prove successful, companies will build more and distribute them

*No one can pinpoint what will trigger a downward trend in ticket prices.*






by the world’s most credible scientists on the subject. Consider the extremes predicted in the IPCC report: The lowest end of the lowest-range scenario is a rise of less than one foot; the highest end of the highest-range scenario is 3.22 feet. The probability that sea levels will rise six feet by 2100 is similar to the probability of winning a major lottery.

**Kenneth Humiston**  
Naples, Florida

I lived in Oakwood Beach, Staten Island. We lost everything to Hurricane Sandy—our home and possessions, our peace of mind, our health. Three neighbors were taken from us in this

## BILLIONAIRE SPACE CADETS

*Some of the world’s richest men are racing one another to space—here are the three projects leading the way*

			
<i>Company</i>	Blue Origin	SpaceX	Virgin Galactic
<i>Founder</i>	Jeff Bezos	Elon Musk	Richard Branson
<i>How they made their billions</i>	Amazon.com	PayPal, Tesla Motors	Virgin Group
<i>Founder’s net worth</i>	\$27.8 billion	\$8.3 billion	\$4.9 billion
<i>Founded</i>	2000	2002	2004
<i>Ticket price</i>	unknown	\$20 million	\$250,000
<i>Investment in space company</i>	unknown	\$100 million	\$100 million
<i>Estimated year of first manned flight</i>	unknown	2016	2014 (crashed)





RICHARD BRANSON'S VIRGIN GALACTIC LOST DEPOSITS AFTER A TEST-FLIGHT CRASH.

around the world. The more craft that are built, the more these companies will streamline their operations, and with efficiency, safety and reliability will come lower operational costs.

But for most, those prices will still be too high. "I don't think it will come down dramatically anytime soon. In this business, things cost more and take longer than you plan," Ketcham says.

Up until a few months ago, Virgin Galactic's experimental SpaceShipTwo was the most hyped spaceplane in the world. Branson had been booking seats on the suborbital vessel for hundreds of wannabe astronauts, including Stephen Hawking and Justin Bieber. Then in October, disaster struck: A SpaceShipTwo test flight ended in a catastrophic crash, killing one of its pilots and totaling the craft. (Just three days earlier, an unmanned rocket built by Orbital Sciences exploded shortly after liftoff; it had been carrying supplies for the ISS.)

"Getting into space is, always has been and probably will be a dangerous activity for the foreseeable future," Ketcham says. As the number of test flights increases, so too will the number of accidents. "Eventually, tourists are going to die in space," he says.

After the October accidents, many questioned if these companies' timelines were overly aggressive. They may have been pushing too fast and too hard. Dozens of people who had put deposits down on a SpaceShipTwo flight asked for a refund. Poynter says some of those people transferred their money to her company, thinking World View's craft will be a

safer ride because it doesn't use rockets.

Currently, the Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation licenses experimental spacecraft that will launch or land in the U.S. (NASA and the U.S. Air Force do not need licenses from the FAA for their launches.) If a launch company wants to make money off of paying customers, it must get a commercial operator's license from the FAA. The 2004 Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act prohibits the FAA from regulating the vessels beyond that—unless the craft has killed people.

"We were very concerned that, given just the coincidence of the timing of the two mishaps, there would be this cry for more regulation and more oversight," Stallmer says. "In the case of the Virgin Galactic accident, the key is that it was an experimental test flight. You have to test these things before you can open them up to the general public."

The FAA could force additional licensing and insist on vetting the design and operation of spacecraft as it does for commercial airliners. The goal is to make flights safer, but more oversight dramatically increases

the complexity and costs of getting into orbit—costs that would eventually get pushed onto the consumer.

Such restrictions would not sit well with the dreamers, schemers and engineers at the heart of the young but ambitious private spaceflight industry. "We the industry and we the public have been waiting for this for so long," Poynter says. "I don't see any way but up." ■

**"Getting into space is dangerous. Eventually, tourists are going to die."**

## READER RESPONSE

horrible storm. We are now, more than two years later, in a different home, trying to put the pieces back together. Yes, we have a roof over our heads. Yes, we are away from the dangers of the constant flooding and storms that pounded Oakwood Beach. But we will never be the same.

New York governor Andrew Cuomo stepped up and recognized that the area never should have been developed for residential use and instead should have been left to nature. We are doing our best to move forward. As much as we have gained, the pain and the scars caused by Sandy will never heal—at least not for me and my family.

**Joe Monte**  
Staten Island, New York

Eric Klinenberg's article got me thinking about sea levels, and I came up with a question to which I have not found an answer. Since elevation is measured from sea level (for example, the summit of Mount Everest is 29,029 feet above sea level) and the sea level is rising (or not, depending on your political view), I was wondering if the mountains are, for lack of a better word, shrinking?

**Dewey Quong**  
Reno, Nevada

*We know more about rising hemlines than rising sea levels, so we reached out to Edmond Mathez of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. "I suppose the answer is yes," Mathez tells us. "To keep the 'shrinking' in*

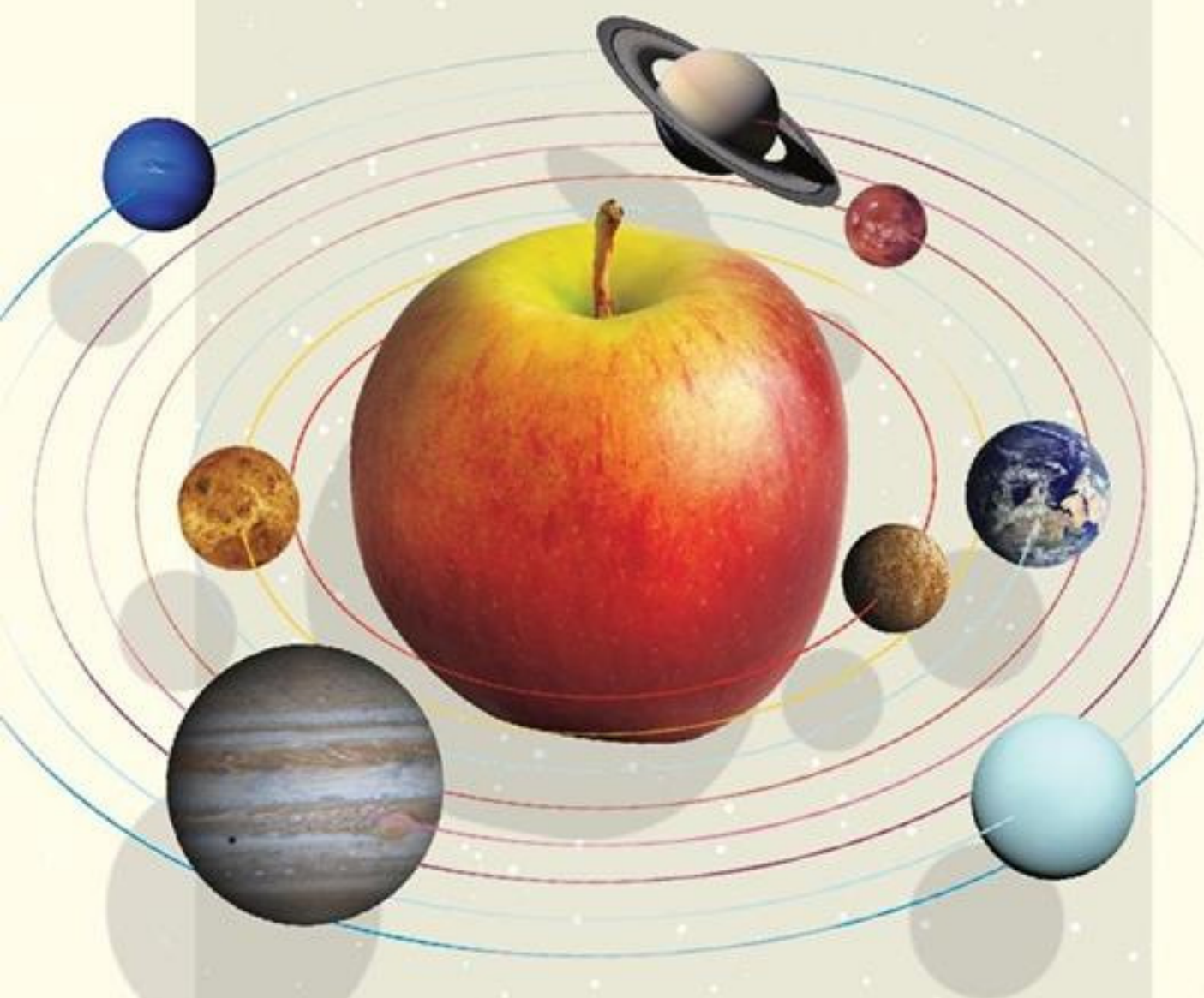




## READER RESPONSE

*perspective, global sea level has risen about three inches since 1960, which of course means that Everest has shrunk about 0.0009 percent, to a mere 29,028.75 feet. I'm sure climbers will be delighted."*

The thinly veiled "New York City is the center of the universe" philosophy and the assumption of imminent global climate disaster contained in "Surrendering to Global Warming" are just too much. No one is abandoning beachfront property in droves. No one alive today will notice anything related to climate change, nor will their grandchildren. Only the power of



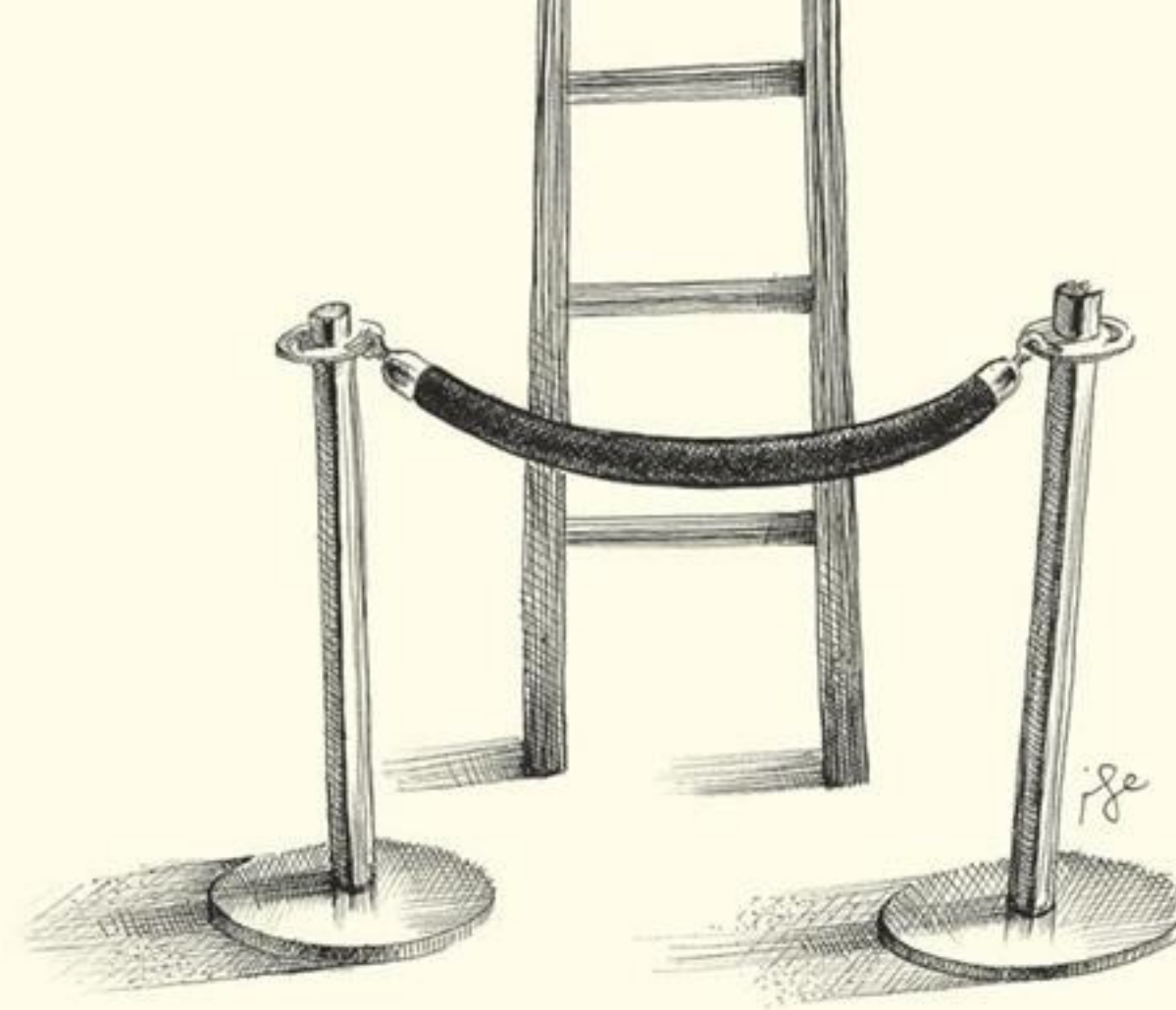
suggestion will have some believing that measurable climate change is occurring, when in reality what they are experiencing is weather.

**Mark R. Craven**  
Las Vegas, Nevada

*We believe the center of the universe is actually in Holmby Hills, California, where the Playboy Mansion is situated. All joking aside, beliefs have little to do with the fact that climate change is occurring, according to the overwhelming majority of scientists.*

### BEYOND BIOLOGY?

I beg to differ with Kaniksu Darwin (*Reader Response*, December), who says evolution explains biology alone and "is not meant to be applied to morals or ethics." Evolution is indeed the source of basic morality. Trust—for example, trust that



# THE FAILURE OF MERITOCRACY

*Elites think they've earned their spot at the top.  
If they only knew how wrong they are*

BY CHRIS LEHMANN

Last year, former Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke gave the commencement address at his alma mater, Princeton University. Before his Ivied audience, he took the opportunity to criticize a universal American fetish: meritocracy.

Bernanke cautioned against the ideal of individual heroic success as it now prevails among our educated business and government elites, a remarkable concession coming from the unelected head of the world's most powerful financial institution. "A meritocracy," he explained, "is a system in which people luckiest in their health and genetic endowment, in family support, encouragement and probably income, and in so many other ways difficult to enumerate, reap the largest rewards." In other words, today's meritocracy needs some old-fashioned noblesse oblige, a sentiment calculated to draw loud applause on commencement day in Princeton. "The only way for even a

putative meritocracy to hope to pass ethical muster," he continued, "is if those who are the luckiest in all of those respects also have the greatest responsibility to work hard, to contribute to the betterment of the world and to share their luck with others."

It is in many ways an admirable sentiment, but Bernanke has no concept of the roots of the word *meritocracy*. Indeed, nearly every American economic commentator now ritually invokes the term without the faintest understanding of its definition. *Merriam-Webster's* defines it as "a system in which the talented are chosen and moved ahead on the basis of their achievement." However, the term was created and promulgated in so much satirical venom as to render that meaning poisonous to the elites who enjoy its many storied perks.

Scores of thinkers have mounted assaults on the gleaming spires of meritocracy. Financial reporters discovered, in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse, that Silicon Valley, not Wall Street, best embodies the meritocratic spirit. Valley moguls accept the accolade but counter that American higher education has betrayed the cherished precepts of meritocratic achievement, such as when PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel asked why Harvard should not be franchised like McDonald's. On the left, MSNBC host Christopher Hayes has glumly prophesied the twilight of our meritocracy. On the right, Ross Douthat and David Brooks, the genial pair of elite-educated conservative *New York Times* columnists, regularly inveigh

against the meritocracy's waning self-discipline and routine cultural trespasses.

Meritocracy, in other words, is everywhere and nowhere: You can catalog its migrations, institutional corruptions, conceptual flaws and moral failings, but as with the plot of *Lost*

or the mystery of the Trinity, you'll never touch the bottom of it.

The simple explanation is that the idea of meritocracy that critics have adopted is wrong—180-degrees, missing-the-point-by-several-miles wrong. It's a basic failure of reading comprehension, akin to treating a movie synopsis as a recipe for dinner.

The literary emphasis is relevant, because the term *meritocracy* was coined by British sociologist-novelist Michael Young in his deftly satirical 1958 novel *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870–2033*. It was intended as a clear parody of the technocratic regime of intelligence testing in postwar Britain, but its eponymous concept has been so brutally misinterpreted by Bernanke and his ilk that its modern usage, over and against

*Social critics  
are trapped  
in a state of  
self-parody.*

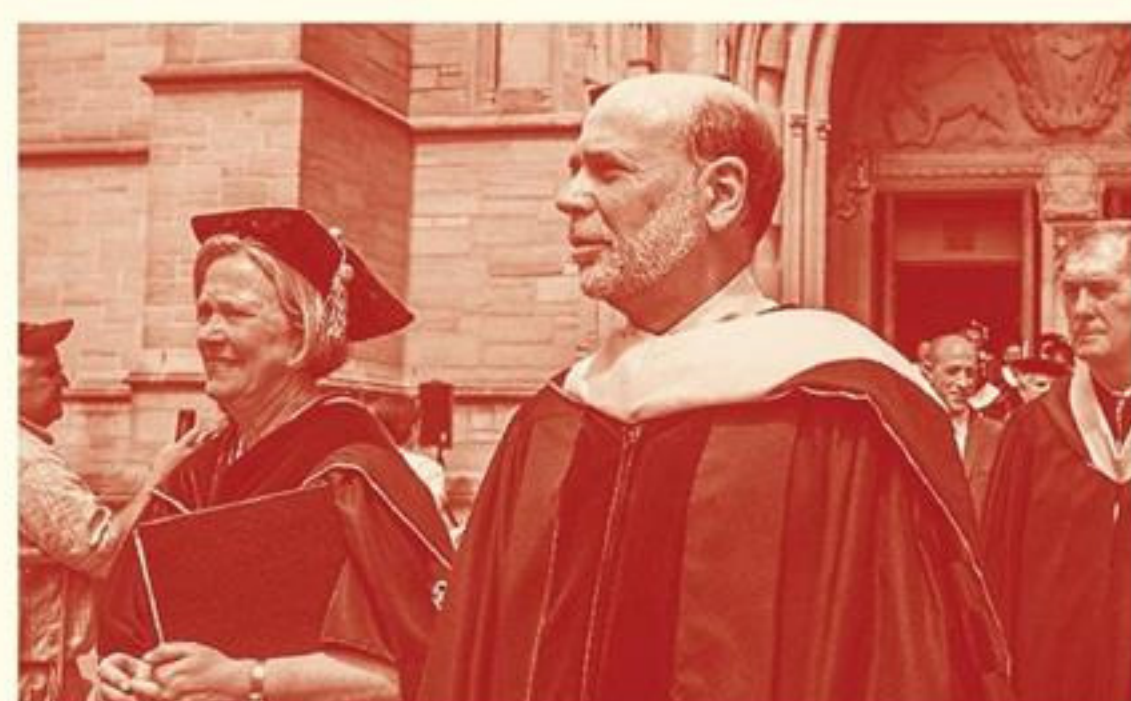


the author's original intent, becomes hilarious and disturbing all at once.

Presented in the guise of a government report by an officious sociologist, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* describes a society bitterly divided between "hand workers" and elite "brain workers," brimming with a social-scientific bureaucracy's conviction that it is on the right side of history. Young's blindingly obvious point is that a meritocratic order is anything but good and fair—for a meritocracy "to pass ethical muster," as Bernanke has it, would be morally incoherent. Young's meritocracy, in fact, is the height of social folly.

Young makes this lesson impossible to miss. The sociologist's report is occasioned by a coming strike organized by a militant hand-worker coalition, and the causes of this unrest are everywhere: As our narrator explains, democracy as we know it is simply unsuited to rule by the new knowledge class. "Today we frankly recognize that democracy can be no more than an aspiration," he announces in one of the novel's bursts of crackpot realism, "and have rule not so much by the people as by the cleverest people; not an aristocracy of birth, not a plutocracy of wealth, but a true meritocracy of talent."

However, it becomes clear that meritocracy has rationalized class divisions. For hand workers, intelligence testing and career placement ensure their lot is wholly deserved. Lesser-born Britons of intellectual distinction are tested and promoted up the ranks, depriving the working class of its cleverest natural leaders. Those left behind are without any personal or polit-



BERNANKE WOEFULLY MISUNDERSTOOD HIS "CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE" GOSPEL.

ical hope, which brings us to the roots of the novel's social crisis: "Are they not bound to recognize that they have an inferior social status," our narrator ponders, "not because they were denied opportunity, but because they are inferior?"

No wonder then that in this new age the servant classes demand a greater share of resources and social power. Childlike morons that they are, they must cling to the illusion of their social equality, just as the socialists of old did. And they make

good on that faith: In the epilogue we learn that our earnest narrator is killed during an uprising of hand workers against the brain-worker elite.

Young's message couldn't have been more blatant if he had carved it on a sandwich board promoting a general strike outside Oxford: A meritocratic Britain would produce a postwar version of the same class divisions seen during the Industrial Revolution. The question then is how Young's satiric prophecy—which portrays rule by a knowledge elite (the kind produced by, say, Princeton) as a brutal variation on old-line capitalism—could be so vastly misinterpreted among American pundits as a vision of equality.

Critics in the U.S., of course, are aware of how America's own "knowledge elite" reinforces the class system's social inequalities. At this current, savagely unequal juncture in our republic's history, American social mobility

lags well behind that of European social-welfare states: A Harvard-UC Berkeley study found that the chance a child may escape the poorest fifth of Americans and land among its richest had increased only 0.6 percent in 15 years. A child born in Denmark has twice the chance of an American. And social mobility is the great force intended to inoculate us against the Old World's ugly traditions of class conflict.

The American meritocratic dream is powerful precisely because of what it allows our pundits to ignore. It is born of a dogmatic refusal to comprehend our own institutions of class privilege, such as Princeton and the Federal Reserve, as anything other than dispensers of gloriously equal opportunity. Precisely because meritocrats are possessed of superior character, these reformers reason, they must be susceptible to pundits conjuring the better angels of their nature.

The trick is simply to bring about a kind of moral revival in the vein that Bernanke preached to Princeton parents: to urge our meritocrats toward a heightened sense of their social obligations so that they may selflessly harness their advantages to mitigate society's excesses of class privilege. But as Young explains in gruesome detail, true meritocrats would never indulge such fancies—noblesse oblige being, like democracy itself, another relic of the old industrial order and the sentimental dream of widely shared economic progress.

The moral of Young's fable is unsparing: All that can be done with a meritocracy is to dismantle it. Until that realization sinks in on American shores, our social critics will be trapped, like the martyred narrator of Young's novel, in a state of unwitting self-parody. ■

**American social mobility lags behind that of European social-welfare states.**

 **READER RESPONSE**

one is safe living among tribe mates—is easily destroyed by acts of interpersonal violence or dishonesty, so the survival advantage of group living would have been enjoyed only by those human ancestors who could restrain such urges. That's why basic morality—prohibitions within a tribe against interpersonal violence and dishonesty—is common to all contemporary human societies. Other things that get lumped under the heading of morality (random rules about worship, sex, clothing, diet and so forth) reflect particular cultures rather than universal truths.

Lee Helms  
Hazel Park, Michigan

**DRAGON DAYS**

Luke O'Neil's "We Can't Handle the Truth" (October) reminded me of columnist Bill Schneider's reflections from a few years ago. "When newspapers were first circulated in London in the 18th century, the impact was immedi-



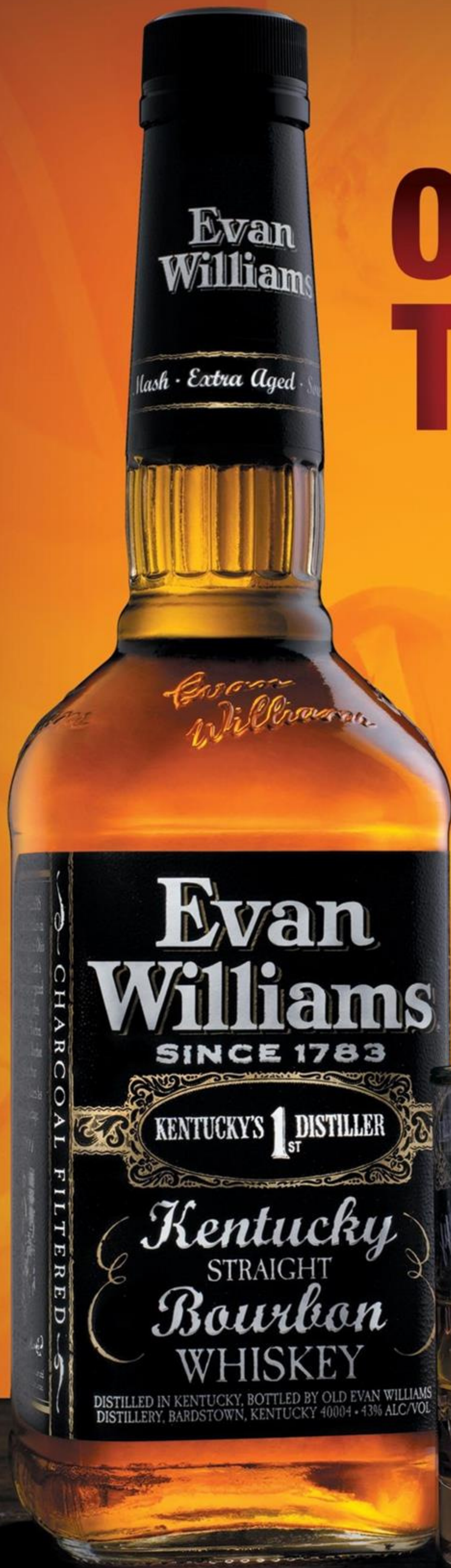
ate: Dragon sightings got further and further from London. The newspapers checked the stories out. Today," Schneider wryly observed, "the new media are filled with dragon sightings."

James M. Curry  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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



# ONE PIECE. TWO PIECE.



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW:

# VINCE VAUGHN

*A candid conversation with everyone's favorite swinger about riding the career rapids, being a libertarian and finally becoming an adult*

Vince Vaughn does not exactly blend in with the scenery. Striding into a Hollywood hotel in a snappy blue suit, the six-foot-five actor, writer and producer has enough swagger and spark to get just about every eye in the lobby turning his way. Partly, it might be the moment. After a few too many so-so comedies, such as *Delivery Man* and *The Internship*, Vaughn is verging on what looks like a full-scale comeback. This month's *Unfinished Business*, about a European business trip that diverts (hilariously) into beer foam, drug benders and kinky sex, has enough muscle and grown-up humor to make it the sleeper hit of spring, according to insiders. With that and a starring role opposite Colin Farrell in the eagerly awaited sophomore season of HBO's *True Detective* this summer, Vaughn's career has the kind of oomph he hasn't felt since those heady years after *Swingers*. Audiences may soon forget he even made a movie called *Fred Claus*.

Vincent Anthony Vaughn was born on March 28, 1970 in Minneapolis but grew up in the wealthy Chicago suburb of Lake Forest. His parents did well in business and real estate. Vaughn, who mostly languished in school, branded as a hyperactive student, put his ambitions into performing. Getting a Chevy commercial in high school was enough

to lure him to California, though success remained elusive until he and fellow struggling actor Jon Favreau proved they were "money, baby" in the 1996 bachelor comedy *Swingers*. The movie earned more than 20 times what it cost to make, and soon Steven Spielberg was casting Vaughn in the sequel to *Jurassic Park*. Another actor might have parlayed that credit into full-time blockbusting, but Vaughn pivoted into quiet films such as *Clay Pigeons* and a high-risk, low-reward remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

It took a few more years to right himself, this time with big-budget comedies including *Old School*, *Starsky & Hutch*, *Dodgeball* and, later, *Anchorman* and *Wedding Crashers*. That put Vaughn at the center of a Hollywood crew known as the Frat Pack (see also Owen Wilson, Ben Stiller, Will Ferrell). When he hooked up with a freshly divorced Jennifer Aniston after co-starring with her in *The Break-Up*, Vaughn ascended to the ranks of the TMZ A-list.

Today Vaughn leads the life of a contented box-office success. He and his wife of five years, Kyla Weber, a Canadian-born realtor, have two kids and a growing number of homes and properties. He's living the dream. But dig a little and another side of Vaughn emerges—that of a fervent libertarian who's skeptical of

authority, big government and social institutions that want to get into our business.

Contributing Editor David Hochman, who last interviewed Gary Oldman for *PLAYBOY*, says Vaughn surprised him. Here's his report: "I was a Vince Vaughn fan from the moment he and Jon Favreau took that road trip to Vegas in *Swingers*. But I didn't realize how thoughtful and outspoken he is. Once we got through talking about how exciting his career is these days, we launched into a conversation about guns, gay marriage, the Fed, the White House and what's wrong with all of them."

**PLAYBOY:** Some say we're in the midst of a Vaughnaissance.

**VAUGHN:** Maybe. I don't know.

**PLAYBOY:** You don't sound convinced.

**VAUGHN:** It's just that I don't live my life according to how other people see my career or whatever. I've had ups and downs for sure, and things are going great right now. But it's like any part of your work or personal life or relationships—you figure things out as you go. Things change, nothing stays the same, good follows bad.

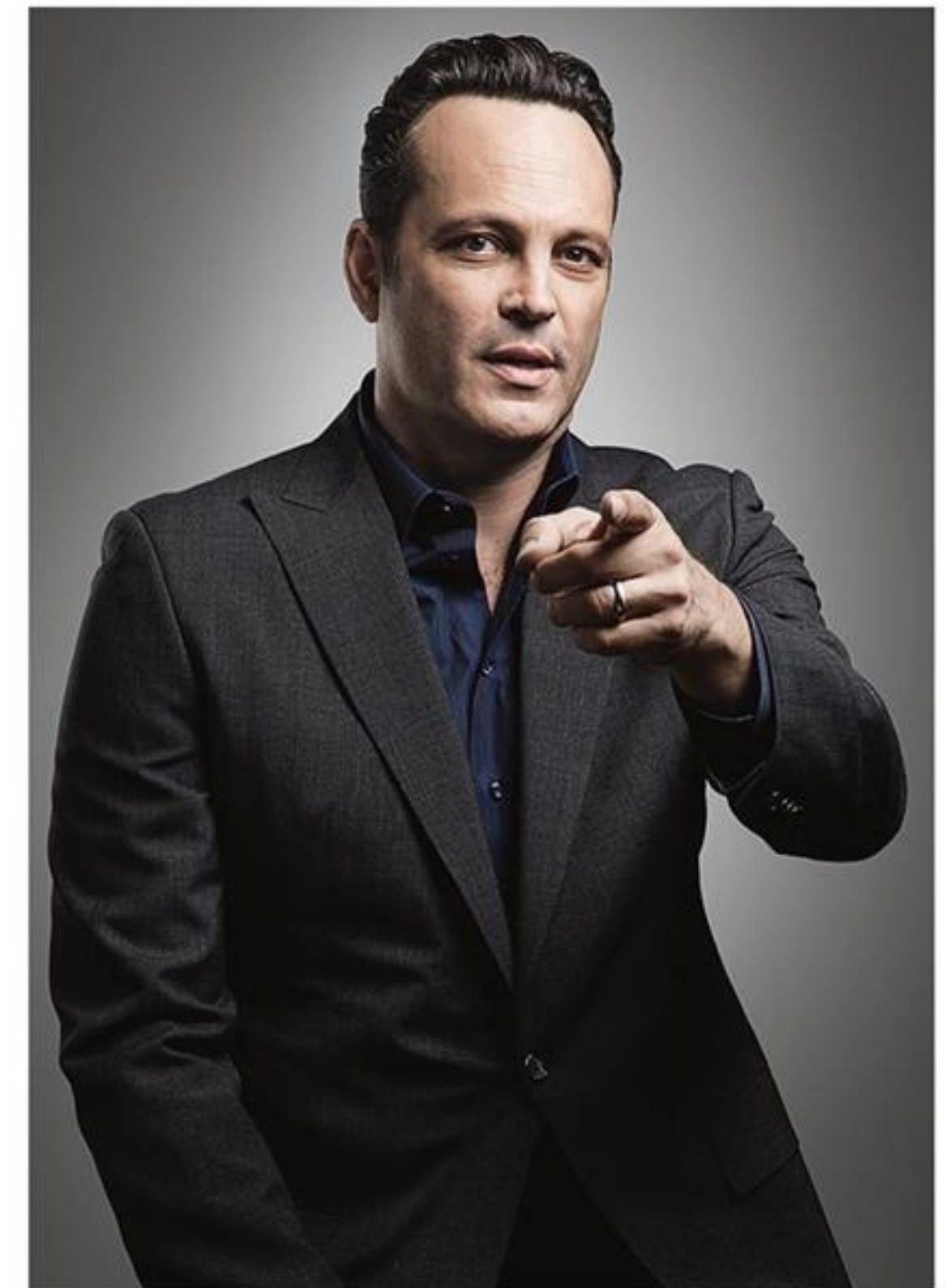
The truth is, I don't know that I ever had a plan. Mostly I've had lots of fun in



"The truth is, I don't know that I ever had a plan. Mostly I've had lots of fun in lots of different ways—acting, producing and writing. Doing those early independent films was great. Doing the big studio comedies was fantastic."



"It's those early years of not getting what you want, of not getting called back, of not feeling desirable as an actor. In the very beginning you have almost zero control. If your identity is tied into all that stuff, it can be pretty awful."



