

PLAYBOY

Happy New Year!

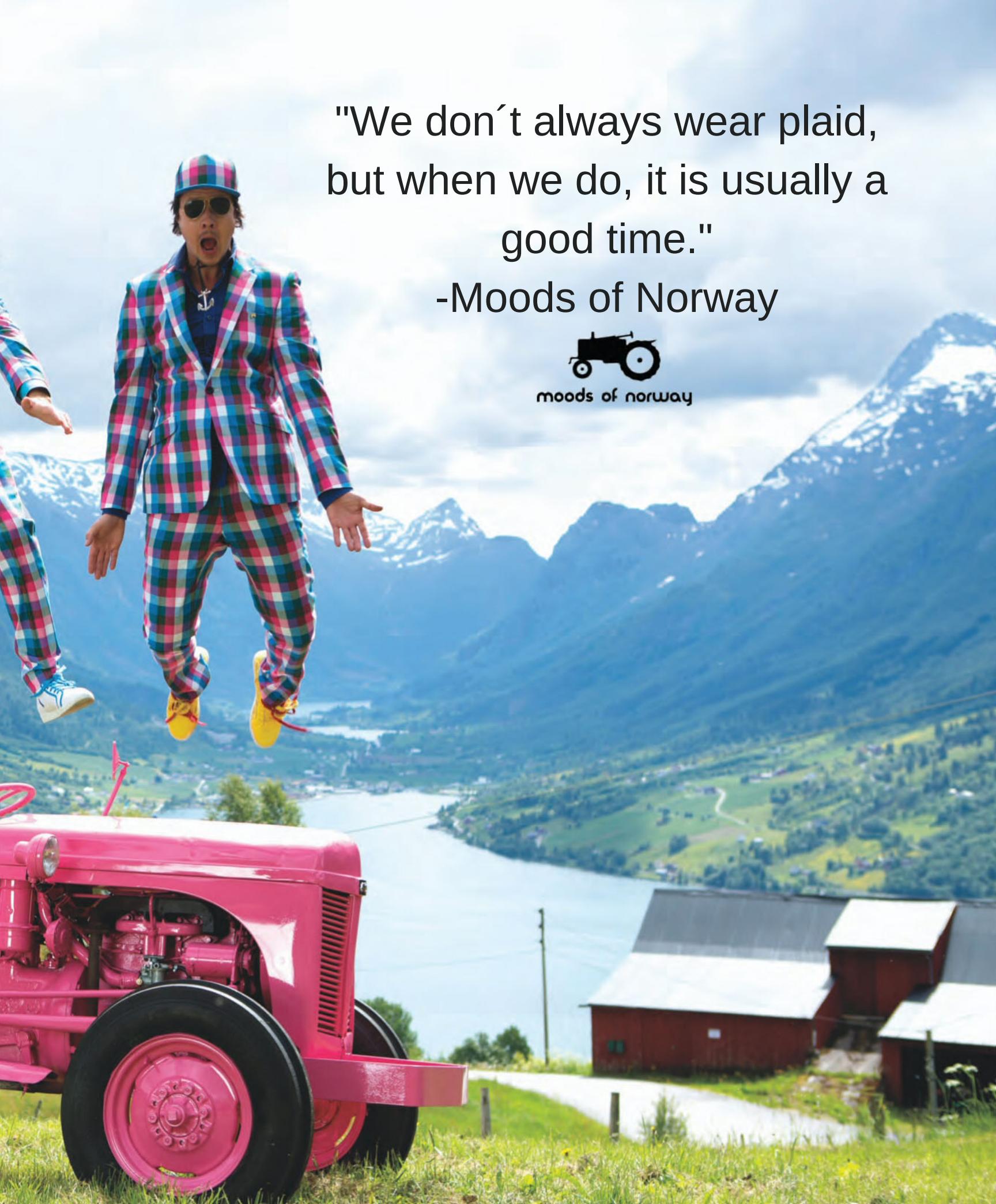
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018



THE INTERVIEW: CHRISTIE HEFNER • THE YEAR IN SEX • 20Q: CILLIAN MURPHY
TEXAS AFTER HARVEY • AARON PAUL • PLAYMATE REVIEW • SENATOR JEFF FLAKE
ARIEL DORFMAN • TOVE LO • FEMINISM IN SPORTS • HERITAGE: ART PAUL



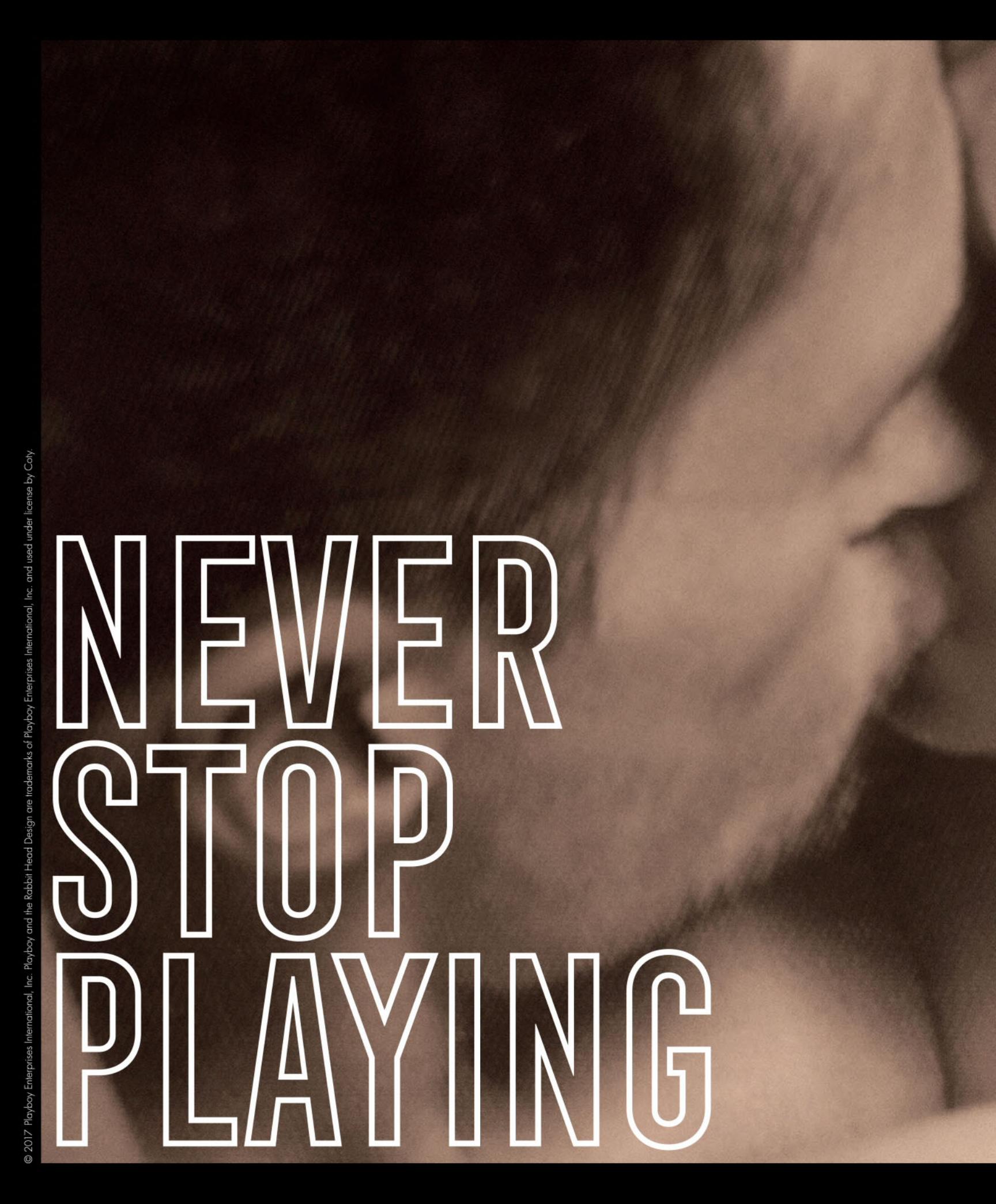
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but when we do, it is usually a
good time."

-Moods of Norway

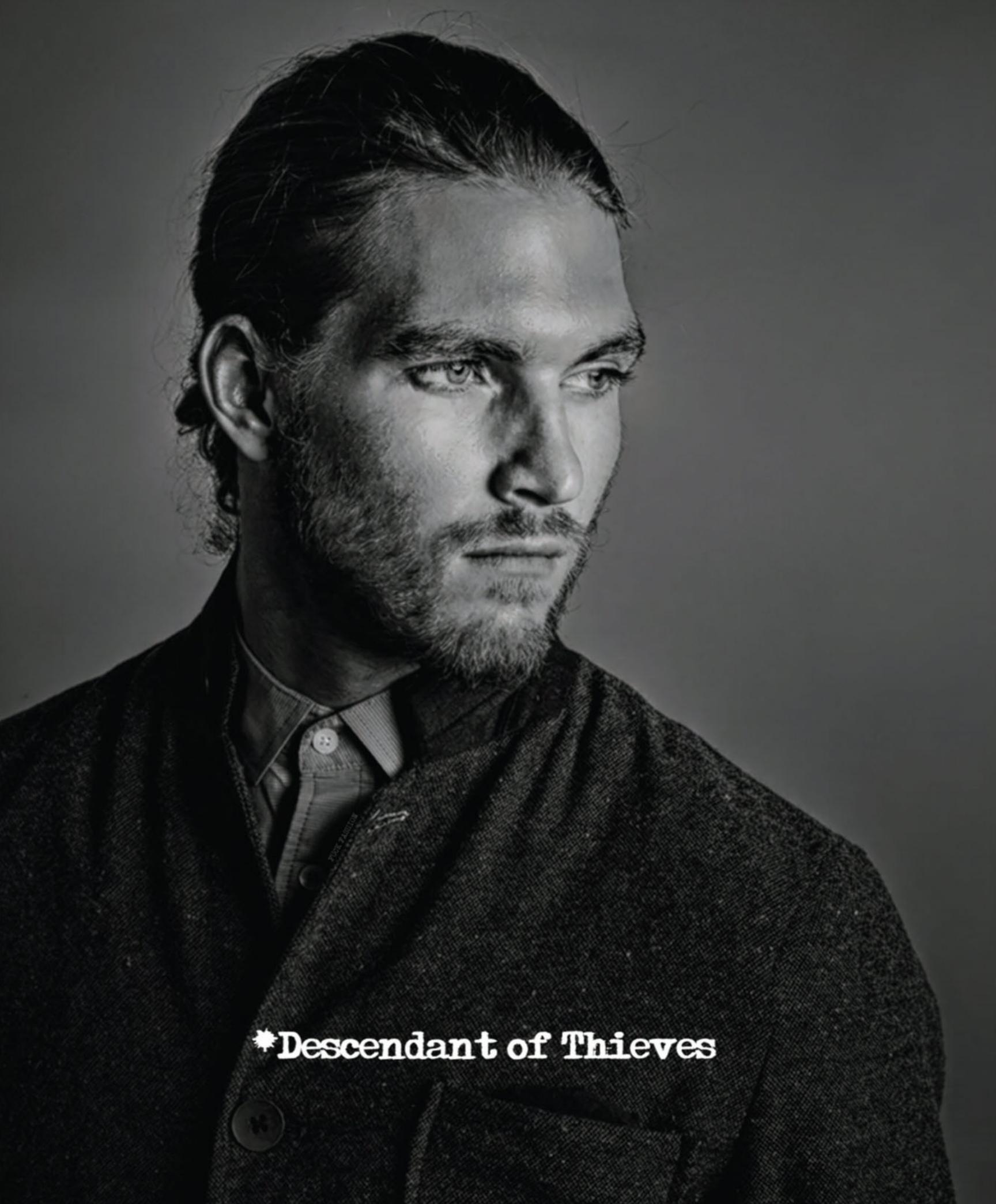




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Brian J. Karen

Karem's insistence on open discourse has led the CNN analyst everywhere from *America's Most Wanted* to the White House, where he regularly goes head-to-head with Sarah Huckabee Sanders. In *Senator Flake vs. the New Normal*, he reports on the days before and after the Republican announced that he would not seek reelection.



Brandon Thibodeaux

"I was taken aback by Harvey's impact but was left encouraged by the strength of my friends, family and neighbors," says the southeast Texas native and photographer of *Texas After the Storm*. He adds, "What good is the world beyond your gate if you can't see the one in your own backyard?" Thibodeaux's new book is *In That Land of Perfect Day*.



Anna del Gaizo

Born and raised in New York City, del Gaizo landed on the West Coast as *PLAYBOY*'s senior associate editor just in time for the magazine's return to nudity in the *Naked Is Normal* issue (March/April 2017). Our resident Playmate profiler has penned every pictorial since, including this issue's *Playmate Review*.

Jonathan Tasini

In *Coming to (Mid)Terms*, Tasini, who sat down with Bernie Sanders for the November 2013 *Playboy Interview*, explains what will be at stake in the 2018 midterm elections, when voters determine America's legislative and judicial DNA for the following four years. His new book, *Resist and Rebel*, is out in February.



Felisha Tolentino

Photographer Tolentino got her start assisting Mark "Cobrasnake" Hunter and shooting celebrity portraits for Nylon. Featuring everyone from SZA to Miguel, her portfolio reads like a cool-kid who's who. For *Let's Play*, she captured Tove Lo's crazy, sexy vibe to a playlist "that had the whole crew dancing," she says. "It felt like shooting a friend."



Ariel Dorfman

Dorfman's background is as fascinating as his fiction. The Argentine Chilean American playwright, activist and author of the celebrated play *Death and the Maiden* first contributed to PLAYBOY in 2010. In his powerful short story *What She Saw*, Dorfman explores love, secrets and what it's like to be held prisoner by your past.



Jonas Bergstrand

The Swedish illustrator-designer's work is a delightful cacophony of typography, conceptual color palettes and collage-like cutouts that read as *Mad Men*-era advertisements yet somehow feel fresh. For this issue, Bergstrand lends his retro stylings to *Leveling the Playing Field*, the sports story by Anya Alvarez.

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Review 2017's
magnificent
Playmates
on page 134.



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ON THE COVER Megan Samperi, photographed by Christopher von Steinbach. **Opposite:** Milan Dixon, photographed by Aaron Feaver.





jōvan

It's what attracts





PLAYBOY

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1953-2017

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Playboy (ISSN 0032-1478), January/February 2018, volume 65, number 1. Published bi-monthly by Playboy in national and regional editions, Playboy, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210. Periodicals postage paid at Beverly Hills, California and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 40035534. Subscriptions: in the U.S., \$38.97 for a year. Postmaster: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 707.4.12.5); nonpostal and military facilities, send address changes to Playboy, P.O. Box 62260, Tampa, FL 33662-2260. For subscription-related questions, e-mail playboy@customersvc.com. To comment on content, e-mail letters@playboy.com. • We occasionally make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products or services we believe you may enjoy. If you do not want to receive these offers or information, please let us know by writing to us at Playboy Enterprises International, Inc. c/o TCS, P.O. Box 62260, Tampa, FL 33662-2260, or e-mail playboy@customersvc.com. It generally requires eight to 10 weeks for your request to become effective. • Playboy assumes no responsibility to return unsolicited editorial or graphic or other material. All rights in letters and unsolicited editorial and graphic material will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes, and material will be subject to Playboy's unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially. Contents copyright © 2017 by Playboy. All rights reserved. Playboy, Playmate and Rabbit Head symbol are marks of Playboy, registered U.S. Trademark Office. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any electronic, mechanical, photocopying or recording means or otherwise without prior written permission of the publisher. Any similarity between the people and places in the fiction and semi-fiction in this magazine and any real people and places is purely coincidental. For credits see page 6. Five Bradford Exchange inserts in domestic subscription polywrapped copies. Certificado de licitud de título No. 7570 de fecha 29 de Julio de 1993, y certificado de licitud de contenido No. 5108 de fecha 29 de Julio de 1993 expedidos por la comisión Calificadora de publicaciones y revistas ilustradas dependiente de la secretaría de gobernación, Mexico. Reserva de derechos 04-2000-071710332800-102. Printed in USA.



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DEAR PLAYBOY

EYEWITNESS

I couldn't wait to see the November/December issue. I thought for sure the cover would be Ines Rau (*Enchanté, Mademoiselle Rau*), but I was heartened to see Hugh Hefner instead. I got teary-eyed reading the tribute to him. He was a trailblazer, and to break barriers with the first transgender Playmate in the same issue says even more. The Rabbit in his eye on the cover is how he would have seen it.

*Joey Munguia
Laredo, Texas*

Thank you for the great tribute to Hugh Hefner in the November/December issue. I was very pleased to find the Rabbit as a sparkle in Hef's eye. It was the perfect touch.

*Gordon D. King
Laconia, New Hampshire*

I must tell you that the hidden Rabbit on the November/December cover is the best ever. How appropriate that the windows of Hef's soul reveal his legacy. This image is right up there with the Rabbit Head hidden in a freckle, the impression on a pillow and the curl in a coif.

*Ron Stokes
Lutz, Florida*

FACT-CHECK, PLEASE

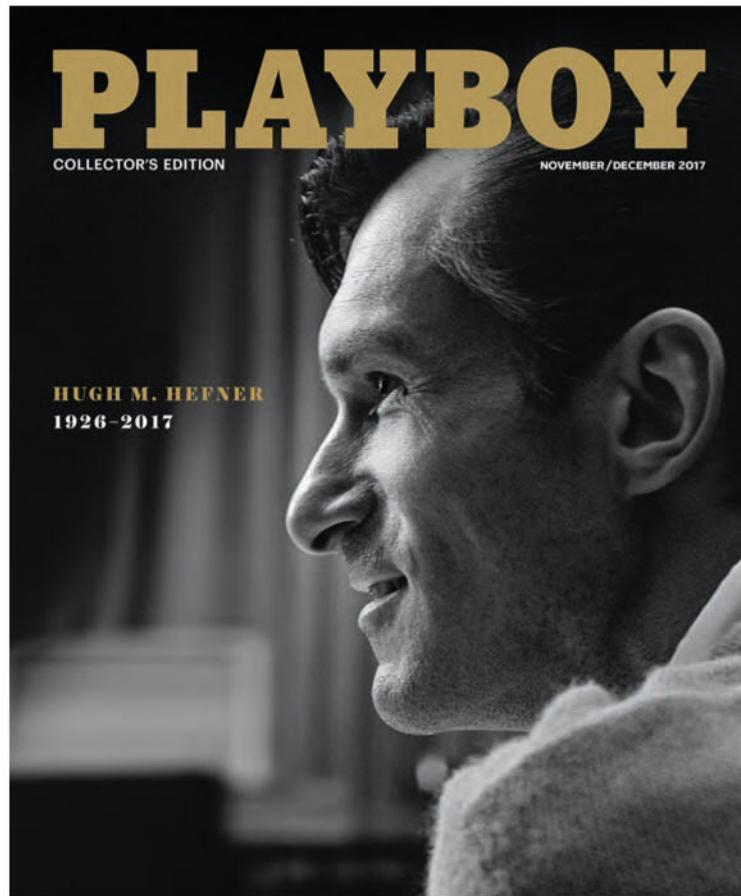
I saw some press about the first transgender Playmate appearing in your November/December issue. Is this claim accurate? I believe your first transgender Playmate was Tula, in 1991; she was also a Bond girl.

*Lance K. Evans
Keller, Texas*

Bond girl Caroline "Tula" Cossey was the first transgender woman to bare it all for a pictorial in our pages, but she was not a Playmate.

MOTHER NATURE NEEDS US

I was thrilled to see the latest installment of *The Playboy Philosophy* (November/December) take a stand on conservation and environmentalism. Climate change and other environmental problems pose genuine threats to all of us and to our planet, and they deserve our serious attention. We need to break through people's complacency and resist the forces of denial and misinformation. Please make sure to carefully fact-check future articles on these issues. Climate deniers and other naysayers are only too eager to pounce on the smallest mistake or misstatement to try to discredit any writing they disagree with.



Our 2017 year-end issue—a profoundly bittersweet moment in Playboy history.

They'll probably do it regardless, but please don't give them a legitimate hook—let them be solidly in the wrong. I'm sure plenty of my fellow scientists would be happy to help.

*Tim Benner
Silver Spring, Maryland*

SAY IT AGAIN

That's right—feminism is about social, economic and political equality (*The Playboy Philosophy*, July/August).

*Patrick Maniscalco
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

HITTING THE HIGH NOTES

I applaud your efforts in creating a music-themed issue (September/October), but I think it should have featured more well-known artists. I don't expect Taylor Swift to pose nude—Halsey's photo shoot and interview were cool—but the lack of star power left me wanting to shuffle-play through the pages.

If it is indeed a music issue, shouldn't the featured content (such as *Playboy Interview*) relate to music? At least the *Heritage* section nailed the theme with its fascinating read on Playboy Records (*Going Vinyl*). If this issue becomes an annual event, I hope the next one is double platinum.

*Ed K.
Los Angeles, California*

THANK YOU, JESUS

Alexander Chee's remembrance of Denis Johnson and his masterwork, *Jesus' Son* (*Writing for Survival*, November/December), is a revealing tribute to a great American writer. My introduction to Johnson was through PLAYBOY's four-part serial *Nobody Move* (July, August, September, October 2008). I loved the crime noir atmosphere of that work and so was inspired to investigate his other writing, including *Angels*, *Fiskadoro*, *Tree of Smoke* and, yes, *Jesus' Son*—all



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DEAR PLAYBOY

very different but equally sad, moving and beautiful. Thank you, PLAYBOY, for opening that world for me.

*J.R. Pierce
Brooklyn, New York*

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

The pipe and captain's hat in Johanne Landbo's seaworthy pictorial (*Anchors Aweigh*, November/December) serve as a moving and fitting (if presumably coincidental) tribute to Hugh Hefner. May his legacy be carried on in your pages for decades to come.

*Jeff Ohm
Berlin, Germany*

SEEKING ADVICE

The best thing to happen to the magazine, besides the return of nudity, has been the decision to once again include multiple questions in *Playboy Advisor*. However, though I enjoy the advice, I think it's time to go back to real and fun questions that require more than a simple Google search to answer. That's why people like me have enjoyed reading the *Advisor* over the years—it answers everything you'd want to know, from sex and dating to fashion tips and fantasy football. Now the *Advisor* seems more like a tough-love doctor.

*T.E.
Richmond, Kentucky*

We can't say we've ever been the best source for advice on fantasy football—we're in the business of a different kind of fantasy. We will pass your note on to our Advisor, though we think this issue's advice on how a couple can watch porn together is as fun and real as it gets.

GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

As a cat and dog (not to mention Bunny) lover, I want to thank you for advising readers to donate to the Animal Rescue Corps this holiday season (*Playboy's American-Made Gift Guide*, November/December). It was a welcome surprise to see a gift guide that promotes American-made goods and isn't completely focused on consumerism.

*May Jefferson
Madison, Wisconsin*

KNOCK, KNOCK

I'm curious as to why you seem to have replaced your old joke writers. Recent selections for *Party Jokes* have been so lame that if you told them at a party you would be asked to leave.

*Paul Hosmer
Dillwyn, Virginia*



Ahoy, beauty! A tip of the hat to Johanne Landbo.

Over the years I've had the distinct feeling that I was trading jokes with Hugh Hefner himself. Unfortunately, that ended after the *Party Jokes* page was dropped and then reinstated a year later with a noticeably different tone. I've read only one joke since then that sounded like Hef's signature sense of humor, and it definitely made me laugh.

*Steven Rovnyak
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Alas, it's hard to tickle everyone's funny bone. We're constantly evolving here, and that includes making sure our humor reflects the times. See if this issue's jokes page does it for you.

WRITTEN IN INK

What does the tattoo on Playmate Allie Leggett's left hip read (*Fire and Iceland*, November/December)? Despite giving it a lot of long looks, I can't figure it out.

*Dave Burton
Dallas, Texas*

Allie responds: "The one on my side says NO FEAR and the one on the back of my neck is the coordinates to my home in Kentucky."

PICTURE-PERFECT PUTIN

I enjoyed Steve Friess's article about Russia-adjacent Estonia's uncomfortable position—both geographically and technologically

(*Danger in Tomorrowland*, November/December). I especially loved the full-page art that ran with the story. Putin as a red-skinned, green-eyed devil looming over the country is perfect.

*Frank Fuller
Los Angeles, California*

A MAN OF HIS TIME...

Many people don't know that Hugh Hefner was a social activist who hired stage performers such as the wonderfully multi-dimensional man of character Dick Gregory. Sadly, Hef and Gregory's friendship ended last year with both their passings. To whom can our nation now turn its eyes for lessons on unconditional love?

*Anthony Parisi Sanchez
Vineland, New Jersey*

...A MAN FOR ALL TIME

Playboy and I have been intertwined for decades. My father had an office on East Ohio Street in downtown Chicago that happened to be right across from Playboy's headquarters. He said that he could see beautiful women coming and going all the time.

When Playboy outgrew the Ohio Street offices, Hugh Hefner bought the Palmolive Building and moved his company there. When I was a little kid I lived in a third-floor apartment on Chicago's northeast side. It had a sunroom with a view to the south, and I liked to watch the aircraft beacon on the top of the Playboy building—named the Lindbergh beacon after Charles Lindbergh—flashing every 10 seconds.

Now, more than 50 years later, I live in a house designed by Bart Prince, the same architect who did Barbi Benton's house in Aspen, Colorado. Hef cast a long shadow on popular culture. To do what he did—in 1953—took amazing guts. I have no doubt my life would have been greatly impoverished without him.

*Robert Borden
Jemez Springs, New Mexico*

COVER STORY

What could be sweeter than sharing a sundae with February Playmate Megan Samperi? Our Rabbit seems to know the right answer.



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WORLD of PLAYBOY



BURTON MORRIS RETHINKS THE RABBIT

Last fall, Burton Morris became the latest in a long line of pop artists—including Andy Warhol and Keith Haring—to put his own spin on our Rabbit Head. The resulting exhibit, titled *Painting Playboy: Burton Morris* and held at Taglialatella Galleries in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, featured no fewer than 64 unique versions of our ubiquitous

logo. Burton, who has taken on such globe-spanning brands as Coca-Cola, Chanel and Ford, created his Rabbit pieces using everything from spray paint to diamond dust. On November 9 the gallery hosted a packed opening reception with a guest list that included Playboy Chief Creative Officer Cooper Hefner, CEO Ben Kohn and a pair of Playmates.

Halloween in Vegas and a Fashion Show at Playboy HQ

Our 2017 Halloween party—TAO Las Vegas Presents Playboy's Haunted Fantasy—was definitely one for the ages. A bevy of costumed Playmates, a searing set by homegrown DJ Wellman and a frighteningly sexy costume contest were among the highlights at the Venetian that night. Some of the more eye-catching costumes had a sneaky Playboy signature: Last fall we teamed up with apparel brand Yandy for a series of fun and unapologetically hot Halloween ensembles, including Go-Go Bunny, Disco Bunny and the totally tubular 1980s Workout Bunny. (Believe it or not, this was also the first time Playboy had ever participated in an official costume based on the Bunny outfit.) The collection launched just before Halloween with a steamy invite-only fashion show at Playboy central in Beverly Hills.



Good Worth Cooks Up More Playboy Swag

Playboy partnered with cheeky clothing and accessories brand Good Worth & Co. for a holiday collection that includes screen-printed Rabbit Head shirts (pictured above on Riley Hawk).



PLAYMATES SALUTE OUR ARMED SERVICES

This past Veterans Day we thought we'd give our readers—and our fighting men and women—a little something extra. With the help of nine Playmates, we put together a pinup-style shoot that pays tribute to four branches of the U.S. armed forces. Here, Kristy Garett (February 2016), Summer Altice (August 2000) and Michelle McLaughlin (February 2008) salute the Air Force and the Navy.



Cooper Hefner Named to Forbes List

Congratulations are in order for Playboy Chief Creative Officer Cooper Hefner, who was chosen for the exclusive *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for 2018. The 26-year-old, who rejoined the company in 2016, is no stranger to accolades for his efforts to return nudity to the magazine and to revitalize the Playboy brand: In September 2017, Hefner was also named to *Folio*'s Change-makers list.

West L.A. Vets Get Some Very Special Visitors

As we do every Veterans Day, Playboy sent a delegation of Playmates—Irina Voronina (January 2001), Carly Lauren (October 2013), Raquel Pomplun (PMOY 2013) and Alison Waite (May 2006)—to the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, where they met with roughly 250 veterans. Selfies were snapped, head shots were signed and plenty of goodwill was shared between our Playmates and the hospital's resident heroes—whom we commend now and year-round.





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ONLINE- EXCLUSIVE GALLERIES

- Insta-queen Cherie Noel, photographed by Evan Woods.

BONUS MAGAZINE CONTENT

- Start off 2018 right with an extended gallery of January Playmate **Kayla Garvin**.
- Synth-pop star **Tove Lo** took a break from her PLAYBOY shoot for a characteristically wild video Q&A.
- Unlike the midterms, voting for **Playmate of the Year** won't leave you with a headache. We have all the information you need on the 12 candidates.

THE BEST OF OUR ARCHIVES

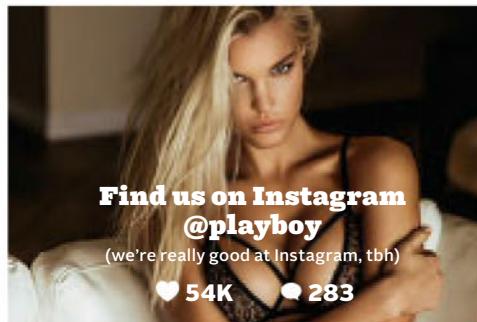
- Denzel Washington is sparking awards-season chatter for his role in *Roman J. Israel, Esq.* His 2002 *Playboy Interview* explores what it means to be a black actor in Hollywood and remains relevant 16 years later.

CULTURE, POLITICS & MORE

- Our diary from the underbelly of the

Caribbean's secret sex-tourism scene may have you pricing flights.

- Is fragile masculinity fake news? We enlisted a sex columnist to reject every man who messaged her on OkCupid for a month to find out.
- What's going on at Camp David now that the president prefers Mar-a-Lago? We visit the hometown of America's most beloved (but now ignored) presidential retreat.



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• "When women purchase insurance, they have the same right to have their health care covered as men do. They have paid into the same pool. This is how insurance works."

• "Health care is not a right. It's a privilege."

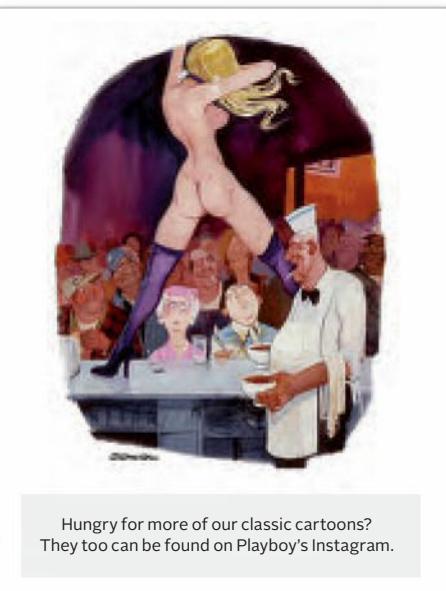
• "I can't even begin to imagine men's outrage if male birth control were excluded."

• "Data proves it: When low-income women have access to birth control via insurance, they are less likely to have unplanned pregnancies."

• "I'm triggered."

—comments on *Birth Control Is Health Care, and Health Care Is a Human Right* by Caroline Orr

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Every once in a while a timepiece comes along that's so incredibly good looking, masterfully equipped and jaw-droppingly priced, that it stops us stone cold. A watch that can take you seamlessly from the 18th hole to the board room. A watch that blurs the line between sports watch and dress watch. We're talking the **Blue Stone Chronograph**, and it sits at the top of the discerning gentleman's watch list.

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LET'S PLAY

TOVE LO

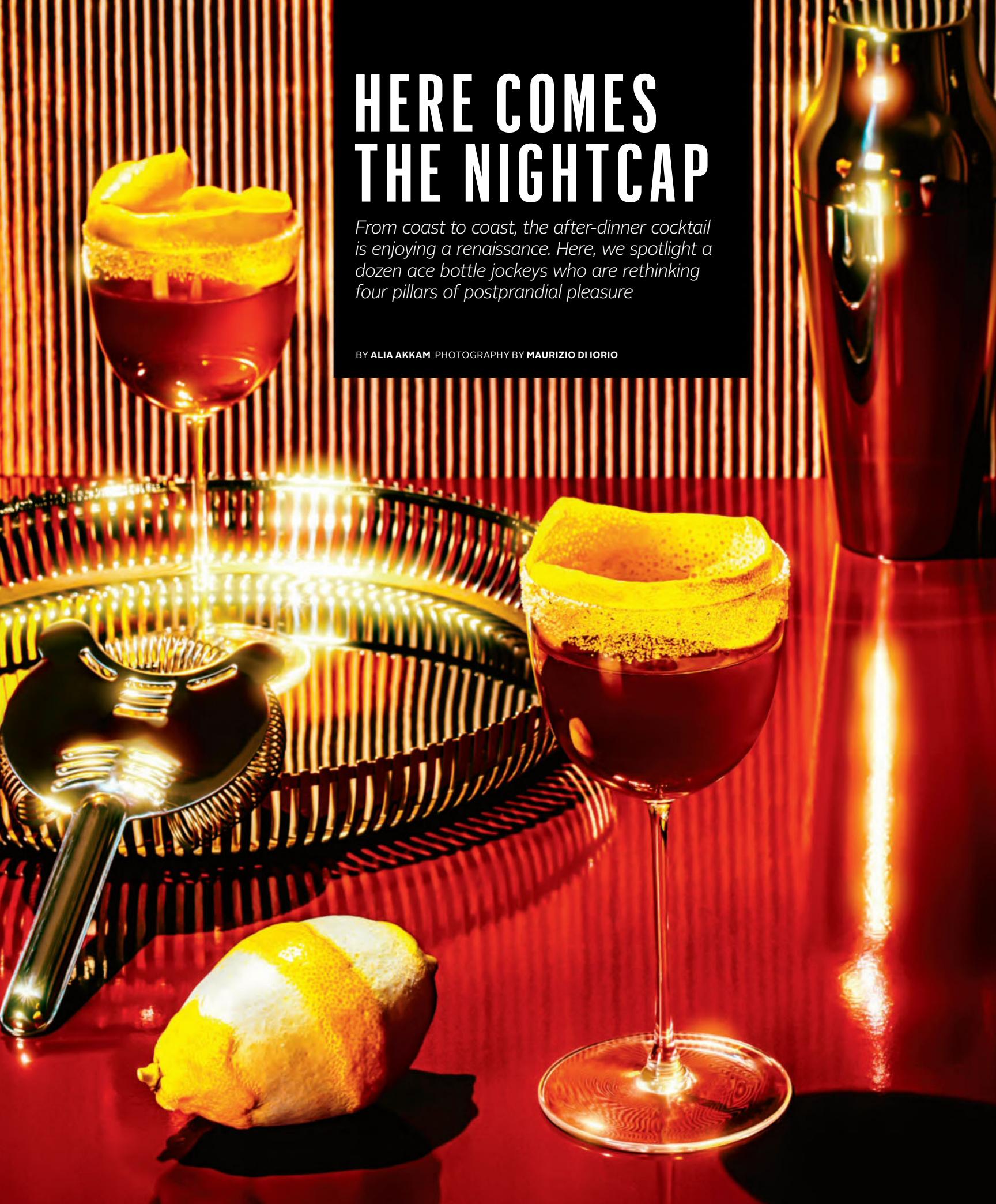
Swedish pop singer-songwriter Tove Lo is incapable of self-censorship; we've seen this since she first emerged, in 2013, with the addictive single "Habits (Stay High)." She has spent the past four years conquering ever-larger stages, often with only glitter covering her nipples, kit-titting out her house-infused synth pop with unfiltered lyrics about sex, drugs and hard-won self-discovery. The result: a bracing new paradigm of how women in pop can present themselves. In addition to co-writing for artists including Lorde, Nick Jonas and Ellie Goulding, Lo takes charge behind the scenes, funding her own films to accompany 2016's *Lady Wood* album. That title, by the way, is a female twist on the male anatomy; her new album, *Blue Lips*, is another cheeky reversal. Both suggest insatiable appetites—a theme borne out by the new album's lead single, "Disco Tits," whose video depicts Lo in flagrante with a yellow bug-eyed puppet. Therein lies a key weapon in her arsenal: "It's rare to make fun of female sexuality," she says. "Naked dudes in movies can be sexy or funny, but not women. I like to play with that." Having recently turned 30, with new music and a new love in the mix, Lo feels reborn. "I made it to this!" she says with a laugh. "I'm whole."—Eve Barlow

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
FELISHA TOLENTINO

HERE COMES THE NIGHTCAP

From coast to coast, the after-dinner cocktail is enjoying a renaissance. Here, we spotlight a dozen ace bottle jockeys who are rethinking four pillars of postprandial pleasure

BY ALIA AKKAM PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAURIZIO DI IORIO





DRINKS

AMARO

If Campari is the ideal Italian overture to dinner, then amaro is the finale; the bitter-sweet liqueur is a stomach settler that shines beautifully in cocktails

● Fernet-Branca is one of the most revered names in the category, and a float of it crowns the Howling Owl at the Pass & Provisions in Houston. Bartender Patrick Dougherty's wintry revamp of the piña colada includes



absinthe, Coco López cream of coconut, pineapple and lime juices, and turbinado sugar.

