

# PLAYBOY

Alex Halderman • Maggie Gyllenhaal • Jason Dill • Stoya • Laura Jane Grace • Allie Wong • Kevin Hart • Rachel Bloom • Vince Staples

## The Renegades Issue

—  
Starring  
**Sky Ferreira**





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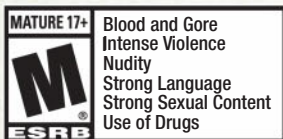
# It's 1968



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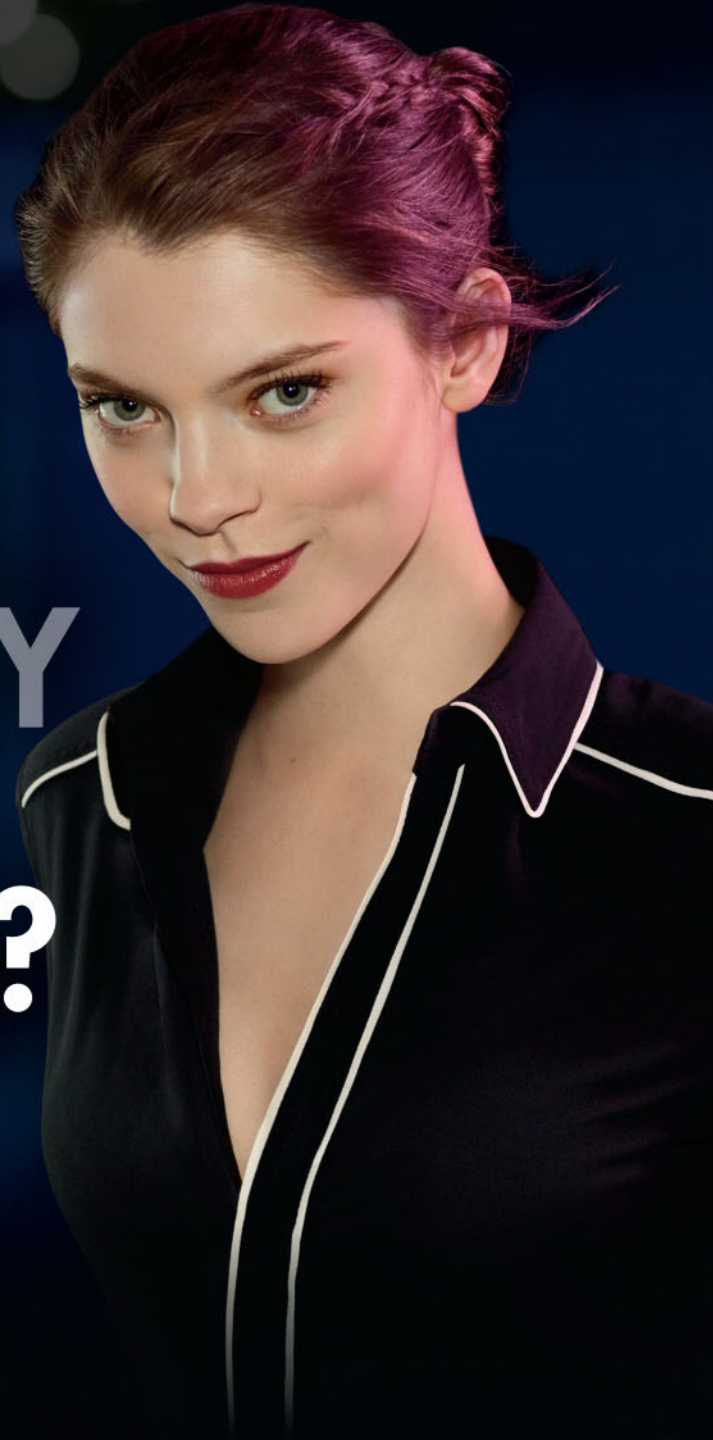






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## PLAYBILL

### Tony Tulathimutte

In July, National Book Award winner Jonathan Franzen praised Tulathimutte and his debut novel, *Private Citizens*, calling him “a big talent.” With *After the Dyerses*, an original short story about family dysfunction, Tulathimutte further solidifies his status as one of the most exciting new voices in American literature.



### Catherine Servel

Raised in France and trained at New York City’s School of Visual Arts, Servel has made a name for herself as an in-demand celebrity photographer, carrying a portfolio that includes everyone from Kim Gordon to M.I.A. to Susan Sarandon. Her portraits of comedian Kevin Hart are a perfect accompaniment to his *Playboy Interview*.



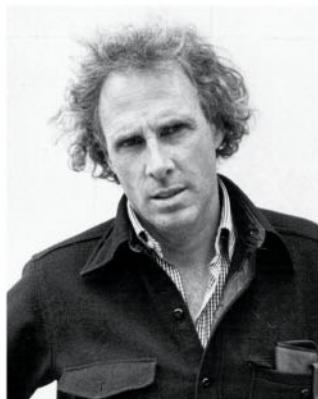
### Bruce Dern

It may seem odd to pair indie-rock ingenue Sky Ferreira with two-time Oscar-nominated actor Dern for a conversation. But both entertainers are committed to revealing truth through performance and are equals in terms of passion and grit. As Dern says, “Sky is the most uniquely interesting person I’ve met in a long time.”



### Bridget Phetasy

A stand-up comic living in Los Angeles, Phetasy has penned her sex column *Just the Tips* exclusively for *Playboy.com* since last April. This month, Phetasy brings her writing—and her savvy, sex-positive wit—to our *Advisor* page, answering perhaps the greatest question of our generation: Is it ever okay to send a dick pic?



### Sandy Kim

Kim succeeds in photographing youth culture in part because she lives in that world. From struggling bands on tour to lovers running wild in the rain, she documents those who set the rules on fire—which is why she’s the perfect woman to capture singer and guest art director Sky Ferreira (above, in cowboy hat) in all her fuck-you glory.



### Chloé Kovska

There’s something carnal and mischievous about Kovska’s work, which depicts cartoonish characters exploring grown-up material. Taught by her Macedonian father to embrace painting at an early age, this month’s Artist in Residence now refers to art as her “addiction” and loves muddling the boundaries between cute creatures and kinky pleasure.

### Steve Friess

A veteran journalist, Friess brings to our pages an important profile of a man trying to probe the limits of a serious (and imminent) domestic threat: vote hacking. In *Technology Will Destroy Democracy Unless This Man Stops It*, Friess observes Alex Halderman, whose cybersecurity work could fuel *Mr. Robot* story lines for years to come.



### Ryan Lowry

A skateboarder, a comic, a rocker, a rhyme spitter, a sex-rights activist, a slam poet. It takes an indefatigable talent to capture the essence of such distinct personalities. In a testament to his gifts and agility, photographer Lowry did just that, his work becoming the primary visual voice of our *Renegades Issue*.



**CREDITS:** Cover and pp. 70–77 model and guest art director Sky Ferreira, photography by Sandy Kim, styling by Kate Crowley, hair by Christian Marc for Forward Artists, makeup by Amy Chance for Bernstein & Andriulli, production by Brande Bytheway, styling assistance by Cassandra Parigian. Photography by: p. 4 courtesy Steve Friess, courtesy Chloé Kovska, courtesy Bridget Phetasy, courtesy Catherine Servel, Lyndon French, Robin Jones/*Evening Standard*/Getty Images, Sandy Kim, Lydia White; p. 31 courtesy Renault U.K. Limited, George Frey/Bloomberg via Getty Images, Ullstein Bild/Getty Images; p. 36 Myles Aronowitz/Netflix; p. 37 courtesy El Rey Network, courtesy Fox, courtesy HBO, courtesy Starz; p. 38 courtesy 2K Games; p. 46 courtesy RoboteX (2), AP Photo/Gerald Herbert; p. 50 Molly Cranna; p. 67 Kate Warren; p. 68 David Titlow; p. 103 CQ Roll Call via AP Images, Danielle Hicks; p. 105 Chris Hondros/Getty Images; p. 114 Ben Clement. P. 15 styling by Chloe Chippendale, hair by Jakob Sherwood for the Wall Group, makeup by Melinda Love Dean; p. 18 prop styling by Janine Iversen; p. 21 prop styling by Janine Iversen; pp. 32–35 styling by Annie & Hannah, hair by Creighton Bowman for Tomlinson Management Group, makeup by Roxy for Tomlinson Management Group, photographed at Canter’s Deli in Los Angeles; pp. 40–41 grooming by Ed at Faded Society Barber Shop; pp. 52–59 styling by Ashley North, grooming by John Clausell; pp. 64–65 hair and makeup by Bethany McCarty, wardrobe assistance by Maya Harris; p. 67 makeup by Sara Mabrouk; pp. 86–99 model Allie Silva for No Ties Management; pp. 106–112 model Lily Bridger for Premier Model Management, styling by Violetta Kassapi for Premier Artists London.



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DEAR PLAYBOY

**EXPAND YOUR MIND WITH MOLLY**

I may disagree with Molly Crabapple’s politics, but to devote only four pages to her work is a shame (*Artist in Residence*, July/August). Her art makes me think and question my beliefs.

*Chris Sullivan  
Broadway, Virginia*

For more thought-provoking work from Molly Crabapple, see her profile of Stoya (page 62).

**LOVELY LISE**

There’s never been a better ad for traveling to Cuba than Jean Pierrot’s spectacular photo shoot of Lise Olsen (*Cuba Libre*, July/August). I’ll bet bookings to the island shot up because of her.

*Brent Davis  
Houston, Texas*

**LET FREEDOM RING**

From Wiz Khalifa’s high-as-fuck but candid 20Q interview to Matt Gallagher’s enthralling short story, *Babylon*, to the *Playboy Interview* with Ta-Nehisi Coates, I was extremely impressed with your Freedom Issue (July/August). Matthew Zaremba’s illustration for Killer Mike’s piece, *Black Votes Matter*, was obviously inspired by Malcolm X’s famous “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech.

*Brooks Roenisch  
Kentfield, California*

Thank God and the First Amendment for freedom of speech (*The Conservative Sex Movement*, July/August). And thank God also for Hugh Hefner and PLAYBOY.

*David Jacobson  
Chicago, Illinois*

Chelsea Handler frames her argument (*My Choice*, July/August) the way many pro-choice supporters do, saying that people against abortion want to somehow keep women down. But for me, it has nothing to do with the mother; it’s about the baby.

*Patricia Gadd  
Portland, Oregon*

Women should have the right to choose, period. But you don’t have to agree with us. Chelsea says it best in her essay: “It’s okay if you think it’s not right for women to have abortions...it’s not your problem.”

Mary Mapes’s essay, *Free the Press* (July/August), brought me great joy, and I thank her



As if Cuba weren’t steamy enough, model Lise Olsen is smoking hot on the beach.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN PIERROT

profusely. Staying well-informed is a lifelong responsibility for adults. Journalism should strengthen society; journalists need to recognize this as imperative.

*Andrew Small  
Taylor, Michigan*

**PUCK ’ER UP?**

Writer Scott King asks, *Does Hockey Need a Bigger Net?* (June) and reports that soon goalies will wear smaller pads. That may encourage higher scores, but what about just making the puck smaller? Surely that would have the same effect as a larger goal.

*Scott Landon  
Portland, Oregon*

*King responds: “There’s already a shortage of teeth in the NHL—imagine the puck being whipped around like a golf ball. More scoring? Probably. More danger? Definitely. And the goalie would have a chance to chip one in from the other side. That’s not hockey.”*

**EURO BEAUTY**

Miss August Valerie van der Graaf, who was born in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, made my day (July/August). As a kid in Orléans, France

I once visited Rotterdam; I still have its badge on my wall. Valerie says she loves “being European”—I do too.

*Bill Martin  
Smith Center, Kansas*

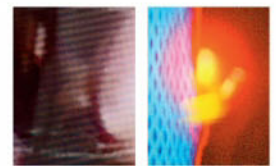
**PLAY IT AGAIN, HEF**

When I saw the picture of Playmate of the Year 1965 Jo Collins signing her Centerfold in Vietnam (*Playback*, July/August), I had déjà vu. I was stationed in Bien Hoa in late 1966 through the summer of 1967, and I wall-papered my billeting area with Centerfolds, just as in the photo.

*Dave Selbach  
Weeki Wachee, Florida*

**COVER STORY**

Twice is nice: Our Rabbit hides on two covers this month with guest art director Sky Ferreira.



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into a Steelers girl for life. I love making people feel an emotion—especially now, when so many horrible things are happening to good people. Dance is freedom of expression. It's about whatever you're feeling in the moment. And as long as you get out there and own it, girls will fall in love."

*Choreographer Sharna Burgess competes on ABC's Dancing With the Stars this fall.*

**"It's so  
sexy  
when  
a guy walks  
onto a  
dance  
floor  
with  
confidence."**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON FEAVER





DRINKS

# A Better Boilermaker

*The shot and a beer just got a major upgrade*

It's a beautiful ritual of drinking: Pop a top, pour a shot and let happiness arrive in double time. The PBR and Jack remains the gold-on-gold standard for the shot and a beer, but bars around the country are going top-shelf and pairing often obscure and artisanal beers and spirits—think Victory Storm King stout and Italian amaro, or Brooklyn Brewery lager and Old Grand-Dad bonded bourbon, both on offer at New York's aptly named Boilermaker. To get to the bottom of the boilermaker boom, we spoke with Matt Tocco at Nashville's Bastion, which serves a drinks menu heavy on smart shot-and-beer pairings. Tocco says it's the insider drink for weary bartenders tired of making and drinking fancy, time-consuming mixology cocktails. "I think beer and shots resonate well with industry people because they're often playing catch-up. If you work till 12:30 or one a.m. and last call is at 2:15 or 2:30, you don't have a lot of time," he says. "It's a nice way of facilitating a buzz." Now that's a nice and honest answer. Tocco shared three easily executed pairings from the Bastion menu: The PBR and Beam is an eight-and-a-half-ounce glass of draft PBR and a one-and-a-half-ounce shot of Jim Beam bonded bourbon. Tocco says this is the "classic version of an inexpensive combo that gets right to the point." For the High Life Meletti and rye, he serves a seven-ounce Miller High Life pony bottle with a one-and-a-half-ounce shot glass filled with equal parts Meletti amaro and Hochstadter's rye whiskey. This combination of crisp beer and strong but sweet shot is the favorite drink of his discerning staff, Tocco says, but the Mantra Battleground is the most elegant: Mantra Battleground saison is paired with a shot glass filled with equal parts Dolin G n p y des Alpes and Clear Creek pear brandy. Tocco thinks of it as a deconstructed cocktail. "Still, I recommend just dropping the shot into the glass," he says. And that's the unpretentious spirit that makes the boilermaker so easy to love.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT



Leonard Roberts is sitting on a wooden bench in a boxing ring. He is wearing a blue t-shirt, a dark grey zip-up hoodie, and blue Skechers sneakers. A pair of red boxing gloves is on the bench next to him. The background shows the ropes of the boxing ring and other people in the distance. The name 'LEONARD' is repeated in a light grey font across the background.

# SUGAR RAY

*Leonard Roberts*

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# The Next Big Asian Cuisine

*Filipino food is popping up all around the country*

As any casual trend spotter (translation: anyone with Instagram) knows, what happens in Williamsburg never stays in Williamsburg. And so with a slew of openings—from last year’s Manila Social Club in the Brooklyn neighborhood to the more recent Pinoy-Cali incubator Lasa—Filipino cuisine has been anointed in America.

Although mom-and-pop shops have been serving Filipino staples in the U.S. for decades, this hearty and humble food is finally creeping into the mainstream, from the roving White Rabbit Truck in L.A. to the party-vibe Jeepney in Manhattan’s East Village to the revered Bad Saint in D.C. Granted, what constitutes “Filipino food” can be difficult to define. Not only is the Philippines an island country—it consists of more than 7,100 specks of land floating between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean—but its colorful history means the food “is a beautiful mutt,” says Yana Gilbuena, who was born in the Philippines but now lives in New York when she’s not traveling the world, serving regional Filipino cuisine to groups of around 30 diners for her Salo Series pop-up dinners. “We’re talking about influences from the Chinese,

Arabs, Indians, Malays, Spanish, Japanese and Americans.” Put that together and you have the sweet, salty, tangy, spicy food we all want to eat. “Suddenly we’re the cool kids,” Gilbuena says. So how did a cuisine that has been in this country for more than 50 years become an overnight sensation? As American palates warm to fish-sauce funk and “other” animal bits, more people are finally ready to receive the Philippines’ particular brand of hot, tart, meaty cooking.

BY **JULIA BAINBRIDGE**

Gilbuena’s goal is to introduce eaters to more than “the ubiquitous trio” of adobo (vinegar-marinated meat), *pancit* (noodles) and *lumpia* (meaty egg rolls) found in most Filipino restaurants in the U.S. That said, she recommends that newbies tour the lesser-known parts of the Filipino repertoire to get a more nuanced understanding of the cuisine. Next chance you get, order *tapa* (cured beef), *tocino* (cured pork), *silog* (garlic fried rice with an egg) or the ultimate beer food, *sisig*, a sizzling pork dish made with all the humble cuts (namely pork face) that intrepid foodie dudes like to brag about eating. To get a baseline understanding, start with Gilbuena’s adobo (recipe below) and hit one of the many pop-ups now serving Filipino fare.

## PINOY POP-UPS

Some of the most adventurous neo-Filipino cooking is itinerant. **LASA IN LOS ANGELES:** Brothers Chase and Chad Valencia have a weekend residency at Unit 120, a culinary incubator in Chinatown. What you might find on the seasonal four-course prix-fixe menu: red snapper with black plums and fermented Fresno chilies, or twice-cooked pork belly with eggplant and *bagoong* (fermented shrimp paste). *Lasa* means “flavor” in Tagalog, and the Valencias are bringing it. **FOOD AND SH\*T IN SEATTLE:** Every third Monday of the month, husband-and-wife team George “Geo” Quibuyen and Chera Amlag sell Filipino comfort food at Kraken Congee in Pioneer Square. One of this year’s spring dinners included what they call “the hottest *sisig* ever,” made with Trinidad scorpion chili. **PELAGO IN PHILADELPHIA:** Food photographer-curator Neal Santos’s mission is “to articulate Filipino culinary culture within the context of the American mid-Atlantic region.” With partners Jillian Encarnacion and Resa Mueller, he throws ticketed dinner parties in spaces around the city. One evening’s meat-themed menu featured *kilawin na baka* (beef tartare with ginger, chili and shallots) followed by *sisig* cannelloni and coconut-braised greens, prepared by chef Damon Menapace.

## CHICKEN ADOBO SA GATA

by Yana Gilbuena  
Serves 4

As with curry in India, there are myriad recipes for the national dish of the Philippines. This one will get you started. If you can’t find cane vinegar, Gilbuena says palm vinegar or even distilled white vinegar will do.

¾ cup soy sauce  
¾ cup dark brown sugar  
¼ cup cane vinegar  
2 tbsp. canola oil  
4 bone-in, skin-on chicken quarters (thighs and legs), scored  
2 heads garlic, crushed, skins removed, roughly diced  
½ cup water  
2 cups coconut milk  
3 Thai chilies (optional), roughly chopped

Pinch of black peppercorns  
5 bay leaves  
4 scallions, white parts only, sliced thinly on a bias  
Steamed short-grain white rice, for serving

Mix soy sauce, sugar and vinegar in a bowl and set aside.

In a large sauté pan or wok, warm oil over medium-high heat. Sear chicken,

flipping periodically, for 10 minutes or until skin browns. About five minutes in, add garlic. Add soy-vinegar mixture to the pan, then add water and coconut milk to just cover chicken. Bring mixture to a boil, then add chilies, peppercorns and bay leaves. Reduce heat. Simmer 30 to 40 minutes. Remove chicken from the pan, reserving some of the liquid. Garnish chicken with scallions and serve with rice and liquid (for spooning over the dish) on the side.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT









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STYLE

# Brogues Go Rogue

*The ever-versatile shoe gets a stylish and unstuffy reboot this fall*

Originating on the moors of Scotland and Ireland, the classic brogue has taken on a city-ready footing in a range of smart designer updates this season. This sturdy lace-up gets its name from the distinctive perforations and serrated edges on its surface, called “broguing.” Originally a rough-and-tumble work shoe with open, punched holes, brogues allowed water to drain from the feet as laborers tromped around the bogs. Nowadays the perforations are a nonfunctional detail and often

associated with the staid, old-school wingtip. But there’s nothing at all stuffy about this fall’s offerings, ranging from British brand Trickers’ heavy-soled Bourton in a versatile merlot (\$645) to iconic designer Thom Browne’s luxury iteration in navy (\$1,290). But Jimmy Choo’s Alec (pictured) really caught our eye, with just the right amount of detail and a tonal blue hue that can punch up everything from a slim flannel suit to indigo jeans (\$825; all styles at [mrporter.com](http://mrporter.com)).—*Vincent Boucher*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTTIE CAMERON





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TRICKS.**

**THE  
VODKA  
TREATS.**

*Stoli*  
**THE  
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**THE  
STOLI  
MULE**

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Lime	garnish

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AUTO



## JAG'S SUV IS A BRIT BRAWLER

*Jaguar jumps into the SUV arms race with a badass ride that's capable both on and off the road*

If a storied car brand is going to introduce any kind of “first,” it had better knock it out of the park. That’s why, even with more than 80 years of experience in the luxury game, Jaguar left nothing to chance when developing the 2017 F-PACE, the first SUV to wear the British nameplate. This burly, somewhat peacocky ride comes at a time when the world is already full of powerful status SUVs, including the Porsche Macan and the Audi Q5. And the F-PACE is about as muscular as a British ride gets.

From interior details to overall performance, Jag’s design team spared no expense in positioning the F-PACE as a major contender in the segment, drawing on the company’s racing-influenced F-TYPE coupe for inspiration. The car’s most striking feature is its muscular profile, accented with bulging rear-

wheel arches that give the SUV a true catlike appeal, especially in the black-on-black 35t R-Sport (pictured), one of six styles offered.

The optional black package, which comes with special black-metallic paint, gloss-black roof rails and 22-inch contrasting alloy wheels, makes the F-PACE impossible to ignore even if you aren’t a fan of Jaguar.

Inside, it builds on that appeal with a mix of luxury and practicality that doesn’t leave you feeling you’ve had to sacrifice the functionality of a midsize SUV when opting for a more premium experience.

The seamless integration of features—such as the twin cup holders and the 12-volt socket—into the interior design is as much a part of the F-PACE’s appeal as the etched-aluminum veneer trim. But one of the coolest interior selling points is the optional InCon-

trol Touch Pro infotainment system, which features a 10.2-inch touch screen that functions like a tablet with the ability to customize the home screen and add widgets.

Still, not until you put the all-wheel-drive F-PACE (available in three engine options) through its paces on roads like those mapped out for our test run in Aspen, Colorado can you fully appreciate what this new Jag brings to the luxury segment. After all, what better way to gauge the true worth of a \$40,000-plus luxe SUV than by powering it along winding mountain roads at elevations of up to 12,000 feet above the tree line?

The F-PACE proves to be just as capable off-road, which makes it an even worthier contender in the world of luxury, considering so many new vehicles badged as SUVs fail to live up to the label.—*Marcus Amick*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTAL ANDERSON





 **PLAYBOY**SHOP.com



TECH

# Future-Proof Your Headphones

*The audio jack may disappear, so get ready with next-gen Bluetooth versions*

Like it or not, our old friend the headphone jack is going the way of the VCR. Rumor has it Apple will nix the 3.5-millimeter plug on its next-generation iPhone. And Android lovers won't be spared either: The only hole on the new Moto Z is a charging port. This is actually good news for audiophiles; connecting via Lightning (Apple) or USB (everyone else) means that headphones can include onboard amplifiers and deliver higher-quality sound. The rest of us get slightly thinner cell phones and another item on our shopping list. But there's a way out: The phone gods aren't taking Bluetooth away. Going wireless now will keep the music playing in the future. Here are our favorite headphones that allow you to unplug.—*Corinne Iozzio*

## **PHIATON BT 460**

While it was busy cutting cords, Phiaton also did away with buttons. The BT 460 over-ears include a touch-sensitive pad on the ear cup, from which you can adjust volume and skip tracks. The headphones also automatically pause when you take them off your melon. If you and a friend each buy a pair, both sets of headphones can connect to share the same audio feed. (\$199)

## **SENNHEISER PXC 550**

The crowning glory of Sennheiser's newest cans is their ability to shut out the world around you. The headphones use active noise canceling, which listens to the din of a room and generates opposing sound waves to nix it, so you'll hear only your music.

Need to hear an announcement on the subway or listen to the boss rant for a second? Tap the touch-sensitive pad on the right ear cup to start and stop your tunes. (\$400)

## **MASTER & DYNAMIC MW60 WIRELESS OVER-EAR HEADPHONES**

No matter how gorgeous a pair of headphones—and the MW60 is undeniably beautiful—Bluetooth audio can turn into a bummer the second it shudders, skips or drops out. So rather than waste its whopping 45-millimeter drivers, Master & Dynamic focused on the MW60's antennae, borrowing the exposed design from Apple. The result is a clear signal that travels up to 50 feet, even with drywall and doors in the way. (\$549)





PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTTIE CAMERON





ADVISOR

## Is It Ever Okay to Send a Dick Pic?

**Q:** *I matched with a girl on Tinder, and our exchanges have gone from flirtatious to hot. We have yet to meet, but I think that will happen in the near future if I keep playing it right. In the meantime, we've been texting a lot at night, and I'm close to doing something I've never done before: send a dick pic. If I do, will I be blowing the chance she'll want to hook up in real life?*

**A:** When I asked one of my girlfriends if it's ever okay for a guy to send her a picture of his penis, she responded, "No. Five hundred times no. Question answered." This knee-jerk reaction isn't uncommon. You can thank the miscreants who scatter unsolicited dick pics through dating apps and text messages like flyers at a college activities fair for that. You can also thank high-profile snappers Brett Favre and Anthony Weiner. These guys gave dick pics a bad name, and their subsequent public shaming and professional fallout haven't helped the cause either.

I don't find unsolicited dick pics offensive, but it all depends on the context—and the recipient. A dick pic can inspire feelings of violation, amusement, attraction or pity. That broad spectrum should let you know just how much opinions vary. For some women it's the digital equivalent of a flasher in a trench coat. There's something menacing about a guy wielding his penis like a weapon. It can be violating—and I think in some circumstances that's the intention. In other instances, I believe it's harmless exhibitionism. The biological imperative makes sense to me. A quick Google Images search of my name will result in plenty of boob shots, so it would be hypocritical of me to say I don't get it. And if I had an alien member with a mind of its own attached to my body, I'd probably be showing it off to the world too, like, "Can you believe this fucking thing?"