"I like the principles of the Constitution and the republic. A republic did very well in Rome until they got a lot of central power and Caesar decided he knew what was best for everyone. Even back then, it didn't work."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIUS BUGGE



lots of different ways—acting, producing and writing. It was great early on, working with Jon Favreau on *Swingers* and all the things that followed. Then doing those early independent films was great. Doing the big studio comedies was fantastic. And it's nice now to be mixing it up and doing something different with *True Detective*. But I get a little uncomfortable when people start putting labels on things.

**PLAYBOY:** Woody Harrelson and Matthew McConaughey certainly set a high bar with the first season of *True Detective*. You must feel a certain amount of pressure.

**VAUGHN:** Honestly, no, because Nic Pizzolatto is such a great writer, and so much of this is driven by his stories. I thought Woody and Matthew did an exceptional job with the first season. This one's very different, though. It's a totally different story, with its own characters. The thing that's consistent is the richness of the characters and the quality of the material. That was Louisiana. This is a California-based story, and it was kind of birthed from here. A lot of it is set in Los Angeles. I really like my character. Nic is so great about investigating characters and their complexities in an authentic and engaging way. I want to watch this show not because I'm in it but as a fan of the material.

**PLAYBOY:** How did the project come to you?

**VAUGHN:** I was developing a movie version of *The Rockford Files* and met with Nic about writing it. He was really enthusiastic but was already working on a crime drama set in Los Angeles, and he gracefully said it was best for him to focus on *True Detective*. Then he reached out to me about doing that series, and I was beyond flattered and thrilled to collaborate with him. I was happy to work with Colin Farrell too, whom I'd never worked with before.

**PLAYBOY:** *True Detective*, *Orange Is the New Black*, *Homeland*, *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones*—why is TV so much more interesting than movies right now?

**VAUGHN:** I wouldn't say more interesting; it's just different. A film like *The Way Way Back* with Steve Carell and Sam Rockwell was as smart as anything you'd see in any format. But TV is definitely having its moment. It's almost as if we've discovered how exciting it can be to tell a story over a longer time frame. In the 1990s we went through a run of independent films that captured the attention of critics and a certain type of audience member. Those movies were edgy, offbeat and risky and had fully drawn adult characters. You can't do that as easily anymore on a big studio movie. If you can't turn something into a franchise that gets people into seats that first weekend, you're probably not going to get your movie made. Studios are huge corporate businesses, and they have to show their shareholders each quarter how well they're doing. When money is what drives you, it's a lot easier if you can

say, "We have this third sequel opening now and that fifth sequel next month and the ninth sequel of something else coming this summer."

You also have all these new avenues of financing and distribution, which have the studios running a little scared. Netflix, Amazon, other streaming outlets—they appear to have more patience to finance character-based stories. And not just dramas. I think Netflix in particular has been a fantastic place for documentaries to land and be seen. But the basics are still the same: You want a great story; you need good characters, good actors and someone in charge who's running it well. I think it's the most exciting time since probably the early 1970s for actors, writers and directors in terms of doing meaningful, intelligent, grown-up work, and that has a lot to do with these episodic shows.

**PLAYBOY:** You started off in TV, right?

**VAUGHN:** Actually, the first acting job I ever got paid for was an industrial film.

*If you require  
coaching to get  
a woman, it'll  
come out as dis-  
honest and you'll  
end up alone.*

It was about issues for teenagers or something. This was back in Chicago, and I had cut high school one day. My parents didn't want me to go downtown. We lived in the suburbs. A friend of mine told me his mom would take him for an audition. I had no concept of what that was, but it sounded cool, so I went with. The casting director asked me if I wanted to read for the part, and I did, and I got it. And that led to getting an agent and taking all this shit seriously. I did improv classes, acting classes, and I started performing live in the city even though I was a minor. I was tall enough that nobody really questioned it. When I turned 18 I flew out to California to pursue acting full-time.

**PLAYBOY:** One of your early TV roles was on *21 Jump Street*. Any memories of Johnny Depp from that experience?

**VAUGHN:** Yeah. We were walking down some stairs and I was super nervous because I hadn't done much acting. Johnny could have ignored me completely, but he stopped and said, "Hey, if you're over

here, the camera will see you better." I thought, Gosh, that's really gracious of this guy. The director comes over and asks if I can move, but Johnny goes, "No, I think Vince should be right here." That always reminded me to be like that whenever I could. It meant a lot to walk into a situation and have someone in a position of power be warm and including and make you feel a part of something. I always respected him for that.

**PLAYBOY:** Was it pretty much like *Swingers* for you in those early days? Auditions, girls, video games?

**VAUGHN:** A lot of the time, yeah, though it certainly wasn't glamorous. It was those early years of not getting what you want, of not getting called back, of not feeling desirable as an actor. There's only so much that's in your control when you're starting out, and in the very beginning you have almost zero control. If your identity is tied into all that stuff, it can be pretty awful. I always thought if I could get hired to play a part it would be exciting and smooth sailing from there. And my gosh, if you could get a recurring role, like a big co-star or guest star, a couple of scenes in a film, you were set for life. But then you'd get stuff and nothing would materialize. You'd be right back auditioning. A group of us would always be hanging out, like in *Swingers*. We'd go to those bars; we'd all go out in L.A. and put the Club on our steering wheels to keep our cars safe. Then we'd come home and play video games. That was a big part of what we were doing. Everything you see in the movie was authentic to that moment.

**PLAYBOY:** Where did you meet Jon Favreau?

**VAUGHN:** On the movie *Rudy*, a few years before *Swingers*. Right from the beginning we would joke around a lot. He was from Queens and had gone through the Improv Olympics with [acting coach] Del Close, something I had done in Chicago. We were in a similar situation as far as going out for all these auditions. I said we should write something that captured that life, and he sat down and wrote *Swingers* in two weeks.

**PLAYBOY:** After that movie hit, it must have been crazy for you. Were women throwing themselves at you and saying, "You're so money!"

**VAUGHN:** I always had a lot of fun with girls, even before *Swingers*. It's interesting; I was a late bloomer and never really found my way with the opposite sex until later in high school. I think I was 17, maybe 19, when I lost my virginity. At a certain point I guess it kicked in. But I was never someone who needed to be with a new woman every night. That was never my thing. I always had an easy time joking and getting along with women, and I liked to go out and have fun and talk and joke and meet people and dance. But I was never a pickup artist, per se. I have two older sisters, so I always felt comfortable with women and respected them.



What I love about my character from *Swingers*, Trent, is how much fun he has with women. It comes from a pure and positive place. Now it's such a different thing. Gaming on women has become almost like the dark arts. Like, if you're not cutting her down or using psychological tricks to make fun of her, you won't get anywhere. I would argue it's the opposite. I would suggest that if you take the avenue of putting a woman down or making fun of her so she feels insecure enough to go out with you, you're ultimately screwing yourself. I mean, let's face it, if you require coaching and techniques to get a woman, it'll come out as dishonest and you'll probably end up unhappy or alone. I much prefer Trent's charming way with women to this more menacing approach you see now.

**PLAYBOY:** You and Favreau made a number of movies together, but he's also had enormous success on his own as an actor, writer and director of blockbusters such as *Iron Man*. Do you ever feel a sense of rivalry or envy?

**VAUGHN:** Not at all. We do our own things, and Jon's done well. I've done well. He's working in an area that really interests him. He's interested in technology, so those big movies are like big toys for him. I'm less of a technology guy. I'm not someone who thinks a lot about gadgets or Twitter and all that. I've been offered those bigger types of movies before and would do one if it were the right thing. But nothing that's come along felt like it would be a great time to make. You want to feel excited about what you're spending your time on. For me, in the past few years I got married and had kids and was doing family stuff, and that was my priority. I feel like I'm just starting to get a little more excited about focusing on different types of things.

I don't know that one should envy anyone's life. If you feel your life isn't where you want it to be, you probably need to wake up and make changes. Or try to move in a new direction while also being kind of easy on yourself. It's natural to get down on yourself if you're trying to make a change. But I think you're always growing, your priorities are always changing, you're learning from your mistakes, and that never stops. Also, you want to have fun.

**PLAYBOY:** You mentioned technology. A couple of years ago, when you made *The Internship*, about two old-school salesmen who talk their way into working at Google, you said you were the last guy on earth who still didn't have a smartphone. Did you ever get one?

**VAUGHN:** Yeah, I got one about four years ago. I'm very savvy with it now. I think it was that I didn't like the feeling of getting a call, especially where business was concerned, and feeling I was on all the time. I liked having my time to go do stuff and not be reachable. I sometimes miss that feeling. But as with all

technology, I now say, how did we live without this before?

**PLAYBOY:** *Unfinished Business* is another work-related comedy. Three guys on a European business trip end up in unexpected situations, such as making an unplanned stop at a huge fetish convention.

**VAUGHN:** We definitely get into trouble. It's a very funny movie. My character is a guy with kids and a wife. He really wants to close this deal and go home, because he has a lot at stake. But things go haywire in the most insane ways, the fetish convention being one of them.

Tom Wilkinson's character is kind of at the end of his run and looking to have the deal go well and make some money so he can make some choices in his life, one of which is he wants a divorce. Dave Franco plays a kid who might have been a good candidate for prescription drugs. Let's just say he's not traditionally on top of things academically. But it's his first business trip and he's excited. He wants to get into exploits, sexual and other-

*Look at these undeclared wars. You're suggesting at gunpoint how things will go.*

wise. There's a scene where we find ourselves in a youth hostel throwing a big international party. It was just a romp, so much craziness. We just went for it. And we shot in Berlin, which gives the movie an unusual backdrop. It's an intense city, architecturally and every other way.

What's great is that you take this group of characters who are mostly misfits, the kind of people you might normally overlook, and they come together in a way that makes sense only to them. It reminds me of *Dodgeball*. I loved being in that movie because it was about this community that was kind and supportive of one another and trying to find joy even when nobody else understood them. I love playing people who are not in the norm. *Dodgeball* was one of my favorite comedies.

**PLAYBOY:** *Wedding Crashers* was your highest-grossing comedy, bringing in more than \$200 million worldwide—perhaps the most ever paid for a hand job under a banquet table.

**VAUGHN:** Right? *Crashers* is an adult situation comedy. I think that movie did well because it really captures how guys talk—the purple stuff, the explicit tone and language. It was a blast to work with Owen on that. We had never really worked together, aside from a cameo in *Zoolander*, and *Crashers* just went all-out on the content. You have to do that sometimes in a movie. It's sort of a relief to people when your characters say things people are thinking but don't have the nerve to say. When you pull away from that sort of content, it can really mess up a film.

**PLAYBOY:** What are you referring to?

**VAUGHN:** Well, *The Internship* was supposed to be an R-rated comedy. Right before we started shooting, the studio said they wanted to go PG-13. I said I just didn't see that. I said we'd do it both ways and then make the call. But the ship had sailed, and I found myself in a movie that was PG-13, which was not my initial intent. As an actor you're not in charge of how those decisions get made, so you find yourself in positions sometimes where you're making a movie that's different from what you expected.

**PLAYBOY:** What's your thinking now about starring in that shot-for-shot remake of *Psycho*? Critics crucified it.

**VAUGHN:** People love to evaluate and re-evaluate that stuff. I can tell you, for me, at that time, Gus Van Sant was one of the most interesting filmmakers around, having done *My Own Private Idaho* and *Drugstore Cowboy*. So I went into it with a very artistic point of view, which was, Yeah, let's go play with this material and work with a great director whose work is pioneering and exciting. I really enjoyed making *Return to Paradise* and *Clay Pigeons*, and that was sort of where I was at and what I wanted to do at that time. These movies are actually comments on moviemaking, and they were also fun to make.

**PLAYBOY:** You'd just come off doing the *Jurassic Park* sequel. Were you consciously separating yourself from big studio movies?

**VAUGHN:** I don't know that it was conscious. We had a good time on *Jurassic Park*, and working with Steven Spielberg was exciting, especially on that kind of film where he was creating a massive world. Growing up I was at the right age for his movies to have a huge impact on me—*Jaws*, *E.T.* I remember having a lot of great conversations with Steven about movies, particularly American Westerns. So maybe it was a bit of a retreat from that. I don't know. I think you have freedom as a creative person to do whatever you want. I never felt I had to be reverent to one form or one way of doing things. I never saw anything religious about the arts. In fact, I sort of saw it as the opposite. On *Psycho*, all the folks involved were excited about doing it, including Hitchcock's estate. To me it was more about taking that journey with Gus. It



was a different place to work from. I really liked the experience, and I still like the movie. I appreciate that it's out there.

**PLAYBOY:** Most actors worry at some point that they'll never work again. Did you ever think, God, my career's in the crapper?

**VAUGHN:** No. I think you have times when some things work out better than others. Sometimes things will be clicking, clicking, clicking in any aspect of your life, and you think, This is great. Then you'll get into a run where you think, Gosh, nothing seems to be jiving. Or you'll make a movie you think is great, and the world just goes, "Eh." *Return to Paradise* was a great movie. *Made* was a movie Jon and I did that I really liked. Even *Swingers* didn't make that much money when it first came out, though it found a place afterward.

**PLAYBOY:** Reviewing *Couples Retreat*, one critic wrote, "Here's the review: Couples, retreat."

**VAUGHN:** And in spite of that, it made a lot of money both internationally and domestically. Here's part of what happened: We shot it in Bora-Bora in the South Pacific, and I honestly think some people thought, Oh, fuck these guys; they don't get to have this much fun making a movie in paradise. Fine. That's fair, but I think the movie has some fun stuff in it.

**PLAYBOY:** You dated Jennifer Aniston, your co-star in *The Break-Up*, but never talked much about it. What can you say now about that relationship?

**VAUGHN:** You know, she's great. For me personally—and I think most well-known actors who are together feel this way—I never enjoyed the paparazzi side of it. You like someone and you're spending time with them; that's separate and that was all fine. But I really spent most of that time finding ways not to be drawn into the attention. I think lying low and not talking about it put me in a good position later, because I just wasn't part of anything.

**PLAYBOY:** Now you're a married man with two kids.

**VAUGHN:** I waited until I was a little older, and I'm glad. I just hadn't matured in that area. A lot of people think, Oh, I've got to focus on my career. And then you wake up and go, Oh goodness, I forgot about the rest of my life. Marriage is terrific, but it's the hardest thing I think you'll ever do. You have to really work at it and want it. I got to an age when it was something that seemed exciting. I wanted kids and a family, but I wouldn't have at 30. You know how it is. You've been making decisions about what you're going to do on your own. Suddenly you're making those decisions with somebody else. It's a much different journey.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you still collaborating on a documentary film project with former Fox News commentator Glenn Beck?

**VAUGHN:** It was a contest, actually. Peter Billingsley, who works with me, did a series of documentaries that Glenn was

involved in producing. The idea was that filmmakers from all over the political spectrum would come to them with concepts about various issues: prescription drugs, the Federal Reserve, this or that, and then get funding to make them. Peter and I previously made one that went to a bunch of festivals, called *Art of Conflict*, about the Protestant and Catholic struggle in Belfast. We followed muralists and artists from both sides. Those contest films are slated to come out this year.

**PLAYBOY:** Most people don't associate Beck with filmmaking. Why did you work with him?

**VAUGHN:** I just thought it was an interesting project.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you onboard with his politics?

**VAUGHN:** I would use the term *libertarian* to describe my politics. I like the principles of the Constitution and the republic, which is a form of government built around the law. A republic did very well in Rome until they got a lot of central power

*I like to drink,  
but drugs never  
appealed to me.  
If anything,  
my thing was  
cigarettes.*

and Caesar decided he knew what was best for everyone. That type of government works if you're looking to start welfare programs, if you're going to conquer the world and use force a certain way. But even back then, it didn't work. More and more people went on the dole and others went bankrupt, and businesses couldn't afford to pay their staff.

**PLAYBOY:** You've been a supporter of Ron Paul. With the presidential election on the horizon, is he still your go-to?

**VAUGHN:** I'm a very big fan, yes. Ron Paul woke a lot of people up to the fact that government can't handle everything for you. Once you start playing that game, where does it stop? I like the way it was until 1913 [when the 16th Amendment was ratified, legalizing a federal income tax], when locally you had sales taxes and property taxes. That seems ethical to me, because I can move to a different neighborhood or area if I like the services they provide. To this day, your police department and your fire depart-

ment are paid for with local taxes, and that makes sense, because you might use those. But the federal government looking into your books to decide what to take from you, that feels wrong.

Trusting the federal government to know what we need and to run things well feels like a bad idea. You see that in the foreign policy of force, where the United States decides to go into another country to make things turn out a certain way. It doesn't work. It causes more problems. Just look at any of these undeclared wars. You're suggesting at gunpoint that you'll decide how things will go. The results haven't gone well. I've been over to Afghanistan and Iraq. I've been with the USO. I've gone over with movies and done stuff. I care a lot about all the kids and families in those situations. It can't be easy. But I don't agree with a foreign policy that says you can send troops places without declaring a war and without having a plan to win the war. I would think you would look at Vietnam and suggest it wasn't the best-laid plan.

I feel the same way domestically. If you look at America today, there's a real want to use force for the issues people believe in. You want whatever you believe in to become law. You're going to make this drug legal and that one illegal. I don't think that's the government's job to decide. I think it's up to the individual. We're all different. One kid is going to start drugs at a young age. Another person won't touch the stuff. Another person will take a puff and go to sleep. We don't all share the same consistent behavior, and the individual should be innocent until proven guilty. They should be allowed to decide what's in their interest, what makes sense for them, unless they commit fraud or physical force or take someone's property.

**PLAYBOY:** So we should have lawyers running the country?

**VAUGHN:** Courts are an important part of the system. If someone commits fraud against you or does something to you, you take them to court. Then there's either a penalty or jail time, depending on what it is. No one's suggesting that you don't have law. Everyone's freer and safer if there are laws in place. If you have no law, you can't leave your house, because you have to protect your stuff.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you own a gun?

**VAUGHN:** I do, yeah. I believe in the right to defend yourself if need be. Hopefully you're never in that situation, but I think you're fairly naive to believe there will never be a cause for self-defense. But again, I believe it's up to the individual. I don't believe rights come in groups. You shouldn't get more or fewer rights because of what you believe in or what nationality you were born into.

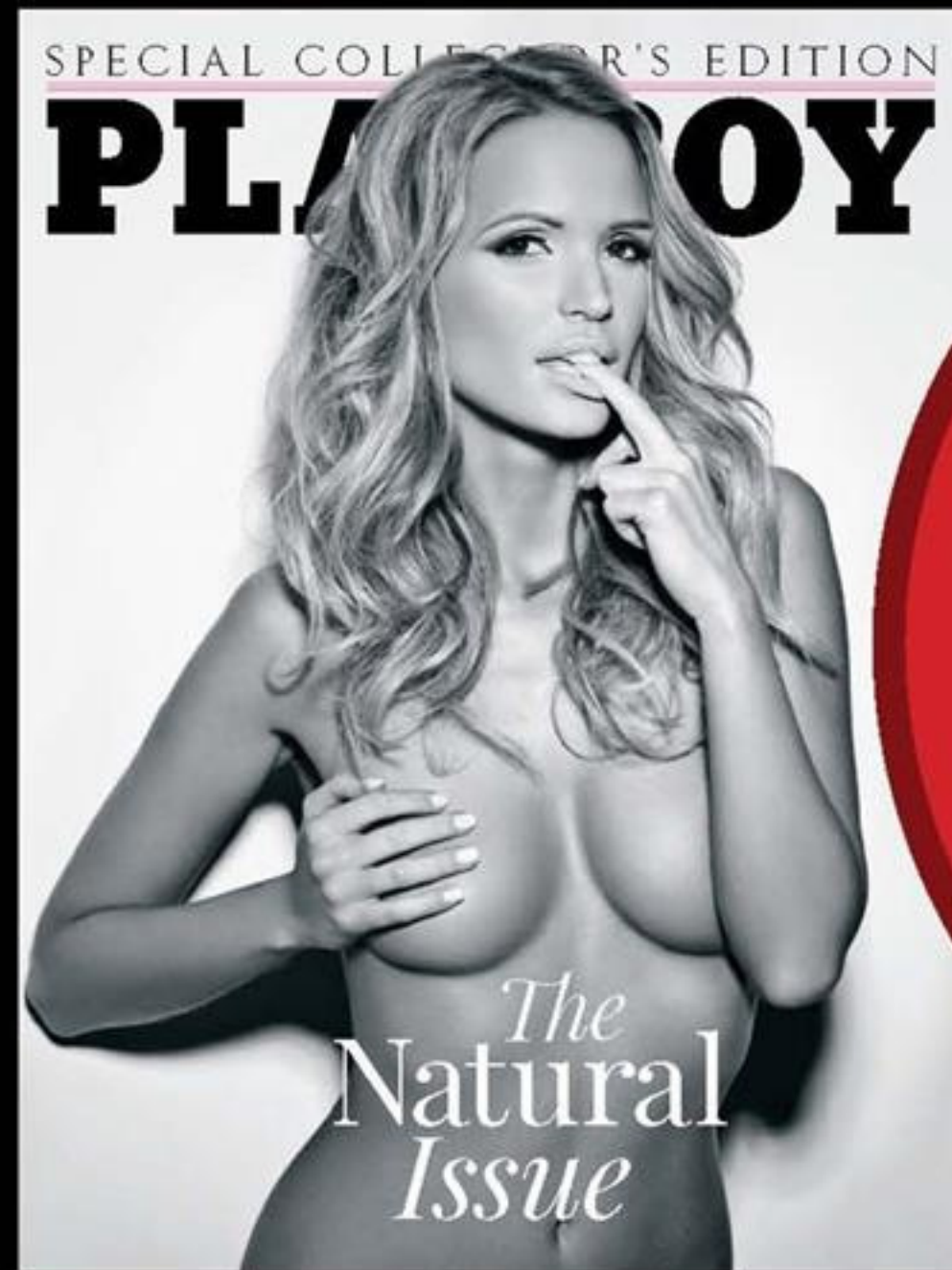
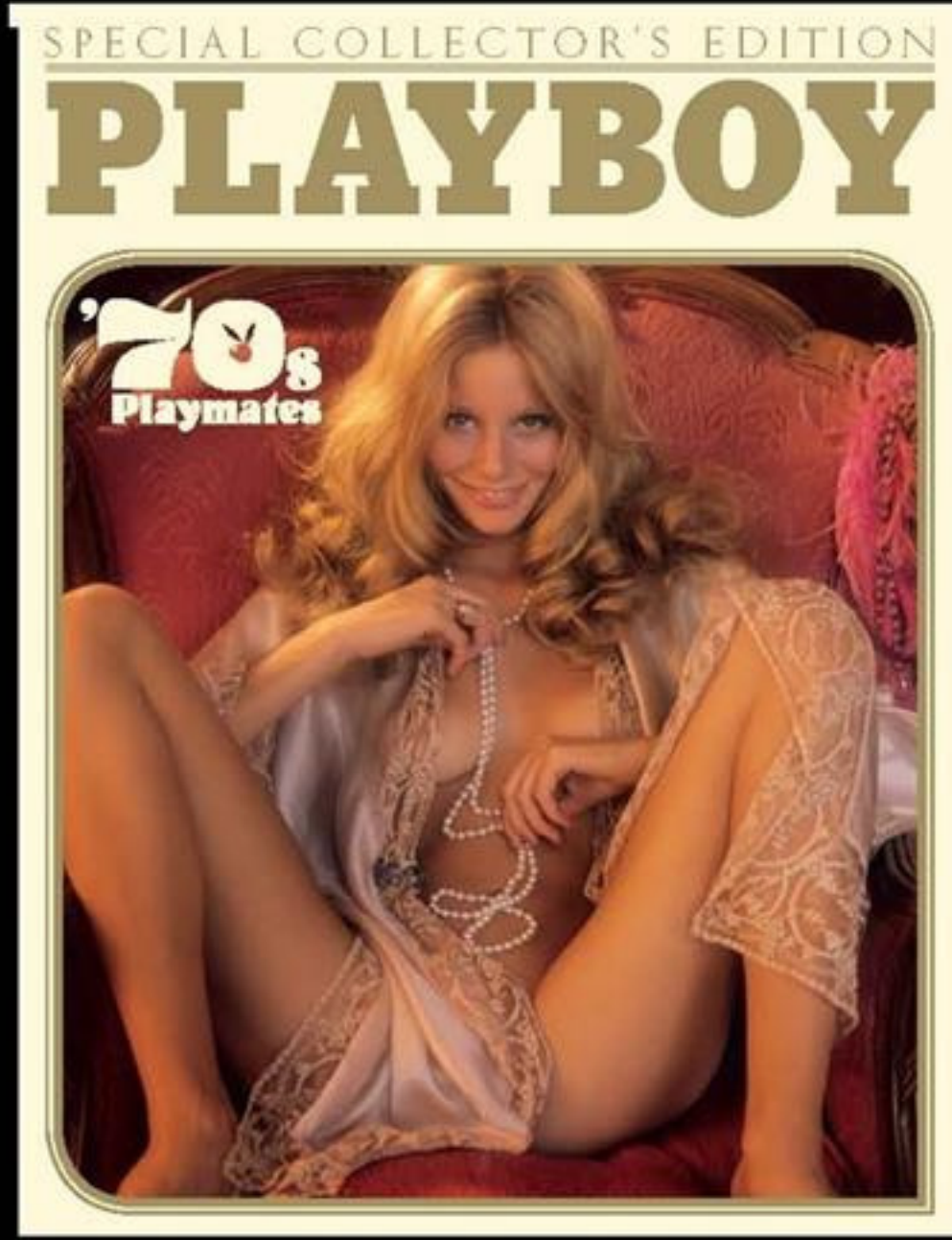
**PLAYBOY:** So you're not a fan of affirmative action?

**VAUGHN:** I'll answer that with a question. Do you believe *(continued on page 114)*

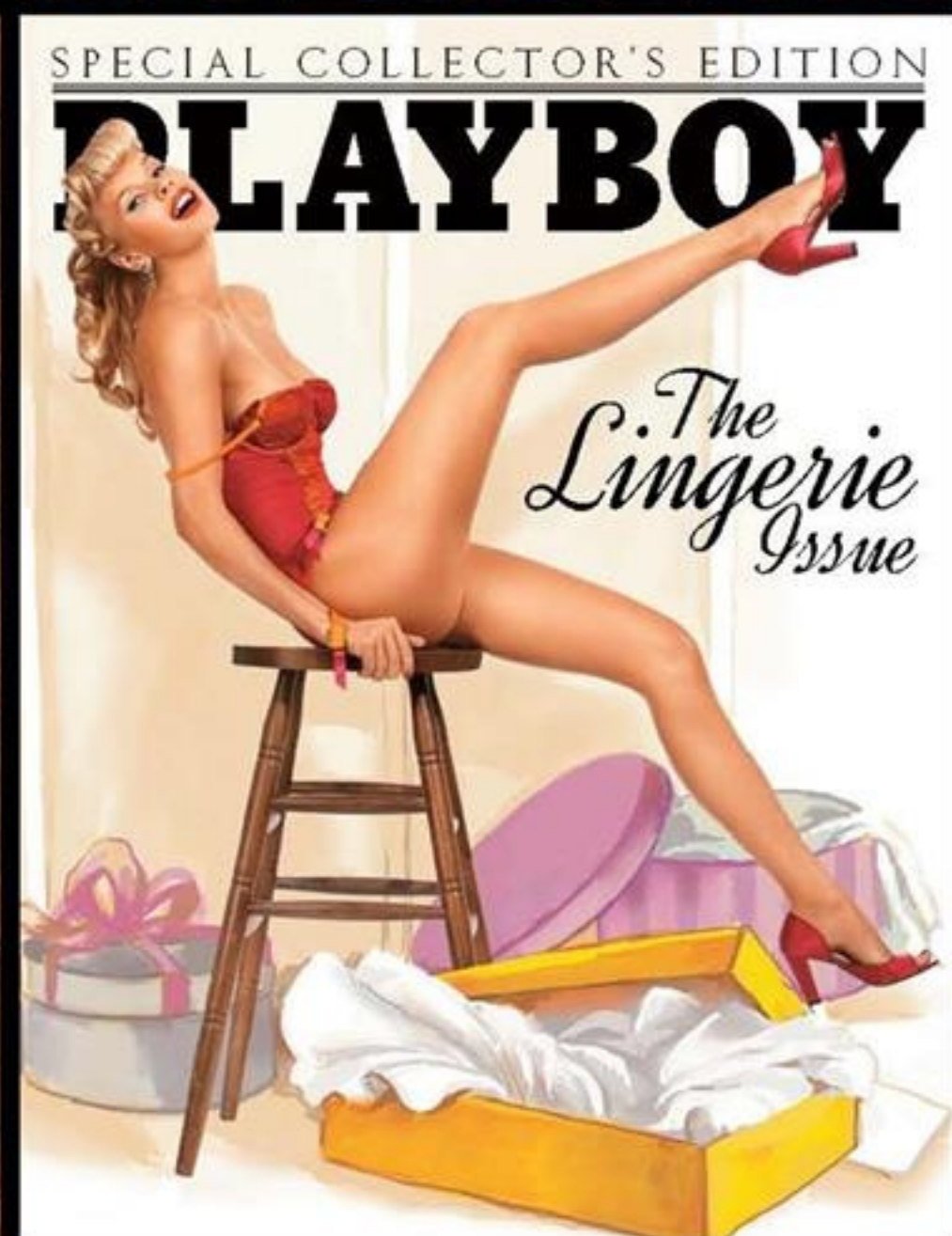
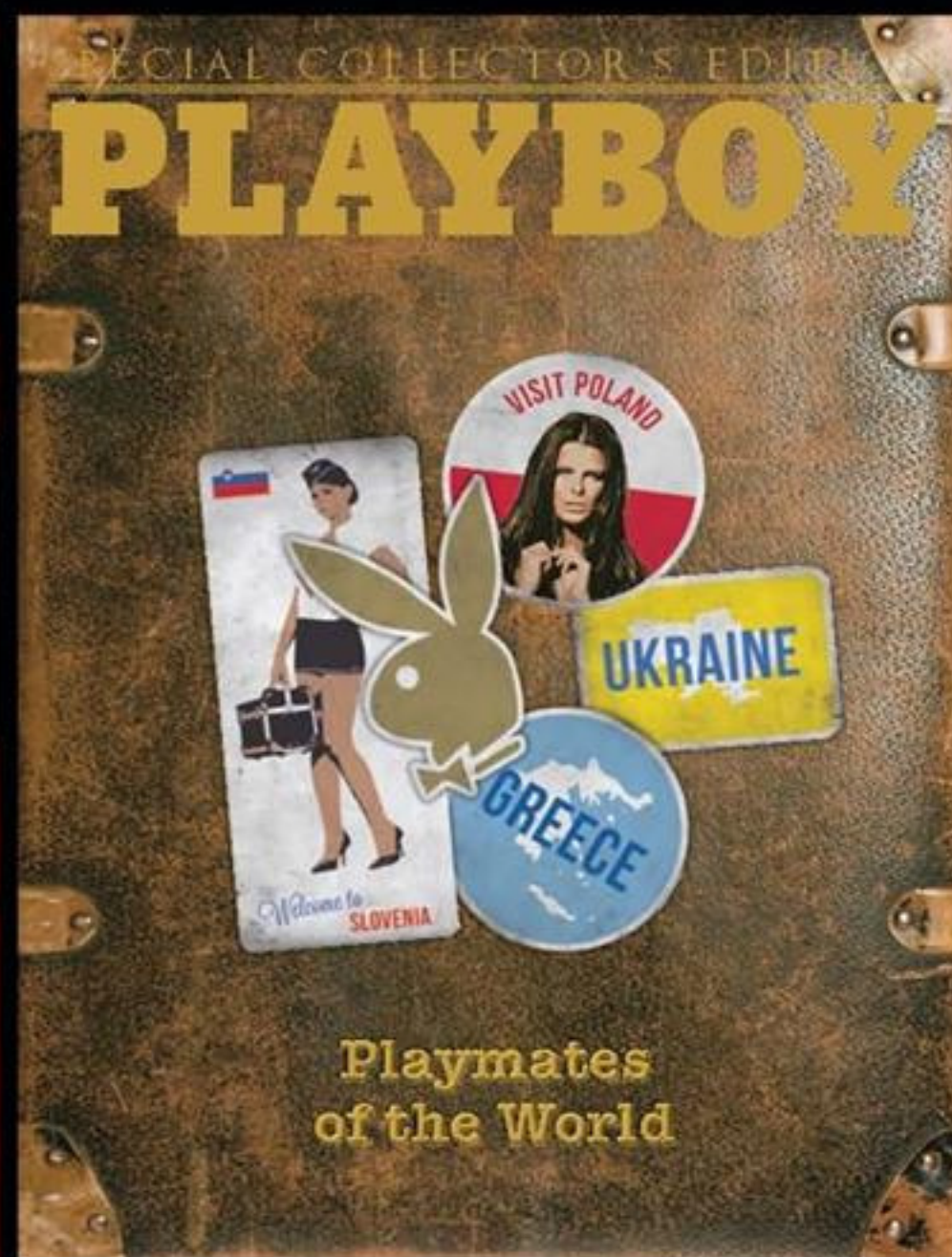
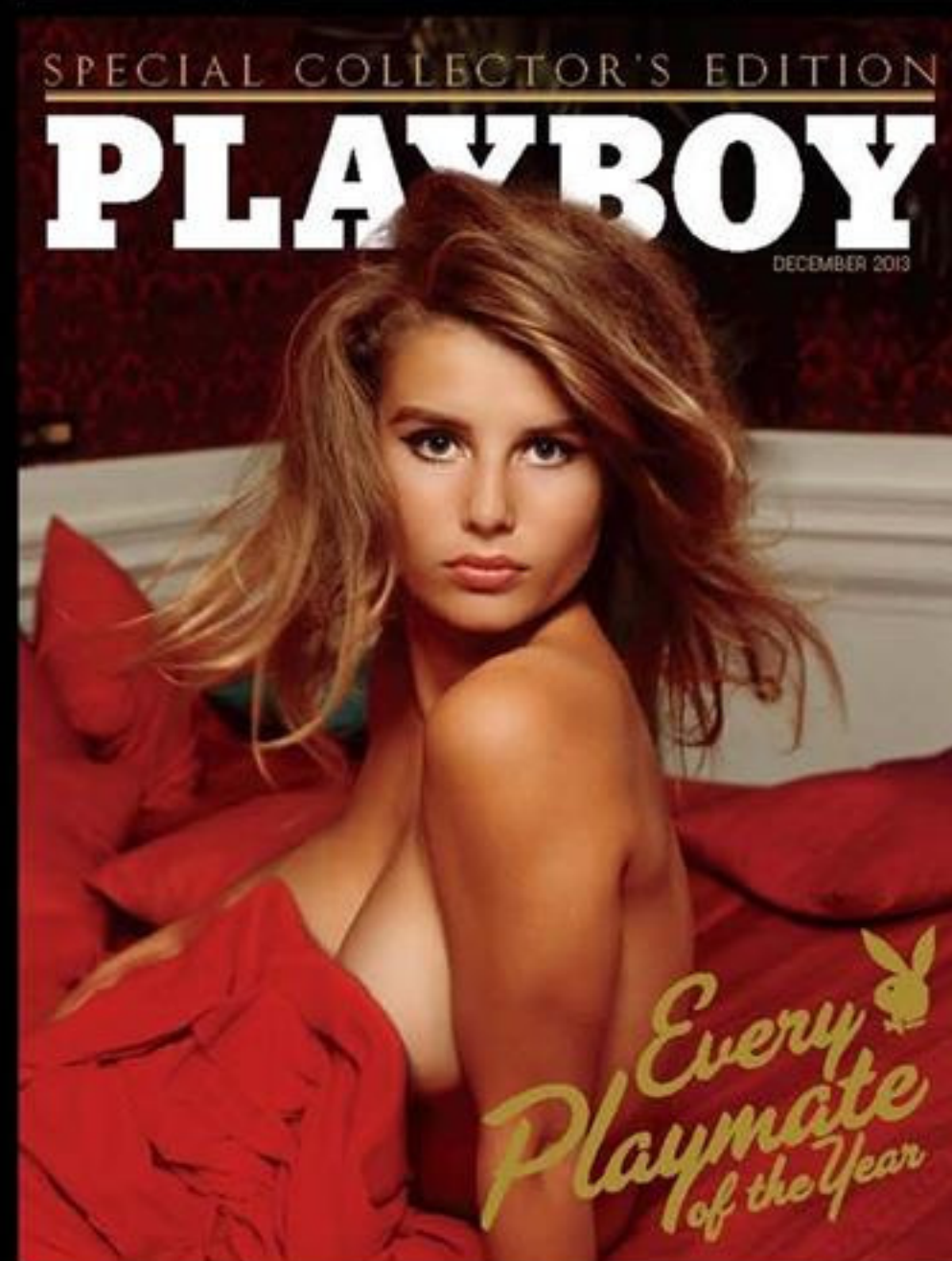
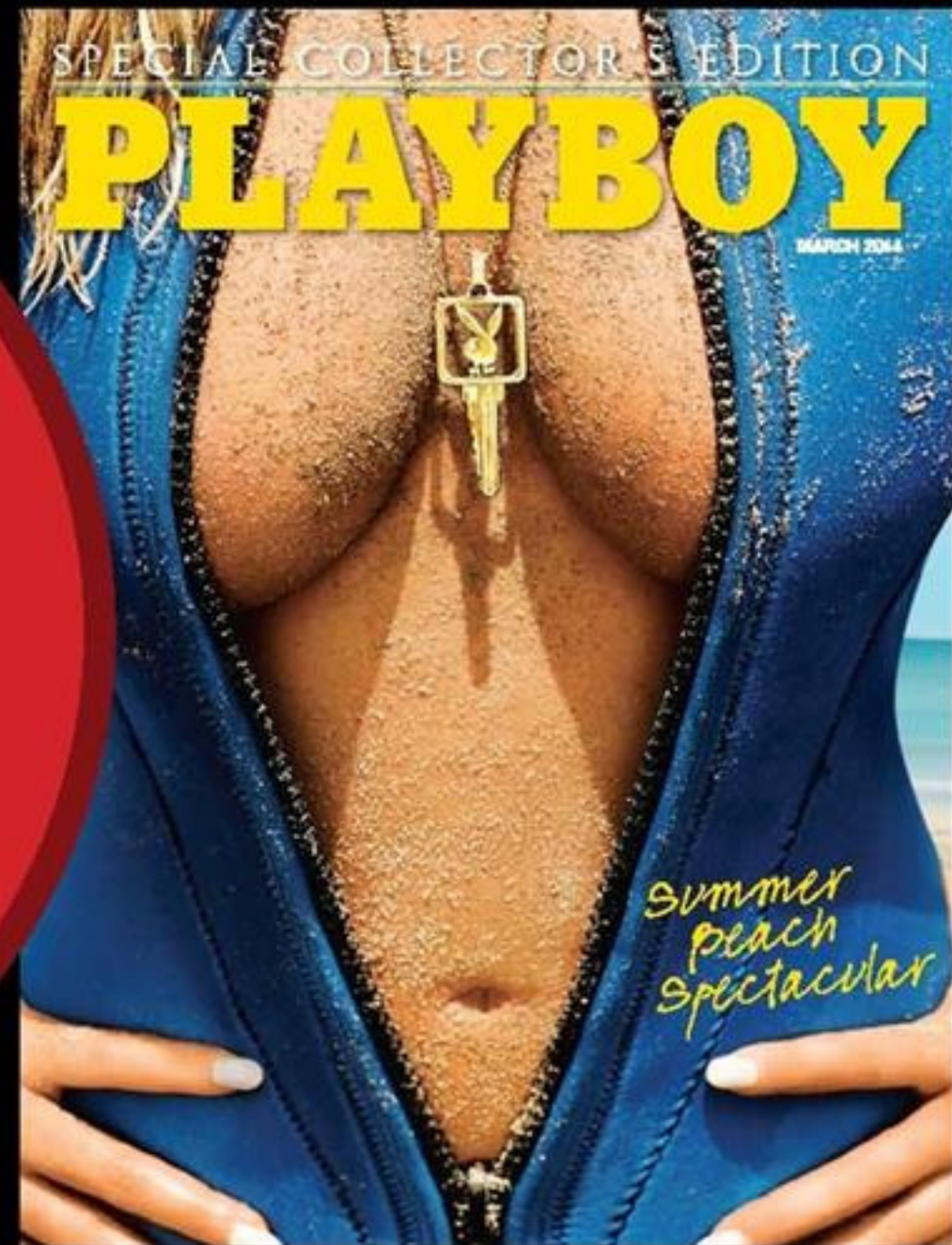