- At the Washington, D.C. ramen joint Toki Underground, the best way to come down from your noodle high is with the Aviato from Chris Chapman-Shakra, who oversees the bar program. In this agave-centric ode to the boulevardier cocktail, Fidencio mezcal, Bitter Truth Golden Falernum liqueur and habañero shrub mingle with Chapman-Shakra's amaro of choice: Cappelletti's smoky Sfumato Rabarbaro, made with Chinese rhubarb.
- To lend dark, chocolaty undertones to the drink known as the Pavement Artist, Patrick Halloran, bar manager of Henrietta Red in Nashville, reaches for Amaro Nardini. Plantation Grande Réserve Barbados five-year-old rum is washed with brown butter filched from the restaurant's pastry station and blended with Punt e Mes, orange and chocolate bitters, and a pinch of salt. Pro tip: Let it sit for a minute or two so that its slightly warm state elicits what Halloran calls "a crazy chocolate chip cookie dough nose."

TEA

An all-natural relaxant, tea makes a lovely addition to calming after-dinner cocktails

- The base of proprietor Kenta Goto's malty Hojicha Milk Punch at Bar Goto in New York is Japanese rice vodka invigorated by a jolt of earthiness from hojicha (roasted green tea), mixed with cream and shaken with ice.
- Chamomile, in mixed and misted form, is the star of Thomas Waugh's tea-inspired drink of the same name at the Pool Lounge in midtown Manhattan. He infuses Wild Turkey 101 rye with the mild tea

and then, for a modern spin on the old pal cocktail, pairs it with Campari and swaps out the vermouth for St-Germain. "Honestly, rye and chamomile is an unlikely flavor combination, but it works," Waugh says. "Rye doesn't have a lot of pretty notes, so it benefits from the light, floral, soft flavor."



DESSERT

Sometimes the purpose of the after-dinner cocktail is to stand in for, say, a stupefying slab of fudgy cake



● Kate Gerwin, who runs the bar at Front & Cooper at Abbott Square Market

in Santa Cruz, California, makes her Evergreenies drink with local Mutari chocolate, chicory, Dolin Génépy and Fernet-Branca, capped with raspberry preserves and truffle cream.

● At the Korean restaurant Oiji in New York, head bartender Ryan Te prepares the honey buttered rum, an upgrade of the holiday favorite, with a slew of rums, Cynar, lemon juice, Dolin Blanc vermouth, cayenne-cinnamon powder and an apple *sabayon* float.

● The Share the Pear at Péché in Austin is a low-proof adult milkshake that bar manager Shaun Meglen blends from Osborne fino sherry, St. George spiced pear liqueur and house-made vanilla ice cream.

HOT TODDY

With its predictable mélange of booze, water and honey, this seasonal stalwart has tended to bore—until now

- Bar manager Colin Carroll of Trifecta Tavern in Portland, Oregon offers a dazzling outlier with a drink called No Fixed Destination. Served in an Irish-coffee mug and topped with apple cider, it rests on a foundation of Laird's applejack, Portland's own scorpion-chile-spiked Bee Local Hot Honey and Krogstad aquavit for a spark of brightness.

- Subtle fiery appeal awaits at the Walker Inn in Los Angeles, home of the Heat Miser. Co-owner Devon Tarby infuses Elijah Craig 12-year-

old bourbon with Thai chile and then melds it with Luxardo Amaro Abano, Alexander Jules amontillado, Fuji apple juice, Grade B maple syrup, verjuice and salt. For a shockingly chilly contrast, she accompanies it with apple ice wine ice cream. (That's not a typo; we're talking about ice cream made from apple ice wine.)

- Estelle Bossy, head bartender of Del Posto in New York, had Victorian Christmas puddings and pomanders on her mind when she dreamed up the Blessed Thistle. Italian liqueur Cynar is heightened by the addition of Laird's apple brandy, Drambuie, lime and salt. Building on the artichoke in the Cynar, Bossy decided to "double down on the floral theme" with a spiced hibiscus tea. That last ingredient is both tart and high in vitamin C, making it, in Bossy's words, "perfect for a cold-weather dram."



OPPOSITE PAGE: The January Crusta, Chicago bartender Julia Momose's wintry twist on the classic brandy crusta, is the color of garnets—the gemstone of its namesake month. Copper & Kings brandy and J. Rieger & Co. Caffè amaro are the main ingredients, and it's capped off with a rim of cinnamon, sugar and truffle salt and a lemon-peel garnish.



TECH

SMART IMITATES LIFE

A 2018 Tech Forecast

From batteries to birth control, five dizzying innovations that could transform our lives this year

Trying to predict the tech world's reliably chaotic trajectory often seems a futile endeavor. Sleeper-hit products materialize to solve problems we didn't know we had, while multimillion-dollar fads flame out in the time it takes to cold-press some kale in a black-market Juicero. But every once in a while an identifiable trend manifests, offering a glimpse of our ever more connected future. In 2018 we're bound to see more overlap between the digital and physical worlds, a swelling chorus of soothing voice assistants and the further outsourcing of human grunt work to artificial intelligence. It could be the tipping point in a robot uprising—or just another year full of cool stuff that makes our lives drastically more efficient, fun and even sexy. Here then are five innovations that will shape the next 12 months and beyond.

BY **JIMI
FAMUREWA**

● **AR Will Colonize Your Phone**

While continuing to insist to a shrugging public that VR is more than an expensive, apartment-clogging disappointment, Big Tech's major players are investing heavily in augmented reality: smartphone-enabled digital graphics that seamlessly interact with the physical world. *Pokémon Go*, the focus of a short-lived global mania in 2016, is still the most famous example of mainstream AR, but 2018 will see multiple attempts to prove there's more to it than catching Charizards. Google, unbowed by the hubristic disaster of Google Glass, is making waves with ARCore, a new platform that lets you plant moving augmented-reality stickers (a sleepy coffee cup, the Demogorgon from *Stranger Things*) next to your friends. So far, so "Snapchat dancing hot-dog." But Apple's developer-ready suite ARKit

may offer smart real-world solutions: IKEA Place lets you see how that end table will look in a room before you buy it, MeasureKit uses your phone's camera to consign the tape measure to the Dumpster of history, and social start-up Neon allows you to find friends at festivals by overlaying crowds with floating AR signposts.

● **You'll Buy a Butler**

When most of us watched *Her*, Spike Jonze's disquieting look at a lonely man falling in love with Scarlett Johansson's disembodied operating system, we felt the chill of an uncomfortably proximate dystopia. Meanwhile, Silicon Valley's power players were taking notes. From Amazon Echo to Google Home, voice assistants have been stealthily invading houses all over America; Amazon alone has reportedly shipped more than 10 million Echo-enabled speakers. In 2018, the virtual-butler boom will only get bigger with the

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NISHANT CHOKSI

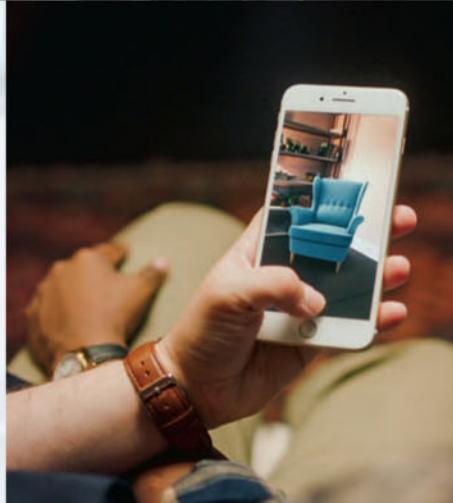
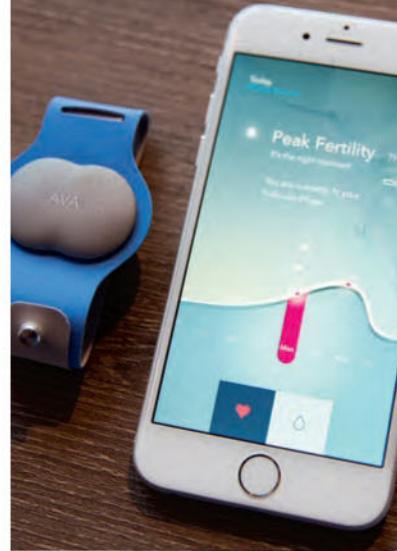
late-2017 launch of Apple's Siri-powered HomePod, Google's new Home Mini and Amazon's sprawling family of new Echo products that can do everything from control your appliances to help you follow recipes. Yes, there are legitimate concerns about privacy, incrimination and corporate surveillance, but this train can't be stopped. And looking even further ahead, x.ai's Amy, an e-mail-based piece of artificial intelligence that can organize work meetings, shows that when it comes to virtual assistance, asking Alexa for traffic updates is only the start.

• **Wall-E Will Deliver Your Takeout**

The drone's appeal may have plummeted, but Amazon is still pressing ahead with plans for a fleet of unmanned air-delivery vehicles. While the Seattle megacorporation's progress has been stymied by U.S. airspace restrictions, a more earthbound solution has emerged. Founded by former Skype bosses in tech-savvy Estonia, robotics start-up Starship Technologies deploys driverless terrestrial droids to handle all manner of hyperlocal deliveries. When one of the knee-high bots rolls up to your door, you simply unlock it with a smartphone app, get your goods and send it on its merry way. It sounds like a folly doomed to fail as soon as a gang of local kids hurls one into a nearby river, but Starship has factored in security: If someone tampers with a bot, an alarm sounds and cameras snap pictures. And having linked with Postmates to storm side-walks in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and beyond, the Starship bot increasingly looks like the measured tortoise to Amazon's haughty hare. Delivery people aren't the only ones being supplanted by cute machines: French start-up Stanley Robotics is rolling out an automated outdoor parking service that uses an intelligent towing droid and algorithmic precision to make the fumble for your valet ticket a thing of the past.

• **Your Home Will Come With Batteries**

From space tourism to solving L.A.'s traffic problem by boring giant holes in the ground, Elon Musk has always had an enjoyable Bond-villain mystique. But one of the Tesla CEO's most fascinating (and achievable) recent initiatives is all about sparking a revolution with something seemingly simple. On first examination, the Tesla Powerwall, a giant home battery based on the electric-car manufacturer's



Wave of the future, dude. **Clockwise from top left:** the Ava bracelet and app; the Tesla Powerwall home battery; the IKEA Place app; the Apple HomePod.

celebrated lithium-ion Powerpacks, sounds humdrum. But the Powerwall actually enables those with solar panels to save money by storing renewable energy during off-peak times, safeguard against outages, juice up electric cars and even sell power back to the grid. As ever, where one company has led—the first Powerwall arrived in 2015, and a revamped \$5,500 version started shipping this year—others follow. With big hitter LG (in collaboration with Californian solar expert Sunrun) entering the race with its own cut-price energy-storage units, 2018 could well be the year this trend goes from the kind of thing wheatgrass-slurping Silicon Valley types yammer about to a game changer that brings green energy to the masses.

• **You Will Use Your Phone as... Birth Control?**

Imagine a smartphone that doubles as a contraceptive. (No, we don't mean an ill-judged

emoji that torpedoes your chances with a Tinder match.) The smartwatch-style Ava, which tracks a woman's cycle to identify when she's most fertile, can be used to aid conception or thwart it. The iPhone's Health app can also assist in this millennial rhythm method, but Natural Cycles, an app-and-thermometer set designed by Swedish particle physicist Elina Berglund, leads the way—algorithmically logging ovulation, basal body temperature and other data to chart a woman's chances of getting pregnant. With more and more people rejecting the hormonal roulette of the morning-after pill or the ecological iffiness of latex condoms, Natural Cycles attracts an estimated 10,000 new users each month. What's more, last year the service became the first digital solution to be officially certified in the European Union as a form of birth control: In "perfect use" trials, it matches the pill's effectiveness rate of 99 percent. Although the service is not yet certified in the States, the company has made overtures to the FDA. Sex—not to mention the sight of your date innocently checking her phone—may never be the same. ■

Among the Faithful...

Waco aims to tell the story of a national tragedy from both sides—finally

What really goes on inside a cult? Over the past couple of years our collective fascination with that question has risen to a fever pitch. The

literary world obsessed over Emma Cline's *The Girls* and Stephanie Oakes's *The Sacred Lies of Minnow Bly*, both of which reimagine collective madness as coming-of-age tales. Indie auteur Ti West barely bothered to alter the Jonestown story for his horror film *The Sacrament*. *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* turns a young woman's survival of a doomsday-sect kidnapping into screwball comedy, and *American Horror Story: Cult* pulls everything from Andy Warhol's Factory to Heaven's Gate into its maniacal vision.

John Erick Dowdle and Drew Dowdle are the brains behind *Waco*, the fledgling Paramount Network's six-part miniseries about the deadly 1993 standoff between federal agents and Branch Davidian cultists led by David Koresh at the group's compound near Waco, Texas. The brothers were haunted by the feeling that the media had shown them—and us—a version of events that was superficial at best.

"We were teenagers when the real Waco story happened, but I remember it unfolding live," says Drew, who produces and co-writes most of the pair's films. "It was this one-sided perspective, from the outside in. To experience that same story we remember from the inside out was a completely different thing."

Their journey through those walls started while they were researching a fictional script. One of the characters, they thought, could be a survivor of the fire that ended the

FBI and ATF siege of the compound—which killed 76 members of the group, including the 33-year-old Koresh.

"Then we said, 'Hey, did anyone survive the fire?'" remembers John, who directs and co-writes their work. That led them to David Thibodeau, one of nine Branch Davidians who made it out alive. The Dowdles won his trust, and he allowed them to work from his autobiography, *A Place Called Waco: A Survivor's Story*. To get the feds' side of the ordeal, they mined the memoirs of Gary Noesner, the

maniac presented by the media, and that Kitsch could embody the qualities that attracted many highly educated and spiritual people to Koresh's ministry.

"This was someone who was really knowledgeable about the Bible and, in their minds, cracked codes they'd been trying to solve their entire lives," says Drew.

In the end, Koresh was desperate and trapped, as so many of the Dowdles' protagonists have been. Time and again they've put their characters through claustrophobic nightmares: the snaking corridors of an apartment building in 2008's *Quarantine*; a broken elevator in 2010's *Devil*; the catacombs of Paris in 2014's *As Above, So Below*.

"It's always interesting to see how characters respond when they're backed into a corner," Drew explains.

And through *Waco* they found a surprising answer to that quixotic question: What *really* goes on inside a cult?

"People think of everyone on the inside as having the same opinion, a kind of mind-meld," says Drew. "Reading Thibodeau's book, you realize how smart and opinionated these people were—they often disagreed with David Koresh—and, as events unfolded, how much debate happened inside over what they should do. It was very different from what you think of as a mind-control environment."

Perhaps that's why cult stories resonate through these volatile times: They reflect a need to understand what drives people to seek order within fortified walls—and a sneaking suspicion that their needs are much the same as our own. ■



Taylor Kitsch as David Koresh in the new miniseries *Waco*.

FBI's lead negotiator during the standoff.

But they didn't stop there. They conducted hundreds of their own interviews, listened to all the audio of the negotiations and watched every inch of Koresh footage they could get their hands on. Their goal: a "no bad guys" examination that humanizes participants who'd been demonized as fascists or fanatics.

They came to realize that Koresh, played in the *Waco* miniseries by *Friday Night Lights* star Taylor Kitsch, wasn't the unhinged

In a Cult Called America

The Path returns to offer an unsettlingly familiar portrait of extremism

“People don’t want to be in a cult; they want to be in a movement,” says Aaron Paul, star of the Hulu original series *The Path*. Paul plays

BY SCOTT PORCH Eddie Lane, a charismatic everyman who just may be extraordinary.

The foundational story of Meyerism, the fictional faith at the center of the series, can sound outlandish or inspiring, depending on your propensity for religious belief: In the 1970s, Stephen Meyer climbed a ladder of pure light—he may have been tripping on ayahuasca at the time—and received the wisdom of the universe.

“What the Meyerists preach,” says Paul, “isn’t too far from what a lot of other religions preach: Live a life with transparency, don’t lie, be good to each other, be good to the planet. You climb each rung and eventually get to this garden full of love that sounds incredible.”

In its third season, *The Path* asks viewers to allow for the possibility that Meyer truly did climb that ladder and achieve enlightenment, which he then passed on to his followers, most of whom live in communes in San Diego and upstate New York. The other possibility, still very much on the table, is that Meyerists are 100 percent bat-shit crazy.

The first two seasons saw Lane veer from faithful Meyerist to outright denier and then back to believer. As season three begins, he has not just returned to the fold; he has grown from follower to leader—the psycho-spiritual

offspring of Dr. Phil and the Dalai Lama.

“I grew up in a very religious household, believing everything that was presented to me,” says Paul, whose father was a Baptist minister. “Eddie wakes up one day and says, ‘I just don’t buy it anymore.’ But those beliefs keep pulling him back until he can’t ignore them. He eventually sees it as his true calling.”

The Path presents just enough facts to make you believe—or come close to believing—that Lane is more than a fervid disciple and that

convincing case for Lane as a divine figure. “Aaron Paul is a very instinctual actor, and his character is coming from a very instinctual place,” she says. “He’s the leader and the most honest person who could be that leader. The question is whether he can stay that honest.”

With parallels to multiple real-life religions including Mormonism (a founder who saw visions), Scientology (electronic gizmos), Buddhism (spiritual enlightenment), shamanism (trippy drugs) and Catholicism (confession), the Meyerist movement provides rich territory for a reflection on how a small sect with seemingly odd beliefs can evolve into something greater.

“The majority of cults don’t consider themselves cults,” Paul says. “Religions start off as something—heaven and hell, let’s build an ark, let’s part the Red Sea—that sounds so out there. Once you stamp ‘religion’ on it and get millions of followers, you validate it.”

Shocking moments in early episodes of season three reconfigure TV’s weirdest love triangle—Involving Lane; Sarah (Michelle Monaghan), Lane’s wife and a lifelong Meyerist; and Cal Roberts (Hugh Dancy), leader of the New York branch—but at its core the new season is about something far larger than personal relationships. It’s an inquiry into the nature of truth and the deep, twisted foundations of belief.

Given the current cultural climate, in which objective facts are more elusive than ever, this is the kind of story we need to be telling. ■



Aaron Paul as Eddie Lane in the new season of *The Path*.

Meyerism is about more than hallucinogenic hysteria. Lane claims to have been struck by lightning, seemingly corroborated by an elaborate scar on his back, and has had intuitions about things that came to pass. And then there was that time he appeared to heal a baby with a potentially fatal heart defect just by touching him.

Show runner and frequent series director Jessica Goldberg says one of the reasons *The Path* works is that Paul makes such a



ART

CREATIVES FOR CLIMATE

Introducing a collective of artists who are wielding the Rabbit to take on climate change

"Art is like an open window to new ideas," says Kii Arens, whose Technicolor canvas *Play Joy* is reproduced here. "Words can get lost in the shuffle of everything that's being broadcast and posted, but art doesn't go away." Art's power to foster passionate dialogue is what we had in mind when we conceived *Creatives for Climate*, a campaign to raise money for environmental causes by auctioning off original work by our favorite artists. Our only creative direction to them: Remix the Rabbit. It proved to be an inspiring prompt. "Despite the variety of what people pull while reading PLAYBOY, there is a Bunny for everyone," says Nina Palomba, the artist behind the kinetic *Bunny Love* piece at right.

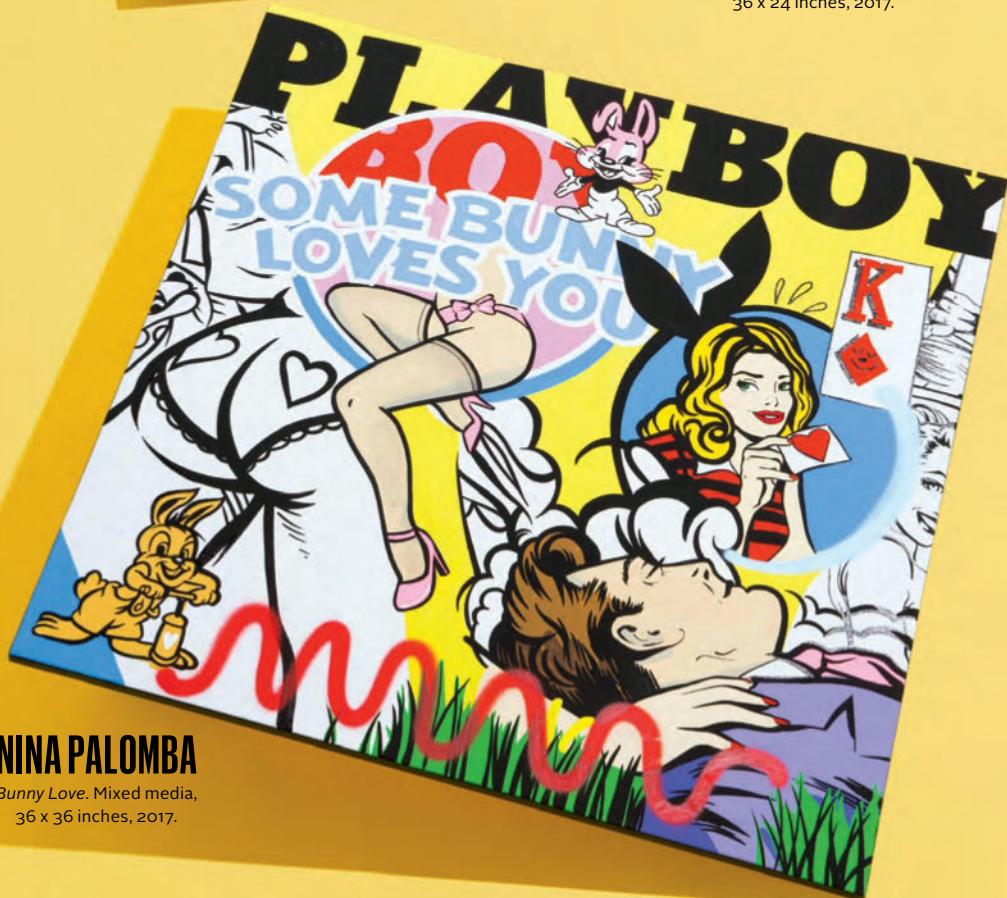
Early in the new year we'll host a silent auction in Los Angeles. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on the very pieces you see here, as well as dozens more, while enjoying drinks, live music and the sexy, sophisticated company you'd expect at any Playboy event. More important, we hope it will serve as a launchpad of sorts. As Arens puts it, "A Playboy art show on the topic is a platform for open discussion, which is the path to change." If you're interested in joining us, drop a line to creativesfor@playboy.com.

Meanwhile, check out some of the art we've rounded up so far. Climate change is serious business, but judging by the pieces shown here, raising awareness about it can be a hell of a good time.



BURTON MORRIS

Climate and Change. Acrylic and spray paint on wood, 36 x 24 inches, 2017.



NINA PALOMBA

Bunny Love. Mixed media, 36 x 36 inches, 2017.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY CRANNA

JOE SUZUKI

Happy Accident Series—
Playboy Bunny. Resin casting
material and enamel paint,
various sizes, 2017.



KII ARENS

Play Joy. Archival
canvas print,
4 x 3 feet, 2017.



STEPHEN PALLADINO

Indulgence. Acrylic ink drawing on
paper, 40 x 26 inches, 2017.



Playboy Advisor

Columnist Bridget Phetasy counsels a sports novice who's dating a jock.
Plus, Botox for her birthday, pitfalls of polyamory and more



Q: *I may be the only man ever to admit this to the Playboy Advisor, but I'm not a football fan. The problem is I'm dating a Cheesehead. Football is her life, from playing in a fantasy league to Super Bowl partying. I've attended games with her but still feel alienated from the culture—and from her when she talks to other men about football. If I exclude myself, will she hold it against me or, worse, leave me for a Cheesehead?—J.A., East Brunswick, New Jersey*

ILLUSTRATION BY ZOHAR LAZAR

A: You're not the first guy to admit he doesn't like football, and there's no shame in that preference. That said, I too am a die-hard football fan, and though I'll happily date a man who doesn't share my passion, I don't know if I could commit to him long-term. Even if he roots for an opposing team, game watching is something I want to share with my partner. Romantic bonding over sports is common; consider how many couples meet in a sports bar, at a tailgate party or in line for over-priced beer and nachos. Dating a person with different interests can be beneficial to both the relationship and your personal growth, but I can't say whether you can completely exclude yourself from the billion-dollar Church of Football without her eventually holding it against you. So instead of asking me, ask her, "Is it a problem that I don't share your passion for football?" If the answer is yes, ask her why she loves the sport. Maybe she can help you discover an interest you didn't know you had. But if you don't start the conversation soon, she might leave you for someone in her fantasy football league—or worse, a Vikings fan.

Q: *My girlfriend has been hinting that she wants me to buy her a Botox session for her birthday, but I don't think she needs it. More important, I don't like the idea of her getting Botox. We live in Los Angeles, so it might be my city's obsession with looking young and being fake that turns me off. Should I grit my teeth and just buy it for her because it will make her happy?—M.L., Los Angeles, California*

A: It's awesome you don't think she needs Botox, and I hope you tell her that. The fact that you love and accept her for exactly who she is is priceless. And I can appreciate why you don't like the idea of Botox: It's expensive; once you start, you can't stop; and it is literally a bacterial toxin. It sounds almost like heroin.

But let's take a broader view. For one thing, Botox, which pulls in about \$2 billion in annual revenue, is actually popular across the country. Miami, Salt Lake City and Austin rank as some of the biggest cities for plastic surgery and cosmetic procedures. Soccer moms in suburbs all over America are throwing Botox-and-wine parties. And if someone wants to do something to make themselves feel younger or better, who are we to judge? If they want a breast augmentation, a nose job or a spray tan, that's entirely their prerogative. Your lady has probably invested in gifts she felt you didn't necessarily *need* but knew you wanted. Maybe she got you the latest *Call of Duty* game—or a July 1968 edition of *PLAYBOY*. Moral of the story: If it makes her happy, man up.

Q: *The new year has arrived, and finding love after taking a year off from online dating is on my list of resolutions. During my hiatus I dropped 20 pounds and got a promotion, so all that's missing is the right woman to celebrate my good fortune with. But I feel rusty. Most women don't like to chat for too long before being asked out. How can I get to know a girl through only a few questions without her losing interest before I set up a first date? What red flags should I look for on a profile?—L.K., Encino, California*

A: I'm currently writing a book that will answer questions like yours, so I'll do my best with the *CliffsNotes*. In terms of starting a conversation, lead with something witty that shows you've read her profile. Follow up with a sincere compliment; flattery will get you everywhere. The best way to get a first date is to ask if she's interested in something that interests you (old movies, hiking, bowling). If she says yes, that's your cue to ask her out.

Red flags depend on the individual. If 90 percent of her profile pictures show her with alcohol, she might have a problem. But if 90 percent of *your* profile references liquor, you'll probably be great drinking buddies (and recovery buddies too). Phrases such as *not looking for anything serious* aren't ideal. Some more generic warning signs: No bio? No bueno. The lack of effort reveals laziness or entitlement. An overuse of emojis signals she's childish. Grammar errors drive me nuts, but I'm a writer. "Follow me on Instagram!" might as well read "I'm a narcissist!" She wants followers, not intimacy. Finally, Snapchat animal filters? Run away.

Q: *When my girlfriend and I became official, we agreed to keep the relationship open. I have since "cashed in" about six times, and she has only once. She insists that it's fine and that open relationships are about trust—but I'm starting to feel guilty. It's hard to enjoy the freedom when I feel she's not participating as much as I am. Will these feelings pass?—C.C., Birmingham, Alabama*

A: You're not doing anything wrong, and you have no reason to feel guilty—unless you're lying to me (and her). An open relationship, especially your first, comes with growing pains. We're so conditioned to want monogamy that it's natural for you to feel guilty for "cashing in" more than she has. These feelings should subside, but there's no timetable. I'm not suggesting you start sleeping with more people, but if your girlfriend is cool with it, stop robbing yourself of the joy and freedom of consensual nonmonogamy. People are wired

differently; to your girlfriend, her one time may be the equivalent of your six times (unless she's lying about the number of times she's cashed in). If your guilty feelings don't pass, then you should stop sleeping with other people, because guess what: You're truly not okay with being in an open relationship. There's no shame in admitting you're old school.

Q: *I borrowed my boyfriend's iPad, and—surprise!—he hadn't cleared his search history. That led to my obsessively examining his porn-viewing habits. The good news is I didn't find anything that made me uncomfortable. We joke a lot about watching porn when the other isn't around, but I'd like to explore watching together. Have you ever brought this up with a lover?—M.P., Ottawa, Canada*

A: Is the pope Catholic? I love watching porn with a man, and I highly recommend it, not only to instigate sexy times but also to get a window into each other's deeper sexual yearnings. Realize, though, that you may learn things about your partner that you can't unknow. A few tips for beginners: Let the woman choose what you watch the first time. Don't let adult-film stars make you feel insecure—it's their job to have huge penises or fantastic-looking vaginas, bleached assholes and loud, over-the-top orgasms. And keep in mind that it's okay to spend more time critiquing the film set's throw pillows than fixating on the actress's double-Ds. Finally, a tip for women readers: Never say, "Oh my God. I've never seen one that big in my life!" Just think it.

Q: *I have a question about lube. My friend takes it personally when a woman reaches for it during sex. He thinks her insufficient wetness is some kind of biological commentary on his performance. What does science say?—D.S., Jacksonville, Florida*

A: I don't need science to tell your friend what I already know: A woman's wetness is not wholly based on her partner's performance. He shouldn't take the blame—or the credit. Like a man's ejaculate, a woman's wetness can vary day to day, hour to hour. It depends on many factors beyond her level of arousal—factors like hormones, time of cycle, mood, medications and genetics. I've become inexplicably wet for men who are bad for me, yet a good man I really like may not have the same effect. Scientists are still working to understand the exact physiology, but the vagina wants what the vagina wants. It's not logical. Tell your friend to stop taking it personally and to pick up some Astroglide.

Questions? E-mail advisor@playboy.com.

THE PALMA

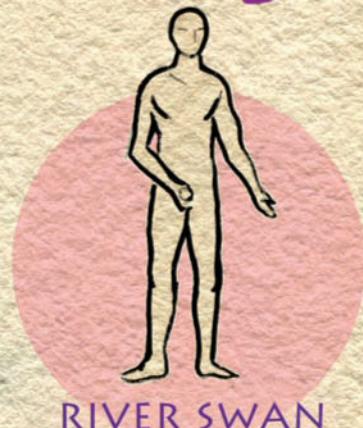
Master the ancient ways



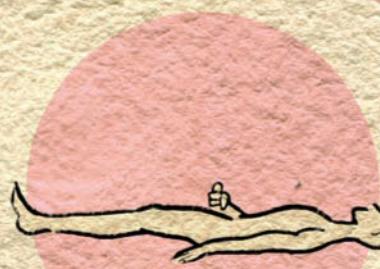
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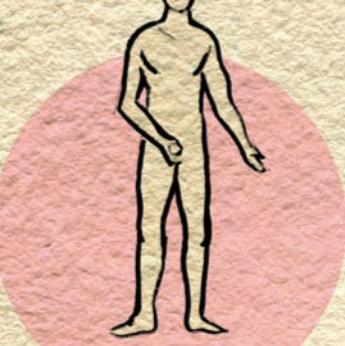
TREE OF FIRE



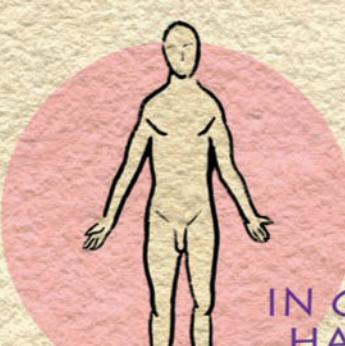
RIVER SWAN



RIVER SWAN
ON BANK



RIVER SWAN
WITH HAT



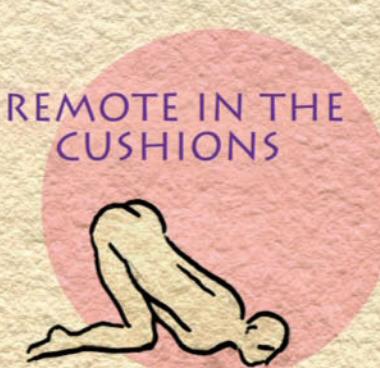
IN GOD'S
HANDS



DEEP FRIAR



BALTIMORE
SHUFFLE



REMOTE IN THE
CUSHIONS



SUTRA

of self-stimulation



SINISTER COBRA



RELAXED COBRA



BLIND COBRA



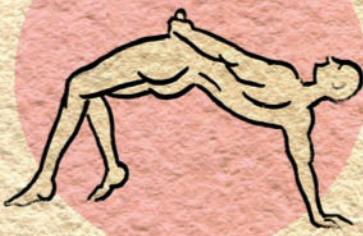
RAIN DANCE



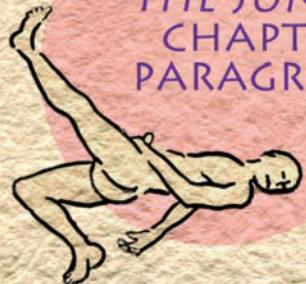
BROKEN RICKSHAW



HEAVEN'S GATE



UPTON SINCLAIR'S
THE JUNGLE,
CHAPTER 2,
PARAGRAPH 5



FRIENDLY FIRE



POLITICS

Coming to (Mid)Terms

With both political parties fighting themselves even as they take aim at each other, it's shaping up to be another gonzo election year. Here's what you need to know

Every midterm election is a referendum on the party holding the White House, but this year's cycle will be unusual for one reason: Civil wars are tearing at both parties, especially the one currently controlling all three branches.