BY **BRIDGET PHETASY**

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE PERRY



So is there a time and a place? Absolutely: when a woman specifically requests one from you. Personally, I love well-lit, artful dick pics and solicit them regularly from suitors and lovers alike, who are usually more than happy to oblige. In some cases they aren't comfortable with it, and that's fine too.

That being said, there's always a gray area, such as when you're flirting and sexting and want to show her how turned on she's making you. Recently a man and I sexted after meeting at a bar. I sent him a few tasteful nudies that same night. He replied, "You wanna see my cock, baby?" He didn't assume. He asked. And his timing was perfect. The picture was hot. It was well played. When it comes to exchanging nudes, then, the same rules apply as when you're having sex. It's all about communication, consent and mutual respect. After all, a consensual sexy pic isn't sleazy; it's foreplay.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

1. Don't make the mistake of thinking that once a woman sees your dick, she'll want to see it anytime during the day. There's something jarring about penises when they make surprise appearances in the wild.
2. Do your research before sending a lady your *David* imitation. The internet has plenty of tips for taking good dick pics. Nothing kills the mood faster than a full-length, badly lit bathroom-mirror selfie with a half chub.
3. Unless she initiates a sexy-pic exchange, don't ask for one if you don't plan to reciprocate. Sexting is an exercise in trust. You can't demand what you're unwilling to give.
4. I'll emphasize "specifically requests one" one more time. "What's up?" is not an invitation for you to send an X-rated selfie. Never send unsolicited dick pics, period. If you don't know this yet in 2016, you're the reason they get a bad rap.

Questions? E-mail [advisor@playboy.com](mailto:advisor@playboy.com).

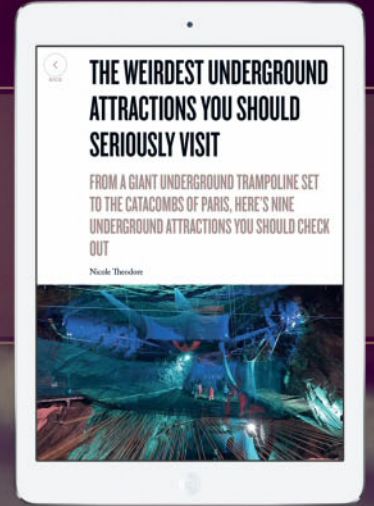


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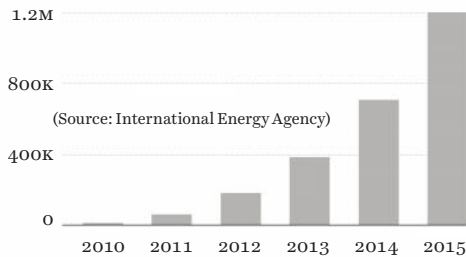


# ON ELECTRIC CARS

BY **BEN SCHOTT**

## ACCELERATION

The global stock of electric vehicles (EVs) accelerated from 12,000 in 2010 to 1.2 million in 2015 and is estimated to hit 13 million by 2020. China alone accounted for 40 percent of 2015 sales.



Bloomberg predicts that by 2040 long-range electric cars will cost less than \$22,000 (in today's money), and 35 percent of new cars sold worldwide will come with a plug.

## FORMULA E

Formula E—the electric-vehicle equivalent of Formula One—was created in 2012 by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile to stimulate interest in EVs and catalyze innovation in consumer cars. Up to 10 teams race on inner-city street courses one to two miles long. Each ePrix lasts around 50 minutes, during which driv-



ers are required to swap cars with a fresh battery and tires. The third season starts October 2016 in Hong Kong. ▼ One novelty of Formula E is FanBoost, a site where fans vote online for their favorite driver; the top three drivers get to deploy a 100-kilojoule blast of power during the race. There *has* to be a way of incorporating this idea into the Olympics...or Miss World.

*“When Henry Ford made cheap, reliable cars, people said, ‘Nah, what’s wrong with a horse?’ That was a huge bet he made, and it worked.”*

—ELON MUSK

## THE AGES OF AUTO



At the dawn of the Auto Age (1880–1920), the number of steam, gasoline and electric cars was roughly equal; indeed, electric cars often had the edge in cities such as New York, where fleets of electric taxis roamed. It took the invention of the electric starter motor (which eliminated the hand crank) and the rise of mass production to popularize gasoline engines and consign electric vehicles to the margins. There they languished (sporadically revived by oil crises) until global warming and technological advances coalesced to establish our current golden age of electric.

## DRIVING A BARGAIN

In addition to offering **FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS** (purchase rebates, lower taxes), jurisdictions promote EVs with **INCENTIVES**, including free or discounted access to toll bridges, ferries and HOV and bus lanes; free or designated parking; access to car-free areas or on car-free days; and less onerous vehicle-inspection regimes. Some countries employ a **BONUS-MALUS** principle, punitively taxing fossil-fuel vehicles. ▼ The most successful promoter of EVs is **NORWAY**, where 24 percent of all new vehicles are plug-ins. When it was reported that Norway might ban all gas cars by 2025, Elon Musk tweeted, “What an amazingly awesome country. You guys rock!”

## SOUND OF SILENCE

Although a reduction in noise pollution is a key selling point of EVs, the risk that near-silent cars pose to pedestrians has caused real concern—not least to the blind. Artificial noise is necessary only at speeds below 18 miles an hour—above that, the vehicles make enough noise to be safe. While the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration does not yet require EVs to broadcast fake noise, many are already fitted with noise-faking capabilities.

## RANGE ANXIETY

One brake on consumer acceptance of EVs has long been **RANGE ANXIETY**: the fear that your battery will die in the middle of nowhere. Given that the average U.S. driver travels just 29 miles a day—and the average journey is less than 10 miles—such concerns seem overblown. Yet range is being addressed via ubiquitous (and soon wireless) charging stations and a race for better batteries—a race supercharged by Tesla. ▼ Listed below are the five longest-range 2016 base-model electric cars, according to AxleGeeks/Graphiq:



MSRP	battery-only range, in miles	
\$41,450	Mercedes-Benz B250e	87
\$31,800	Fiat 500e	87
\$31,950	Kia Soul EV-e	90
\$115,500	Tesla Model X P90D	250
\$108,000	Tesla Model S P90D	253

## HACK, JACK & RANSOM

Internal software and external connectivity leave EVs vulnerable to **HACKING, JACKING** and **RANSOM**—threats that go way beyond a dude with a slim jim. In 2015 researchers were able to hack a Tesla Model S, and in February Nissan was forced to deactivate an app that allowed remote access to the climate control of its Leaf models. As *The Guardian* predicts, “Your next car will be hacked.”





# RACHEL BLOOM

*A wild conversation with the creator and star of Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, the smartest, sexiest show on prime time*

**Q1:** *More than six studios turned you and your co-creator down before the CW picked up your show, and now it's returning for its second season as a critical and viral hit. Do you get recognized more now than before?*

**BLOOM:** Either I don't look the same on TV or people are just polite. When I do meet someone who recognizes me, it means they watch the show, which, from an executive-producer standpoint—that's what I care about. I'm like, Oh good, you're watching the show! What demographic are you?

**Q2:** *You wrote nearly 50 original songs last season, on topics ranging from anal waxing to how weird a stranger's balls smell—and all of it on network TV, not streaming or cable. How do you get away with that?*

**BLOOM:** You can get away with saying all kinds of dark shit if you turn it into a bouncy musical number. When you're doing comedy, music is your straight man. "The Sexy Getting Ready Song" is all about the brutal things women do to look hot and get in touch with their feminine side. My character, Rebecca, sings, "I'm gonna make this night one you'll never forget" as she's waxing hair off her ass. The chorus chimes in

with "Ass blood," and you see blood on camera. There's no subtext with songs. You just let it rip.

**Q3:** *You shot an earlier version of Crazy Ex-Girlfriend as a pilot for Showtime that never aired. How much edgier was that?*

**BLOOM:** It was mostly what we have on the CW. There was only one scene we had to reshoot. Instead of a make-out scene, there was a hand-job scene, which I hope to release.

**Q4:** *How much do you have to hold back?*

**BLOOM:** We find work-arounds. It makes us more creative. There was a song, "Oh My God I Think I Like You." Now, had I just done that song by myself, with no censorship, some of it probably would have been sung by my character as she was getting fucked. You can't show that. However, what we could show was her head getting pushed down for a blow job. Pretty fucking close. So rather than try to be cutesy, we push the envelope as much as we can. And then when we can, we do a dirty version.

**Q5:** *Your song "Heavy Boobs" is about having double-Ds, each with "the volume of a toddler's head." They are "dense like dying stars" and*

*"they each have their own memoirs." What would your heavy boobs say in a tell-all?*

**BLOOM:** When you have big boobs, you're a sexual object even when you don't want to be. I would walk down the street in New York in just a T-shirt and get catcalls. I know men don't understand this, but getting catcalled is the worst feeling in the world. It truly feels like you are being physically violated. Boobs sexualize you when it's not on your own terms. Then there's the physical part of it: Having these giant sacs on your body can be painful. They're tied to your hormones, to your reproductive system. PMSing is a real thing, and it can be awful. Boobs are not just these disembodied bags of fat to be used as playthings for guys. That said, a gentle touch goes a long way. For guys in relationships with big-boobed women, I'd say err on the side of being tender, unless she specifically requests you to really grab them and mash them.

**Q6:** *Do you feel at all competitive with other women in comedy?*

**BLOOM:** I feel competition only when other people point it out. You read these weird headlines, like MOVE OVER,





“HIYA  
HIYA!”





AMY SCHUMER, OR MOVE OVER, TINA FEY. Why move over? Can't we all just stand here together? The only time I get a twinge of something is when there's content overlap. We wanted to do a song recently, and someone in the writers' room pointed out that it had basically already been an Amy Schumer sketch, so we scrapped it. For a second you go, "Fuck, she got to it first!" But do I wish she didn't exist and that I was the only woman doing comedy? Absolutely not.

**Q7:** *You were an intern at Saturday Night Live. What did you learn there?*

**BLOOM:** I remember watching a ton of *Real Housewives* and waiting for stuff to do and seeing the writers sit around and write like me and my friends did, and thinking, There's no difference between me and my friends and these guys. I used to think there was some secret they had or some key to the castle. No, they just had more experience. It was just them getting better.

**Q8:** *You got famous for a 2010 song called "Fuck Me, Ray Bradbury." Wasn't he just shy of 90 years old at the time?*

**BLOOM:** He was getting on in years, yes. But I was inspired after reading *The Martian Chronicles*. Also, I find smart people and writers to be very hot. I never went for men because of their looks.

**Q9:** *So much of dating today is about swiping left or right based on profile pics.*

**BLOOM:** I used to be attracted to guys who were very tall, very lanky, almost to the point of being feminine. Those guys were not always great for me personality-wise. They tended to be kind of reserved and have a rigid nature about them. I'm glad I'm married now, because if I was dating based on my physical type, I'd be swiping at men I shouldn't be swiping.

**Q10:** *On the show and in your social-media feeds, you switch from looking model gorgeous to strutting around without makeup in your Spanx. Is one closer to the real you?*

**BLOOM:** I'm self-conscious when I'm supposed to look pretty or neutral. I watched a scene where I'm in a bar, and I noticed I had a muffin top. I was like, The song we're doing is *not* called "Look at Me and My Big Ol' Muffin Top." But there was nothing I could do. People have muffin tops—great. Just like when my character is depressed, she should have no makeup on. I go to all these red-carpet events, but it's all an illusion. Anyone being glossy and pretty, with their hair done and makeup done—it's mostly fiction. On the inside, we're all humans filled with guts who poop and fart.

**Q11:** *This past Father's Day you posted on Twitter, "Hey Dad, thanks for jizzing in my mom then sticking around to help raise the jizz and paying for the jizz to take singing lessons." Is that how you talked growing up?*

**BLOOM:** Around the house it was "fuck, fuck, fuck." As an only child, you become like your parents' idiot sidekick, so we all talked that way. They were also okay talking about sex, and that openness made me feel in control of my sexuality. First of all, I have the good fortune to not have been raped—something that happens to one in four women. That's just fucking luck. I lost my virginity in college and never had sex with a guy before I was ready, because I knew what sex was; I knew the realities of it. I have no problem talking about sex. I have boundary issues in that I have none.

**Q12:** *Was anything off-limits with your parents?*

**BLOOM:** Talking about my anxiety and depression. I didn't want to be a burden on my parents, and when you have that darkness inside you, it feels very shameful. Eventually I found that the more you share it, the more a weight is lifted. That's why I like exposing secrets. If you don't, you're repressing things. Fear leads to hate, hate leads to the dark side. I'm completely bungling the *Star Wars* quote, but it's all connected. If we were all more open, we

wouldn't be so ashamed that we have insecurities and that we watch porn, and a lot of problems would go away.

**Q13:** *What kind of relationship do you have with pornography?*

**BLOOM:** A vibrator and porn are my glass of wine. I read erotica for many years, which was really fun, but then a couple of years ago I was like, I'm going to try watching porn—and I really, really liked it. My tastes in porn are very much the typical older-man, younger-woman type. It's the hetero-normative way of things, where men are dominant and women are submissive. I think people often confuse someone's sexual predilections with their ability to be powerful or feminist. Just because I want to be on the submissive side in the bedroom has nothing to do with my ability to be a boss or with my intelligence. It's an interesting contradiction. That's kind of what the show is about: the struggle between thinking we are evolved human beings who live in society and us all being animals.

**Q14:** *How would America be different with a woman in the White House?*

**BLOOM:** Women, to use the most gross generalization, do what's good for the team. They do what's best for the greater good, and that would be good for the country. I see this on my TV show, where most of our department heads are women. If you say to a male costume designer, "This needs to be changed because it doesn't work with the writing," sometimes they'll be like, "You're wrong. I have an Emmy, so, um, no." Then you have to really serve the ego. "Oh yes, we know you have an Emmy, but could you just do this one thing, pretty please?" If you say to a woman something needs to be changed, she'll go, "Okay. Done."

**Q15:** *Who's funny but not yet famous?*

**BLOOM:** There's this group called the Apple Sisters who are just fantastic. They do a 1940s-type radio show. They're amazing. Zach Sherwin, who

**I'M DOING THE THING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO. TO USE A PORN TERM, I'M BEING FILLED IN ALL MY HOLES.**





writes a lot of the raps for our show, is fantastic and should be famous. I know the Lonely Island is famous already, but I love them.

**Q16:** *What's coming up this season on Crazy Ex-Girlfriend?*

**BLOOM:** The theme of season one in the writers' room was the lies we tell ourselves. The theme of season two is that change is hard. Rebecca's not in denial as much anymore. She has admitted to Josh that she moved to California to be near him. You can't unsay that, and now we can play with the premise of the show in a way we hadn't been able to before.

**Q17:** *What would you put out there if you didn't have to worry about standards and practices?*

**BLOOM:** It's funny. I did a comedy-club show at the Largo in Los Angeles, and I was going to do "Heavy Boobs" wearing just pasties. I pitched that idea to

my friend Jack, and he said, "That's awesome and so funny, but just know that it will live on the internet forever. Whenever someone googles you, they're going to see you in pasties at a live show where you didn't have to be in pasties." I thought, Maybe I want to hold off on that until it's really important.

**Q18:** *What would qualify as important enough for pasties?*

**BLOOM:** Maybe a big benefit performance rather than a regular club gig. It's something I'm not opposed to doing. I just want to wait for the right moment. Same with the internet. I'm not going to post topless pictures of myself, because that's a boundary that I do have. I don't want people to see my bare tits unless it's for a good reason.

**Q19:** *Life is going well for you. Any new mountains to climb?*

**BLOOM:** People ask me, "What's next for you?" and I think, What do you mean what's next? This was the thing. Not that I have no other ambitions. There are things I want to do. After doing a lot of these talk shows—Colbert, Seth Meyers, Kimmel—I would love to be a person in late night. I would love to host a late-night or variety show. I wouldn't do a topical opening monologue. I would make it much more variety-based.

**Q20:** *Who would be your dream guests?*

**BLOOM:** I can picture having a politician on and then a fire eater and then doing a musical number. I would have Elizabeth Warren, the cast of *Stomp* and maybe someone dead, like Benjamin Franklin. But I'm doing the thing I've always wanted to do right now, so I'm good. To use a porn term, I'm being filled in all my holes. ■





TV

# BULLETPROOF TELEVISION

*Marvel's Luke Cage* nods to the blaxploitation era into which its character was born—but muscles out the clichés

Of the 40-plus new shows premiering this fall, none arrives with higher expectations or stakes than *Marvel's Luke Cage*. It's the third Netflix-Marvel collaboration, after *Daredevil* and *Jessica Jones*, and it's the first live-action superhero series to star an African American actor.

Making its debut in a year of boiling racial politics, *Luke Cage* is the story of a reluctant superhero, endowed with extraordinary strength and bulletproof skin, who takes on violence in the streets and corruption in the government—threats far more relatable than the alien hordes and sentient robots invading other superhero

franchises. The series is loaded with allusions to black culture (the Harlem Renaissance, Jackie Robinson, Walter Mosley, the Tuskegee experiments, Malcolm X, *Roots*), but the most pervasive influence is the crop of swaggering crime thrillers, including *Super Fly* and *Foxy Brown*, that grew into their own genre in the 1970s.

"I hate the term *blaxploitation*; it's black empowerment," says *Luke Cage* show runner Cheo Hodari Coker. "Blaxploitation was a black man asserting himself in a cinematic world, kicking ass and getting the girl, being able to do the same thing as Steve McQueen or Lee Marvin.

*Luke Cage* comes from that. The way I thought to do the character was to take that attitude and modernize it."

Marvel Comics created *Luke Cage* in 1972 as the story of a streetwise crime fighter in the mold of *Shaft* and *Black Caesar*, films with strong black men who take care of the little guy and look good in leather jackets. Cage-featuring titles *Hero for Hire* and *The Defenders* are dated as much by their headbands and disco blouses as they are by racial stereotypes. A lot had to change for him to survive the 21st century—a time when shows such as *Empire*, *Jane the Virgin* and *Fresh*





*Off the Boat* are gaining popularity outside their demographic borders, and the announcement of future blockbusters *Black Panther* and *Captain Marvel* hints at new levels of inclusiveness in mainstream entertainment.

This Cage is still cool and still a bruiser, but now he reads Ralph Ellison and Malcolm Gladwell. “Black men in this country, particularly with the fact that they’re systematically hunted, have a lot to be angry about,” Coker says. “But Luke Cage is very measured, and he doesn’t act impulsively. He has strong opinions, but he has a sense of humor. He has a charm that women go crazy for, and there’s a philosophical side of him that thinks about the world.”

Cage made his live-action debut last year, as Jessica Jones’s love interest and fellow crime fighter. Between the end of that show’s first

season and the beginning of *Luke Cage*, he has moved some 70 blocks north from Hell’s Kitchen to lie low and work off-book for an old friend who runs a Harlem barbershop. The quiet life doesn’t last long.

Adds Coker, “In the first episode, one of the villains says, ‘He’s about to bring it.’ Luke says, ‘Not the way I want to. I’d kill you.’ He realizes his strength, his power, and he’s judicious about how he beats the shit out of these guys. He’s in control of himself.”

The main villains are revamps of original characters that would scare the hell out of today’s guardians of political correctness: Cornell “Cottonmouth” Stokes, a butterfly-collared pimp in the 1970s comics, is reimagined by Mahershala Ali (*House of Cards*) as a menacing crime lord who runs Harlem’s Par-

adise nightclub, where much of the series is set. Black Maria, a 400-pound racketeer and drug dealer in the comics, is now Mariah Dillard (Alfre Woodard, of *Desperate Housewives*), a corrupt and fucking scary Harlem councilwoman. And Cage? In the hands of six-foot-three, 250-pound actor Mike Colter, he’s also thoroughly of our time—but he retains his original superpower.

“We were in a production meeting, and someone asked if we should do something different than having the bullets bounce off Luke—that it might look like a shtick,” Coker recalls. He disagreed: “I never get tired of seeing a bulletproof black man. That image of power is important to show that you *can* have a black superhero. I wanted the show to be unapologetically black, but there’s nothing to apologize for.”—*Scott Porch*

## When the Nerds Took Over the Airwaves

From network to cable to streaming, fall TV is rich with gifts for sci-fi and horror fanatics



### FROM DUSK TILL DAWN (EL REY)

Robert Rodriguez returns! *From Dusk Till Dawn* has a different relationship to its source material—the campy 1996 horror film of the same name—than, say, FX’s *Fargo* does to its own. Whereas that show places new stories firmly in the world of the original Coen brothers film (also a 1996 cult classic), *Dusk* is a darker, more mysterious retelling. The Gecko brothers, the Titty Twister strip club and the *culebras* vampires are all here, but the series is more cerebral than madcap.



### THE EXORCIST (FOX)

TV is crawling with effects-heavy spectacles—zombies (*The Walking Dead*), vampires (*The Strain*) and even the devil himself (*Lucifer*)—but shows about inner demons, such as A&E’s *Damien* and WE’s *South of Hell*, haven’t yet connected. Enter *The Exorcist*, Fox’s adaptation of the 1973 horror masterpiece. The pilot sets a tempered, religious tone with unexpected bursts of violence, opening up rich story lines for a haunted matriarch (Geena Davis), her husband and two daughters, as well as a pair of priests.



### ASH VS EVIL DEAD (STARZ)

Sam and Ivan Raimi’s refresh of the *Evil Dead* films they’ve been making since the early 1980s once again gives us Ash Williams, played by paunchy 58-year-old franchise star and national treasure Bruce Campbell. From the beginning you know you’re in good hands—including one old-school prosthetic that prompts Ash to ask a demon-possessed woman, “You like my wood?” Ash’s road trip to his hometown in the season two opener, which includes a fight in a haunted crematorium, is bloody hilarious.



### WESTWORLD (HBO)

With only two seasons of *Game of Thrones* remaining and *Vinyl* failing despite a \$100 million budget, HBO desperately needs a hit. *Westworld*, the sci-fi Western series whose cast includes Anthony Hopkins, James Marsden and Evan Rachel Wood, may be the answer to its prayers. Early looks portend a series bursting with sex, violence, humanoid robots and *Truman Show*-like surveillance. Prepare to lose sleep thinking about how artificial intelligence threatens our sense of what’s real.





GAMES



# Playing With Politics

*Mafia III's violence, racial tensions and apocalyptic dread are set in the 1960s but rooted in the now*

There's a disorienting moment early in *Mafia III*, the latest installment of 2K's richly plotted drive-and-shoot series: Somewhere in the fictional town of New Bordeaux, which strongly resembles New Orleans circa 1968, you stumble into the basement of a seedy jazz joint and find yourself in an opium den. Seconds ago you were on your way to a bloody showdown with a mafia henchman, but now you're watching a shaggy Jim Morrison type intone apocalyptic laments backed by a sitar player.

Andy Wilson, one of the game's executive producers, explains that his team chose the era for its volatility, citing Martin Luther King's and Bobby Kennedy's assassinations in particular. "And within the South, there's no more of a pressure-cooker place to be than New Orleans," says Wilson. "Players can connect the dots between then and now." With pundits constantly comparing the current election year to the "summer of hate" 48 years ago, the game couldn't have arrived at a better time.

You play Lincoln Clay, a Vietnam vet of mixed race seeking revenge on the Italian mob that slaughtered his surrogate family. In this land of sultry sleaze and barking gators, you're a calculating avenger, a unifier and an annihilator—"a one-man army," says Wilson. You get medieval on the KKK. You get assailed with *N*-bombs. You get hassled by cops. And all the while, hundreds of classic songs blaring from your various rides set the mood. "Fortunate Son," Creedence Clearwater Revival's counterculture anthem, could be Clay's theme song. An angry orphan from the poor side of town, Clay "ain't no millionaire's son."

Occasionally the allegory comes unsettlingly close. In the bayou, you track down Uncle Lou, a crime boss who resembles Donald Trump in a pink 10-gallon hat. Everywhere you turn, neo-noir horror and paranoia—not to mention voodoo, prostitution and drugs—lurk. "We treated New Bordeaux as a many-layered character," says Denby Grace, another execu-

tive producer. "The sexiness. The heat. The underbelly. The mystery."

The dialogue hums with the tensions of the game's moment. "I was definitely affected by books and speeches of the time," explains senior writer Ed Fowler. "Malcolm X said, 'Anytime you live in the 20th century and you're walking around here singing 'We Shall Overcome,' the government has failed us.'" Adding to the authenticity, 30 vintage issues of this magazine are scattered within the game, allowing you the surreal pleasure of reading up on the era as you fight your way through it. Enter a nondescript trailer and you might find yourself paging through the December 1968 *Playboy Interview* with prominent Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver.

From graveyard to warehouse, power-ups depend on which lieutenant you allow to control a ward. As you jack cars and toss exploding voodoo dolls, the essence of New Bordeaux crawls inside you, biting and clinging hard, like an ancient bayou parasite.—*Harold Goldberg*





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MUSIC

# The Reluctant Rap Star

North Long Beach native **Vince Staples** has broken just about every rule in the hip-hop playbook. So what does he stand for?

From Tupac Shakur to Lil B, rappers have long embraced the make-it-and-move narrative. “I made a little money, then I moved my mama/Yeah straight out the hood,” Rich Homie Quan says in “Water.” In “The Watcher,” Dr. Dre raps, “I moved out the hood for good, you blame me?” And Ice Cube’s “Once Upon a Time in the Projects” is a whole cautionary tale about hanging around the hood.

Don’t expect any such songs from Vince Staples. “That’s the most ignorant thing,” he says. “To me, that translates to ‘If we want to do better, we have to get away from black people.’ It’s impossible to feel good about doing bad if you have a strong connection to the people in your community.” The 23-year-old is so proud of his native North Long Beach, California that he dedicated a song to thrills not found in any travel guide. On “Norf Norf,” from his 2015 Def Jam debut, *Summertime '06*, he offers a new slogan for the LBC: “We Crippin’, Long Beach City, pay a visit.” What’s more, he still resides there.

Staples has just stepped out of Hamilton Middle School in North Long Beach, where he dropped in on the kids at the Youth Institute, a new YMCA initiative he helped establish. A few blocks away sits Ramona Park, a landmark he name-checks in the sleepy, ominous “Ramona Park Legend, Pt. 2.” The struggle crystallized in that song—“It’s so hard, trying not to go so hard”—is precisely why he donated to the program, which gives kids the opportunity to learn filmmaking and music production instead of gangbanging.

The latter is what Staples studied. Growing up, he attended Christian schools and excelled at every sport he tried, but his father was affiliated. The elder Staples made him promise he’d never touch the stuff he watched his pop chopping up (to this day, Staples doesn’t drink

or do drugs), but the pull of the streets and the appeal of the family business were strong. His 2014 song “Nate” begins, “As a kid all I wanted was to kill a man/Be like my daddy’s friends, hoppin’ out that minivan.” Eventually he became a 2N Crip. Although the most detailed accounting you’ll get of that time is in his songs, Staples allows that “backlash is still there, probably. But I’m not worried about it; it’s part of life.”