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The

RESURRECTION

of

BOOSIE

BADAZZ

**IN LOUISIANA, HE'S A RAP LEGEND. IN FERGUSON, HIS LYRICS BECAME A BATTLE CRY. IF HE'D BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF MURDER, HE'D BE BEHIND BARS FOR LIFE**

It's a muggy October night in Louisiana, and the crowd at the 13,500-capacity Lafayette Cajundome is growing restless. Rich Homie Quan, a 2014 breakout rap star—whose anthem “Lifestyle” is a YouTube hit with more than 100 million views—is giving it his all on stage. Auto-Tune crooner Future is up next. But the opening acts elicit only groans from the concession stands. Future abandons his set three songs in, explaining he hasn't been paid properly. Twitter messages start to appear: “Soooooo future walked off

stage at the boosie concert in Lafayette & they played fuck u after he left #messy.”

After two hours of waiting, all the crowd wants is Lil Boosie, a.k.a. Boosie Badazz. They're accustomed to long waits, though, because until March 2014, Boosie was incarcerated in the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. Situated on a former plantation and nicknamed “the Farm,” Angola is a veritable terminal ward for inmates on death row or serving life sentences. It's the largest maximum-security prison in America, and Boosie served five years there in near-solitary

By **ETHAN BROWN**

ILLUSTRATION BY RORY KURTZ







confinement after his sentence for drug possession was followed by a false accusation of murder, a case brought by Baton Rouge's much-feared district attorney, Hillar Moore III.

Backstage, Boosie huddles with his mother, Connie; his personal DJ, Chill; and his seven-year-old daughter, Toriana, one of his seven children, who are, as he raps, from "five baby mamas with five different personalities." At a folding table Chill furiously scrolls through Boosie's back catalog to assemble tonight's set. Although he has 1,040 songs, five albums and countless mixtapes at his fingertips, Chill is unsure whether this encompasses the entire Boosie oeuvre. "Boosie used to not even have a DJ," he says. "He would go to Walmart and buy his own CDs to play at shows. I said, 'Boosie, you can't do that no more.'" Boosie, wearing head-to-toe white offset by a 10-pound, \$200,000

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**"I AM AND  
ALWAYS WILL  
BE THE VOICE  
OF PEOPLE WHO  
CAN'T SPEAK."**

— — — — —

gold Jesus piece, wanders toward Chill to discuss his set.

This scene at the Cajundome is overshadowed by outrage building 700 miles away in Ferguson, Missouri as a protest movement set to become the story of the year gains steam. Given Boosie's release just seven months earlier, one might assume it would take time to rebuild his public profile, but in August, Boosie's "Fuck the Police" became the soundtrack for the demonstrations against the police shooting of Michael Brown. In the track, off his 2009 album *Superbad: The Return of Mr. Wipe Me Down* (named one of the 50 best rapper mixtapes of all time on *Complex* magazine's website), Boosie vividly describes abuses at the hands of cops. That and the song's call-and-response chorus—"Narcotics!/ Fuck 'em!/ Feds!/ Fuck 'em!/ DAs!/ Fuck 'em!"—make it a compelling piece of protest music.

Little could he have predicted the track



**ABOVE:** AFTER HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON, LIL BOOSIE FILLED STADIUMS FOR HIS COMEBACK SHOWS. **BELOW LEFT:** BEHIND BARS, THE RAPPER CONTINUED TO RELEASE MIXTAPES, PROVING YOU CAN'T KEEP A HOT ARTIST DOWN. **BELOW RIGHT:** PROTESTERS IN FERGUSON, MISSOURI.



would contribute to dozens of arrests in Ferguson, including the one captured in an August 23, 2014 YouTube video in which a protester standing outside a McDonald's blasts Boosie's "Fuck the Police." He's quickly swarmed by officers led by Missouri State Highway Patrol captain Ronald Johnson, whom *Time* magazine dubbed the "star of the Ferguson crisis" for his ability to calm angry crowds. As the protester is arrested, someone yells, "What law was broken?" Johnson responds that the man was "inciting"—as

though publicly playing Boosie's music could bring about riots.

It's a plausible conclusion. "Police hot in Laffy," tweeted one fan at the Cajundome show, "'cause Boosie around." St. Louis rapper and protest leader Tef Poe called "Fuck the Police" "the national anthem of Ferguson protest grounds" in the *St. Louis Riverfront Times*, proclaiming Boosie had "more relevancy to Mike Brown's peers than Al Sharpton." Indeed, a *USA Today* reporter posted a Vine video just a day before (continued on page 108)





*"He rubs me the wrong way."*





Join model Katrina Elizabeth on the court for a private game of tennis, where her beauty and charm radiate with every swing

# MATCH POINT

*Photography by*  
DAVID BELLEMERE




























CUBA'S SLOW MOVE TOWARD  
REFORM ISN'T FAST ENOUGH FOR  
A GENERATION OF DRAG RACERS  
WHO FIND THEMSELVES STALLED  
AT THE STARTING LINE



Engine





**T**

he road from Havana's José Martí International Airport runs through a landscape of lush green and cinder-block gray, of pastels and corrugated metal, and of course a surreal, seemingly endless flow of finned-out, chrome-covered classic American cars. Some look pristine. Others are a shadow of their former glory, chugging along the highway, belching exhaust and running on long-borrowed time. It's easy to think of Cuba as a snapshot, stuck in the moment after Fidel Castro took power and declared, "The Cadillac does not increase the wealth of the country; it diminishes it." When the U.S. embargo cut off the supply of parts in 1960, necessity made Cubans into the automotive mad doctors they are today. And the evidence is there just beneath the hood: decades of ingenuity in handmade parts and diesel engines transplanted from Soviet imports, half a century of world history and politics coiled through the innards.

# Shrouble

By **WILLIAM WHEELER** Photography by **LUIZ MAXIMIANO**



One sees a few new foreign cars on the roads today, a possible sign of a new Cuba lurching toward the future. In December, President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. would renew diplomatic ties with Cuba for the first time in more than 50 years. The announcement followed a hesitant series of reforms implemented by Raúl Castro, who took over as president in 2008, intended to encourage a degree of private enterprise and boost an ailing economy. These have allowed Cubans greater freedom to travel abroad, buy a house or start a small business. In December 2013 the government announced it would allow people to buy their own modern cars without an official permit.

Unfortunately, those cars are mostly Chinese- and Korean-made pieces of shit, my driver tells me. Like the one he's driving—a yellow Hyundai that skids when it corners, always breaks down and belongs to his employer, the state-owned taxi company. And in a country where the official salary for a doctor was recently doubled to \$70 a month, a new import can fetch as much as \$250,000. To afford one, he tells me, you must be related to one of the Castro brothers.

It's the older cars that have brought me to Cuba. Havana has long been home to an illegal drag-racing scene, but a group of participants has recently begun to lobby for official sanction. In a few days they have a race scheduled, a rare public demonstration of a sport whose legal status is still dubious. In a sense, a drag race in Cuba is not unlike its counterpart in America, an arena of reckless teenagers and thrill junkies. Except here, racing entails speeding down bad roads in a jerry-rigged jumble of spare parts spanning five decades. And in addition to cheating death, participants risk running afoul of authorities in a socialist dictatorship that has long viewed their sport as a bastion of counterrevolutionary tendencies. In Cuba, racing is revolution.



Late on Friday morning, 48 hours before the race, I clamber into a white 1953 Chevy alongside Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter, a 35-year-old American filmmaker in town to film the race and wrap up three years of work on *Havana Motor Club*, his documentary about Cuban drag racing. Together we head off into the daily downpour to the run-down neighborhood of El Cerro. We hurry out and under the pitched roof of Eduardo Hernández's *taller*; a lofty workshop of gleaming metal decorated with giant Chevrolet insignias. Perlmutter chats up Hernández, joking that he bears a resemblance to Mel Gibson, and Hernández's wife, presenting them with a stack



of U.S. car magazines. Hernández tells us that the U.S. recently rejected his visa application, and he wants Perlmutter to set up a cultural exchange for race car drivers to improve his chances of obtaining a visa—not so he can defect but so he can see how Americans race and what it feels like to drive on good roads. “I watch races from around the world,” he says, “and I ask myself, how do they do that?”

Parked in the *taller* is Hernández's 1956 Chevy Bel Air, the Missile of El Cerro. Hernández has dropped the roof a couple of inches, installed two new Chevy doors and moved the engine back toward the driver's seat, allowing him to lower the hood for a more aerodynamic profile and shorten the transmission, increasing power.

In the ecology of Cuban motor sports, V8s are the crowd-pleasers at the top of the food chain, followed by Ladas and Moskvitches (wimpy clown cars of Soviet

stock) and finally motorcycles, on which Hernández got his start. His family always had a car—his father was a mechanic—so it was a natural transition, cruising around Havana, looking for someone with a car like his to challenge.

Life in Cuba has improved under the new reforms, he says. Before, you couldn't buy or sell a car, only inherit one. Your car would be yours forever and then your son's forever. But now in Cuba anyone can buy and sell his own car. (Of course, he says, they exchanged cars before, despite the law; they just had no proof of ownership.)

Just as important, new travel freedoms have opened access to a supply of new parts. A few years ago Hernández was struggling to win races when he couldn't get his hands on a working carburetor. Now he scours the car magazines to learn what he needs and spends what he has on a shopping list of parts that he asks friends





1. Eduardo Hernández and the Missile of El Cerro. 2. Nighttime at the Malecón, a Havana spot where drivers go to see and be seen. 3. Rey Lopez in his garage. 4. A driver putting full throttle on his car. 5. Classic car gathering. 6. Jote Madera and what is left of his Black Widow. 7. Street scene in downtown Havana. 8. Classic cars in Havana. 9. Sunday gathering of classic American cars at the famous Tropicana Club.



to pick up for him on their travels. “Everything you see, I get it from abroad,” he says. “Dude, I’ve gotten so much better.”

While that access has raised the overall level of competition, it has also increased the performance gap between those with the means to travel and those without. The shift presages the arrival of a new species of racer, one who didn’t grow up in his father’s *taller*.

A prime example is a newcomer on the racing scene known as Mascara, whose family’s wealth, it is said, is tied to the Cuban tobacco industry. With a supercharged engine in his BMW, Mascara is the rich kid playing with toys no one else on the island has heard of yet. “You

can’t compare a new car to an old one,” Hernández tells me. “His BMW, there is no describing what it can do.”

Mascara has even beaten the Titos, a racing clan widely respected for their mechanical prowess and consistent performance. Hernández speaks of them in deferential tones. He does not extend that esteem to Mascara, whose success is merely a function of resources. Mascara may be a sign of things to come, a day when Cuban racing is dominated by rich kids with superchargers. But by then, Hernández says, maybe those guys will have their own exclusive category in which to compete against one another. “People who have more can do





1



3



2



4

1. Carlos Alvarez attempts to fix the engine of El Porsche. 2. Inside Madera's shop, where he makes fenders and other car parts. 3. Close-up of a classic American car at the Sunday gathering. 4. Alvarez's garage.

more; that's obvious," he says. "I don't have much. But if I have something, I'm going to fight for it, fight for what's mine because I love it; it's in my blood."

One day, Hernández hopes, racing will be truly legal, an official sport. Then he will turn over the keys to his son to race—at a proper venue, with safe roads and that liquid he's heard about that's sprayed on professional tracks so the cars don't skid all over the place. But that's just what he hopes, he says, not necessarily what he expects will happen.

Hernández thought things would be different after January 2013, when the first officially sanctioned race since the revolution was held. But authorized races are still too few and far between. He's tired of racing clandestinely, like a fugitive in the streets, worried about going to jail or losing his car if he gets caught. Racing is an addiction, he says, comparing himself to an alcoholic who knows he's drinking himself to death but can't stop.

Hernández recently discovered a problem with his camshaft and has been working all week to be ready for Sunday's race, making his replacement parts by hand. That's normal, though. He still hasn't finished construction on his house,

## WE HEAR A RUMOR THAT APPROVAL FOR THE RACE COULDN'T BE SECURED BECAUSE THE VENUE MANAGER DEFECTED TO THE U.S.

because he spends all his free time working on his car. "I only go inside to take a shower and sleep," he says. "Racing is a huge sacrifice, the biggest you will ever make. It's like anything: If you want to be big, then you have to sacrifice a lot. And in Cuba you have to sacrifice twice as much."



Fidel Castro controlled racing even before he controlled Cuba. In 1958, on the eve of the second annual Cuban Grand Prix,

Castro's men kidnapped the lead racer, Argentina's Juan Manuel Fangio, a five-time world champion, from the luxurious Hotel Lincoln to protest a sport that bore all the trappings of the decadent capitalist regime the rebels were trying to overthrow. The coup put the revolution on the map internationally, but the race went on anyway, until a car veered off the road at a curve and smashed into the crowd, killing seven, wounding more than 40 and leaving a trail of what looked like broken toy soldiers in its wake. By January 1959 Castro's revolution had toppled the Cuban government.

After the revolution, professional sports were banned in Cuba. Castro championed amateur sports as "the right of the people" and no longer the pastime of the wealthy. Today billboards on Havana's streets celebrate sports as a gift of the revolution and athletes as "champions of the people." But that propaganda pointedly excludes auto racing, which was never brought under the auspices of the new sports ministry.

The official *(continued on page 116)*

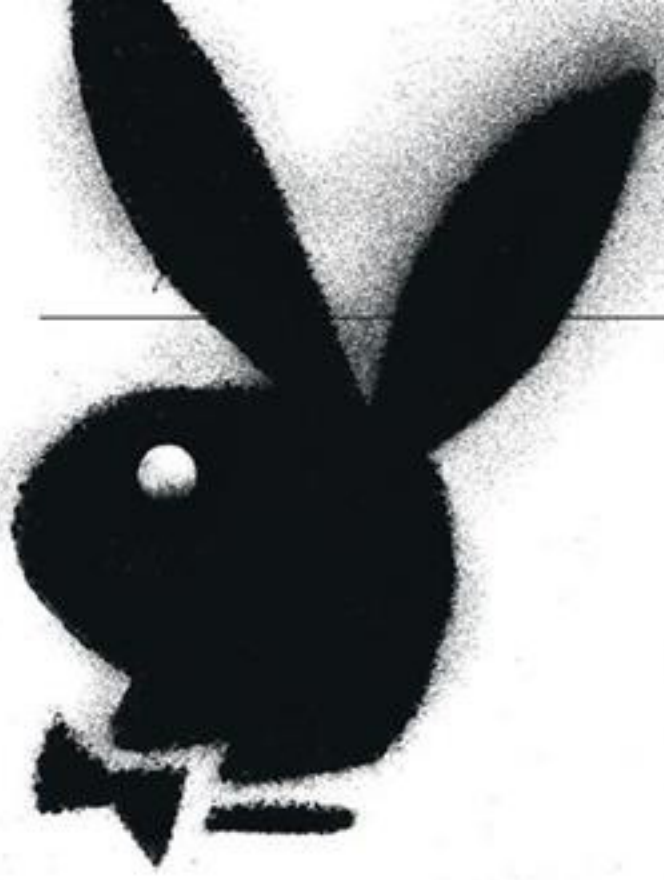




*“What do you think? Is it too much?”*



PLAYBOY'S  
SPRING STYLE  
GUIDE



# STREET SMARTS 2015

URBAN  
CASUAL IS  
BECOMING  
THE NEW  
COUTURE.  
HERE ARE  
35 WAYS TO  
JOIN THE  
REFINED  
STREET-  
STYLE  
REVOLUTION

Text by  
**PLAYBOY STAFF &  
VINCENT BOUCHER**

Illustrations by  
**ROBERT HARKNESS**





Let us mourn the death of the man in the gray flannel suit. In a world where casual Fridays have taken over the entire week and tech CEOs wear hoodies, simply knowing how to match a suit with a tie isn't enough for the stylish modern man. Welcome to the street-style revolution. The new tastemakers aren't designers at storied fashion houses but regular guys well-versed in mash-up culture. They take their influences from the worlds of hip-hop, nightclubs, sports, skateboarding, the military, rock and roll and American work-wear and put it all together with flair. Here's what you need to know.

## SHOCK AND AWE



• The Casio G-Shock remains unbeatable for sheer durability and rugged good looks. The 1990s reissue costs less than a smartphone and never needs an upgrade, and it's stayed in style since its 1980s debut. (1990s Protector G-Shock, \$99, g-shock.com)

1

## THE STATUS SNEAKER

• It's gonna get you, snukka. The sneaker-chukka combo is coming up fast for spring, ticking off all the boxes of street-worthy style. Dressier than your usual kicks yet still projecting a laid-back groove, the shoes pair with anything from suits to swim trunks. Del Toro's Matthew Chevallard has made chukkas a mainstay, with versions that run the gamut from Tokyo-influenced edgy to Palm Springs preppy. "It's a classic silhouette we made more apt," he says.



1

### Chuk It

• Chukkas are an obsession at Milan-by-way-of-Miami's Del Toro; dope numbers such as this python-print velvet shoe have made the brand a favorite of NBA players, especially with sizes that regularly run to 13 (16 by special order).

• Velvet sneakers, \$340, deltoroshoes.com



• Canvas sneakers, \$60, vans.com

2

### Man With a Van

• This vintage-influenced canvas shoe from Vans remains true to the brand's surf-bound code. In crimson red canvas, it's bound to be a summer staple everywhere from sandy beaches to city streets.



• Leather sneakers, \$400, barneys.com

3

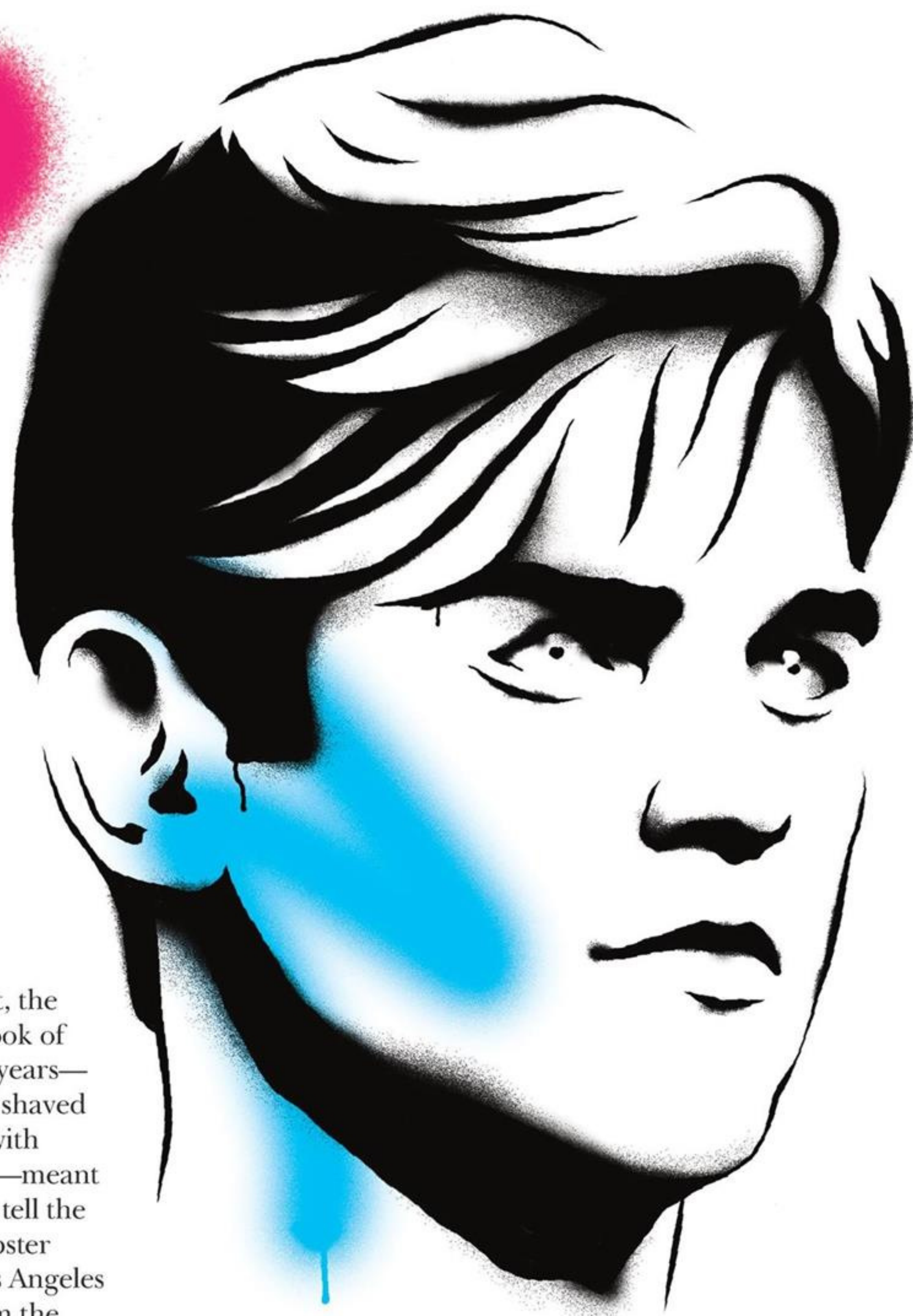
### Project Runway

• With a quietly luxe and minimal style, Common Projects jump-started the move away from blinged-out sneakers. This version for Barneys New York in navy Italian leather sports only the company's gilded numbering.



# HAIR SUPERIORITY

3



• Let's face it, the ubiquitous look of the past few years—pompadour, shaved sides, often with bushy beard—meant you couldn't tell the Brooklyn hipster from the Los Angeles publicist from the Noe Valley biker. This spring is all about a clean streak, as seen on men's runways and in the Michael Kors look here, with casually layered longer

hair. Jack Abernethy of Beverly Hills's Ramirez Tran salon, who tends to everyone from Tom Hanks to Benedict Cumber-

batch, says that with more hair on top, it's time to ditch the beard altogether. "You don't want to look like a caveman."



## Shaver

• Mid-ear is the best length for sideburns. Pros including Jack Abernethy swear by the Wahl Peanut trimmer, which has four different cutting guides.

• Trimmer, \$50, [westcoastshaving.com](http://westcoastshaving.com)

## Skin Tonic

• Soothe that just-shaved skin and maybe create some good vibrations with Brooklyn Grooming's organic-cucumber-scented Anchor aftershave tonic.



• Tonic, \$42, [brooklyngrooming.com](http://brooklyngrooming.com)



## Shave Oil

• At home, reach for this pre-shave oil from Imperial Barber Products to soften up those whiskers. Smooth this potion on before your shaving cream.

• Pre-shave oil, \$16, [imperialbarberproducts.com](http://imperialbarberproducts.com)

## Wax

• The brew-meisters at Blind Barber have just released a hops-infused wax aptly named 60 Proof; use it to add texture and define layers with a matte finish.



• Hair wax, \$18, at [mrporter.com](http://mrporter.com)



# CLEAR OUT

• Los Angeles-based Oliver Peoples has been stylishly shading the eyes of Hollywood for decades. The translucent frames and blue lenses of the Fairmont model update a retro design. Unlike with heavier styles, the lighter profile means you're wearing the glasses, not the other way around. (Fairmont sunglasses, \$365, [oliverpeoples.com](http://oliverpeoples.com))

4



# LIGHTEN UP

• This spring, denim is all washed up. That's right: In a move away from the prevailing mood indigo of raw denim seen the past few seasons, jeans are taking on a lighter tone, with vintage styles a big inspiration. Says Steve Romero, men's designer at 7 for All Mankind, "I love adding handcrafted treatments such as sanding, whiskering and distressing. They give each piece an authentic, worn-in, one-of-a-kind look." For more on denim, see *Into the Blue*, page 88.

1

## The Jacket

• With its faded blue tone and subtle shading, this 7 for All Mankind jeans jacket looks like it's right out of *Butch Cassidy*. Stylish renegades will wear it with darker denim now and with white jeans come summer.

• Denim trucker jacket, \$378, [7forallmankind.com](http://7forallmankind.com)

2

## The Shirt

• You won't be accused of wearing a Canadian tuxedo if you pair this organic washed-denim shirt by Nudie Jeans with a pair of darker denim. And the Western details don't come on too strong—just right for urban cowboys.

• Denim shirt, \$199, [nudiejeans.com](http://nudiejeans.com)



3

## The Jeans

• Levi's newly introduced 522 slim-taper jeans fit close through the waist and have a slightly tapered leg; they

could be a warm-weather go-to in this barely blue, sun-washed version called, appropriately, Winnemucca.

• 522 jeans, \$68, [levi.com](http://levi.com)

## GO CLEAN YOUR CLOSET

**It's complicated, but it doesn't have to be. Making room in your overstuffed closet can be daunting, so take a deep breath and follow these simple rules.**

### NO.1

#### PLAY FAVORITES

• Ryan Crowe, owner of ConsignMEN, a designer-resale boutique in Los Angeles, says, "I'm pretty hardcore. I don't have anything in my closet that I don't love, unless there's a practical reason I might need it someday, like a ski cap."

### NO.2

#### ZERO IN ON DENIM

• "Men need to get rid of jeans that are in an outdated style, like boot cuts," says celebrity men's stylist Annie Psaltiras.

### NO.3

#### LEATHER UP

• "Any piece of leather you're not wearing, hand over to a consignment shop and see

what you can get for it," says Crowe.

### NO.4

#### BEEN THERE, BANK THAT

• If you have a loud Versace print deep in your closet that you're never going to wear again, it could be some kid fashion-isto's prize. "The resale value can equal what you originally paid,"

Crowe says. Other hot labels include Hermès, Saint Laurent and late-1990s Tom Ford-era Gucci.

### NO.5

#### SHOE-OUT

• Did you know women look at your footwear too? "Shoes cost a lot of money, so men tend to hang on to them," says Psaltiras. "Let those square-toed lace-ups go!"



# DON'T SWEAT

• A few years ago a handful of fashion-forward (i.e., fearless) guys started wearing pants that had the fit of old-school sweats but were made of fabrics you'd never see on a treadmill. And thus the "jogger" pant was born. Fitted,

slimming and with more than a little swagger, this style quickly became the fastest-growing category of pants out there. Top brands include Publish, Zanerobe and True Religion. Here's how to wear them.

7

## 1. Top It

• Wearing them with a button-down shirt lets the world know you're not about to go for a jog.