With President Donald Trump polling at historically low numbers, you'd think Democrats would have a golden opportunity to seize the Senate, where Republicans have a 52-48 majority, and an outside shot at recapturing the House, where the GOP enjoys a 241-194 edge. Some observers are forecasting a "wave" election, when voters break at the last minute toward one party, handing it a larger-than-expected victory. The post-Watergate 1974 midterm election saw Democrats net 49 House seats; in 1994 Republicans netted 54 House seats, making Newt Gingrich Speaker of the House.

But before any lefties get too excited, keep in mind that the Senate map actually favors Republicans. Just nine Republican seats are in play; of the seven incumbents up for reelection, only one, Nevada's Dean Heller, appears to be an attractive Democratic Party target. Democratic incumbents, on the other hand, are defending seats in 10 states Trump captured in 2016, including five—Indiana, Montana, Missouri, North Dakota and West Virginia—that he won by double-digit margins.

For their part, House Republicans have to defend many districts claimed by Hillary Clinton, including up to half a dozen seats in California—a state she won with 61.5 percent, racking up a 4.3 million-vote margin over Trump. And in 18 of the last 20 midterm elections, the party holding the White House has sustained an average loss of 33 House seats.

Two caveats throw those calculations up in the air. First, in the House, incumbents usually cruise to reelection because gerrymandering has made only a handful of seats competitive—perhaps as few as 30. Second, intraparty wars are muddying the political waters. The Republican combatants are a varied lot: In one foxhole sit those who, though they vote down the line with the party on policy, are suddenly waking up to the



BY JONATHAN TASINI

bellicose and often unhinged conduct of the chief executive. That wing is most notably represented in the Senate by Bob Corker and Jeff Flake—two incumbents who decided not to seek reelection because of their conflicts with Trump—and to a lesser extent by Susan Collins and John McCain. Flake's retirement could put that seat in play.

A more rebellious wing, mixing a murky brew of conservatism and white nationalism, is mustering elsewhere on the battlefield, declaring war on, as they see it, the Mitch McConnell "establishment." Led by self-styled "populists" like Steve Bannon and financed by shadowy figures like billionaire Robert Mercer, that wing is mounting primary challenges to Senate Republican incumbents.

What will become of these extremist wild cards? Last September saw the Bannon-favored Roy Moore win a cranky primary in Alabama, defeating McConnell's (and, oddly enough, Trump's) choice, incumbent Luther Strange. If more Republicans like Moore—who has deeply bigoted views and at press time is facing accusations of sexual misconduct from five women—emerge as general-election candidates, they could lose, following the example of Todd Akin, whose theories about "legitimate rape" cost him the Missouri U.S. Senate election in 2012. Then

again, if ever there were an environment where Moore's ideology could flourish, it's the one created by the current administration.

The infighting among Democrats is relatively muted, if not resolved. In the days after Election Day 2016, the party was apparently headed for trench warfare between the Clinton establishment and the ascendant progressive wing led by Bernie Sanders. Today, the party is in dire need of a shake-up. In the past decade, despite winning the White House twice in 2008 and 2012, it has lost more than 900 state legislative seats.

But Donald Trump's election—his mix of erratic behavior and deeply conservative gambits around health care and taxes—has put that fight on hold. To be sure, a few primary contests are in the offing, most notably a progressive Democratic challenge to California senator Dianne Feinstein. But most Democrats seem willing to bury the hatchet until after the midterms, when they must begin the contentious process of choosing the party's 2020 nominee.

And let's not forget the gubernatorial battles. Republicans currently occupy 34 out of 50 governors' mansions, including every one in the South. But with Trump's unpopularity, we could see as many as six contests favoring the Democrats, along with scores of legislative seats. That's significant because, circling back to the gerrymandering issue, governors and state legislatures control the once-every-decade redrawing of the congressional maps. Whoever runs state politics after the 2020 census will be in a strong position to define the outlines of federal power for the following decade.

After the 2016 election, the political-prognosticating business should have withered. So perhaps the best guidepost to guessing election outcomes is to follow that contest's twisted logic: The victorious party might once again be the most effective "the system is broken" messenger—even if those delivering that message are funded by the same corporate donors and elites who broke the system in the first place. ■

Steel Yourself

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Edition**

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— R., Lacey, Washington



Not shown
actual size.



SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



POUR VOUS, Mon Cheri

\$18.2 BILLION: estimated total annual Valentine's Day-related spending in the U.S. (roughly \$137 per person)

\$16 BILLION: estimated value of Valentine's chocolate shipped within the U.S. in 2015

8 BILLION: number of Sweethearts manufactured each year

#GOALS

TOP FIVE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

5. Travel
4. Save more money
3. Enjoy life
2. Get organized
1. Get fit

FUN with PUNXSUTAWNEY

1887: year that February 2 became the holiday affectionately known as Groundhog Day



GOING LONG, GOING STRONG

466: most passing yards ever thrown by a quarterback in a Super Bowl—Tom Brady in 2017

166 MILLION: pounds of chicken wings consumed by Americans on Super Bowl Sunday



BULL! FOOTBALLS ARE MADE FROM COWHIDE, NOT PIGSKIN.

Super SOCIAL

175.5 MILLION: number of U.S. Facebook interactions about Super Bowl LI
62% of them were by women; **42%** by fans under the age of 35

WIENER JOHNSON Says MIX IT UP!

28% of surveyed Americans say they typically use two positions each time they have sex; **7%** say they use five positions or more.



...BUT BEWARE

41: percentage of broken penises that occurred during doggy-style sex
26: percentage of broken penises caused by missionary-style sex

WE HAVE LIFTOFF

1 IN 10: people who have had sex in an airport, according to a Jetcost survey; **17%** of respondents said they were caught in the act.

JUST SAY WHOA!

5 places that teens could be stashing drugs, according to the DEA:

alarm clocks, highlighters, graphic calculators, gaming consoles and... **TEDDY BEARS**

Drinking DATA

Holy Hallmark

145 MILLION: estimated number of Valentine's Day cards purchased in the U.S. annually—second only to Christmas cards

1,500: number of Hallmark V-Day card varieties



Love and MARRIAGE

119 TO 100: ratio of single men to single women in their 20s in the U.S.

2 MILLION: estimated number of weddings in the U.S. each year (some 6,000 a day)

NYE in NYC

1 MILLION: number of people expected in Times Square on December 31

6,000+: number of NYPD officers on duty in the 42nd Street vicinity on New Year's Eve

\$0: cover charge to get into Times Square

\$400: cover charge for the Olive Garden NYE party

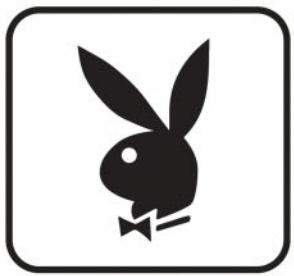
BALLS IN THE AIR

2,608: number of crystals on the Big Apple's New Year's Eve ball

32,256: number of LEDs illuminating the ball

11,875 POUNDS: weight of the ball

7: number of different incarnations of the ball since it debuted in 1907



PLAYBOY CLUB
NYC
COMING SOON





SPORTS

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

From the court to the sidelines to the owner's box, women are fighting for airtime, equal pay and a culture free of discrimination—and logging some major wins

"You play like a girl."

I heard this time and again as a kid on Gallup, New Mexico's only golf course, where I was the only girl golfer. Men found it cute that I played from what were then called the "men's tees," but I practiced every day to move from cute to great. My dad taught me to swing the club hard and use every fiber of my frame, and by the age of 11 I could drive the ball nearly 200 yards. Soon I was beating the men.

My talent and hard work eventually earned me a full-ride scholarship to the University of Washington, and I later qualified for the LPGA, playing in two U.S. Opens. Yet even as a professional golfer, I struggled to be taken seriously. It's a common sentiment among women in sports, whose obstacles are a reflection of those faced by women in general: pay inequality, sexual harassment, prejudice.

Protest in professional sports has been a national debate for nearly two years now, and with outsize figures from Colin Kaepernick to Vice President Mike Pence dominating the headlines, it's easy to overlook the fact that a WNBA team used its platform to speak out against the killings of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling a month before Kap's first protest, and that female World Cup soccer player Megan Rapinoe was the first white athlete to take a knee during the National Anthem. Along with this increasingly clear shift toward political consciousness in sports, a culture of unprecedented feminism and activism in women's pro athletics has taken root.

BY ANYA
ALVAREZ

"We're used to people talking shit about us," says Seattle Storm point guard Sue Bird, who just wrapped up her 15th season in the WNBA. "We're used to having to go against the naysayers and prove them wrong over and over again."

...

The modern history of sports is dotted with stories of women standing up for the right to play. In most cases they are exceptions,

albeit inspiring ones, to the rule of institutionalized sexism. Kathrine Switzer became the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon as a numbered entry in 1967, under the gender-neutral name K.V. Switzer. When a race official realized a woman was running, he tried

to chase Switzer down, yelling, "Get the hell out of my race and give me those numbers!" Five years later women were granted the right to run the marathon. Diane Crump, the first female jockey to ride in the Kentucky Derby, in 1970, was met with scorn at previous races, having to fight off mobs of men protesting her presence.

The most famous (or at least most colorful) case of a woman athlete having to prove herself

is the 1973 tennis match, dubbed the "Battle of the Sexes," between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs, who had mocked women players as inferior. Riggs was the five-to-two favorite to win what *The New York Times* called "the most talked about event in the history of tennis," but King won handily in straight sets. Her victory, televised during prime time and viewed by an estimated 90 million people, led to greater acceptance not only of women's

tennis and women in sports but of the idea of women's equality. King realized she had a platform and became an outspoken advocate for equal pay and abortion rights. "I wanted to use sports for social change," she said.

But the most impactful change for women in sports

took place in 1972 when Title IX, which prohibits sex-based discrimination at educational institutions that receive federal funding, became law. After decades of lopsided funding, a whole new world opened for women's athletics. Suddenly middle schools and high schools were offering sports programs for girls, and colleges were providing athletic scholarships to young women. Before the legislation, one in 27 high school girls



Seattle Storm point guard Sue Bird leads her team onto the court last year.

ILLUSTRATION BY JONAS BERGSTRAND





Shelly Vincent and Heather Hardy in the thick of their 2016 fight at the Ford Amphitheater in Coney Island, New York.

"IT MAKES PROMOTERS AND TELEVISION NETWORKS UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN A WOMAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT IS CALLING THEM OUT."

played sports. Now that number is two in five, according to the Women's Sports Foundation. And in the wake of Title IX, more professional women's leagues have been created, giving female athletes more opportunities to make a living. (Billie Jean King founded the Women's Tennis Association in 1973.)

Despite the doors that opened for women in sports more than 40 years ago, the playing field remains wildly uneven. Women's sports receive only four percent of all sports media coverage, according to the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, and women athletes still earn considerably smaller paychecks than their male counterparts. In 2014 the U.S. men's national soccer team received \$9 million for their disappointing round-16 World Cup loss; the following year, when the U.S. women's team won the World Cup, they earned only \$2 million. That women's final match was, incidentally, the most-watched game in the history of U.S. soccer.

These inequalities are pushing women in sports to speak out and demand changes. But how exactly do you take on a culture as entrenched as professional sports? I spoke with a number of women who have turned their passion and anger into action—and results.

•••

World champion boxer and Bellator mixed-martial-arts fighter Heather Hardy, 35, quickly made a name for herself in combat sports. She earned the coveted Golden

Gloves after just one year of training, fought in her first professional match that same year and secured 19 victories in the five years that followed.

Women's fights are rarely televised, so when Hardy learned that her August 2016 match against Shelly Vincent would be Premier Boxing Champions' first nationally televised female undercard, she thought it might be a turning point. But in reality it had little impact. "My fight was on tape delay four hours later on NBC Sports," Hardy says, speaking over the phone during a break in training at a Brooklyn gym. "They came in my locker room and said, 'We're going to have you fight after the main event because we don't want your fans to leave while Errol Spence Jr. is fighting.'"

As a result, there were fewer TV viewers for Hardy's fight, which she won after 10 rounds. But the greater injustice was the \$150,000 that Spence took home that night—15 times the \$10,000 Hardy received.

That moment spurred Hardy to act. Her first priority: to pressure television networks to improve opportunities for female fighters. "They make a lot of excuses," she says. "They'll say, 'Well, there's no demand for women's fights' or 'We don't get ratings for it.' Give me a break. When you put a woman's face on at 11 o'clock at night on Fox Sports 38, of course it's not going to get ratings."

Hardy points to Ronda Rousey as proof that women fighters can not only get good

ratings but can also make a living. Rousey has made millions in the UFC thanks to her popular televised fights. Broadcast exposure can make a huge difference, and not just through TV viewers: After one of Hardy's Bellator matches was televised, her Instagram followers shot from 16,000 to more than 50,000. That translates into money for Hardy because sponsors want athletes with large followings.

And with a larger fan base, Hardy can in turn make a convincing case that women in boxing deserve to have their fights televised. Hardy is also aware that with more people paying attention, her actions have greater impact.

"If I have a voice and a platform, it's my responsibility to speak for all the girls who are world champions and who are fighting for \$100 a round," she says. "It's about creating a space where things are equal for women, and it's not equal for women in boxing."

Hardy says her requests have led to some awkward encounters. "It makes promoters uncomfortable and it makes the television networks uncomfortable when a woman in the spotlight is calling them out," she says. "They expect that woman to be quiet because she's the lucky one."

But until women in boxing are given equal opportunities, Hardy says, she won't stay quiet: "No freedom till we're equal."

•••

It's not just athletes who are taking action.

Ginny Gilder, Dawn Trudeau and Lisa Brummel own the Seattle Storm, one of just two all-female-owned WNBA teams, and they use that platform to support women's issues. Holding a pregame rally in July 2017 to raise money for Planned Parenthood was a natural move.

"I think we all need to use our voice when we see things being done that we consider unjust or unfair," says Trudeau, a former Microsoft executive. The Planned Parenthood event raised more than \$40,000 for the reproductive-health nonprofit and, perhaps more important, demonstrated what can be accomplished when women occupy top positions off the court.

For Trudeau, co-owning a women's basketball team is deeply linked to her desire to foster equality. "Part of why we got involved [in owning the team] is because we really want opportunities for women and girls, to show them they can have different kinds of careers that are nontraditional. We wouldn't have done this if there wasn't a social-justice aspect to it," she says. Trudeau pauses, then adds, "In some ways, the very fact of being a woman in sports makes you an activist by nature."

"The WNBA is filled with women who have had to fight just to be where they are in the league," says point guard Bird. "So it's really only natural for us to have other people's backs as well and to continue that fight."

Recent years have seen small but important shifts for women entering sports spaces traditionally held by men, helping to set the stage for future generations of women. Alison Overholt became the first woman to helm a national general-interest sports magazine when she became editor in chief of *ESPN the Magazine* in 2016. Dawn Hudson, who took over as the NFL's chief marketing officer in 2014, spearheaded the inaugural NFL Women's Summit in 2016—during which commissioner Roger Goodell announced steps to ensure that women be considered for executive positions. The NFL also hired Samantha Rapoport to bring more women into the organization. These women in part stand on the shoulders of those who have come before, including Sheila Johnson, the only African American woman to have ownership in three professional teams (the NBA's Washington Wizards, the NHL's Washington Capitals and the WNBA's Washington Mystics).

With the increased representation of women in sports, Seattle Storm co-owner Trudeau is optimistic about the future. "I love that a little girl can now turn on the television or go to an arena and see women playing

professional basketball or can get into a field and see women playing professional soccer," she says. "That has not always been the case, and I think that's going to continue to drive a positive change for our young girls in what they believe is possible."

•••

The range of women in sports who are using their experiences to empower others goes even further, beyond athletes, owners and employees: Women in the media have joined the fray too.

Laura Okmin has worked as a sideline reporter for almost two decades—long enough to witness the cycle of experienced talent being replaced by young reporters who lack depth of knowledge in the sport they're covering. So when Okmin was benched for a few games during the 2015 football season—a younger and less experienced reporter taking her place—she knew it was time for action. She started GALvanize, a boot camp to equip young women for careers as sports reporters. The move both expanded her career and created a durable solution to the problem of unprepared newbies.

"I was meeting so many young women on a football field or at other big venues, like the Olympics, where they were hired to report from," says Okmin. "And every time I would ask 'How many times have you been down here?' their answer was zero." The boot camp teaches students on-camera interviewing skills and how to network and build professional relationships with players and coaches. It also preps them on how to deal with the inevitable on-the-job sexism.

Okmin values the fresh perspective young reporters bring to the field but doesn't want that to negate the advantages older women bring to sports journalism.

"I've never been better with my relationships. I've never been better with my knowledge. I've never been better with my confidence. I've never been better as a teacher. I've never been better, period," she says. "I try to teach the women that they need

to build a career, not a job, and one that will hopefully last decades, not years."

•••

Perhaps what's happening today in women's sports is just as pivotal as the passage of Title IX. Female athletes are not afraid to call out injustices and have gained support for being vocal. Girls who witness women refusing to accept the status quo will in turn expect better treatment for themselves.

"Having a little girl see a strong and powerful athlete speaking up on social issues gives that girl permission to do that on her own," says Trudeau.

Jessica Mendoza, an Olympic gold medalist softball player and ESPN's first female Major League Baseball analyst, feels optimistic about the wave of female athletes raising their voices to bring awareness to inequalities. She points to the latest round of contract negotiations for the U.S. women's soccer team: Players' base pay and game bonuses were boosted, and their per



Left: Jessica Mendoza playing for the U.S. softball team.

Right: Sideline reporter and GALvanize founder Laura Okmin at work.

diem stipends were raised to match their male counterparts'. And in March 2017 the U.S. women's ice hockey team threatened to boycott the world championships if pay inequalities were not addressed. Their last-minute agreement with USA Hockey improved compensation and benefits for the players. Ten days later, they won their fourth straight world championship.

"It's been a long time coming, but women just want to have more of a voice," Mendoza says. "They want a seat at the table. They want equal pay. And that's not just in sports."

So maybe in the future, playing like a girl won't seem like such a bad thing. ■



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: CHRISTIE HEFFNER

A candid conversation with Playboy Enterprise's former president and CEO on working alongside her father and journeying beyond the world of Playboy

In the summer of 1982 news broke that 29-year-old, Brandeis University-educated Christie Hefner, the first child of Hugh Hefner, had been appointed president of Playboy Enterprises, the \$389 million company launched almost 30 years before by her father. The announcement raised eyebrows and red flags. For all her smarts and poise, was she up to the task? Would she actually be given any real power by her 56-year-old father, who owned 70 percent of the company stock and whose take on sex, social justice, pop culture and the high life marked every page of the magazine he created in 1953? She, a committed feminist, wanted the magazine and the company to reflect the shifting cultural tide. Surely an epic clash of wills was imminent, one that could even bring down the whole Playboy empire.

Criticism came thick and fast—some of it veiled, some not. One national magazine patronizingly crowned her “the Princess of Playboy.” Depending on the viewpoint (and prejudices) of the observer, Christie Hefner was too young, too inexperienced, too pretty, too much of a feminist, too conservative or, perhaps most glaring of all, too buttoned-down in dress, demeanor and mind-set, especially compared with her rock-star father. Meanwhile, the company was hemorrhaging cash. Recently lost were the British gambling clubs that had accounted for more than a whopping 80 percent of the company’s profits, roughly \$39 million yearly. (Due to charges of “technical credit violations” in 1981, the company was unable to renew some of its licenses, forcing the sale of five casinos and 80 betting houses.) Led by Christie

Hefner, the company began long-term but dramatic restructuring and belt-tightening, retiring a number of top executives, significantly cutting other staff and closing or selling a handful of divisions.

Still, despite the fact that Christie had no MBA nor any business experience outside Playboy, she radiated unflappable intelligence and self-possession when telling reporters that she fully expected profits from PLAYBOY magazine and new cable-TV ventures to take up at least some of the slack. In 1988 she was made chairman of the board and chief executive officer. For a total of 26 years, some of them undeniably turbulent, she ran the business alongside her father, who often referred to her as “Corporate” or “Chicago.” Publicly, she didn’t let that faze her. In 1991 she announced that she would be with Playboy for



“At certain points when I became an adult we might have talked about relationships, though, candidly, I was probably trying to secretly give him relationship advice.”

“I remember reading an answer to a question in Playboy Advisor in the early 1980s that was so stunning: ‘She has the right to say no even if she has her panties off.’”

“I’ve told Barbi many times that he became a richer, better person in the years of that relationship. I used to tease her and say, ‘You know, we could borrow each other’s clothes.’”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAKE CHESSUM



life, but in 2009 she stepped down. She wasted no time in reestablishing herself as a high achiever in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Born Christie Ann Hefner in Chicago on November 8, 1952, she is the older of the two children of Hugh Marston Hefner and Mildred Williams. Mildred, a former English teacher and Hef's college sweetheart, separated from Hef when Christie was four and her brother, David, was one. (The latter, a computer consultant, has long avoided the limelight.) After her parents divorced and her mother married Chicago lawyer Ed Gunn in 1960, Christie, her brother and her mother relocated to leafy, upper-middle-class suburban Wilmette, Illinois. Several times yearly a limousine would whisk Christie back to Chicago for a visit with her father at the Playboy Mansion; in the main, that was the extent of their face-to-face contact. Meanwhile, Mildred's marriage to Gunn didn't take and, to put it mildly, neither Christie nor David took to him. They too divorced; Mildred re-wed and has been happily married for nearly 40 years.

Nevertheless, as Christie Gunn and a top student active in theater and music, she graduated from New Trier West High School and went on to major in English at Brandeis University, near Boston. Elected in her junior year to Phi Beta Kappa, she graduated summa cum laude in English and American literature. Thinking she might pursue law, journalism or public service, she decided to move to Boston her first postgrad year, working as a freelance writer for magazines and the alternative newspaper *The Boston Phoenix* to see whether journalism was the best fit. From there she got swept up in the world of Playboy and not only made a success of it but also launched the Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Awards in her father's honor.

While serving as Playboy's CEO, she helped raise \$30 million for Chicago's CORE Center for people with AIDS. Post-Playboy she has taken on advisory or executive roles at Canyon Ranch Enterprises, HatchBeauty and the \$3 billion agricultural conglomerate RDO Equipment Co. She has also stumped for progressive political candidates, particularly women, and has worked with the Center for American Progress, a nonpartisan think tank, since 2009. In 1995 she married former Illinois state senator William A. Marovitz, a real estate developer and attorney; 16 years later, Marovitz settled a Securities and Exchange Commission lawsuit that accused him of making roughly \$100,000 by illegally buying Playboy stock, trading on confidential corporate information gleaned

from his wife—who had repeatedly warned him against acting on that information. (The couple separated in 2011 and later divorced.)

Today Christie remains close with her brother, David, 62, and her two half-brothers: Cooper Hefner, the 26-year-old chief creative officer of Playboy Enterprises, and 27-year-old Marston Hefner, who writes under the name Marston Glenn and is the author of a collection of postapocalyptic zombie tales called *Bleed*. The four of them gathered for dinner in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles at the end of September the day after their father died, unexpectedly and of natural causes, at the Mansion.

We sent **Stephen Rebello**, whose last *Playboy Interview* was with Patton Oswalt, to Chicago, where he interviewed Hefner in her Michigan Avenue offices. Says Rebello, "Christie Hefner is brisk, articulate and

both over his daughter's left shoulder. It was unsettling and somehow oddly comforting at the same time."

PLAYBOY: For years you've turned down offers to write an autobiography and declined more than a few invitations to do the *Playboy Interview*.

HEFNER: I am fundamentally a private person. I wouldn't choose to share in a book things about my working relationship with my father or my personal life that I consider intimate. If I had agreed to do a memoir or an autobiography, it would have become a cheat. Way too many people think they need to write a book and that the world is interested in hearing about their life. I had a very clever agent once say to me, "Which is exactly why you should write a book—because you have that kind of insight." I thought, Well played, sir, well played.

PLAYBOY: Well played, but still no sale. This time, though, you've agreed to an interview.

HEFNER: I wouldn't have said yes were it not on the heels of my father's death and had there been no element of tribute. In all likelihood I wouldn't have said yes if Cooper hadn't asked me. But I also wouldn't have said yes if I hadn't felt comfortable about the phone conversation you and I had beforehand.

PLAYBOY: Hugh Hefner's death unleashed, and keeps unleashing, reminiscences, reappraisals, appreciation and virulent criticism from all over the world. As a colleague of his for decades observed, "The ones who knew and understand him the least are writing the most." How are you coping with the loss of your father?

HEFNER: Well, it's still very new and I'm still very early in it. I don't think I'm in a position to be helpful on coping strategies for grief. I have been helped indirectly by the many things I have had to attend to, like planning the memorial celebration we had for close friends in Los Angeles and a memorial celebration here in Chicago. I was asked to write a tribute for the magazine, which I did. I've also been overwhelmed by the outpouring of kindness in e-mails, cards and flowers. For a while there it looked like I could open a florist's shop.

PLAYBOY: How often were you able to see him in recent years?

HEFNER: I saw my father once a month, when I would go out to Los Angeles. So in a funny way I'm not having to face his absence on a day-to-day basis. I know he's gone, but it's like, "Well, I'm coming back to Los Angeles next month, so...." I'm not looking forward to going back to the house. On certain levels, the reality of it will sink in more over time, especially on

There's no "It's good enough" for me. There's just an unyielding commitment to trying to be the best, do the best.

businesslike. Fiercely loyal to her father and his legacy, she is a study in poise and boundary-setting, especially on what she will and won't discuss—hence the long phone call she requested before agreeing to this interview. But she is also very much a grieving daughter. More than once when talking about her father, her eyes welled and her crisp speech pattern grew momentarily hesitant. What I came away with was far more precious than tabloid fodder; during our time together she gave refreshingly personal insights on Hef as a father, mentor and boss—and some powerful life lessons about finding yourself even if you grew up in the shadow of such a towering figure.

"Tacked onto a board behind Christie's desk are two photocopied black-and-white images. In one, she and Hef beam at each other; in the other, her father, in close-up, looks raffish, rascally and faraway. It was almost as if Hef himself were monitoring us

occasions or at events I would have shared with him or have shared with him in the past, and now he won't be there.

PLAYBOY: From what other sources are you drawing support?

HEFNER: The man I'm seeing has just been a rock and wonderful. We're fortunate in my family because we really have three families: my brother, David, and me; the two boys, Cooper and Marston, from my dad's second marriage; and my dad's wife, Crystal. There's huge mutual respect and love among all of us, so that's a kind of funny support system, even though everybody has a different kind of grief. I feel for the boys, because they had their dad for far fewer years than David and I did, and of course Crystal lost a husband. It's not the same, but underlying it all we lost the same person whom we loved. The fact that we're close and care so much about each other is a huge plus, and it's something he knew when he was alive.

PLAYBOY: How did you feel when photographers shot you and your siblings out dining together at a Brentwood restaurant the night after your father died?

HEFNER: That was bizarre. That's L.A., though. I had organized the siblings' dinner, as we called it, and we were going to have a family dinner, including Crystal, the next night, which we did. I thought it would be nice to go out with the boys. We were standing on the sidewalk and were suddenly swarmed by paparazzi. I said as we were leaving the restaurant that I was sure it was because people follow Cooper, who is more visible with the company and all.

PLAYBOY: What changes did you observe in your father in his later years?

HEFNER: He was not a person of regrets. Honestly, even when he sometimes behaved regrettably, he was not good that way. Consequently, he wasn't apt to have a would-have, could-have, should-have attitude about things. How he definitely changed was he found it much easier to express how important people were to him and how much he loved them—not just with family but with other people he was close to. He was always a romantic, but that mostly manifested in his personal romantic relationships, as it would normally. That softer side didn't manifest itself so much in his professional relationships. He was not the kind of person to quickly say to someone who worked for him, "Great job" or "I really appreciate the effort you put into that project." He was always fundamentally a kind person, and I don't want to say he became kinder or gentler, because he

was never *not* those things. But as he got older, he became a softer version of himself. Maybe he came to realize how fundamental and essential human relationships are at the end of the day and how they're to be honored and treasured, and part of that is expressing what they mean to you.

PLAYBOY: Did you and David, both very young at the time, suffer because of your parents' divorce?

HEFNER: Candidly, no, because our parents were already separated by the time I was four. David was an infant. I was seven when they divorced. I'm sure it would have been quite different if I had been 13 and they'd been together. I

PLAYBOY: What is your mother like?

HEFNER: I believe the best qualities I have came from her. In no particular order, she was very engaged in politics; she was a Democratic poll judge almost every election, and from the time I was little she took me canvassing door-to-door for candidates. I got interested in politics when I was very young. She was an English teacher and is an avid reader. From the beginning her attitude was that any book or magazine in the house or in the library was fine to read. She's a wonderful cook, and I learned that from her.

PLAYBOY: Several writers have depicted you as a child abandoned by a father consumed with building his empire. How much did your father actually make you a part of his life?

HEFNER: Growing up, I thought of him kind of like a favorite uncle—someone I knew absolutely loved me and would be there for me but not someone who knew who my friends were or what I was interested in. I would see him a handful of times a year. We went for birthdays and Christmas.

PLAYBOY: At the 74-room, 20,000-square-foot Playboy Mansion in Chicago, where he lived from 1959 through the mid-1970s before relocating to Playboy Mansion West in Los Angeles?

HEFNER: That's right. Those visits were lots of fun. It was like a child's dream because the house had a huge game room. To me it was a game house, with a pool table and a Ping-Pong table, and you didn't have to put quarters in the pinball machines. Every game he owned had a board next to it where you put up the leading scores. Everybody competed to get on or move up the board. He would get the newest games, so that was the first time I saw *Pong*, *Pac-Man*, *Frogger* and *Donkey Kong*.

We'd have a lovely dinner and conversation, and then we would play games. He was highly competitive with me and I with him.

PLAYBOY: In what ways are you most like Hef?

HEFNER: It's different now than it might have been 20 or 40 years ago, but I would say my competitiveness, my almost unending desire to make it the best it can be, whatever the "it" is, whether it's wrapping a birthday present or helping develop a strategy for a company. There's no "It's good enough" for me. There's just an unyielding commitment to trying to be the best, do the best.

My parents weren't married that long, but there's a reason they were attracted to each other. In addition to their progressive political views, we have very much the same wickedly



never lived with my dad. My mother, I have to say, was incredible.

PLAYBOY: How so?

HEFNER: I came to appreciate this only in hindsight, but she always emphasized that the fact that the marriage hadn't worked had nothing to do with how much our father loved us and wanted to always be in our lives. Sometimes children feel that if they had done something differently or better their parents would have stayed together and that somehow they caused the divorce. And then there are other parental dynamics in divorce where the kids become pawns and each parent says terrible things about the other in front of the kids, which is horrible. But my mother was just great about that.



dark sense of humor. I could easily finish a lot of my father's sentences, and either of us could take something and turn it into a quip. I think of myself as a very loyal friend.

PLAYBOY: There had to be times when you just wanted more time with him, among other things.

HEFNER: When I was younger I was less forgiving of his shortcomings than I became as I got older. I've had this conversation with friends who have had challenging relationships with one or another parent. The only thing I can say is what I feel: The other person isn't going to change. That is who they are. With someone who is genuinely abusive or a bad person, you should just get out of town. But if they're being the best person they know how to be, then you have to decide if there isn't much there you can love and not become consumed with what they're not able to give you.

PLAYBOY: How did you react to your father's relationship with Barbi Benton from 1969 to 1976? She was born only two years before you.

HEFNER: He met her in 1969, my last year of many at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, in Michigan, where I was involved in music and drama. I remember being there and reading newspaper stories about him going to Europe, where she was shooting a movie. As a girl I was a little suspicious of her and slow to warm up. I don't think it had to do with anything in particular that I didn't like about her. My dad was very youthful, so I don't think it had much to do with the age difference. I just remember thinking, as I did when my mom began dating the wonderful man she has been with for 40 years now: Is this a good person and a good relationship? Barbi and I have actually become quite good friends.

PLAYBOY: You were almost thinking like a protective parent whose kid is dating.

HEFNER: It took 10 years, but I came to understand that she was a wonderful influence on him. She got him to travel and broaden his horizons in ways he hadn't before. I've told Barbi many times that he became a richer, better person in the years of that relationship. I used to tease her and say, "You know, we could borrow each other's clothes."

PLAYBOY: What do you remember most about growing up in the village of Wilmette, Illinois, about 14 miles from downtown Chicago?

HEFNER: The music of the 1960s was my high-school soundtrack. I remember a large framed photo of Ringo Starr that my father got for me, which was kind of cute because the Beatles had visited the Chicago Mansion. They might have stayed the night, but I'm not positive. I strongly suspect that Bobbie Arnstein, my father's long-time executive assistant and right-hand

person, said to him, "You should get something for Christie. She's a teenager and this is the Beatles." How my father wound up with Ringo, I have no idea. I was actually a Paul person.

PLAYBOY: What was your classroom role?

HEFNER: I was the one whose hand shot up all the time when the teacher asked a question. I loved school. I met many of my friends, particularly from New Trier West High School in Northfield, Illinois, because we were in shows together. I started in fifth grade, playing the title role in *Sleeping Beauty*, all *en français*. In high school I had a small role in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and a much bigger role in Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. I spent six summers at Interlochen, playing Daisy Mae in *Li'l Abner* and Luisa in *The Fantasticks* and singing in a number of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. I was wise enough to know that I didn't have the level of talent it takes to make it a career.

in those years. Did any of your friends know Hef was your dad?

HEFNER: I had my sweet 16 party at the Mansion, so my 14 closest girlfriends knew.

PLAYBOY: Did any friends avoid associating with the daughter of Mr. Playboy?

HEFNER: Not in any way that blew back on me or that I was conscious of. When my best girlfriend from grammar school and I went out to lunch years later, she told me that when we were in third grade, she was at home having dinner with her parents and somehow the subject of work and dads came up. She told them, "You know, Cindy's dad is a doctor, and Christie's dad is the editor of *PLAYBOY*...." *PLAYBOY* was just a name to her; she could easily have said he was the editor of *National Review*. She told me that her father had said to her, "You shouldn't believe all the things your little friends tell you."

PLAYBOY: When boyfriends entered the picture, did you ever find yourself having to introduce them not only to your father but also to your mother and stepfather?