Rapping happened almost by accident. Friendly with members of the sprawling L.A. collective Odd Future, he crashed at producer Syd tha Kyd’s studio one night in 2010, after his mom had kicked him out, and recorded a verse on Earl Sweatshirt’s song “epaR.” In the fall of 2014, his debut EP, *Hell Can Wait*, a collection of bleak hood tales told by a realist in the cold light of dawn, received critical raves. By *Summertime '06*, he’d earned the respect of everybody from dudes kicking it on the corner to *The New York Times*. His new EP, *Prima Donna*, should secure his place as one of rap’s best lyricists. Still, he shrugs off the idea of fame, insisting he’s “regular” and leaving that hustle to, say, Kanye.

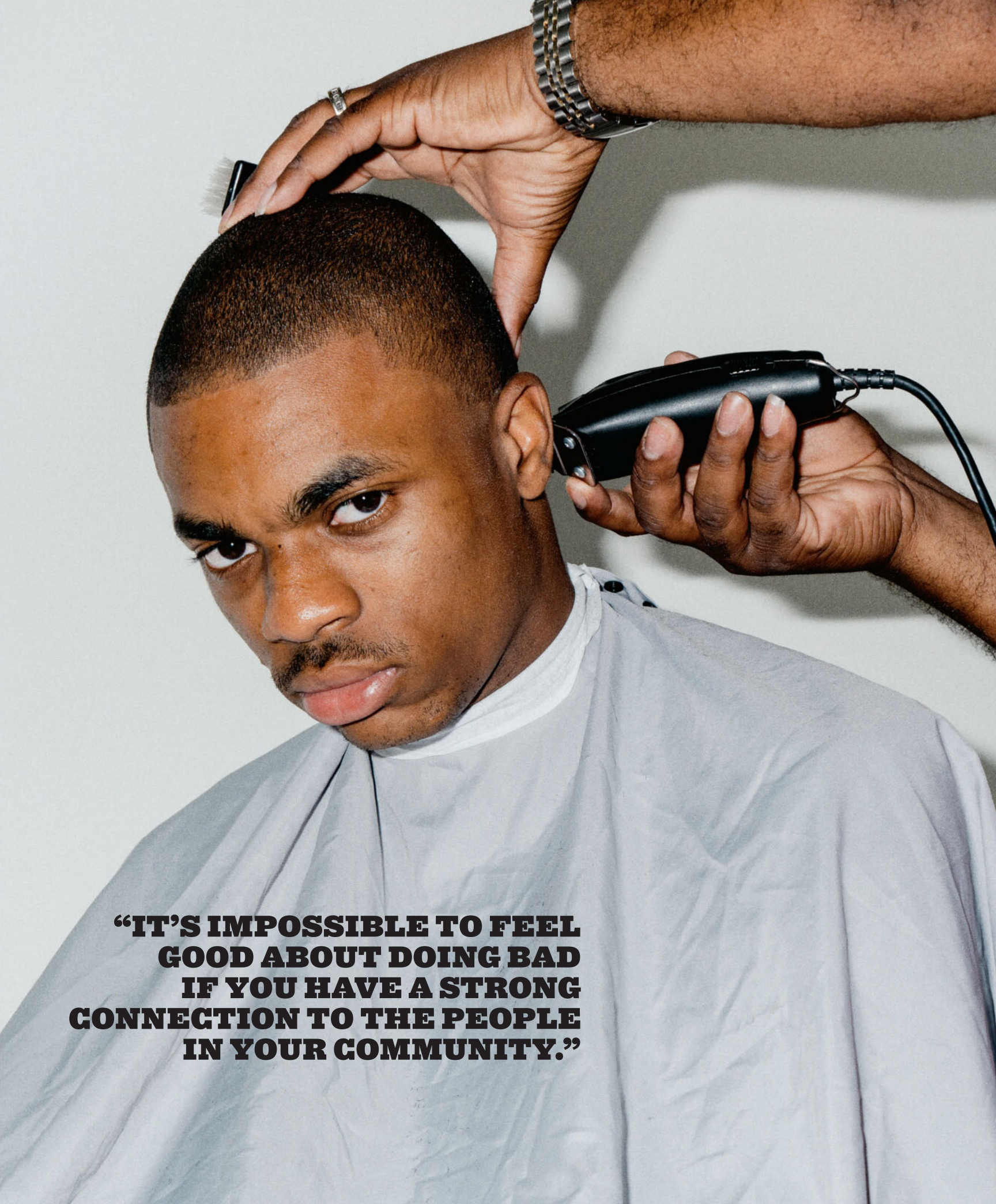
“I’m someone who has lived that full life, so I know for a fact it is not promised,” he says. “I also treat it like it doesn’t matter, because life is so much bigger than us as people. I’m not the important part. There are so many issues in the world—we don’t just need to pay attention to the children, we don’t just need to pay attention to police brutality—people should focus on whatever they want to fix. They should do their best to put their passion into action, because if it really matters, you won’t let it fail.”

And if rap fails for him?

“I’d be all right,” he says, the wind off the ocean blurring his words a little. “I’d get to stay home more.”—*Rebecca Haithcoat*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN LOWRY





**“IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO FEEL  
GOOD ABOUT DOING BAD  
IF YOU HAVE A STRONG  
CONNECTION TO THE PEOPLE  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY.”**





COLUMN

# FRANCOFILE

*A conversation with **Maggie Gyllenhaal** on the science of playing a prostitute, the art of navigating a sex scene and the brilliance of Heath Ledger*

**JAMES FRANCO:** Your parents were both directors. How much were you exposed to the film business when you were younger?

**MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL:** I was born in New York, and my parents, even when I was little, both wanted to be filmmakers. I think my mom got a job in Los Angeles, so they gave up their apartment and drove cross-country with me. I was really little. At first my dad was a carpenter in L.A. They were just jobbing, trying to get work. By the time I was old enough to really remember, they were both making movies. They were never celebrities; it wasn't a world like that.

**FRANCO:** When you're playing a part like the recovering addict Sherry in *Sherrybaby*, or Candy, who's a prostitute on our show, *The Deuce*, how do you meld yourself to someone who lives a life so different from yours?

**GYLLENHAAL:** There are things that come without my thinking about them—like wardrobe or hair and makeup—where I just have a sense. I don't totally know where that comes from, but it's a big part of creating somebody. Then, for example, Candy has a child and is a prostitute. I gave myself some space to imagine and see what bubbled up. As Candy I was thinking, Did I ever put my baby in the other room and fuck a john or go down on someone, and the baby started to cry in the middle of it? Did my milk ever start to leak when I was with a john?

**FRANCO:** Oh my God.

**GYLLENHAAL:** Those are intense, right? And you go, Okay, now that's a real person. Now the blood is coursing in my veins as this person. You also have to ask, How many people am I fucking a night? How cold is it? Which of the eight men I'm sleeping with tonight is this one? I find it difficult to be disciplined enough to do that work, but when I do it, it helps.

**FRANCO:** You worked pretty intimately with James Spader in *Secretary*. How did you navigate those scenes?



BY  
**JAMES FRANCO**

**GYLLENHAAL:** I didn't know much about the business of making movies at that time, but I see now that *Secretary* wasn't a real movie until they had a guy who meant something financially. We were working, but I don't think the movie was real until they got James. He came in and read through some scenes with me, and it was amazing. We were just quietly reading through these scenes, sitting on a couch, but it was on. James speaks very slowly and deliberately, and at the end of this read-through, he sort of stopped and took a long, dramatic pause, looked at the director and said something like "I think...you have hired...the most wonderful actress for this role." My heart was beating. I was like, Oh my God. I also remember him saying to me in the very beginning, again with a lot of dramatic pauses and very deliberately, "I always have an ally on everything I work on, and this time my ally is you." And I just went on the trip with him. I was his ally.

**FRANCO:** You and your brother Jake worked

with Heath Ledger in what I thought were two of his best performances—*Brokeback Mountain* and *The Dark Knight*. Did you see his idea for the Joker taking shape?

**GYLLENHAAL:** I remember my husband, Peter Sarsgaard, talking to Heath about Jack Nicholson having played the Joker. Heath kind of said, "I know what I'm going to do. I have an idea." The thing is, it's really hard to be excellent and free in a movie of that scope and when there are so many other things that are important aside from the acting. And Heath really is totally free. It's hard to make space for yourself to do that in a movie like *The Dark Knight*. It's way easier in a movie like *Sherrybaby*, for example. That was what was particularly amazing about Heath as the Joker. It was totally clear from the second I was on set with him that he was doing something really special and alive.

**FRANCO:** You told me Jeff Bridges once said to you, "Everything goes into the stew." How do you use that?

**GYLLENHAAL:** Here's a simple example. An actress said to me two days ago, "I've been getting so scared when it comes time for my close-up. I'm paralyzed with fear." From my objective position, I was like, "You're playing someone who is acting like they're comfortable with the wildest sexual encounters. It is so much more interesting if that person sometimes is paralyzed with fear." I don't believe in the fantasy person who is totally comfortable with that kind of stuff. Maybe there are a couple of people like that in the world, but I'm not really interested in them. I'm much more interested in the person who acts like they're comfortable with all those things and then sometimes is paralyzed with fear. If that actress heard me, then the experiences come out and she's paralyzed with fear. If you can just let that be okay, then all of a sudden you're doing something fascinating. I think that's what Jeff was talking about. I really find that freeing. ■

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# WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN COPS CAN KILL A MAN WITH A ROBOT?

*For the first time ever, police officers killed an American citizen—albeit a mass shooter—on home soil using a bomb-bearing robot. Where does that leave our civil rights?*

ILLUSTRATION BY

**PATRIK SVENSSON**

It's the dark, wee morning hours of July 8, 2016 and Micah Xavier Johnson is holed up on the second floor of El Centro College with a rifle, singing. Eleven people are injured, five police officers are dead. After two hours, the Dallas Police Department has given up on negotiations. A Special Weapons and Tactics team is positioned down the hallway from Johnson, working a pound of C-4 plastic explosive into the arm of the department's Remotec Andros Mark 5A-1. It's the C-3PO of police robots. It has video cameras and an arm, but aside from being able to blind someone with a flash or dole out a nasty pinch, it is not a fighter. It was made for bomb disposal, not delivery. This morning, for the first time in police-robot history, it will be used to take a human life.

Afterward, news headlines screamed **KILLER ROBOTS HAVE ARRIVED**. But those headlines miss the point. The robot wasn't sentient. It didn't kill somebody; somebody used it to kill somebody else. Much of the debate focused on the robot and others like it: how heavy they are, how fast they are, how their tiny electrical muscles work. These details are superficial, but our collective nervousness that someday robots would call the shots ran deep. Artificial intelligence can be as much a threat as a benediction—but what happened in Dallas had nothing to do with AI.

Under its most orthodox definition, AI is

the replication of a biological mind. Philosophers and software engineers can't agree about whether AI could ever be more than a convincing charade, much less a staple of policing. Under its most liberal definition, AI is what you'd find trying to shoot or outrun you in a video game. Even that is beyond the scope of the world's police robots. The Andros used in Dallas, like every other police bot, is remote-controlled, like a Tyco toy car.

No one from the Dallas Police Department would speak with me (perhaps because their robot overlords wouldn't let them), but Tim Dees, a former Nevada police officer and former criminal-justice professor, understands the events of July 8. "The Dallas situation was fairly unique," says Dees, who writes for PoliceOne, an online publication for law enforcement officers. "The shooter was in an area where he couldn't be easily visualized by the cops without exposing themselves to gunfire. He was believed to have ample ammo on him, and he said he had explosives with him."

Don Hummer, associate professor of criminal justice at Penn State Harrisburg, agrees. "The Dallas incident represented an extremely high, if not the highest, rung on the use-of-force continuum," he says. He explains Johnson's position 30 feet down a hallway from the SWAT team, in a computer server room

from which he could easily defend the only two doorways. "He'd barricaded himself in a space where further casualties were likely if the police stormed it—or, if they did not, from the subject firing at law enforcement or civilians or detonating the explosives he claimed to possess. The decision to neutralize the subject was a virtual necessity. Is the outcome any different if the perpetrator is felled by a sniper's bullet or by an explosive device attached to a robot?"

If Dallas is a special case, it raises more theoretical questions than practical ones; namely, does the availability of a robot capable of killing a suspect change police decision making from here on out? Because if it does, we won't be going back.

•••

Technology changes law enforcement. It happened with Kevlar vests, pepper sprays, Tasers, undercover squad cars, body cameras, in-car laptops, radios, flash-bang grenades, beanbag ammunition rounds and tear gas. America's police forces also transformed when revolvers were swapped for semiautomatic handguns in the 1980s and when long guns were issued to non-SWAT officers in the 1990s. The domino effect of those changes has never been more evident than it is today.

"When I was investigating allegations of police misconduct in New York City, officers were allowed to carry guns but not Tasers," says



A futuristic police officer is shown from the chest up, wearing a metallic, helmet-like headpiece. The officer's eyes are glowing, with the left eye emitting a blue light and the right eye emitting a red light. A thin red laser line extends horizontally from the right eye across the dark background. On the forehead of the helmet, there is a white, shield-shaped emblem with a four-pointed star. The officer's uniform is dark and appears to be made of a heavy, textured material. The word "POLICE" is printed in large, white, block letters across the chest area.

POLICE





POLITICS



1. Robots such as RoboteX's Avatar III are actively marketed to law enforcement, yet few police agencies buy them because of their high price tag. 2. Police bots are primarily used for the removal of explosives; the response to the mass shooting in Dallas is an exception. 3. Dallas officers embrace hours after Micah Xavier Johnson killed five of their own.

Ryan Calo, assistant professor of law at the University of Washington and co-director of the Tech Policy Lab, which studies the collision of U.S. law with new technologies—specifically robotics and online tech. “They would have to call in a supervisor for a Taser. This is because the NYPD wasn’t sure officers would have the experience or operational awareness to make the decision to use nonlethal force, even though they were trusted with lethal force.”

There’s a strand of thought that goes like this: The less likely it is that a certain degree of force will cause friendly casualties, the more likely it is that someone will authorize a greater degree of force—even when it’s not 100 percent necessary. If it shocks you that a police robot set off a bomb in Dallas, what did you think when a CIA drone fired a missile into a car carrying American citizen Kamal Derwish in Yemen in 2002? Derwish was associating with Al Qaeda. It was at the height of the war on terror, and the CIA’s unmanned aerial vehicles—General Atomics MQ-1 Predators—were being retrofitted to shoot Hellfire air-to-surface missiles at the world’s biggest threats. But it raised a furor nonetheless. Shouldn’t

American citizens be arrested (or at least an attempt be made to arrest them) before being gunned down? If not for their sake, then for the integrity of our Constitution? Where is due process in the age of technology?

“Legally, the two scenarios are controlled by wholly different laws, but the ethical considerations are quite similar,” says Ron Sullivan, a Harvard law professor who focuses on civil liberties, criminal law and criminal procedure. “Co-extensive with the militarization of police a decade or so ago has been the increased incidence of use of force, including lethal force. The psychology of warfare is markedly different from the norms that should animate policing.”

The laws governing police use of force, deadly and otherwise, are set out in the 1989 Supreme Court ruling *Graham v. Connor*, in which a man sued Charlotte, North Carolina police for using excessive force after they observed him quickly enter and leave a convenience store, behavior they found suspicious. Dees explains the Supreme Court’s ruling: “Any use of force must be objectively reasonable in the eyes of the officer, and any subsequent reviewing judicial authority has to consider that officer’s

perspective in ruling on the reasonableness of the officer’s actions. This applies whether the use of force is via an empty hand, a firearm or a brick of C-4.” Or a robot.

• • •

Robots, bots, brobots, drones, automatons, mechano-men, androids, mandroids, replicants, terminators and UAVs—one can imagine the American executive branch has been into robotics since *Tron*. The CIA and the Department of Defense began acquiring and developing unmanned aerial vehicles in the early 1980s to the point that, according to the U.S. Navy, there was at least one UAV in the sky during every second of the Gulf War.

Years earlier, in 1966, America’s mad-scientist division, DARPA, funded the first modern unmanned ground vehicle, or UGV. “Shakey” was remote-controlled, wheeled and about as automatic as shoelaces. A human driver—not anything resembling AI—made all the calls. As with many of DARPA’s ideas, the Department of Defense went lukewarm on it until interest in UGVs reemerged in the early 1980s. The vehicles were built to see inside dangerous buildings and territories and



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to manipulate explosives placed by enemies and suspects. American police departments have been using them for the same purposes for two decades.

Arming these robots isn't a foreign idea to those who manufacture them. Northrop Grumman, of which Remotec is a subsidiary, has sold accessories that mount a Franchi 612 or Penn Arms Striker 12 combat shotgun to its Andros UGV since 2004, though sales literature refers to the Franchi 612 as a door-breaching tool and the Penn Arms Striker 12 as a delivery system for less-than-lethal rounds. So the ability to arm robots has been there for more than a decade. In reality, most police agencies don't have ready access to robots; for those that do, the devices are rare and expensive, used mainly for explosives disposal and for entry into areas deemed too hazardous for police officers.

"Robots with guns are impractical," says Eric Ivers, president of robot manufacturer RoboteX. He says RoboteX has dealt with at least a thousand police departments, including those in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Seattle and St. Louis. "Reloading would be nearly impossible at the point of use, and delay in wireless signal is a possible problem. From my perspective, the biggest problem is the speed with which a gun could move and track a subject. People can move faster than current police robots can track them. By the time the operator could locate, aim and fire, the subject would likely have moved far enough to avoid being hit."

Two Korean firms, Samsung Technwin and DoDAAM, and one Israeli company, Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, have developed near-autonomous sentry guns for border defense along the Korean Demilitarized Zone and the Gaza Strip, respectively. Software detects and tracks targets through body-heat signatures, but each gun relies on a human operator to fire. Good thing, because an automatic sentry can't distinguish between friends and enemies; it targets anyone it sees. And because they're long-range stationary platforms, these devices are unsuitable for police work. Put wheels on one and roll it into a hotel room or a bank, and deficiencies will show up immediately.

"A robot is not agile enough to protect its weapon from being accessed by a hostile," says Dees. "It's a relatively simple task to creep up on a remote-controlled vehicle, tip it over, throw a

net over it or grab something off it, especially if the vehicle is out of sight of its operator, whose perspective is limited by the vehicle's camera."

Neither is a robot good for fighting with explosives. "Robots don't really need modification in order to be used the way the one in Texas was used," Ivers says. It isn't the price tag of the Dallas Police Department's \$151,000 Andros, which survived the explosion, that keeps police from deploying suicide bots, he says. "Any remote-controlled toy car or truck could probably be rigged, driven to a location and detonated. Police have not used explosives in the way Dallas did mostly because there are better ways to accomplish the same goal."

Police face situations in which they have to end a life for their own and others' safety. There's no getting around that. But those who

## **“ARMED ROBOTS MAKE THE DECISION TO USE LETHAL FORCE MUCH EASIER BECAUSE THE HUMAN BEING IS REMOVED FROM THE SUBJECT.”**

make that decision should also follow legal and civil regulations. Some, like Sullivan, want police departments to write protocols specifically for the use of armed robots. "Armed police robots, in effect, add an insulation layer between the police officer and the subject. It makes the decision to use lethal force much easier because the human being is removed from the final point of contact with the subject," says Sullivan. "And my strong intuition is that shared responsibility increases the likelihood of irresponsible decision making."

For others, the current regulations are enough. According to Hummer, every police department already has in place language relevant to armed, nonautonomous robots, but that language is written exclusively for firearms. Something as simple as a broaden-

ing of terms—from "firearm" to "any tool in the police arsenal"—could fix that. "As with any critical incident, there is a supervisory decision-making process whereby a senior administrator has the ultimate responsibility for using deadly force," he says. In Dallas, it was the chief of police and the mayor. When there isn't time to call police headquarters, it's the senior officer on the scene. "We have seen in recent months that every level of officer from top management through line officers can be held accountable for misuse of force," Hummer continues. "For instance, half a dozen officers were indicted in the Freddie Gray case in Baltimore." Use of an armed robot, as in Dallas, is subject to the same hierarchy of potentially shared responsibility.

One day robots will be as standard-issue as Kevlar vests and sidearms, particularly for negotiation, surveillance, bomb disposal, door breaching and distraction. For the moment, though, and for foreseeable moments, armed robots are as much an aberration as they are a legal means to an end. "Assuming the robot is tele-operated at all times by a person, I don't see a particularly greater impact than snipers, full-body armor or other militarized police tactics," says Calo. "The current constitutional framework is sufficient to address a situation such as Dallas, wherein officers use a robot to kill someone."

"I don't think overall police decision making will be affected much as a result," says Hummer. "Every police incident is a continual flow of circumstances, and no two are ever the same. Discretion is the most critical component of doing police work. I firmly believe policing will be one of the last occupations to have the human element diminished."

Still, to others, the mere presence of passed-down military robots is enough to affect police-civilian relations. "Society would be much better off if the structural divide between military and civilian police remained distinct," says Sullivan. That said, starting discussions about autonomous robotics and true AI would be wise. Autonomous robots are coming, without a doubt. And as humanity accelerates its efforts to create artificial intelligence, preparing for that day is smart contingency planning. The moment it arrives will be a watershed because it will, for the first time, shift judgment from the officer using the machine to the machine itself. ■



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# SEDUCING THE VOTE

*The science of persuasion is reshaping politics—and the men's room—forever*

We're putting the band back together. That was the message UCLA psychology professor Craig Fox sent out this past summer to a tight-knit, rarefied group of academics at the nation's top universities. For more than a decade, this unusual team, which calls itself the Consortium of Behavioral Scientists, has worked to uncover new information on how people make decisions. Now their expertise is being deployed for an urgent mission: maneuvering the public into voting for Hillary Clinton.

Major corporations have been employing this type of persuasion science in their advertising and sales strategies for years. One of the most famous applications helped clean up filthy men's restrooms at the airport in Amsterdam. (Come to think of it, this may be perfect for politics.) Rather than post signs instructing men to aim into the urinals, the airport's solution was to etch the image of a fly near the urinal drains. The result was that men locked their aim onto the flies, and the floors had 80 percent less residue.

Fox offered Democrats this type of insight into decision making in 2004, but presidential nominee John Kerry wasn't interested. He lost, and George W. Bush was reelected. By 2006, the academics were so offended by Bush's policies that they went into overdrive to sell Democrats on their science. At the time, the Bush Republican machine was pushing the rhetoric that the war in Iraq was part of the "war on terror." The Democrats' denial wasn't cutting it, so the consortium helped craft the line that the war in Iraq was a "detour" in the war on terror. Hillary Clinton, then a New York senator, paid close attention and attended a small meeting where some of these "decision scientists" gave advice on how

to take Congress back from the GOP. Using this new message in various forms, Democrats won control of both houses of Congress that fall.

It sounds like the spin-doctoring of press secretaries and communications strategists, but the field of decision science is already influencing U.S. politics. In the political game, these academics look at questions and conduct real-time experiments through e-mail polling and web-link tracking to find which messages move people to volunteer, donate money and deliver a vote at the ballot box.

Fox assembled the group again to get President Barack Obama reelected in 2012. Helping were Robert Cialdini, who earned his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of North Carolina, did postdoctoral work at Columbia and wrote the best-selling book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*; Michael Morris, a professor at Columbia Business School who has written more than 100 articles on decision making for psychology and management journals; Samuel L. Popkin, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ph.D., professor at the University of California, San Diego and author of *The Candidate: What It Takes to Win—and Hold—the White House*; and Richard H. Thaler, a behavioral economics pioneer, University of Chicago professor and co-author of *Nudge*, a book about tactics such as etching flies on urinals.

He was so impressed with Obama when they met in 2004, Thaler told *The Guardian*, that he made the first political contribution of his life to Obama's campaign for the U.S. Senate. By 2008, Thaler was being described as the "in-house intellectual guru" of Obama's White

House run. The campaign never admitted to using the scientists' advice—but after winning, Obama himself praised their unique research and appointed Cass Sunstein, co-author of *Nudge*, as administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

When I contacted Thaler to ask him about Fox's group and their advice for Clinton, he refused to talk and accused me of "making up claims." But his colleagues who did provide me with information firmly believe they're on a mission. And Clinton is fortunate these experts lean left, because even with Donald Trump's repeated meltdowns, he's an agile persuader and an expert at controlling the conversation,

whereas Clinton often "short circuits," as she put it in August.

Other experts in persuasive techniques argue that Trump's off-the-cuff, authentic remarks are more deftly calculated than he lets on. Trump has such a mastery of persuasion (he grew up with *The Power of Positive Thinking* author Norman Vincent Peale as his minister) that he has internalized the techniques, according to persuasion expert Scott Adams. Known for his popular *Dilbert* comic strip and author of *How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big*, Adams runs a blog that includes thoughts on the art of persuasion. "Trump's technique matches pretty much point for point what the best persuaders would do," says Adams.

So Clinton is going to need something revolutionary to beat Trump at his own game. Referring to one of Professor Fox's stars, Robert Cialdini, Adams admits, "If Godzilla's in the fight, Trump's got a problem." ■

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INTERVIEW

# KEVIN HART

*Kevin Hart is poised to become the biggest stand-up comedian ever. Not that he's kicking back to celebrate: His movies, including *Ride Along*, *Get Hard* and *Central Intelligence*, have raked in more than a billion dollars globally, and yet he works like an unknown still angling for an *NCIS* callback. Since last January, Hart has appeared in half a dozen films, including this month's *What Now?*, a genre-hopper about his recent record-breaking global comedy tour. That movie, which mixes stand-up footage with a fictional James Bond-style backstory, is expected to smash box-office records too. Hart is also producing TV shows, building a video-on-demand network, partnering on tech deals and signing endorsement contracts.*

In other words, his life is as dazzling as that gold mike he wields on stage. No wonder he calls himself the “comedic rock star.”

At 37, Hart is at the peak of his popularity, and all signs point to continued domination on screens both large and handheld. He has a keen sense that comedy today is an *everywhere* experience, whether you're spending an evening with him at the megaplex, buying his new Nike “Hustle Hart” sneakers or letting him guide you on the Waze app. Wherever you go, Hart's quicksilver voice and contagious energy are with you.

He was born on July 6, 1979 in Philadelphia, the younger of two boys. His mother, Nancy Hart, raised them; father Henry Witherspoon was a heavy drinker and coke addict who spent time in jail on drug charges. Being funny saved Kevin well before he was getting laughs professionally. At the shoe store in Philly where he worked, his pratfalls and snappy observations made him the star salesman on the floor. But “regional manager” wasn't going to cut it. After high school, Hart played small comedy clubs under the stage name Lil' Kev

the Bastard. People urged him to quit, but he followed the paths blazed by heroes like Chris Tucker, J.B. Smoove and Eddie Murphy, eventually willing his way to Hollywood.