## 2. Go High

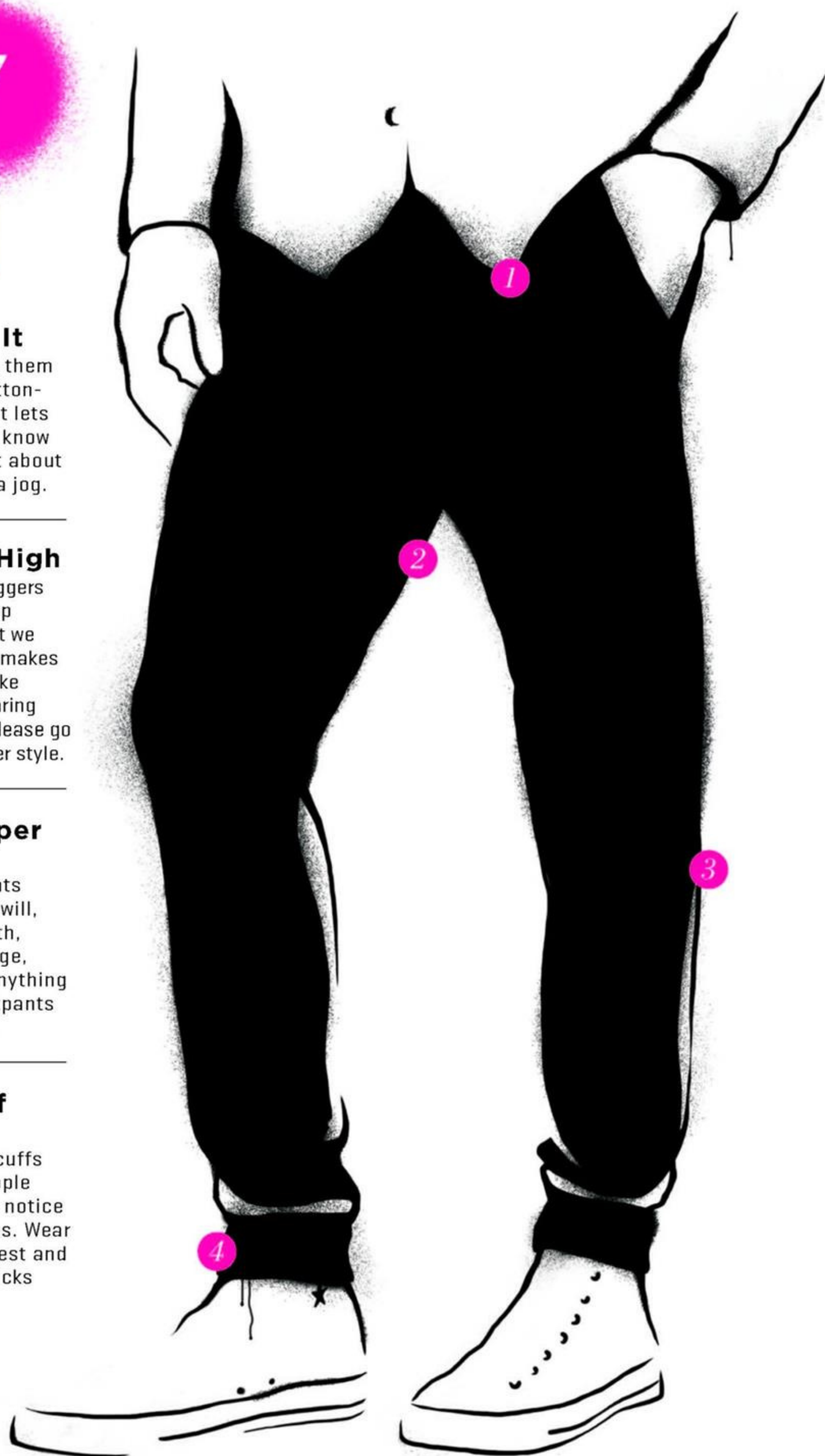
• Some joggers have a drop crotch, but we think that makes you look like you're wearing diapers. Please go for a higher style.

## 3. Proper Cloth

• Pick pants made of twill, chino cloth, camouflage, cotton—anything but sweatpants material.

## 4. Cuff Love

• Elastic cuffs mean people will really notice your shoes. Wear the cleanest and coolest kicks possible.



8



## THE NEW BRIEFCASE

• If briefcases are too bourgeois and totes too tame, you're in luck thanks to the badass-backpack boom. With styles from tactical rucksacks to retro reissues, it's no longer inappropriate to hoist a bag on your shoulder while wearing a suit. This gray twill and leather Everlane pack has a tailored urban-military vibe that would be at home on streets from Brooklyn to Berlin.

• Twill backpack, \$65, [everlane.com](http://everlane.com)

9



## NO RAIN, NO GAIN

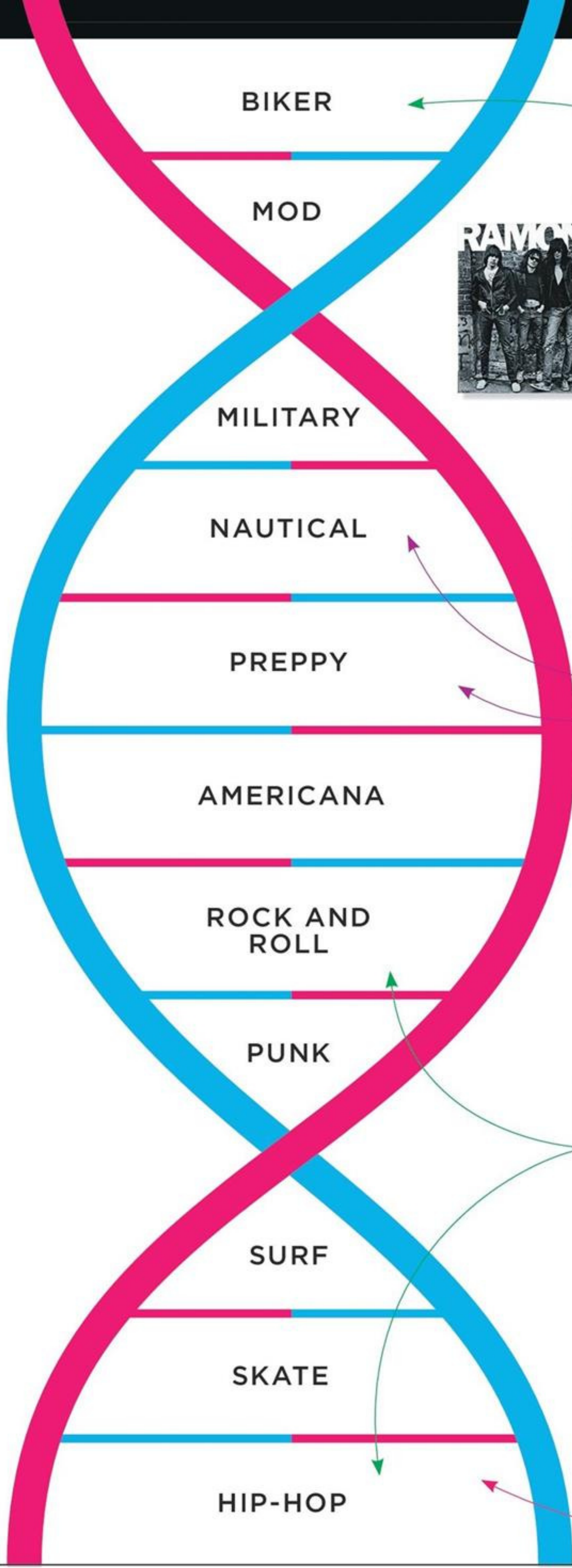
• There's something retro mod (as in Swinging Sixties meets ska meets *Quadrophenia*) about the rubberized-cotton Stockholm raincoat from Stutterheim, which comes in every color from forest green to wide, in-your-face black-and-white stripes.

• Raincoat, \$395, [stutterheim.com](http://stutterheim.com)



# MUSICAL INFLUENCES

• More than anything else, music culture drives street style. Here's how three iconic bands hijacked existing clothing trends to express themselves—and influence generations of urban dandies.



**The Ramones**  
 • The skinny jeans, horizontal-striped T-shirts and leather jackets these guys rocked still look current today.



**The Striped Tee**  
 • It looked great on the Ramones, sailors and, yes, the White Stripes. (Officine Generale T-shirt, \$185, available at mrporter.com)



**Bomber Jacket**  
 • A black bomber jacket can channel just about any manly subculture. (Rick Owens jacket, \$2,220, available at mrporter.com)



**Run-DMC**  
 • The hip-hop pioneers wore a fierce two-tone uniform that used the clamshell-toed Adidas Superstar as its foundation.

**Beastie Boys**  
 • Their look blended skate culture and hip-hop style long before such contemporary artists as Pharrell.



**Cool Kicks**  
 • Adidas still sells the urban classic Superstar 2.0s. (\$75, adidas.com)

## HEAR THIS

• We're in the middle of an audiophile style revolution. Here are three handsome headphones that go beyond Beats: 1. This sleek and technical pair will make you look like a real producer (Sennheiser Momentum, \$295). 2. Bold color and better-than-earbuds bass come without the high price (Philips SHL3000RD, \$25). 3. Titanium drivers and metal construction make these DJ-quality headphones stand out (Eskuché 45v2, \$270).





*The*  
**BULL**

*The*  
**BULL**  
*You See*

*The*  
**BULL**  
*You Don't*

Everything dies for a reason

*Fiction by* **Mark Jacobs**

**T**he bull died. Alice had never really given the matter any thought. At Las Ventas bullring there was pageantry, and horns blared. She was able to recognize a kind of art in the ritual motion, the fancy footwork, the strutting of courageous men. Then the thin blade stabbed, puncturing a lung, and the bull died. A team of men and horses clattered into the ring and towed it out, bleeding and floppy. Sweepers followed, obliterating the imprint of the body being dragged across the smooth brown sand.

The stone seats at Las Ventas were hard. The sun was Spanish stern. The matadors, and the picadors

on their armored horses, and the lithe young banderilleros who danced up to the bull and stabbed it with bright darts were dressed in sparkly suits. The men sitting around Alice and Will in the cheap seats smoked cigars and drank beer from plastic cups. They cheered aesthetic niceties in the arena that Alice did not perceive. Then the bull died.

Next to her, aggravated by the smoke, Will said, "What's wrong?"

It would have been better for him, and probably for Alice, if Will had been less physically perfect. He was like a Spanish matador, that trim and shapely, only blond. It was taking them far too long to accept

ILLUSTRATION BY JESÚS SOTÉS







the fact that he was not going to make it as an actor. Twenty-seven. A watershed age, or it should be. But Will could not bear the thought of an anonymous life. Spain wasn't their vacation; it was the island they swam to, escaping themselves. Neither of them had any idea what happened next. Will was no good with money, so it was Alice's job to make sure the little they had lasted.

"The bull died."

"What did you expect, Alice Alice?"

That was how he'd been signaling his irritation with her lately, doubling her name. She told him, "I'm going to dream about this."

"Only if you want to."

She watched a dignified man carry a signboard to the center of the ring. The signboard announced the name of the next bull and some of its particulars. It was fixed to a pole, which he placed on the ground, turning a slow circle so that anybody who wanted to could read it. Before she knew it, another unsuspecting angry bull raced into the ring, looking for its tormentor. Twenty minutes later it was dead.

Afterward, Will wanted to go out to a sherry bar, but Alice persuaded him to eat in their room. They were staying above *Donde Manolo*, a workaday eatery with no choice on the menu; you ate what they had on a given day. The room was a monk's closet, but there was a narrow table with rickety legs on which she put out bread and olives, a tin of sardines and half a bottle of rioja. Why on earth did she provoke him after he'd agreed to eat in?

"You could go to college," she said. "I could work. I'll get a job, any job. We'd get through it."

The anger was there. She watched it narrow like a laser in the gray pupils of his arrogant eyes, expecting it to burn a hole in her. But he surprised her and let it go. Sitting on the bed, feeling like Mommy, she watched him pick up a towel, make it a cape, become a matador. It was a bravura performance. Having been to one bullfight, he had the moves down. The swagger, the style, the confidence. The room was a ring and Will its center of gravity. It was fun. The problem was the mirror on the wall over the chest of drawers. He played to it as though nothing else mattered, least of all Alice. But feeling mature, liking the taste of the wine in the creases under her tongue, she clapped like a real audience. At the same time she could not help dreading the bull.

Which did come into her dream that night, blacker than the *Ventas* victims. The context was dream-wacky, and she had already lost most of it when she woke up breathing fast and shallow. It was late. Will was snoring like an angel. Out in the street, one horn honked. She got up and looked out the window. Thick shadows were walking on their own, unconnected to bodies. Alice felt old. She was her grandmother, with her grandmother's eyes, hands, memories. The day she and Will decided to get married it began as a spoof. He wore a Confederate uniform

joined the crowd of spectators behind a rope line watching the self-important bustle of a movie making itself. Brava Coquense had a silver ponytail and was steeped in cool. The actors clearly loved him, or pretended they did. They were filming a single scene, a woman with superb long legs pursuing a man in a leather jacket carrying a satchel, both of them twisting through the social hubbub of walkers and talkers, drinkers and emphatic gesticulators. After the scene was shot, the spectators clapped and Will stomped away in a rage. It was as though he had sneaked up close to the edge of the world where he belonged, only to crash into an invisible field of force. Alice knew better than to chase after him.

That night Will did not come back to the room. Sleeping alone was a relief. Alice felt the kind of sexual longing she had experienced as a teenager, an ache like loneliness incarnate. She brushed the loneliness lightly with a hand and found herself crying softly, thinking of her grandmother. Mama Aija fled Latvian horrors she refused to speak of, winding up in Queens married to an Irish fireman. Once, when Alice was a kid, she had gone into Mama Aija's room and found her standing naked before the full-length mirror, one hand over her groin, the other tracing the outline of her sagging pink breasts in a tender effort of memory that devastated the girl and aroused a fierce protective instinct in her. The old woman smiled at her granddaughter with radiant kindness. Later, Alice understood the sorrow in Mama Aija's blue eyes to be sacred knowledge, leaping a generation to make a home in her.

The next day Will came back to the room with an iPhone and a bottle of fino. The cost of the phone alarmed Alice. With stylized defiance he opened the bottle and poured her a glass.

"And the service plan?" she asked him.

"I told them you'd come back tomorrow and work that out."

"We can't afford it."

"How am I supposed to get work if nobody can find me, Alice Alice?"

Here was the moment toward which they had been maneuvering in their complicit ignorance. She tasted the sherry. It was very nice. Quietly she told him, "No one is trying to find you, Will. They don't want you."

He came as close as he ever would to hitting her. The flat of his hand grazed her face. But he *(continued on page 122)*



**When Will got to the place  
he imagined the bull's  
defenseless shoulders to be,  
there was Alice.**

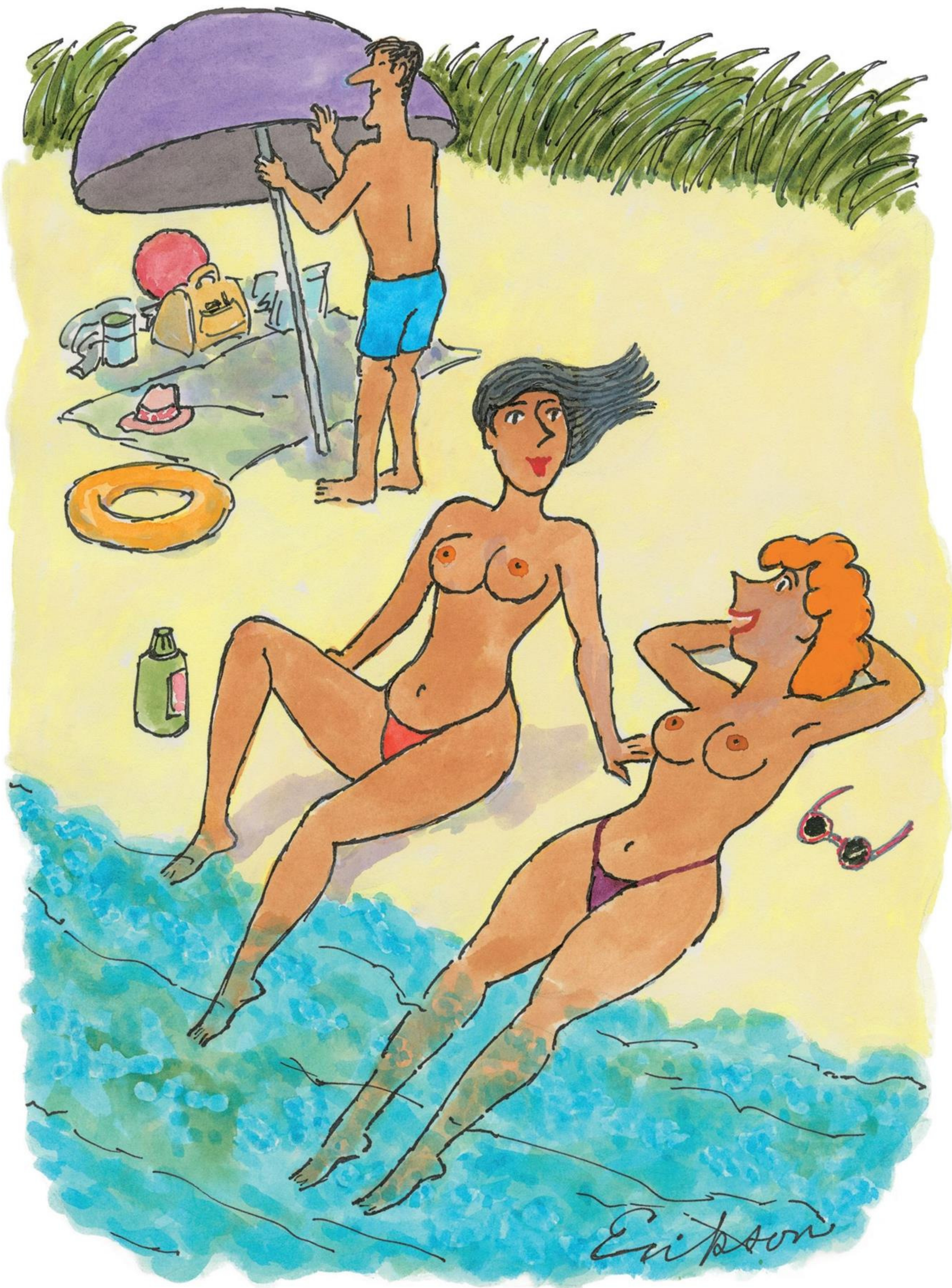
and leaned on a bloody crutch before the justice of the peace. She wore a babushka and seven strings of glass beads around her neck. They were playing parts. Then, with no warning, they became the characters they'd affected.

I'll leave him.

Whispering it in the dead of night didn't count. She picked up Will's towel-cape and made a pass at the animal of her imagination. Just missed getting gored. It was safer to sleep.

Her next mistake was telling him what she'd read in the paper the next morning, that Brava Coquense, the Spanish director, was filming at the Santa Ana Plaza. A thriller of some sort, if she understood the Spanish. Will couldn't stay away. They





*"Did we sleep together? Not really. We were wide awake the whole time."*



# ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

—  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SASHA  
EISENMAN



DRIVE OFF INTO THE DESERT SUNSET WITH MISS MARCH, AN INTERNET SENSATION FROM THE EAST WHOSE LEATHER-CLAD CURVES AND WILLFUL SPIRIT MAKE HER THE MOST WANTED GIRL THIS SIDE OF THE MISSISSIPPI

Considering the unpredictable world we live in, it's nice to know some destinies are still able to manifest themselves. Chelsie Aryn's journey to becoming Miss March is a prime example. Born and raised in an upstate New York speck of a town, this Japanese German knockout grew up modeling and listening to country music while obsessing over vintage cars and motorcycles. But her ultimate goal was to become a Playmate. "I scoured my dad's PLAYBOYS and was blown away by how drop-dead gorgeous the girls were," she says. "I wanted to be part of their family, and that's why I became a model." Chelsie's ambition, all-natural curves and girl-next-door visage transformed her

into a social media phenomenon; she won our Miss Social challenge in 2011 and has since gained more than half a million followers online. For her pictorial we whisked her to the desert, geared her up in black leather and let the East Coast girl channel her West Coast desert fox. "It was super-sexy," Chelsie reports. "I felt like a Western gangster. And though I was all the way across the country, I felt super at home too, because I wear cowboy boots all the time in real life." The self-proclaimed tomboy is ecstatic about her pictorial and the fulfillment of her Playmate dream, and she hopes her internet multitudes will be satisfied too. "My online fans are going to go nuts," she says. "I sure hope they like what they see." We have a feeling that won't be an issue.



















**MISS MARCH**

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH









Christie-Ann



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Chelsie Arlyn

BUST: 34DD WAIST: 26" HIPS: 31"

HEIGHT: 5' 5" WEIGHT: 117 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 9/18/92 BIRTHPLACE: Berne, New York

AMBITIONS: To live my life to the fullest as a Playboy Playmate and to become a kick-ass designer.

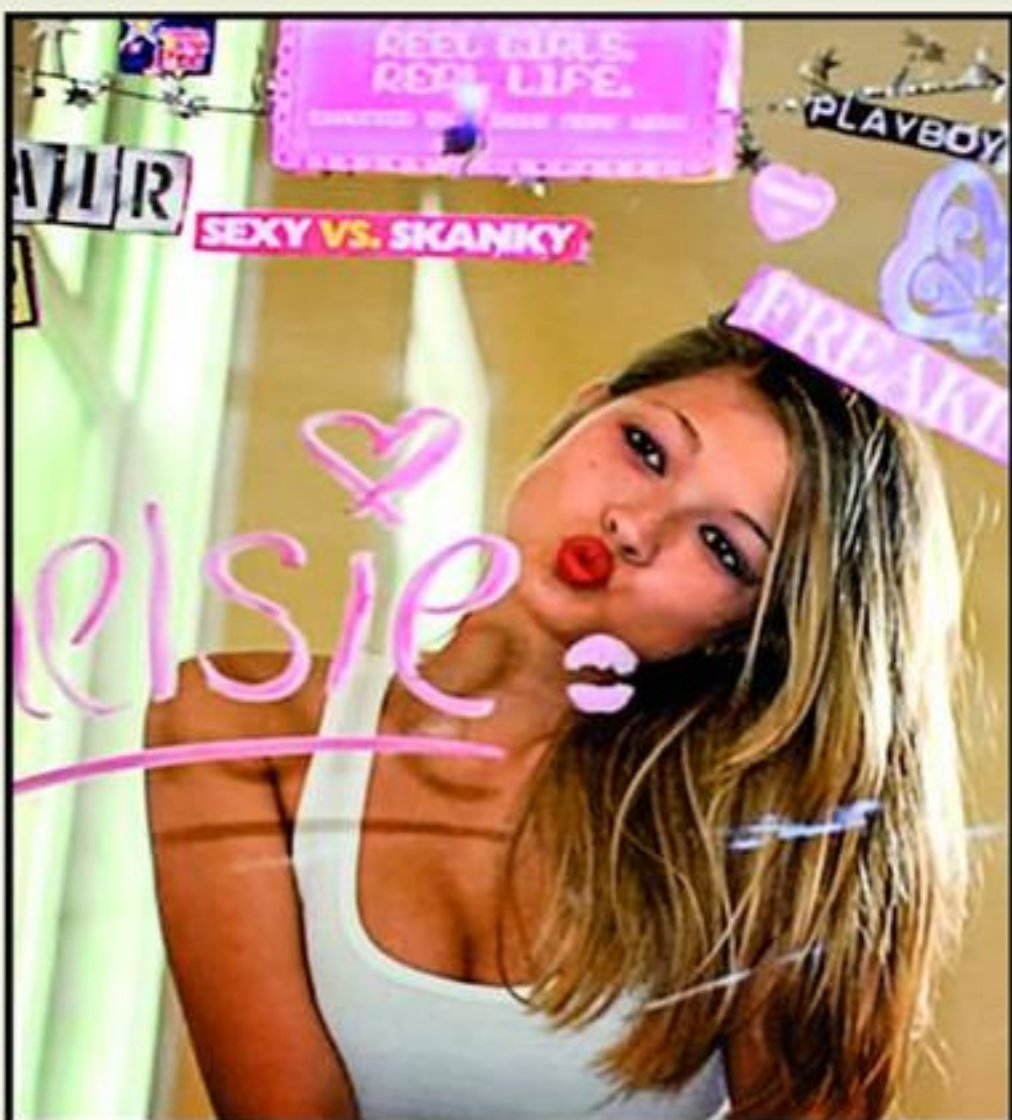
TURN-ONS: Men with tattoos, facial hair, piercing eyes and a sense of style make my heart skip a beat!

TURNOFFS: I hate when guys try to buy my love - I'm into being spoiled with affection, NOT things!

FIVE THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: The love and support of my family, my Hello Kitty stuffed animal, my cell phone, my lip balm, hot fries and Snickers.

MY GUILTY PLEASURE: Nothing beats lying in my bed with a bowl of popcorn watching Disney movies. :)

THE DOS & DON'TS OF DATING ME: I'm not the kind of girl who likes being wined and dined - just give me spontaneous, unpretentious fun and we're good!



Kiss me, baby. :)



Want a pizza with me? :)



Dirty girl. :)



STYLING BY JENNIFER HERREMA; HAIR BY TONY VIN; MAKEUP BY ERIN LEE SMITH FOR ATELIER MANAGEMENT





# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

**A**fter terrorist threats against the movie *The Interview* made headlines, we checked in with our buddy who lives in North Korea to see how he was doing. He responded, "I can't complain."

**I**s it in?" asked the man.

"Almost," answered the woman.

"Does it hurt?" asked the man.

"Uh-huh," answered the woman.

"Let me put it in slowly," the man suggested.

"It still hurts," she said.

"Okay," the man said, "let's try a bigger shoe size."

**A** guy we knew in college has the heart of a lion—and a lifetime ban from the local zoo.



**A** naked man broke into a church. The police chased him around and finally caught him by the organ.

**T**o this day the boy who used to bully us in school still takes our lunch money. On the plus side he makes a great Subway sandwich.

**S**o then the genie asked me, "What do you want, a better memory or a bigger penis?" a man told a woman at a bar.

"And what did you say?" she asked.

He replied, "I don't remember."

**M**ila Kunis once asked me out," a Hollywood producer told his buddy.

"Where were you?" the friend asked.

The producer answered, "I was in her room."

**W**hat's the difference between the American flag and *American Idol*?

The American flag actually has stars.

**T**wo prostitutes were standing on a corner when one said, "Tonight's going to be a good night. I can smell the dick in the air."

The other replied, "Sorry, I just burped."

**W**e never wanted to believe that our buddy was stealing from his job on a road construction crew. But when we visited his house, all the signs were there.

**A** man was sitting on his own in a restaurant when he saw a beautiful woman at another table. He sent her a bottle of the most expensive wine on the menu. She sent back a note: "I will not touch a drop of this wine unless you can assure me that you have seven inches in your trousers."

"Give me the wine," he wrote back. "As gorgeous as you are, I'm not cutting off three inches for anyone."

**C**harles Dickens walks into a bar and asks for a martini. The bartender asks, "Olive or twist?"

**W**hy is Cinderella still a virgin?

Because she runs away from all the balls.

**W**hat do a dildo and soybeans have in common?

They're both used as meat substitutes.

**W**hat's the difference between being hungry and being horny?

Where she puts the cucumber.



*Ally Neiman*

**A** woman walked out of the shower and said to her boyfriend, "Honey, I shaved myself down there. Do you know what that means?"

"Yeah," her boyfriend replied. "It means the drain is clogged again."

**R**esearch shows that 80 percent of men don't know how to use condoms. They're called dads.

**W**hat's the difference between Russell Brand and the *Titanic*?

Only about 15,000 people went down on the *Titanic*.

**M**ost people want a perfect relationship, but some days we just want a hamburger that looks like the ones in commercials.

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





*"You despicable son of a bitch, Henderson—and with my own secretary!"*





Eureka! Brit Eaton discovers a pair of rare hickory-striped buckle-back jeans in the rafters of an old barn.

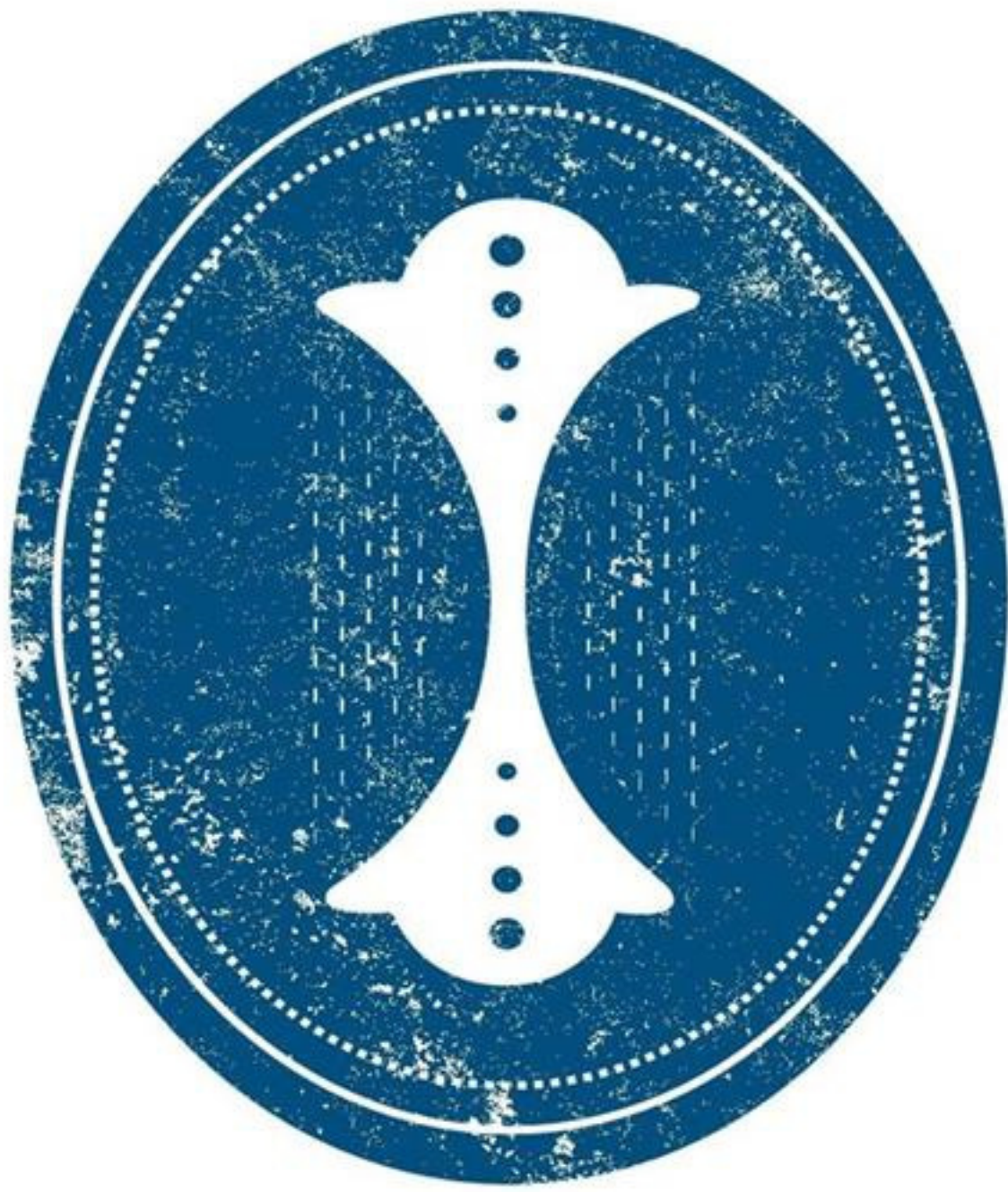


THE  
TRAIL

**When it comes to tracking down high-priced vintage denim, fashion can be a very dirty business. We hit the back roads of America with denim hunter Brit Eaton.**

By  
**MICKEY  
RAPKIN**  
Photography by  
**CORY PIEHOWICZ**





It's late on a Saturday night in April when I pull up to the East Wind Casino, the only place in Martin, South Dakota (population 1,071) still serving food at 10 o'clock. I tuck into two slices of pepperoni pizza that have been congealing under a heat lamp for longer than I care to know. A cold beer would help wash it down, but the casino doesn't allow alcohol—only cigarettes, and a lot of them, apparently. I take a whiff. This place smells like the Marlboro Man's taint. I can't really complain, though, considering I smell like cat piss.

I should probably rewind. I'm in the middle of a four-day expedition through the Midwest with Brit Eaton, a fashion archaeologist who goes by the nickname Indiana Jeans. I just call him the Denim Hunter. Since the late 1990s, Eaton has made six figures annually by traveling the country, going into ghost towns and abandoned mine shafts in search of turn-of-the-century denim and other antiquarian apparel. Designers for the likes of Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein and Abercrombie & Fitch pony up serious cash for these relics, taking inspiration from the fading, the wash and even the rivets. Eaton capitalizes on the fashion industry's obsession with such buzzwords as *Americana* and *heritage*. Among his scores: a Native American beaded vest he once unearthed that now hangs in Ralph Lauren's personal closet. Eaton may be the best-kept secret in the fashion industry, and now his name is being whispered around Hollywood too. He has outfitted actors on *Boardwalk Empire* and in films including *On the Road*. When the costume designer for the upcoming *Batman vs. Superman* blockbuster needed the perfect World War II-era collared wool coat with a 48-inch chest, guess who got the call.