HEFNER: My high school boyfriend certainly knew my mom and Ed Gunn, but I don't believe he ever came to dinner with my dad. Once I got into high school, I don't remember bringing any boyfriends to meet my father.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever seek or receive relationship advice from your father?

HEFNER: Not when I was younger, but we talked about religion and politics. At certain points when I became an adult we might have talked about relationships, though, candidly, I was probably trying to secretly give him relationship advice under the guise of discussing relationships.

PLAYBOY: Did you have a lot of boyfriends?

HEFNER: I wasn't allowed to date until I was 16. That was my stepfather's edict. My mother took me to get the birth control pill when I was a freshman in college. I had a very open relationship with my mother. There were a couple of guys I went out with a couple of times, but pretty quickly I was "going steady," as we would say back then, with the same guy through high school. I met my college boyfriend, Paul, very early in my freshman year. We fell in love and lived together for three years, and then we were a couple during my senior year even though he was in his first year at Georgetown Law.

PLAYBOY: In 1974 you graduated from Brandeis, worked at Playboy over the summer and then moved to Boston. What career path did you have in mind?

HEFNER: My long-range plan was to apply to Yale's combination law and public policy graduate program. My dream was to wind up on

When I went to work at the company I'm quite sure my dad did not expect me to stay, never mind run it someday.

PLAYBOY: What kind of trouble did you get into as a young woman?

HEFNER: We were reading Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* in a high school advanced English class. At the time, girls couldn't wear slacks to school. It was already seen as silly, but the rules hadn't changed. I said to the eight other young women in the class, "We're reading *Civil Disobedience*. Let's all show up in slacks tomorrow. What are they going to do?" Five girls showed up in slacks, and I got sent to the principal's office—the other girls had brought skirts to change into. My mother was called, and she thought I was in the right and they were in the wrong. I had an intellectual debate with the principal, who said, "If we didn't have dress codes, the students might show up in bathing suits." I remember saying, "Honestly, it would be incredibly uncomfortable being in school all day in a bathing suit, so I doubt that's a genuine worry."

PLAYBOY: You were known as Christie Gunn



the Supreme Court or in the Senate. Part of the divorce decree was that our dad would pay for whatever colleges we got into. I had no interest in Radcliffe, where my mother thought she'd like me to go. A friend of mine, the television and film director Ed Zwick, was going to Harvard and suggested Brandeis: liberal arts, great academics, coed, close to Boston. I loved it.

I changed my last name to Hefner the summer before my senior year. I'd been elected to Phi Beta Kappa my junior year. I had this idea that the certificate would be important to me and it would have my name on it, and I didn't have warm fuzzy feelings about my stepfather. Whatever the challenges of navigating the world with a famous last name, it seemed about the safest environment to make the change. So I went to court and changed my name to Christie Ann Hefner.

PLAYBOY: Rather than head straight to grad school, you wrote film reviews for the alternative newspaper *The Boston Phoenix*.

HEFNER: I thought I'd work as a journalist for a year before I considered graduate school. I liked journalism and got accepted into Radcliffe's publishing program. In my imagination I was going to be the next Ellen Goodman, a columnist who could write about serious and important issues but in a personal way. Maureen Dowd would be today's version.

PLAYBOY: What happened?

HEFNER: I was visiting my dad, and I told him about the Radcliffe program. He said, "Would you rather come back to Chicago, intern at the magazine and work with the editors and writers there?" I thought, Yeah, I probably would learn much more by being with some of the best writers and editors around.

PLAYBOY: Did you feel coerced?

HEFNER: I never felt pressured to work in the company or, later, to take over the company. I've met enough Donald Grahams, Arthur Sulzberger Jrs. and Brian L. Robertses, and I think it must be challenging to feel this mantle on you almost from the beginning or to feel if you choose not to accept it you're deeply disappointing someone you love. When I went to work at the company I'm quite sure my dad did not expect me to stay, never mind run it someday. Things that would have been burdensome, like feeling my life had been mapped out for me or that I didn't have free choice, were not there.

PLAYBOY: How did you adapt to the office environment?

HEFNER: In no small measure as a result of its being Playboy, you're talking about

people who are crackerjack smart, highly creative and overwhelmingly liberal. I felt completely at home with them. Problem-solving is my default mode, and it manifests itself in all aspects of my life. I came to realize that business is this interesting mix of creativity and discipline, and discipline is sort of about problem-solving. For me, Playboy lived at this interesting intersection of the two, with a strong element of social conscience over it. The thing that most struck me after I'd been there awhile was how much I enjoyed it and how much more comfortable I felt than I ever would have imagined.

able to do, in part because they don't know that they shouldn't be able to do it, and so they just press forward.

PLAYBOY: During your tenure Playboy saw drastic layoffs and an expensive push toward developing a strong online presence long before other magazines had made the leap. How much guidance and support did your father offer when things got rocky?

HEFNER: I was incredibly stressed about the state of the company and the responsibility, and I spent a long time worrying about whether we could turn it around. I had all these stakeholders—the employees, the public shareholders, the business partners. But I also had him. He did say at one point, "I want you to know I sleep better knowing that you're in this job," which I thought was very dear.

PLAYBOY: Was your father a good businessman?

HEFNER: If he wanted to be, he could be. He had an acute intelligence that allowed him to very quickly zero in on what was important in complex situations. He'd ask the questions that, depending on whether you were prepared or not, you were either glad to be talking about or really sorry he'd asked. For someone as creative as he was, he could also be highly analytical and logical. On the other hand, he could willfully *not* be a good businessman if he decided something else was more important to him. He could choose to disregard what I'm sure he knew were the merits of the business side. When people on my team would get discouraged, I used to say, "It's a campaign, not a battle." Over time he became less and less an active business partner. He didn't aspire to be a CEO; he aspired to be an editor

and a chief creative officer. He had become a CEO because he'd started a magazine that then spawned an empire, and he was the person to run it.

PLAYBOY: So you didn't take offense when your father said things like "Ask Corporate," referring to you?

HEFNER: [Laughs] Or "Ask Chicago." No. The flip side of that was when something didn't go the way a person wanted, the first sentence they would say to me always began with "Your father...." It's like when a parent comes home from work and the other parent says, "Your son...." You know the end of that sentence isn't "...got an A on his math test today."

PLAYBOY: Working with any boss is complicated enough, let alone, one would imagine,



PLAYBOY: When your father offered you the chance to run the company with him, you had to deal with its financial troubles. He reportedly said it was as if he'd thrown a great party and now you'd come in to clean up the morning after.

HEFNER: He actually said that to me and then repeated it publicly. Well, I thought, there's a little self-awareness anyway. [laughs] For sure there was trouble in the empire by the time I became president. I often ask myself what made me think I was up to the task, because, to be honest, there was no logic to it. I was 29. I'd never worked anywhere else in a business. I didn't even have an MBA. And it was a publicly traded company, so I wasn't going to be forgiven for making learner's mistakes. But people do things that by all rights they shouldn't be



working with a boss who is also your parent. How heated did things get?

HEFNER: I can tell you that it never got heated between my father and me because he was completely nonconfrontational. He was not a screamer or a table pounder. If we were having a difficult time, it would manifest itself in tension during a meeting or in the avoidance of meetings.

PLAYBOY: How did you weather the charges of nepotism and the magazine articles that called you the Princess of Playboy and Ms. Playboy, as if you got the job only as a matter of succession?

HEFNER: I'd been president a few years and we were in the middle of the turnaround when I just decided that most people were going to judge me based on what I did with the opportunity I'd been given. That's all I ever asked for. The fact that some people would never get past the fact that I'd been given this opportunity as a function of being the daughter of the founder—or, for that matter, the son of the founder—just didn't matter to me.

PLAYBOY: When you ran the company, women executives were a minority. How many other women were in top positions within Playboy's ranks?

HEFNER: On the Playboy Club side, a woman vice president in charge of a lot of the marketing and merchandising sent me a cute welcome-to-the-club note when I became a vice president. Over time, women in number-two positions had come up the ranks in administrative services and human resources. Many senior editors, the copy chief, the West Coast photo editor, the cartoon editor and, for much of the time I was there, the fiction editors were women, and we had big copy and research staffs, many of them women. When I joined, in the mid-1970s, women at *Time*, *Newsweek* and I think even *The New York Times* were filing class-action suits because women couldn't get out of the copy pool; there were no women on mastheads. At Playboy there wasn't the dynamic that all the women were secretaries and all the men had power. It was much more nuanced than that. When I left, more than 40 percent of my executives were women.

PLAYBOY: How do you explain some people's insistence on believing that Playboy must have been, and may still be, a sexist, *Mad Men*-type environment?

HEFNER: I encountered a fair amount of sexism, but it wasn't within the walls of the company. When I was running Playboy, it was almost laughable how often an accounting firm, law firm or investment bank would come to bid on work, and you just knew from the dynamic of the team they brought that the senior partner had said, "We can't go in there with no women! Find

a woman, for God's sake!" And so they'd picked some poor woman whose name they didn't even know who'd be cowering against the wall in the conference room. It was ridiculous.

PLAYBOY: What kind of sexual harassment have you encountered in your life and career?

HEFNER: I don't know any women who haven't been sexually harassed, to be honest. Sexual harassment is a power issue by definition, so once I became president and CEO I wasn't likely to be targeted. But was I in situations where men seemed to think I was dying to kiss them and have them put their tongues down my throat when I had no interest? Or they put me up against a wall? Or came pounding on my door in a hotel room? Absolutely. So in the broader sense of a lack of clear communication and understanding the difference between someone expressing interest and someone who

HEFNER: You have to treat those photos as a Rorschach test: You're reading your own psyche into them to think that the magazine in any way stood for anything other than respectful relationships between men and women. It couldn't have been more overt in the voice of the magazine or in the people who were interviewed for it. I remember reading an answer to a question in *Playboy Advisor* in the early 1980s that was so stunning: "She has the right to say no even if she has her panties off."

PLAYBOY: Then how do you feel about the famous phrase "You can't be a feminist at Playboy" being leveled at you—both then and in hindsight?

HEFNER: Well, in no particular order, I would have said I am among many feminists at Playboy, and I know from the research we do that the readers of the magazine also support the goals of the women's movement and don't see the idea of the sexual appeal of women and beauty in any way at odds with that. I think it's not an accident that the places in the world where women's rights are suppressed are also the places in the world where sex is repressed.

Playboy has been a force for good in terms of opening up attitudes and empowering people. And the sexual revolution benefited women as well as men because the good girl-bad girl dichotomy was harmful for women. Separate from that, are you interested in slogans or in changing the world? Because if you want to change the world, you need allies, and if you want to have allies, then I wouldn't push away the largest men's magazine that is actually on

your side on these issues. It's not a good strategy to make young women less likely to identify as feminist because they see it as being anti-male. It's a struggle the women's movement has actually gone through, more at certain times than others, but it's still a struggle. For a long time you'd get women—forget men—who would say, "Well, I'm not a feminist, but..." and then they'd say things that are completely feminist. Playboy did not cause the word *feminist* to take on a taint that kept younger women from identifying with it; it was that aspect of the women's movement at its extreme—Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, "all heterosexual sex is rape," "all heterosexual men are fundamentally rapists." Whether they believe that or not I can't say, but it's a warped sense of who men are and is not designed to build bridges between the genders in a way that could help solve issues, whether issues that transcend gender or issues like sexual harassment that are rooted in gender.

It's not an accident that the places where women's rights are suppressed are the places sex is repressed.

is not interested, I have seen that, yes.

PLAYBOY: How do you react to the charge that Playboy contributed to and continues to contribute to the culture of harassment and toxic masculinity?

HEFNER: It's a complete misapprehension of anything to do with Playboy. In all the years I worked there we never had that problem, to my knowledge. We never had to litigate a suit. And it was a highly sexualized environment by definition because of the creative content of the product. It was very clear that the culture was one of respect—respect on every level. We weren't going to subject employees to drug tests or polygraphs, and the models were as respected as the writers or any of the magazine's other contributors. All of the Playboy Clubs had Bunny mothers so the women working as Bunnies would have a woman, not a man, to go to if there was a problem.

PLAYBOY: And what about the photos and layouts in the magazine?



PLAYBOY: Let's circle back to your story. In January 2009 you exited Playboy Enterprises and went on to pursue other interests: political, corporate, public health and beyond. How was it for you transitioning out of Playboy?

HEFNER: I'd actually been thinking about leaving for a couple of years. I had to decide what I wanted to do next, and the only thing I knew for certain was that I had a long-standing interest in politics and public policy. We had just elected Barack Obama, for whom I'd been working since his U.S. Senate primary run, when very few people thought he could win. I sat next to Michelle when Barack gave the speech in Denver that put him on the map. I invited Barack to be the featured elected official at an annual magazine conference I chaired, and I asked David Remnick to interview him. I brought him to L.A. for his first fund-raiser and asked Norman Lear to host it. We had a real history together. I thought if I'm ever going to do anything more than just help individual candidates—if not now, when? But I didn't want to move to Washington, and I didn't want to try to get a job in the administration.

PLAYBOY: Were you anxious about finding another position quickly?

HEFNER: My then husband [William Marovitz], to give him fair due, gave me a great piece of advice: "Don't feel you have to say yes to everything that's offered to you right away as if there won't be other things. If you can wait a bit, I think you'll have opportunities you can't imagine, because no one's thought of you as available to do anything other than what one does in one's spare time when one is CEO of a public company. Now you're available."

PLAYBOY: What were you offered?

HEFNER: I said no to a bunch of not-for-profit boards, but the founders and CEO of Canyon Ranch, on whose board I sat, called. I didn't want to be CEO but I did get to work with them, first as a consultant and then as executive chairman of a new division. A CNN producer asked if I would like to do more television. I'd started doing TV for a while when the Washington Speakers Bureau contacted me about representing me, and I started doing that. Things just assembled themselves in such a way that I thought, I can make a living and have enough time to do things that interest me in the political and not-for-profit world and have a life.

PLAYBOY: More of a life than you had as a CEO?

HEFNER: Once I was out of that for a while, I could see more clearly that the job of CEO entailed worrying 24/7 about everybody else.

It was enormously refreshing to find that I still take everything I do seriously and give it my all, but I don't have to feel that everything rests on my decision-making. During my time at Canyon Ranch, I met with HatchBeauty. Three years ago its CEO said, "Would you consider working with us to help build the company to the next level?" I said yes. And a former friend who had a consulting firm I used when I was building Playboy.com in the 1990s is now an operating partner at L Catterton. He has just been asked to become CEO of the largest massage school and skin care school in the country and do a turnaround. He asked if I would be interested in working with him on it. I've agreed to do that. And I'm on the board of a large family agricultural company because I met the CEO through the not-for-profit

he works for are candidates I've worked for, which is kind of neat. One of the advantages of having lived some years is you know more quickly whether someone is the kind of person, in all the things that matter to you, you would be serious about.

PLAYBOY: As someone with a strong interest and sphere of influence in politics, are you optimistic about the future of this country?

HEFNER: I'm a fundamental optimist, so I'm optimistic about our politics, the planet, human relationships, business. That doesn't mean I'm not worried. There's very little this administration is doing that I don't vehemently disagree with. I was actively involved in an effort to end gerrymandering here in Illinois, and I deeply believe in ending the corrupting influence of money in politics through some form of public financing and independent drawing of electoral maps. I'm increasingly intrigued by this concept you have in California of open primaries. As depressing as the results of the election were—which, by the way, was on my birthday, thank you very much—I found it equally disturbing that more than 90 million people who could have voted didn't. But there are things that make you optimistic: the thousands of lawyers who showed up at airports the night of the first travel ban, the multimillion-dollar spike in contributions to the ACLU and Planned Parenthood and the numbers of wonderful people in elected office, such as Senator Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota.

PLAYBOY: Do you see any strong presidential candidates for 2020?

HEFNER: No, and I'm not particularly worried about that. At this point in time people didn't know Barack, Bill Clinton or Jimmy Carter either.

PLAYBOY: Accusations of sexual misconduct against director and producer Brett Ratner recently derailed a Hugh Hefner biopic project in which Jared Leto had been rumored as a possibility to star. Do you want to see a movie made of your father's life?

HEFNER: Jared Leto has the bone structure for it. I'm very impressed with him as an actor. I'm mostly rooting for a good script. The Amazon series *American Playboy* was so good, though, I'd kind of like it to be the last chapter.

PLAYBOY: Looking back on it all, have you ever wished you'd been born to someone else?

HEFNER: No. First of all, it's the life you know. I'm not much of a "road not taken" person. I'm still encouraged to run for office, and it's one of the things I probably would have done if I hadn't gone down the path that I did. But I didn't feel burdened by it. It's been a wonderful life. ■

Listen, I had a personal life when I was running Playboy, so for sure I have a personal life now.

WomenCorporateDirectors. I recognize there may come a time when everything stops and nothing else starts, but it's been more than eight years and it's worked so far.

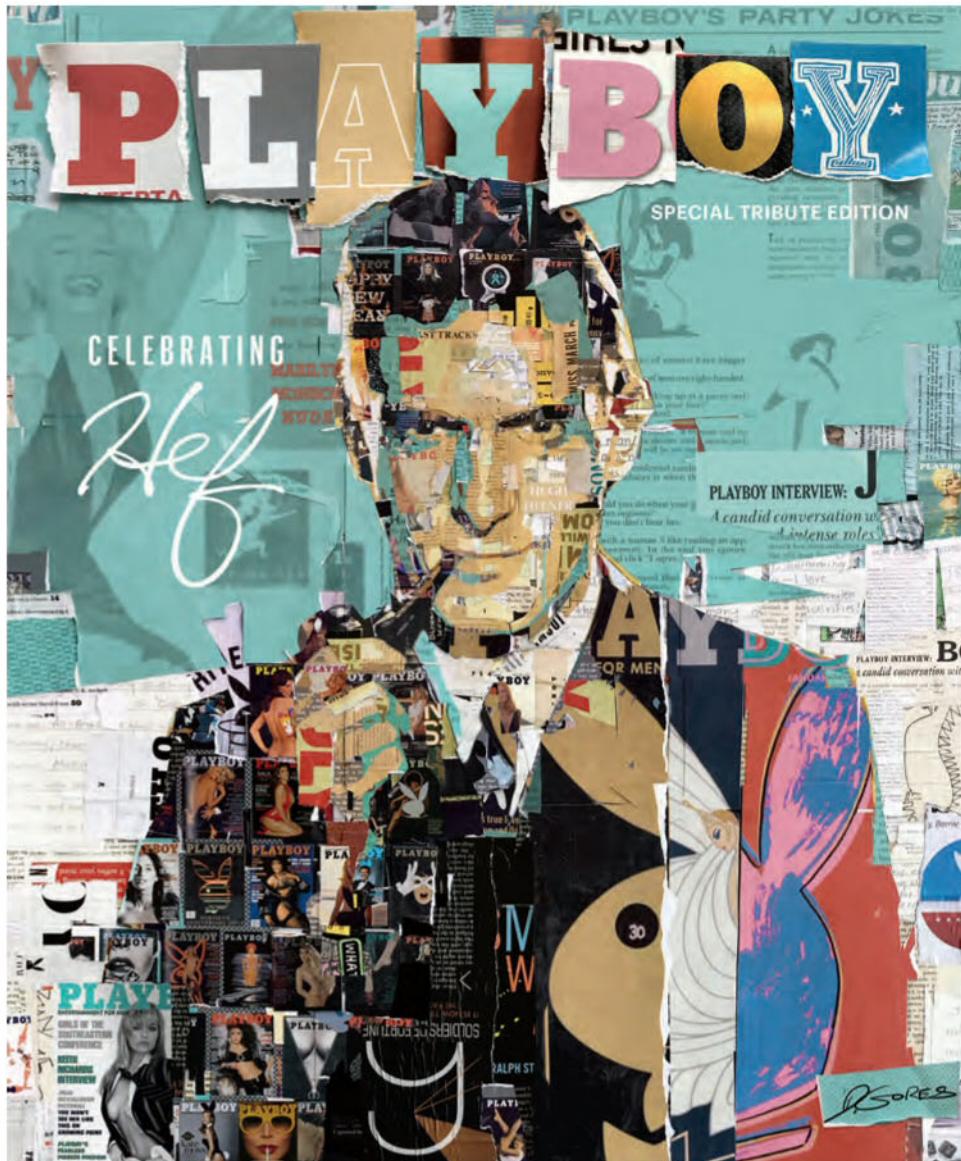
PLAYBOY: And you have a personal life?

HEFNER: Oh gosh, yes. The nice thing about virtually everything I've just described is that I have a high degree of control over how much time I spend on it and how I spend that time, so it can flex, you know? If something becomes intense, then something else goes on the back burner for a bit. Listen, I had a personal life when I was running Playboy, so for sure I have a personal life now.

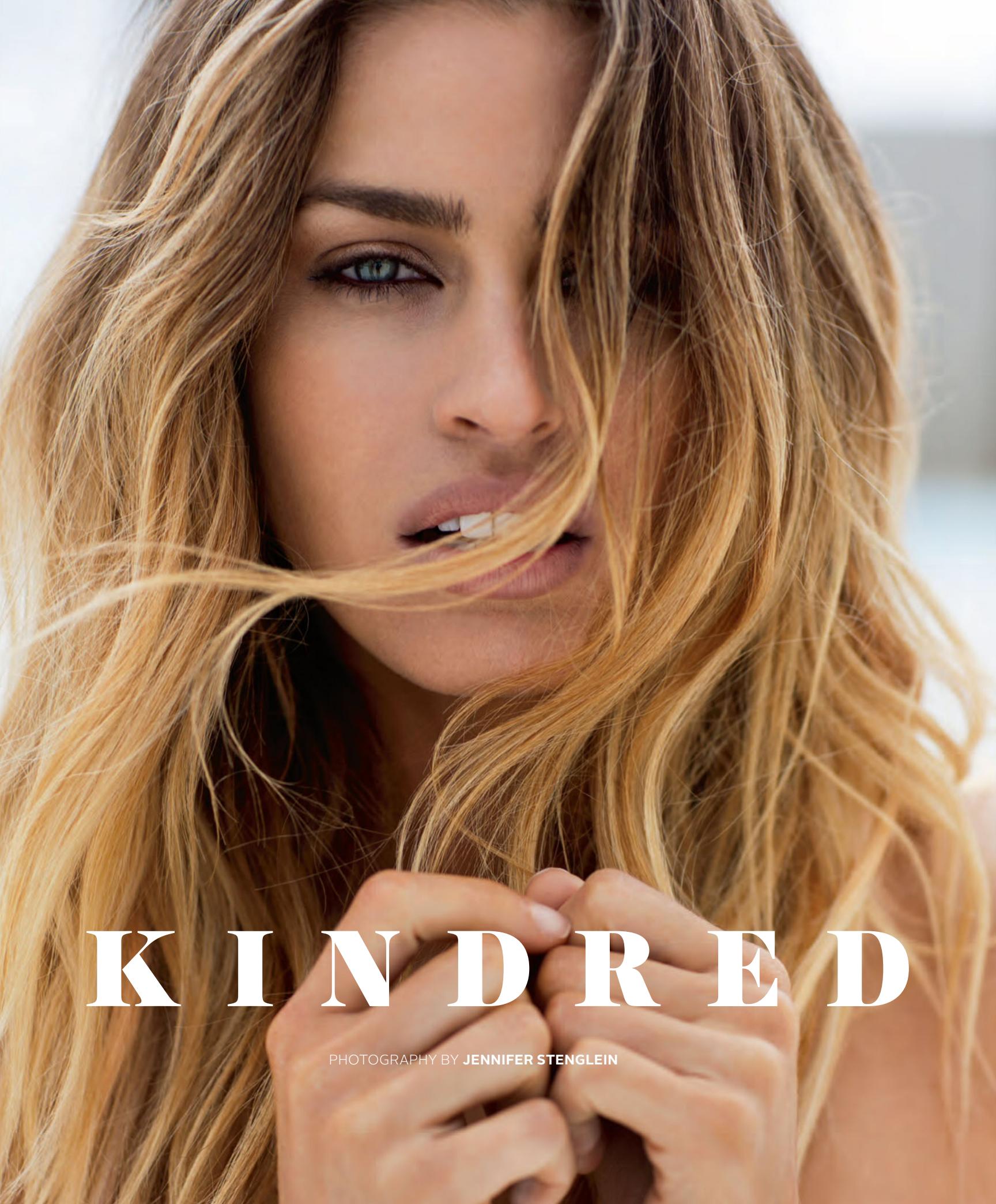
PLAYBOY: You mentioned earlier that there is a man in your life. Do you want to say anything more about him?

HEFNER: We haven't been going out very long, but I would call it a very serious relationship. He's in business but has broad interests and has a fantastic young son in his 20s who's very interested in politics. That's been fun, because some of the candidates

CELEBRATE THE MAN BEHIND IT ALL



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SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO HUGH M. HEFNER



K I N D R E D

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER STENGLIN



SPIRITS

Abby Brothers—Kentucky native, dedicated vegan and child of nature—meets her match in a majestic wildcat, and her animal instincts follow suit



















For its spring 2017 collection, fashion brand Eckhaus Latta launched the year's sexiest ad campaign.

YEAR IN SEX

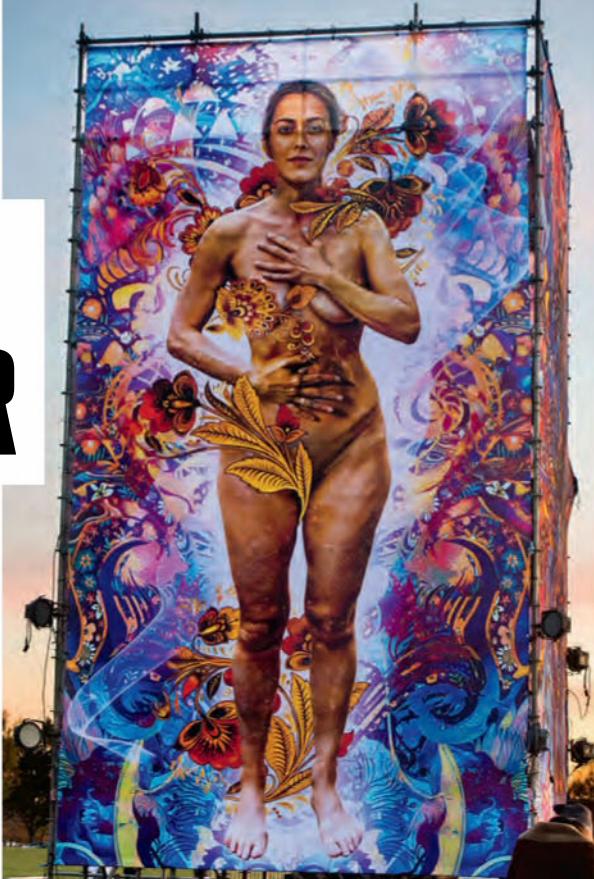
Politics and protest, privacy and pregnancy—a look at 2017's craggy sexual landscape

BY **LIZ SUMAN & SAMANTHA SAIYAVONGSA**

PUSSY POWER

ATTACK OF THE 26-FOOT WOMAN

Our Evolution (right), a towering digital portrait of a nude woman created by artists Mia Hardwick and Marty Kenney, arrived in November at the National Mall, where it stood as a statement of female empowerment at Catharsis on the Mall, a three-day free-speech version of Burning Man.



UNCAGED

Three days before the Women's March, artist and activist Natalie White (above), who's no stranger to bringing exposure to a cause, staged a topless demonstration called Women's Equality Jail in support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

HAT TIP

The day after Donald Trump's inauguration, a sea of pink cat ears flooded the nation's capital for the Women's March. "Pussyhats" became the unofficial uniform of the largest single-day protest in U.S. history.



PLEASURE CRAFT

Japanese artist Megumi Igarashi spent a week in jail on obscenity charges for e-mailing 3-D scans of her vulva that she'd used to build her vagina-kayak. In October Igarashi, who works under the name Rokudenashiko (loosely translated: "good-for-nothing girl") joined forces with PEN America on an initiative to protect artists from censorship and government persecution.



RECKONING

DOWNFALL

Hollywood megaproducer Harvey Weinstein was dumped from his own company after dozens of women accused him of unwanted advances and worse. The revelations of one man's misconduct rapidly snowballed into a national conversation about sex and power—and harassment allegations against many other well-known men.



VOICES RISING

The #MeToo hashtag exploded in response to the Weinstein charges, with more than 500,000 people tweeting their stories of harassment and abuse.





THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Nearly 50 percent of Americans believe sex with robots will be common within the next 50 years. One in four men said they'd consider having robot sex, while fewer than one in 10 women

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS

Voted one of the best sex inventions of 2017, Biem is an app that aims to be a "virtual health clinic." Schedule consultations, video chat with doctors and access results via smartphone. The makers say they hope



FUTURE SEX

would; 52 percent of those open to bot-boinking said it's important that the robot resemble a human.

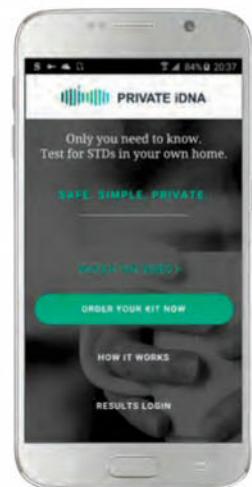
GET TESTED

A crop of new companies, including Mately, myLAB Box and Private iDNA, is making it easier than ever to get tested quickly and quietly for STDs. Order a kit online, send your sample to the lab and then share the results digitally.

to encourage people to take charge of their sexual health.

ELECTRIC LOVE

Sex researchers in Los Angeles may have found a way to deliver electrical currents to your brain to help boost or curb your sex drive. Liberos LLC offers "brain-stim" consultations—and for a \$50 donation to sex research will send you a "prototype anal probe."



PRIVACY, PLEASE



DOCU DRAMA

April saw the release of *Hot Girls Wanted: Turned On*, the Netflix docuseries, co-produced by Rashida Jones, about sex, tech and amateur porn stars. A thought-provoking look at cam girls and sex workers, the show was criticized by two women who said one episode used footage of their Periscope feeds without their consent.

SOMEONE'S GOING DOWN

Rapper Cardi B's eye-catching album art (left), in which a heavily



tattooed man buries his head between her bare legs, caught a lawsuit in October. The distinctive ink apparently belongs to a man who says he never posed or gave permission for his likeness to be used; he wants \$5 million for his troubles.

SOMETIMES CHEATERS WIN

Users of Ashley Madison, a dating site for married

people, slapped the company with a huge class-action lawsuit in 2015 after their personal records—from financial data to sexual proclivities—were leaked. In July a federal judge approved an \$11.2 million settlement against the website.

HACK IS WHACK

Hackers again stole private photos and videos from major stars, then dumped them onto the web for all to see. Some of the targeted celebs, including Kristen Stewart (left) and Stella Maxwell, fought back with legal action.



HOT MAMAS

OH, BEY-BEY

Wearing a bra and panties and little else, Beyoncé (right) made the sexiest pregnancy announcement in the history of the internet in early February.

POWER POSE

Exactly 26 years after Annie Leibovitz's portrait of a nude, pregnant Demi Moore graced the cover of *Vanity Fair*, Serena Williams appeared on a similar belly-baring cover (below), also captured by Leibovitz. Another beautiful reminder that maternity and sexuality are not mutually exclusive.



TRANSCENDING

A FREE WOMAN

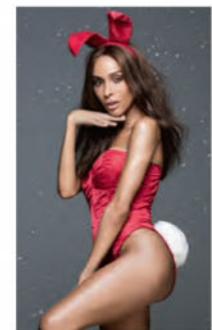
Before exiting office, Barack Obama commuted Chelsea Manning's sentence for leaking military secrets. Manning celebrated by releasing the first photo of herself as a woman. Soon after, September's *Vogue* featured her in a red swimsuit.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BEAUTY

In November model Ines Rau (below) became *PLAYBOY*'s first trans Playmate—her second appearance in the magazine. Selected shortly before Hugh Hefner's death, she called it "the most beautiful compliment I've ever received."

TRANS ACTIONS

In July President Trump tweeted he'd ban transgender people in the military. The ACLU swiftly told him, "We'll see you in court." In October a federal judge blocked the ban on grounds that it was unconstitutional.



NEW SLANG

Five terms that pricked up our ears in 2017

HALF-NIGHT STAND:

a hookup for which you don't stay the entire night.

CUCKBOY:

a fuckboy who is also a feminist.

BREADCRUMBING:

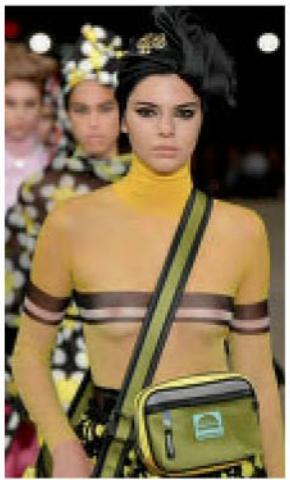
giving someone just enough attention to make them think you're interested.

HATFISHING:

wearing a hat at all times to hide a bald spot, bad hair or other perceived flaw.

GRAPEFRUITING:

giving a blow job while using a shaft-gripping citrus assist.



BARE IS THE NEW BLACK

SHEER GENIUS

Marc Jacobs ended his New York Fashion Week show in September with Kendall Jenner in a see-through top (far left). Jenner isn't nipple-shy off the runway either....

EQUAL EXPOSURE

As part of his fall collection, Calvin Klein dressed both men and women in transparent plastic-and-mesh tops. A comment on gender equality, perhaps, but not on class equality—the pieces retail for more than \$1,000.

TEEING OFF

Braless models took to the runway wearing designer Prabal Gurung's protest tees (left). Emblazoned with phrases such as THE FUTURE IS FEMALE and OUR BODIES, OUR MINDS, OUR POWER, the shirts were inspired by the Women's March.

SEX SELLS

Design duo Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta said they were looking for authenticity when they asked couples to have sex for their spring ad campaign (top). Strategically pixelated, the resulting ads were so hot the label's site crashed after they were posted.

CIRCLE OF LIFE

Studying the sex habits of millennials and...cadavers?

TREASURE CHESTS

Young men apparently aren't into breasts so much: Male porn consumers ages 18 to 24 search for breast-related content nearly 20 percent less than older men do, a Pornhub study found.

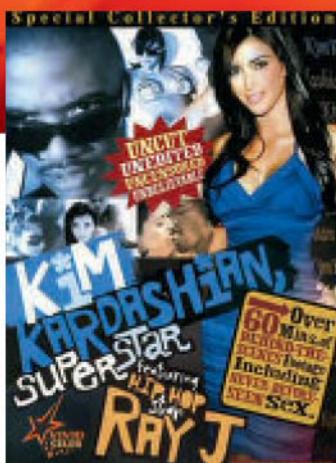


HOT SHEETS

The award for most sexually active age group goes to the 18-to-29 bracket, who get it on about 112 times a year. A Kinsey Institute study that surprised no one suggests age may be a predictor of how often a person has sex.

DEAD SEXY?

The "plastinated" human bodies that populate Gunther von Hagens's Body Worlds: Pulse exhibit, at the California Science Center through February, include a copulating cadaver couple (reverse cowgirl, we've heard).