For years Hart struggled. Sitcom after sitcom tanked. *SNL* rejected him. His marriage collapsed. But he turned heartache, and even his mother's death from cancer in 2007, into gold. His 2011 *Laugh at My Pain* stand-up tour and subsequent concert film became his first real hit. The five years since have been a rocket ride: He hosted the MTV Music Video Awards, guest-starred on *Modern Family*, produced and starred on the *Real Husbands of Hollywood* series and made a handful of movies each year (*The Wedding Ringer*, *The Secret Life of Pets* and *Think Like a Man* and its sequel, to name a few), all but one of which went to number one. He has two young kids, Heaven Leigh and Hendrix, from his first marriage, and this year Hart married model Eniko Parrish. Along the way, he became a living counterargument to an ugly show-business assumption: that African American actors can't sell movie tickets in the global market.

Contributing Editor **David Hochman**, who last interviewed Trevor Noah for *PLAYBOY*, spent several days with Hart on both coasts over the past year. “Kevin's got this massive, hyperactive energy that makes you forget he's a small guy,” Hochman says. The two of them hung out most recently in the ultra-luxurious Baccarat Hotel in Manhattan, where Hart was tailoring the menu to his dramatically fitness-conscious tastes: “I'll have a burger but no cheese, no lettuce, no tomato, no onion, no sauce and definitely no bun,” he told the amused waiter. “Do the same thing with a chicken patty.” Says Hochman, “Kevin knows what he wants in every situation. It's not Oscars. It's beyond mere money and fame. Kevin Hart wants to be the Genghis Khan of comedy.”

**PLAYBOY:** Your new stand-up concert film follows you on the biggest comedy tour of all time: 156 shows, 112 cities, 13 countries and five continents. That's a lot of airport body-cavity searches.

**HART:** You get used to it. The good thing is,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CATHERINE SERVEL**









INTERVIEW

flying private takes a lot of the hustle and bustle off it, makes the ins and outs a little more convenient. But the whole goal behind the tour was not only to make history but to go beyond what people would expect a comedian to do. To be able to play so many venues in so many cities and countries, to sell out multiple shows and arenas, to do stadiums—it blows up the idea of “You’re just a guy telling jokes,” right? You show the global importance of laughter.

**PLAYBOY:** How does your material change when you’re playing to a crowd in Singapore versus an audience in, say, Brooklyn or Cape Town?

**HART:** I change nothing nowhere. Nothing. That’s the beauty of it. To become a universal comedian and really stay true to the meaning of *universal*, you come up with comedy that appeals to everyone. We set so many records. We sold 100,000 seats in New York alone, with three sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden and two more shows at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. It’s completely crazy. And it’s not just crazy here. My international shows sold out in three days, all with the same material and the same level of laughter. California, Cape Town—the people are amazing, and they respond. Durban, Qatar, Dubai, Singapore. Same thing everywhere. Funny is funny.

**PLAYBOY:** What was the toughest crowd?

**HART:** Well, Abu Dhabi was definitely the scariest before I got there. I was so afraid to go because I didn’t want to offend anybody. I heard you could rub the culture in the wrong way. You know, because of the language and sexual content, I wondered, How far can I push it? What can I do? But I talked to people, and they said, “Kevin, these are your fans. They want you over there.”

**PLAYBOY:** Did you really think something would happen to you?

**HART:** I didn’t want to have a problem with a sheikh or the royal family and then not be able to get out of the country. But then I got there and it was the complete opposite. All these people dressed head to toe in the sheikhy garb, and they’re roaring with fucking laughter. It was mind-blowing. *Mind-blowing*. The shit they’re laughing at in Abu Dhabi is the same

shit they’re laughing at in Australia is the same shit they’re laughing at in Philadelphia.

**PLAYBOY:** You sold out Lincoln Financial Field stadium, where the Eagles play in Philly. Doing stand-up for 53,000-plus people in your hometown must have been wild.

**HART:** That was some wild-ass shit. First time a comedian ever sold out an NFL stadium. We knew Philadelphia was going to be massive, so we turned it into a huge production. We had 84 cameras on me and a gigantic wall of screens behind me. So my backdrop was a video wall that acted as a visual point of view that matched whatever I was saying throughout my show. As I’m joking about my house,

## ***There’s this idea that actors of color don’t sell movies outside the U.S. Look at me and Cube.***

the screens change into the set of my house. Now I’m talking about my backyard. It flips. It switches. As I’m walking out, the cameras walk with me. I wanted to transform my stand-up comedy show into something with a movie dynamic that’s never been seen. And then shit starts to explode. We go all James Bond *Casino Royale* with the biggest fight scenes. Fire on the stage. A whole backstory about what happened to me leading up to the show. People say, “What the hell are you doing, Kevin?” But with a movie like this, it can’t just be me coming out and telling jokes. We’re too big for that. The production has to be big. I paid too much not to go huge. I’m in with finances for about \$13.8 million on this one.

**PLAYBOY:** You personally financed all this?

**HART:** Out of my damn pocket. Every cent. This is all me. I fully financed a movie, and Universal distributed it. They act as a partner. I know me. I know my value. When you’re dealing with other people’s money, you can’t control it. But when you invest in yourself, you’re in charge and the rewards come to you.

**PLAYBOY:** Some have predicted this could be the highest-grossing stand-up concert film of all time.

**HART:** That is the plan. I’m going for the win on this one, you know? Eddie Murphy still holds the record for stand-up concert film for *Raw*, at \$50 million in gross. My last concert film, *Let Me Explain*, did \$32 million, but that was on

only 900 screens or something like that. This one is on screens everywhere. All signs are pointing that this could be the big one. This could achieve the highest level of success ever. It’s all part of the progression.

**PLAYBOY:** But does bigger equal funnier?

**HART:** I grow with my fan base, man. I grow and I change. If you look at my stand-up specials—if you look at *I’m a Grown Little Man* and then at *Seriously Funny* and *Laugh at My Pain*, you see it. So *What Now?* shows my progression not only as a comedian but just as a man. You see me going through things. You’ve seen me married. You’ve seen me go through a divorce. You’ve seen the consequences of divorce. You’ve seen my kids grow up, and as they’ve grown, how I’ve changed. Now that I’ve changed, how do I feel? How do I feel about where I am, people treating me, the places I put myself in, my relationship with my family?

**PLAYBOY:** What’s it like when you come across one of your old stand-up routines now?

**HART:** It can be weird. I was watching *Grown Little Man* recently, and the way I’m touching the mike, you can see my nervous energy. I’m not comfortable, at least not at the level I’m at now. I’m also rushing. You’d think somebody was chasing me with a machete. The speed is off the hook. There’s no break. Now I see a guy who’s full of fear. You’re out there on stage and you look up, you see all the people, and there’s real tension: *All right, I don’t want to lose these people*. Now I feel like I’m much more in command. It’s all about growing and improving. I want to continue to get better as a stand-up.





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**PLAYBOY:** Not that your movie career is hurting. In the past year alone, your credits have included *What Now?*, *Ride Along 2*, *Central Intelligence* and *The Secret Life of Pets*.

**HART:** [Laughs] Yeah, I feel like a slacker if I don't have a movie coming out every two months.

**PLAYBOY:** Chris Rock joked at the Oscars this year that he can't afford to lose another role to you. What do you make of the complaint that African American actors don't get the same opportunities in Hollywood as white actors?

**HART:** First of all, Chris is a great friend. I thought it was a great joke. Here's my opinion: When people speak on the diversity issue in Hollywood or the lack of actors or actresses of color, I'm not going to sit up here and play dumb to it and act like it isn't an issue. But at the same time, when you bring more attention to an issue, it becomes a bigger issue. Whereas if you try to figure out a solution and do things to help position yourself or people of different races, shapes and sizes to have more options, that's where you can be of service. If you're not making shit happen, you just become a part of the problem. You know what I mean?

**PLAYBOY:** But how does the problem get fixed?

**HART:** For me, I'm actually doing some of the stuff that people are saying black performers aren't getting the opportunity to do. That includes taking my movies international. You know there's this idea that actors of color don't sell movies outside the U.S., but look at what me and Cube did. The first two *Ride Alongs*, you're looking at something like \$278 million in worldwide box office revenue with two African Americans as your leads. And yet no attention was thrown to the fact that we were breaking major ground, because so many people were focusing on what wasn't happening in the industry. I can't get stuck on the negative. Let's keep grinding. Let's go to 25 countries and promote the hell out of it. Then let's come back and do another one. Now, whether we do a *Ride Along 3* or not, what Cube and I have is special, and we know it can work here and around the world. Same thing we saw with *Straight Outta Compton*, a major success domestically and internationally. Universal Studios saw it. They got it.

**PLAYBOY:** You almost always share the screen with a major co-star, whether it's Ice Cube, the Rock or Will Ferrell. Is there any reason you don't do a straight-up Kevin Hart movie? Where's your *Beverly Hills Cop*?

**HART:** I'm just slowly building up to it. It's not like you can walk in and tell the studio, "All right, give me all your money. I'm ready to do the \$100 million movie." I mean, I can go in and say that, but here's the thing. I've had one number-two movie. Every other movie I've done has been number one at the box office. My



fans love what I'm doing. I'm also switching it up, you know? I've been lucky enough to be part of two franchises. I got *Think Like a Man*, *Think Like a Man Too*, *Ride Along*, *Ride Along 2* and possibly *Ride Along 3*. And it's not like I haven't done any Kevin Hart movies. My stand-up concert films are my movies. *The Wedding Ringer* was like a Kevin Hart movie, and it was a good movie. That's Kevin Hart's name in the lights, nobody else's.

But there's a reason I'll go do *Central Intelligence* with the Rock. It still makes sense to do that, because to become that international star, you want to get with somebody who can

help you achieve that. The Rock is that guy. So for us to team up and have that pairing was amazing. I also broke into the animation space with *The Secret Life of Pets* and now *Captain Underpants*.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you ever do a drama?

**HART:** It's in the works. I'm going to do *The Untouchables* with Bryan Cranston. It's a remake of the French movie *The Intouchables*. That'll be my first and I'm looking at another one, but I'm slow walking into these things. To be honest, I'm not looking for the artsy stuff, the stuff that's going to go under the radar for a group of intellectual people to watch and say [in highfalutin voice], "Oh, this is one of the most marvelous films." I'm about box office success. But sure, after I'm done having fun and achieving the box office successes, then I'll go and take the risk of doing the more serious, more dramatic. But if I'm trying to break international waters and show the world that comedies do play overseas with lead actors of color, you don't just try to do it all by yourself—then people start saying you can't do it. But my numbers add up. No matter what anybody says, Kevin Hart is bankable.

**PLAYBOY:** You have 20 million-plus followers on Facebook, 30.5 million on Twitter and 40 million on Instagram and Snapchat. Does that ever freak you out?

**HART:** Are you kidding me? Anything that gives you the opportunity to test out material and get an instant reaction from a population as big as a country? It's a godsend. If I want to test out a joke, I put it out to my followers and see in five seconds

what works and what doesn't. That's changing comedy. For people coming up, not only can you test out your material, but you build that fan base. You get 100,000 or 500,000 followers and now you can say, "Hey, you should invest in me and my idea because they love me on Twitter or Facebook or Instagram or whatever." Periscope? I love that shit too.

When you look at what a guy like, say, Mark Zuckerberg has done, it's amazing. I haven't met him yet, but I can't wait to. I'll probably have 5,000 questions for the guy. I just love the fact that he's creative and what he's done with that company. I also really love Snapchat





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right now. You see somebody like DJ Khaled on there. You got to take your hat off to him for re-creating himself. He's found a niche. The Rock is funny as hell on Snapchat too. If you're a comedian in 2016 and you're not jumping into the tech space, you're going to get left behind. Me? I'm not being left behind. You know why? I've got Kevmojis.

**PLAYBOY:** Kevmojis?

**HART:** That's right, Kevmojis! Everybody uses animated emojis, but Kevmojis are real photos of my face doing a million different twists and turns. How many people have the ability to really change up their face that many times? Not many, that's who. So I went and did a bunch of different facial expressions, and now you can use them instead of that little yellow smiley-face shit people use. I'm always thinking, always building, always moving to whatever's new and exciting. That's why I hashtag ComedicRock-StarShit. I know people are looking at their phones and seeing me surpass just being a comedian.

**PLAYBOY:** For someone who loves his devices, you're unusually strict about audiences not using phones at your live shows. A woman in Iowa City was arrested after she called a friend during one of your gigs.

**HART:** I told you there's a lot of money invested in my shows, and I don't want to see that money go down the drain because everybody's filming me and putting that shit on YouTube. More than that, you want people to watch. Enjoy it, people. Put yourself in a position where you can laugh. As much as I love social media, at these live shows, it distracts people from actually seeing and enjoying the show, because everybody is worried about getting that great piece of footage to show to their Twitter friends or on Facebook Live or whatever. I can't stand it in my own house. My kids love their screens. I don't remember the last time my kids went outside and kicked a stick or something. So at my shows, I don't want your mind on footage. I want your mind on me on the stage. Again, I'm taking entertainment to a level it's never been before, and I want people right there with me.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you always have this level of ambition?

**HART:** No. Actually, here's the crazy part. As a kid in school, I had no real desire to reach

the highest levels of education. I was not that guy. But I've always been a person who pushed to the ultimate realm of things that I loved. If I had a passion for something, I figured out a way to be the best at it. That started with video games. *Tecmo Bowl*, *Double Dribble*, remember those? These are the games of the past, but it was me trying to figure out everything I possibly could to have an edge. Then basketball became the passion. I wanted to go to the NBA. I said, "Mom, I want trainers. I want to take private lessons. I want to be in the gym all day." And I would spend all day in the gym.

**PLAYBOY:** Your mother was a computer analyst at the University of Pennsylvania. Clearly

***Shit's not funny unless it's true to life, and nothing was funnier than my mom and dad's relationship.***

she was smart enough to see that you weren't NBA material.

**HART:** Hell no! My mom was the opposite of a dream killer. She was the person who told me I could do anything I put my mind to. Her thing was: Anything you start, you have to finish. You start a book, you finish the book. You start a sport, you finish the season. It's still the major rule we live by in my household. We don't quit. I don't care if you don't like it. My kids get into some new project, it's got to get done. I went as far as I could in basketball, but then, yeah, you go, Okay, maybe somebody like me could excel even more in another line of business.

**PLAYBOY:** Your dad was in and out of jail, and you've joked on stage about him showing up at your school spelling bee on a cocaine

high, shouting, "All right, all right, *all right!* My son's spellin' the shit out of these motherfuckin' words!" How much of that is true?

**HART:** Shit's not funny unless it's true to life, and nothing was funnier to me growing up than my mom and dad's relationship.

**PLAYBOY:** But he was actually stealing money from you to buy drugs, right? Where's the comedy in that?

**HART:** He was stealing, 100 percent. From me, from other people. But honestly, this is the beauty of who I am. I've always had the ability to find a positive in any negative. Coming up, of course, what kid doesn't want his parents to be happily married? You want to wake up every day and see Mom and Dad in the morning, being all snuggly with you and lovey-dovey, and then good night. Every kid wants that. For me, I didn't have it, so I had to deal with what was there. My parents weren't fond of each other. They were hot and cold and frozen cold, and my dad could be crazy. So my mom would let him have it. He'd come home with stuff he bought. "That's probably stolen!" she'd say. "That stuff can't come in this house." I'd be thinking, But look how cool these toys are. She'd go, "You ain't touching that stuff. Set it down. We're going to give it back in the morning." Then my dad would be like, "Ain't nobody stole that stuff!" Mom would go, "You did steal it." "No I didn't." "Then bring a receipt. You got a receipt? Then he can keep it." I'm like, What? Why am I the butt of this stuff? Even if he did steal it, it's sitting

right here waiting for me to play with. But my mom would always win.

**PLAYBOY:** Is it true she died before she ever saw you perform?

**HART:** She died in 2007, so she saw my success. But she never saw me do stand-up because, you know, she was a churchgoing woman. The language and all that was not something she was going to enjoy. But I know she's watching over me now. She's seeing it all. That's my angel. I definitely believe in heaven. I believe that when you pass away there is a place where these positive spirits go, and I feel like I have one. Them days you feel are your toughest days, you're okay, because you've got somebody pushing you in the direction to smile.

**PLAYBOY:** You had it pretty tough coming up





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as a comedian. Didn't someone once throw a chicken wing at you?

**HART:** Yeah, yeah. [laughs] Somebody was that frustrated with my material that they decided to throw a half-eaten buffalo wing at me. Sloppy sauce and all. And you hear the worst stuff when you're starting out and nobody knows you. "Brother, this ain't for you. You need to fucking do something else." That wasn't just the audience; it was friends, family, peers, whoever. All that stuff is nothing to me but ammunition. People say, "No, you can't." Well, here I am, motherfucker. But even so, you look around and you're playing at some shitty-ass places. In the early days in Philly I was doing bowling alleys and nightclubs, strip clubs, people's living rooms, places that weren't conducive to comedy at all.

**PLAYBOY:** You were turned down by *Saturday Night Live* too.

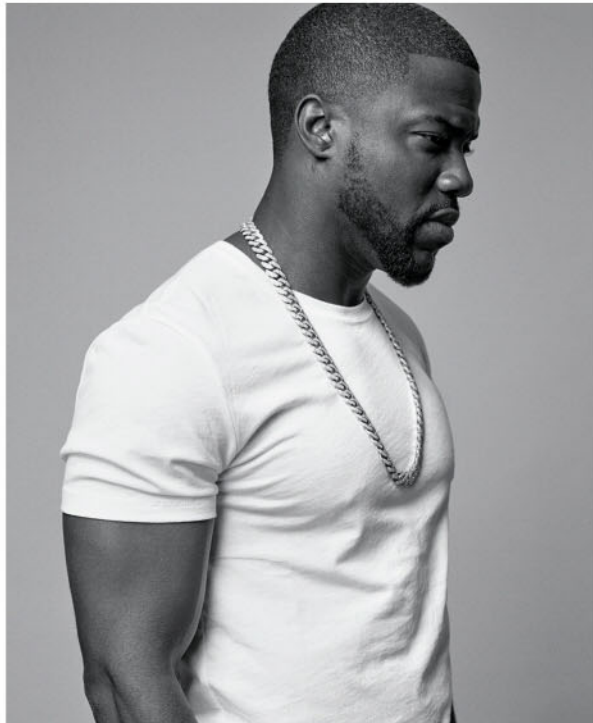
**HART:** Lorne Michaels and I joke about that now. He's been doing this for so long and he knows comedy. He lives it. You can only admire a person who's given his life and devoted himself at the highest levels of entertainment for more than 40 years. I was probably just having an off day. That wasn't my only rejection. I was the death of every sitcom I was on for a while. You struggle, but you keep going. It's the only way. I think that's why you have certain stars and why some people can't make it in show business. I think the ones who made it are the ones who heard the word *no* and didn't let it affect them and were strong enough to hear the word *no* again and still continue. I'm actually glad I struggled, because I can look back and connect yesterday's lows to the highs I'm experiencing now.

**PLAYBOY:** By the way, how's your relationship with your father these days?

**HART:** Oh, he saw the mistakes he was making and the people he was hurting. He's in his late 60s and clean as a whistle. My dad is a man's man. His pride is heavy, but he got to a point where he wanted to be a father and make up for a lot of the mistakes he made with my brother and me. My brother held more of a grudge, but I'm different. I'm just a forgiving person. I take care of him now.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you ever worry about those addiction genes passing down to you? What's your history with drugs and booze?

**HART:** I'll tell you what. Having the knowledge about what drugs and alcohol did to him was the greatest gift he gave me. Now I can tell you 100 percent, "Hey, man, don't do drugs. That shit will fuck you up." My dad got fucked-up bad. I mean, I'm human. I've done things in the past, but I'm not a drug guy. I drink. I'm not abusive with drinking. I'm very much in control of what's going on, but that's a combination of my mom and my dad. My dad's mistakes became beams of light to me. My mom's strict rules of behavior are the reason I'm in line.



**PLAYBOY:** Who were the people who made you want to get into comedy?

**HART:** Redd Foxx. Eddie Murphy. I had to sneak around to listen to Richard Pryor. George Carlin, Sam Kinison. Andrew Dice Clay, Chris Rock. My mom wouldn't allow that in the house. She let me watch Sinbad because he was clean. Seinfeld. Martin Lawrence. There were others, of course.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you purposely leave Bill Cosby off the list?

**HART:** No. Bill Cosby was a huge influence. He's still a comedic legend, and his impact on me remains massive. What he has done in his

personal life, I obviously don't support. If all arrows point to him doing what all these women say he did, then I hope he'll be dealt with accordingly. But I still have his picture up in my house. He's one of my comedy heroes.

**PLAYBOY:** So often we hear about the private troubles of our favorite icons. Prince was supposed to be a clean-living Jehovah's Witness. Then he dies of a drug overdose.

**HART:** Yeah, you don't know what goes on behind those closed doors. But Prince lived his life the way that he wanted to live it. He

was one of the most intimidating men to meet, I'll tell you. Somebody like Prince, you don't want to go and talk and be stupid. The one time I met him, I didn't even want to make eye contact as he was walking by. You're like, Shit, here he comes. Okay, look down. All right, wait a minute. He smells good. Is he gone? What? He wants to say hi. Hey, P-P-P...do you even call him Prince? I'm confused. So you go, "Hey, man," and that sounds stupid. The man was such a talent. You don't want to tarnish his legacy. Digging up and finding speculations about people—it won't bring him back, so why bother?

**PLAYBOY:** What about the next generation of entertainers? Who are you watching?

**HART:** In comedy, if I had to put together a quick list, there's Lil Rel—I think he's very funny. William "Spank" Horton, Na'im Lynn, Joey Wells. Those are guys who've been with me for a long time and I think are very talented comedians. Keith Robinson. I mean, tons of comedians in New York I came up with that I would love to see get

a shot. David Arnold, who I was producing something for. Corey Holcomb. These are guys I think have an amazing comedic perspective and point of view and could become huge names. A lot of these guys will be featured on a new network I'm launching this fall called Laugh Out Loud. It's a new video-on-demand network in partnership with Lionsgate. We just shot 52 comedy specials over the summer. I want this to be a multi-cultural platform for comedy, stand-up comedy, miniseries, viral content. I want this to be a hub where people will go.

**PLAYBOY:** What motivates you to do so much?





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Didn't you also sign a big sneaker endorsement deal this year?

**HART:** First-ever sneaker endorsement for a comedian, that's right. Why stop, you know? The Nike deal grew out of my love for physical fitness, and I love the fact that I now have a platform for that. I was out of shape. Well, I thought I was in shape, but I wasn't, so I decided to get into shape. I started doing 800 to 1,000 sit-ups throughout the day. I bench about 260, 265. Being in shape motivates me to do other things too. You have to look at yourself and go, What am I doing? I want to do action movies? I want to be an action-comedy star? I can't be an action-comedy star looking like this [*slouches and blows out gut*]. So now that I'm getting my act together, let me see if I can get other people who want to get it together. So I started doing 5Ks, putting the call out on Instagram and whatnot, and people started joining us. Thousands of people. We've gotten crowds of people of all shapes, sizes and ethnicities, and they come out to challenge themselves for that day. You hear the stories: "Hey, Kevin, thank you for getting me out of my bed to come run." "Hey, I had triple-bypass surgery and I was just lying around not doing anything, but you made me want to get up and get myself together." "Hey, man, I'm a cancer survivor." When you start to see the effect you have on people and you start to see the faces and hear the stories, you know you're doing something right. It's the satisfaction of knowing that I motivated people. That's another effect I'm having on the world. You have your window of time here on earth, and you want to try everything.

**PLAYBOY:** Don't you ever just want to take a vacation?

**HART:** We go and do stuff, sure. I'm very much a family man. When Dad goes to work, he's working for a couple weeks, but then I'll be back for a couple weeks, and we want to do something fun. We'll go to Orlando. It's not about Disney World or anything like that. It's us, house, nice little barbecue setting, the family doing three meals a day. I'll tell you, the best party is just me and my wife with my kids. Nerf gun fights with the babies, movie night, taco night, game night. We love to play [Ellen DeGeneres's app]

Heads Up. My kids make me smile. No matter how bad it gets out here, knowing that they're okay, that calms me down.

**PLAYBOY:** You got married this summer. What did you learn from your first marriage, which ended in divorce?

**HART:** I was 22 years old. What happened happened when it was supposed to. I'm where I am now in my relationship for a reason, and I'm happy. At some point, you're not going to keep searching. What else are you trying to find? You eventually go, All right, this is it. I'm going to die with this one.

**PLAYBOY:** Tell us about a recent splurge. You like cars and watches, judging from your Instagram.

**When people go, "Man, you're short," I'm like, Oh, good job, sir. You cracked that case.**

**HART:** I bought the new Benz truck. I love it. The G65 is a major upgrade from the G63. I also recently had my Shelby rebuilt from the ground up. It's a beautiful 1966 hatchback Eleanor, black with silver streaks. I get something big for myself every time I do a big movie or project. The Shelby was from the first *Ride Along*. I got a Mercedes SLS AMG for *Laugh at My Pain*. My Ferrari 458 Italia is from *Let Me Explain*. I bought my house from *Think Like a Man*. Other than that, I'll buy myself a watch. Those are definitely my weakness. I like Cartier, Rolex, Richard Mille, Patek Philippe. That's my guilty pleasure right there. It's a little bit of an addiction.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever worry about losing it

all, going MC Hammer and blowing through the cash?

**HART:** No worries there, man. Can't do that when you're doing the right thing. If you spend more than what you're making, that's your fault. If you're in for \$15 million on something, and all you've got is \$8.5 million, that choice is going to crush you. The hard thing with money is I try not to let it change or affect who I am or who I'm shaping up to be. I don't want the money to play a major factor in it. You don't want to become one of these guys who can't zip up his own pants or put on socks or open a door for himself. People get like that. They get so rich they forget how to be a normal human.

The trick is to stay close to people, to get out there in the public, to run in Central Park, to talk to people, to observe, to be real. It's easy at a certain success level to isolate yourself and disappear into a castle of your own making.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's move on. Do you have any thoughts on the race for the White House?

**HART:** I'm not a major political guy. It's not my cup of tea. I don't put my foot in that stuff. But I'm definitely going to miss Barack Obama. Amazing man. Michelle Obama, amazing woman. The fact that I got to have dinner at a White House Christmas gathering with the first black president of the United States, that's one for the lifetime highlights reel.