Vintage denim is big business. In 2008 a pair of Levi's 201 jeans from 1890

sold to a collector on eBay for \$36,000. In 2001 the auction house Butterfield, in partnership with eBay and the History Channel, sold a pair of turn-of-the-century Levi's (discovered in a mining town in Nevada) to a representative from Levi Strauss & Co. for \$46,532. Levi's employs its own full-time archivist, who, in 2011, purchased what the company believes is the world's oldest riveted denim jacket—a piece from the 1880s discovered in a southern California ghost town. Eaton's stash fills a 10,000-square-foot warehouse in Durango, Colorado, and his customers are a diverse group. A particularly ardent collector from Japan makes twice-yearly pilgrimages to Durango to wade through Indiana Jeans's warehoused "archives." Eaton has sold several pieces to the venerable denim house himself, proud of the absurdity of the situation. "I was selling Levi's to Levi's. I'm like the guy who could sell ice cream to an Eskimo," he says.

Eaton, 45, may be looking for old shit, but he's a very modern man. Not to get too philosophical, but we live in the *Duck Dynasty* era, in which any authentic subculture is rebranded for Hollywood producers to plunder. Meanwhile, at any

might want to kill us. It was cold as shit when he zipped his Carhartt jacket and pointed into the distance. "There might be something in that barn," he muttered. Yeah, I thought, dead bodies.

There was no denim inside the barn. There was nothing, really, except two dozen cats perched atop \$100,000 in farming equipment. The smell was corporeal. It tasted like ammonia simmered down to a demi-glace, and it seeped into my pores. We rode in silence to the casino, where Eaton, who suffers from a gluten allergy, struggled to find something to eat. "Are the taco shells made of corn?" he asked the woman behind the counter. She blinked twice but didn't say anything.

The plan was simple, or so it had seemed: Indiana Jeans would pick me up from the airport in Rapid City, South Dakota for a four-day "denim safari." He's hoping to find the perfect jacket for Superman, but there's no shopping list. Nor is there an itinerary, save for a vague appointment in Wyoming with a couple of aging hoarders Eaton met a year ago; he spent \$350 at their house in 30 minutes before they had to get back

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**VINTAGE DENIM IS BIG BUSINESS. IN 2008 A PAIR OF LEVI'S 201 JEANS FROM 1890 SOLD TO A COLLECTOR ON EBAY FOR \$36,000.**

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given moment, fanatics of all kinds seek like-minded souls on the internet. As a culture we used to laugh about Japanese teenagers obsessed with Pokémon cards and whatever else Japanese teenagers fetishize. But look at us: Whether it's craft cocktails, fantasy football or Bronies, we're all Japanese teenagers about something. At least Eaton has found a way to capitalize on his obsessions.

Eaton claims to average \$5,000 a day in "picking," but he hasn't come close to that today—and motherfucker is getting antsy. We're hundreds of miles from Wyoming, our ultimate destination, chasing our tails. Earlier in the trip a bearded 50-something man we'd met by chance led us to a quiet field with zero cell-phone reception, a place so far removed from civilization I suspected he

to work. Eaton suspects the real treasure is still buried in their basement. He opens his journal and reads the note he wrote about his visit: "It says, 'Brit, get your ass back there as soon as you can.'"

We're traveling with his buddy Kyle Bitters, a 55-year-old retired air traffic controller who looks like Keith Carradine and sometimes models for a Japanese denim company. I've joined their safari midtour, and though I'm a stranger in a really strange land they treat me like an old friend. An hour after touchdown we're seated at the Belle Starr Gentlemen's Club, watching a woman with a tattoo that reads BEAUTIFUL DISASTER undress to Creedence Clearwater Revival. Eaton was reluctant to go to a strip club with a journalist; the last thing he wants is for his wife (continued on page 104)









**matt  
hoyle**







the  
multifaceted  
actor-author-comic  
explains why he's  
more than just a  
famous head  
of hair

BY  
DAVID  
RENSIN

Q1

**PLAYBOY:** You're more than just a guy known for his hair. You have sold four screenplays and written humor books, and are a master improviser with the Upright Citizens Brigade as well as a successful actor. On Showtime's *House of Lies* you co-star as Clyde Oberholt, an insecure, competitive, self-aggrandizing young management consultant. Before you tested for the role, did you have any idea what management consulting was?

**SCHWARTZ:** No, so I read the book on which the show is based: *House of Lies: How Management Consultants Steal Your Watch and Then Tell You the Time*. There was a lot of jargon to learn. I read the glossary in the back so I would understand all the terms in case I had to improvise—which I love to do. Los Angeles has a lot of people who embellish or bullshit you. Their intentions don't match their words. That's how I play Clyde. Clyde never says what he means, ever. Never.

Q2

**PLAYBOY:** You won an Emmy in 2009 for outstanding writing for a variety, music or comedy special as part of the team that wrote Hugh Jackman's opening number for the 81st Academy Awards. Where do you keep the statuette?

**SCHWARTZ:** The first year it was in my kitchen cabinet with the crackers. I don't know why, but I didn't want people to see it. Now it's on a bookshelf with props I keep

from everything I've ever done—lately the 1970s-era glasses from my role in *The Walk*.

Q3

**PLAYBOY:** You're also well-known as Jean-Ralphio Saperstein, the desperate-to-be-cool friend of Tom Haverford on *Parks and Recreation*. If Jean-Ralphio and Tom had sought advice from the folks at *House of Lies* for their now-defunct company, Entertainment 720, could it have been saved?

**SCHWARTZ:** What a dream if those two fucking idiots came to us! It would be so easy to make them think we could transform them into millionaires while taking their money and doing almost nothing. Jean-Ralphio wouldn't last a second with us.

Q4

**PLAYBOY:** *Parks and Recreation* is ending its long run. Imagine Jean-Ralphio 10 years from now.

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't see him going upward. The only way he'll survive is if Aziz Ansari's character, Tom, becomes incredibly rich and wants to take care of him. Otherwise he'll live with his parents for the rest of his life. Jean-Ralphio's problem is that he wants people to like him. He's such an innocent that he believes his own bullshit. Sometimes I wonder what would happen if he suddenly realized it was all bullshit. What



an episode: Jean-Ralphio's moment of existential crisis.

### Q5

**PLAYBOY:** Give us a brief history of your hair.

**SCHWARTZ:** When I was in college I shaved my head every day because I couldn't afford a haircut. I also kept it short doing improv at the Upright Citizens Brigade in New York. Then I came to Los Angeles and let it grow out because I spent most of my time writing. When I got an audition for Jean-Ralphio I offered to cut it, but they wouldn't hear of it. Ironically, when Jean-Ralphio became big I got a call to make a shampoo commercial. They said it would be a guy and a girl, and they told me how much money I'd make. At the time, *any* money would have been a lot. "We're not giving you the offer yet," they added. "First we have to figure out who the girl is." They hired Heidi Klum. But she wanted twice as much money, so they cut my part altogether.

### Q6

**PLAYBOY:** You graduated with degrees in psychology and anthropology, yet one of your earliest gigs was as a CBS page on *The Late Show With David Letterman*. How did you land that job?

**SCHWARTZ:** In college I did short-form improv. When I graduated I told my parents I really wanted to do comedy. They said they'd help me out for a year. I needed to figure out who would hire a young person with my interests. I hit on MTV. I put on a shirt and tie and took a backpack filled with résumés on the nicer bond paper. When the elevator doors opened I saw a big dollar-bill sign with George Washington sticking out his tongue. I was like, Oh man, I'm definitely at MTV. This is it.

A young woman sat at a big desk. I said, "I'm supposed (continued on page 120)

“

**in college  
i shaved my  
head every  
day because i  
couldn't afford  
a haircut.**





*"It's such a huge relief to know they're real, doctor!"*



# Home

# Home

# Sweet

# Home

A modern incarnation of Jayne Mansfield with the buxom confidence of Anna Nicole Smith, Gia Genevieve captivates in little more than black stilettos, cherry-red lipstick and delicate lace, ready to slake our thirst for nostalgia. “Jayne and Anna Nicole are two of my inspirations, along with Marilyn Monroe,” she says. “They made sexuality something not to be ashamed of but to be embraced.” Who better to celebrate our love of lingerie than a woman whose very essence seduces us as much as the silk and sheer she wears? We paired Gia with Ellen von Unwerth, the renowned fashion photographer who discovered her, and turned a retro New York pad into a domestic fantasy. “The corset was my favorite,” says Gia. “There’s something about the restriction of being tied up and how it forms the most beautiful shape on my body.” The 32G model, well versed in the language of lingerie, hopes to launch her own line—one that showcases the beauty of the female form. “After all,” she says, “the tease of what’s underneath is so much more exciting than seeing a woman in the nude.”

*Spend a night in with Gia Genevieve, the blonde bombshell whose vintage flair and natural curves make this year's lingerie special unforgettable*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ELLEN VON UNWERTH













This, opposite and previous pages: bra by **DOTTIE'S DELIGHTS**, skirt and black lace gloves by **MAISON CLOSE**, garter belt by **SECRETS IN LACE**, holdups by **LEVANTE**, earrings and ring by **ERICKSON BEAMON**, necklace by **FENTON**, shoes by **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN**, corset, stylist's own.





Sunglasses by **A-MORIR**, rhinestone belt worn as necklace by **PATRICIA FIELD**, ring on middle finger by **FENTON**, ring on ring finger by **VICKI SARGE**, rhinestone cuff bracelets by **BETSEY JOHNSON**, cuff bracelet on bottom by **LARUICCI**, holdups by **AMERICAN APPAREL**.



Pink feather baby-doll dress, earrings, ring and panties by **BETSEY JOHNSON**, shoes by **PLEASER**, gloves by **SHANEEN HUXHAM**.





This page: Bodysuit and black panties by **MAISON CLOSE**, hold-ups by **AMERICAN APPAREL**, shoes by **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN**, necklace on panther by **ASSAD MOUNSER**, leash, stylist's own.  
Opposite page: White robe by **SECRETS IN LACE**, ring by **ERICKSON BEAMON**.







**STYLIST**

Anna Trevelyan  
with CLM US

**MAKEUP**

Alice Lane at the  
Wall Group

**HAIR**

Thanos Samaras at  
the Wall Group using  
Paul Mitchell

**SET DESIGN**

Chelsea Maruskin

**MANICURE**

Lisa Logan at  
Wilhelmina

**PRODUCTION**

Dana Brockman at  
Viewfinders





## INTO THE BLUE

Continued from page 90

and parents to read this article and think his monthly expeditions aren't above-board. But Bitters insisted, so Eaton lays out the ground rules for me. "You have to say, 'Brit was reluctant,'" he says. For the record, he was reluctant. He also reluctantly got a lap dance from a Sioux woman (at least Eaton thinks she was Sioux; maybe she was Dakota) named Dawn. "Like everyone's favorite dish soap," she says later, smoking a cigarette outside.

We're on the road by nine the next morning. And Eaton—dressed in beat-up, shapeless jeans, a torn T-shirt and a yellow trucker hat—drives happily along, looking for abandoned farmhouses while telling stories that meander like these very back roads. He was raised in Princeton, New Jersey, he tells me, and he's been entrepreneurial from the start. As a kid he had a lemonade stand that he forced his brother and sister to run while he went out in search of clients. In a later phone conversation, his father, who worked for Merrill Lynch before starting his own investment firm, recalls his son's exploits with obvious pride. "When Brit went off to college," he says, "we found a note he wrote to his brother. It said, 'Steven, don't forget to water the marijuana plant.'" Brit was growing weed on Princeton University property that butted up against his family's land. This kid was never going to have an office job.

In the early 1990s Eaton made some cash exporting Harley-Davidson motorcycles to the Netherlands. He drove a cab in Wisconsin. He worked on a commercial fishing boat until he pissed off the captain, who locked him in his cabin until they reached port. He got involved in a pyramid scheme in Florida, selling water filters and environmental products through a company called Equinox, which left him \$50,000 in debt. Life wasn't working out as he'd hoped. "I'd made a conscious effort to get rich on the East Coast," Eaton says. "I failed miserably." He left Florida and headed west on what he calls a pilgrimage. He settled in Durango, Colorado because, he says, his car broke down there.

Where others saw coincidence, Eaton saw opportunity. He acquired a bale of Levi's from an acquaintance for \$1,000 and started selling the jeans at flea mar-

kets, including the one at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. He watched others in the vintage game rabidly picking through piles of denim for rare pieces, and he started to wise up. What got his blood pumping—besides the cash—was the history of Levi's, which in a way is the history of the American worker. Suspender buttons started to disappear from denim in the early 1920s when ranchers stopped needing them. Copper rivets in the crotch disappeared in the 1940s due to wartime rationing. There are also stylistic clues to decipher the denim's age. Levi's jeans produced before 1971 have a capital E on the red tab; in the trade, these are known as "Big E's" and are more valuable than later styles. A "Double X" refers to a Big E with a rivet. Some of the best finds are "buckle backs," pre-World War II denim with cinching across the back waist.

Part of Eaton's appeal is his personality. He opened a vintage store, Carpe Denim, in Durango in 1997; when an employee from the Gap admired the jeans Eaton was wearing, he took them off and sold them to her for \$250. He also seems to have a knack for finding valuable merchandise. He tells me about a church sale where he found a pair of rare Lee Cowboy jeans from the 1940s. He paid 10 cents ("It was dime day!") and later sold them for \$750. He once discovered \$50,000 worth of vintage Levi's jeans in an abandoned train depot in Nevada. He sold a pair of circa-1900 Levi's he'd found in a mine shaft to a Japanese collector for \$12,500. (Lynn Downey, a retired archivist for Levi's, explained the Japanese obsession with Levi's to *The New York Times*. It began in the mid-1980s, she said, with men who'd grown up in occupied Japan after World War II, watching American soldiers who wore Levi's and carried Zippo lighters.) Eaton went all-in on the vintage game, so much so that he got a vanity license plate: BUKLBAK.

But eBay put a dent in his plans. Suddenly anyone with an internet connection could find out what the crap in their attic was worth. He imitates some customers, screeching, "I'm not an idiot. I looked these up on eBay." When he could no longer find the good shit at Goodwill, he had to get creative. He had to go on the road. His skill—and it's definitely a skill—is going into places no one else would dare risk entering, from run-down buildings to hoarders' pigpens, to find truly one-of-a-kind pieces.

Blaine Halvorson, who started a line of high-end denim and menswear called MadeWorn in L.A., travels to Durango twice a year to pick through Carpe Denim's stock. Although he half-jokingly suggests one get a tetanus shot before entering Eaton's untidy warehouse, Halvorson estimates he drops more than \$15,000 each trip, buying gems such as vintage chaps that he uses to make bespoke shoes for A-list clients including Brad Pitt and Elton John. A pair of rust-stained Levi's 501 Double Xs that he bought from

Eaton for \$1,000 inspired a design in his latest collection. "I don't have any interest in a \$30,000 pair of Levi's that's been laundered and cleaned," Halvorson says. "Brit's finds still have the toxic Egyptian dust on them. Smack those things once and you've probably got cancer. That's the beauty of them."

Eaton's job does have some occupational hazards. "Have I come close to dying?" he says. "Fucking absolutely. I pepper-sprayed my balls one time with bear repellent. It's like pepper spray on PCP. I was in an abandoned mining building. I thought I was going to die; suddenly I'm in mortal agony in the lower regions. I dangled my sack and cock in a puddle of water for 10 minutes. That didn't work. I jumped in the car naked, drove to a mountain stream half a mile away, where I knew the water would be freezing." He pauses for emphasis. "I thought about cutting my cock off. I'm not kidding."

This is a crazy way to make a living. It is also a lot of fun. We've been driving for an hour on our second morning when Eaton spots a possible score on the side of the road and pulls over. He stares at the house through his binoculars, announcing, "I'm gonna go pull some valuable old jeans out of there." I don't see how this is possible; from where I sit, the roof looks entirely caved in. But I'm game. We put on heavy gloves, climb over a low barbed-wire fence and push through the house's rotted-out front door. The stairway to the second floor looks rickety at best, and there appear to be more floorboards missing than in place. When I hesitate, Eaton shames me—as though we're kids on a school playground—so I reluctantly follow him upstairs. I step on the remains of a dead cat and scream, but Eaton steps in shit: Underneath a dank old mattress in what must have been a child's bedroom he finds a pair of Big E pre-1970s Levi's worth at least \$500. "In this condition," he says, "I have a Japanese collector who might want it as an art piece."

"High five!" he says, imitating Borat.

Twenty miles later we pull unannounced into a ranch; inside the barn, a 30-something cowboy has just delivered two baby lambs, which stand before him knock-kneed, shivering and wet. One is so small the cowboy feeds it with a medicine dropper. Somehow he doesn't seem surprised to find three strangers standing in his doorway, asking about denim.

"I work with movies and fashion designers," Eaton says, giving the rancher his standard opening spiel. "I buy old clothing. Can we take a look in one of these old buildings, see if there's a jacket on the wall or something?" The dude hesitates, but Bitters offers him a can of Natural Light beer—then three more—and he agrees to show us around the property's outbuildings.

Eaton is a machine. And tireless. He





*"Yes, Miss Siegel, I'd say 'natural wonders' is a valid description."*



borrow a ladder and climbs into an attic, emerging with a newspaper from 1915 and half an old denim jacket. He yanks more old denim out of a wall (the material was used as insulation—and still is) but nothing of value. Eventually he spots an oversize Harley-Davidson sign that looks like it should be hanging in a Double RL store in SoHo or in Zooey Deschanel's loft on *New Girl*.

"Would you sell that sign?" Eaton asks.

"Hell yes!" the rancher says without skipping a beat. "It's aluminum. It's worth 75 cents a pound."

Eaton is confused. "I don't want to buy it by the pound. I'll give you some cash," he says, offering him \$40.

As Eaton pulls out his wallet we spot a Shetland pony taking a dump a few feet away. The rancher tells us, "Shetlands are ornery cocksuckers."

This is pretty much how the rest of the day goes, which is to say amusing but ultimately disappointing. Eaton drives a few miles, spots a house that looks like a winner, chats up some strangers and leaves with little more than his dick in his hand. "We haven't found the epic thing that's go-

ing to define the trip yet," he says, and it sounds like a challenge. At least the people we meet are friendly, even the family with the aggressive sign informing trespassers WE DON'T CALL 911.

These are long days. And we have a lot of time to talk. During the four-day trip, Eaton holds forth on topics as far-ranging as the FDA's failure to regulate genetically modified food to *The Guinness Book of World Records* (he once inquired about establishing a record for "being inside the most abandoned buildings" but was denied) to his unusual childhood (he knew the Menendez brothers). He tells stories that are impossible to confirm, often about his own prowess. He claims he can close his eyes, run his hand along a rack of leather jackets and pick out the most valuable item. He takes issue with the costumes in *Brokeback Mountain*, which he says are wrong. ("It's supposed to be taking place in the 1950s and 1960s, and they're wearing 1990s jeans, man.") Late one night he tells me about a peculiar Japanese fetish called dick *hige* (pronounced *HEE-gay*), which apparently describes a pair of den-

im jeans worn by a well-endowed cowboy whose penis has left a particular fading in the crotch, the way a can of chewing tobacco might leave an imprint on a back pocket. I express extreme doubt over the existence of dick *hige*, but Eaton insists it's real. "Certain Japanese collectors love this kind of striping around wherever the fucking dude's dick was," he says.

Later, he tells me about an odd pair of pin-striped jeans he rescued from a mining shaft; he says they came from a time when men had to go right from working the fields to a night on the town. This seems absurd to me, but maybe it's true. He sold the pin-striped pair to an Italian company called BlueBlanket, which now sells very similar pants.

"So they knocked them off?" I ask. "That's what your customers do?"

This makes Eaton apoplectic. "A knock-off implies taking someone else's idea and copying it," he says. "It's not someone else's idea. It's *your* idea based on the vision of what you're seeing." He looks down at my digital recorder. "Are you recording this?"

"Yes."

"Good," he says and laughs. "That was some good stuff."

Eaton is prone to grandiose self-pronouncements like this one. The fact that he bears a striking resemblance to Jeremy Piven as Ari Gold on *Entourage* only drives the point home further. He tells me he recently purchased a mining claim in Nevada and that he pulled \$100,000 worth of clothing from the ground in a single day. Eaton often talks as if there's a camera recording his every word—perhaps because there once was. In 2012 Eaton starred on a short-lived reality show on the Discovery Channel called *Ghost Town Gold* in which he scoured the West for antiquities.

His business relies on buying clothing from people and selling it for a lot more money than he paid. I ask if he ever feels as though he's cheating these people. He corrects me: He's doing them a service. Actually, he implies he's doing God's work. About 10 years ago, he says, "I knocked on this old lady's door. I bought maybe \$250 worth of stuff from her. She was practically crying at the end. She said, 'Before you came this morning I was praying to the Lord that some money would come my way, because my power was just turned off. And here you came!'" He thinks on this. "That flipped everything on its head. I realized, I'm not here for me. I'm here for *them*. I'm gonna buy shit they don't even know they have, and I'm gonna pay them well for it. And they'll think, That guy is fucking crazy. What an awesome guy."

We're going on 48 hours together when Eaton says, "I'm without a doubt a person you either love or hate." Or want to avoid. By the time we get to the casino café, morale is so low I'm afraid to make eye contact with Eaton. Even he is forced to admit, "Today fucking sucked."



It's the final day of our safari. We've seen a lot of cats but no big game. Eaton is hanging his hopes on the hoarders in Wyoming,



but he's starting to fade. The drive-through Mexican food doesn't help.

As we drive on toward Wyoming—our last great hope—I start to wonder about Eaton's business. He has 10,000 square feet in Durango, and it sounds like a mess. "There's stuff I bought 10 years ago that's still in bags I haven't processed," Eaton confirms. Some of his boxes are labeled, but it's not exactly the Smithsonian. "That doesn't mean one box is labeled SUPERMAN JACKET, SIZE 48," he says. Rather than head out on the road, I wonder, why not organize the archives and see what treasures are there? Eaton is married, with two young kids at home. In a rare moment of quiet, he tells me, "The best word in the entire English language is *daddy*." So why go on these trips? He doesn't hesitate. "There's gold in them thar hills," he says.

Finally it dawns on me what this whole story is all about. Of course expensive heritage denim and Americana—as branding concepts—have always been about capturing the thrill of the old West and what it once meant to be a man. Sure, Eaton could use a business manager. He has since closed the retail arm of his operation and is in the process of converting some of his warehouse space into high-end condos. But denim hunting has never been about getting rich. It's about the road and the thrill of the chase. Eaton is part of a great American tradition. Go west in covered wagons—or in this case, a Toyota Tundra four-by-four.

Jacqueline Cameron, a denim-industry veteran who has designed for Calvin Klein and Madewell and now runs her own label called AYR, has been buying inspiration from Eaton for years. She puts a fine point on the appeal of his wares. "I don't want to buy a pair of denim because it's a buckle-back single pocket from this time period," she says. "I like to hear the *story*. That it has sun fading because it was used as insulation in the rafters of an old barn. What I'm more interested in, particularly at this point in my career, is starting from an authentic place. Anyone who has broken in a pair of jeans for five years? Their life is imprinted there."

While obsessing about Eaton's return on investment and his bona fides, I'm missing the real narrative. I start to think back on the people we met, like the retiree from a utility company who was watching a live steer auction on TV when we pulled into his driveway. He'd survived throat cancer, and a handkerchief around his neck covered a voice box. When Eaton explained I was a writer for PLAYBOY, making the classic joke about reading the magazine for the articles, the old-timer casually pressed his hand to his voice box and muttered, "I read it for the pictures." Eaton let out the biggest belly laugh I'd heard in days.

I think about the contractor we met in Wyoming who doesn't wear a cowboy hat but told us emphatically, "I grew up on a ranch, and I'm a thousand times the cowboy any of these men are." I think about the rancher we met who accidentally shot himself in the foot on Christmas years ago and wouldn't part with the chaps he'd broken in all his life. When you walk into a Double RL store and pay \$3,000 for a pair

of high-end jeans splattered with paint and worn in by a cowboy, *this* is the feeling you're supposed to get. But, man, let me tell you, the real thing is so much better.

We finally arrive at the hoarders' house in Wyoming, a mess of run-down buildings beneath a cartoonishly blue sky. The basement is like something out of *The Blair Witch Project*. Garbage is piled to the ceiling; an industrial freezer is packed with animal antibiotics and Swanson frozen dinners. Empty cans of cat food are strewn about; there must be a dozen cats roaming the joint.

Eaton tries to lighten the mood, saying, "You want to sell a couple cats?"

"Not *these* cats," one of the hoarders says, missing the joke.

Undeterred, Eaton gets busy. Perhaps he is doing God's work, because very quickly he finds a pair of buckle-back jeans from the 1940s. Then another. Then another. He's found five in all—a \$20,000 score, minimum. He also uncovers an odd pair of patchwork pants, which he'll sell a week later to a designer from Ralph Lauren. The blood rushes back to Eaton's head. "It's fucking denim fucking city!" he shouts, declaring this one of the top 10 scores of his life. He's a pig in shit.

When the sun sets we head into town for karaoke night at the local bar, a celebratory end to our trip. There are dollar beers and cheap steaks and men in 10-gallon hats and oversize belt buckles. Eaton is freshly showered and in great spirits. He strikes up a conversation with a dude who looks like Michael Chiklis and who's heard some gossip about Eaton's arrival in town.

"Is that your truck outside?" he asks.

It is.

The Chiklis look-alike inquires about the orange and black Harley-Davidson sign in the back.

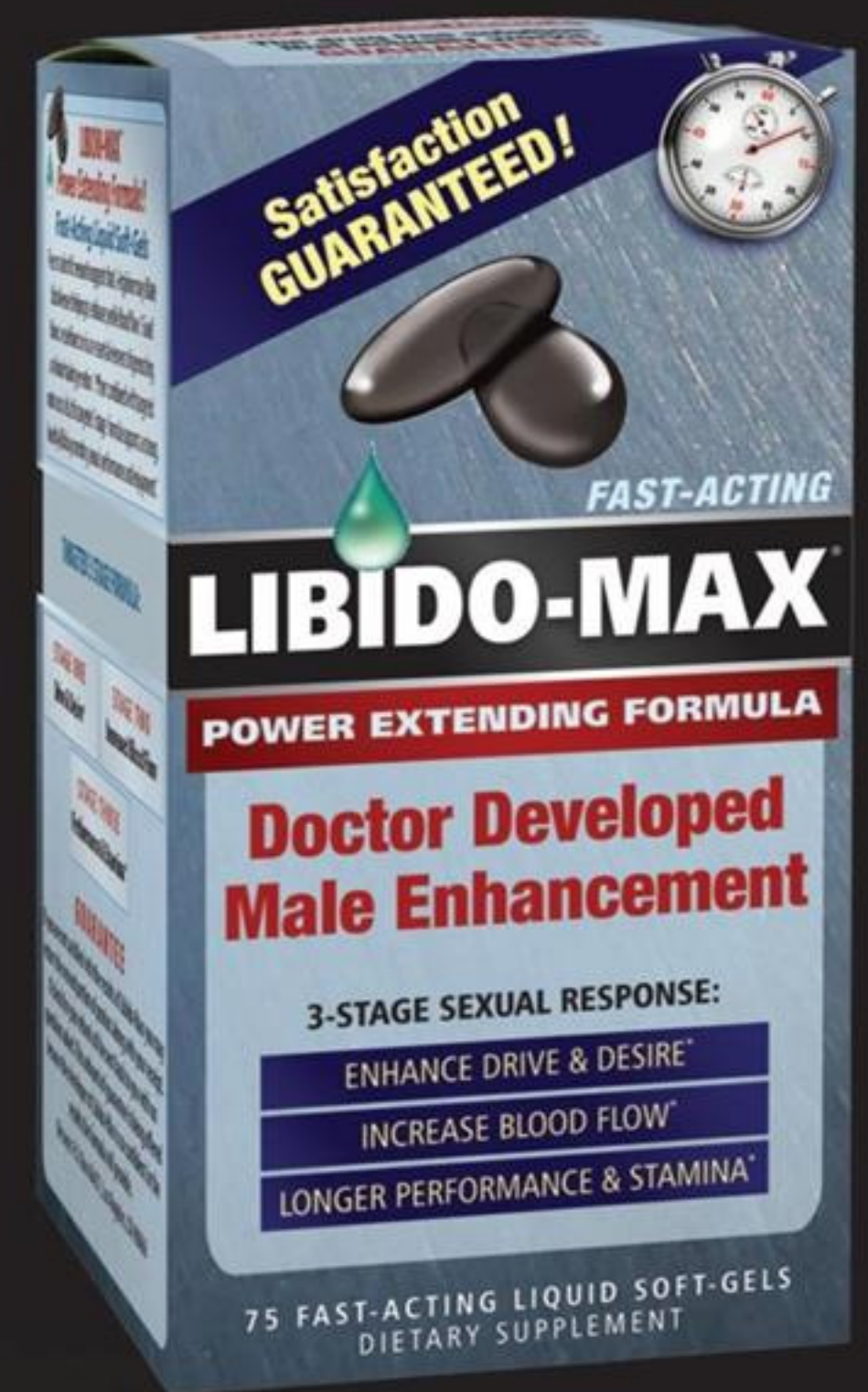
"You can have it for 100 bucks," Eaton says, sounding like Al Pacino in *Glen-garry Glen Ross* as reimagined by Larry McMurtry. Always be closing, *yee haw!* Without thinking twice, Chiklis whips out a \$100 bill and grabs the sign.

There's something thrilling about this scene but also something wistful. This stank-filled bar, with its green carpet and jukebox, feels like the last authentic place on earth. There's not a chain restaurant for miles. The closest movie theater is more than an hour away, one of the patrons tells me. But these towns are disappearing for a million reasons. Perhaps we're all clinging to words like *heritage* and *Americana*—and even shelling out cash for jeans excavated from mines—because we sense the end of an era. When all the old denim is gone, does the dream of the wild, wild West and the frontier die with it? What happens when there are no farmhouses left for Eaton to explore?

I think about this idea for a second, but only a second. Eaton jumps up on the bar like this is a made-for-TV movie and shouts, "The next round is on me! I love this town!"



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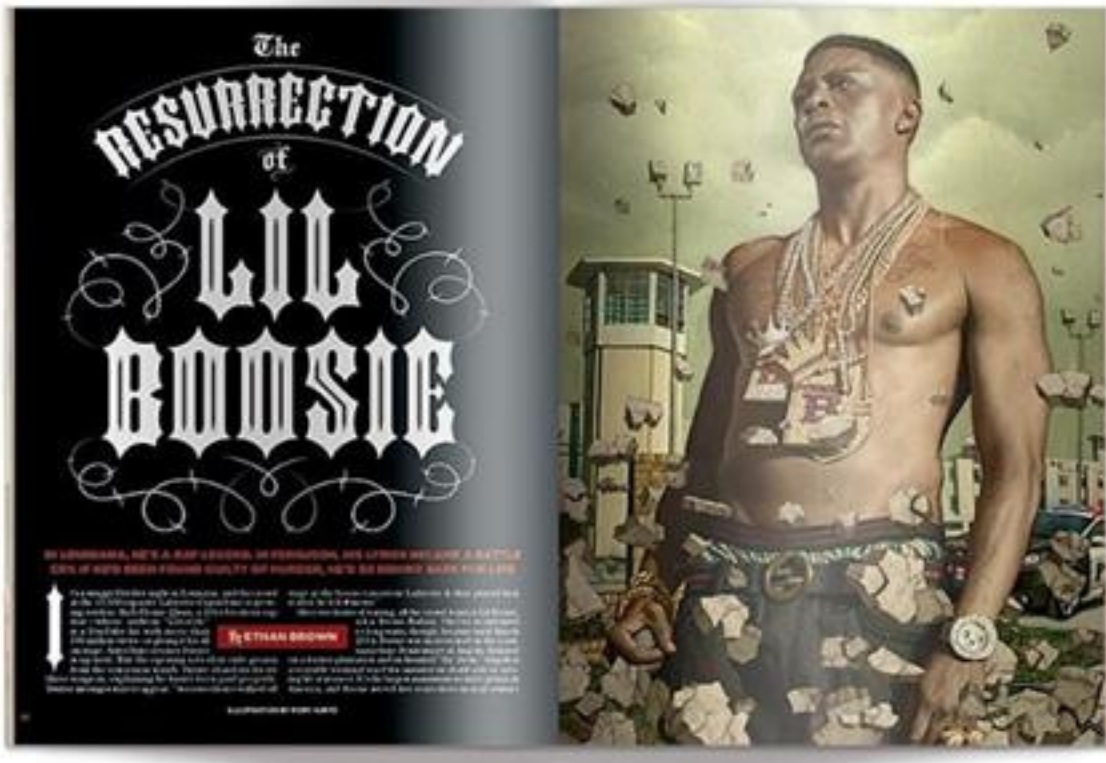
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## THE RESURRECTION OF LIL BOOSIE

Continued from page 52

Boosie's show that captures hundreds of protesters furiously rapping the song's lyrics directly in the face of said police.

After a moment of worship with Connie and an aunt who joyously completes a prayer with "Lawd, we gonna set it off," Boosie walks down a cavernous hallway flanked by family and friends to ascend the stage. The stadium erupts, the throng screaming, dancing and rapping along. A sense of resurrection surrounds the man who nearly died at the hands of the Louisiana criminal justice system. The set is raw and compelling, and Boosie concludes it with "Fuck the Police," to which he adds, "RIP, Mike Brown."

"I could go until six in the morning," he tells the crowd.