HARD TO KEEP UP

In the decade since Vivid Entertainment released *Kim Kardashian, Superstar*, the 41-minute home video has generated more than \$100 million; *Keeping Up With*

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

the Kardashians has filmed 14 seasons; and members of the Kardashian-Jenner clan have amassed an estimated collective net worth of \$373 million.

DECade of Decadence

Since opening in May 2007, Pornhub has gained more than 22 million registered users and 170 years' worth of video content. For its 10th anniversary the site awarded premium memberships to 100 winners of a social-media contest. The

porn powerhouse followed the milestone with an unexpected move: expanding its safe-for-work content.

MORE MOSEX

New York City's Museum of Sex (above) celebrated its 15th birthday after a rebranding that positioned it as a thoughtful institution for exploring sex through a playful intellectual lens. The museum has more than 30,000 artifacts—some of them donated by Playboy.



GOOD TIMES

SMELL-O-VISION

Yes, it's kind of like a gas mask—but a sexy gas mask! CamSoda's device (above) combines virtual reality with actual scents, such as sweat, that correspond to the visuals.

HANDYMAN SPECIAL

DIY enthusiasts' delight: From butt plugs to vibrating saddles, you can download toy designs at SexShop3D.com, then print and play.

THE RUBDOWN

The futuristic Cobra Libre II (below) from Germany's Fun Factory is proof positive that erotic massages aren't just for women.



NICE PACKAGE

An Unbound subscription is like Birchbox for sex toys: Get a goodie box in the mail every three months—think cock rings, nipple balm and arousal gel.

DUPED BY GOOP

Gwyneth Paltrow found herself in hot water this year after promoting "Yoni eggs"—vaginally inserted jade ovoids—on her website, Goop. The gemstones were advertised as increasing feminine energy and confidence, but watch groups say the health claims are unsubstantiated. Others warn the eggs can get stuck. Among other products Goop hypes: a \$15,000 gold-plated vibrator (right).





WHAT SHE SAW

Silence entombs the secrets of the past

BY **ARIEL DORFMAN**

She didn't know I was watching when they roughed her up that dawn.

Oh, she knew I was a conscript, wasting away my youth in that regimiento, everything in my life terrible except for our one tumultuous night together on a weekend furlough. Carmina had liked me in spite of the uniform I was wearing, hoped I would do the right thing, she said, and stay loyal to the government if there was a coup, and I had answered that I prayed to the Virgin every chance I got that I wouldn't have to make that sort of choice, promising that the next time we'd meet up I wouldn't be in military garb.

But the next time turned out to be five days later when my mates pushed her through the door of the barracks and she didn't recognize me. Or didn't want to.

She wasn't blindfolded.

Later, we blindfolded everybody, right away. The sergeant told us it was for our own good, so the prisoners couldn't ever testify as to our identity, but that wasn't the reason we covered those eyes up, I thought. I thought it was because we were ashamed of what we were doing, we didn't want to remember what those eyes were mirroring.

But that dawn in Puente Alto her eyes were wide open, looking groundward but oh so open, and yet she did not see me. Maybe everything happened too fast, maybe my image was distorted by her fear: a man across the room from her, in full military gear, the mere blur of a face, cheekbones smeared over with black grease. And a rifle with a bayonet pointed in her direction. If I had been her I would have focused on the glint of that bayonet, the raw steel, the possible thrust of that raw white steel. But I wasn't her. I was standing at a distance and remained there all the while—the slaps and kicks could not have lasted more than a minute or so—and then she was gone, hustled away to who knows what hole in hell. Without my having touched her. The hands that had explored every soft slope of her skin did not fondle her in that barracks, those hands were not mine, not my lips swearing at her, not my feet probing her midriff.

If it had gone any further, I would have intervened, of that I am sure. Or that is what I

told myself then, continued to tell myself for the next four months until I saw her again, have repeated the same litany during the decades she and I have spent together. This I do not doubt: I would have stopped my mates if they had gone too far. But I was spared the need to confront them. No, no, she was the one spared. At least that dawn, in that place. Later, once she was out of my sight, I don't know, I can't know, I wasn't there. But then, that first hour after she was arrested, that first minute, something saved her. Something. Not me. That same, inexplicable something would bless other female prisoners over the following months, once in a while one of them would remind us of a sister or a mother or who knows what pinup goddess we adored, and just like that, we held back—but with her, with Carmina, my brothers in arms experienced that need for mercy for the first time, foretelling other moments of absolution that awaited them, all of us, in the future.

Because suddenly the hands and the boots and the foul words ceased, the urge to unbuckle belts and open zippers subsided, they all took a step back, affording her a miraculous circle in which to breathe, realize that she was going to survive.

Or maybe she already knew that. She was smart, my Carmina. As soon as she came into the room, before the first blow, she had already decided to keep her eyes averted—not only refusing to look at where I was standing, staring quietly, across the chasm of that vast space, but avoiding as well every soldier's hungry face and lips. She had been preparing

for just such an encounter, more than we had. Like all supporters of the revolutionary government, she had trained herself as the devastation of a military takeover loomed near, been instructed by comrades on how to survive, never make your captors feel bad about what they are doing, that will only urge them on to do something worse, do not provoke them into doing something worse.

All speculation on my part.

I had then and still have now, 35 years later, all that time with her by my side, no way of knowing what went on in her head. Only if I had whispered to her when we first met again, revealed that I had been there and witnessed every blow, every curse, the miracle of a reprieve. Only if she had asked me directly or not even asked, just simply stated, I saw you there, I'm glad you did nothing, I'm glad that you did not endanger your life trying to save me when I was perfectly able to take care of myself. We both had to protect our future together, not let it get contaminated. What she never admitted. What I wanted to admit, it was the first thing I needed to do, come clean, when I knocked on the door of her father's house and she appeared, worse for the wear—a broken rib, bruised breasts, a scar on her inner thigh, a fractured wrist, nothing compared with what happened to others—but alive and with a smile that did not try to hide the tooth that had been knocked out.

I had called her house every day since her arrest. Always getting the same measured answer from her mother: Carmina was doing well, thank you very much. Yes, she would be back

soon, again thanks for your interest, we will be sure to let her know you were this considerate.

I wasn't going to appear at her doorstep in uniform. Not when her father, the whole family, hated the military for overthrowing the president, hated them even more for what they did to the president's followers afterward, confirmed that hatred forever when the patrol battered down their door just before dawn and carted Carmina away. And never conceded, the authorities, that she had been detained, her parents and her little sister had no way of knowing if she was alive or dead until that afternoon, four months later, when she suddenly limped her way home.

I saw it as an auspicious sign, some slight benevolence from heaven, that it was the same day that my military service ended. Both of us released at the same time.

So, yes, I fully intended to tell her what I had seen, what I had been unable to stop, what I would have stopped no matter the risk if things had gotten out of hand, presenting myself in the best possible light and yet not shirking my guilt, my dread, my anger, my disgust. That was my plan, as God is my witness. But only God is my witness—God and the band of brothers with whom I served—because she did not let me say a word, her smile was like a sweet wall, she was so radiantly happy to be breathing the same air as I was, and to see me, me and not my bayonet, me and not my helmet, me and not my camouflaged outfit, radiantly happy that I was also alive, that I had not been devoured by the same terror she had been through.

All these months I never forgot your face, she said, her only acknowledgment that anything special or terrifying had befallen her—thank you, thank you for thinking of me every day, I know you were praying for me every day, I could feel it every day—and this was true, I had not forgotten her, not for one instant, our one night fighting loneliness, starving death, those soft, feverish hours under the blanket her friend had loaned her so the winter moon that streamed through the window into that back room would hide her body from my eyes that wanted to roam over each last inch of what I hoped would be mine forever. She did not need me to shatter the one illusion that had kept her sane and unbroken over those months of prison in a place that she did not mention and I did not ask about.

I'll confess tomorrow, now's not the right time. Except tomorrow wasn't the right time, nor the day after that one, tomorrow kept giving way to more tomorrows and once we became engaged, once she recovered enough to

WE WERE WISE ENOUGH NOT TO LET OURSELVES BE EATEN UP BY THE CATASTROPHE.

repeat and explore with me what that inaugural night had offered, once whatever was shattered in the bones and bruised on her skin started to heal, when her many muscles were ready to play and love again, once her body had forgotten her ordeal enough to enjoy my body over and over again, well, it was too late. I couldn't ruin it for her, for us.

If she had cracked open the door to the past just a sliver, offered the slightest splinter of permission for me to breach the stillness. But I had to respect her decision to keep the cobweb of her memories in the dark. At least that's what I convinced myself of, that's how I justified the days as they rushed by toward that wonderful morning when we married, when I was no longer wed to the army, no longer felt under orders, distancing myself ever further from those other soldiers who had pounded my Carmina and also spared her, those mates whose loyalty was all that had separated me from death if it came calling.

The balm of silence. For both of us.

Later, I would wonder whether it wasn't for the sake of the children we had yet to conceive but were awaiting us at the other end of the tunnel of our life and who would have vanished into nothingness, not been given a chance even to exist if she had known what I had seen, if she had not covered up what she had endured, I wondered if it wasn't for them

that she turned her back on that dawn and the nights and days and dawns that followed, eluding the memory of the experience for the sake of our two sons and our darling daughter just as she had avoided my startled, confused, scared eyes as soon as she was marched into that room.

Better that way.

Or were we expected to throw our lives away like fucking crabs dragged by the tide into the sea, for her to throw me into the garbage, for me to throw her into despair, throw away our one stab at happiness, was it fair to demand that we grind out our existence remote from each other forever and ever because I had been unlucky to get conscripted six months before the military coup, she had been unlucky to have a malicious neighbor who accused Carmina of revolutionary activities as a way of getting back at her parents for putting up a fence that choked off the sunlight from his squalid next-door window? Was it our fault that we had been born in this country at the asshole end of the earth?

But we were wise enough, just like the country, just like the country that kept waiting for democracy and elections to return, she and I and everybody else, we were wise enough not to let ourselves be eaten up by the catastrophe.

If I were haunted, it would have been different, I'd have been forced to tell her, tell

anybody, relieve myself. Like a bladder about to burst. But I am not haunted. No ghosts, no nightmares. Not even of their faces, those boys as they blinked into the muzzles of the firing squad. True, there was no certainty my bullet had been the one to kill either of them, I had aimed to one side with the first one, a bit above his head at the second boy. It was risky, if the sergeant, let alone the lieutenant, had suspected, if all of us had done the same thing and everyone had missed and the boys left standing, intact, alive despite the hail of ammunition, pissing in their pants but alive, I would have been the one to die next. But the first one collapsed like a heap of clothes, the second one tottered for an instant that seemed everlasting, enough for a look of surprise to cross his blackening eyes—and they were dead and I was not, I survived and have been able to forget almost everything about them. I tried not to hurt them, that's the truth, and they have thanked me by not smuggling their voices into my dreams during the nights when I am most vulnerable and cannot defend myself against any fading memory. But neither do they hound my waking hours. Leaving me alone, those two boys, just like the others, everybody else who crawled through my life while I was completing my military service. Except for her. That I recall, I cannot help recalling how she stumbled into the room, her eyes to the floor where she was so soon to drop to her knees. Her eyes wide open as she fell.

Does revisiting that incident, does that at least disturb me? Not really. It is like watching a film starring somebody else who has the face I used to wear, the face and body she was inhabiting at the time, not me, certainly not her. Suspended far away, as if that past belonged to a stranger, to a man who died that day and will not resurrect.

Until this morning, when everything changed.

•••

There was that insistent knock at the door. Because our doorbell wasn't working and I kept postponing the need to fix it, I'll get to that tomorrow, *mi amor*, that's what I had said just yesterday to Carmina when she scolded me for being a lazybones.

Today was tomorrow and there was that knock.

I opened the door.

A woman was there. Older than her years, tangled hair that straggled this way and that and a bitter mouth twisted into what she probably thought was a smile, and eyes, those eyes that were the only thing on fire inside her,

eyes that see through you because they have seen everything under the sun and beyond, eyes that once knew how to glow in the dark.

She wanted to see Carmina.

"You know her?"

"I was with her back then."

"Back then?"

"Back then, you know what I mean, you're her husband, aren't you? Back then. Four months together, back then."

I let her in.

She explained that Carmina was not answering her calls, had hung up on her the last two times but that she was going to see her no matter what, come hell and high water. Hell and high water, her exact words.

I told her Carmina was out shopping, did not elaborate that we ran a business from our home, sandwiches for a stand down at the Mapocho bus terminal, just cheese or just



I SURVIVED AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FORGET ALMOST EVERYTHING.

ham or ham and cheese, three kinds of sandwiches, and that afternoon we needed some more bread for the next day's delivery.

"I can wait."

I offered her a cup of tea, some biscuits.

She didn't even respond with a thank you, muttered sullenly that she'd have something when Carmina came back.

Which was an hour later. All the while the two of us just sat, she didn't say a word and I didn't ask her anything either, that's how much we liked each other.

Nor did Carmina seem to like her. Or didn't like the fact that, despite those unanswered phone calls, the many times my wife had hung up on her, this woman had thrust herself into our lives, crossed the threshold that was not hers to cross or enter or question.

Carmina didn't even greet her with a kiss or a hug or a smile.

"I already said no, Cristina. Why are you here?"

Cristina turned to me. "Your wife does not want to appear before the commission. I'm hoping you will help me convince her."

"What commission?"

Carmina responded in a voice that was drained of all emotion. "You know what commission. The one set up by our new government to register the citizens who suffered during the previous regime, give them compensation if their complaint proves true. The Reparations Commission."

"Oh, that one."

The woman, for some infernal reason, kept addressing me instead of Carmina. After having ignored my presence for an hour as if I had the plague.

"I've told Carmina that what she suffered during those four months entitles her to

that money. Her name wouldn't even be published, nobody has to know that she testified. But it shouldn't just be about the money. Her story, every story, matters. Tell her, tell her how important it is that she do this."

For one moment that lasted longer, much longer, than it had taken that boy to look down on the spread of blood reddening his shirt, for one eternal moment, I hesitated. Then I said, "You tell her," and I left the room.

They were in there for a couple of hours. Or maybe it was less. Who knows how long it was?

I stayed in the kitchen, cutting the rinds off the bread, making each slice perfectly identical to the next one. Preparing the ham on one platter, the cheese on the other, making sure every sandwich would be absolutely the same as every other one, no customer should complain that they were being treated unfairly. When I was done, I went to the stove and heated up some soup from the previous day, and poured half of it into a bowl.

Left the bowl steaming on my side of the table, placed another bowl, unfilled and hollow, in front of Carmina's chair. Allowed the steam to subside, my food to grow cold, my spoon unused. Poured the minestrone back into the pot.

Waited.

I heard the front door opening and closing.

It took Carmina a while to come into our kitchen. As if she had taken a detour, as if she had lost her way, as if she needed a map to get here.

She stood at the door, looked at me.

"I can't do it."

I said nothing.

"I can't do it," she repeated the words and they did not trip on her tongue this time. "Lord knows we need the money. We could

buy a car and double our deliveries."

I nodded my head, but the nod did not say yes and it did not say no.

"And Victor could go to business school," Carmina went on. "And Amanda could have her braces done. And a vacation, a few days by the sea would be nice." She paused. "But it's not just the money."

My mouth was dry. Abruptly, my stomach growled. I hadn't tasted a bite since morning.

Carmina frowned, ventured farther into the kitchen, saw that my bowl was empty, the residue of the soup still clinging visibly to the inside, my spoon entirely untouched and untroubled next to me on the table. "It's not just the money," she said again.

I wanted to say something, anything, but nothing came out.

"Maybe it's time, Miguel. But I can't. Not to a roomful of strangers."

Not to a roomful of strangers. She didn't add that first she had to tell me and that was the one thing she didn't know how to do. She didn't need to say it.

Just waited for me to speak.

The silence was heavy and would not stop, the silence simply would not stop.

I had to say something.

"If you could...." I stopped. Then: "If you could, what would you tell them?"

"Everything," she said. "Everything I saw."

"All of it?"

"All of it."

She walked over to the stove, lit the gas.

"I'll warm this for you again."

"For both of us."

"Yes, for both of us."

"I'd like that," I said.

I watched her stir the pot, I smelled the soup we had made just yesterday, together.

"If you want to do this...." I said, my voice trailing off. Watching her beautiful hand on the wooden spoon, her beautiful wide-open eyes looking down into the pot.

"Yes," she said, not looking at me.

"Then first," I said, choosing each word as if it had never been said before in the history of the world, "first I have something to tell you."

"All of it?"

"Everything," I said. "Everything I saw."

She tasted the soup with pursed lips, did not burn herself, decided the brew was not quite ready.

"First let's eat," she said, looking straight at me. "Would you like to have some nice warm soup first?"

"Yes," I said.

What else was I supposed to say? ■



FOLLOW THE BUNNY



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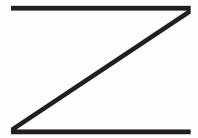
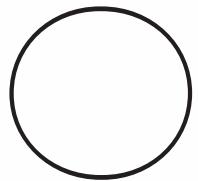
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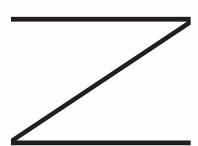
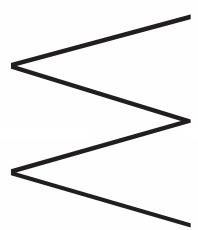
A close-up photograph of a woman's back and shoulder, bathed in warm sunlight. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, garment. The background is a bright, airy room with a large window and a patterned sofa.

*Hailing from
the Pacific
Northwest,
our January
Playmate
possesses a
passion for
freedom and
the face of
an angel*

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY **DOVE SHORE**



PLAYMATE





A delicate tattoo of a feather decorates Kayla Garvin's left forearm. It represents freedom, she explains, and it's a reminder to keep life from getting too heavy or pinning her down. Judging by Kayla's nomadic roots and the fluidity with which she moves between passions, it's the perfect emblem for our first Playmate of 2018.

Born in Eugene, Oregon, a college town she describes as "hippie-like," the middle child of three siblings says her family frequently relocated. "When I was seven we moved to Vegas for a year and then to Colorado," Kayla says. "Everybody asks, 'Are you from a military family?' No. My mom is gypsy-like and just wants to move around." As a result, Kayla is nothing if not adaptable. "I'm up for anything...within reason."

That innate flexibility came in handy when she shifted the course of her career. "I always knew I wanted to be artistic in some way," she says. "In college I majored in psychology with a minor in art; I was going to go to grad school to get a master's in art therapy." She never planned on modeling, but when she had the opportunity, she took it. Despite the career change, Kayla remains an artist at heart. "Lately I've been creating a lot of abstract art. It's freeing because it doesn't have to be perfect. I can just let it all out."

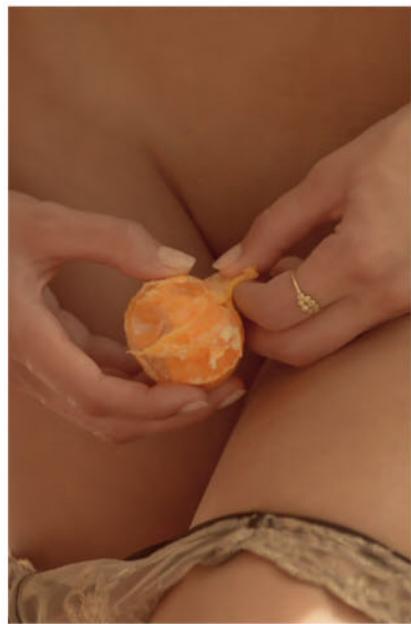
Kayla's angelic appearance is evidence that looks aren't always deceiving. Lacking in pretense, she exudes warmth and positivity. She's a natural people-pleaser: "the one who's always trying to put things together, to make everyone happy and to make sure everything's good." But when it comes to men, she's no shrinking violet. "You have to be in a good place yourself in order to be in a healthy relationship," she says. "Focus on yourself first."

Clearly, this free spirit can't be bound by anyone or anything—even the siren call of technology. "I'll often remind myself to put down my phone for a couple of hours," she says. "That's healthy. I need me time." We could use a little Kayla time too.















*"I investigated your husband, Mrs. Adams. He isn't cheating on you.
In fact, I'm your husband. We've just really lost touch recently."*





JANUARY 2018 PLAYMATE



DATA SHEET



BIRTHPLACE: Eugene, Oregon **CURRENT CITY:** Los Angeles, California

CREATE AND CAPTURE

I've been drawing and painting ever since I was a little kid. And photography has been a huge part of my life too. Lately I've been concentrating on landscape photography. Because of that, I would really like to travel to New Zealand. It looks so beautiful in pictures, and I think I could get some amazing photographs there. It's at the top of my list.

LOVE YOURSELF

Confidence is something that can be within a person naturally, but it's also something that can be learned. We all struggle with our self-image. As I've gotten older, I've learned to accept who I am and to embrace my inner and outer beauty and to just go with it. You shouldn't take what others say too seriously, and you should always be true to yourself.

HIGH SPIRITS

My preferred drink when I go out? I like tequila. Give me any drink with tequila and I'm good. Give me a few drinks, and I'll be busting out my dance moves! But I'll pass on karaoke.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

I hate going to the gym. If I'm going to work out, I want to do something enjoyable like riding my bike or going on a hike. I don't have a strict workout regimen. I just listen to my body and do everything in moderation.

TIME OUT

I think my biggest fear is not living my life to the fullest, then getting older and looking back and thinking, What did I do? I want to make sure I don't look back with major regrets. Sometimes you get so caught up in the

mundane everyday things, you forget to slow down. Life is short. You have to relax and enjoy it.

SWEET GUYS WANTED

When a guy makes you feel like you're special and the only woman in the world who matters, it's a big turn-on. Just be in the moment, sweet, loving and considerate.

SOCIAL SKILLS

People get way too absorbed in social media instead of enjoying what's right in front of them. Sometimes I think they visit places just to post photos of themselves there. I'll be in these beautiful environments and see everybody with their cell phones out, taking selfies! It's like they're not even experiencing it. Sure, take a picture, but more important, take in what's in front of your face.

@kaylajeangarvin





PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Studies show that 10 percent of men will forget to buy a gift for their significant others on Valentine's Day. Coincidentally, on that same day, 10 percent of women will forget how to give a blow job without teeth.



An agent called one of his clients to tell her he had an audition lined up for her. "Does the role require nudity?" the actress asked.

The agent said no.

"Well," said the actress, "does it *permit* nudity?"

Once you've seen a woman remove her bra without taking her shirt off, you'll understand why they should be in charge of things.

Heard of the hot new sex position? It's called 96, and it's a play on 69, except you lie head-to-toe facing away from each other and silently stare at the walls because one of you watched *Game of Thrones* without the other.

A woman gave her puppy his first shot and quickly learned that the little guy hates Fireball.

Ladies, if you want to get an idea of how well a prospective boyfriend will treat you, take a long hard look at how he treats his wife.

Ajuggler, a magician and a mime walk into a bar—and all the women walk out.

You know how psychologists have identified the stages of grief as disbelief, denial, negotiation and acceptance? They should make one of those stages "spontaneously getting rock-hard abs"—because, come on, you've been through a lot.

It has been demonstrated that women with graduate degrees are 30 percent more likely to engage in anal sex than women who have completed only bachelor's degrees. Be that as it may, this isn't a good excuse for hanging out at the library.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away...if you throw it hard enough.

Ahusband and wife make a bet on Super Bowl Sunday. The husband says, "If my team wins, you have to go down on me every night for an entire month."

The wife replies, "If my team wins, you have to go down on *me* every night for an entire month."

"Regardless of who wins," says the wife's father, "I get to live the rest of my life having heard that."

And another scientific study shows that only 57 percent of women orgasm while having sex—but scientists who are married to unsatisfied wives swear that number is much lower.

Look out for some new signage at airport arrivals. Next to COURTESY SHUTTLE, EVERY 10 MINUTES, the new ones say, RUDENESS SHUTTLE, WHENEVER IT GOD-DAMN FEELS LIKE IT.

I was conceived on the carpet in my older sister's bedroom, which is something she still holds over me. I really wish she'd get rid of that carpet.

When someone says there's no such thing as a stupid question it's usually because someone just asked a stupid question.

Our new neighbors are urban chicken farmers," says your girlfriend as she calmly checks Zillow to see what kind of price you can get for your house.

NURSE: Where can I find some scrubs?

TARGET EMPLOYEE: I don't know—I guess hanging out the passenger side of his best friend's ride, trying to holler at me.

Ever get that feeling, on a weekday morning about 15 minutes into your commute, that your girlfriend is still talking to you through the bathroom door?

The hacker who stole my Equifax information just sent me \$20 with a note saying, "Hope this helps. Hang in there."



Alley Neiman

Two old friends were sitting on their favorite park bench on a Sunday afternoon, mulling over their sex lives.

"My wife gives me blow jobs like she cooks my steak," said the first.

"Well done?" asked his friend.

"No, rare."

"You think that's bad, last night my wife and I tried anal," said the friend.

"How was it?"

"It's not all it's cracked up to be."



CILLIAN MURPHY

Deranged hijacker, Batman villain, apocalypse survivor—if that's how you think of this striking Irish actor, he politely asks that you take another look

BY **DEVON MALONEY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PAUL WETHERELL**

Q1: You're known for avoiding the Hollywood spotlight in favor of the peace and quiet of your home in Dublin. Was that attitude instilled in you, or did you just not like the way celebrity felt when you first experienced it?

MURPHY: The concept of Hollywood has always been strange to me. I've never lived in Los Angeles. It's always been, you go to work, and then you come home, and home life is just this normality. And when I'm not working I have very little to do with "the industry." They're two separate entities for me. It's always been that way.

Q2: You went to law school before you got into acting. What inspired that choice, and what drove you away?

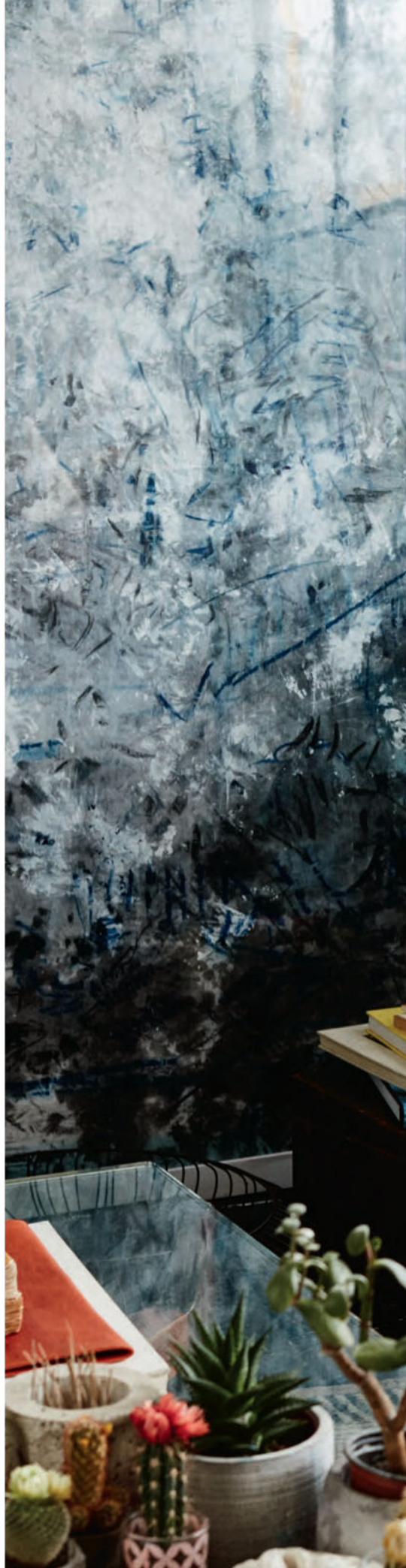
MURPHY: I'm the eldest of four kids, and we come from a long line of pedagogues, so the academic route was strongly encouraged. At the time, I thought it could be interesting. There were hardly any lectures, so you could go away and do a lot of work by yourself. But I realized very quickly that it's not a creative world at all. Law is all about precedent, so you're always

looking backward, regurgitating cases. It was just the wrong choice for me, but making a misstep like that can actually be more revelatory than anything, because you very quickly realize what you don't like.

Q3: Is it true that as a teenager you played in a Frank Zappa-inspired band, the Sons of Mr. Green Genes?

MURPHY: Yeah. My brothers and I really liked him. We saw some concert he did on the BBC late at night; we had never heard of him before. The process of discovery was very slow in the pre-internet days, but you felt as though you were unearthing gold when you discovered those records. So yeah, he appealed to us in many ways: his sense of humor, how cynical he was about everything. Compared with hardcore aficionados I'm probably very fair-weather. He made something like 150 albums, and some of them I find unnecessarily dense, but there are 10 or 12 that, at that time, blew our minds.

Q4: Do you still get together with your brothers and jam?





MURPHY: No one really has time for that, but at weddings or family gatherings or boys' weekends, the instruments come out. There will always be some drunken jams.

Q5: Your show *Peaky Blinders* is returning to Netflix, and several more big-name musicians have done covers of the theme song, "Red Right Hand," including Iggy Pop and Laura Marling. If you could pick any artist, living or dead, to cover the song, who would it be?

MURPHY: I'm a huge music nerd, so it still really tickles me that somewhere in the world these musicians have actually had to sit down and watch the show. It's humbling. But it would be pretty extraordinary to hear Jeff Buckley do a version of the song. No one has had a voice like his since or before, so that would be kind of magical.

Q6: You sort of backed into screen acting through music and theater, right?

MURPHY: Yeah. It was initially music and then theater, and then I slowly got into film, then television. Theater is still very important for me. It was never my burning ambition to be on the silver screen. It was a desire to perform—that was clear to me from a very young age. The medium was secondary.

Q7: Was there a moment in your performing career when you decided to commit to film and television acting?

MURPHY: No; it came gradually. I'd been doing theater for about four or five years, touring plays around Ireland. Then I got an agent who said, "Look, there's this part in a short film. Do you want to audition for it?" So you go, "Well, that sounds interesting." You get a part in a short film, then a few months later it's this tiny part in a feature film, and do you want to audition for that? So you audition for that, and you get it. And then they say, "There's a slightly bigger part...."

Q8: But you could just as easily have said no to each of those opportunities. You had to at least have had some curiosity to try out those things, right?

MURPHY: Yes, exactly. And that word is really important: *curiosity*. I think that has been my main drive—like, "Wow, wouldn't theater

be interesting to try?" Then that led to the next thing.

Q9: You've declined to be part of the *Peaky Blinders* musical currently in development. Do you draw the line at musical theater?

MURPHY: I actually think the musical is such a bizarre idea, it could work. [*Peaky Blinders* creator] Steve Knight is an incredibly inventive man as a writer and as an entrepreneur and original thinker. But for various reasons, it wouldn't work for me. I have a limited range as a singer, and professional musical-theater actors? They *work*. Eight shows a week, singing those songs—it's relentless. I admire them tremendously, but I could never do that.

Q10: Isn't filming a season of *Peaky Blinders* pretty full-on?

MURPHY: Yeah. It's a four-month shoot, and it takes about five or six weeks to limber up into the character. So it's about a five-month commitment, then there's generally about 18 months in between each series, because Steve has to go write it, and then it's a logistical nightmare getting everybody back together.

Q11: You say it takes time to settle into your character, the Birmingham gang leader Tommy Shelby. What does that involve for you?

MURPHY: You can't be fooled into thinking you can just wake up and step back into a character; you really have to work at it. A friend of mine likes to call it conditioning. I genuinely don't share anything with Tommy Shelby—not one bit of DNA. Every year Steve really pushes the character into strange places and unfamiliar territory. I have to readjust my way of thinking, because the way Tommy reacts to situations is completely the opposite of how I would react. There's also the physicality of him and the way he carries himself, his physical energy. I also need to spend time refreshing the accent and making that feel authentic. He's a decorated soldier, and he commands incredible respect—God, I'm sort of intimidated by him. I'm not that, you know? But I love going that distance with the characters.

Q12: The show takes several significant leaps in time, and in this new season we see that Tommy

and his family are even going a little gray. Do those jumps make playing the role more challenging for you?

MURPHY: Well, that's the beauty of these long-form dramas—you mature with the characters. We decided this season to give Tommy some glasses, because he's a middle-aged man now. All the violence and physical brutality have taken their toll. But I like that you can see the characters mature and carry the burdens of the kind of lives they live, both mentally and physically.

Q13: What do you think makes a script worth taking on?

MURPHY: I mean, every part is a gamble, because film and television are the most collaborative of all art forms—there are so many people involved. But for me there are several criteria. It has to be good on the page. It has to read well, it has to be compelling, and you have to want to get to the end of the story in one sitting. And then it has to represent something different, something that you haven't explored before. Then it needs to have a good director attached. If any one of those things isn't present, you just can never tell. That's the exciting but also occasionally frustrating thing about being an actor: You give your best work, and then you hand it over, and it's up to the editor and the director and the distribution company and the marketing company and everybody else to make it. You take a leap of faith every time, but as long as you can tick off some of the boxes before you engage, then you should be at least part of the way there.

Q14: Was there ever a particular project that surprised you in terms of the risk you took and what came out of it?

MURPHY: Oh, gosh, I don't really know. I tend to do a part and move on. I don't really think about things retrospectively, really.

Q15: That was the problem with law school, right?

MURPHY: Well, yes. That's also why Tommy Shelby is strange: because I keep coming back to him. I've never had that experience before, except in theater, I suppose, if you do a second run of a show or something. You do the part,

I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT PRESSURE DOES TO THE HUMAN PSYCHE AND TO THE HUMAN CONDITION.



and then it's on to the next thing. You don't really think about the work again, other than hopefully learning something from it.

Q16: You have made your career playing some really intense characters—including the terrorist Jackson Rippner in *Red Eye* and the *Dark Knight* trilogy's Scarecrow—and you don't appear to be anything like those characters in real life. Is that a balance you maintain, as though each of these parts of your life provides a catharsis for the other?

MURPHY: First of all, I would kind of take

issue with that. I've played two villains in my career; one of them happened to be in a big franchise. Again, I hate looking back, but look at my characters in *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, *Breakfast on Pluto*, *The Party*, *Broken*. I think that shows a wide range of characters, some intense, some introverted and withdrawn. A lot of the characters I've played onstage are actually quite gentle and soft. When I said earlier that I look for something challenging or different, I would be contradicting myself if I were

playing the same types of characters all the time. I think that's a problem that happens a lot with journalism, trying to reduce a career to "That's *that guy*." It only takes a little bit of further inspection to see that's actually not the case.

Having said that, I'm interested in what pressure does to completely normal characters who have normal lives, and in what pressure does to the human psyche and to the human condition.

Q17: What would be in store for you next, if you could pick? Do you have any bucket-list projects?

MURPHY: I don't, really. I've enjoyed the experience of long-form television, and eventually *Peaky Blinders* will come to an end. I like the idea of finding some other television project that could offer me a different challenge. I'm also going back to theater this year to do a play with my longtime collaborator, the playwright Enda Walsh. But I don't think any actor would be able to answer that question. It's so unpredictable, and the vagaries of getting a film financed are so complicated—a film can be just about to happen and then collapse in front of you, or you can suddenly get offered a part you've never heard of and the film's ready to go. My whole career has been completely haphazard, you know?

Q18: Does that mean actors have to be built for that unpredictability?