**PLAYBOY:** What do you make of Donald Trump?

**HART:** What I can say is that I have no ill will toward him or his campaign, but I'm a people person. I love people. I love the idea of people coming closer together. My whole job is to unite people. You go to my shows, there's all races there. So the idea of separating and segregating and dividing because of what someone believes in, that's not something I could ever get behind. I try to understand people and accept them, but it can be difficult sometimes. Then again, I have entertainer friends who are widely misunderstood, and if you get to know them, you see what's really going on.

**PLAYBOY:** Who comes to mind?

**HART:** Kanye is probably number one in that category. He's a good friend. You can say what you want about Kanye and his approach, but the passion behind what he's fighting for is





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real, and I really believe he's misunderstood because of his passion. He's a monumental talent. His last album, *The Life of Pablo*, is incredible. Best line of all time: "Name one genius that ain't crazy." There you go. That's Kanye in a sentence. He's admitting that he's crazy but also calling himself a genius at the same time. Same respect goes out to Justin Bieber. The Biebs is my man. His last album also is fucking amazing, and he's a guy who does whatever he needs to do to be himself, no matter how much shit he gets for it.

**PLAYBOY:** You spend time with Jay Z too. What's that like?

**HART:** He's the king. It's like being with the king. To be honest, I'm a sponge when I'm around that guy. You just sit there and soak up information on how he does what he does, man. You see a guy who is not content and constantly pushing and stretching. I mean, look at Tidal and the flak people gave Tidal when it first came out. "What is this shit? It's gonna fail." Everybody wanted it to fail. Nobody saw potential. Now look at it. Tidal has over 3 million subscribers. He's doing something right. When you think about Jay Z, you're looking at a guy who has so much success in music, but he took that music, and took the money from music, and turned himself into a business and created X, Y and Z, and now sits at the top of Roc Nation as a mogul. You can't fight what people are destined to be.

**PLAYBOY:** What about your destiny? What's on the horizon for Kevin Hart?

**HART:** There's definitely an exit plan. I'm not going to give away too much about it, but it's a retirement plan. I'm not going to be 50 years old and grinding at the level I'm doing it now. The reason I'm building these things and putting all these pieces together is because, at a certain age, I want to say, Okay, I did it, and now it's time to enjoy myself, and enjoy myself doesn't mean partying it up, and being on a yacht and dancing and stuff like that. It means enjoying my home, enjoying my kids, enjoying the foundation that I built.

**PLAYBOY:** Is there anybody you envy?

**HART:** I wouldn't say envy, but I certainly admire what Eddie Murphy has been able to do.

I think he's very happy. I know him well. He's very happy in his relationship. He just had a baby and already has tons of kids. He doesn't seem to be bothered by any piece of negativity. He plays his music. He has his hobbies. I mean, at a certain age, you have to understand, it's about being at ease. It's about doing what you want to do and not what people want you to do. And when you look at the people who really get that and understand that, I guess you could say I am envious of that. Dave Chappelle—again, people can say what they want. Dave



Chappelle, he's all right, man. He's a guy who is very much in control of his life. He has a farm with tons of animals on it, and he has his kids and his wife, and he has his wonderful life. He's set up, he's not answering to anybody, and I'm very proud to call that guy a friend. I want to be like that one day.

**PLAYBOY:** If that's what you want, why not just buy the farm now and call it a day?

**HART:** All in good time. I'm doing what I want to do. I'm doing it at the level that I want to do it, but what people have to understand is that there's a difference in entertainment between working because you have to work and work-

ing because you love to work. I love to work. I love entertainment. I love stand-up comedy. I love making people laugh. I love embracing my fans. I love giving my fans content. I love the fact that I can make a movie and people watch the movie and say, "That guy makes my day." I'm in love with that.

For me, stand-up comedy is bigger than the title "stand-up comedy." Stand-up comedy is an effect. I have an effect on people. I have the ability to change your day in a positive way. I have the ability to light your day up. I take pride in that. I don't take that for granted. If you feel like you're just going through the motions in life, you can turn on a Kevin Hart movie or Kevin Hart stand-up, and you know what? You laugh, and it takes your mind off whatever that may be. Give me your stress and I'll take it away. That's the true art of comedy. That's why, regardless of whatever negativity I've taken from critics or even other comedians, I'm true to my fraternity of comics, because very few people can do what we do. I got chosen as one of the guys who are funny. Thank you, God. I get it. Now my goal is to be the best at it. I'm going to do what I can to be the best and the biggest.

**PLAYBOY:** You talk about being the biggest. Be honest: Does it offend you when people make fun of your height?

**HART:** When people go, "Man, you're short," I'm like, Oh, good job, sir. You cracked that case. What a genius! It's the thing that people have known for the last how many years I've been in entertainment? But you just figured it out. It doesn't bother me, no. I'm good either way.

You can't offend me.

**PLAYBOY:** Great. In that case, one last question. Are you sure you're not driving so hard to overcompensate for, you know, some other physical shortcoming?

**HART:** [*Cocks head and lets eyes go wide*] All right, brother, all right. I don't know what to tell you, man. I'm happy. I'm very happy. I'm happy over here and I'm happy down there. Definitely happy. That's the best way to put it. That's my nicest way. I'm not overcompensating for anything. I am in a great space. A great space. I'm living it! Things are flying! Life is good! It's great being Kevin Hart! ■

# RENEGADES LEGENDS

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
**RYAN LOWRY**

*The men and women on these pages will change how you think about business, music, porn, comedy, gaming and more. They've risked it all—even their lives—to do what they love, showing us what can be accomplished if we break the rules. Meet the Renegades of 2016*





**“I COME FROM NO MONEY. I GREW UP IN A TRAILER PARK. IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO ME TO SUCCEED. TRIAL BY FIRE. SURVIVE OR DIE.”**

## **JASON DILL**

In 2009, pro skateboarder Jason Dill had to call 911 on himself. He was throwing up blood all over his New York City apartment and suffering from a gastric hemorrhage. The Jameson, Vicodin and Percocet cocktails had finally taken their toll.

“I didn’t think I’d even survive,” says Dill, who now stars on the Netflix series *Love*. “When I’m on the set, I’m quiet as a mouse. I’m just so blown away and thankful I’m there. And the last thing I ever wanted was the responsibility of owning a company that people expect more from—

because owning a company is a pain in the ass.”


In 2013, after kicking the pills and spending more time on his board, Dill ditched his long-time sponsor, Alien Workshop—one of the most popular skateboarding companies ever—and walked away from a partial-ownership offer to co-found board brand Fucking Awesome, an extension of his self-funded apparel side project.

In doing so, Dill dumped a bucket of ice on the once-countercultural world of skateboarding, which in the previous 17 years had devolved

into a G-rated parody of itself to appease moms and malls, and woke it the fuck up. The exodus of Alien’s riders to Fucking Awesome was swift. It’s now one of the top-selling and most knocked-off companies in boards and streetwear, despite its provocative graphics, null social media presence and label that prevents mass retail saturation.

“I suppose FA is like having a kid,” he says. “It’s got personality; it’s walking around and talking. I can’t let it go to a community college, you know? I gotta raise it right.”—*Rob Brink*





**“BEAUTY IS  
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CONTINUE TO  
RESPOND TO  
THE QUES-  
TION, WHY  
BOTHER?”**

## **STOYA**

It’s hard to capture an old friend in one anecdote, but I’ll try. The time is two A.M., and Stoya and I are smoking outside an East Village bar. A mink hangs from her shoulders. The streetlights catch her feline cheekbones like a kiss. Stoya tells me about the mid-19th century prima ballerina Emma Livry. In an era when dancers routinely caught fire from stage lights, Livry refused to destroy the ethereality of her art by soaking her tutu in flame retardant. When she

died of burns, she had no regrets. Stoya notes that panic about safety often focuses on the bodies, and the choices, of young women. She wonders why no one thought to move the lights.

This moment hints at Stoya’s ferocious mix of glamour, toughness and nerdery. A classically trained ballerina until an injury in her mid-teens ruined her prospects, Stoya became a porn star—and I use the word *star* in the sense that applies to Garbo. She has written

for *The New York Times*, starred in a Serbian sci-fi film (the upcoming *Ederlezi Rising*) and trained as an aerialist in Moscow. She has also moved into entrepreneurship, co-founding the genre-defying porn site TrenchcoatX. When one of the biggest porn studios in the country treated her with disrespect, she chose to work as a waitress rather than kowtow. No matter what she does, Stoya exudes a fierce, hard-won sense of freedom.—Molly Crabapple





## LAURA JANE GRACE

Laura Jane Grace has been minutely scrutinized since she started the band Against Me! as an anarchist-inspired solo project in 1997. Punk purists frothed as the Gainesville, Florida group's sound evolved from lo-fi folk to full-on anthemic pop punk, leading to a major-label record deal in 2007. (These days, the band releases music on its own Total Treble imprint.) Fans and critics stopped and stared when Grace came out as transgender in 2012—an event with few precedents in the

testosterone-drenched world of punk rock. This November, two months after the release of the seventh Against Me! album, *Shape Shift With Me*, Grace will cap off her odyssey so far with a memoir titled *Tranny: Confessions of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist Sellout*.

Back in May, Grace made headlines for burning her birth certificate onstage in North Carolina to protest the state's anti-trans bathroom law. But her music and writing signal a more intimate strain of activism: Listening

to Against Me! songs such as "I Was a Teenage Anarchist" and "True Trans Soul Rebel," it becomes clear that Grace has always lived where the personal and the political collide. Her painfully honest, deeply human way of articulating that friction is the definition of Grace. And she still believes in the scene that has sustained her, even as it has threatened to drown her in expectations. "The influence that punk rock has had on my life is astounding," she says. "I just think music is infinitely important."—*Jonah Bayer*



**“MAKE YOUR OWN  
DECISIONS. SOME-  
TIMES PEOPLE  
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BUT IN ORDER  
TO SURVIVE  
YOU HAVE TO BE  
CONFIDENT IN  
YOURSELF.”**



## ALI WONG


Ali Wong wanted it all (career, relationship, baby), got it all and mined every last minute of it in the process. The comedian currently juggles her mom duties, her day gig as a writer on acclaimed sitcom *Fresh Off the Boat* and her thriving stand-up career—while taking every conventional rule of comedy and bending it to her liking.

Wong's Netflix special, *Baby Cobra*, filmed when she was more than seven months pregnant, is truly hilarious and groundbreaking. Now, as a new mother, she's on another mission: speaking openly about finding a balance between her hormones' command to stay home with her daughter and her professional need to stick to the comedy grind. The good news? Whatever she's doing, it's working.

"Last year in San Francisco, before *Baby Cobra*, they had to put some of my tickets on Groupon because I couldn't sell all the seats," she says. "Now this year, at that same venue, tickets for five shows sold out in less than one minute." Sure, the crowds may be changing, but the objective of an Ali Wong show has always been the same. "I want people to laugh to the point that they can't think." —*Jamie Loftus*





A close-up photograph of a person's back and shoulder. The person is wearing a garment with a complex, abstract pattern of irregular shapes in black, white, orange, and brown. The fabric appears to be made of a textured material like paper or felt. The background is a plain, light color.

**“I’VE ALWAYS WANTED TO  
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## PAUL BEATTY

Paul Beatty may be America's most hilarious—and subversive—writer. In July, the Los Angeles native's daring fourth novel, *The Sellout*, was long-listed for the prestigious 2016 Man Booker Prize. The gleefully unhinged satire follows the misadventures of one Bonbon Me, an urban weed and watermelon farmer whose father, a prominent psychologist and “Nigger Whisperer,” is gunned down by the LAPD. With the settlement money, Bonbon reinstitutes segregation, acquires an elderly slave and lands himself, stoned, before a baffled Supreme Court.

“It all starts with the language,” says the 54-year-old (who was also the first-ever Grand Poetry Slam champion, in 1990). “That’s where all the latticework is for me.” Indeed, the thrill of *The Sellout* lies not only in Beatty’s delirious conceit but also in his virtuoso riffs that take bull’s-eye aim at race, class, pop culture and propriety in our supposedly postracial America.

“I get nervous when things don’t make people nervous,” Beatty says. “A lot of writers of color feel there are certain directions they have to take: what your point of view should be, who can do what, how positive it has to be. Somebody’s always going to tell you what it means to be a black writer, what responsibilities you have. Just trying to create some space is important to me.”

And that’s exactly what Beatty does, obliterating the boundaries of what is funny, what is profane and what is just so sad and unfixable that we can only laugh to keep from crying. There’s a bit of truth in every good joke, and perhaps in that truth we are able, after the laughs subside, to better see the world and ourselves in it.—James Yeh

**“THERE’S STILL THIS NOTION THAT THERE’S ONLY ROOM FOR ONE FUCKER. CAN WE HAVE A RANGE? THAT’S ALL WE’RE ASKING FOR.”**





## NOOR TAGOURI

For anyone with preconceived ideas about women who choose to wear a headscarf every day, Noor Tagouri is disorienting. She's simply not what you expect: a 22-year-old journalist (she likes to call herself a storyteller) on the verge of becoming this country's first hijab-wearing news anchor. As of June, she's an on-air reporter for Newsy, where she provokes the sort of confusion we could use right now, in part by making a surprisingly bold case for modesty. As a badass activist with a passion for

demanding change and asking the right questions, accompanied by beauty-ad-campaign looks, Tagouri forces us to ask ourselves why we have such a hard time wrapping our minds around a young woman who consciously covers her head and won't take no for an answer.

A West Virginia native and first-generation Libyan American, Tagouri graduated from college at the age of 20. In 2012, her #LetNoorShine campaign went viral. Her 2015 TEDx talk advocated unapologetic individuality,

and her YouTube channel draws tens of thousands of viewers. More recently, she collaborated with streetwear brand Lis'n Up Clothing on a fashion line that includes a Jean-Michel Basquiat-inspired sweatshirt. Half the purchase proceeds go to Project Futures, an anti-human-trafficking organization. Americans have a long way to go when it comes to how we regard Muslims, but with Tagouri burning down stereotypes and blazing new paths, we're a healthy stride closer.—*Anna del Gaizo*

**“BEING A HIJABI MUSLIM WOMAN HELPS ME GAIN TRUST. I SAY, ‘I KNOW WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE MISREPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA. I WON’T DO THAT TO YOU.’”**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE WARREN





## SEAN MURRAY

Everyone dreams of being an astronaut; Sean Murray made a game that lets you play one. This summer, the 36-year-old's company, Hello Games, released one of the most ambitious video games in recent history: *No Man's Sky*. The gorgeous sci-fi adventure allows players to explore more than 18 quintillion planets—yes, *quintillion*—thanks to clever environment-generation technology. Travel to massive worlds suffused with rich colors and teeming with alien creatures—then dodge galactic cops in your spacecraft.

The Ireland-born, Australian outback-raised Murray created his first game when he was just five. “My parents always joke that this is all I ever wanted to do,” he says.

Murray founded Hello Games in 2008 with three friends after quitting his job at Criterion, a big studio that got bought by EA, an even bigger studio. Sick of slaving away on blockbusters such as the *Burnout* series, he wanted to flex his creative muscles. Today that's not a unique origin story for an independent game developer, but back then, in the days before the Apple App Store, it was.

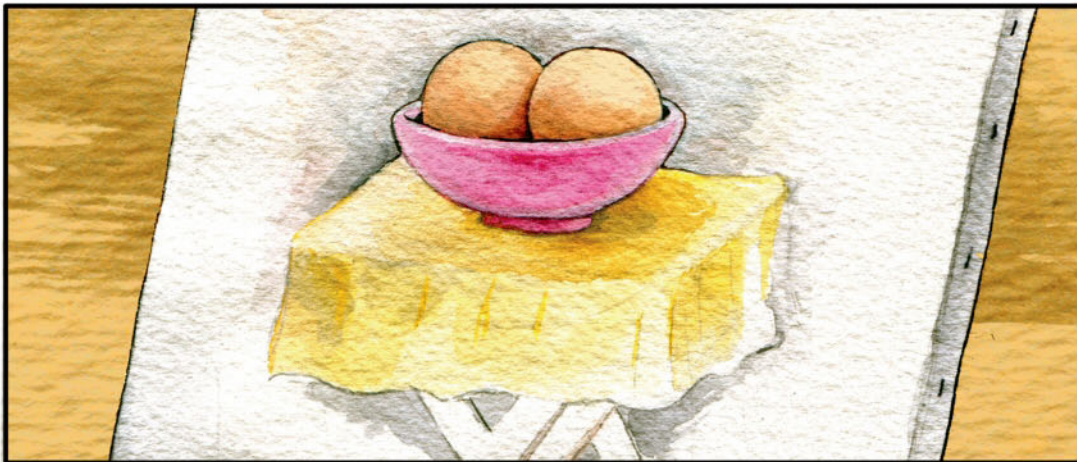
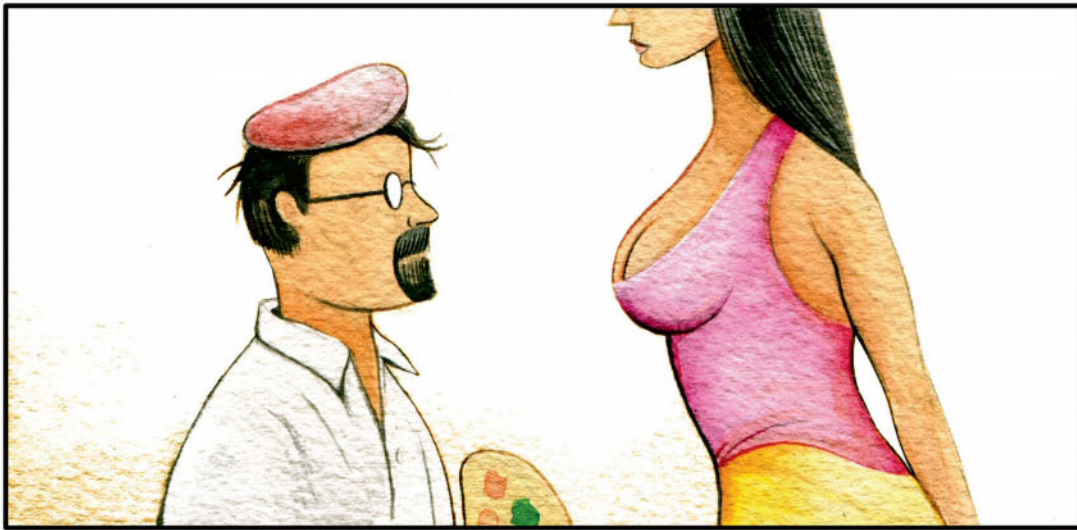
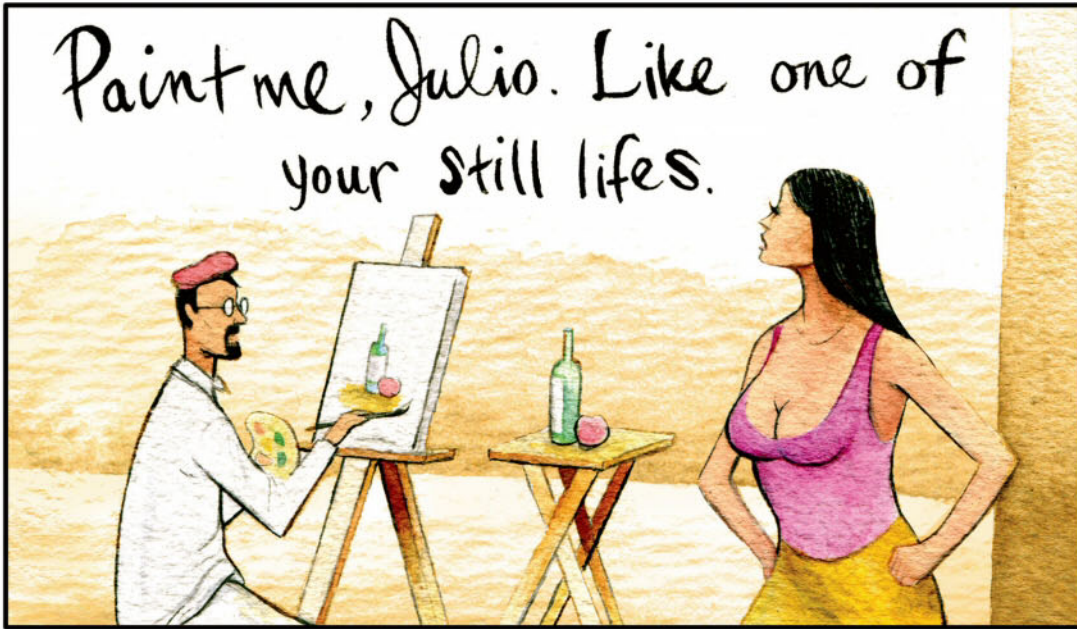
“We were some of the first people to do that,” he says. “In our minds, it wasn't some path to success. It was more like, I can't work here anymore, and I need to go do something different.”

*No Man's Sky*, the third release from Hello Games, launched in August after three years of feverish buildup among gamers obsessed with the promise of endless exploration. It's a high-water mark for video games—and like a true artist, that's all Murray really cares about.—Mike Rougeau

**“THAT WAS A BIG MOTIVATOR: WHAT IS GOING TO BE THE BEST WORK OF YOUR LIFE? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO LOOK BACK ON AND SAY, ‘THAT FUCKING NAILED IT’?”**



Paint me, Julio. Like one of  
your still lifes.











# SKY FERREIRA

TEXT BY SHANE MICHAEL SINGH

In “Everything Is Embarrassing,” her most-streamed song on Spotify, Sky Ferreira croons, “Everything and nothing always haunts me.” That song first appeared on the 2012 EP *Ghost*, a collection of dreamy pop synth embraced by critics and fans, yet its lyrics have endured beyond that release and her debut album, 2013’s grungier *Night Time, My Time*, to become her oeuvre’s metaphorical spine. Routinely cited as one of today’s most provocative artists, Ferreira is capable of bending sounds from rain-bow fluff to grizzled wails. Magnetic yet unpredictable, she hasn’t released a new collection of music in three years: It takes time to become more of yourself and less haunted by the past—a goal of the 24-year-old, whose new album, *Masochism*, could very well be named for her process of self-discovery. That self-discovery also includes a role in David Lynch’s *Twin Peaks* revival on Showtime, slated for next year, and, more recently, an epic Twitter takedown of a journalist who had trivialized her in a story called “Sky Ferreira’s Sex Appeal Is What Pop Music Needs Right Now.” “I’m not a think piece,” she barked back. “I’m not a fucking example. I do what I want when I feel it’s true to me.” This is why no one can take their eyes off Sky: When she speaks, sings or acts, we want more. And so we tapped Oscar-nominated actor Bruce Dern, who had previously met Ferreira as a producer committed to championing films about young women, to get it for us. As Dern observes, “She has so much to give.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SANDY KIM**









SKY

# THERE'S THIS ENTIRE "SHUT UP AND BE PRETTY" MENTALITY. I'M SO TIRED OF APOLOGIZING. DON'T PACIFY ME.

**BRUCE DERN:** *I love that PLAYBOY is allowing you to give an interview that shows people what you want them to know rather than what they want to hear. One reason I fell in love with you is that I don't meet many young women your age who are genuine, but every fucking note you sing is genuine. What's the biggest challenge for an established singer who is trying to be an actress at the same time?*

**SKY FERREIRA:** You'd think it would make it easier to book jobs, but when people have an idea of you and who you're supposed to be, it gets in the way. I actually started acting first but then stopped and went to New York to focus on music. Music gave me the freedom to do what I wanted to do so I wouldn't have to go on the Disney Channel or Nickelodeon.

**DERN:** *When did you move to New York?*

**FERREIRA:** I was 16. I got signed, but the label tried to make me into someone I wasn't. I felt like they were all lying to me, agents and managers and the record company. I write my own stuff, which is unusual. I go into situations trusting people until they do something wrong. It's not little things. I'm a sensitive person, and sometimes it seems like I'm being irrational, but it's for valid reasons. When something is so true to me and I know on the inside it's wrong, I can't hide it.

**DERN:** *Ben Harper said to me, "I'll tell you one thing about Sky Ferreira: She's 25 years ahead of the game." Your most unusual quality is that, at your age, you have confidence in who you are, and that's why your struggles come so often.*

**FERREIRA:** A lot of people don't listen to or see their surroundings. I can see the ugliness and the beauty in everything. Music is a way for me to get it out, and it's why I also love acting. Both are personal to me. I get to exorcise my demons without it affecting my life. There's a switch when I'm performing.

**DERN:** *Have you ever studied acting?*

**FERREIRA:** I started to see an acting coach when I got older.

**DERN:** *Stay away from that. I taught acting for a long time, and I'd never teach anyone younger*

*than 25 because of life experience. When I taught, I didn't teach how to act. I taught about investigating your own behavior.*

**FERREIRA:** I've wanted to act for a while, but I get scared I'll sign up for something and it will be a disaster. I'm the type of person you either love or you hate, because people don't know what box to put me in. I don't like feeling I have something to prove, but I do feel that way. I didn't want to make my new record about dwelling on the past. I just wanted to get better. When I get attached to something, it's all parts of me. It has to be 1,000 percent. In some ways that's why I had to take a break after my previous album. I think that intimidates people to a certain extent.

**DERN:** *Don't try to please anybody but yourself.*

**FERREIRA:** When I get angry, I get stuck. I've heard I'm "intense" my entire life. I can be exhausting to people, but I try to reason with them. Then finally, if that doesn't work, I have to walk away so I don't go off. Obviously, if I'm doing something wrong, I'll apologize. But I'm so tired of apologizing for stuff I shouldn't be apologizing for. Don't bullshit me. Don't pacify me. Why do I always feel like I have to earn respect from people? I don't need to feel I'm a burden by doing what I'm supposed to do.

**DERN:** *Do you have a feeling that the people surrounding you in your career dream the same dream for you? That's essential.*

**FERREIRA:** I've had a lot of people who pretended to but didn't. Even when I was 15 years old, going by myself to meetings with Sony or some other place, they'd be like, "Little girl, you don't know what you're talking about." But they kept wanting to get my music from me. There's this entire "shut up and be pretty" mentality.

**DERN:** *It seems you have a mechanism where there's never a moment when you're not retaining the shit that's going down around you.*

**FERREIRA:** Never. That's why I have so much in me. Sometimes it's too much. For example, last night I got only an hour

of sleep. I woke up feeling like I couldn't move. But I thought, I'm not doing this work for nothing. No matter the circumstances, I'm going to make the best of it, even if I have to complain and be miserable during the process. I don't really have regrets. A lot of people are scared to fail, but I've never been much of a winner. That's why I don't care about doing stuff that could open up an easier way for me to do the films I want to do. I don't like having people rely on me to win.

**DERN:** *I never go into a situation thinking I'm here to entertain people. I go in thinking I have to give a little bit up today and leave a piece of myself behind. It's a quest. And you're trying to do that, especially when you sing.*

**FERREIRA:** I started making music because I felt I might be understood if I did. I need to forge my own path, because no one else is going to do it for me. I get upset that I don't get help from the people who should be helping me, but it's the way I choose to live.