It's a proud return to form, one of several since his release from Angola. "You couldn't hear yourself talk at his first two shows," says DJ Chill. "He could have walked off without performing and the crowds would have been satisfied." That momentum continued with a fall 2014 mixtape titled *Life After Deathrow*, which garnered more than 100,000 downloads on the day of its release, building anticipation for Boosie's first post-prison album, *Touchdown 2 Cause Hell*.

What has made Boosie a central figure in Ferguson, drawing thousands to welcome him back and propelling a career that only strengthened in his absence, isn't jewels and it isn't stunts—it's his music, which touches listeners in ways few rappers since Tupac can. It is music made possible by his birthplace of Baton Rouge and by his fight against the racial injustice of Louisiana's mass incarcerations—what law professor Michelle Alexander has called "the new Jim Crow." And the resurrection that followed was born of a law-enforcement campaign that, despite its best efforts to imprison him for life, could not kill his spirit.

||

Under an inky black sky on a fall evening in New Orleans, I'm wandering a 650-acre gated community, searching for Lil Boosie's home. This earns me a sarcastic text-message rebuke from the rapper's bodyguard, friend and quasi life coach, which means I've been LOL'd at by Hashim Nzinga, head of the New Black Panthers.

Boosie lives 10 miles outside downtown New Orleans, deep within English Turn, a 500-home development with a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course. A neighborhood of

McMansions in a 300-year-old city where 18th and 19th century homes are de rigueur, English Turn is dysfunctional in a distinctly Crescent City manner. The lone security guard smiles and shrugs off the fact that the development has few working streetlights, symptomatic of the decline from its 1980s heyday, with the celebrities who once called it home—Emeril Lagasse and Mike Ditka among them—long gone. I've plugged Boosie's address into my GPS, but the blanketing darkness makes it impossible to discern the pompously named subdivisions—the Manors, the Estates—leaving me little hope of reaching the rapper.

The aforementioned New Black Panther Party, despite its moniker, is not a successor to the similarly named 1960s civil rights group, which the original Panthers would probably consider a blessing. The Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center have labeled the New Black Panthers a hate group. Its platform merely advocates the "elimination of institutionalized racism," but its rhetoric is often incendiary, such as when a leader of the group's Philadelphia chapter declared in 2009, "I hate white people. All of them. Every last iota of cracker, I hate it... You want freedom? You going to have to kill some crackers!"

In November, fears in Ferguson were stoked by a CBS News report that the FBI had arrested two New Black Panthers over an alleged plot to detonate pipe bombs during protests. Although CBS retracted the story hours later, the men were indicted in Missouri federal court for using false statements to purchase two Hi-Point firearms. "Weak charges," insists Nzinga. "We will win in court."

After my phone finally lights up with directions, I reach Boosie's 4,000-square-foot mansion, its front door framed by Grecian columns and an imposingly tall window. In the living room a flatscreen TV plays last October's BET Awards, where Boosie performed. Bay windows overlook the golf course, palm trees swaying in the dark. For a towering man with wide shoulders and a bald head, Nzinga, who once placed a public bounty on George Zimmerman, is surprisingly gentle as he ushers me into the kitchen.

There Boosie sits, wolfing down barbecue chicken and mashed potatoes prepared by Nzinga himself. The rapper's white T-shirt, jeans and rough, shoeless feet belie his status as one of the country's most talented hip-hop artists. And nothing at Boosie manor resembles the tableaux one might find at the homes of other rappers: no hangers-on, no women, no weed—just Boosie, glassy-eyed after the Lafayette show, and the head of the New Black Panthers nudging him to take his insulin shot. (Boosie, who has type 1 diabetes, has memorably rhymed, "Diabetes steady eating my insides, fucking my vision up/I swear to God I feel like giving up.")

Boosie's friendship with Nzinga is far from radical chic, or extremism as fashion. After all, Boosie is a black man born to working-class parents in the Deep South. He just spent five years in Angola. And "Fuck the Police" is providing the drumbeat to which Ferguson's dissidents raise their arms, crying "Hands up, don't shoot."

In other words, Boosie is all radical—and not a damn bit chic.

|||

While a rapper like Rick Ross waxes poetic about becoming a billionaire and popping black bottles, Boosie pens lyrics about growing up poor, washing cars for cash and hoping one day to obtain an elusive bankroll. And while T.I. raps, "If it ain't about the money/Nigga, I ain't gettin' up," Boosie spits about being there for the impoverished and incarcerated. "I Feel Ya," from *Life After Deathrow*, is one of the most empathetic songs in hip-hop today; in it Boosie raps about a raft of outcasts, including an Angola inmate whose commissary account is low and whose mother is suffering from cancer. "If nobody understands you," the chorus goes, "I feel ya/If nobody understands what you're going through, I feel ya."

"It's in the core," he explains, pushing at Nzinga's mashed potatoes. "It's about that class of people who have a real lifestyle. I can't talk about food I'd never eat, my fans would never eat, cars my fans would never see or ride in. I can't talk about Bugattis, because I don't have a Bugatti. I'm the one rapping about the single mother sometimes." He pauses to wipe potatoes from his chin. "My fans know what I had to do to get where I'm at."

It's an enviable place to be. Last March, just before his release, Boosie signed a lucrative three-year contract with Atlantic Records. *Touchdown 2 Cause Hell* is one of the most anticipated rap projects of 2015. And his fan base grew while he was locked up: A "Free Boosie" movement that began in 2009 exploded into a pop culture phenomenon upon his release; even a TMZ headline proclaimed him FREE AT LAST. High-profile listeners, including Mike Epps and Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch, are not just admirers—they're obsessives. Collaborations are slated with rappers from 2 Chainz to 50 Cent to Curren\$y; even Justin Bieber has professed his desire to record together. Last fall Boosie delivered such a hot streak of guest verses for the likes of Lil Wayne, Young Jeezy and Rick Ross that in November 2014 *Complex* magazine's website compiled his "10 best verses since being released from prison." And his lyrics are parsed with passionate exegesis: A Twitter account tribute to the rapper's rhymes, @TheMindofBoosie, has nearly 150,000 followers.

"Boosie is an urgent artist, one who drives the culture," says Atlantic Records chairman and CEO Craig Kallman. "Today there's an opening for entrants to the rap game who are doing something powerful and meaningful. Signing Boosie felt obvious. His new album will only scratch the surface of his thoughts on politics, where the country is at economically and in our history. I could see him doing the Clash's *Sandinista!*"—the 1980 triple album titled after the Nicaraguan liberation movement by the iconic British punk band, the "only band that mattered"—"but two to three times over."

Boosie was born Torrence Hatch on the south side of Baton Rouge, his mother a public-school teacher and his father, Ray, a



part-time construction worker. "My dad was in the streets," Boosie says, "but he'd bring home a check too." Baton Rouge, the state capital and a conservative company town, is similar to Washington, D.C. but with uglier politics. Louisiana is so dominated by oil and gas companies that environmental activists call it a "petrocolonial state." Entrenched racism and violence infect the city. "Separate and Unequal," a recent *Frontline* episode about the Baton Rouge school system, follows an attempt by a group of mostly white parents to form their own town, St. George, complete with its own school district.

Since 2006 the city of 230,000 has averaged 60 homicides each year; as a measure of population, its homicide rate is more than three times that of Los Angeles. At one point a despondent local businessman erected highway billboards that read BR MURDER RATE HIGHER THAN CHICAGO.

"It's just been like that," Boosie explains. "Murder, murder, murder. Whoever murders most gets the most money. People will try to take your life because of what you've got, make you feel like you owe them something because of it. The dropout rate is sky-high and there's so many guns, so people just be trying to protect themselves, scared for their lives." He pauses. "Baton Rouge is crazy, you know?"

Growing up, Boosie sought shelter from south-side chaos in basketball. He played across the country as a point guard in an Amateur Athletic Union league. While the streets raged, his family life remained warm. He spent his boyhood writing poetry and hanging out at neighborhood suppers, a Baton Rouge tradition of weekend neighborhood gatherings. "You'd purchase a supper," Connie explains, "play cards, listen to music—but not hip-hop. Love songs. Blues." When his father passed away from cancer in 1998, Boosie realized he wanted to rap. "He didn't want to play basketball anymore," says Connie. "He wanted to support the family."

For Boosie, it was a year as transformative as it was tragic. His cousin Glenn Clifton Jr., under the moniker Young Bleed, released his debut album, *My Balls and My Word*, on No Limit, a then-mighty New Orleans rap label. At its peak, the No Limit empire, run by rapper and entrepreneur Master P, was valued at nearly \$400 million. A berth for Baton Rouge rappers in that glitzy universe (so pivotal within the national rap landscape that it popularized the term *bling*) raised the possibility that the smaller city could become a hip-hop epicenter too.

At the time, Baton Rouge had two major rap stars: Young Bleed and C-Loc. In 2000 Boosie joined Bleed and C-Loc's burgeoning rap crew, the Concentration Camp, and released his solo debut, *Youngest of da Camp*, an auspicious work from an 18-year-old artist. The release made him the hottest rapper in the city. "When Boosie came," he says about himself, "it's just been history ever since."

A pair of Baton Rouge music entrepreneurs, Marcus Roach and Melvin Vernell Jr.—known as Turk and Mel, respectively—quickly signed Boosie to their label, Trill Entertainment, on the strength of his debut. The presence of

their other partner, Pimp C of the legendary Houston rap outfit UGK, persuaded Boosie to choose Trill over its competitors. Through Pimp C, Boosie met Nzinga, who was then UGK's road manager. "I been knowing Boosie since he first came to Trill. This is nothing new," Nzinga says, referring to their brotherly bond.

Atlantic CEO Kallman hails Turk and Mel as "great record men." Boosie's arrival led to phenomenal records, even after Pimp C, who became Boosie's close mentor, died in 2007 from a codeine overdose. Most rappers boast of their prodigious output, especially in today's mixtape-driven digital era, but Boosie's catalog grew so vast and varied—with songs about two-faced street partners ("Betrayed"), paeans to strange sex ("Finger Fuckin'"), tributes to great mothers ("Mama Know Love"), cautionary tales about the streets ("Chill Out") and sweet, heartfelt tracks dedicated to his children ("Daddy Luv U"), all delivered in his nasally punk snarl—that it is a universe unto itself. Boosie was among the first to popularize the now ubiquitous term *ratchet*, on a song of the same name, defined in liner notes by the song's producer as "n., pron., v., adv. 1. To be ghetto, real, gutter, nasty. 2. It's whatever, bout it, etc." It's now universal slang: Beyoncé posted a photo of herself on Instagram in which she sports door-knocker earrings that read RATCHET, and Miley Cyrus has been accused of co-opting ratchet culture with her embrace of twerking and gold grilles in her infamous 2013 video for "We Can't Stop." "When Boosie talks about being ratchet," says Nzinga, "he's really just telling our stories. And that's how he became the people's rapper."

By the early 2000s Boosie's career had hit its stride. He'd even managed to find a place among Baton Rouge's white elite, with a home in the ritzy Centurion Place subdivision; a neighbor who was a judge brought cookies as a housewarming gift. But the goodwill was short-lived. Before long, Boosie was seen as a new-money nuisance, and his world began to collide with Louisiana reality, where the *laissez le bon temps rouler* ("let the good times roll") image is little more than tourism marketing.

Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the United States. If it were its own country, it would have the highest incarceration rate in the world. This is due to the state's habitual-offender law, which mandates a prison sentence of "natural life" without parole after three felony convictions. Drug possession in Louisiana can be a felony, depending on the drug and the offender's intent, which means multiple drug convictions can lead to a life sentence. In 2011 a 35-year-old named Cornell Hood II was handed a life sentence on his fourth marijuana-related conviction. According to a *Times-Picayune* series called "Louisiana Incarcerated: How We Built the World's Prison Capital," at least 300 inmates in the state who are serving life without parole have never been convicted of a violent crime.

Given Boosie's revolutionary, power-challenging music, a series of drug-possession



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charges between 2008 and 2011 brought him serious trouble. In October 2008 Boosie was pulled over by East Baton Rouge Parish sheriff's deputies, who seized a small bag of marijuana, a blunt and a gun from his vehicle (his gun was legal, but it is illegal in Louisiana to carry a firearm while in possession of illegal drugs). In 2009 Boosie pleaded guilty to third-degree marijuana possession and was sentenced to two years in prison. Further drug charges in 2011 didn't help the rapper, who pleaded guilty to attempting to smuggle codeine into prison. What might have been a misdemeanor in a more liberal city earned Boosie a decade in Baton Rouge, thanks to the harsh political climate and, some said, the perception among the city's elite that his rising national profile made him a dangerous cultural force. Six years of the sentence were suspended, but the conviction's timing could not have been worse, arriving as *Superbad* debuted in the top 10 of the Billboard 200.

The blow would soon be eclipsed by a life-defining tragedy: At 12:40 A.M. on October 21, 2009, a 35-year-old Boosie associate named Terry Boyd was shot to death at his Baton Rouge home. The shots were fired through Boyd's window. A toxicology screen later

detected morphine, marijuana and codeine in his blood. The murder was noted in the Baton Rouge *Advocate's* "Police and Fire Briefs" section and scarcely anywhere else.

Law-enforcement officials claimed to have no leads, but behind the scenes fingers pointed at Boosie, perhaps the unlikeliest suspect—he and Boyd were family, as Boosie has a daughter with Boyd's sister. During the trial, prosecutors alleged Boosie had ordered Boyd's murder to preempt an attack after an Angola inmate warned him in a letter that Boyd was set to "jack and slap him," as reported by *Rolling Stone*. Boosie and his legal team deny the letter's existence. Prosecutors were unable to explain the meaning of "jack and slap" or why Boyd would turn on a man he had previously been amicable with in court. The letter itself has never been released to the public.

Behind bars at the Dixon Correctional Institute, Boosie had no doubt he was going to take the fall: Michael "Marlo Mike" Louding, a teenage Baton Rouge street player whose nickname stems from *The Wire's* violent drug lord Marlo Stanfield, had confessed to law enforcement that Boosie paid him to kill Boyd.

Curiously, Louding provided police with

factually inconsistent statements on May 14 and May 17, 2010. In the first, Louding denied any involvement in the Boyd murder, but then he reversed course. "Boosie was like, 'Y'all need to take care of it,'" he told interrogators, claiming the rapper gave him \$2,800 to do so.

Jason Williams, Boosie's attorney, notes Louding was interviewed over nearly 10 hours, but police began recording only after seven hours had passed. Louding later admitted that prosecutors had offered him a deal for "less than life" for Boyd's slaying if he cooperated against Boosie. Further, Louding claimed investigators lied to him during the interrogation, saying Boosie had a \$25,000 hit out for him; getting Boosie behind bars, Louding was told, would ensure his safety.

"I was getting word from other jails of what Marlo was saying," Boosie recalls. "I knew what was coming." He believes Louding's claims were the result of a law-enforcement campaign to turn Boosie's network against him. "They were snatching all my people up off the street," he says, "snatching up everybody."

"Boyd was thought to have killed several people," says Williams. "There were bullets in Baton Rouge with his name on them."

On June 17, 2010 Boosie was indicted for first-degree murder—a charge that carries a punishment of life without parole or the death penalty. East Baton Rouge Parish is particularly death-penalty prone; in 2009 it accounted for 16 of the 82 death sentences handed down in Louisiana, more than any other parish (and all 16 were given to African American males). Boosie coped with the prospect of death at the height of his career by self-medicating. "I got high every day in jail," he says. "I'm like, Hell, I'm in prison. I'm going to live like I'm on the street."

His despair deepened with an intimidation campaign intended to rattle him before his trial. In early 2010 police visited Boosie at Dixon. "Came every two months, telling me they're going to charge me with another murder, another murder, another murder," he says. "They said, 'We got you on seven murders.'" Concurrently, Louisiana DAs held press conferences to brag about their case's strength, the big fish they had caught and the money they'd spent to bring Boosie down. Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal attended one of the press conferences. The prospect of taking Boosie on as a client seemed so forbidding that few lawyers would bite. Were it not for Jason Williams, the rapper might still be behind bars, or dead.

As Boosie frantically searched for an attorney to represent him at trial, friends and associates urged him toward Williams. "You don't know about the new Johnnie Cochran?" Boosie remembers being told. In reality, Williams shares none of the flamboyance of Cochran, who was best known for his slangy "If the gloves don't fit, you must acquit" defense of O.J. Simpson. With his dimpled smile and easygoing demeanor, when Williams slams the state's case against Boosie, it is with quiet conviction rather than thunder. He's quick to theorize why Boosie was indicted: "He was antiestablishment, questioning the authority of the DA and



"The poor things used to run the planet, once, but they blew it."



law enforcement in his music," he says, "no different from Bob Dylan."

Williams was elected to the New Orleans City Council last March (the same month Boosie was released), a position far from the flashy career moves—bigger, more famous clients and skyrocketing billable rates—of most high-profile criminal attorneys. As an African American man who has defended rich and poor alike, he is deeply familiar with the unequal scales of criminal justice. In taking on Boosie, Williams "had to go against Governor Jindal, District Attorney Hillar Moore and law enforcement itself," he says, "and say they were wasting taxpayer dollars." Or, as Boosie says in praise of Williams, "I was hollering at everybody, seeing who ready to go to war, to be hated if they beat this case."

As the office of Baton Rouge DA Hillar Moore focused its campaign, the rapper boldly and publicly fought back. On a 2010 mixtape track, "Fuck 'Em All," Boosie rhymes, "Fuck the DA Hillar Moore/Your racist ass going to hell/Probably gonna be dead/When I come outta jail." Boosie's lyrics against a man with the power to seek his death—in combination with his case's high profile, his rising fame and fears for his safety—would result in his being moved from the medium-security Dixon to near-solitary "closed cell restricted" 23/1 confinement (23 hours in a cell, one hour out) on death row in Angola.

Nearly 75 percent of Angola's 6,300 inmates are serving life sentences without parole. Few of the thousands who enter leave alive. For a drug offender like Boosie, the placement was extraordinarily unusual. High-profile inmates such as snitches and celebrities often find themselves in protective custody, but as NYU law professor Bryan Stevenson writes, "It is illegal to subject pretrial detainees to confinement that constitutes punishment. Putting someone who has not yet been tried in a prison reserved for convicted felons is almost never done. As is putting someone on death row."

"You have to look at his behavior in prison," responds Louisiana Department of Corrections spokesperson Pam Laborde. "You can't just look at the crime. You have people at Angola with murder and rape convictions who are trustees"—that is, inmates with highly sought-after prison jobs and less-restrictive housing assignments. "I know he had issues at Dixon and Angola and time taken from his 'out date' because of those issues"—presumably including getting high behind bars to cope with his impending trial.

But locking someone away for 23 hours a day on death row over a marijuana charge—or for anything short of insanity or physical risk—can safely be called overzealous. Indeed, Amnesty International calls such treatment cruel and inhumane.

"Solitary just becomes a way of life," Boosie recalls. "You make the best of what you have." Fan mail kept his spirits afloat. "I got hundreds of letters a day," he remembers, "fans cursing me out, tired of listening to other rappers. Thirteen-year-olds telling me my music was their daddy; I was the closest thing they had to a father. They would damn near have me in tears."

When his murder trial began in May 2012, it seemed the state of Louisiana had deployed

its entire legal arsenal against him. His jury was seated anonymously, protection typically reserved for violent drug kingpins. One prosecutor had a 24-hour security guard assigned to her. Snipers were perched on the courthouse roof. "It was like he was an underworld boss," Williams says. Nzinga agrees, describing the prosecution's attitude toward the trial as being "like [Boosie was] John Gotti."

On the stand, key witness Louding immediately recanted his statements implicating Boosie in Boyd's murder. To the chagrin of prosecutors, he turned out to be as unreliable as his 2010 interrogation, testifying that instead of killing Boyd on the night of the shooting, he was with Boosie at the rapper's home. Prosecutors pressed on with flimsy evidence, including a letter from Boosie to Louding advising him to "listen to

Donkey, Donkey knows the deal"—referring to Boosie's cousin Carvis "Donkey" Webb, to whom Louding had reached out after his arrest. They argued that Boosie had told Louding to seek advice from Webb on how to tell prosecutors his confessions were coerced. Webb himself flatly rejected that interpretation, testifying that Boyd had several enemies in Baton Rouge, recalling an incident in which Boyd had been shot 12 to 14 times outside a nightclub by a man he'd robbed. When Webb's turn on the stand backfired, prosecutors were left scrambling with scraps from Boosie's lyrics, including "Whoever tried to play me, they dead now" and "Yo Marlo, he drive a Monte Carlo, dat bitch gray/I want him dead today, here go the cake."

But lyrics are just that. Introducing songs as evidence has become a surprisingly



*"If older generals got erections more easily, they wouldn't be so eager to go to war."*



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commonplace prosecutorial tactic in criminal cases: A California rapper named Tiny Doo is facing 25 years to life over his alleged role in a gang that committed nine shootings; incredibly, prosecutors allege he was not involved in the gang's violence but profited from their activities via album sales. The tactic could target any major artist with violent lyrics. "Bob Marley said he shot the sheriff," Boosie points out. "He wasn't indicted for it. Johnny Cash said he shot a man down in 'Folsom Prison' just to watch him die."

Even without Louding's testimony, there was a chance a jury bullied by prosecutors and blinded by circumstantial evidence could bring a murder conviction, especially in conservative Baton Rouge. But before Williams "could make it two blocks back to our hotel," as he recalls, a unanimous verdict came down: On May 11, 2012, Boosie was found not guilty.

"Karma's a motherfucker, man," Boosie says now. "That's how I feel. After all they put me through, I was acquitted in less than 40 minutes. If I was them, that would hurt."

Louding was not as lucky: In July 2013 he was given a life sentence without parole after a first-degree murder conviction in Boyd's slaying. Then, last February during an appeal hearing, a psychiatrist testified that Louding had PTSD, vividly describing two murders Louding had witnessed at the age of nine. But it wasn't enough to change the mind of Judge Trudy White, who declared Louding "rotten to the core" as she passed him a Bible from the bench.

Boosie's acquittal ensured his eventual freedom, but he had several years left to serve on drug charges. With a new lease on life, he poured himself into his work and art, penning an autobiographical screenplay and composing more than a thousand new songs. He attended church services and found meaning in menial prison tasks. "I was the vegetable man," he says, laughing.

That newfound focus brought an incredible payoff in his contract with Atlantic. "We solidified the Boosie deal before he was released so he could hit the ground running," Kallman says. But neither he nor Boosie could have predicted the cavalcade of mainstream media attention that accompanied his freedom, with coverage everywhere from Buzzfeed ("Rapper Lil Boosie is finally home—Internet, rejoice!") to *Spin* ("The Free Boosie Twitter account, which numbers 141,000 followers, can rest easy for a while"). At a postrelease Atlantic press conference, rappers Bun B, Webbie and Young Jeezy stood by his side. "You'll be surprised how many people don't want to see a young black man come home from prison and succeed," iconic rapper and UGK leader Bun B told the crowd. "They waited years for Mandela. They waited years for Pimp C. They waited years for Boosie."

Boosie's release from Angola and his prophetic role in the mushrooming anti-police-brutality movement cannot dispel the long shadow his Louisiana criminal record casts over his future, where any mistake, no matter how small, could mean decades in prison. After the Cajundome show, Boosie confesses he's leaving Louisiana for good. "I'm just trying something new," he says.

"Louisiana is too small for me." He pauses, struggling to place his thoughts. "Got to get on. New York, Rodeo Drive, Atlanta, you know. I'll always love Louisiana; nothing comes before Louisiana. It's just me living here. It's too much going on, too much that's been done here."

Fans from his home state retain their near-religious devotion, with teenagers rocking "Boosie fade" haircuts and LSU sorority girls rattling off his lyrics at will. But "the not-so-Boosie crowd," as he puts it, knows only his "crucified character." Outside Louisiana he'll have a clean slate; the state's habitual-offender law makes remaining home—where he has contributed so much of his spirit, and where his fans, in turn, see him as family—too risky. Williams personally advised Boosie to move. "If he wants a real shot at freedom, he needs to go somewhere that embraces artists," Williams explains. "We have the highest incarceration rate in the world. I don't want him here."

His new home will be in Atlanta, where Mel and Turk moved after their own scrapes with the law similarly forced them to flee. He'll still meet with his probation officer and undergo drug testing. And because of the long-distance relocation, most of his children will remain behind for the time being, a significant burden on the proud father.

Nzinga, clearing away dishes on the kitchen table, is less resigned to the move, viewing it as yet another dark chapter in a long history of African American artists being driven from Baton Rouge. "Half the south-side black population worked for Trill Entertainment," Nzinga says. "They trumped false charges and chased them out. It's an impossible place to live if you're black and have a certain amount of money and don't depend on white America. That's the truth. It happened with Master P, it happened to Trill, and it's happening with Boosie."

He is naturally nudging Boosie to embrace his newfound status as a Ferguson icon. As we watch the *USA Today* reporter's video, Boosie says, almost under his breath, "I just be feeling like I'm not the only one feeling that way. When I see it, I'm feeling like, Feel me now, feel me now." Aware of the costs of speaking out against law enforcement, he shies away from revealing much more. Still, Boosie is hardly backing down from Ferguson: He recorded a song in Brown's honor in the fall of 2014 called "Hands Up Don't Shoot."

Although his immediate future is in flux, Boosie's prodigious musical output will not be stanch. "What I know is the struggle," Boosie says. "What I know is what I've seen, what I've been through. And no matter what I'm worth or how much money I make, it won't make me stop rapping, because I am and always will be the voice of people who can't speak."

"It's really all been uphill since the beginning," he continues. "It used to be so easy to piss me off, and it's so hard now. I came home making more than I was before. I know who's real and who's fake. I got a good situation. So when people judge my character, I smile, because I know who I am. I'm an entertainer. The corner was a long time ago."





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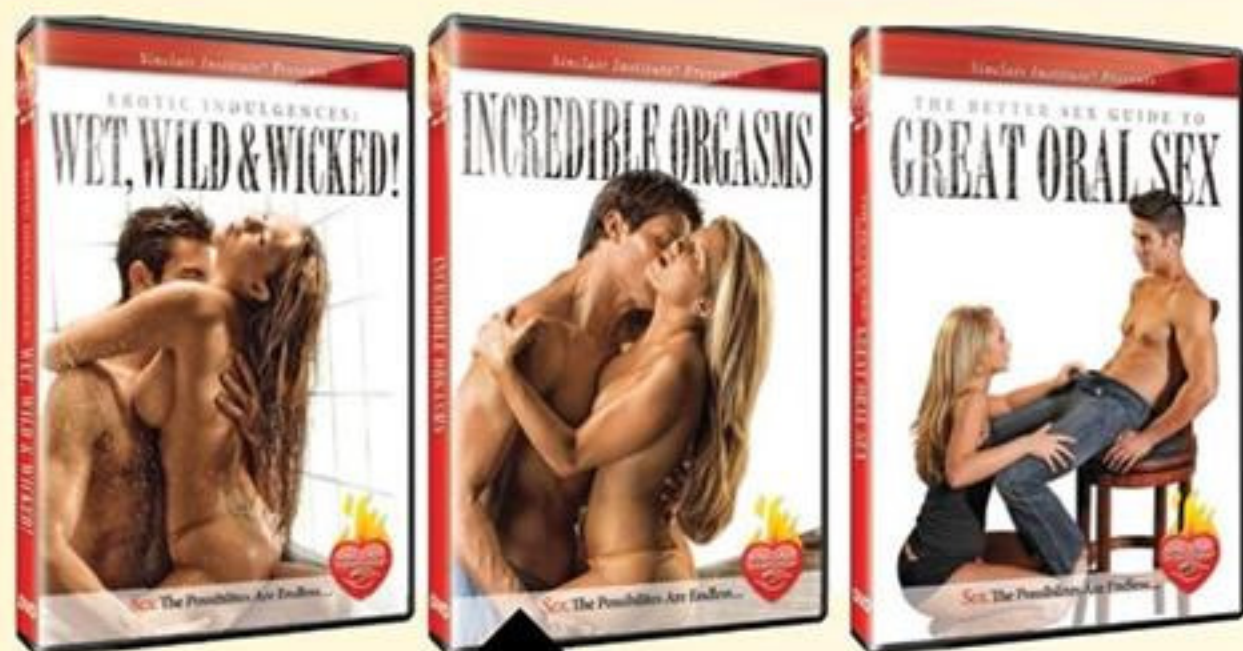
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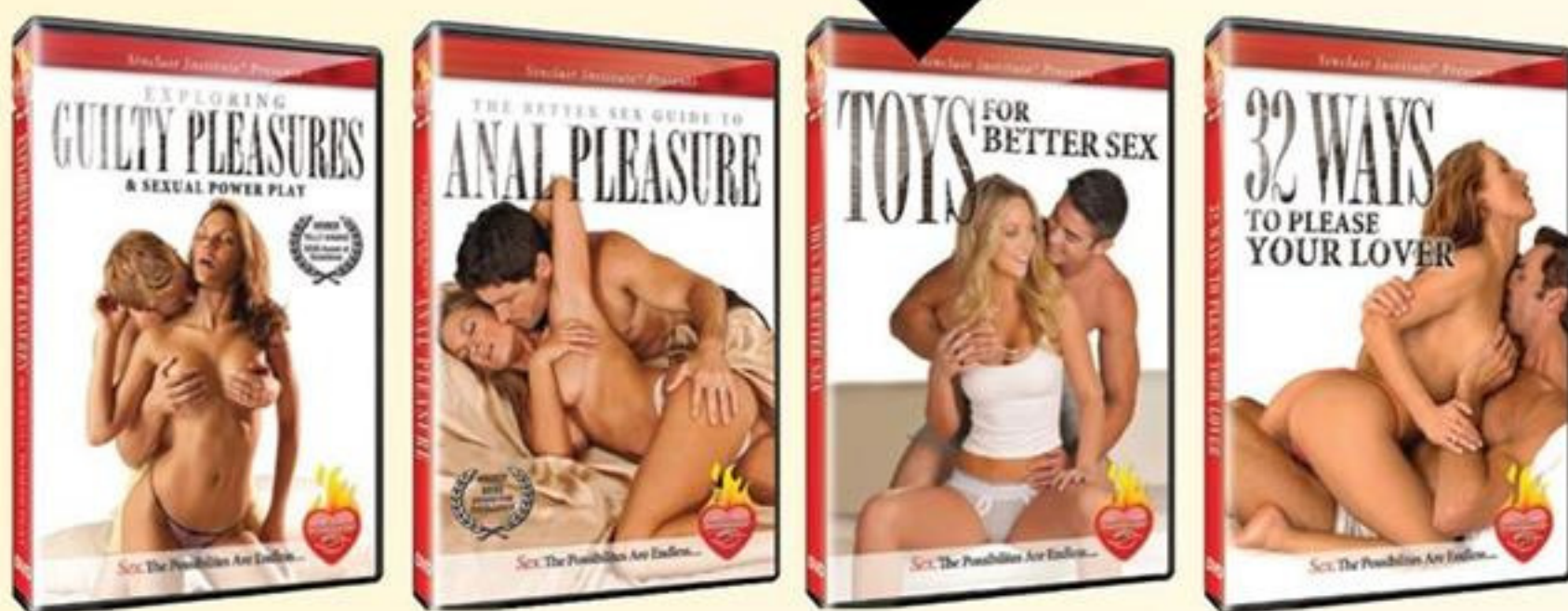
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## VINCE VAUGHN

*Continued from page 48*

that using race as a factor in evaluating a person is a good way to operate?

**PLAYBOY:** The idea is that those who have been at a disadvantage because of race deserve a leg up when it comes to landing opportunities.

**VAUGHN:** But then you're evaluating someone based on race, which is racism. Rights don't come to you because you're a man or a woman or African American or European or Jewish. And I certainly don't think the federal government should be in the business of deciding things or handing out money based on factors like these. It's the same with same-sex marriage. Who cares what people feel about each other? Let people decide for themselves who they can marry. It's not the government's job. It's between you and your partner and your church or synagogue or whatever you believe in.

I think history has proven without a doubt that the proper role of government is to protect individuals' rights and liberties. That has always been the most prosperous, freest society for people to live in. And when government gets too involved,

society turns into a place that gets very, very ugly. But I think we've walked more into *Crossfire* here than *PLAYBOY*.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you ever consider running for office?

**VAUGHN:** No. But let's say I did. I'm going to have a lot of people with a lot of money becoming my friends, aren't I? Because I can write laws to benefit you. Let's say you're a major corporation, and I'm the politician and I can write laws. I can say which race gets a benefit and which doesn't. That could get me some votes. Or I write laws that help your business and limit other businesses from being able to compete with you because they can't survive all the new programs I'm putting in place. What is it they can't afford? The health care act? Okay, I'll vote for that and they can never reach you. But you have to vote for me.

You have to understand that America today is not capitalistic. The problem is corporatism. The government has too much authority, and it's dangerous. It stifles productivity and freedom and prosperity and peace. I find most people nowadays are more complacent or accepting that the government can successfully do everything for us. It can't. It can't!

**PLAYBOY:** You're very passionate about these issues.

**VAUGHN:** How can you not be? The Patriot Act? Let's get rid of it. Undeclared wars, doing away with personal liberties—let's understand how that has worked out historically to see that it has led to some horrible things. Once our personal liberties are gone, when an American citizen can be pulled out of his house and detained for six

months without a trial, where is our country? Once those rights are gone, how do you get them back? Once the government is allowed to listen to you, how do you get that privacy back?