MURPHY: Yeah, I think all actors need to be inclined that way. You have to get used to things not working out, to being patient. That was something I wasn't very good at when I was younger.

Q19: So if you could go back in time and give your younger self advice you've learned over the past couple of decades, would patience be part of it?

MURPHY: Yeah. Also, it's such a privilege to actually be working in an industry where there are far too many actors and not enough jobs. That's a vital lesson. Then, every job you take, whether it succeeds or fails, whether you have a good time or a bad time, you can learn something from it. I don't always get to that place, but as I get older I really think that's important.

Q20: For a while after *Red Eye* came out people would freak out when you sat next to them on planes. Does that still happen?

MURPHY: No. Movies come and go and disappear; they're sort of ephemeral, transitory. So yeah, there was a while back in 2006 when people would say, "Oh. Fucking. God." [laughs] But that time has long since passed. ■





PROFILE

SENATOR FLAKE VS. THE NEW NORMAL

A closer look at the Republican statesman who dropped out of the race to protest his own party's leader—and the forces that led him to that precipitous moment on the Senate floor

Taped to the refrigerator in the house Jeff Flake grew up in was a three-by-five-inch card smeared with baking residue. As described in his 2017 book, *Conscience of a Conservative*, the card read, “Assume the best. Look for the good.”

“I wish everyone lived by that,” the Arizona senator says, smiling, “but the best I can do is to try and live it myself.” We’re talking outside the Senate two weeks after he took the floor to announce he would not be running for reelection this year—a speech that made waves worldwide for its frank denunciations of a “new normal” in American politics, defined in the speech as “the accommodation of a new and undesirable order.” Asked if he believes the current leadership might ever embrace the fridge wisdom of Flake’s youth, he is sanguine; he shakes his head and keeps the smile. “As I said, I wish everyone lived by that. I am so thankful my parents gave me this as a creed and I’ve passed it on to my children.”

Folksy moments like these aside, Senator Flake can be hard to pin down. He’s often reluctant to speak with people he doesn’t know, but reporters who cover the Senate regularly say he can become quite loquacious as he walks the halls of the Capitol. He looks like a Hollywood

leading man, but with his nose bent slightly askew, he also has an everyman charm that attracts voters. And though he’s been elected several times to the House of Representatives, starting in 2000, and once to the Senate, he has not always been popular.

A staunch conservative—and, many would say, an enemy to some key liberal causes—Senator Flake is also a vocal supporter of sane and welcoming immigration policy. A devout Mormon, he spoke at the Islamic Center of the North East Valley in Scottsdale, Arizona in late 2015. His tone brought to mind Barack Obama more than any other recent leader.

“It is well known by those in this room but certainly underappreciated around the country that Muslim Americans have fought and died alongside Christians, Jews and others in every war our nation has fought since the Revolution, including most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said. His speech even took on a personal perspective: “Muslims make the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. The Mormon hajj is to our holy temple. Because, like Muslims, Mormons do not drink alcohol, our trip to the temple is usually followed by a

stop at Dairy Queen. Ice cream is about all we Mormons have. I’m not sure if there’s a corollary for Muslims.”

Flake stood out in the early days of Donald Trump’s campaign for opposing immigration restriction—the infamous “wall” being one of the early components of the Trump stump speech. “When reevaluating immigration policy, it is right to give priority, through a point system or otherwise, to those who have skills and abilities unique to the new economy,” Flake wrote in an August 2017 op-ed for *The New York Times*. “But there must always be a place in America for those whose only initial credentials are a strong back and an eagerness to use it.”

When it comes to guns, Flake gets an A grade from the NRA, which endorsed his Senate run. Still, he has been known to skew leftward on gun control—with firsthand experience of a mass shooting to back up his arguments. He was present the day House Majority Whip Steve Scalise was shot on a baseball diamond in Alexandria, Virginia last June.

“It was horrifying,” Flake says. “You hear the bullets and see your friends running for safety. You know you’re not safe. I can’t describe it adequately, but no one should have to go through

ILLUSTRATION BY EVGENY PARFENOV

that. No one." Since then, Flake has echoed calls for stricter laws in the wake of the shootings in Las Vegas and Texas.

And while Flake has often voted in line with President Trump—some 91 percent of the time, according to Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez—he has apparently come to believe that opposing the president is more important than enacting legislation upon which both men agree.

His conservative bona fides have never been in question. The American Conservative Union rates him at 93 percent, FreedomWorks at 95 percent—his worst marks among those given by six of the top conservative and limited-government organizations. Americans for Prosperity gives him a 97 percent rating. The National Taxpayers Union grades him an A.

The family portrait on his website resembles a lightly updated version of *Happy Days*, and his critics often accuse him of espousing a 1950s view of America that no longer exists, if it ever did in the first place. But regardless of his stance on issues, few doubted his sincerity when he stood on the floor of the Senate and announced he wouldn't run.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi tells PLAYBOY she wasn't all that surprised by Flake's decision. "It took a lot of courage," she says. "But I remember him taking on earmark legislation when he was in the House. We gave him what we called 'the Flake Hour' and he would go after earmarks. Oftentimes nothing happened, but he took it on earnestly."

Flake often broached the discretionary spending of his colleagues—funds provided to help specific causes and special interests by circumventing the normal legislative process. He even took on earmarks in a piece of Pelosi legislation. "I told you he had courage," she says with a laugh. "He's very true to himself. You always know where you stand with him."

In that light, Flake's mercurial nature looks less like political flip-flopping and more like the work of a man who, whether you agree with him or not, genuinely prizes old-fashioned integrity over the party line.

...

Self-sacrifice and hard work, family and church have always been staples of Flake's life. Born in Snowflake, Arizona, a town partially named for his great-great grandfather, Flake grew up work-

alfalfa into rows. "Yeah," he says, "I lost part of a finger. But I was young. I laugh about it now."

Considered by most who know him as a man of genuine affection, he is the married father of five children. "I am very happy with my work in the Senate," he says, "but it doesn't define who I am. My top memories are of family, personal relationships and church." He has been called a poster boy for his religion and has served as a missionary in Africa. A staunch conservative

who opposes abortion and gay marriage and who has served as executive director of the Goldwater Institute, he seemed a natural and important ally for Donald Trump.

But Flake didn't see Trump as a savior of the conservative movement; he saw him as a fake, a liar and a used-car salesman who threatened not only the GOP but the entire country—a bully who substituted bombast for political skills. Flake's criticisms often made him sound like the senators across the aisle, but Flake dismisses any suggestion that he's switching sides.

"I just speak my mind," he says with a smile.

"The thing about Jeff," one Hill staffer says, "he doesn't like to make deals with the devil. He believes what he believes. And he doesn't believe in putting the party ahead of the country."

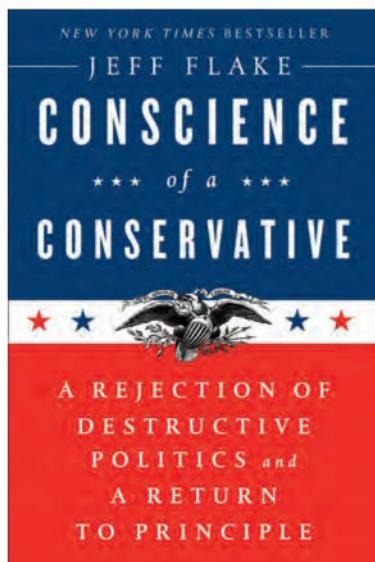
"It's more important to me that I can sleep with myself and face my children," Flake says.

...

Senator Flake's full complexity came glinting through during his Senate-floor speech, as well as in the giddy moments before and after. That day he presented himself as both canny and earnest—and possibly the closest thing we have to a politician who can coax the political temperament away from the brink and back toward the middle.

Flake walked slowly toward the U.S. Senate from his nearby office in the Russell building. His Kirk Douglas-worthy chin led the way, and his dark blue suit followed. Reporters who

"I AM VERY HAPPY WITH MY WORK IN THE SENATE, BUT IT DOESN'T DEFINE WHO I AM."



Left: The book that launched Flake onto the world stage. **Right:** Facing reporters shortly after his moment on the Senate floor.

ing on the family cattle ranch. "Believe me," he says, "if you live on a cattle ranch, then you work."

Flake admits it was a cloistered existence. "Just to let you know how sheltered I was, not until I went away to college did I find out *flake* was a funny term," he says. "Nobody made fun of Flakes in Snowflake."

At an early age he also acquainted himself with the value of learning things the hard way. As recalled in his autobiography, he lost the tip of his right index finger at the age of five while working on a machine used to rake freshly mown

caught him going into the Capitol knew he was scheduled to speak, but no one, with the exception of a very few of his closest aides and family members, knew what the Arizona senator with the piercing blue eyes would say that day.

Several reporters shouted questions to that effect as he strode to the Capitol.

He smiled. "Wait and see," he said. He brushed his hands through his hair as he walked the halls. He did nothing to give away the gravity of the speech or the passion he would show on the floor of the Senate.

Less than an hour later, he walked out of the Capitol holding his wife Cheryl's hand and making his way through the many reporters trying to corner him.

"The guy just changed the world," one of them said.

On the floor, Senator Flake had recited a laundry list of Trump's worst habits without once saying his name: "the personal attacks, the threats against principles, freedoms and institutions, and the flagrant disregard for truth and decency, the reckless provocations, most often for the pettiest and most personal reasons, reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with the fortunes of the people that we have been elected to serve."

He upbraided the president for pushing policy via Twitter, and he pushed back at the GOP, arguing that the party was splintering and becoming irrelevant. "It is clear at this moment that a traditional conservative, who believes in limited government and free markets, who is devoted to free trade, who is pro-immigration, has a narrower and narrower path to nomination in the Republican Party, the party that has so long defined itself by its belief in those things. It's also clear to me for the moment that we have given in or given up on the core principles in favor of a more viscerally satisfying anger and resentment."

Taking care to avoid alienating the president's base, he added, "To be clear, the anger and resentment that the people feel at the royal mess that we've created are justified, but anger and resentment are not a governing philosophy."

As *Independent Journal Review* reporter Haley Byrd tweeted following his speech, Flake received a standing ovation from Republican senators Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, John Barrasso and Todd Young. The speech also brought cheers from Democrats including senators Chris Coons, Tim Kaine, Maggie Hassan and Jeff Merkley. Fellow Arizona senator John McCain later praised the speech at a press gaggle: "I have seen Jeff Flake stand up for what he believes in knowing full well that there would be a political price to pay. I have seen him stand up for his family. I've seen him stand up for his



Adversary and ally: Donald Trump and Senator Bob Corker on the campaign trail in 2016.

forebears.... When Flake's service to this country is reviewed, it will be one of honor, of brilliance and patriotism and love of country."

Predictably, the speech struck a nerve with Trump, who tweeted out at least three jabs. He suggested that Flake was a weak senator and couldn't win even if he did run. Flake, in a reflective moment a week after his announcement, replied that while the president may have had a point, the real reason is far greater. "We used to be able to run on policies. Now it's all about the president and if you support him—and I'm not going to condone his behavior."

...

While no one can say how he or she will come across in future history books, or even if those books will record their efforts at all, Flake staked his claim on the floor of the Senate for things that have apparently disappeared from the American body politic: spirited debate without rancor, and honor before party.

"We were not made great as a country by indulging or even exalting our worst impulses, turning against ourselves, glorying in the things which divide us and calling fake things true and true things fake," Flake said.

The senator's immediate future is either unknown or a closely guarded secret, but there's a sense that the gloves are off. On the day several women came forward to accuse GOP senate

nominee Roy Moore of sexual harassment, Flake renewed his fight against the "moral rot" some have described inside the Republican Party.

"No. No. No," he told a group of cameras and reporters in the basement of the Russell Senate Office building when asked if he would ever support Moore. "He should not continue his campaign." Flake wanted the man, who is now endorsed by President Trump, to step down. Another quiet attack on the new normal.

As he strode through the halls of the U.S. Capitol following his October speech, he looked like a man at peace with himself—a man who'd gotten it off his chest and was resigned to an uncertain future but hopeful he'd played a part in shaping it.

Republicans who espouse the old-world view of conservatism see Flake as a vital player in the realignment the party is undergoing; others, who see the outgoing senator as Tea Party before the Tea Party was cool, say they don't want Flake involved in the GOP going forward. The bottom line is that Flake will have as much input as he wants.

Some have encouraged him to run for president, but he laughs off that suggestion. "One man sent me a check for \$20.20 and said I should run for president," he says. "I'm not going to cash the check, but I appreciate it. After all, with a name like Flake, you can only rise so high in national politics." ■



The Girl

Aussie stunner Anthea Page glides from the pool to the sheets—and leaves us praying for summer

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALI MITTON**

From Oz























"It was very generous of you, by the way."



TEXAS

after the

The Golden Triangle sits on one of the world's richest oil reserves. After Hurricane Harvey, it became ground zero in the war between industry and environment

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
BRANDON THIBODEAUX



STORM

The refineries appear on the horizon about 20 miles west of Port Arthur, Texas, smokestacks and twisted piping all pallid gray against the clear morning sky. It's nearly a month and a half after Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Gulf Coast, and I'm on Texas Highway 73, heading east from Houston toward the Golden Triangle, a small region of the state tucked between the Gulf of Mexico and the Louisiana border.

BY **PETER SIMEK**

I'm drawn to the place by a peculiar irony. In 1901 an Austrian-born mechanical engineer punched a hole in the ground at a place called Spindletop and discovered an oil well from which gushed 100,000 barrels of crude a day. The size of the discovery, unprecedented at the time, kick-started the era of cheap fossil fuel. Today the Golden Triangle remains a major center of the petrochemical industry, home to North America's largest oil refinery and responsible for approximately 8.5 percent of all U.S. oil refining. It is also a sitting duck for increasingly destructive tropical storms, coastline erosion and sea-level rise—events that scientists attribute to human-assisted climate change. Hurricane Harvey offered a preview. Over five days, upward of 40 inches of rain fell on the region, causing floods that wiped entire towns off the map.

Highway 73 cuts through sodden bottom-land. Off the side of the road, cattle mill about in scrubby sage. A heron takes flight from the lavender-tinged blue of an estuarial pool. Here the Texas Gulf Coast is a no-man's-land between sea and earth, shaped by the continual lurching and ebbing of waters. But the refineries offer a grim reminder: Scientists project that at some point within the next century, because of warming oceans and melting polar ice caps, all of it will be subjected to chronic flooding or submerged by rising seas. This out-of-the-way corner of the world is a front line in the global war against climate change, one that is harder to ignore than the vanishing Pacific Islands or the desertification of sub-Saharan Africa. Here, at the birthplace of domestic Big Oil, the industry's major players find themselves facing head-on the catastrophic planetary change they helped set in motion. And it is no longer a question of when. After Harvey, it is clear: Change has already begun.

• • •

Port Arthur, population about 55,000, sits at the southern tip of the Golden Triangle, which counts the small cities of Beaumont and Orange as its other two points. The region's municipalities are a collection of in-betweens—a blend of industrial and rural, economically inequitable, proud but struggling, diverse yet polarized. The refineries are owned by the world's wealthiest corporations and sit in foreign-trade zones. Demographically it's roughly split in half: Jefferson

County, the region's largest, voted for Donald Trump but in the same election put a female African American Democrat in the sheriff's office. The unemployment rate is double the national average, and the median income is about \$15,000 less than that of the U.S. as a whole.

I arrive in Port Arthur late in the morning and drive through the downtown of early-20th century brick high-rises and boarded-up storefronts, all of them scarred by hurricanes or blight or both. Harvey's effects are clear. You can trace the path of the floodwater by following the heaps of trash on the curb: rotten mattresses, torn-out carpet, waterlogged sofas and crumpled drywall. Among the soggy cardboard boxes and taped-up refrigerators, some are sprayed with yellow paint that reads DO NOT TAKE OR NOT FOR SALE. Across from a hardware store, where pickups load up on Sheetrock, the facade of a shuttered storefront bears another spray-painted message: GOD BLESS EVERYONE.

When the rain came, most people knew to evacuate. Gerald Durham, an elderly man I find in front of his Bridge City home, sipping coffee while neighbors stack trash at the curb, drove to Louisiana and stayed at a motel to wait out the deluge. When he returned he was relieved to find the water came only to the top of his front-porch step.

Edward Sanders wasn't so lucky. He managed Port Arthur's civic center, which was converted to a shelter during the storm. He remembers watching the rain pour down and thinking, It's going to stop soon; it has to stop. The rain did stop, but not before the reservoir to the north of his home had overflowed and flooded it with three feet of water. Still, Sanders says, some of his neighbors' homes took in twice that much.

The damage can appear random—one house a total loss, its neighbor apparently untouched. The disconnect between people trudging through the grind of recovery and small-town life resuming its sleepy course makes everything feel eerie. The people and places I find most alive are the ones that seem somehow stuck in crisis mode—still tapped into the initial adrenaline, resilience and resolve that gave birth to the catchphrase "Texas Strong" in the hours after the storm and led to an uptick in the number of Texas-themed tattoos at local parlors.

Stopping at what looks like a clothing drive in front of a community-policing storefront in Bridge City, I find Gwen Prine and Lee Morrison, two Alabamans who came to Texas and started a homespun relief organization called Thumbs Up on a Mission for Jesus. They've been gathering supplies—diapers, clothes, water, bleach,

household items and food—and distributing them door-to-door nearly every day for weeks.

Prine wears rolled-up jeans, flip-flops and a T-shirt with a map of Alabama on the back. She decided to come to Texas, she says, after she received a vision in which the Lord told her to go help the flood victims. The next day, she packed a pickup full of supplies and headed south. When she and Morrison arrived in Texas, much of the area was still underwater, and Interstate 10 was shut down. A policeman told them to turn around.

"Well," Prine says she told the officer, "the Lord filled this truck up with water and supplies and told us we've got to go to Orange."

The officer looked at the barricade and then back at Prine and her truck.

"If you serve the same Lord I serve, you go right around that barricade and he'll part them waters," he said.

They drove on, following a thin strip in the

"THE LORD, HE SETS HOW EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE. HE'LL TAKE CARE OF US."

center of the road with the floodwaters pulsing on either side. When they arrived at North Orange Pentecostal Church, they unloaded their supplies with the pastor.

"It was down for maybe an hour or two," Prine remembers. "It was like the exact time we were there, the water receded."

Outside I chat with a local resident who is helping the women with the drive. I ask if he's concerned about the scientific projections that weather events like Harvey may be coming more frequently.

"The Lord, he sets how everything is going to be," he tells me. "It is in his hands on all that. He'll take care of us. I believe it."

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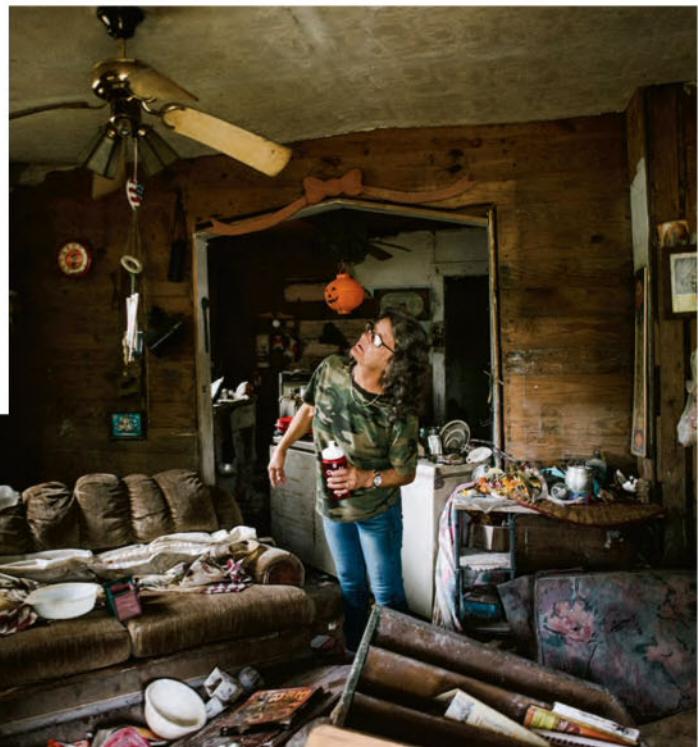
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that the sea level at Sabine

Pass, a natural outlet from Sabine Lake into the Gulf of Mexico that serves as a major shipping route for the Golden Triangle's petrochemical industry, will rise up to nearly seven feet by the year 2100. Some models anticipate higher rises if global carbon emissions continue to escalate. A map tool NOAA created to demonstrate the impact this will have on the Gulf Coast shows the slow creep of narrow blue waters fingering their way up available channels and low-lying areas, eroding barrier islands and eating away at the coastline and even portions of settled land.

But renderings like these may not accurately portray what will happen to the coast when the sea rises. John Anderson, an oceanographer at Rice University, says that most projections focus on overall sea-level rise, but he's concerned about the rate of rise. When you look at the last major period of sea-level rise, at the end of the Ice Age, high rates of rise facilitated more-rapid erosion of coastal areas, resulting in surging seas that moved inland more quickly. If the rate of erosion continues to increase, Anderson says, a couple of feet of sea-level rise on the Gulf Coast could mean as much as 30 feet of lost coastline a year.

Rising seas will only intensify the effects of strengthening storms. This part of the Gulf Coast is well versed in hurricanes, but no one here had ever seen anything like Harvey. The storm's severity resulted from two peculiar phenomena: the incredible volume of moisture it picked up off an unusually warm Gulf of Mexico, and the way the system stalled over southeast Texas. Scientists are not yet sure what caused the latter. Since 2010, the continental wind systems that would have pushed the hurricane northward have collapsed, and disruptions in atmospheric flows caused by a warming climate could be a factor. What scientists are sure about is that the warming climate supercharged Harvey. When it came across the Yucatán, Harvey was barely a tropical storm. Then, after hitting a warmer-than-usual Gulf of Mexico, it grew into a category 4 hurricane within 48 hours.

The science is clear: Sea levels are rising, storms are getting stronger, and if nothing is done to curb carbon emissions, things will only get worse. Increasingly the American public agrees. According to a 2017 Gallup poll, the percentage of Americans who believe in global warming and attribute its cause to human activities is on the rise. Even among those who voted for Trump in the last election, only one in three does not believe that global warming is happening. And in recent years, most oil companies have admitted to their investors and the



Previous spread: Carol Smith strolls through what's left of her neighborhood in Rose City. **This page, clockwise from top left:** Nathaniel Welch works on a home in Mauriceville. Chris Duplant and his daughter Shelley pose at his home in Groves. Smith assesses the damage to her home. A volunteer sorts through donations received by the city of Port Arthur.

public that they are aware of the risks related to global climate change.

In a speech at an energy conference in 2016, Saudi Aramco president and chief executive officer Amin Nasser called addressing climate change and the environmental sustainability of the planet a “critical objective.” (Saudi Aramco owns the Motiva refinery, the largest in North America and a pillar of the Golden Triangle.) An ExxonMobil statement entitled “Our Position on Climate Change” speaks about the need both to address the challenges of climate change and to lift “billions out of poverty,” calling for constructive political dialogue and citing its own attempts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in its operations.

“The risk of climate change is clear and the risk warrants action,” the statement reads. “There is a broad scientific and policy consensus that action must be taken to further quantify and assess the risks.” (When I ask an ExxonMobil spokesperson via e-mail to speak about whether Harvey, and climate change in general, had affected the corporation’s long-range planning with regard to its Golden Triangle facilities, she sends an e-mail with links to internally produced articles that trumpet the company’s resilience in weathering Harvey and the work of its

engineering teams in restoring the refineries to full operating capacity.)

But climate change remains a polarizing political issue. Last year, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Accord and in 2012 tweeted that global warming is a Chinese conspiracy. Big media outlets tend to ignore the issue. According to a Media Matters analysis, during the two weeks of coverage leading up to and after Harvey, only one of the three major television networks even discussed climate change as it related to the storm.

“In Texas there are a lot of vested interests to argue against climate-change regulation,” says climate scientist Andrew Dessler, professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University and co-author of *The Science and Politics of Global Climate Change: A Guide to the Debate*. “In their hearts, I think they know it is true.”

• • •

At the foot of the Rainbow Bridge, which spans the mouth of the Neches River as it enters Sabine Lake, a dirt road runs past a shuttered bait shop, a marina and some small warehouses. Nearby, a large earthmover sits on an earthen levee, lifting huge clumps of black, silty soil and dumping it on top of the mound.

Next door in a small warehouse I meet Mary Burdine, owner of DBS Electronics, a marine electronics company that services tugboats in the channel. Burdine sits behind an old aluminum desk, wearing a gray T-shirt and glasses, her brown hair pulled up in a ponytail. The earthmover, she explains, has nothing to do with the storm. She believes it’s part of the ongoing expansion of the Total Petrochemicals USA refinery that sits across the marsh from her business. Dredging for the expansion has affected drainage in the entire area, causing water to back up into the farmers’ market up the road and silt to fill in the canal behind the office. Burdine says she doesn’t mind the refinery expansion—“When I smell stink, I smell money,” she says—but is ticked off that the government agencies tasked with overseeing the expansion aren’t protecting her land from its impact.

“They always pass the buck,” she says. “Nobody has an answer. No one has a solution to the problem they created down there.”

Burdine’s frustration hints at an aspect of climate change often overlooked in sea-level calculations and the fear of superstorms: The human cost will not be felt merely by scientifically measured effects but also by how



Clockwise from top left: An oil tanker traverses the Intracoastal Waterway near Port Arthur. Richard LeBlanc, general manager of Jefferson County Drainage District 6, stands near a drainage project the county had been developing prior to Harvey. North Beaumont resident Chris Edwards assesses his mother's home, which took in six feet of water.

industry and government respond and adapt to the gradual changes. In a small though not insignificant way, this remote marina, where a farmers' market is almost permanently flooded and a canal that supports a small business needs to be dredged, shows that chess game already in progress. And Burdine knows it will only get worse.

"The sea level is coming up. That's a given," she says. "The icebergs are melting. That's a given. It doesn't take a genius to figure that one out."

The road south toward Sabine Pass bisects the Valero and Motiva refineries. Pipes zig-zag in every direction, hissing as they run up from the ground, pass over the road and plunge back into the earth. Smokestacks spit huge clouds of ashen white smoke. Mountains of black coal sit adjacent to plump cylindrical storage containers and rounded white orbs of pressurized gas.

The major oil companies may have admitted they're aware of the impending threats of climate change, but none of them appears to be going anywhere. Total's dredging near Rainbow Bridge is presumably part of a \$1.7 billion expansion, and Saudi Aramco plans to invest in a similar project to the tune of up to \$30 billion.

"They know the sea level is rising. They've done some risk-reward calculations—how much

does it cost?" says Dessler. "The big corporations are not what I'm worried about. What's going to hurt the economy is people getting flooded. It is a socially destabilizing force."

Most of the media coverage of climate change frames its effects cinematically: the gaping caves of Antarctic ice sheets; the rushing melted water boring moulins in Greenland's white expanse; animations of rising seas contracting around the New York skyline like a great blue python. But most of the millions of people whose lives will be transformed by climate change will experience those changes like the people struggling with Harvey's aftermath, in a thousand subtle, insidious ways—ways that might not even seem, on the surface, to have anything to do with carbon dioxide emissions.

Initially, Harvey fit the climate-change cinematic narrative, providing television networks with around-the-clock disaster-film outtakes—images of ordinary suburban homes flooded to the rooflines. But most of the news cameras left before the owners of those homes experienced Harvey's social destabilization: the physical and psychological torment of hauling furniture to the curb, tearing out Sheetrock, buying gallons of bleach, scrubbing black mold, sifting through waterlogged papers, struggling to maintain employment

and trying to decide what, if anything, from life before Harvey is worth salvaging.

Perhaps the scariest thing about Harvey was not its scale or the drama of its monstrous wind, rain and floods, but the way the hurricane revealed who would bear the weight of future natural disasters. Rising seas will continue to redraw coastlines, but climate change is not a purely natural phenomenon. The broader destabilizing forces Dessler describes will follow socioeconomic fault lines as well.

...

In Rose City, population 523, all but a single home was submerged up to its roofline.

The town is nestled in a dark, swampy forest in the Neches River floodplain, just southwest of a large sand-and-gravel operation. Driving its streets, one encounters devastation like nowhere else in the region. Houses sit rotting in the afternoon heat, some with windows gone, others missing entire walls. Mold is visible on interior studs and exterior eaves. Trash piles are everywhere. An entire chimney, still connected to its fireplace, sits in a yard near the curb.

Near the little one-story City Hall, a makeshift disaster-relief center built out of shipping containers distributes supplies. A volunteer directs me toward Eric Klein, CEO and founder of Can-Do, a disaster-relief nonprofit based

in Marina del Rey, California that is running the relief operation in Rose City. Klein, who appears to be in his 40s, wears a black T-shirt, jeans, earbuds and a camouflage hat. He founded Can-Do after receiving a settlement from a car accident, and the organization has since deployed to areas affected by Katrina, Rita, Ike, the earthquake in Haiti and other disaster zones. In 2008 he was a contestant on Oprah's philanthropy-themed reality-TV show *The Big Give*.

Today Klein looks tired. It has been a month and a half since the storm, and none of the homes in Rose City is habitable, and the city still doesn't have running water. The relief organizations, he says, are nowhere to be found. The Red Cross showed up the day before to register residents for aid but simply parked its branded truck on the most visible street corner and handed out 1-800 numbers. It's a familiar shtick, says Klein, who mentions a Pro-Publica report on the Red Cross response in Haiti that found the organization had spent little of the millions donated to it on tangible relief efforts. FEMA has been similarly useless, Klein says, in advising residents to go down to the government staging center to ask for a \$2,000 relocation grant that Klein says turns out to be a dead end.

Looking at the homes in Rose City, it's difficult to picture what \$2,000 will do. And recovery from the flooding goes beyond simply fixing homes: The Gulf Coast lost about 27,000 jobs in the aftermath of the hurricane, and long-term health issues related to mosquito-borne illnesses, mold, stress and anxiety are only starting to surface. The Gulf Coast Health Center reports 10 percent more patients than this time last year, with locals complaining about breathing problems and rashes. Doctors are providing patients with hepatitis A vaccines and insect repellent to protect against Zika virus. Some doctors warn that prolonged contact with mold can lead to neurological disorders. Even if the aid were reaching all the victims, there are some things money alone can't fix.

The region seems to be slipping into a new phase of recovery: a period filled less with the essential concerns of the day-to-day and more with uncertainty and fear for the future. It challenges the assumptions that fuel the outpouring of goodwill that tends to follow a national tragedy. The scale, complexity and frequency of events like Harvey are only increasing, and their intensity suggests that the existing social safety net and our storied American grit may not be

enough. This new phase arrives with a sinking feeling that, despite the massive mobilization of government services and the billions of dollars in philanthropy, at the end of the day we're all on our own.

...

What if a Harvey happens once a year or every other year or even every four years? Perhaps the question is no longer hypothetical. This past year saw hurricanes Harvey and Irma hit the mainland United States and Maria pummel Puerto Rico. Wildfires ravaged northern California after changing climate patterns fueled record-high temperatures and abnormally powerful winds. Each of those events received its moment of around-the-clock media coverage and philanthropic zeal before public attention drifted to the next catastrophe. And each of those areas is full of what Harvey left scattered across the Golden Triangle: individ-

been so bad this time, and he's adamant that it must be related to the release of reservoir waters. But Richard LeBlanc, general manager of Jefferson County Drainage District 6, says North Beaumont flooded after the massive amount of rain that fell in the largely undeveloped land to the north of town percolated down the watershed and, over the course of a few days, overwhelmed the Neches River and its bayou tributaries.

Standing in front of Edwards's ruined family home, it hardly seems to matter what you believe about the cause of all this heartbreak and devastation. The result is the same.

"It's sad, man," Edwards says. "You know the people who work their whole life trying to put something together, and then your whole life is out there in the street, in the trash pile."

"What will your mother do?" I ask.

"She's just accepting it for what it is," he says. "It's all you can do. You just got to accept it for what it is and try to move on best you can. It's hard. It's a hard blow. But that's life. You either sit around and cry about it or pick up and try to keep on going."

Before I head out of town, I decide to look for Spindletop, the place that started it all. I find a granite obelisk sitting in a pristine grassy meadow adjacent to a quaint museum fashioned after a tiny frontier town. But upon reading the marker, I discover that it doesn't in fact mark the spot of Spindletop. The monument was moved some years back because decades of digging, drilling and pumping for oil, natural gas, sulphur, sand and gravel at the actual site had left the ground ravaged and unstable. I drive a mile south trying to find the location of the original well; it's barricaded by a web of railroad tracks and barbwire fences guarding patches of industrial wasteland.

I keep hearing the voice of Chris Edwards. What does it mean to "keep on going" when faced with forces as colossal as a changing climate? It's hard to ignore the parallel between our trajectory and the history of Spindletop: using up the earth until there's nothing left.

But Edwards's remarks speak to another urgent question: How we are going to prepare for the change we already know is on the way? If Hurricane Harvey is any indication, our current answer is to allow those with the means to get out of the way while leaving the rest to fend for themselves—the de facto disposition of a society still caught in denial of its own fate. Reversing that attitude won't be easy, but it might begin with the resolve Edwards gave voice to in the face of disaster. The future may be stormy, but its story can still be written. ■

"NO ONE HAS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM THEY CREATED DOWN THERE."

uals struggling to find a way forward.

Heading out of town, I follow one last trail of trash to a buried bayou that runs under Manning Street in North Beaumont on its way to the Neches River. The street is dotted with 80-year-old shotgun shacks and tiny bungalows. Chris Edwards stands outside his mother's gutted home. From the stoop you can see the blackened studs inside and smell the deep, noxious funk of mold. Edwards says his uncle did most of the demo work, though Edwards tried to help when he wasn't at his job as an operator at Exxon-Mobil. His uncle sits on the stoop with a cigarette dangling from his lips, staring at the ground.

The family has lived on the land for decades; their cousins live up the street. In all those years, he says, the water never even came over the curb. He can't understand how the flood could have



PLAYMATE

SCORE!

February Playmate Megan Samperi has a lot to offer—if you can keep up with her



"I was raised dirt-biking, four-wheeling, all that fun stuff," says Megan Samperi, her enormous blue eyes darting with mischief. "I like going fast. I drive like a dude—one hand on the wheel, a leg up, chilling with my music. All my dude friends are actually scared of me driving." Our February Playmate is that extra-rare breed of dream girl: the spunky and jaw-droppingly sexy tomboy. A 24-year-old model who loves football, ice hockey and kicking back by a bonfire, Megan also holds a bachelor's degree in biology. "I studied my butt off for quite some time," she says. "That's my backup plan, but I just moved to the O.C. and I'm chasing my dreams."

Those dreams include acting and singing (she's recently picked up the acoustic guitar again after a long hiatus) while improving her surfing skills. "One day I'll shred," she says. "For now, I'm learning." Growing up in Jupiter, Florida, 90 miles north of Miami, Megan spent most

of her time outdoors and learned to love horseback riding—while, of course, putting her own wild spin on it. "I used to jump horses. It's actually really dangerous. You have to have a connection with the horse before you do anything. I could sit in the barn all day, grooming horses, then ride bareback and be happy."