**DERN:** *No. "It's the way I live." Fuck "choose." You're going to live however you're going to live. You're a person doing the writing for yourself, and you're light-years ahead of guys your age. All my life I've been searching for the Big One in terms of love. Have you had that feeling yet, that you're on the edge of finding the Big One?*

**FERREIRA:** Yes and no. I didn't kiss a guy until I was 15 or 16, which was pretty unheard of. I was mature in so many other ways, but sexually I was such a prude. I've learned from people who are now in my past. Now I respect myself, and I didn't before. I actually had to learn to be completely alone, to be okay with being alone, sitting in silence and not feeling weird about it.

**DERN:** *You have a light and a sensitivity that are magical. Even with an hour of sleep, you don't look tired. You look very much like Charlize Theron, and she's never fucking tired. If you can find a way to balance your music with acting, we'll be entertained. You have so much to give. You have too much going on for us not to be entertained.*

**FERREIRA:** If you want to come along for the ride, go ahead. ■

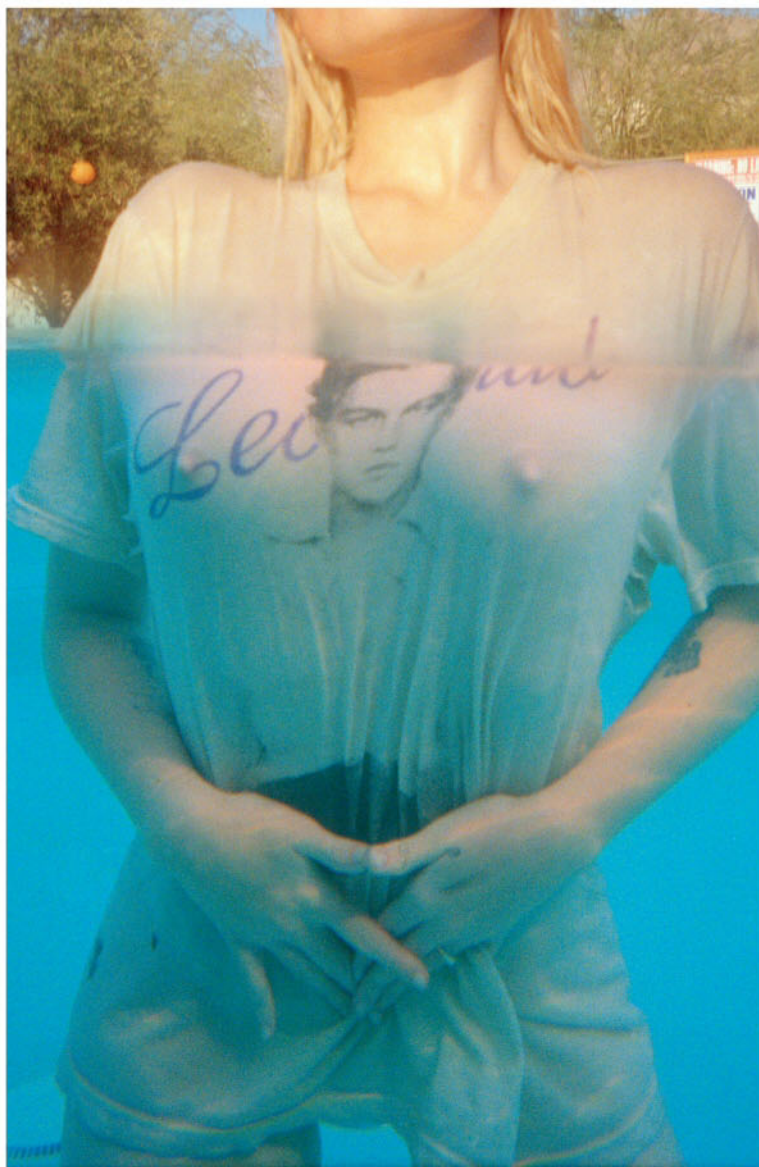












**I'M THE TYPE OF PERSON YOU EITHER LOVE OR YOU HATE. I DON'T LIKE FEELING I HAVE SOMETHING TO PROVE, BUT I DO FEEL THAT WAY.**









*Mom's a mess, Dad's a drunk and junior's having sex—a fractured family spins out of orbit and into dangerous trajectories*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER STRAIN





*It sounds like a damn joke and maybe it is one. The other day Richard had asked the doctor where the sting in his back was coming from. Doctor said, It's coming from your back. And he was kidding but also wasn't. Trick backs and necks are what your 40s are all about, Rich. And your 50s, 60s and 70s. ¶ Nothing he could do about it? ¶ Nein. It's natural wear and tear, especially with you former athletes. ¶ Former my ass! ¶ No, former your back. Take glucosamine and fish oil.*

Hotbaths. Stretch and exercise. Try a hard futon.

Take it easy by lying on something hard, says Dr. Common Sense. Great: So Richard's back pain isn't coming from his back, it's coming from his futon. A futon's not a bed. So now he takes hot baths. His fingers twiddling in soapless water make currents drift against his thighs, and the pain, which is what hockey turns into, steeps away. But he laughs because now he gets it: In an hour, the pain will be back, the joke will be back, the tricks will be back: in his back. And he feels *tricked*.

Richard has turned his cell phone off. So has the phone company. Fine—he needs to distract himself from distractions anyway. And fine—since anymore the only ones who call him are the guys from community hockey asking to borrow his goalie pads. Or else Leigh, the chick he's been seeing on and off (she's on; he's off). He met her through the personals and she's been talking marriage from date two. "Listen, Rick, we've both been through this hokeypokey. I don't even want a wedding. It's just good sense for two old hides to be together. You're that cowboy type who needs to be dragged into doing anything good for you. Well, if it makes it easier, put it this way: We get hitched, you get all the sex you want. You like sex, don't you?"

Women can talk like that now, say whatever they want and it's equality so long as it's at his expense. Leigh's a mouth. Usually *he's* the mouth. And he's never "Rick." At any rate, nobody's getting married.

He checks for cancer downstairs, and when

the bathwater goes luke he kicks out the plug by its chain. Feels his ribs through a damp cotton towel. Doctor's right, he needs exercise, something to get his unemployed heart in shape. A heart's not a bed. It needs to work too. He does like sex. Could take the dog for a run. But the last time Richard was outside three days ago, the air was so thick with cold that he coughed out his first few breaths and after 10 minutes he had an ice cream headache. When he staggered back inside he checked the temperature, 47 degrees. Anyway the dog's got hip dysplasia. A trick dog that can't learn new tricks.

The air shrinks the moisture off his body as he snaps on his briefs and walks to sit at his computer. Spam, spam, can't figure out how to cancel it, hey-o, there's the one:

Dear Mr. RICHARD F. DYERS,

As a world-class establishment with eight locations across the Pacific Northwest, Bob Hope's Laffateria receives many applications. We're sure you'd make a great addition to our first-rate LINECOOK , but given the current economic—

Richard doesn't know how to delete it so he switches off the power strip and walks to the kitchen, scratching under the elastic of his underwear. Teakettle weighs a thousand fucking pounds apparently. Somewhere under all the back issues of *Shootout* the cordless phone rings, can't find the cocksucker.

The landline makes him feel older than anything else. Down the hall the magnetic tape in the answering machine spins and a voice lays itself across it. How can a phone be nowhere? How the hell do you answer a phone that's nowhere? Suppose you don't. Suppose instead you watch the TV for one God-blessed reason to move.

•••

After four rings Suzanne hears her own dull duh voice on the other end speaking the outgoing voice-mail message, which is less than outgoing: "You've reached Richard and Timothy Dyers and Suzanne Ueda, the Dyerses.

Please leave a message. Okay, so now what do I—" *beep*.

He still hasn't changed it. No surprise that he'd enshrine her at her stupidest. "The Dyerses" never sounded right. "Harrisese" sounds right but "Williamsese" doesn't. Huh. Dyerses Dyerses Dyerses—well, now she can't tell. In the message's background she hears the old stove's hood fan and the TV news from four years ago. Had she been cooking? She never cooked. Richard neither. She lags after the machine's beep, and trying to make her pause sound deliberate, or at least not deranged, she painfully extrudes her words. "It's Suzanne. It's about Tim. If you still care about your son, you'll call me back. Same number. This is important. B—" she says, halting herself.

In the bathroom, she thinks about the virtue of self-sufficiency but then cries anyway,

BY **TONY  
TULATHIMUTTE**





touching her eyes with the corner of a towel, lightly so they won't turn pink. She imagines a smarter self, standing behind her, arms crossed—*Real independent*, this figment says, *very Woman Having It All*. After a few *cri-du-chat* breaths, she blows into a folded square of toilet paper and dimly recovers. In the mirror she anguishes over mouth lines that no longer vanish with the relaxation of her face, the thought-crease between her eyebrows, so much for the ostensible Asian fucking fountain of youth. Then there's her new haircut, which made the face that should've looked heart-shaped look fat.

In the hallway, her answering machine indicates a missed message. "Suze—it's Peter. We're going on-site Monday and we should dress for success. One of those start-ups that gets their first taste of VC money and thinks they're an enterprise. Ping me when you get this."

Peter is a managerial fast-tracker, a passionate hander-offer. His job consists mostly of not stuttering. While Suzanne sumo-wrestled the in-house IT and shit-kicked through log files and fought the screen-glow migraine, Peter would be kibitzing with his management

kindreds, trading restaurant recommendations and explaining that Memecare was pronounced *meh-meh-care* and not *meem-care* since the company was founded before memes were memes. Thank you ibuprofen, thank you coffee, thank you half an Ativan.

God and here she'd just made the stupidest phone call of her life to *avoid* thinking about work. It's the first time she's reached out to Richard sans lawyer in two years, and when he gets her message, he'll want to know what's up with Tim. Then what'll she say? Certainly not the truth: that nothing was wrong, that she was lonely. She would've called Colleen instead, if Colleen weren't on her extempore jaunt to Germany with her husband. Childless couples can do that. Colleen is Memecare's HR lady, a compact woman with a queen-size butt that looks implanted. Since the separation Suzanne has relied on Colleen as a social chaperone, and in her reintegration, Suzanne found herself asking questions like "Can I wear jeans there?" Suzanne waits on Friday nights for Colleen's summons to go and sip their enormous drinks. Suzanne sways solo to the music and practices flirting

with the bartender, who she hopes is gay, and it's time for more moronic questions: "Um, so what goes into a manhattan?"

Colleen's fun energy, let's be honest, makes Suzanne feel torpid. Next to her Suzanne is a hippo, an *unhippo*, hur-hur. But the alternative is to go out alone. Better to be inferior.

With Colleen in Europe, with nobody's childlessness to borrow, Suzanne is just a mediocre mother. Tim's in his room watching cartoons on TV and picking at an unplugged Stratocaster. His long flat body spans the armrests of his couch, and the bladelikey angles of his recently pubesced face startle Suzanne. None of her fat to soften them. When Suzanne enters he doesn't look up.

"Dessert?" Suzanne asks. "Ice cream? Wait, no, we're out. I could go get some."

Not even a grunt. She hates when Tim doesn't engage. Suzanne stares at the colorful mayhem he's staring at. TVs are so huge now. He's too old to watch cartoons but cartoons are so filthy now that he's also too young. It's okay as long as he's passing his classes, though it's ironic that Richard, community college dropout, takes the credit for that, since Suzanne was never home to help with Tim's homework. Did Tim miss his father? He'd never tell her, and she's the only one who needs to know. He probably tells his friends. She always forgets their names. She knows what they're thinking: Who's the weird awkward Asian lady raising a white kid a foot taller than her? Can she even speak English? And the answer was yes—she just *didn't*, sometimes. She hates Tim's friends and is polite to them.

But Suzanne adores his girlfriend Cristina. Elegant feminine manners, which must be cultural. Suzanne tries not to over-trill her Latin name, though weren't you supposed to?

"How's Cristina?"

"Fine."

Tim never asks for money, which is either worrisome or not, and he bikes himself around. He doesn't smoke anything, although she supposes it wouldn't be terrible if he did (thought the Cool Mom). She's never had to discipline Tim, and probably couldn't. If something *were* wrong with him, she'd have told Richard the truth. She's got to stop worrying. Teenagers need privacy, and Cool Moms know that privacy means total estrangement.

She leaves the den feeling like she needs to talk with him before he leaves for college in three years. But about what? If only they'd





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FICTION

had anything in common. If Tim had been a girl, or Asian. That is, what if Suzanne had gotten her way re: adoption? But it wasn't good to consider what you were owed, and also? What *awful* things to think.

Lately dark blurs have appeared in Suzanne's vision. Flushing her eyes doesn't help and rubbing makes it worse, but she does both. Something may be wrong with her brain and not just her personality. Every time she tries not thinking *tumor*, she thinks it. Walking to the kitchen for a glass of water, which she'll either drink or pour on her eyeball, she hears the phone ring and panics.

Before it finishes ringing, her body decides to seize her purse and keys off the kitchen table. "Tim, I'm going out for ice cream. Don't stay up late."

"You're not my real dad!" he shouts back. A joke.

• • •

Then Mom whams the door shut in the exact way she always says not to wham it. Now she's hauling across the lawn to the car instead of taking the walkway, another of her own no-no's. Not even gonna answer the fucking phone, Mom? Tim gets up groaning and answers the hall phone. Mom, a.k.a. Rules RoboCop, a.k.a. Politeness Nazi, Heil Mom, doesn't like when he answers with "hey" or "hi" or "sup," but there's no logical reason not to. He says, "Sup."

It's Cristina. For whatever reason she won't text and never calls his cell. She calls specifically so Mom knows she's calling, so everything's proper. He throws his guitar over and taps up the phone volume. "How was your day?"

Her end is quiet. He's not even sure if she's still on the phone but he doesn't want to say "Are you there?"

"Everything's okay," she says.

"What...wasn't supposed to be okay?" For some reason he's talking all slow and weird like he has to build each word from mud and spit before saying it.

"Something could've gone wrong."

"Should I come over?"

"No. My parents are here."

It was crazy last night how easy it was. Cristina's parents were at a party so Tim went over and all the lights were out except Cristina's window. He had been worried about having to do something special, but she opened the door and just was kissing him right there,

and Tim did it back and pushed the door shut. That was it. When she took her clothes off it was weird. Like it wasn't normal even though it was fine. Aaahhh it was hard to explain. He got on her and felt hot on his chest and thighs, but he didn't actually get very, like, sprung. Everything looked great, her tits looked awesome, like the three times he saw them before, but they didn't make him feel like porn tits made him feel, like even non-great blurry ones. And he definitely wasn't expecting her pussy to look that way, messy and really dark, or feel that way, like different parts of the inside of his own mouth. But it was fine, he totally still did it, and for like a long time too. It just didn't feel as good as he thought, not even when he shot his load. Which literally made no sense. And her face the whole time was blank like, wuh. He left after, not saying anything. Easy.

Tim paces around the den, into the kitchen, as far as the phone cord can stretch. It's so stupid that they're paying for a phone *with a cord*, like, for real? Especially since he and his mom have smartphones, and double especially since Mom doesn't even talk on the phone because she has no friends. *He's* not her friend. In fact, if he didn't feel so bad for her sometimes he would think she was a cunt pretty much.

"I told my parents we did it," Cristina says.

## **"YOU TOLD YOUR PARENTS WE HAD SEX? WHY THE FUCK DID YOU TELL THEM THAT?"**

"Your *parents*? You told them we had *sex*?" She doesn't sound sorry, even a bit. "I don't lie."

Tim's hands feel staticky. "But *not telling's* not *lying*."

"I never said it was going to be a secret."

He knows that Cristina's family has customs and shit because they're not American. They're Mexican, so Jesus makes her all serious, and maybe her dark hair and really straight posture is that sort of thing too. She can change her accent and when it's heavy she sounds better. Her weird rules, where she always needs to do some hypothetical right thing, fuck him completely the fuck up.

"But they didn't *ask* you, did they? They didn't *know*."

"Tim, relax. They're angry, but it's okay. They trust me. And this is *why* they trust me. The one thing is they want to have me examined."

"What? For what?"

"Because we didn't use protection."

"Why the fuck did you tell them that? That's fucked-up!"

"Do you have a problem?" Cristina pronounces it *pro-blem* instead of the right way, *praw-blum*. "I need an examination and to go to confession, but that's all, there's no punishment. So what is the matter?"

"I don't know," he barely says.

"This was a bad idea," says Cristina. "We need to talk later—no, *later*, Tim."

The house is quiet and he slugs over to his room and drops into bed. It made no sense why you couldn't just sleep whenever. After Dad was fired they'd stay up late together and watch those shows that were only reruns anymore. That's when his sleep started getting fucked-up, like somehow whatever was making Dad drink was making it hard to sleep.

After an hour awake in bed Tim kicks his sheets off and goes to the bathroom to look into the mirror at a goblin basically. Like, yeah, he's overall better off with Mom, moneywise, but he wishes he could get on a

plane to Dad. All that has to happen is: Dad gets a job, Mom decides to be less of a useless shred of cunt lint. She loved him before. Why didn't it get easier the longer you did it? Even if he told them what to do, they wouldn't be logical enough to do it.

The hallway phone rings but Tim ignores it. They were so afraid of change they still used landline phones, but *divorce* is okay somehow? The bathroom light is going through his head like a spaceship and he flicks it off. He fucked Cristina. He smashed the V. So what's the problem. Why does he care about Cristina's parents or some whatever examination. The phone's last ring gets cut off by the





FICTION

answering machine, and Tim sits on the toilet and boo-hoos like just a complete wiener.

...

Suzanne gets to the bar and it's both loud and mostly empty, with drunk people drinking in private spaces. A girl and a man at the end of the bar are making out, nearly all-the-way out, under a green Heineken neon sign. The only time she'd been here was when Colleen was in low spirits, when her husband canceled their Vegas trip because it would look

## A GIN AND TONIC APPEARS, TASTES LIKE ANTIFREEZE, AND DOWN IT GOES, HOO.

bad if he took time off during his company's re-org. Colleen had shanghaied some younger guys to play cards, draining and flipping every shot glass they handed her. She sucked on her hair and mushily muttered to Suzanne about needing some fresh dick. Suzanne left her at the bar, pretending that she'd promised to watch a movie with Tim.

And what happened the next morning was so predictable that Suzanne was amazed it even happened—a force field of hangover oozing from the phone receiver as Colleen sobbed, “Oh shit oh shit I am *fuck*ed beyond *life*! I don't know what the *fuck*... He was such a creep, really—oh, I cheated with such a creep—why did you bail on me?” Um, because you've done this twice before? is what Suzanne should have said. Colleen drags Suzanne out; Colleen implodes; Suzanne has to mop up Colleen's sad yellow puddles of guilt.

No more begging permission. Suzanne is here tonight by herself because she wants to and can be and in life there are no real rules. Suzanne is free, and with her freedom and \$5 she orders a white Russian and mezes out into the mirror behind the bar, then realizes she's dressed in work khakis and a pink button-down. Undeodorized too. A zit of dried pesto on her khaki leg from lunch. And these ugly clothes weren't even covering a good body; no sir, it was schlump-upon-schlump. She crosses her legs over the stain and nods at the bartender when he sets her rocks glass on the bar.

Midway through drink two, someone calls

her name. She pivots on her stool and sees a man standing so close to her that she can't see his entire face. “What's the news, Suze?”

There he is, cozy old Peter, boss man, old slackass intestinal parasite Pete Farber. He's flopping his hands around in his pockets, smiling like there's a rake sideways in his mouth. “What's a working gal doing here on a school night?”

“This working gal is getting ready for a week of good old-fashioned data recovery,”

Suzanne says dully, refusing to amend his mixed metaphor.

“Super,” he says.

“Super duper.”

Perching next to Suzanne, Peter delivers entirely without segue his philosophy of success, which seems to involve squash at the YMCA, deep tissue massage and a cross-platform internet-blocking app. He gestures demonstratively, like he's launching a product. Over his shoulder Suzanne sees someone try repeatedly to feed a limp dollar into the jukebox, which at last plays “Come As You Are.”

When Richard used to take her out—when he bothered to go out, before he took to making 10-pin arrangements of empties on the kitchen counter—he would start conversations with waiters, passersby, other couples, anyone in range of his yap. Whereas Suzanne was so cowed by chitchat, by the pressure of knowing his friends expected her to be this trembling Asian concubine, that she came off as slow and diffident even though she'd kicked ass in college and she made the money. But nobody at a bar cared if what you said was astute or informed or even true. People wanted to laugh. So she needed a few seconds to say nonstupid things; Richard just said them, and the wide way that he talked, that nonstick coating of Georgia around his vowels, exonerated everything. She became Richard's duller half, to whom you spoke only out of the goodwill of proximity, with no friends of her own. She should have foreseen that as an adult in the job world, his charm would

fail. See where the love of charm got her.

“—that's where I say *nuh-uh*, 13.5 percent is just a *little* bit ridiculous. Three things about me: I hate wasting time, money and food. It's the rule of minimums. Speaking of which, I'll be going on a retreat this February, a safari of the Sierras thing. Boys only, unfortunately, though sometime you'll have to meet my buddies—ridiculous guys. But they're great. Let me get you another.”

Peter is still close enough that she sees the hatch mark of hairs in his chin cleft that his razor missed. But his aftershave is nice—or not actually nice, it's just nice to smell aftershave. Or whatever men use to smell like something other than drunk. A gin and tonic appears, tastes like antifreeze, and down it goes, hoo. Pete's voice has flattened into the background noise, and it's nicer than having to screen it out. Though the side of his hand just made some maybe probably not accidental frottage against her forearm. Oh—another one.

She looks up at Peter and he isn't Richard. But he's about the same height, median. Oh, isn't that good enough? Half of everything is below median. Can we not just have fun without ramifying? But she doesn't have a Suzanne of her own to bail her out. Well, but she's not trying to do herself any favors. And she'll get away with coming in late tomorrow.

From a bathroom stall Suzanne leaves a message: “Tim, it's Mommy. Listen, take care of yourself tonight. You're so mature, I never tell you this but you are so much more mature and capable than your father, and I'm very proud of you; you'll have no problem handling things tonight. Have some friends over. Have a beer, why not? I trust you. Love you, sweetie.”

...

Steam wiggles from the kettle spout. No one's answering. Richard's been drinking a lot of tea: gunpowder black, blooming flower, Lap-sang souchong, dirty greens with canister labels in foreign scrawl. The swallowing keeps his mouth busy, and he swishes with hoji-cha as he prepares the next pot. Richard hangs up and tries again, and when someone picks up, Richard asks for the manager. Man says, “This is him. How can I help you?”

“Hey there, brother, Richard Dyers. How's it going?”

“Can I help you with something?”





FICTION

"How's it going?"

"Fine."

"Great to hear, brother. Well, what my situation is right now, last week I put in an inquiry for a position at your eck-stabishment, which I've bought my shares of, I don't mind telling you. I was wondering if y'all'd got around to taking a look at my résumé yet." Richard pours hot water into a dirt-brown mug and dunks the steeper.

"I do remember a query, yes. Hang on one sec." The phone at the other end is placed down, and in the background is the mall's PA system. Man picks up again. "You were dismissed from your last job."

"Indeed. No bull from me."

"Can you give me some background on that?" the man says.

"That, I believe, I included on the application."

"Can you describe to me the way in which you were 'unfairly persecuted'?"

Richard makes himself smile. "A lot of shit was getting shoveled in that place. A lot of guys with agendas, plans hatching, little men in brown helmets—"

"Sir, can you give me the reason *they* gave you for your dismissal?"

Richard pops his knuckles just to rally up a go-getting feeling. "With regards to that, it may have been due to one episode of inebriation. But it was after game time, practically after hours and well, I know I don't have to explain this to you, fella, we've all been there."

"It also says here," the man adds, "that up until last year, you were a hockey referee."

"Yes sir, and believe me, that's referees. Drinking's part of the culture."

"I follow hockey. I don't recall anything like that."

"Local teams. Hawks versus Dragons."

"I've never heard of either," says the manager. "You mean Clement Regional Junior High Hawks?"

"This one cholo was disrupting the game. Chucked a hot dog on the ice. The way he was going on, who knows, hot dog coulda melted through, hurt some kids. I was right by him."

"And?"

"Frontier justice, I confess."

"Okay, Mr. Dyers, we're getting a little off track. We don't have any positions open."

Richard feels a dizzying strike of anger. Words roll up his spine and out his mouth. "Bullshit, sailor! I saw that HELP WANTED sign yesterday."

And it's done.

It's bright in here. Sun coming up off the surface of the tea into a fat web of light wobbling on the ceiling. Richard looks at the phone like he's giving it three seconds to apologize, then chucks it across the kitchen, which is the den too. The phone strikes the wall, battery lid flying off, and hits the carpet softly; the dog jingles awake in his basket. Nine-volt battery dangling like a gouged eye.

He fills the kettle again at the faucet, but he's already full of tea, his gut so swollen another cup will throw his back out. But that doesn't mean he has to stop drinking—or for that matter that he has to drink tea. In the closet. Behind the skis. Paper bag. Orange discount sticker still on it. Adults with no problems kept booze in the house all the time. It was something you had just in case. For guests, people in shock, cuts, the common cold. Lots of uses besides *that* one. How long since? Not since Suzanne. And nowhere close to enough to, God forbid, enjoy.

It was only being married that made it a problem. Not just for Suzanne, but for everyone. But how do you convince anyone you're

clean, once their eyebrows go up? They didn't have to smell it on your breath either, just step one toenail over the line. Leave the bathroom with your shirt untucked and you're off the wagon so far as the Joneses are concerned. Any fun and you're fired. You can't drink—you're a father.

But what's a father who never sees his kid anymore? Maybe if there was that solid band of blood connecting him to his son. But there wasn't. His parenthood was repossessed. They took everything but what he didn't have: ex-hockey, ex-husband, ex-dad. Now Richard is squatting in the closet and he's not feeling like a father, not feeling anything except for dust, until his fingers brush the textured glass and label. Okay, slow it down, not right from the bottle. It goes into a Dixie cup and he toasts the dog and drinks, breathes it in, apples, caramel, moss, alcohol, reminds him of when everyone liked how he was, when he was like the Dean Martin of his own life. Cheers to Suzanne, to Tim. To Matty Dyers who took 12 shots and laid his genius ass down in a snowbank in 1993 and didn't get found until







FICTION

a plow hit him two days later with a solid pond of ice in his mouth. Here's to Dean, ain't that a kick in the head....

• • •

Suzanne wakes only a little later than usual, and her head feels fragmented, corrupted, unreadable. But no headache. She wasn't *that* drunk.