**PLAYBOY:** What happens when you start talking like this among the Obama-loving, Tesla-driving liberals of Hollywood?

**VAUGHN:** Ha! I have a lot of good friends, and if we can have a dialogue and hear each other's opinions, that's fine. People's opinions can change when you can say stuff, so I'm always up for a debate. Also, I'm not against Obama and his policies. I don't have a problem with him personally or as a cool guy. I just don't agree with his ideals or his philosophies. I'm not a fan of central power.

**PLAYBOY:** Why haven't you been more outspoken on these issues? You never appear on shows like *Real Time With Bill Maher*.

**VAUGHN:** I haven't really thought about it. I find a lot of those shows to be about saying something shocking. Maher and Jon Stewart are meant to be comedic, but these shows need ratings, so they need to be provocative. And despite all I've said here today, I don't know if I take it all seriously, in that, is it interesting to see celebrities talk about this stuff? I'm not sure.

**PLAYBOY:** Point taken. Let's move on. What kind of kid were you?

**VAUGHN:** When I was younger they said I could be hyperactive and unfocused. I probably would be medicated if I were growing up today. My parents, thankfully, said no to all that. Sometimes it's like you take a person's spirit away when you put them on medication because they're not fitting in with what's expected.

Both my parents worked, so I was always involved with some activity. This was in the 1970s, when not all moms worked. She did different jobs, including real estate. My dad was maybe the first one in his family to go to college. I never went to college. At that age I didn't have the attention span to study and focus on things that weren't of top interest to me. I always read a lot and liked history, but I always felt motivated, for whatever reason, to work hard and pursue this career. Acting was my passion. And Chicago sports. Growing up, those were my things.

**PLAYBOY:** You're still into Chicago sports. You've sung "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" at Wrigley Field and thrown out the first pitch. You're a Blackhawks season-ticket holder.

**VAUGHN:** You like to see teams you grew up watching do well, but it's not the greatest time for Chicago's teams. The Blackhawks have been doing great, but the Bears have been struggling. The Cubs have been struggling forever. The Bulls have gotten hurt, which is a bummer. They were competitive and now they're not. You gotta keep hope alive, as they say. I've had some of my biggest highs watching all those teams.

**PLAYBOY:** Speaking of high, did you ever go through a period of doing drugs?

**VAUGHN:** I never did, no. I like to drink, but drugs never appealed to me. If anything, my thing was cigarettes. I quit seven years ago, and it was the hardest thing



"Okay, I'm here. Now what do you want?"



to do. I'll smoke a cigar occasionally, but with cigarettes I got to a point where, for whatever reason, I can now take it or leave it. Part of it was just being on a movie set. You're bored and you just get used to it.

**PLAYBOY:** You've been around long enough that they're starting to call some actors, such as Miles Teller from the upcoming *Fantastic Four*, "a young Vince Vaughn." Is it difficult aging in public?

**VAUGHN:** I'll tell you a funny story. I've never been overly fit. I was more fit when I was younger, but I can be lazy by nature now that I'm older. I never was overly focused on my looks, like, Oh, I've got to look this way or wear these clothes when I go out. It just wasn't my priority. I'd eat a hot dog at a sporting event, a photo would come out and I couldn't care less. That being said, I remember about three years back I noticed my hair starting to go a little gray. For whatever reason, it really hit me. I've always seen myself, on some level, as still a kid. I'm not 19 anymore, but I've still got some life left in me. I thought, God, I don't want my hair to go gray. So I asked my mom. She was a beautician when she was younger, and she said there's a product called Just for Men—just get that and put it in your hair and it will make it very naturalistically your regular color. I have kind of black, dark hair. I said, "Great, let's go get it." Well, by the time we were done, I looked like Adam Ant. My hair was neon purple. I was about to do press for some movie, and I had to find a colorist in New York. I never put anything in it after that. I just let it go natural.

**PLAYBOY:** Who are your all-time favorite actors?

**VAUGHN:** I like lots of people for different reasons. I liked Marlon Brando quite a bit just for being so cool and authentic. I liked Gene Wilder a lot. I liked Jackie Gleason. So many good comedic actors. Carol Burnett, I always loved her. I thought she was great, had a great grace about her, very funny. And from a working standpoint, I've had so much fun with Owen Wilson, Ben Stiller, Steve Carell, Will Ferrell, obviously Favreau and now guys like Dave Franco. He's awesome.

**PLAYBOY:** You've made so many successful

movies and TV shows, as an actor, writer and producer. We have to ask, what do you do with all that money?

**VAUGHN:** I started buying up real estate. I bought some houses here and there. I bought some property to rent. I bought some farmland in Illinois.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever get out on a tractor?

**VAUGHN:** I rent the land to a farmer, actually. My grandfather was a dairy farmer. My wife is from a farm in Canada. But I leave it to them. From a real-estate point of view, I think farmland makes sense. It's something I like because I figure we'll need it for years to come. We all have to eat. So I like to put my money into that.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you invest in stocks?

**VAUGHN:** My father helped me with that a little, but I'm not someone who's going to spend the time to get educated on that enough to know what to buy and sell. I'm not up on the stock market. I don't follow the kind of information you need to follow to stay ahead in that game. I don't care when the new iPhone is coming out or keep track of the next technology that's going to replace the iPhone. I'm not overly motivated by that stuff.

As I get older, more and more of my money goes straight into property. I realized that the value of money inevitably goes down over time; \$5,000 today is not worth what it was in 2000. We now have these extreme business cycles that have become part of how our economic system works. It's because we have a central bank that prints money, and now nobody knows what's real or not. The whole system is artificially pumped up. So many loans go out, and money's easy to get, so people grab those loans and start buying stuff. Costs go up because it feels like there's a lot of money out there, but it's not real. Eventually the cost of things domestically goes up, so people start buying foreign in bulk. And then they call in their notes because they want their money. Then the banks tighten up, and there's no money to pay off the extension of loans. How many people do you know, whether they were mortgaged or had two or three properties or were trying to rent, and they can't pay it? There's an inevitability in that business

cycle that there will be a bottoming out and a lot of people will lose a lot of stuff. God help them.

**PLAYBOY:** Speaking of God, are you a man of faith?

**VAUGHN:** I am. I have faith in God. I don't have a dogma or religion that I follow, but by heritage I'm part Catholic and part Protestant. My grandmother was a devout Catholic and one of the kindest, greatest women I've ever known. Just a tremendous lady, and she found a lot of truth in it. I'm more of a questioner when it comes to the church, and some of it has to do with the way it's run. The pope, for example, falls a little bit under the central planning we were talking about earlier. The idea that you have one person suggesting this is the way it is and this is the way it's not—it's not my favorite form of governing.

**PLAYBOY:** What's left on your life to-do list?

**VAUGHN:** Workwise, I'm always looking to accomplish new things. I don't have a dream project under my arm that must get made, but I always think about what to do next, what would be interesting, what would make me stretch a little. On a personal level, travel would be nice. I've seen a lot of places because of work, but I never really took vacations because I was always nervous to leave town and give up an opportunity to act. I haven't been to Africa yet. I'd like to take the kids places. I want them to see the world. We don't know what's going to happen in life, and I don't want to have regrets, though honestly, I feel I've done so much already that I can't complain.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you optimistic about the future?

**VAUGHN:** Sure, yeah, you gotta be. You gotta hope. What I want is to be healthy, for my family to be healthy and happy. Like everybody, I want to continue to be excited about what's in front of me. Try to laugh. Connect with people. Continue to grow. Be curious about things, open-minded. Be open to finding different ways of doing things. Yeah, just continue to live, continue to make stuff happen. It's been a pretty fantastic ride so far.







ENGINE TROUBLE

Continued from page 64

argument is that racing is too dangerous, an argument that is not without merit. As Hernández was leaving one event, his car's accelerator stuck, forcing him to swerve into a tree to avoid running into a large crowd. The collision uprooted the tree and left three people in the hospital. But racers say there is also a loaded political dynamic at work in a country where the socialist regime still considers racing an elitist pastime.

As a result, a Cuban street race is often an impromptu affair, carried off before a large crowd can form and draw the attention of police. Even so, Perlmutter says he's

seen cops look the other way, even filming races on their cell phones, as the "pilots" pull over alongside the highway while an observer sets up at a makeshift finish line to record who wins.

It's Friday night, and the racers have gathered not for a race but for a screening of a near-final cut of Perlmutter's documentary. This takes place in a Polynesian-themed bungalow on a dark hillside far from the lights of central Havana, even further removed from the present. Decorated with tiki masks, nautical paintings and a pair of cattle skulls, it looks like a place Richard Nixon's corpse might throw a birthday party. The event starts at half past seven, but the racers turn up at their leisure, piling out of cars loaded with friends, family or *jevitás* (mistresses), greeting one another and fishing beers from a well-stocked cooler.

Noticeably absent is Carlos Alvarez, the driver and mechanic for El Porsche, a Porsche 944 that belongs to Saul, who lives in Miami and is viewed with some resentment as another rich Cuban expat. On Sunday, ignoring Saul's directive, Alvarez went up against Hernández. The engine overheated and El Porsche broke down. Word arrives at the screening that Alvarez, who was assumed to be out of the race, got Saul's backing to buy the

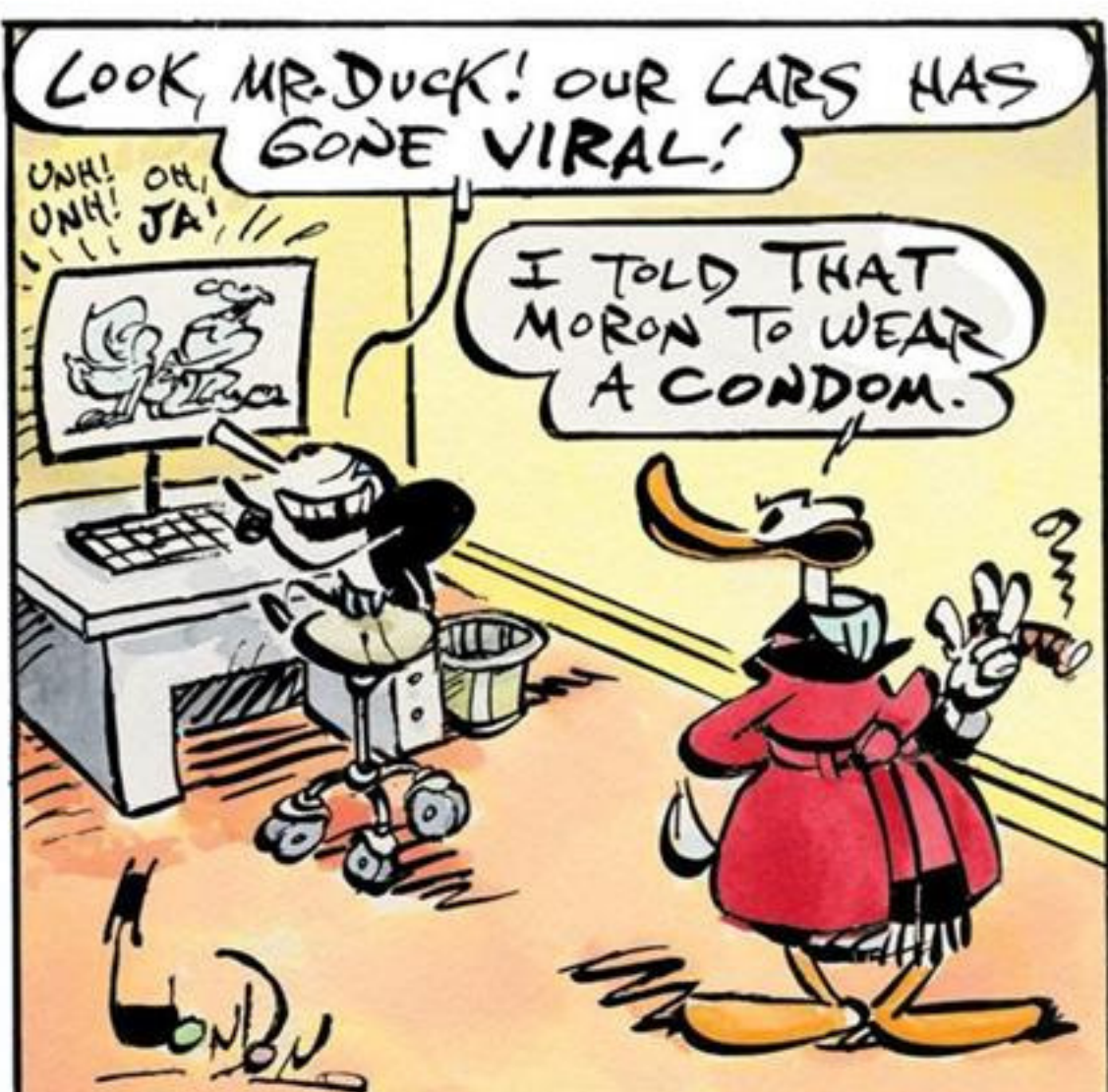
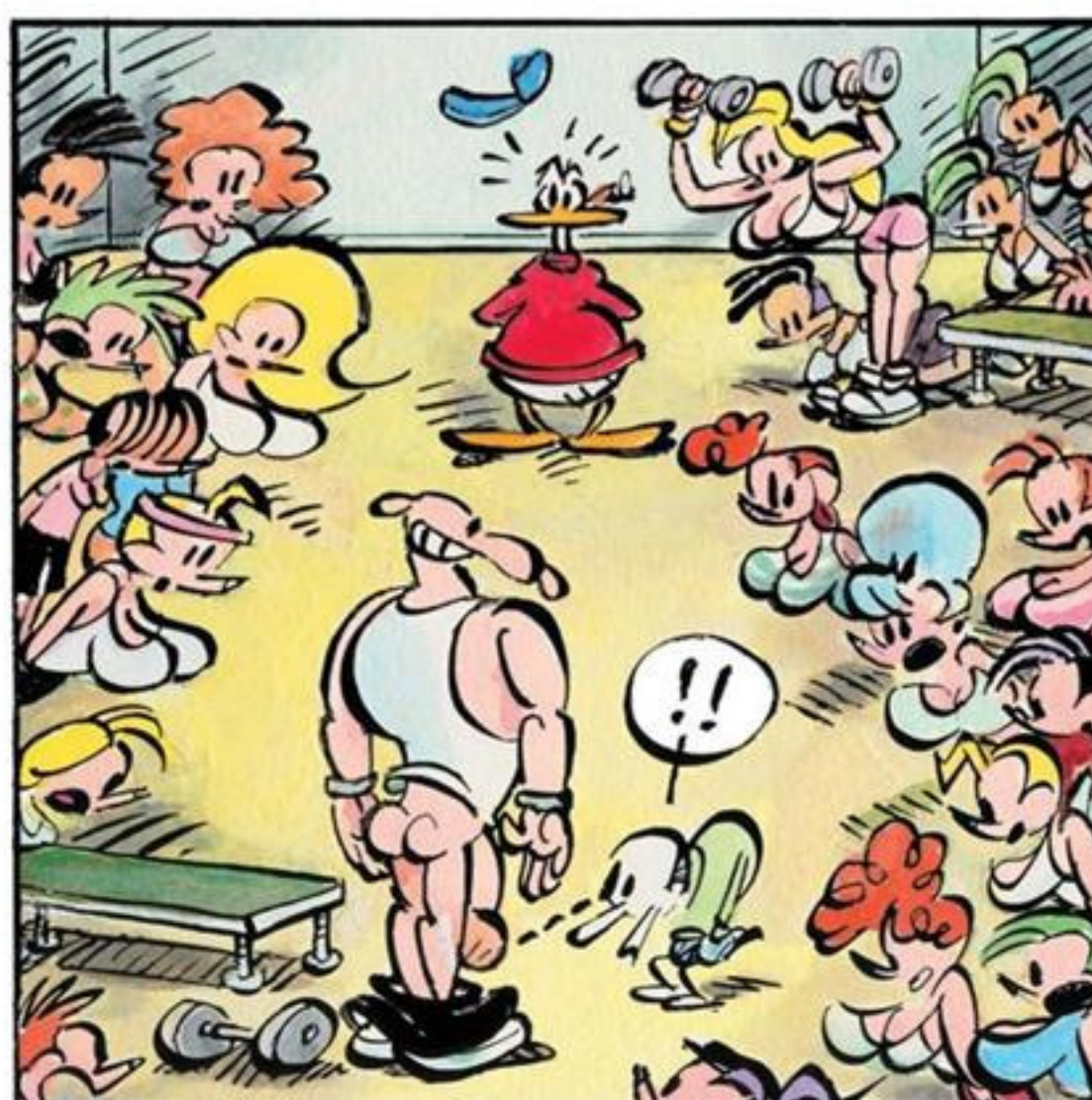
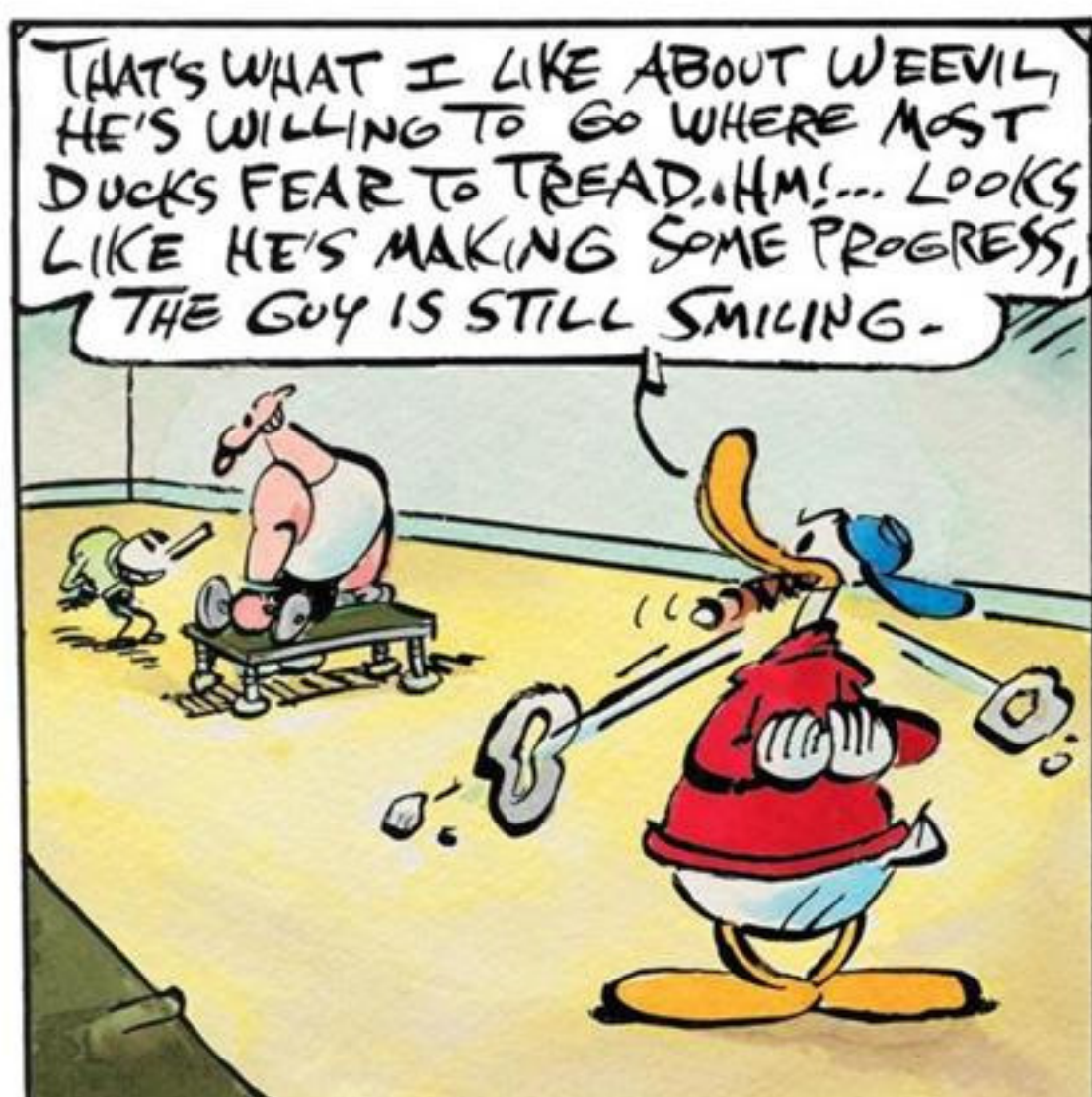
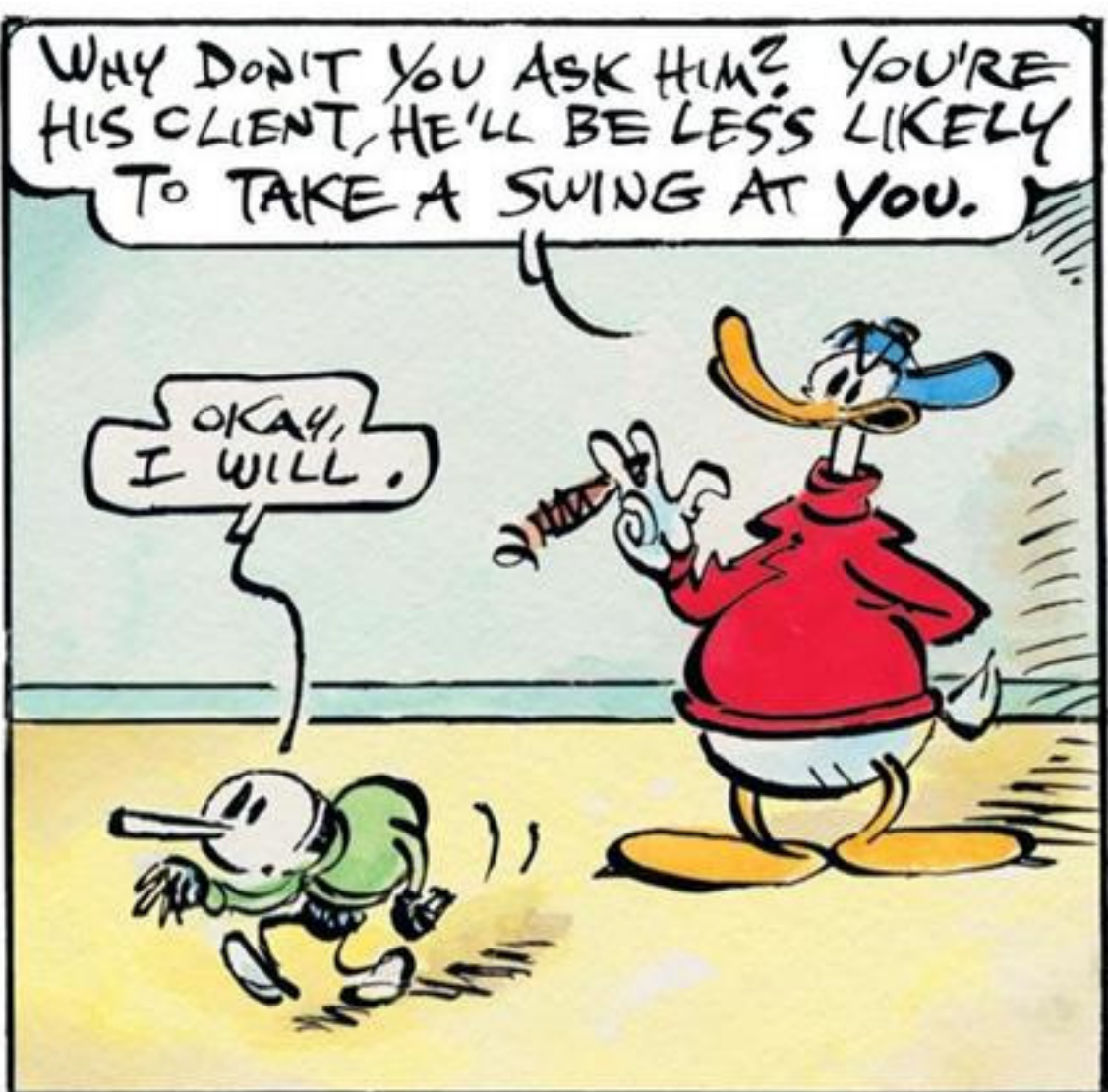
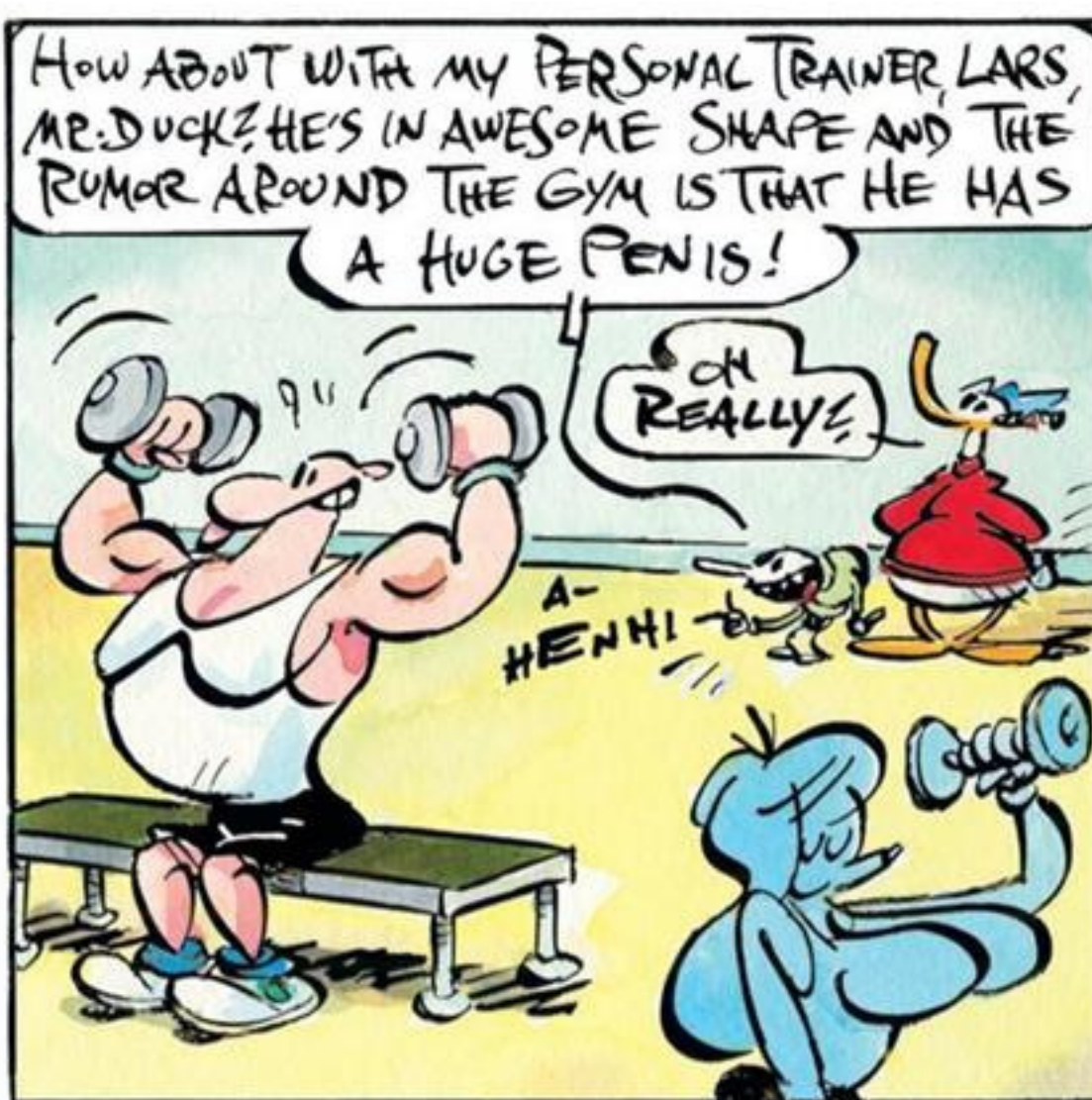
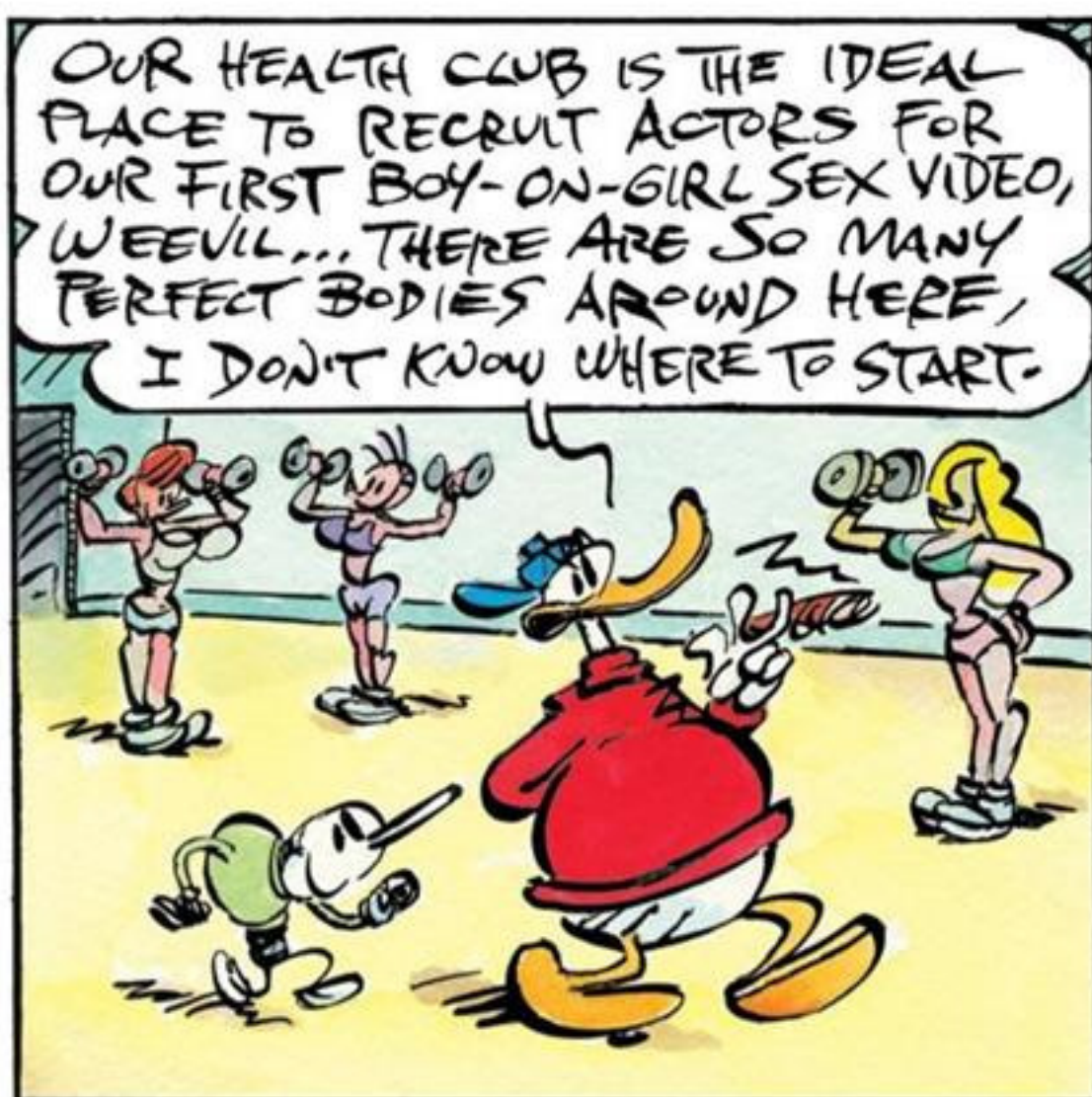
part he needs and will likely be working through the night.

After a short introductory speech from Perlmutter—in rapid-fire Spanish with little regard for grammar but an abundance of body language—the film begins. It opens with what will prove to be its most controversial scene. A short, scrappy, tragicomic character named Jote Madera pushes a 1951 Chevy Coupe, the Black Widow, into a garage and drops in a new engine. Madera tells a story: It's an American-made motor that found its way into a boat used to smuggle Cubans off the island; the boat ran aground and was seized by the Cuban Coast Guard, who tossed the engine overboard (presumably as a deterrent to other smugglers), where it was salvaged by a scuba diver, who resold it to Madera.

Perlmutter was nervous about the scene. A much earlier cut had elicited a few objections, which he understood to be about his disclosing where racers find engines—a trade secret. This time the scene is greeted with stiff silence and discernible fidgeting.

The mood changes with footage of a recent race. A potbellied older man stands in front of two cars to signal the start. He whips his arm downward, and Madera and Hernández peel off, speeding away from a few dozen cheering spectators who line the road. A camera in the

# Dirty Duck by Bobby London





passenger seat of Madera's car captures his focused scowl, a blurring backdrop of trees and cloudless sky, and the angry whine of a motor. Hernández quickly overtakes him and wins by more than a car length. But it's Madera, exuding recklessness, who steals the scene. "You're crazy," another driver yells at him. "Don't you care about anything in life?" In the next shot Madera declares he's a "raft hopper" and will soon set sail for Florida. "People are afraid of the sea, but it's easy," he boasts. "Christopher Columbus and all those guys did it."