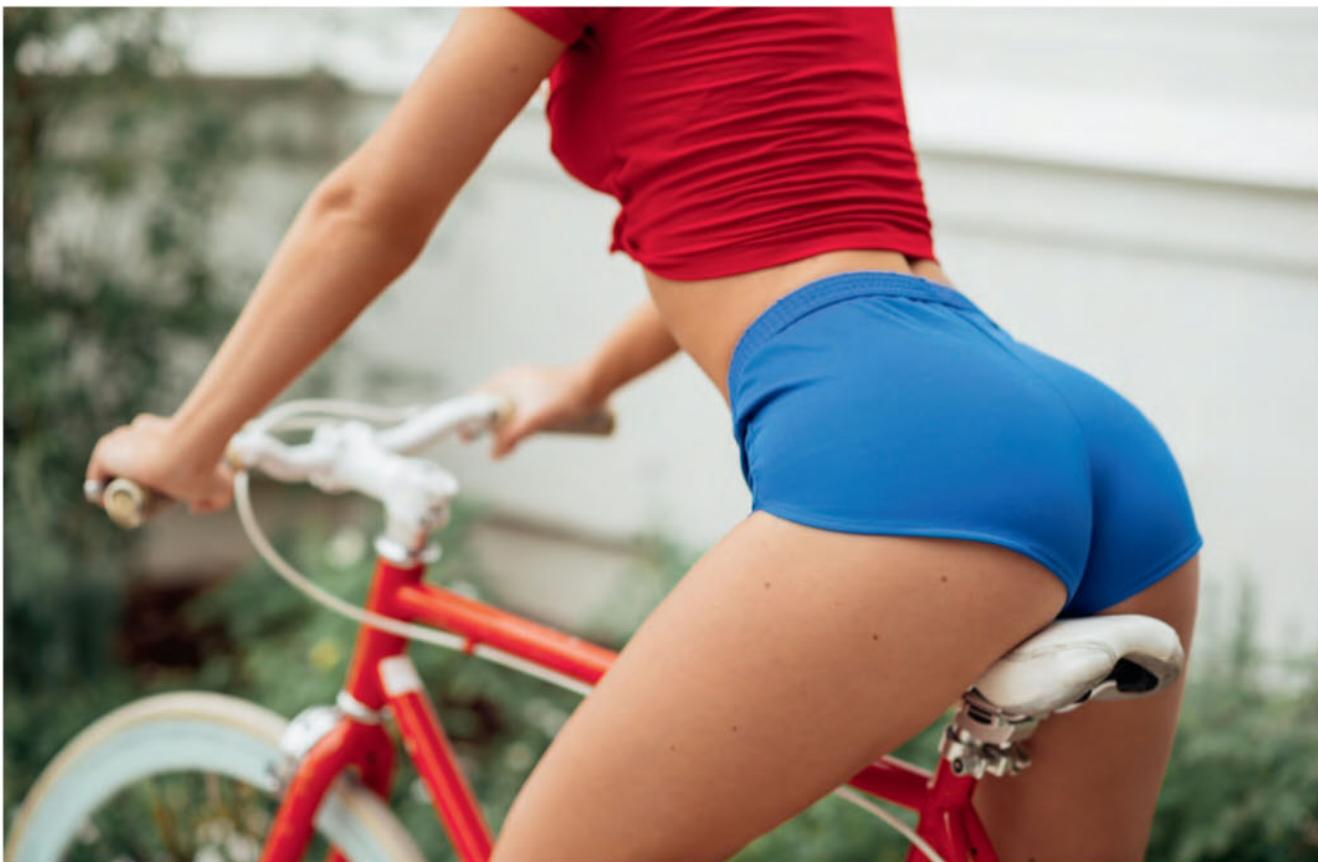
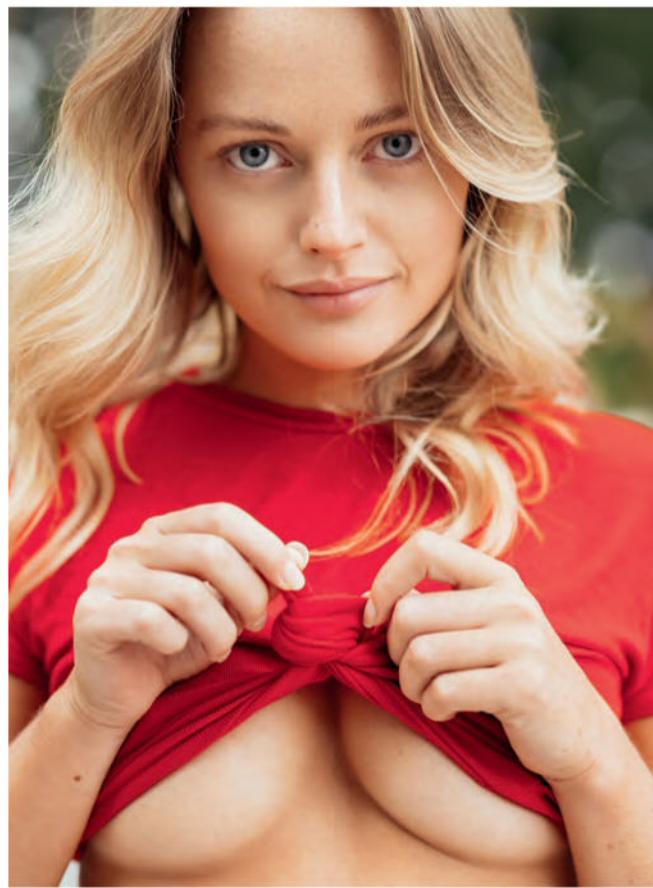
When it comes to men, this guy's girl knows exactly what she wants. Just don't expect her to put anyone in a box, herself included. "No one's the same, so how can you have a type?" she says, adding, "I love extroverted, intelligent men. Trust is big, and we both need to have separate lives. It's sexy when a guy is independent, doing his own thing." Megan, of course, is all about doing *her* own thing. "I don't want to be any other person; I want to be myself. My attitude is to just live your life. Go with the flow. Go travel. Things will happen."

When it comes to this live wire, we can't wait to see what happens next.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER VON STEINBACH























FEBRUARY 2018 PLAYMATE



DATA SHEET



BIRTHPLACE: Jupiter, Florida **CURRENT CITY:** Santa Ana, California

WORSHIP YOUR WOMAN

Real men get it. Men will look at PLAYBOY and be like, "Oh, wow, this is beautiful!" The body is freaking beautiful, and it's attractive when a guy shows off his girl. If I were a guy, I'd show off the hell out of my girl. "Look at this girl! Look at her ass!" Just kidding.

DIVER DOWN

Spearfishing is awesome. You just need to go with a lot of friends because I have friends who have blacked out in the water. The max I've gone is 50 feet and held my breath for a minute and a half.

FRIEND ZONE

I'm single and I'm just trying to stay friends with everybody. I like to keep it chill, but then I'll meet someone with a great sense of humor and we'll connect right away. I just think it's important

to find someone who appreciates you for who you are and not for what you look like.

WILD LIFE

I love hunting, and I also love animals. I actually wanted to be a veterinarian. I shot my first buck last year, and you know what—it was a great experience, even though I felt bad doing it. Then again, if certain animals weren't hunted they would overpopulate and kill off humans with disease. So maybe I saved somebody.

SIMPLE PLEASURES

Besides work, I love watching the surf, eating good food, having a good cup of coffee, hanging out with a bunch of friends and going on a hike. I like to go to bed early and wake up early if possible so I can have the whole day to do stuff.

NO OFFENSE

I'm so inappropriate. If I offend anybody, I'll say, "Oh, sorry I offended you," and then I'll make a sarcastic joke and probably walk away. Sometimes I need to relax; other times everyone loves it. You have to be yourself. Listen to "Go Fuck Yourself" by Two Feet.

LET'S MAKEUP

I love dressing up and putting on sick makeup, but I don't want everyone to gasp when I take it off. Some girls are like that, and I just tell them, "You're so beautiful without all that."

TOMBOY PROBLEMS

Guy's say they want a girl who rocks Vans and ripped jeans and a crop top. That's me. Then they end up with the one who goes to a restaurant to wear high heels for 30 minutes.



@megan_samperi





2017 PLAYMATE REVIEW

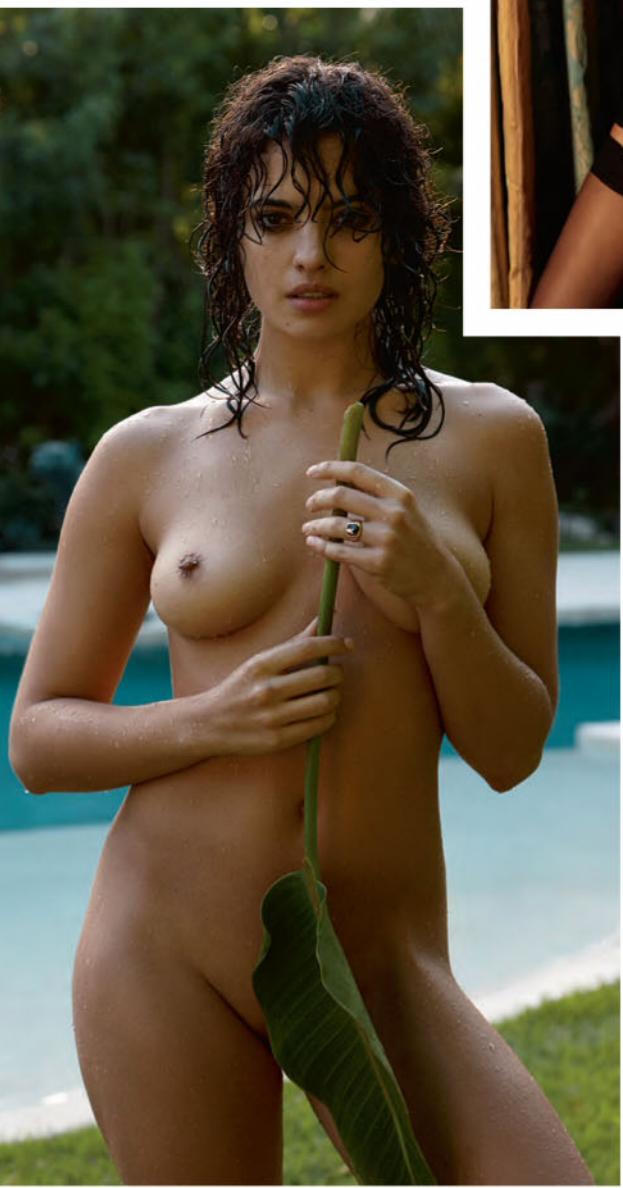
Choosing 2018's Playmate of the Year from among these ravishing, fascinating contenders is the toughest job you'll ever love. Cast your vote at playboy.com/p moy2018

DECEMBER *Allie Leggett*

She may wear the 2013 Miss Kentucky tiara, but Allie's spiritual home—and radiant persona—is California all the way. "You have to put yourself out there," she says. "Take a chance."

MARCH *Elizabeth Elam*

This small-town Oklahoma native helped us proclaim "Naked Is Normal" on the cover of our March/April issue. "You can cry and still be 'manly,'" she says. "And as a woman, you can be smart and naked at the same time."



APRIL *Nina Daniele*

Writing, photography, animal rescue and even pole-dancing are among this badass, big-hearted Bronx girl's passions. "I like pushing boundaries," she says.



AUGUST *Liza Kei*

Russian-born model, globe-trotter and former ballerina Liza Kei can describe herself in three words: "Funny, sexy, sarcastic." To which we would add "cultured," based on her FOMO-inducing Instagram feed.



A full-page photograph of a nude woman with long, dark, wavy hair. She is lying on a bed with white sheets, propped up on her left arm. She is holding a vintage-style pink telephone receiver to her ear with her right hand, and the coiled cord hangs down the side of the frame. She is wearing a thin, light-colored thong. Her gaze is directed towards the camera with a neutral to slightly intense expression.

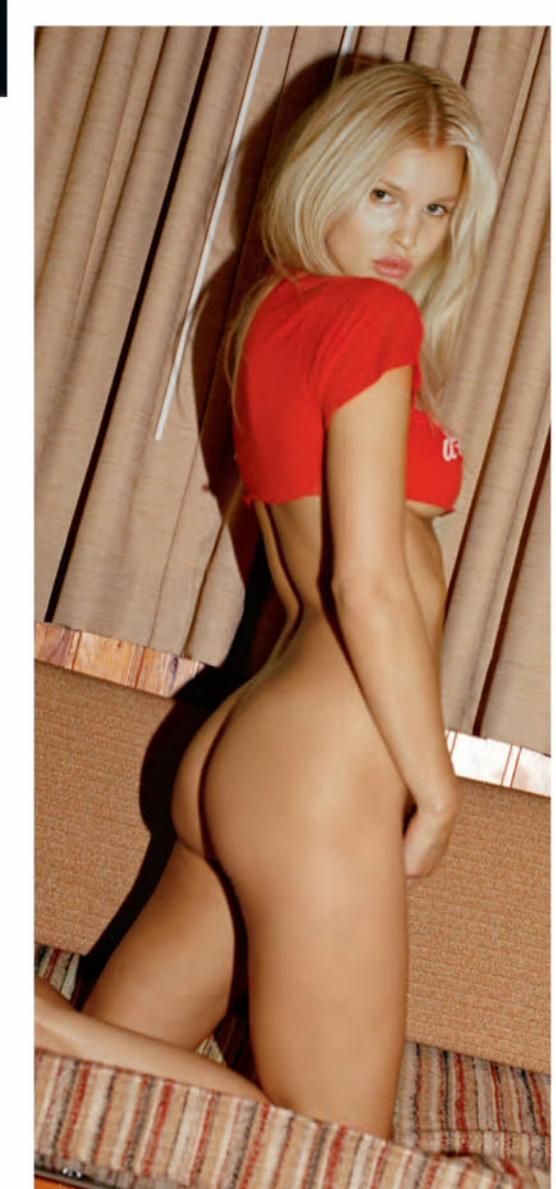
SEPTEMBER

Jessica Wall

A Chicago-bred nomad whose whole life can fit into a hiking backpack, this classic beauty is all simplicity and zero bull: "I don't have time for fake stuff in my life; I've seen too much real life."

OCTOBER***Milan Dixon***

Having spent five years pounding the Hollywood pavement while working at TGI Fridays, our October Playmate has both heart and hustle. "What you're thinking, what you're feeling in your heart—once you speak it, it can come to pass," says the Las Vegas native.

**FEBRUARY*****Joy Corrigan***

It's hard to picture Joy Corrigan blending in anywhere, but she's come a long way since her childhood, spent with nine siblings on a small farm in North Carolina. "I grew up poor," she says. "I didn't know drinking powdered milk and wearing hand-me-downs wasn't the norm."

JUNE
Elsie Hewitt

Born in London and independent since the age of 15, our June Playmate is inspired above all by sisterhood. "Everybody should be lifting each other up, especially women," she says. "There are enough men who are awful to women; we all need to be nicer to each other."

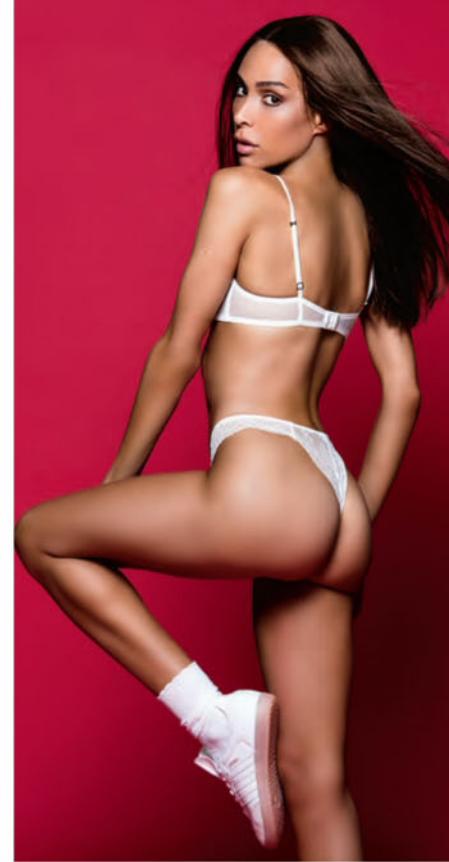




JULY

Dana Taylor

Fellas, take heed if you wish to approach this Chicago native. (What can we say? We have a type.) With 11 years of competitive ice-skating under her belt, she has a fierce sense of self: "I'm a wild girl, a free spirit, so when I meet a guy, he has to be able to keep up with me."



NOVEMBER

Ines Rau

For this Paris native and rising fashion model, taking the Playmate title was a historic (and, yes, controversial) move. "I lived a long time without saying I was transgender," she says. "Then I was like, You know, you should just be who you are. It's not about being loved by others; it's about loving yourself."



JANUARY

Bridget Malcolm

Trained oboist, devoted vegan and former Victoria's Secret Angel, our Aussie Playmate is perhaps most passionate about wellness. "Dedicate just 10 minutes a day to meditating," she says. "It could change your life."



MAY
Lada
Kravchenko

In addition to living the glamorous life of a jet-setting model, this Russian-born, New York-based Playmate is also a trained programmer: "Database systems and computer tech—that's my profession. I'm a nerd!"



What Are You Thinking About Right Now

BY **BAIRD HARPER**



FICTION

That's a fair question, Miss therapist, though it rouses a distasteful memory. Thinking back on how things went, I still believe I acted out of love, though you people will certainly take me for some kind of coward. I do wish I'd told my wife the truth, but once I hadn't, there really was nothing to do but leave—

Oh, hello, Bill, have a seat. You're not late. Or, I suppose you're quite late, but you haven't missed anything critical. Jose and Carol were just pointing out that I hadn't yet shared my tale of woe with the group, and then Miss therapist Kay started in with one of her open-ended questions, the answer to which was interrupted by your tardiness. But anyway, we're all here now.

Okay, where was I? I was leaving my wife. Right, so what I did was this: I sold my collection of lever-action rifles for a wad of traveling cash, I packed one good bag of clothes, and then I wrote a note whose brevity left nothing to chance. Dear Molly, I wrote. Please consider this our divorce paper. Everything not taken with me today I leave to you. Sorry for being such a pecker. Love always, Darrel.

And it's true that I did still love her. But over the years she'd come into the opinion that I belonged to her, as a house cat might. And while, in the light of most days, I was able to pardon this possessiveness as a side effect of Molly's devotion to our marriage, when lying awake at night beside my wife, I found that her omnipresence had a truly suffocating effect. But if it's all right with you people I'd prefer to stop short of explaining the exact reasons I decided to leave. Fair enough?

Your point is valid, Miss therapist. I came here of my own volition, that's true. And I do recognize that the powers of a support group may be diminished if I withhold details, but I just don't see the honor in trashing my wife in

front of a bunch of strangers. Now don't shake your heads. I can see the ties that bind us are real—you've all lost someone, and I have too—but I'd prefer to talk about the grief without constructing a litany of grievances. Do you understand why I'm reluctant? Do you see that I'm not one of these people whose grief is also anger? I'm all for anger when it happens. Like Herb over there. Herb's still livid that his brother gassed himself in the garage. I get it, Herb. I'd be pissed off too if one of my people took himself out like that. In fact, some years back, I had a dear friend who did exactly the same.

One afternoon, out of nowhere, this dear friend's wife called me up. "Oh, Darrel," she said, "I need you right now!" I tried to tell her I didn't have time for any nonsense, but this woman was hysterical. "Randy's missing!" she cried. "He didn't come home from work! His boss said he never even showed up!" So Molly and I went over there and immediately we could see, through the little garage windows, what Deb hadn't yet noticed, that her husband's Subaru was still in there. So I rolled up the big door and there he was, sleeping in his

Outback. That's how it appeared, anyway, as if Randy was just taking a good long nap, his face wearing the clamped smile of a man rowing peacefully through dreams. The happiest I'd seen him look in years.

So I guess I wasn't mad about it, but Deb was certainly upset. She eventually did the stages, though. Anger, bargaining, all of it. She got better. She even got remarried, to that hack dentist with his office beside the candy store. The one who parks his penis-shaped sports car all over town. Or maybe I don't know the guy

well enough to hate him, but the point is, Deb moved on. It's me who still dwells on how, when we found old Randy piloting his Outback into the hereafter, the vehicle was heaped with dead squirrels. Squirrels! You see, a rather sizable community of these rodents had taken up residence in the rafters of Randy's garage. I'd been over there with him a few times drinking beer and picking off the little fuckers with my Winchester, but it was no use. They were multiplying faster than I could reload. But now I figure I've got the way to do it. The next time a neighbor needs his garage cleared of vermin, I'm just going to tell him to leave the car running with the doors closed.

Yes, Miss Kay, it's true that my story has veered from its original course, but the point is that I don't want to share the particulars of my anger with a room full of—

Yes, Herb, thank you for pointing that out. I did say "my anger," didn't I? But isn't it therapist Kay's job to catch us on the hidden semantics of our damaged psyches? And besides, it *isn't* anger. How could it be? Molly loved me

to the point of possession, and I loved her. If anything, *she* was the one to be angry with me, for leaving.

Which is actually where I was headed with my squirrel anecdote, because it was right around the time of my good friend Randy's death that I first began to wake up during the night with thoughts of leaving Molly. This was years before my actual departure, mind you, but there was something about that tranquil look waxed onto Randy Menard's dead face that made me want to drive my own wheels to some happier place.

Before anyone gets excited, though, I'm not the suicidal type. No offense to your brother, Herb, or to you, Carol, for the long nights you claim to have spent considering it, but I just don't see it as a legitimate solution. I'm so sad I'm gonna make everyone I know go to a fucking funeral?

Sorry, everyone. The *F* word. I'm working on it. But where was I? Right, so Randy takes a road trip to Elysium, and then I start getting these weird middle-of-the-night feelings like I need to get in the truck and drive until I'm a bachelor again. For hours sometimes I'd lie there beside my beloved wife imagining the clothes I might fold into a duffel. Night after night like this, month after month, like one of those old-time prisoners visualizing every footstep of the jailbreak. I had it down to a perfect single piece of luggage filled with the exact right clothes. A go-bag to end all go-bags.

And then one night, completely out of nowhere, without even realizing she wasn't sound asleep, Molly cleared her throat and said, "What are you thinking about right now?" Just like that, with the "right now" tacked on the end to make sure I didn't think she was just making idle conversation. And for a second, I was going to tell her. But when I opened my mouth, I said the first other thing that popped into my head. I said, "Molly dear, I wish you'd quit driving around with Shackleton on your lap. It's dangerous, for both of you."

She just lay there in silence, for so long I thought maybe she'd fallen back asleep. But then, in this solemn little voice, she said, "Okay, Darrel, I promise I won't do that anymore."

Oh, sorry, good question, Carol. Shackleton, or "Shack" as we called him, was our Jack Russell terrier. Okay, let's pause here. I know what you guys are thinking. You're thinking, This hulking motherfucker—sorry, Miss Kay—this

hulking bastard owned a motherfucking *toy dog*? And to be honest, "toy" probably doesn't even paint a fair picture. This animal was a runt of runts, which is actually why we ended up with him. You see, good old Randy the Sad had a Jack Russell for himself, which he and Deb bought from a breeder in California. Then they bred this dog themselves every few years, sold off the puppies and used the money to trade up for a new snowmobile. But of course no one lays down any coin for the runt of the litter, so Randy started talking about carrying the thing up the pass and leaving it for the coyotes. This is what the man honestly proposed. To hear him eulogized, you'd think he was kind to all creatures great and small, but I'm telling you Randy Menard had a demon inside him, which happens to be my theory on suicide, by the way, that these people who end themselves,

to give him a chance. So I plucked him from that crate and took him out of there, without even asking. And that night, when I got home, there was my beloved wife in the kitchen, wearing a look like her house cat is gravely mistaken if he thinks he's an outdoor cat now. She especially wanted to know what Debra Menard had been phoning her about—something to do with me chopping Randy on the breastbone with a hammer and stealing the last puppy they'd been thinking of keeping for themselves.

"Bullshit, for themselves," I said to Molly, and told her about Randy's plan with the coyotes and would she please just look how goddamn malnourished this animal has gotten sitting over there in that steaming death trap of a garage.

This was where Molly came around to my side. She was still pissed at how I'd gone about it, and there was no end to the phone calls from Deb about the little piece of bone chipped off the bottom of Randy's sternum now just sort of floating in the center of his fat chest. But before those weeks of static from the Menards, and way before we eventually reconnected them so successfully that it would be me and Molly who'd come fish Randy out from under that mounded carnage of squirrels, it was just the three of us in that kitchen together—husband, wife, dog.

In that way, Shack was like our child, in lieu of actual children, which we could not have. This is another one of those details I'd prefer not to share with you people, but rather than suffer the arguments of those who believe the reproductive travails of my wife and I might somehow be relevant to my current grief, I'll just say that *our* issues were actually *my* issues. I could raise the crane just fine—no problems there, I assure you—but there's such a thing as sperm motility and—

Understood, Miss therapist. I just didn't want the Freudians in the room to think I was holding back about my damaged loins' influence on the present state of my psyche. But the fact is, if such an issue had ever existed, this tiny dog seemed to be filling that void in our lives.

Of course we'd thought about getting a pet before, but we didn't want to be those people who have dogs instead of children. And Shack wasn't some proxy. He was a miraculous event in our lives. I swear something half magical came over me that day in Randy's garage. But it wasn't any swell of compassion, and the last thing I desired in my life was a purse-size

He was consumed by demons while hunting squirrels in his garage.

that it's actually this occupying demon they're trying to kill when they—

Okay, fair enough, Miss Kay. It's just a theory. But anyway, I was sitting on a lawn chair in Randy's garage some years before he did himself in, and that pee-soaked newborn pup was lying in a crate full of soiled shop towels, and Randy took his ball-peen hammer off the pegboard and said, "One bop on the head and that puppy wakes up inside a coyote's gut."

Evil, right? Carol, are you listening to this? This is why you're not actually going to kill yourself. You don't have a demon inside you. You just miss your dad. This grief of ours is a hell of a thing, but we're not *possessed*. Trust me, Carol, you're a survivor.

Which is what I'm getting at with Shack. This dog was a fighter too. He just needed someone

canine. So do you see how it was? Can you hear the whispers I so desperately wanted to avoid? What is he doing with that miniature dog? He played high school football, for God's sake. And have you heard, he's shooting blanks! No, it wasn't compassion that drove me to take Shack that day, and I had very little humanity left in my life at that point. My humanity was being wasted feeling sorry for myself for all the heirs I'd never sire, secretly hating Molly for shrugging her shoulders and saying, "So we'll adopt." But I'd seen the videos of those feral Romanian orphans. Put them all to sleep, right? And leave the runt pup to the coyotes? It was exactly the kind of thing I could've said. And how many times had I sat in that very lawn chair with my Winchester pointed to the rafters ready to blow away a small mammal? But the point is, that time in the garage I *wasn't* the one saying it. And with that tiny whimpering dog lying there in that crate, something deep inside me just broke open. I don't know what it was, but it wasn't compassion. It was more elemental than that. Like pure shame. And humiliation. Yes, that's it. Looking into Shackleton's suffering yellow eyes was like a great and merciful shame, gushing through me, humiliating me... and maybe forgiving me too, for all the horrible shit I've done.

Hold on a second. I'm not crying. I'm just, goddamn it, that dog. He was a pain in the ass those first months, and an expense too. Imagine hooking a rat up to an IV *and* a feeding tube. Can you see it? The little heart monitor going *beep*? Close your eyes if you need to. Come on, Jose. Carol, you too. Close 'em. Can you guys see this pitiful sight? Okay, ready...? Now imagine the invoice coming in the mail.

You wouldn't believe what intensive veterinary care costs. More than a coyote, for sure. Bill, you must know what I'm talking about. I've seen you drive away in that shiny Cadillac. You some kind of rich veterinarian? And those vanity plates: DR-BILL. What is that, a play on words or something? No? Not gonna take the bait? One of these days we'll get you talking, Bill. I tried to hold out too, brother, but eventually Herb's beady eyes just overwhelm you and you start gushing about your poor dead dog. It's pathetic, me sitting here between Carol with her murdered father and Jose with his—what was it again, Jose?

Right, dead sister. Black ice. Honestly, there's no excuse for me coming in here and getting

choked up over a dog that wasn't supposed to live to begin with. But that was exactly the issue. Shack started *improving*. He came home and he began eating food and sleeping on our laps, and his presence pumped new life into our marriage, for a time. The married people in the room know how it goes, how things grow stale. Or, I suppose I was the one growing stale. I don't know why, but one day I just stopped gushing with all that great forgiving shame. It was probably the day I found Randy in the garage and started dreaming of go-bags.

But I kept that fantasy to myself. I stood firm against the gathering demons. I loved my wife, after all. I loved her enough to lie to her in the stark midnight void, to tell her I didn't like the way she drove around with our dog on her lap when what I really should've said was "Can you please find me a support group for

I wasn't worried about the police. My wife was well liked around town, and I was well liked by her. So I told those cops, "Go ask Molly about my whereabouts. She'll tell you I was here the whole time." Which she did. And the cops haven't been back since, so I assume the case of the sad, evil neighbor who just couldn't go on is now closed.

Doctor Bill speaks! Finally! And I was afraid we'd have to go on in perpetuity listening to you rattle off name and serial number. But no shit? You actually knew Randy Menard? A patient of yours, I bet. Well, if you were the one who tended to his chipped sternum, then I regret to inform you the patient didn't make it after all. He was consumed by demons while hunting squirrels in his garage. The police investigated, but the demon fled. It may now be hiding out inside Carol's heart—

Okay, yes, Miss Kay, that was in poor taste. Carol, I apologize. It's just that you guys have got me picking at some old wounds, and—*hmm*, okay, you've all been patient with me, with the swearing and all, and, let's see, Herb, are you still awake? What was it you were fishing for earlier? My "anger"? Okay, let's try that out. If you guys like it, then we can vote to see if I should include it the next time I share my feelings with strangers in the basement of a community center—

I am getting to it, Bill. However, I must say your long-anticipated contribution hasn't been entirely pleasant. But where was I? Anger...anger...okay, so in all honesty, no bullshit, *I am* still angry with Molly. It is, after all, an incredibly stupid thing to do. So yes, *anger* is actually a fair word to use here.

Imagine stealing a dying puppy from the jaws of a coyote, plunking down thousands in medical bills, then thousands more because it has every degenerative disease a dog can have, but you end up loving it like it's the honest-to-God embodiment of the children you couldn't give your wife, and then she gets in the car one day to take the latest ream of adoption forms to the post office and some teenager rolls through a stop sign and the two cars bump gently but just hard enough to trigger the airbag and this miracle dog explodes all over the woman you love more than anything in the world.

This happens, people. This happens everywhere, all the time. Ask Doctor Bill. He probably has the stats in his head about how many

This fat mustasche in a sheriff's hat said my wife had been in a car accident.

assholes who can't be happy with their incredible good fortune?"

But it's not like I took off the very next day either. I waited for the feeling to pass. I stayed quiet, especially when the cops came sniffing around. After all, they just wanted to tie up some loose ends and stamp Randy's file a suicide.

"You really have a stamp like that?" I asked them. But the detectives weren't in a joking mood. Turned out Randy's sister was someone at the county coroner's office, so the medical examiner was dragging his feet and the police had to make like they had an honest death investigation on their hands. So they questioned me about the ball-peen hammer incident and the stolen pet and also about a more distant episode where I allegedly strangled Randy in the parking lot outside Brothers' Tavern. But

beloved terriers get crushed by airbags each year. He'll give you the numbers, and he'll come to the defense of a shit-heel like Randy Menard, but he won't actually tell anybody why he's at our meeting.

No, Bill. *You go fuck yourself.*

•••

Okay, I'd like to restart things by thanking Miss Kay for giving everyone a few minutes to cool off. I, for one, think a recess could be a healthy part of every meeting, but we'll vote on that later.

Right, of course, there will be no voting on anything. And thank you also, Miss Kay, for reminding me that I didn't apologize to Bill for my, as you put it, "aggressive behavior." In fact, instead of merely apologizing, I'll take this moment to cordially invite Bill to share *his* reason for being here....

Well, if Bill isn't going to talk, then I'll—

Okay, wow. Tissues anyone? That was the worst thing I've ever heard, Bill. Honestly, the worst. A bit thin on details for the likes of Herb and Miss therapist, but there'll be time enough for

that next week. But yeah, Jesus, your loss takes the cake. This is humbling. I think I've just been humbled. And I'm sterile, so that's saying something. But, oh man, your wife of *how* many years? And this happened on the very *day* of your anniversary? Yeah, okay, I'm remembering the article in the *Gazette* now. The gates weren't working, was that it? I mean usually people are just trying to beat the train, but sometimes there's more of a death wish—

I'm not trying to usurp Bill's narrative, Miss Kay. I'm just ruminating on the tragedy. And Bill's clearly not afraid to interrupt me, so if he wants to go on with more details, he should feel free. But in the meantime, I feel I've gathered some momentum in processing my own loss. I'm going through the stages here. I feel like just today I've moved past denial and anger into bargaining, or maybe even depression. Depression would be nice. Then bring on acceptance! Like Deb Menard. She got over Randy in no time. She did her stages at high volume, so the grief burned off faster. I remember going over there one day to see how she was holding up and she had the pool-cleaning guy, Lance something—he did maintenance on our Jacuzzi too—facedown in her lap. This was only a few

months after Randy had shuffled off his mortal coil, so needless to say, I was bothered by the sight. Worse, though, it turned out to be the very day that we'd lose Shack in that fender bender.

I remember heading right back home to wait for Molly so I could tell her that Deb was making a rebound with the pool boy. But Molly didn't come home, and the hours started piling up, and she wasn't answering her phone. And every time my cell rang it was Deb wanting to know why I couldn't knock first, and Deb wanting to know if my feelings were hurt, and Deb explaining that it's absurd for her to remain monogamous in a relationship with a married man. But I didn't have time for that woman's bullshit with my wife mysteriously running three hours late. And right then, the police came waltzing up my front walk. Not the same ones who'd come sniffing for blood on my hands, but this fat mustache in a sheriff's hat who said my wife had been in a car accident and that she was in surgery at the county hospital having broken ribs removed.

But I wasn't understanding him. I was in shock. He was blathering on, and I wasn't hearing him right. Finally, I snapped out of my daze and asked this officer, "Did you say that nine of her ribs are broken?"



"Not *nine* ribs," the cop said. "Canine ribs. The dog's bones were lodged in your wife's chest and neck."

I got to the hospital just as Molly was coming into post-op. She was moaning, "I killed Shackleton!" and I kept saying, "You're fine, that's all that matters." But every time I opened my mouth she'd flinch like she was sure I was going to say "I told you so."

What do you mean next week? I can't just pick up mid-story seven days later. Can't you guys stay a little longer? I'm almost done. Two more minutes, that's all. I'll cut to the chase. Jose, sit down. Herb, come on. How is it possible that Bill is the only one not packing up?

Okay, thank you. All right, where was I? Post-op? Forget post-op. I'll jump to post-post-op, which is where it really goes downhill.