Negative evidence of Peter's body indents the pillow and the loose sheets beside her. Shit. She'd sworn not to feel guilty but now she's envenomed with it. Yes, it was stupid to feel guilty about cheating on your past, but that happened to be all she had, and from now on she knows that she will never be able to correctly feel the dignified hurt that she's relied upon, the sore satisfaction that she is lonely because she has no choice.

Peter's room is neat like her own, with a taupe carpet still bearing vacuum tracks and a miniature Zen garden on an oak desk. She gets up to kill, if necessary, for water. Lapping out of her hand from the bathroom faucet, she hears her phone buzz in her purse, so she returns to the bedroom and saves it.

"What's this about Tim?"

Richard's voice is a familiar depth of

monotone—drunk—and it arouses the familiar response—contempt. In pale yellow cotton panties and a camisole, Suzanne wants to cover herself before speaking. Richard asks again, "Tim."

"It wasn't anything serious. I made a mistake. I'm sorry for bothering you."

"Put him on."

"He's not here."

"Whuhthfuck. Where's he?"

The alcohol makes him sound pitifully redneck. She hears his misspellings. She never believed nor wanted to believe that he wasn't as intelligent as she was, but that accent has always sprung her prejudices. Or maybe not always, but between that and the drinking.

"Tim's at home," Suzanne says. "I thought he had a fever but he didn't."

"He's at home? Where are *you* at seven in the morning?"

Suzanne cups her forehead. "Work."

"Okay, what the hell is this?"

"Richard, I just wanted to talk."

"About what?"

"Just talk," Suzanne says. "It's, you know, for one moment I felt a little strange and I

made a mistake, and I'm sorry. I didn't mean to annoy you."

"You tell me my kid's in trouble and he's not? Yeah, I'd call that a mistake all right. Real piece of work. Calling me up to lie! I gotta—"

Suzanne pulls the phone away from her ear and covers the receiver. His voice vibrates in her palm. When it goes still, she moves the phone back.

"I can't do it," she says, talking more quietly than she needs to. "TV and internet, TV and internet, all day. He never talks to me. I don't know what's going on in his head. He hates me. And I think—something's wrong with my brain." Her lips warp to a shape of wretchedness. Her troubles sound as thin as the air she's speaking them into.

Richard breathes on the other end. "Tim can handle himself. I raised him that way. He doesn't need you. Leave the kid alone."

"Okay," says Suzanne. She is so grateful to him for not delivering the easy insult.

Peter enters the room with an actual silver tray bearing orange juice, toast and a French omelet garnished with dill. His grin collapses when he sees Suzanne on her phone. He places the tray quietly on the end table and sits on the opposite side of the bed, recomposing the flatware on the tray with effortful indifference.

"Listen, I've got to go. Sorry to call you at home," says Suzanne, in official tones.

"Wait," says Richard, "how is Tim? How is he really?"

"Yep, touch base later. Good-bye," says Suzanne, hanging up, and says to Peter, without thinking, "Sorry, that was my boss."

Peter regards her with amazement but says nothing. Her clothes are horrifyingly folded for her in neat squares on the desk chair, and she takes them, dresses in the bathroom and leaves her boss alone with his sexual breakfast.

• • •

Evening. The phone rings again, and Richard, warmed up with anger, makes for the nowhere location of the phone, when his back trumps him with its final trick—he goes down on the carpet, one arm back to grab the handle of the invisible switchblade in his lumbar and the other forward to break his fall. He curses when the voice mail plays. "You've reached Richard and Timothy Dyers and Suzanne Ueda, the Dyerses. Please leave a message. Okay, so now what do I—" *beep*. Exactly, Richard thinks, wincing and going prone. What do I *beep*.

The machine records a phone hanging up.







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FICTION

The pain is coming out of him in sweat, and the air is double warm because he's left the stove on in the kitchen. The water has boiled down. He will not try to turn it off. He would rather think about who's to blame. The way things turned out, people disappearing in every way possible. He'd been a good man and a good father: that only sounded like the first line of a eulogy. Try to see. Go back to when

girl, I promise that. Chinese, Japanese, Martian, whatever you want. What I'm saying, though, is if our very first child is going to be under my own personal supervision most of the day, let's do it right. Can a guy like me raise a lady—I don't know."

"Richard."

"But I can raise a boy up to a man. I know that."

"So men can only create in their own image?"

ing the house in daylight now is like whatever made things easy that night is gone.

No answer at the door. What the fuckity fuck? He crosses the lawn and looks into the living room window at nobody. She's the kind who'd get mad at him if he texted her with something serious, so he'll leave a note. He takes out a pen and paper from his book bag. What's even to say? I love you? How was your

## **SHE TAKES HER CLOTHES, DRESSES IN THE BATHROOM AND LEAVES HER BOSS ALONE WITH HIS SEXUAL BREAKFAST.**

things tilted from fine to awful, the instant where people liked him to when they didn't. These things start before they get started. He tries, and what comes to mind is Suzanne's raise, the one they bought the house on. Last step before a family. The hitch was that she couldn't afford to stop working, so no pregnancy and no maternity leave.

So it happened:

...

In the agency office, searching through the binder with the worn laminated pages on her lap, was where Suzanne came across the girl with wet dark eyes, an open-mouthed smile, a nose that Suzanne thought might grow to resemble her own. Malaysian. "That's her," she had said, circling her finger over the photograph but not touching it. "Richard, look at her."

Richard, standing behind Suzanne and peering over her shoulder, sucked in his bottom lip and nodded. "Can't argue she ain't pretty. Can't argue that."

"Let's ask about her."

"No reason to rush. Let's work everything out before we get in anybody's face. Talk it out first."

"Talk about what? Richard, I mean, she's beautiful."

"I'm just saying is all. If it's someone who's going to be at home every day with the child, likely as not it's going to be me, right?"

"We'll both be caring for her. Whoever's working."

"But in terms of actual hours spent. Ain't that the truth? What I'm saying is I'm just not sure a guy like me's really fit to raise a baby girl. Don't get me wrong now, girls are sunshine. One day we can have ourselves a

Whereas a woman—whereas women, for thousands, for *millennia*, raising male babies—"

Richard grasped Suzanne's shoulder. "Level with me here and let's not get political. It's got nothing to do with I'm a man and you're a woman. I'm saying we make choices that will work best for this baby. You see how I get on with Matty's boys? I'm Captain America to them."

Suzanne turned in her seat. "Of course they're going to be attached to you, obviously, you're their only—"

"Don't bring that up now. All I'm saying is that to me, boys are second nature. Would you want me raising a girl, tripping over my own feet, if I already said I'm not sure I can?"

She looked at the picture of the dark-eyed Jane, June, Juliette. "I don't know."

"We're taking our time here. Nothing's getting rushed. No need to get attached to anything. Spirit of compromise."

He picked up the boy binder. He looked at Suzanne, who was looking away from him, and he leaned forward and kissed her shoulder and up the back of her neck where the soft hairs were.

...

After a whole nother night of not sleeping but just looking at his eyelids, Tim sees that Mom must have left for work early, leaving him to bike his own ass to school. He's changed his mind: He feels bad for her *and* she's a cunt. At school Cristina is missing at pre-calc then lunch. So he ditches and pedals five miles across town and he's wearing all of his sweat by the time he gets to Cristina's. He leans his bike against the iron mailbox out front. See-

sex examination? Who even writes notes? Maybe it'd help if she knew he loved her, but you come off like you're lying if you say it like that, so he's got to prove it to her. He writes: *I was here to see you haha call me—tim.*

One story up, on a ledge outside her bedroom window, there's the planter of geraniums she waters in the morning. She'd see the note there. But there's no tree or anything to climb on. You can't throw a sheet of paper up that high. If he crumples it into a ball, she might think it's garbage. Next to the driveway there's a little flagstone path held together with crumbling mortar, and he gets down and pulls out a loose shard. Fastening the paper to the flat rock with a butterfly clip from his book bag, Tim stands close so he doesn't hit the window, and makes a layup. The rock taps down on the shingles, rolls and skips off the slant, and he has to bomb out of the way as it comes back down and shatters. Needs more arm. The next shot doinks short into the gutter, so he writes another note. *I came to see you please call me was your examination okay? I love you—tim.* He clips it to another rock and throws it up again and it goes, not as loud as he'd expect, through the fucking window. And it's not like he even decided to do this, you know, consciously, but he takes another rock and pitches it through the living room picture window and another through the sunroom window. Sprints for his bike. Coins and gum shake loose from his bag, and he takes off before it hits him just outside of town that he could have folded the note into a triangle and flicked it up if he wasn't born and raised an idiot. ■





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PLAYMATE

A large, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allie Silva". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Allie" and the last name "Silva" written in a similar style.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRIK PURIENNE

“I like to think my sunny disposition is the first thing people notice about me,” says Miss October **Allie Silva**, “but it’s probably in the running for second. The first, of course, is my hair—it’s its own entity.” The genetics responsible for those curly locks come from Allie’s Norwegian and African American heritage, which has become the subject of a few too many awkward icebreakers. “‘What are you?’ is the question I’m asked most often. I’ll act confused, as if I’m being asked if I’m an alien. I like to respond, ‘I’m a human. What about you?’ I prefer ‘What’s your ethnicity?’” To that, Allie will speak proudly about growing up in a mixed-race household in bucolic Connecticut with parents who revered education and encouraged her to finish college before pursuing modeling. “I had a balanced upbringing with parents who have a love and respect for each other that many people never find. I’m incredibly fortunate to witness such love, and it’s a perfect example of how absurd hatred and racism are, especially in these crazy and heartbreaking times,” she says. “I believe good is out there.”

































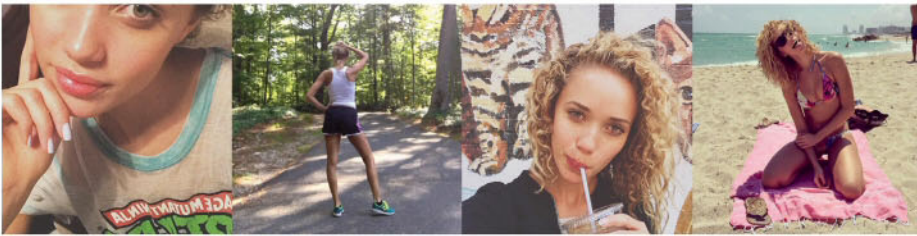








## ALLIE SILVA



**AGE:** 27 **BIRTHPLACE:** Willimantic, Connecticut **CURRENT CITY:** Los Angeles, California

### TRAVELOGUES

To succeed in modeling, you have to be smart and independent. At the drop of a hat you can be sent to a new city with a public transit system or an airport that's totally unfamiliar to you. You have to be able to take care of yourself and navigate foreign places. I've been to some of the most beautiful and romantic locations but had to explore—and hang out in gorgeous hotel rooms—all by myself.

### FAMILY TIES

Despite what my Instagram may look like, I'm actually a quiet and somewhat introverted person. I enjoy visiting my family in Connecticut and going to the grocery store with my mom. I like

watching *SportsCenter* with my dad, making pancakes with my nephew and fishing in the woods with my two older brothers. With my #GrandmaLife, maybe it's better that my social media accounts are a little misleading!

### MY POP CULTURE OBSESSIONS

Prince Eric from *The Little Mermaid* was my first "celebrity" crush. I can't stop singing Justin's Bieber's "Love Yourself"—"My mama don't like you, and she likes everyone." (Come on, you know the song.) I think *Harry Potter* is life. Those books altered how I think about the world, and you can usually catch me at home on Friday nights watching the movies for the thousandth time. And if I could

meet anyone who has ever lived, I would choose Marilyn Monroe. She's the original icon of glamour and the one who started it all.

### SPECIAL TALENTS

I have double-jointed elbows and thumbs—but I don't think those qualify as a talent, unless you want to see how fast I can hail a car while hitchhiking.

### SELF-IMPROVEMENTS

In terms of personal goals for the rest of the year, I'd like to go out of my way a bit more to help people, especially the downtrodden. Also, I need to work on having more patience. Speaking of, are we done with this *Data Sheet*?

@AllieSilva1 @ElusiveAllieKAT















# Technology will destroy democracy unless **THIS MAN STOPS IT**

*Alex Halderman has hacked electronic voting machines, circumvented government censorship software and dismantled a \$100 million NSA surveillance program. Thank God he's one of the good guys*

ILLUSTRATION BY **KAI & SUNNY**

"Let's take a survey around the room," says Jacob Appelbaum, a notorious hacktivist the National Security Agency is definitely monitoring, as we sit on the floor beneath a low-slung canopy illuminated by red strobe lighting. "Charles over here wrote basically every single base station for free cell-phone software in existence. Dorian is, well, just look at the mustache." It's a handlebar waxed at its ends into antennae. "That thing is a story in itself. He does a whole bunch of cryptic stuff in France. I just don't even know what to say about him. I don't want to get him in trouble." He and Dorian both cackle. Appelbaum continues. "This guy works for Laura Poitras on leaking the Snowden documents. BY **STEVE FRIESS** Her? She's a kickboxer, and she can murder you. Write a nice article. She's actually one of the world's leading lawyers on digital privacy. Nadia over there is one of the most badass cryptographers ever. Everybody around the table might look counterculture, but they're amazing people in their field in every way.

"And then," he says, finishing the next thought with a wordless, bemused nod toward Alex Halderman. At two A.M. in Hamburg, on the last night of one of the world's biggest hacker conventions, when everyone else is doing shots of fancy European spirits, Halderman is sipping tea and sitting cross-legged but ramrod straight in khakis and an immaculately pressed navy button-down. "And then there's Alex. He loves oxford shirts. That's his only sin."

That probably depends on whom you ask. A couple of days earlier, Halderman and computer scientist Nadia Heninger stood on a stage before more than a thousand of Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning's most ardent admirers at the Chaos Com-

puter Club's 32nd gathering to explain precisely how to defeat hacking capabilities that cost the NSA more than \$100 million to develop. It is a groundbreaking lecture, occasionally as stultifyingly technical as you'd expect from computer scientists like Halderman, of the University of Michigan, and Heninger, of the University of Pennsylvania. But after a long discussion of algorithms and core years and safe prime numbers and something known as the Diffie-Hellman key exchange, Halderman sums up the method of stumping the NSA: "It's not exactly free, but it's inexpensive. It costs a little money, but at least a large government adversary has to spend a lot of time targeting you individually—at least a year, perhaps—and they can't just have your stuff for free."

This, you might expect, makes Halderman largely unpopular within said "large government adversary." And indeed, the NSA, were it willing to talk about him, which it is not, is unlikely to be enamored of Halderman and his mission to render useless the most costly and sophisticated spying technology ever deployed by the United States or any other snooper with a budget for nine-figure toys. That sort of thing is why Appelbaum, a California native who lives in self-imposed exile in the Netherlands, calls Halderman "one of the top computer security researchers in the world" and his work "super fucking important and really good." (In May, Appelbaum resigned from the Tor Project amid accusations of sexual misconduct against several women at or associated with the digital-security organization. He denies the allegations.)

But Halderman is not just a hero in this world of cyberanarchists and online paranoiacs. His

expertise transcends partisanship. Approximately three weeks after the Hamburg convention, Halderman is running an all-day meeting in his Ann Arbor conference room with key figures from academia, Silicon Valley and the U.S. State Department. Their mission is to decide how to use a \$2 million grant—from the same "large government adversary" whose fanciest espionage toys he has just disemboweled—to develop a device that by the end of the decade could end the ability of foreign governments, including China, to block its citizens from any part of the internet. The contraption, nicknamed TapDance and capable of what is referred to as "decoy routing," is "the most promising of all the anti-censorship programs going on," says Steve Schultze, a program officer working on the State Department's mission to spread internet freedom. "It's the best thing we have."

Halderman, for his part, doesn't see why being a valued member of such discordant groups is surprising. He glides comfortably and almost annoyingly cheerfully between worlds, choosing to see the best intentions of everyone—even the NSA—in a culture otherwise marked by suspicion and distrust. "The world is a dangerous place, and there are people who really do want to do us harm if they have the opportunity," Halderman tells me, reciting a message his late grandfather, a CIA spy, used to tell him in defense of invasive actions by the U.S. government that the likes of Appelbaum and Snowden find irredeemable. "While I think that perspective is true, I think it's also true that the world is one in which living and making policy in perpetual fear of such potential harm also puts us all at risk. My goal is to use technology to make the world safer, more secure and more free."





It is, to him, as simple as that, but that clarity of purpose and good-natured earnestness are as rare as the frighteningly huge record of technological achievement Halderman, at 35, has already assembled. If all he ever did was figure out how to defeat NSA cyber-espionage and build a device to allow the most oppressed people on the planet to have open access to the internet, that might itself be a career. Yet Halderman's output from his perch as a tenured professor includes findings that have stopped governments around the world from using voting machines that can easily be gamed, alerting Homeland Security that full-body scanners in common use at airports can be effortlessly duped, developing a now widely used method of querying every IP address in the world in minutes, stopping major media companies from installing illicit software on home computers, and persuading China to abandon its efforts to require that all computer users load a piece of surveillance software by demonstrating how vulnerable that made every PC in the country to hack attack.

"It's an extraordinary level of productivity for an academic in any field, which is not to say there aren't some other brilliant, prolific, topically varied computer scientists out there," says David Robinson, a dorm neighbor of Halderman's at Princeton and now co-principal of a Washington, D.C.-based tech consultancy that advises a range of policy makers, including ones in the Obama administration. "This isn't normal. But then again, he's a major computer science talent who plays really well with others, and that isn't normal either."

It helps that Halderman is a peculiarly elegant man. This thought had occurred to me before, particularly in Hamburg when he tied his shoes from a standing position without bending his knees. (Try it; it's not easy.) It seems as effortless as his perfectly kept nails, the perpetual absence of even a hint of facial hair, his thin, Plastic Man-esque limbs with which he wraps himself in tight knots as though unable to control his balletic bearing, the simple wire-frame glasses, the puffy dishwater hair, the button-down shirts and khakis always impossibly wrinkle-free even after hours of sitting on grimy floors in hacker-counterculture dens.

When I ask Halderman about his very proper appearance and demeanor, he says, "Well, I'm a professor. I think I ought to play the part." Except plenty of other professors from impres-

sive universities are in Hamburg this week, and they're wearing geek-chic political T-shirts that show off their tattoos as they brag about their place on the no-fly list and how assiduously the NSA tracks their text messages. That Halderman believes he owes it to the world to look and act like the thing he actually is and loves being strikes me as brave and confident. And the fact that all these self-described ruffians love and admire him as he is lends them some credibility too.

After analyzing his unusual physical traits and social status, I realize that Halderman is the embodiment of his vision for technology and the solutions he seeks: simple, respectful, friendly, kind, clean, orderly, uncluttered, helpful, honest.

• • •

Early one steamy predawn morning in August 2010 in Hyderabad, India, a heavysset, ruddy-

## **IN LESS THAN 48 HOURS, HALDERMAN AND A TEAM OF GRAD STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO ALTER VOTES. NOBODY DETECTED THE ATTACKS.**

faceted security researcher named Hari Prasad was roused from his bed by a team of police officers, shoved into a car in front of his children and driven 14 hours to Mumbai. For the next week, Prasad was held without bail while refusing to reveal just how he had obtained one of the country's electronic voting machines. He was allowed to use his cell phone during the cross-country ride—he theorizes the government hoped he would call his sources—which is how he spoke to Halderman. "Alex," Prasad told the professor, who recorded the call and posted parts of it on YouTube, "I have been arrested."

A few months earlier, Halderman, Prasad and the Dutch hacktivist Rop Gonggrijp had used the electronic voting machine, or EVM, to show the world how easy it would be to steal an election by manipulating devices that Indian authorities had proclaimed variously as

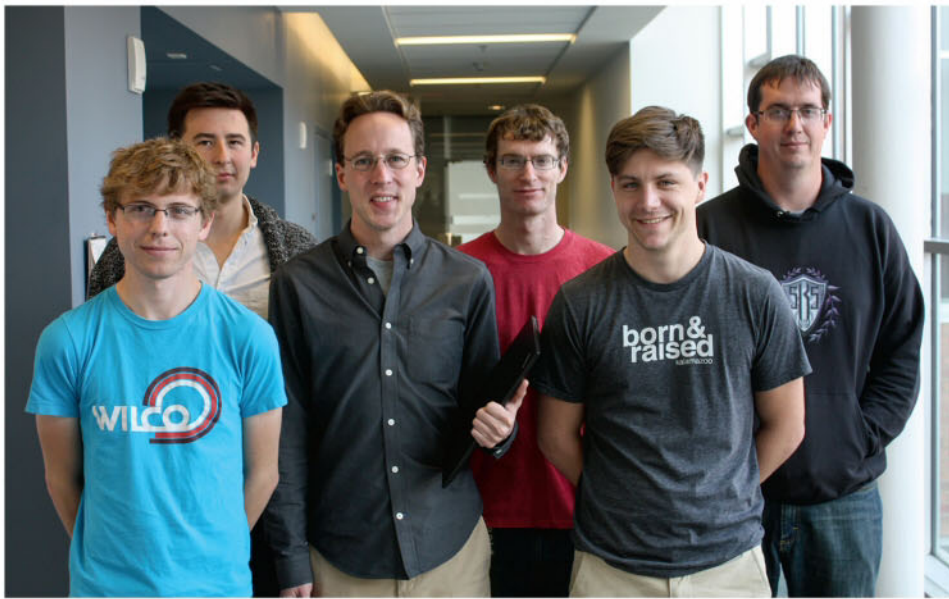
"perfect," "fully secure," "tamperproof" and "infallible." The EVMs had become a symbol of pride and modernity in the subcontinent; local headlines in 2009 trumpeted the fact that then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told a Filipino media outlet how "impressed" she was by what India was doing. Yet the Election Commission reportedly refused to release footage of a taped EVM security inspection that Prasad had conducted in September 2009. Instead, an inside source gave an EVM to Prasad just in time for Halderman and Gonggrijp's visit to Hyderabad in February 2010, and by that April they had posted a six-minute YouTube video demonstrating how vote totals could be changed using Bluetooth, a custom-made machine attachment dubbed Clippy and a phone app mockingly called Fraudster.

Prasad's detainment became a cause célèbre in the Indian media thanks largely to Halderman's hasty posting of both the news and audio clips of his conversations with Prasad on Freedom to Tinker, the blog he co-founded with his mentor, Princeton professor Ed Felten. "It was a moment when I just knew immediately it was going to be up to me to do something," Halderman recalls. "I was sure if people knew what was going on, if we had transparency as to what police were doing, whatever political machinery was making trouble for him was doing, that was the best hope to get him out of this terrible predicament."

He was right. Prasad's arrest drew more attention to the machines' flaws than the publication of the research did—and turned public opinion by portraying Indian elections officials as suspiciously heavy-handed against, of all people, scientists. The judge who granted Prasad's eventual bail wrote that "if the machine was possessed by the accused for demonstrating only that it could be tampered with, then the accused committed no offense. On the contrary, he has done a great service to the democracy."

Several months later, when Halderman and Gonggrijp returned to India to appear at an election-technology symposium, they were detained at the Delhi airport. Their passports sparked an angry, red-lettered warning: "Deny entry to India and notify originator." This time, it was Prasad at the receiving end of the SOS call, but he now had contacts in the government who could help. He told Halderman to do everything he could to delay being put back on the plane.





Left: Alex Halderman (third from left) and a team of University of Michigan grad students who research algorithms in encrypted communication. Right: As a grad student at Princeton in 2006, Halderman worked with professor Edward Felten (left) and fellow student Ariel Feldman (right) to expose the security flaws of a Diebold electronic voting machine.

By dawn, Halderman was cleared to enter, but the Indian episodes shook, exhilarated and shaped him. The notion that a democratic government would persecute researchers for pointing out something so threatening to the basic premise of society was infuriating—and showed just how dangerous and important his work could be. “I was always confident before that as long as we were correct about the technical matters, we would ultimately be successful in producing positive change,” he says. “But this interplay of politics and research results in technology was a much more complicated game than either the technology or the politics alone. The stakes just kept getting higher and higher as we went along.”

That is how I first became aware of Halderman: After Superstorm Sandy demolished the Eastern seaboard a few days before the 2012 general election, the state of New Jersey made the unprecedented decision to allow displaced residents to vote via e-mail. As a senior writer at Politico covering technology and politics, I thought this was batshit crazy. I’m no coder or hacker, and I even occasionally use an AOL address, but this idea seemed fraught with potential mischief. I expected the technology community to calm me down, to tell me it could work. Instead, the same whizzes who boasted that technology could accomplish anything were screaming to any journalist who would listen—and there were precious

few that week—that not only was e-mail voting a terrible idea, but internet voting would probably never be possible. (It’s not clear whether the New Jersey election results were counted properly. Some local races that turned on a few votes could have been swayed, but no losers filed complaints or lawsuits. Unsurprisingly, Governor Chris Christie’s administration insists it was a good solution.)

The leader of this alarmist contingent was Halderman. I presented him with the standard line I’d been hearing: If we can bank online, isn’t it inevitable that one day we’ll be able to vote that way too? “No, I don’t think it’s inevitable,” he replied. “I think we’re having an evolving conversation about that. On the one hand, people look at the progress of technology and see this as something that makes sense. It would be great to have. But on the other hand, we look at how close margins of elections are; we hear every week in the paper about some new cyberattack. I think there are countervailing forces. Whether security progresses in a way that makes online voting safe and private as well as convenient for people is an open question. What I think is inevitable is, if we do online voting on a large scale with the kind of technology we have today, there will be an attack that will disrupt a large-scale election. That might be inevitable.”

Halderman got his first taste of the election-technology stakes domestically. As a

graduate student at Princeton under Felten—who is now the White House deputy chief technology officer—Halderman began to focus on whether the most widely used electronic voting machines in America were vulnerable. After Florida’s 2000 election debacle showed that the nation’s leadership could hang by tiny bits of paper known as chads, Congress approved more than \$3 billion in assistance to help states modernize elections and voting practices. The result was the purchase of thousands of machines, most notably from a company called Diebold, that were deployed with no rigorous external security checks. Felten’s team was eager to examine an actual machine, and one day in 2006 an insider offered to get them one.

Halderman, then 25, was sent to pick up the contraband device, and in an alley behind a New York City hotel, a man in a trench coat slipped it to him. Halderman, Felten and another graduate student then spent weeks—in a room not on the blueprints of the building in which it was housed—attempting several hacks. In September 2006, the team posted a YouTube video that showed how the machines could be hijacked. “We will now show how to steal votes in a simulated election,” Halderman narrates evenly before unspooling a mock election in which Benedict Arnold beats George Washington for the presidency despite the voters’ clear choice of the American Cincinnatus. Further demonstrating how akin to





ordinary personal computers voting machines were, Halderman and a grad student later repurposed one made by a different company as a *Pac-Man* device. It is still available for play in the lobby of Felten's Princeton building.