Part of the film focuses on 2011, when a group of racers attempted to get sanction for the first official race in 50 years. At one point they had a date scheduled. Three days before the race—officially dubbed an "event of maximum acceleration"—it was called off. At the time, Ernesto Dobarganes, president of the Cuban Federation of Motorsports, gathered the racers and read a formal letter announcing its suspension, without stating a reason. According to Perlmutter, Dobarganes asked him to turn off his cameras and explained the race was canceled because Pope Benedict would be making his first visit to Cuba and authorities needed the barricades. Perlmutter didn't understand, since the race would be far outside Havana, where the Mass was to be held two weeks later. Then he learned the pope's visit would require all the barricades in the whole cash-strapped country, and these were in such poor condition they first needed to be repainted.

Dobarganes plays the part of the hesitant bureaucrat. In a televised interview, he explains that the race will eventually go forward when organizers have secured all the appropriate levels of authorization. When asked what would happen if it doesn't pan out that way, he outlines a less than audacious response. "A very simple thing would happen, and it is a direct message to all the TV viewers," Dobarganes deadpans, staring into the camera without a hint of irony. "We would keep waiting for it." Eight months later, they finally get their race.

After the film ends and the applause dies, a discussion follows and gives rise to a heated debate over one short but powerful anecdote. Driver Rey Lopez begins it, complaining that Madera's story paints a false and unflattering image of Cuba. "Now, if he wants to grab a raft and leave the country, it's his life," he says. But Lopez takes issue with Madera's facts, specifically that anyone would throw an engine into the sea.

In the ensuing debate, some agree with Lopez. Others defend Madera, arguing that his story speaks to an important facet of life for some Cubans that should not be overlooked. But no one seems to believe the story about the engine.

"That's a lie. Nobody does that here," says driver Lorenzo Monnet. "Everybody gets an old engine and replaces its parts one by one until it's put back together. There's no other way to do it."

It's a wrinkle that merits looking into. But there are signs of an even more pressing problem brewing when Perlmutter catches sight of Dobarganes talking conspiratorially in a corner of the room with the president of one of the car clubs. When he asks what

is going on, Dobarganes reassures him that everything is fine. No one is reassured.

It's the day before the race and nothing appears ready. Rey Lopez claims that everything is set, but parts of his engine are visible, neatly organized on the floor of his shop. Worst of all, there has been no confirmation from Dobarganes that the race is even on.

Rey Lopez and his brother Jose Miguel Lopez are the sons of Reynaldo "Tito" Lopez. The family is widely respected in the racing community, where they are affectionately referred to as the Titos. Wearing frameless glasses and a polo that hangs like a mud flap from his belly, Jose Miguel looks like an accountant coated in axle grease. But the shop behind him is a portrait of order, with a handful of cars under cover.

Jose Miguel believes racing is doomed always to face resistance. Like other sports associated with money, including hockey, racing is painted with a wide, counterrevolutionary brush. "Except for baseball and the things Fidel always liked," he adds. It's a function of the regime's ideological prism, through which the successful entrepreneur is seen as similarly tainted. "Whenever someone grows, he's a capitalist."

Fidel is one of history's great political figures, Jose Miguel continues, but not so good at economics. "Before, there were people who were very poor, a lot of beggars, and the revolution helped these people," he says. "But there were also people who were very well-off, because they had shops." His grandfather, for example, whose plan to launch an auto service center was derailed by the revolution. His grandfather always said it was one thing to nationalize the big wealthy enterprises, but he knew when the government began to target smaller businesses that the economy was in trouble.

In 1999 police showed up here at his family's home to investigate their thriving mechanic business. On the basis of a paperwork error, he says, their business license was taken away. Jose Miguel offered to fix the glitch, but an officer told him the decision had already come down from above. The family continued to work until he, his father and his uncle were tossed into jail for a night, then released without explanation.

With the family name stigmatized, Jose Miguel and his brother left for Italy to work as mechanics at a brother-in-law's transport company. Their room and board was covered, and they earned more than \$1,000 a month, a fortune by Cuban standards.

It was a learning experience to work in a capitalist society. He recalls the first time he heard a co-worker criticize a head of state, saying, "This Berlusconi is such an asshole." Jose Miguel whips his head around in simulated shock. He struggled to explain to Italians how one could live in Cuba while earning \$10 a month. "We've been living like this for 50 years," he says. "We don't go hungry. We survive."

He also saw the flip side of capitalism when Italy's economic crisis hit and truck drivers clamored to get paid so they wouldn't be thrown out of their homes. In Cuba he didn't have the luxury of living however he

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pleased, but neither would anyone toss his family out because he couldn't pay the bank.

Today Cuba is asking too much of a people unaccustomed to capitalism to move so quickly into a new system. People are scared. Everything you can get a license for is now taxed. A year ago, maybe you paid 200 pesos a month for a license to sell sunglasses, but you made 1,000 pesos or more a day. That was too little, but now the state charges too much. As Jose Miguel sees it, Fidel's revolutionary focus on equality of outcomes cut too broadly, bringing the beggars up but the entrepreneurial class down, while Raúl's reforms have been too swift.

And the state has proved recalcitrant in relinquishing its grip. A few years ago people began to build theaters in their houses, investing in seats, air-conditioning and 3-D televisions. Overnight a law was announced prohibiting the practice. The official reason stated in the newspapers was that these private theaters were showing porn flicks. "That's absurd," says Jose Miguel. The same thing happened with the satellite-television cooperatives.

The real reason behind the crackdowns was the fear that Cubans were being exposed to counterrevolutionary ideology.

Still, things have changed significantly. He asks if I know "los Beatles." In the 1970s he would have been arrested for playing the Beatles at a house party. Today Havana is home to John Lennon Park. No one expected much to change under Raúl, but things have. Today on a TV show called *Cuba Talks*, on which respondents had previously been instructed how to answer preprogrammed questions, random people are interviewed on the street and are freer to express an opinion, even to criticize policy. "We grew up with this fear, and some people are still afraid. But many people speak up," he says. "The whole world has to evolve."

Just then, word comes that the race has been canceled.

In Cuba, getting to the bottom of a bureaucratic decision is difficult. It is especially

hard since I've come in under the radar, without an official journalist's visa. Dobarganes's explanation essentially centers on a minor political turf war: A local official, miffed because another official had signed off on last week's race without consulting him, refused to sign off on this week's race. Later we hear a rumor that the necessary approval could not be secured because the venue's manager had just defected to the U.S. Dobarganes, who had assured Perlmutter this week's event would happen, had pleaded with the racers not to go through with the previous race, because he feared such an outcome. But the racers had decided to race anyway: The stars so rarely align for them that waiting one out was a luxury they felt they couldn't afford.

Several of the racers blame Dobarganes, a former pro racer who was in the prime of his youth when the sport was taken away from him. Today Dobarganes is a government man of sorts. I have plenty of questions, but when I cornered him at the screening, he promised me an interview the next day, which he then postponed and will postpone every day until it's time for me to leave—a common tactic, says Perlmutter.

These bureaucratic tangles may explain why real reform has yet to impact the average Cuban. Hal Klepak, a professor with the Royal Military College of Canada who researches the Cuban military, believes the ongoing reforms "may seem slow by the standards of Brussels or Washington, but by the standards of Cuban reform, they're absolutely exceptional." Klepak says the government is hampered by resistance from the Cuban bureaucracy. Raúl Castro has the loyalty of the military, but bureaucrats within the Communist Party and the civil service drag their heels when implementing reforms that come from above. "It's the state bureaucracy and the Communist Party bureaucracy that have learned to live with the difficulties and have their little advantages that bureaucracy and bureaucrats always seem to get," says Klepak. "Here those advantages are really quite extraordinary."

To find Jote Madera, we have to travel to the outskirts of what can still be called Havana, a mix of town and country that bustles with old cars, packed buses, horse-drawn buggies and hand-pulled carts.

As Perlmutter's film leaves it, Madera sold his engine to build a raft for another attempt to reach Florida. When that attempt failed, Madera bought a new engine that turned out to be too small to race. He was utterly deflated, and not much has changed.

"Everything is still the same," he says. "If you come here today, you will see the same thing in 10 years." He makes good money fixing fenders, but about half goes to food, he says, "and the rest goes to shit—everything here is shit."

He has attempted to defect three times with his nephew. They got matching tattoos to commemorate the endeavor; he lifts his shirt to show a shark stenciled across his stomach. That makes nine attempts for Madera so far. On his closest try, the U.S. Coast Guard picked him up about eight



*"I'm not complaining—I'm just saying you seem to get more fun from you-time than you do from us-time."*



miles off the Florida coast. (In accordance with the U.S. "wet foot/dry foot" policy, Cubans picked up at sea are returned to Cuba, while those who make it ashore are immediately granted asylum.) On the most recent attempt, a Cuban maritime patrol stopped them. Madera and his nephew had shipped out from the port of Mariel, located at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico, about 90 miles from the Florida Keys. In 1980 it was the departure point for some 125,000 Cubans fleeing by boat to the U.S.

Today the Cuban government is constructing a special free-trade economic zone and a new seaport there as part of its effort to draw much-needed foreign investment to Cuba and the world's largest ships to its deepwater harbor. But the increased activity has brought more surveillance. Madera says they could leave from Pinar del Rio, closer to Mexico, but the currents in the Gulf are more dangerous for a small boat. After his arrest, he spent three nights in jail and paid a fine of around \$200. It was a relative slap on the wrist: If you pay to use someone else's boat, he says, you could get 10 years in prison.

When asked why he is so desperate to leave, he taps his left hand, covered in a bloody gauze patch, and makes a cutting motion across his wrist. A few years ago, his hand grew infected after surgery. The wound still won't close, and his body no longer seems to respond to the ointment the doctor gives him. With his right hand Madera bends the lifeless fingers on his left, which has the look of a rubbery claw. He exposes a deep, raw divot beneath the bandage. The last time he returned, the doctor told him the only thing left to do is amputate. That was a month or two ago. He hasn't been back since. "I don't want anybody touching my hand," he says.

But Cuba is known for its great doctors. Why not get a second opinion?

"He is one of the best doctors around," Madera replies. He thinks American doctors could fix it and plans to sell his motorcycle to try once again to leave the island. "I was born to work," he says. "I wasn't born to eat shit."

I tell Madera that some of the other racers said an engine extracted from the ocean would be useless.

It's just the engine block, he says. When a smuggler is caught, Madera continues, the police turn his boat over to civilian mechanics to be disassembled piece by piece and the rest dumped at sea. "But the person throwing it out is human, just like you, just like me," he says. "And they have a GPS to mark where it lands." It won't rust if it's covered in grease before it's dumped and retrieved within a few days. Madera buys the bare block, which weighs about 40 pounds—less in water, he says, a job two scuba divers could handle together—then outfits it with undamaged parts.

What he really wanted was an aluminum engine block, which costs around \$15,000. The salvaged block cost him \$300. "What would you do?" he asks.

Madera started by racing motorcycles in his neighborhood. He wasn't much good at it, so he decided to move up to cars. He had heard that Lopez's was the fastest car

in Cuba, so he showed up at his front door and challenged him to a race. "He said I was crazy," Madera says. Lopez eventually agreed to help him build his car nonetheless. In his first race, against Lorenzo Monnet, Madera broke his gearbox. "It exploded," he says. "Boom!" The high point of Madera's racing career was when he finished second. But that's beside the point. Madera is clear about why he races. In the film he says, "Racing makes you bigger." Huddled in the shack, hail pelting the thin walls like automatic gunfire, he just laughs and says, "Losing doesn't matter."

I want to experience what David Peña, a respected figure in the racing community, calls "the common denominator—speed." Monnet agrees to show me. We are parked alongside a straight stretch of road cutting through Cuba's thick, bright foliage in a red and black Ford Fairlane he's fixing up for his 16-year-old son. Monnet has a tattoo of a flaming skull on his wrist and a spare tire around his midsection, the result of an ongoing battle with cancer. The interior of the car is stripped and unfinished, giving it the look of a prototype for an Apollo space mission. A pair of dice and a U.S. dollar symbol hang from his rearview. He has removed all the seats except the driver's, so I'm squatting in back, digging my heels into the floor for traction.

Monnet planned to boycott the race anyway. He's critical of the federation for not doing more to support the racers, who don't even get money for gas despite the hundreds of spectators paying entrance fees and the vendors selling beer, the wheels of economic activity spinning all around them. The drivers don't even know where that money goes. But worse is the constant uncertainty. He works hard to prepare for a race, then it gets "postponed." Not even canceled, always postponed. Driving is a source not only of release for him but also of renewal. After chemotherapy—a gift of the revolution, as he sees it—he'll take his wife and son out on the road and come back ready for another round. Racing is in his blood. Most airline passengers sit there worrying that their plane will fall out of the sky, he tells me; he wants it to go faster. He backs up, the engine rumbling with a deep, throaty purr, and shifts into gear.

Then he floors it. We accelerate quickly, blasting past a startled pedestrian along the side of the road. Whether from the air streaming in through the window or the car's vibration, the light seems to bend in my eyes, blurring my vision. The faster we go, the faster I want to go—to race ahead, push boundaries, escape my orbit. It is a joyfully reckless impulse, whatever it is that drives a boy to take a fast sled down a steep hill.

Before long we are out of road, closing in on a truck headed our way. Monnet brakes quickly and then throws it in reverse. Turning onto a dusty side road, he spins a donut, the tires burning rubber against the sun-baked asphalt.



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## BEN SCHWARTZ

*Continued from page 94*

to have an interview here for an internship." She laughed and said, "I think you're in the wrong place." I said, "This is not MTV?" She said, "Yeah, this is MTV, but this is the president's office." I don't know why, but I said, "Well, surely *he* can get me a job." She cracked up—and directed me to some guy on a lower floor.

I found my man. He took my résumé and tossed it in a drawer with 300 others. I was super bummed. I walked through Times Square, and as I passed Letterman's theater, a guy said, "Do you want to come in and see the show?" There were seats left, and I was nicely dressed. Afterward I talked to the door guy and said, "I'd really like to do what you do. Is there anybody I can talk to?" He pointed me toward another guy. I gave him the spiel. I could tell he was kind of putting me off because he'd heard it a

million times. He said, "What do you really do at UCB?" I told him interning, getting free classes, handling tickets, having a blast, which meant I was around celebrities and could be trusted not to go crazy in their presence. "I also do comedy," I said. He said, "I'd love to help you out, man, but you need a résumé." I go, "*Whoopa*," and whipped out all 15 of them. Two days later he called. I made \$10 an hour.

### Q7

PLAYBOY: Eventually you started submitting jokes for Dave's monologue. What's the secret to getting him to use your material?  
SCHWARTZ: You study what he likes to make fun of and how he does it. For Letterman it's a sentence setup, a sentence punch, get the fuck out of it. "Paris Hilton was in an accident yesterday. She's fine. It wasn't the first time she's been rear-ended." I woke up every day at six A.M. and wouldn't stop writing until I had at least 15 jokes, sometimes more. Most were rejected. The first time he used one of my jokes felt incredible—but I wouldn't put it on my résumé until I'd gotten three on the air.

### Q8

PLAYBOY: What happened to the unused material?  
SCHWARTZ: My dad, who'd also seen every joke, suggested I put them on my website, RejectedJokes.com. I videoed myself telling them to an audience of zero. I'd get a special guest once a month to do a joke—Seth Green, Rob Corddry. This was back

before YouTube comedy videos got big. It wasn't so much to have them go viral as it was a business-minded approach to having people care about me and know that I existed in that medium. It was a résumé.

### Q9

PLAYBOY: Women always claim a sense of humor is the number one quality they look for in a man. Has it ever gotten you laid?  
SCHWARTZ: That would be amazing if it were true. Imagine a hideous man who's a fucking asshole but has an incredible sense of humor. You think women would rush to date that person? No way! I have rarely had the balls to approach a beautiful woman and say something first. I'm afraid she'll think, Get this hideous man away from me. I suppose it would be great if I could go, "Knock, knock." "Who's there?" And kill her with a joke so good that she's like, "Well, now we've got to fuck." Unfortunately, I have never told a great joke that made a girl take off her panties. On the other hand, when I'm having sex I don't think, Oh, I'm killing right now!

### Q10

PLAYBOY: You once made and posted a computer-animated clip called "Debra's Underwear" on your website. Who is Debra, and does she know you did this?  
SCHWARTZ: Oh, I *love* that you've seen "Debra's Underwear." [laughs] There's a program online from Xtranormal that lets you write a little script and choose characters and camera angles and make them say what you want. I made four about this guy who keeps stealing Debra's panties—and eating them. And it pisses her off. There is no real Debra, though. I haven't seen this in maybe six years, but now I'm going to watch it as soon as I get home.

### Q11

PLAYBOY: In 2007 you and your UCB improv partners were invited to perform at the Just for Laughs Festival in Montreal, but you got held up at the border. Why?  
SCHWARTZ: I was in a sketch group called Hot Sauce with Adam Pally and Gil Ozeri. We drove there in a van. A couple of minutes from the border Gil said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. I don't have my passport. I just have my birth certificate. I hope they don't make a big deal out of it." I said, "That's okay." Then it hit me. I said, "Wait a minute. In the sketches we do we have fake cocaine and fake guns, and they're all in the back of the van right now! Should we say something? Yeah, I think we should." At the border I said, "By the way, we also have fake cocaine and fake guns in the back." Better to be up front so they can check it out, realize it's all fake and send us on our way. But that's not their job. Instantly we heard, "Everybody out of the car." We were each interviewed separately. What a fucking idiot I was. We knew we hadn't done anything wrong, but we were terrified.

### Q12

PLAYBOY: Does your improv experience help when you're pitching a movie?  
SCHWARTZ: Yes. Paramount wanted to do



*"On the one hand, you have more than enough character references. But on the other hand, they're all hookers."*



a remake of *Soapdish*—but not as a soap opera. I thought about setting it in the world of Spanish telenovelas. I realized that in the original movie the characters' lives are bigger than the soap opera they're doing. It just clicked. I pitched for 45 minutes straight, the entire movie, from the first to the last scene. When I was done, Paramount bought it in the room. It was the first time that ever happened to me. It's called *El Fuego Caliente*. It still hasn't been made, but in 2011 it got on the Black List of best unproduced screenplays.

### Q13

PLAYBOY: Do you write only scripts you can act in?

SCHWARTZ: After Universal bought one of my screenplays, we had a meeting. They said, "Who do you see as the lead character?" I'd written it for myself and said so. The executive goes, "Yeah, yeah. But if it gets turned into a *movie*, who would you put in it?" It broke my heart. The latest one I sold is a big deal for me. It has no title yet, but Adam McKay is attached to direct it, and Seth Rogen and I are attached to star. I had a meeting with McKay and said, "I want to be in the movie." He said, "One hundred percent." So I wrote myself the second or third lead. It's the Tina Fey method. In the beginning she wrote herself as the third lead, then steadily moved up.

### Q14

PLAYBOY: You recently got Jane Fonda, who's been in two movies with you, to do something she'd never done before. What was it?

SCHWARTZ: For about 11 years I've done a show with UCB called *Snowpants*. It's me and a bunch of old-school guys, and we invite people who've never done improv to participate—Don Cheadle, Helen Hunt, Blake Griffin, J.J. Abrams. I wanted to ask Jane but didn't have the balls. Then she heard about it and said, "I want to do your show." I could not believe it. I asked her why. "Because it scares me and I have to do things that scare me. I'm over 70, and if I keep doing just things that are safe, what's the point? That's not a way to live life." A beautiful lesson. She did 12 scenes and was great. The crowd went bananas.

### Q15

PLAYBOY: As an actor, what do you regret ended up on the cutting-room floor?

SCHWARTZ: Last season on *House of Lies* Clyde got to have sex with Marty's very hot ex-wife. We filmed a scene where she's blowing me in the bathroom, and she comes up and looks right at the camera. That never made it to air.

### Q16

PLAYBOY: Walk us through *The Walk*, which comes out this fall.

SCHWARTZ: It's about Philippe Petit, who walked a tightrope between the Twin Towers. Joseph Gordon-Levitt is Philippe. I play Albert, one of the gentlemen who hooked up the wires—but I have some evil inside me, and Philippe doesn't really trust me. It takes place in the 1970s, so I had to

grow a mustache and sideburns, radically change my hairstyle and wear glasses that emphasize my nose. I looked just like my dad did. It was really weird. A mom and her kid crossed the street rather than walk next to me. I think it was the porn stache.

### Q17

PLAYBOY: What movie can you watch again and again and never get bored?

SCHWARTZ: *Back to the Future*. It's my favorite movie. It's funny. It's time travel. It takes something unexplainable and convinces you it's happening. When I saw a hoverboard in *Back to the Future Part II*, I thought it was real. Now, as an adult—and I've worked with Robert Zemeckis—I see that movie as a perfect joke, in the sense that it cashes in on everything set up at the beginning and throughout. It's so gorgeous.

### Q18

PLAYBOY: How did you and Amanda McCall come up with humor books that use cute pet pictures to express morbid sentiments?

SCHWARTZ: She's the fucking best. Amanda was a page with me at *Letterman*. She's a very funny girl. Weird sense of humor, just like me. Her father is Bruce McCall, whose *New Yorker* covers are extraordinary. When we decided to try something together, I suggested pairing the most horrific news with the cutest animal in the world as a way of softening the blow. We made *Grandma's Dead: Breaking Bad News With Baby Animals*. We'd try different photos and say, "No, that duck can't tell you that you have herpes—but *this* duck can!" "It's terminal"

will be a baby pig. "Daddy's never coming home" is a little kitten in a basket, wearing a hat. We did two more books: *Why Is Daddy in a Dress? Asking Awkward Questions With Baby Animals* and *Maybe Your Leg Will Grow Back! Looking on the Bright Side With Baby Animals*. They sold a lot, and they've been ripped off everywhere.

### Q19

PLAYBOY: Now that you're making more than \$10 an hour, what's the first expensive thing you paid for all in cash?

SCHWARTZ: A Honda Civic. I still have it, a 2009 basic, nothing-special Civic. I had just moved to Los Angeles and was renting a Camry and sleeping in a tent on my friend Chad Carter's porch. I started out on the couch, but I slept in my boxers, and it was probably disgusting for Chad and his girlfriend to see. The girlfriend had a small blue tent, so inside it I put a tiny inflatable mattress, a sheet and that spare blanket everyone has but never uses, and it was my bedroom for weeks.

### Q20

PLAYBOY: You're a still-single 33-year-old male. Describe your laundering routine.

SCHWARTZ: In New York I had to go to a Laundromat. I now have my own washer and dryer. I prefer Tide detergent, and I use Bounce softener sheets. I used to use only two sheets a load, but I don't give a fuck anymore. I'll use three sheets. It costs only five bucks for a whole box.



"Think of it as an investment."





## THE BULL YOU SEE, THE BULL YOU DON'T

Continued from page 74

had an actor's iron control over his body, and she understood the blow was psychic, or symbolic, or some other messed-up thing, and it was up to her to decide the extent of the damage that was done. To impress the depth of his hurt feelings on her he swept dramatically from the room, leaving the phone and the bottle behind, slamming the door after him. She passed another lonely night, acutely conscious of Mama Aija before the mirror, a precious legacy of self-knowledge she hoped one day to be able herself to pass on.

The following day was interesting because it was totally up to Alice what she did. There was no sign of Will, nor did she expect him. The offending phone lay on the table. She drank a tiny glass of fino before she went out looking for breakfast and later spent a seductive hour in a bookstore absorbed in picture books of bulls and the matadors who lived to kill them. Maybe it was a little surprising that Will didn't come back that night either. And maybe calling what she felt relief made things too tidy in her heart. But she did. There was

room and time and a need for tidiness. An old-fashioned clock hulked in one corner of the room on clunky feet, an artifact of fashionable days. Normally she didn't notice the clock's insistent tick, but that night it raced her to the edge of a cliff she had not anticipated.

Two more solo days, the hours and their minutes sharp enough to draw blood. She had the sensation of standing in a ring. The sand was brown. It mattered how she stood her ground.

She slept late the following day and woke knowing that some ultimate thing was going to happen. Of course she had known all along where to find Will. With the Dutch woman. Katja was studying the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, writing some sort of thesis on evil. She had an exquisite small body and an understated command of the space around her. Katja was in charge of her neighborhood, wherever she moved, but was not too proud to notice a man as beautiful as Will. Alice took her time, not wishing to be or to appear hurried.

The little plaza was hard to find. You had to know what you were looking for. You walked down a narrow street where the buildings on either side were so close the sun did not penetrate until suddenly you stumbled into a triangular space of cobbled stones with a fountain of blackened bronze and numerous city birds chirping in the waxy leaves of a tree that would never be big.

The plaza was bright in early afternoon, and they did not notice Alice on the periphery, half in shadow. Somewhere Will had come up with a cape. A real one, red as heart's blood and sheeny. Also a sword, the sort of *estoque* the matadors used to make the kill. He was fighting the bull, which was invisible, and doing it with style. At the fountain in a folding chair, Katja with her perfect perky tits watched with admiration, clapping

now and then. Four of her Dutch friends sat there with her. They shared a bottle of wine and an appreciation for the grace and skill with which this blond American played out the Spanish ritual. Didn't they see, Alice wondered, that he was an actor?

It was fascinating, watching Will's mastery of the cape, which he held low and close to draw the bull in, courting danger and threatening murder at the same time. Alice felt vicarious pride, not a pride of ownership but of the eye. At that moment, in the sun-spangled plaza on the stones of Madrid, Will was complete, content and without flaw. He took her breath away.

She knew what was coming. The bull was lacerated, it was aggravated. After it was weakened still more, chasing a continually disappearing enemy, the torero chose his moment. Will stood watching the animal breathe, its invisible chest heaving, blood dripping on the cobbles. He raised the *estoque* and stepped forward, ready to stab. But when he got to the place he imagined the bull's defenseless shoulders to be, there was Alice.

Her presence broke the spell; she couldn't help it. She would not soon forget his indignation.

"What are you doing here?"

He held the sword poised to strike, at the lethal angle he had seen them affect at Las Ventas. For an instant, Alice thought he would bring the thin blade down on her head, but that was an indulgence on both their parts. She was not exactly aware of what she was doing until it was done, but that seemed to be how important things happened to her. She reached for the sword, and Will let it drop into her hand without resisting. He surrendered the cape when she tugged on it. She folded the cape over her forearm, and clutched the sword in her other hand. She turned around and marched away.

Katja and her friends sat there stunned. This was not the ending they'd been building up to. Will, because he was Will, had not memorized his lines.

At the edge of the plaza Alice whispered three times, I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee. Three times made it proper, made it right. Made it happen.

That night she went to an ATM and took out half the cash in their account. Downstairs at Donde Manolo, the Ecuadoran cook gave her an envelope and a free tortilla. She ate the tortilla slowly in their room, nibbling since it was her last meal in Spain. She put the money in the envelope and left it on the table. She placed the phone on top of the envelope. She thought about smashing it. That would save Will money, and he wouldn't have the strength to do it himself. But it was up to him to smash the phone or not. She slowly drank a glass of fino.

Not until the shadows had reclaimed the streets did she leave the room. Her pack was surprisingly light, and she felt buoyant. She was not 100 percent sure, yet, where she was going. In a while she would feel bad for Will. Not yet, though. She slung her pack over her back and walked. There was the bull you saw, she understood as she went, and also the bull you didn't.



"To avoid malpractice suits, the actual pelvic exam will be performed by my colleague, Dr. Hand."





# MUCK YEAH

→ Every great horror movie needs a scantily clad damsel in distress, and who better to risk life and limb for than a Playmate? PMOY 2012 Jaclyn Swedberg makes her film debut running amok with monsters and madmen in the indie flick *Muck*, the first in a planned trilogy by director Steve Wolsh. Described as “an ultraviolet love letter to horror fanatics,” *Muck* was filmed in Ultra HD and co-stars Kane Hodder, who plays Jason Voorhees in four *Friday the 13th* films. Jaclyn promises *Muck* will defy expectations. “This movie does not really follow clichés,” she says. Let’s hope that means the hot chick isn’t the first to get axed.



## GIRL'S GOT MOVES

• Having practiced dance since she was two, Miss March 2013 **Ashley Doris** seemed destined to sashay into the spotlight—and now she has, as the newest member of the Playmate Dancers. “Dancing reminds us we all have something in common,” she says. “I think I’ve always been a bit of a natural, and now I get to work with a dream team of talented girls.”



## SIDE DISH

• No, a date with **Shanna Moakler** wasn't a prize on *The Price Is Right*; rather, TV's longest-running game show enlisted Miss December 2001 as a judge for its male-model search, wherein hundreds of lads from across the land vied for Shanna's vote of approval.

• Miss October 2012 **Pamela Horton** drew eyes toward a Union Jack Mini Cooper at the 2014 SEMA Show in Las Vegas, giving new meaning to the phrase *hot wheels*.

• Miss July 2000 **Nefertari Shepherd** hosted the 2014 Jazz Celebration in Beverly Hills to benefit Single Mom Planet, her organization that provides job training, financial advice and mentorship to single mothers.

• The saying “Give and you shall receive” rang true for Good Samaritans in San Diego who chatted with PMOY 2001 **Brande Roderick** during Feeding America's Month of a Million Meals telethon. Brande helped raise enough to pay for 116,000 meals in less than three hours.



## PLAYMATE REDUX

→ Miss September 2004 **Scarlett Keegan** captivated us with her piercing eyes and red-hot hair. Now, as March bestows us with the luck of the Irish, we'd like to share our good fortune. Visit [Playmates.com/scarlett-keegan](http://Playmates.com/scarlett-keegan) to see more of our favorite Irish rose.



## PAM'S HELPING HAND

• From her earliest days as a PETA activist to launching a human rights foundation last May, Miss February 1990 **PAMELA ANDERSON** is known as much for her humanitarianism as she is for her beauty. A documentary about her philanthropic work, *A Conversation With Pamela Anderson*, recently premiered on Chideo, an online charity network.



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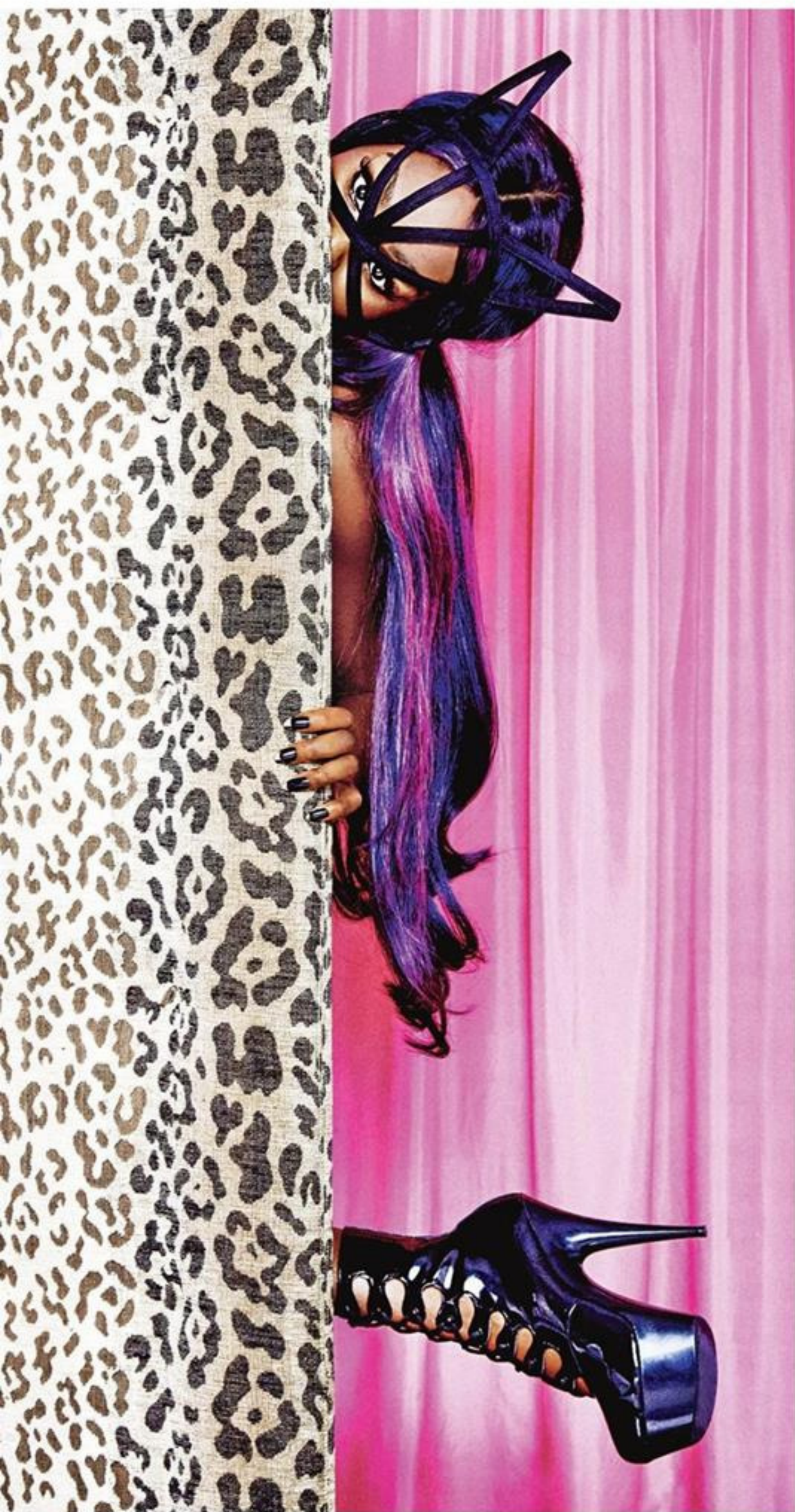
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