Diebold blasted the 2006 study and insisted the Princeton trio had used technology that had since been upgraded. Yet by the following summer, after an intensive security review, California decertified its Diebold machines. As the then secretary of state explained, they were "too flawed to be widely used."

The apotheosis of the Halderman approach came in the fall of 2010 when Washington, D.C. was preparing to deploy the nation's first internet voting system for municipal primaries. The city invited the public to try out the system in a mock election, which Halderman saw as "a fantastic opportunity to test out attacks in a live system but not an actual election." In less than 48 hours, he and a team of his University of Michigan grad students were able to alter votes. Nobody in the city government detected the attacks until trial voters complained about the weird music playing on the THANK YOU FOR VOTING page. The students had set the system to play the Michigan fight song.

D.C. officials promptly canceled the online system and never returned to it, but Halderman's office at UM has one delicious memento of that endeavor. In addition to infiltrating the voting system, his team was also able to hack into the security cameras observing the servers. Taped to one of Halderman's bookcases is a screen shot showing a D.C. election worker, unaware he is being observed, picking his nose.

...

Alex Halderman could easily have been a child prodigy, and the fact that he wasn't may explain something important about his peripatetic interests. Like many geniuses, he was taking apart and reassembling household electronics—the toaster, the VCR, the computer—at a young age and showed an instinctive fascination with and aptitude for devices. His father, a corporate lawyer, and his mother, a housewife and avid birder, indulged these efforts at their home in bucolic Bucks County, Pennsylvania but never pushed him to move faster through school or to abbreviate his childhood as many parents of gifted kids do. Instead, they took Halderman and his younger sister, now a mixed-media artist, for hikes on a 50-acre expanse of meadow, streams and

woods or on frequent excursions to New York, about 80 miles away, to see opera.

Halderman emerged from his childhood with a broad range of interests not often seen in technologists. He regularly opens speaking engagements by showing portraits painted by his great-grandfather Maksimilijan "Maxo" Vanka, a prominent Croatian-born artist. Halderman never met Vanka, whose oblong face and slender, aquiline nose can be seen in his own features, but Halderman traces his philosophy to Vanka's efforts to fight fascism, war and inequality through his work. "The one thing my great-grandfather was said to say all the time was to look, to look at the world, to look at what you see and think about it, and that's what I try to do as well," Halderman says. "This is at the core of computer security."

Halderman's greatest influence was Felten, whose own varied interests showed Halder-

## **“IT’S NOT ONLY THAT DEMOCRACY CAN BE CIRCUMVENTED BUT THAT TECHNOLOGY, THE THING HE LOVES, COULD TURN OUT TO BE THE AGENT.”**

man and his classmates how broad their scientific inquiry could be. (Felten did not reply to several requests for an interview and told Halderman he wasn't comfortable talking to the press given his role at the White House.) It wasn't long after Halderman began under Felten's aegis that he started to make trouble. In his first semester as a grad student, Halderman figured out how the latest coding on Sony BMG's music CDs worked to prevent piracy, the first of his many moments of inspiration and massive publicity. In a paper he and Felten later published, Halderman explains that the discs, without the user's permission, implanted a program that blocked the CD drive from communicating with the CD-burning software. This could be defeated by disabling Windows' autorun feature, and the easiest way to do that was to hold down the shift key while loading the CD.

The result was heady stuff—the music industry felt betrayed by the security company, whose slogan, "light years beyond encryption," was instantly comical. Halderman and Felten were threatened with lawsuits, and the internet lit up with mockery that the music business had an antipiracy system so easy to defeat. After witnessing how his research generated tangible results in the real world, Halderman's interests moved toward other questions he believed had human impact. The topics he chose are, he says, "the part of computer science that most bridges from technology to people. It's all about the actions, the capabilities, the motivations, the intentions of people, whether it's the users or the people who build systems. It's mediated by technology, but it's really more about the human beings who experience that technology."

David Robinson, who witnessed Halderman's coming-of-age as a technologist, sees something more profound—a sense that it is the duty of ethical computer scientists to guard against technology's darker potential. "The word that is at the center of Alex's philosophy is *power* and how it's shared," Robinson says. "The idea of a voting system that allows someone to steal an election from the public—that's a horrifying possibility. It's not only that democracy can be circumvented but that technology, computers, the things he loves and works on, could turn out to be the agent for that kind of disaster."

...

One day in 2011, Halderman stood at the whiteboard in a UM lecture hall, fielding questions from freshman engineering students. Someone asked about an approach to circumventing censorship, and Halderman was in the process of explaining its flaws when an idea popped into his head. The class, he says, didn't notice the few seconds that he stopped and stared, but at that moment the groundbreaking concept of decoy routing—which the State Department's Schultze says could be a "generational jump forward" in efforts to defeat state-sponsored censorship—coalesced in his brain.

It's still to some extent just a concept, but no less than U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power believes it is so revolutionary that she brought Halderman to New York to describe it at the Internet Freedom Technology Showcase held alongside the U.N. General Assembly last September. Simply put, Halderman's team hopes to develop a small box



that would attach to the world's most heavily trafficked internet infrastructure, the backbone servers that virtually no web data can avoid passing through. Computer users would employ software able to detect when governments such as China attempt to block online requests, and the software would reroute the request through the decoy router so it would appear innocuous to government censors. To circumvent a decoy router, the censoring country would have to basically shut down most, if not all, of the internet—an untenable option that would severely damage the country's economy.

Although Halderman calls the instance of clarity that led him to this notion a “eureka moment,” it's not quite as magical as it sounds. “It's not something that happens in isolation,” he says. “But when it happens, when the pieces snap together, it's not a systematic deduction. You set up for it and then—*aha!* When you're working on hard problems, it's not often that you get beautiful solutions.”

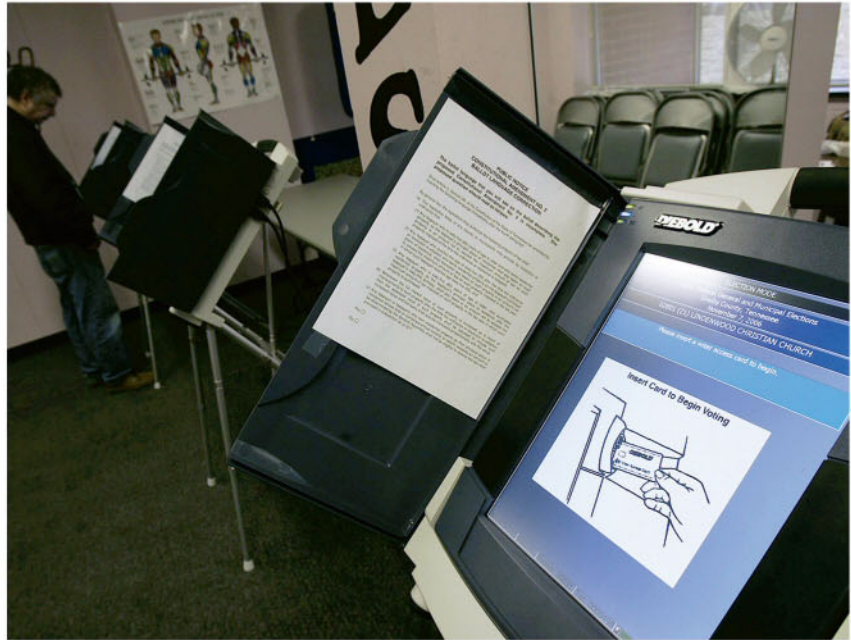
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Hours before Halderman and Heninger are to give their address on the NSA in Hamburg, I watch them prepare in the Airbnb they've rented for the week. They've been not just long-time colleagues but in an on-and-off relationship for years, and her cryptography skills were critical in answering one of the key questions to emerge from the Snowden documents: How had the NSA managed to break so much encryption that the cryptography world had believed to be virtually unbreakable?

Other than the fact that they're getting ready for a lecture, they behave the way young geeks in love do when they don't see one another often—stretched out side-by-side on a couch with shoulders and legs touching, faces glowing from their respective laptops, occasionally draping an arm or a foot on the other casually. She's a small, dead-serious woman with a crown of braids and an aversion to being watched by a journalist, and we never speak on the record for an interview about Halderman.

She's also a bit more hardcore and less sunny than Halderman, having been subpoenaed by a Virginia grand jury in 2011 to testify about thousands of diplomatic cables leaked by Chelsea Manning. While both clearly believe Snowden's revelations about the U.S. government's capabilities and reach are critically important and a net positive for the world, Heninger has been far more outspoken—a fact reflected in a particular debate they have while prepping for their talk.

“We should emphasize that if the NSA can do this stuff, other people probably can too,” he mutters to her. “Not all of them are on our side.”



A YouTube video posted in 2006 features Halderman and a team of researchers demonstrating how an electronic voting machine could be hacked by having Benedict Arnold beat George Washington in a mock election. A similar machine was later reprogrammed to play *Pac-Man*.

“We're currently in Germany,” she answers tartly, “so it's unclear if the NSA is on the side of the people of Germany.”

“That's right,” he says. “But there's no reason to rush to be overly judgmental.”

“From the perspective of the people here, the NSA is an adversary,” she says.

This effort to remain even-keeled may be Halderman's defining trait, the superpower that grants him access to so many diverse worlds. He tries to be respectful of the NSA—he has former students working there and has invited agents to address his classes—but, as Robinson says, “if you were able to interview people in Fort Meade, when you mention Alex's name, this research is the primary thing they're going to be thinking about. The evidence is pretty strong that they spent many, many, many millions of dollars building equipment and potentially specialized chips just to do this one thing that now, because Alex has pointed out this thing is possible, is just not going to work anymore, because people are not going to use that cipher. That will hurt at some level.”

Halderman is nonplussed. The NSA should expect “natural opposition,” he says. “I would hope from their point of view this is a loss but not a threat. On the defensive side, that's a gain, because it's not necessarily just the U.S.

intelligence agencies that can do this, and the U.S. intelligence agencies aren't necessarily on your side if you're, say, a European or any other non-American; then it's not your government. In terms of the security of the internet and of humanity, we're talking about a gain. I think it's a tactical loss for the NSA, but it's a long-term gain for our security of the internet.”

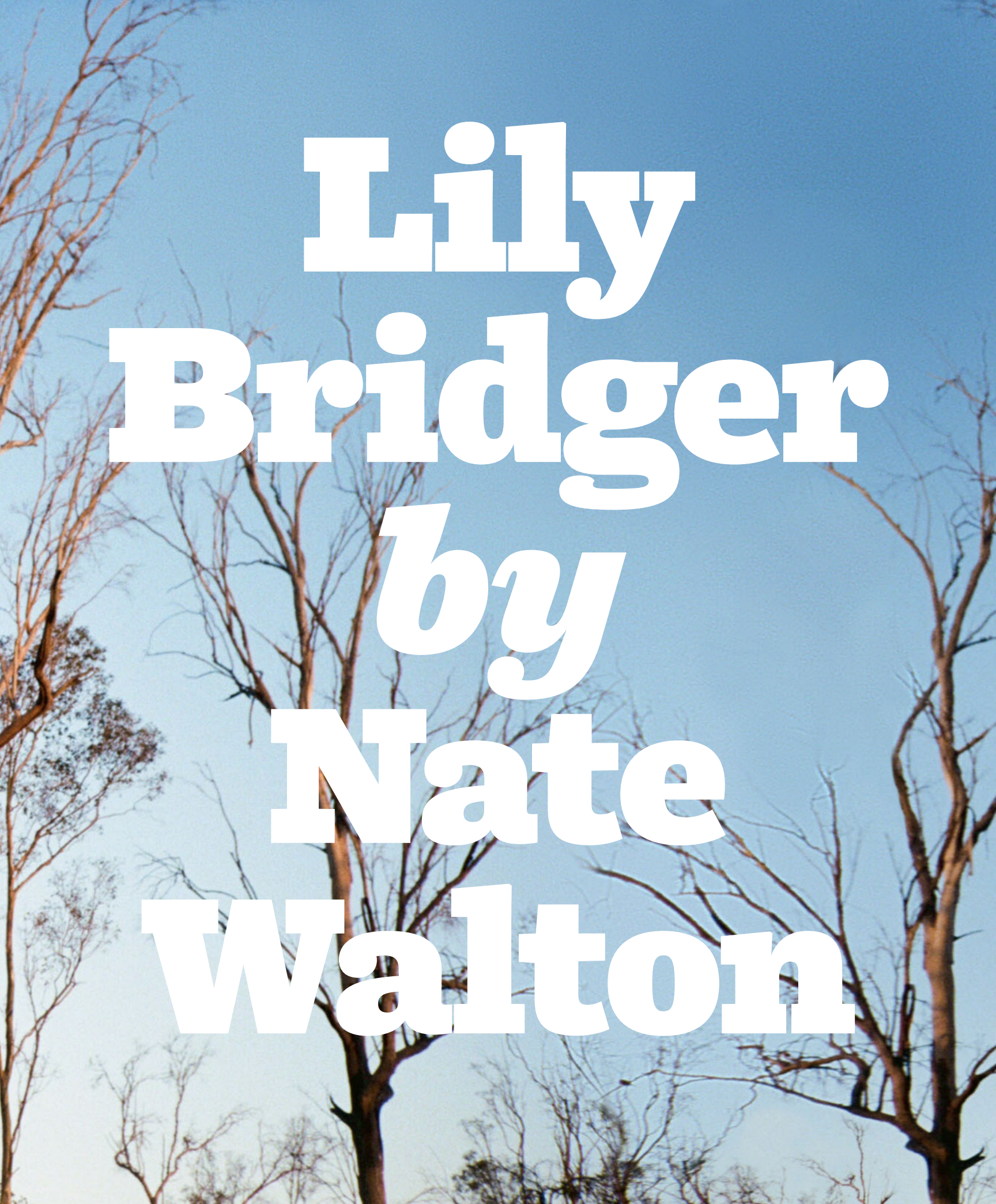
Halderman's reaction to another presentation in Hamburg, this time from his old friend Rop Gonggrijp, is illustrative. One graphic Gonggrijp displays indicates that in coming years the world will devolve from one that embraces “liberty, democracy and civilization” to one with none of those attributes. It's a variation on a theme that not just Gonggrijp but many others present in various forms over the course of the week.

As Appelbaum and others listen, Halderman offers his counterintuitive: “I have some more inherent optimism. I just don't get the sense that society is about to fall. Society doesn't fall, because people solve the big problems and because people learn what it takes to fix them. So if the problem is surveillance, then, yeah, you need technological changes as well as legal and political changes to make sure that surveillance does not devolve into an Orwellian dystopia. But I don't have quite as pessimistic a sense of the future of the world as these guys do.” ■









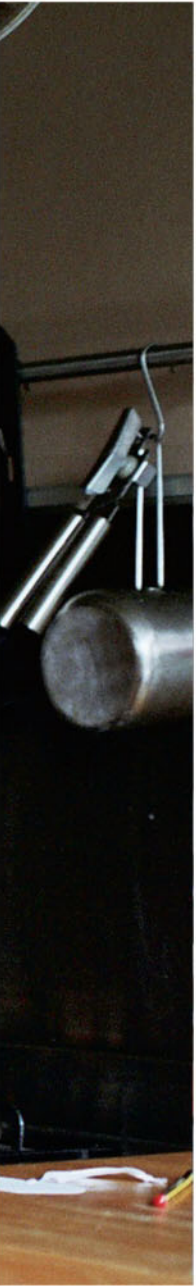
**Lily  
Bridger**  
*by*  
**Nate  
Walton**



*"I love to wonder what makes people tick. Alongside my love of language, it's something that fuels my excitement when reading and writing," says Lily Bridger, who skyrocketed to world-wide recognition last year after she was scouted on a London street for an international Adidas campaign. Her recent travels pair well with her passion for literature, including Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Fowles's The Magus, which, she says, "has encouraged me to investigate early Greek philosophy and to consider some of the fundamental questions posed by thinkers."*











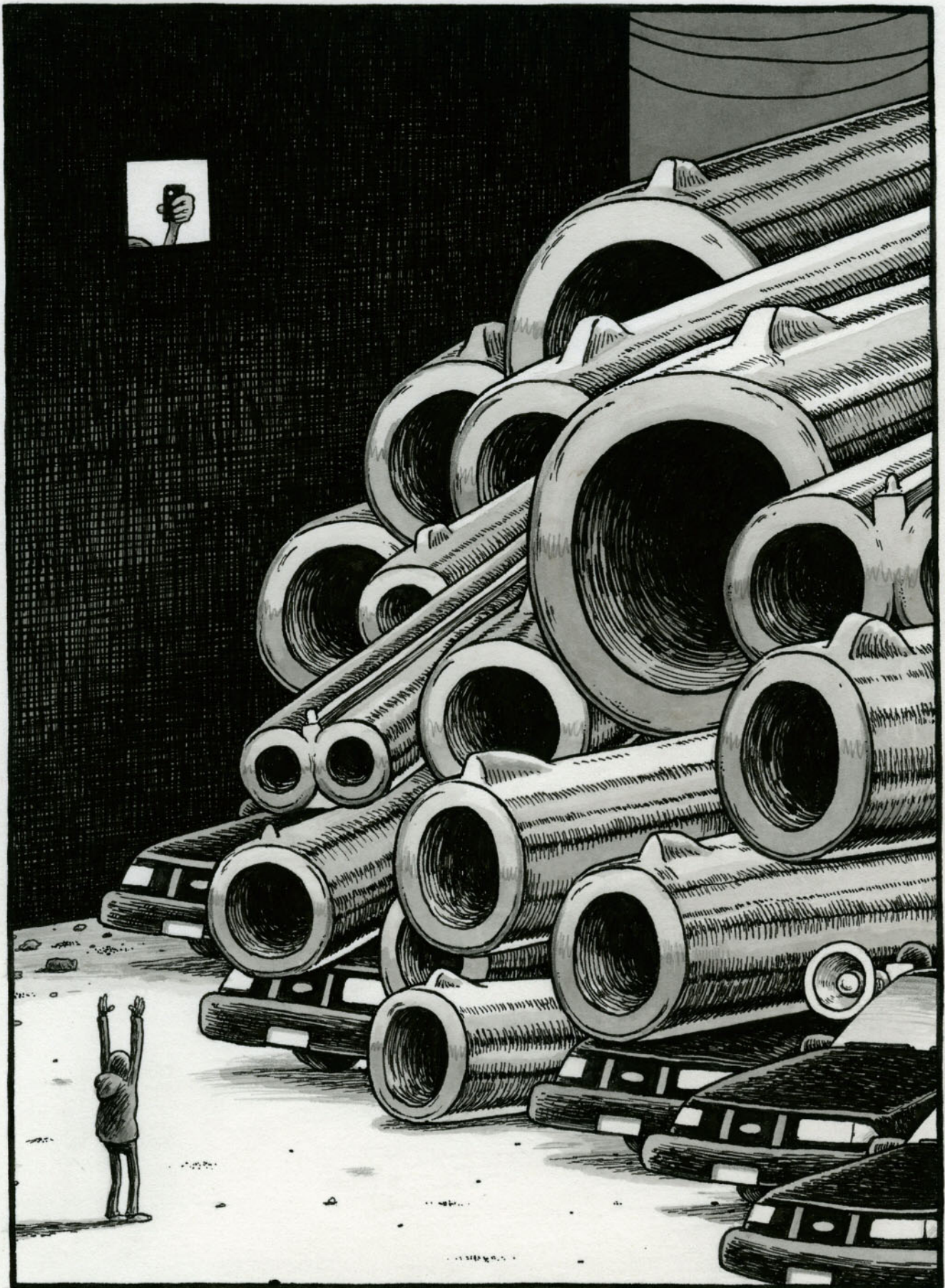












TRAVIS MILLARD





ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

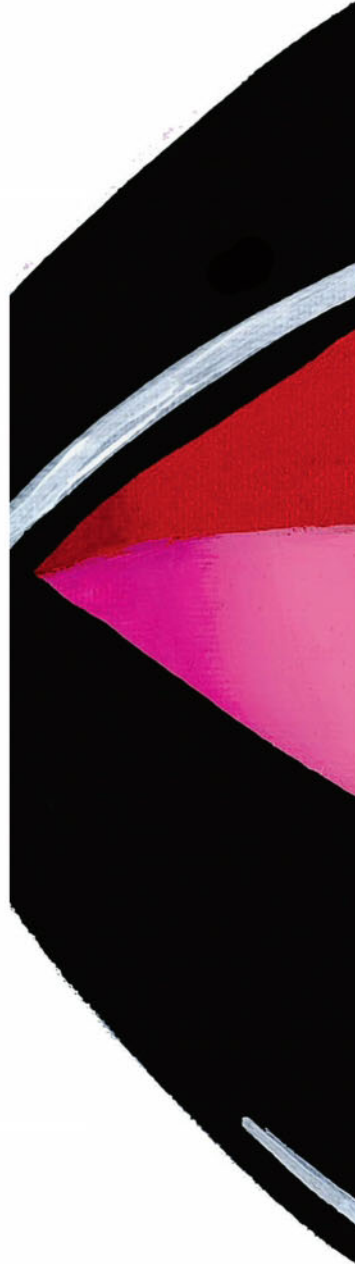
# CHLOÉ KOVSKA

*I've had a crush on Chloé Kovska's work since I first spotted it on Instagram a few years ago. That delightful riot of bubble butts, red devils and Playboy Rabbit Heads nestled deep into my brain, where my inner child waits impatiently for me to go senile. Kovska has the ability to reduce forms to the essential, paying tribute to the American tattoo tradition and Golden Age comics and cartoons while adding her own primal twist. It's as though Tex Avery, Sailor Jerry and Robert Crumb got together and hosted an orgy at the Playboy Mansion. In her words, "I paint desires, urges, dreams, inspirations and memories with lovers, dressed up in cartoons." ¶ I learned that Kovska grew up in Melbourne, Australia, where her father taught her to paint. She has shown her artwork in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami, but she mostly keeps to herself, preferring that the details of her life remain obscure. She likes to use*



**Above:** Portrait of the artist. **Opposite page:** *Playing Tongues*. Acrylic and gesso on canvas, 16 x 20 inches, 2016.

*canvas or cardboard and acrylic paint, which dries more quickly than oil and keeps colors bright—all the better to bring her kinky, trippy pop-cartoon visions to life. ¶ I contacted her to get a piece to hang above my desk and another to be tattooed on my arm. I have tried not to fall in love with her, but it's hard: Aside from her gifts as an artist, Kovska is as sweet and beautiful as you would imagine. Ultimately, I prefer to sit in the audience, like Avery's *Big Bad Wolf*, my eyes bursting out of my head at Chloé Kovska's pink panthers, gorgeous goddesses and red-hot riding hoods.—Jean André*













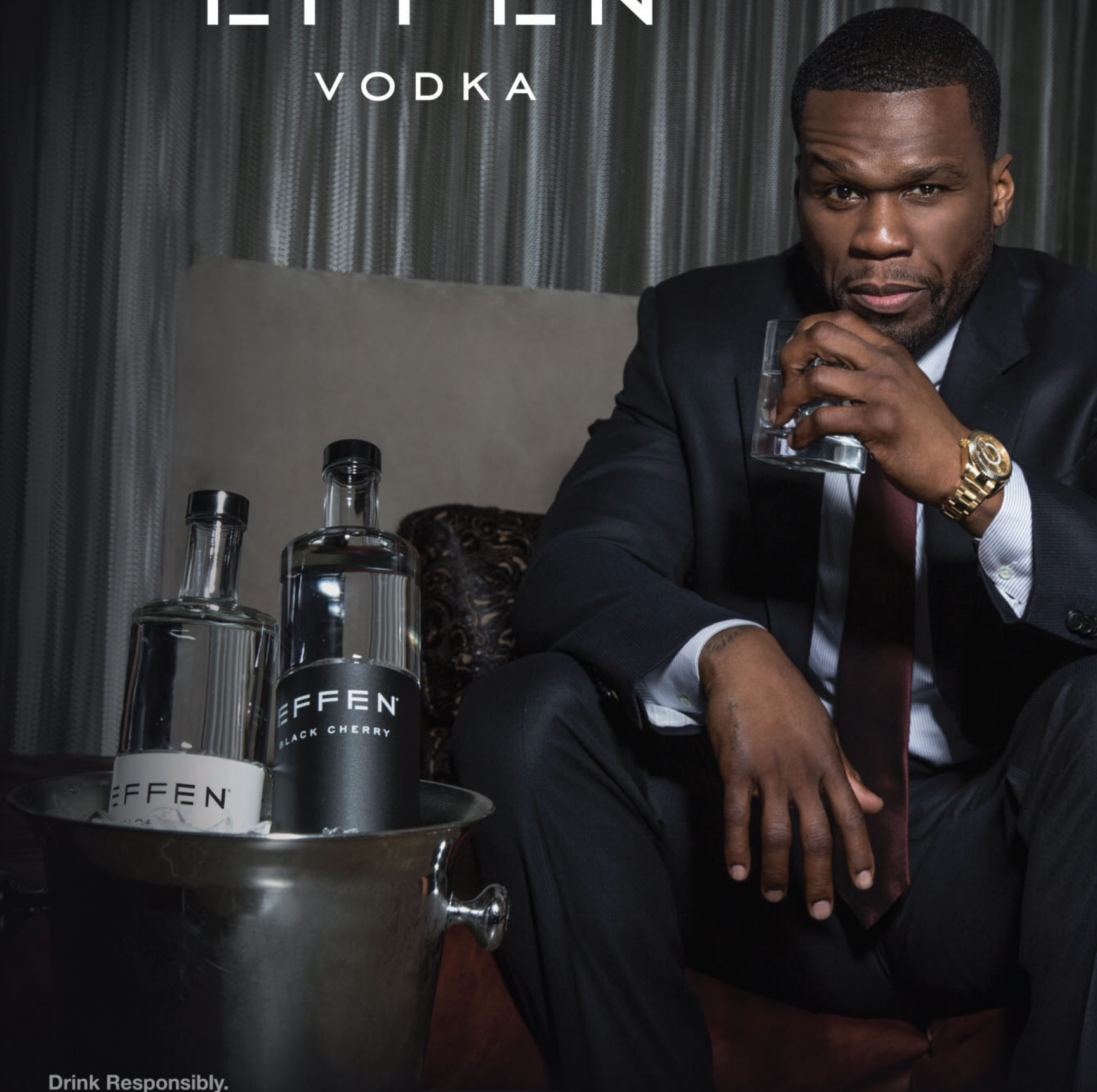


Opposite page: *Playtime*. Acrylic and gesso on canvas, 20 x 16 inches, 2016. **Top left:** *As Quiet as a Mouse....* Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 14 inches, 2014. **Top right:** *Sex Wolf*. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches, 2014. **Bottom left:** *Pink Panther and Little Dot*. Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 20 inches, 2014. **Bottom right:** *Inspired by '76*. Acrylic and gesso on canvas, 18 x 14 inches, 2016.



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