Imagine this. Imagine bringing your catatonic wife home from the hospital and dragging her up to the bedroom with the little crater still in the bedspread where your miracle dog took the last afternoon nap of his life, and you tuck in this wife of yours, groggy and blood-crusted and laced up with surgeon's thread, and you kiss her on the forehead as she drifts into an ocean of pain-killer dreams, and then, as if your life isn't complicated enough, you come downstairs to an answering machine that's got a dozen messages from Deb Menard saying she's so, so sorry and that the pool boy doesn't mean anything to her and that she needs your forgiveness or she's going to kill herself and that she forgives you for whatever happened with Randy, for absolutely whatever it was you did to him *if* you did anything at all because she knows now that the two of you are meant to be together forever.

But then the message ended abruptly and I looked up to find my wife, suddenly wide awake and in the room with me, standing there with her finger on the answering machine's stop button, her eyes boring deep into the center of my chest, as if she was seeing something there she hadn't noticed before, like just maybe she was seeing a true demon. And this is my final theory on demons, by the way—that they don't hunt you down and crawl inside you or anything like that, but rather they start out as something good and pure that you *invite* into your heart, like love or friendship, before morphing into a

ravenous imp that feeds on your guts. I still love Molly like I always did, but it's her love that's turned rotten inside me, possessing me.

Yes, I see you people packing up again. It's fine. I'm done. I'm truly and forever done. I'm possessed. We tried to un-possess me in couples' counseling, but it's difficult to fix a tough problem when giving up is an option too. And by "giving up" of course I mean that I wrote my little note and ran away.

See ya, Herb. It's cool. I know you've got places to be. Later, Jose.

Anyway, after I left, I still kept tabs on Molly. She wasn't exactly thriving, but she pressed on, until she didn't. One day she was there in the amber nighttime windows of the home we once

mean she's gone?" I said, responding to the part when they'd first given me the news. But then I got caught up. I said, "Well, you could've not left the sponge inside her neck is what you could've done." The surgeon's face seemed to agree with this, but he remained quiet. Somewhere, a guilty nurse was being coached up in a broom closet. I could practically hear the whispering. Or maybe it was the voice of my inner demon, the day's news having emboldened it to begin haunting me even before I went home to my motel room full of liquor bottles.

See ya, Carol!

Yep, just a botched surgery. How mundanely tragic, right? Give me a head-on with a semi like Jose's sister. Or a freight train, even. Am I wrong, Bill? Better to have the ones we love wrench from us in spectacular fashion than to watch them succumb to a series of minor mistakes.

And good night to you too, Miss Kay!

Guess it's just you and me now, Bill. Only the widowers, if your story's to be believed. Your tale of woe isn't very convincing yet, but that's just because you haven't come forth with the details that implicate you in the calamity. Miss Kay would have us believe we're telling our stories here in order to feel better, but that isn't really it. You'll eventually cave in with your own ugly particulars because you'll feel the need to demarcate the line inside yourself where the simple sorrow butts up against the terrible, gnawing regret. Your story in brief is made improbable by its one-dimensional sadness, but maybe next week you'll throw some light into the dimmer corners of your grief. Like the time, years ago, when I pressed Deb Menard up against the fridge at a Christmas party while my beloved wife chatted

up my boss in the next room. Or the dead color that filled Molly's eyes as she coolly verified my alibi for the morning of Randy Menard's murder. Or the way my voice trembled like a coward's as I spoke into the midnight void while her wet corneas caught the moonlight just so.

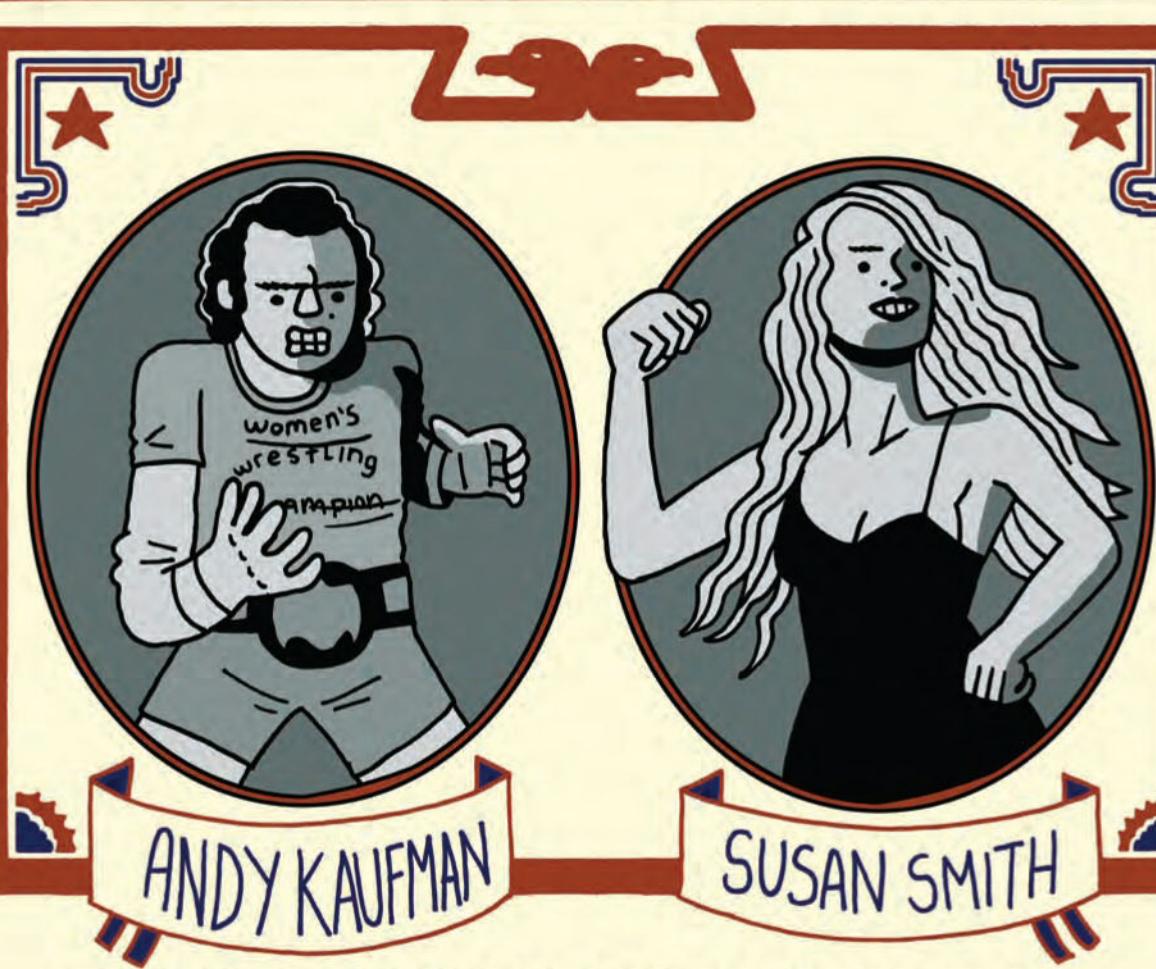
Here lies the true shame of a life, Bill, and the wicked irony too, unmerciful in its incessant return, night after night, hour after hour, as I lie awake in bed wishing like hell somebody was there to roll over and ask me, "What are you thinking about right now?" Just like that, with the "right now" tacked on the end to make sure I don't think she's just making conversation. ■

Better to have the ones we love wrenched from us in spectacular fashion than to watch them succumb to a series of minor mistakes.

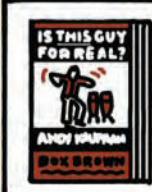
shared, and then the next day she was on a slab in the basement of the hospital. Complications from surgery. Elective surgery. But you can halt your conjecture, Bill. It wasn't a nose job or anything. Vanity wasn't in Molly's heart. There'd been scars where Shack's rib cage had stabbed into her neck, and a single woman needs to keep herself looking good, right? Anyway, it was a routine procedure, until a sponge got left behind and festered.

"The infection spread too quickly," her surgeon explained to me. "There was nothing we could've done." I had to agree, not being a doctor. Plus, I was in shock again. "What do you

IS THIS GUY FOR REAL?



IN OCTOBER 1981, PLAYBOY CHALLENGED ABSURDIST COMEDIAN AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST ANDY KAUFMAN TO A WRESTLING MATCH AGAINST SEPTEMBER 1981 PLAYMATE SUSAN SMITH. KAUFMAN ACCEPTED; HE'D BEEN WRESTLING WOMEN FOR YEARS. THE MAGAZINE IMMORTALIZED THE EVENT IN A FEBRUARY 1982 FEATURE.



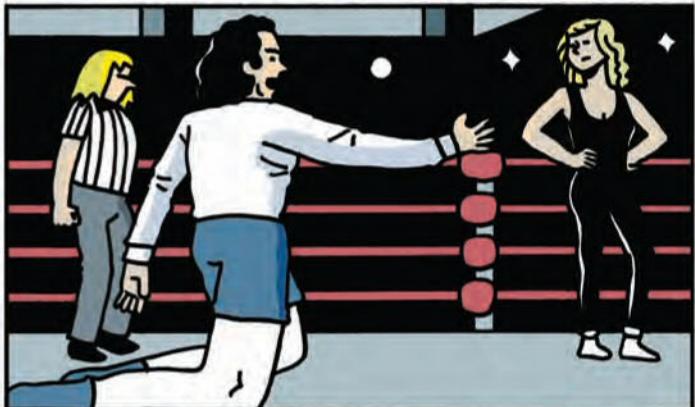
IS THIS GUY FOR REAL?
THE UNBELIEVABLE ANDY
KAUFMAN BY BOXBROWN
EXPLORES KAUFMAN'S
WRESTLING CAREER
AND FETISH.



KAUFMAN HAD A VISION: ONE DAY THERE WOULD BE WRESTLING CLUBS JUST LIKE DANCE CLUBS. AFTER YOU WRESTLED SOMEONE, KAUFMAN TOLD WRITING PARTNER BOB ZMUDA, IT'D BE A QUICK JUMP TO THE BEDROOM. DURING KAUFMAN'S ACT HE CHALLENGED WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE, OFFERING \$1,000 TO ANY WHO COULD PIN HIM.



KAUFMAN BOASTED ABOUT BEING THE UNDEFEATED "INTERGENDER WRESTLING CHAMPION"—A TITLE HE MADE UP—AND CLAIMED HE'D SLEPT WITH 70% OF HIS OPPONENTS. SMITH WAS A DIRT BIKER AND KARATE ENTHUSIAST WHO GREW UP MILKING COWS ON A FARM IN WISCONSIN. SHE TRAINED WITH A WRESTLING COACH TO PREPARE FOR THE MATCH.



THE MATCH TOOK PLACE OCTOBER 11, 1981, AT PLAYBOY'S ATLANTIC CITY HOTEL-CASINO. AT THEIR WEIGH-IN, KAUFMAN AND SMITH POSED FOR PHOTOS, ANSWERED PRESS QUESTIONS—AND EXCHANGED PLENTY OF TRASH TALK, WITH KAUFMAN EVENTUALLY GETTING HIMSELF THROWN OUT OF THE ROOM. BY THE TIME KAUFMAN ENTERED THE RING TO FACE SMITH THAT EVENING, HE HAD ALREADY "DEFEATED"



IN PRELIMINARY ROUNDS SIX WOMEN—ALL VOLUNTEERS FROM THE STANDS—THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO REF ZMUDA'S QUESTIONABLE CALLS. BUT FOR THE MAIN EVENT, PLATINUM-HAIRED "PRETTY BOY" LARRY SHARPE, A WELL-KNOWN PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER, OFFICIATED. AFTER THE BELL RANG, SMITH QUICKLY SHOWED HER ATHLETICISM, HANDILY LEG-DROPPING KAUFMAN, THEN WRIGGLING OUT OF A HEADLOCK AND FLIPPING HIM ON HIS BACK.

SHARPE LATER SAID KAUFMAN HAD TAUNTED SMITH THROUGHOUT THE MATCH, WHISPERING IN HER EAR, "I KNOW YOU WANNA FUCK ME." KAUFMAN SEEMED TO BE PLAYING A STEROIDAL VERSION OF BOBBY RIGGS—WHO LOST TO BILLIE JEAN KING IN THE INFAMOUS 1973 "BATTLE OF THE SEXES."



THE END OF THE MATCH WAS PURE PRO-WRESTLING PERFORMANCE. SMITH WAS MORE THAN HOLDING HER OWN. TWICE SHE HAD KAUFMAN PINNED, BUT SHARPE WAS DISTRACTED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF ZMUDA, WHO WAS TRYING TO ENTER THE RING, AND DIDN'T SEE. KAUFMAN FLIPPED SMITH, AND SHARPE, PAYING ATTENTION AT LAST, GAVE WHAT PLAYBOY WOULD CALL "THE FASTEST THREE COUNT IN ATHLETIC HISTORY"—EVEN THOUGH HER SHOULDER WAS CLEARLY UP.



HARD TO SAY WHY SHARPE DID A FAST COUNT; HE MAY HAVE BEEN IN ON THE ACT, OR MAYBE KAUFMAN PAID HIM OFF. AFTER 18 MINUTES AND 35 SECONDS THE MATCH WAS OVER: KAUFMAN REMAINED INTERGENDER CHAMP. HE'D HOLD THE TITLE FOR THREE MORE YEARS UNTIL HIS UNTIMELY DEATH IN 1984.



BOX BROWN



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PASCAL HEIMLICHER

BACK AT THE RANCH

Playing the part of cowgirl comes naturally to Lorena Medina. The Mexico City native feels right at home in the rough ranch land and dusty diners off Western Route 66















NICHOLAS GUREWITCH



CLASSIC PLAYMATES LIV LINDELAND AND KIM FARBER • VINTAGE CARTOONS • BUNNIES ON PARADE

HERITAGE

THE MAN BEHIND THE RABBIT HEAD

Irreverent and revolutionary, Art Paul brought to life Hef's vision of a sophisticated urban lifestyle in the pages of PLAYBOY

BY **DAN HYMAN**

Nearly 40 years ago **PLAYBOY**'s then editorial director Arthur Kretchmer shared a cab from the airport with a stranger. An international consultant, the woman proved an intriguing chat. When Kretchmer mentioned he worked for **PLAYBOY**, the company whose logo, he boasted, was the second most famous on Earth—behind only Coca-Cola—she smiled and proceeded to disagree. She'd spent much time in Asia and had just returned from Africa; without a doubt, she told Kretchmer, "yours is the *most* recognized logo in the world." Kretchmer chuckles as he retells this story. The woman may have thought she was toasting him or **PLAYBOY** or perhaps Hugh Hefner. But she was in fact saluting Art Paul.

Paul was Hefner's very first hire—founding art director of the nascent **PLAYBOY**—and he quickly proved his worth, drafting the now ubiquitous Rabbit Head in less than an hour. Certainly his best-known creation, the symbol is just one of his countless contributions to **PLAYBOY**.

As Hef put it in his cartoon diary, Paul's fundamental mission was to "really give the magazine a class look." Charged with crafting the publication's overall visual aesthetic, Paul had loftier ambitions.

"I set out to change illustration itself by pushing artists and illustrators to be more personal, expressive and innovative," Paul tells me via a long e-mail correspondence before we meet in person. And he doubled down on the magazine's progressive attitude and voice, he says, through its design. "I was guided by **PLAYBOY**'s spirit of change and the idea that there should be no 'high' art or 'low' art, that good design could be applied to anything."

He aimed to make each issue of the magazine a flight of graphic fancy. To read **PLAYBOY**, Kretchmer says, was to be taken on "an adventure, a visual experience as much as a reading experience." Indeed, within the design community **PLAYBOY** quickly became the go-to destination for the world's hottest artists and illustrators to showcase their talent. Andy Warhol, Salvador Dali, James Rosenquist and Ed Paschke are a small selection of the well-known artists whose work appeared in **PLAYBOY** thanks to Paul.

•••

In the magazine's inaugural issue Hefner wrote about the **PLAYBOY** man, who enjoys life's finer things: "mixing up cocktails and an hors d'oeuvre or two, putting a little mood music on the phonograph, and inviting in a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion on Picasso, Nietzsche, jazz, sex." It was Paul who translated this ideal into visual form.

"The idea that **PLAYBOY** was a sophisticated product, that's all Art Paul," says Robert Newman, former design director of *New York* and



Previous page: Art Paul sketches in light his famous Rabbit Head in Chicago, 1972. **Above:** In 1969, the 10th-floor entrance to the art department at Playboy's Chicago headquarters showcased pieces across a variety of media—oil, wood, collage, papier-mâché, plaster and more—that Paul had commissioned to illustrate articles. **Left:** Paul circa 1985. *The Art of Playboy*, a documentary about Art Paul by filmmaker Jennifer Kwong, is currently in development.

Details, among other publications. "He's the one who gave **PLAYBOY** its up-market, sophisticated and sensual feel." The proof was in the pages, which regularly featured fine art that could have come straight out of a gallery. And Paul didn't limit himself to the traditional options of paintings and illustrations to accompany articles; he also solicited work across wildly varying mediums, from mixed-media creations to plaster and resin sculptures to stone and acrylic assemblages.

Paul's approach to design—liberating artists from the constraints of strict editorial direction—was radical at the time.

"In the 1950s, illustrations tended to be dictated by editors, with art directors following orders," Paul says. "Someone would pick a scene from a story and present it literally, with a caption in case it was not literal enough—a real straitjacket of a formula." By contrast, he says, "I asked that the illustrator interpret the sense or feel of the story—what gave it its power."

Paul expected illustrators to deliver bold, metaphorical and even discomfiting works—whatever best complemented an article. "He let them rip," one art director says with a laugh.

Take, for example, Jerry Podwil's painting that accompanies the December 1974 article *Getting Off*: a diapered baby slumps near a broken rattle, hand burrowed into its nappy in an apparent act of masturbation. That kind of freedom was attractive to artists.

"I never called anybody to do work for us who said, 'Nah, I'm not interested,'" says Tom Staebler, who started in **PLAYBOY**'s art department in 1968 and eventually became Paul's protégé, then successor. "I don't care who it was or how big a name they were—they all wanted to work for **PLAYBOY**."

But suggest that his work was highly influential and the modest Paul will shrug it off. Then again, he doesn't need to sing his own praises; others do it for him. "He was a brilliant visionary and truly a master of magazine architecture," says Newman.

"**PLAYBOY** used illustration in a completely different way," says Bart Crosby, a Chicago-based designer and former colleague of Paul's. "They used it metaphorically, representationally. They used these dramatic illustrations that were disturbing sometimes. And Art perpetuated that. He encouraged it. That changed



Top: Hugh Hefner and Art Paul examine negatives in 1955. **Above left:** The early art staff of *PLAYBOY* magazine surrounds Paul. **Above right:** In addition to setting the magazine's visual style via design and illustration, Paul was also involved with Playmate photo shoots; here he attends to details for the photo session of December 1954 Playmate Terry Ryan—the first Playmate pictorial overseen by magazine staff.

the world of illustration. Even the more conservative publications started to be a bit more bold in what they were doing.”

•••

On a warm fall Chicago morning, Paul welcomes me to the high-rise apartment he has shared for more than four decades with artist Suzanne Seed, his wife of 40 years. Sporting a scraggly white beard and wearing a checked button-down with black pants, he smiles as he rises from his wheelchair, grabs his wooden cane and pats me on the back. He turns 93 this January and has suffered several strokes in the past decade; macular degeneration has left him nearly blind. Still, he moves through

his apartment with a joyful curiosity. The space, with its panoramic view of the city and the occasional peregrine falcon soaring by, is breathtaking—not least because it is a tribute to a creative and collaborative life. Nearly every inch of the apartment is covered with art, photographs and trinkets, many created by Paul, Seed and their friends and peers.

Seed serves as my tour guide for the afternoon, Paul trailing behind, nodding in approval when she showcases one of his favorite or most revered works: a whimsical collection of his drawings that seem almost to interact with one another (he calls it “Conversations”); a colorful collage of concentric circles that

cries out with youthful whimsy; sketches of faces and heads that line the entryway and lead to an adjoining studio space. Despite his vision problems, Paul sketches frequently. He also plays the keyboard, conjuring ideas that he then commissions one of his composer friends to transform into fleshed-out recordings. Today he plays one of his most recent pieces for me, loudly, over the apartment’s speaker system. The song, a serpentine waltz, floats through the room. Paul closes his eyes and allows it to wash over him.

•••

Art Paul was born in Chicago on January 18, 1925 to Jewish parents who had emigrated from

Ukraine with two older children. When Paul was just one year old, his father died. "We were struggling for many years, including during the Depression, but my mother was determined to keep the family together," he says. He credits his brother, Norman, who wanted to be a sculptor but instead worked to support the family, with stoking his interest in the life of an artist. His development was also aided by his mother, who supported her son's artistic ambitions; he recalls that she let him paint in the middle of the house "because the light was best there." Paul accompanied his big brother on weekend trips to the Art Institute, sparking a lifelong fascination with creativity in its endless forms. He came to admire the work of Michelangelo, but he also thought highly of the illustrations he saw in the popular Modern Library books and in the magazines of the 1930s, such as Norman Rockwell's work in *The Saturday Evening Post*. High art, low art—it was all simply art to him.

Paul began looking at the world through an artistic lens. Specifically he became fascinated with faces. He preferred to draw them from his imagination, he says, "but when I'd look at each face as people streamed by on the street where I was selling newspapers, or at those faces coming off the train when I went to meet my brother coming home from work, I'd see faces as amazing to me as those I'd dreamed up."

He won a scholarship to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, but his studies were interrupted by his service in World War II. Upon his return to Chicago in 1945, he enrolled at the Institute of Design, often referred to as the New Bauhaus for its adherence to the precepts of the seminal German art school. "Design seemed more connected to the world than painting," Paul says. After graduating, he opened his own illustration and graphic design studio downtown, where he created ads and other work for top-tier clients including department store Marshall Field's and publisher Scott Foresman. By the time a mutual friend connected him with Hef, Paul was enjoying a comfortable life thanks to his design business.

The two met in the spring of 1953, after Hef had quit his job as a copywriter at *Esquire*. Hef arrived for their initial meeting at Paul's downtown studio "looking disheveled, harried, tired, a bit of a wild man seemingly, with a huge roll of tattered papers under his arm," Paul says. Hef told Paul all about his idea for a new men's magazine—*Stag Party* was its title. Hef did his best to persuade Paul to join him.

"I was hesitant, as I had great clients I hated to give up," Paul says, but he ultimately decided to take the job as art director of what was soon renamed *PLAYBOY*. Paul says he was swayed by Hef's promise "to give me the complete freedom



to commission the experimental, personal kind of work from artists and illustrators that I had struggled to promote to clients for myself."

The early days of *PLAYBOY* were harried ones. It was in large part only Hef and Paul putting together the magazine, working so closely that the two would argue about whose turn it was to take out the trash. "The first few issues were like a sketchbook in which Hef and I were feeling our way," Paul says. "We were clear, though, and of like mind in wanting to do something new and experimental." Their relationship was one of symbiotic growth: Hef showing Paul how an editor built an issue with gripping content; Paul demonstrating how solid design could complement that content.

"There was a great deal of mutual respect and cooperation," Paul says. "It was the best of working relationships."

The first issue they assembled, the landmark December 1953 *PLAYBOY*,

remains of special importance to Paul. After visiting newsstands to research what made a magazine stand out, he realized that a white background would be eye-catching—other designers avoided stark white or black covers because distributors frowned on them.

"Hef had bought a black-and-white news photo of Marilyn Monroe sitting on a car, waving, in a ticker-tape parade," he recalls. "I blocked out everything but her and added a few blocks to the side to suggest confetti—in which I put a very few small cover blurbs." He placed it all atop a sea of white, with red text accents. "It looked fresh in the riot of color and mess of cover blurbs on all the other magazines—as did Marilyn's smile."

Many of Paul's early *PLAYBOY* covers are risk-taking and unorthodox, and sometimes strikingly minimalist. The June 1957 cover, for example, is entirely white but for two black Rabbit Head cufflinks; inside, the fiction story echoes this design with a nearly all-white two-page spread save for a lone fly in the upper left corner. Paul hired a technical artist to draw the insect hyperrealistically. "It's a favorite of designers," he says of the layout. "They love that I dared to make it almost entirely white space, as if a fly had just landed on the actual page of the magazine." Inventive design flowed through *PLAYBOY*, with Paul frequently incorporating die-cut or folded pages into his layouts—something he calls "participatory graphics."

PLAYBOY's art department was a thrilling place to work. With set designers and model



Top: Art Paul in Playboy's Chicago office. "Form follows frustration" is his version of the design principle "form follows function"—meaning not every design comes to him as quickly as the Rabbit Head did. **Middle left:** Paul's family, including his mother (pictured with Paul), supported his early artistic ambitions. **Middle right:** Paul climbs aboard a practice flight in the Army Air Corps, circa 1943. **Right:** For Paul's 25th anniversary as art director, the Playboy team thanked him with an appropriately customized card.



makers on staff, the art directors had no creative boundaries. "If you could think it up, you could make it happen," Staebler says. The creative community took notice: In its first 15 years, **PLAYBOY** received more than 150 honors and was recognized by the likes of the Art Directors Club of New York and the Society of Illustrators. Paul won several hundred awards for his work and toured the world with his Beyond Illustration exhibit, showcasing some of the magazine's most celebrated art pieces in museums and galleries from Europe to Asia. He even helped shape the magazine's editorial content: He's credited with conceptualizing the annual *Year in Sex* feature, which first ran in February 1977—though, as Kretchmer says with a laugh, in the meeting where Paul introduced the idea, Hef jokingly said, "This is a great job you've done. I'm really glad I suggested it."

Few other art directors become as synonymous with the magazine they work for as Paul did, says *Rolling Stone* art director Mark Maltais. But after nearly three decades at the helm of **PLAYBOY**'s art department, Paul sensed his life there had run its course. He left the magazine in late 1982.

Paul spent the ensuing decades working out of his home studio (contributing illustrations to **PLAYBOY** from time to time), hosting exhibits and showing everywhere from Japan to his native Chicago. In 1986 he was inducted into the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame, and he received lifetime achievement awards from the Society of Publication Designers, AIGA and Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design.

He has stayed busy into his 90s, continuing to live a life in the arts. In 2016, in partnership with the Chicago Design Museum, Paul created a custom handwritten design for Threadless, the online community of artists: "Tomorrow is a wonderful invention—it is the best definition of hope," it reads. In 2015 the makers of the popular game Cards Against Humanity commissioned him to create a piece for their limited-edition Design Pack that features illustrated interpretations of George Carlin's infamous 1972 monologue "Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television."

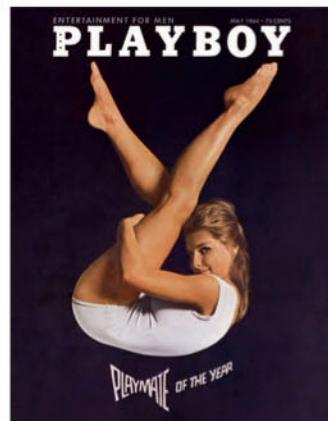
Paul chose to illustrate *Fuck*.

•••

Back at his apartment, sitting on his couch, Paul flips through a collection of his work. He's quiet but deliberate, his eyes following the pages as they drift past. He stops and points to the February 1967 cover, a beautiful blonde lying under an unkempt white bedsheet, her body forming the outline of a Rabbit Head as she gazes up with a coy smile. Paul runs his fingers over his long-ago design. In a whisper he says, "That was a good one." ■

Page-Turners

Art Paul had an ink-stained hand in all aspects of **PLAYBOY**'s visual aesthetic, from commissioning pieces to creating them himself. Below are a few notable specimens



"I had this idea of a girl posing in the shape of the Rabbit," Paul said in *Playboy's Greatest Covers*. "I asked Donna [Michelle] and there was no problem."



The cover of the strikingly minimalist June 1957 issue was art-directed by Paul, who says of the concept: "All white with just a pair of Playboy cuff links placed as if tossed on a linen-covered dresser top."



"Chaplin was one of my favorite actors, for his playful creativity, so to use type in a playful way seemed to suit the story," Paul says about the illustration he created for a March 1960 profile of the comedic actor.



Paul's ink illustration accompanies Larry Heinemann's July 1989 article on PTSD among Soviet soldiers returning from Afghanistan. The bird is a peace dove. "To make it sad seemed fitting," says Paul.



The colorful piece Paul commissioned for a 1971 story by John McPhee remains a favorite. "Afterward McPhee pointed out that in the story the champion favored the opposite hand to what was illustrated," Paul says, "but said he didn't mind the mistake as the image was so strong."



Paul (above) created the art for the September 1959 short story *The Taste of Fear* by Hugh G. Foster—pseudonym of blacklisted writer Gordon Kahn, who'd been denounced by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Liv Lindeland

January 1971 Playmate

Aspiring actress **Liv Lindeland** was looking for adventure when she flew to the United States from her native Norway in 1965. "It was my restlessness that made me decide to come to America," she said. "I came just for a visit, but when I arrived, I liked the country and the people so much I decided to stay." Settling in Los Angeles, Liv found acting roles in both television and film and eventually became a talent agent, but it was in the pages of *PLAYBOY* that she made history. With her sun-soaked 1971 Centerfold, Liv became the first Playmate to show a tuft of clearly exposed pubic hair (though nether fuzz had made its inaugural magazine appearance on a non-Playmate in 1969). Readers everywhere appreciated her moxie, and Liv won the title of *Playmate of the Year* for 1972. The sweet set of wheels below—a Lincoln-Mercury de Tomaso Pantera—was part of Liv's PMOY prize package.









Kim Farber

February 1967 Playmate

*The Theater Bunny was a short-lived breed, but thanks to women like **Kim Farber**, she made her mark. Kim was working as a ticket-taker at Chicago's Playboy Theater—one of a small chain owned by Playboy Enterprises and known for screening indie flicks, censored films and fare from Playboy Productions—when she was discovered. Asked to be a Playmate, the then 20-year-old with the wonderfully mod haircut did not hesitate. "I'd always wanted to be a Playmate," she said. Among Kim's eclectic interests were motorcycling, ice-skating, authors Tom Wolfe and James Michener, and bold fashion ("If I had my way, I'd drape the whole world in bright orange," she noted), but gaining life experience was her top priority before deciding on a career path. "I may be trying to do everything, but I'm trying to do everything in the right order."*









Classic Cartoons

Celebrate another trip around the sun with these seasonal knee slappers



*"Last year's resolution didn't last too long.
It was ruining my sex life."*

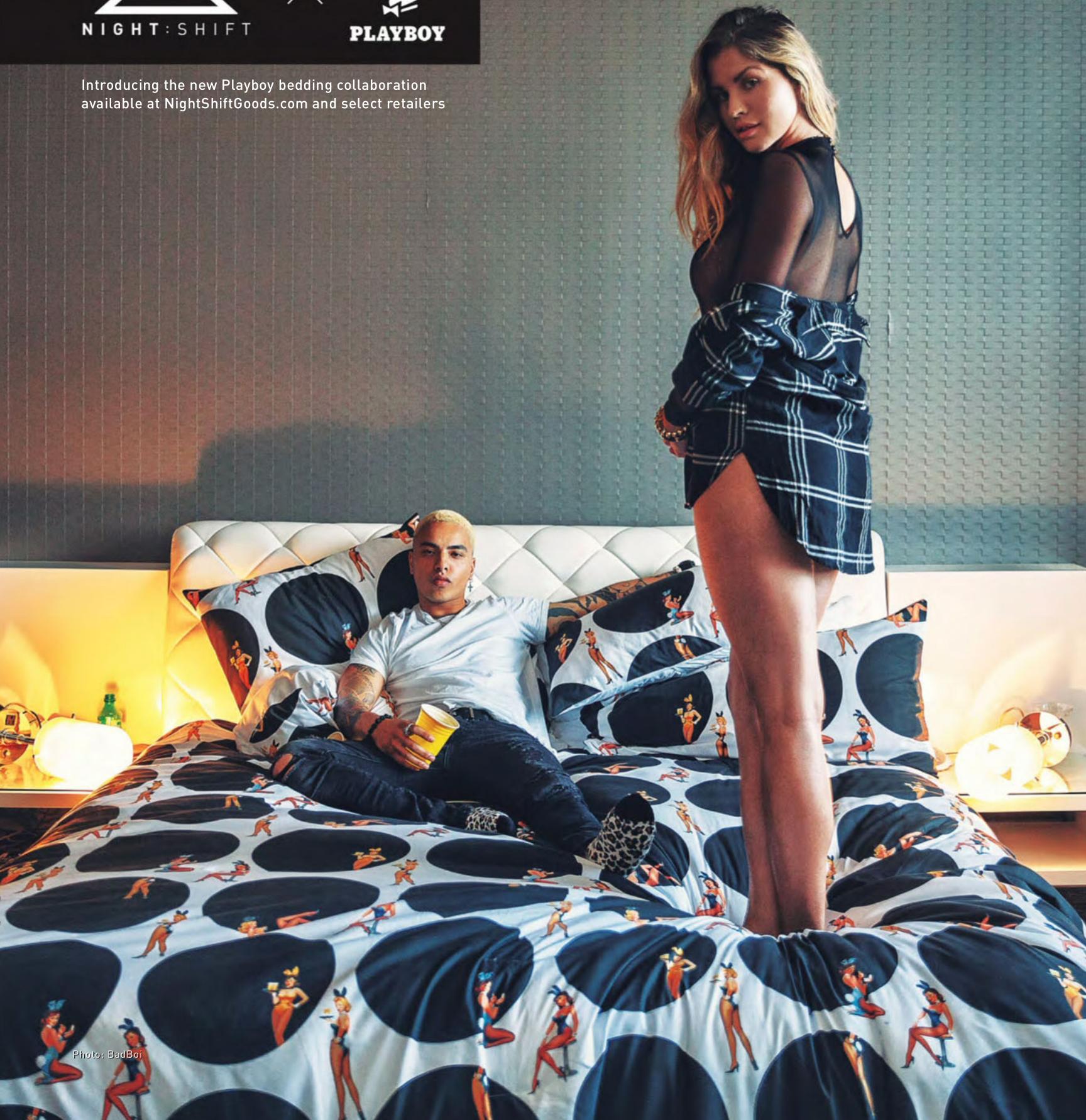


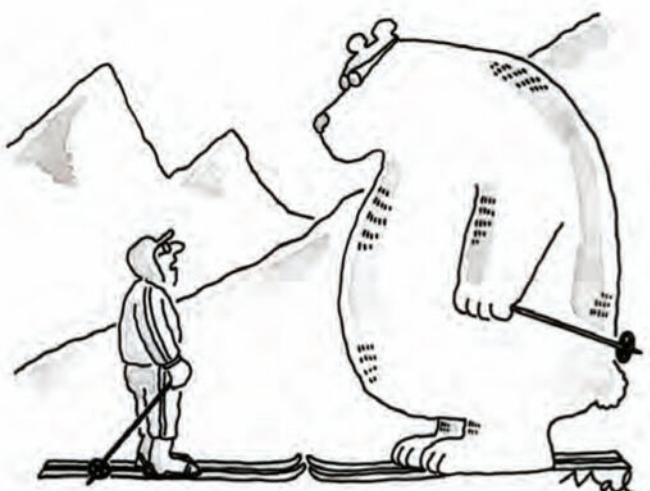
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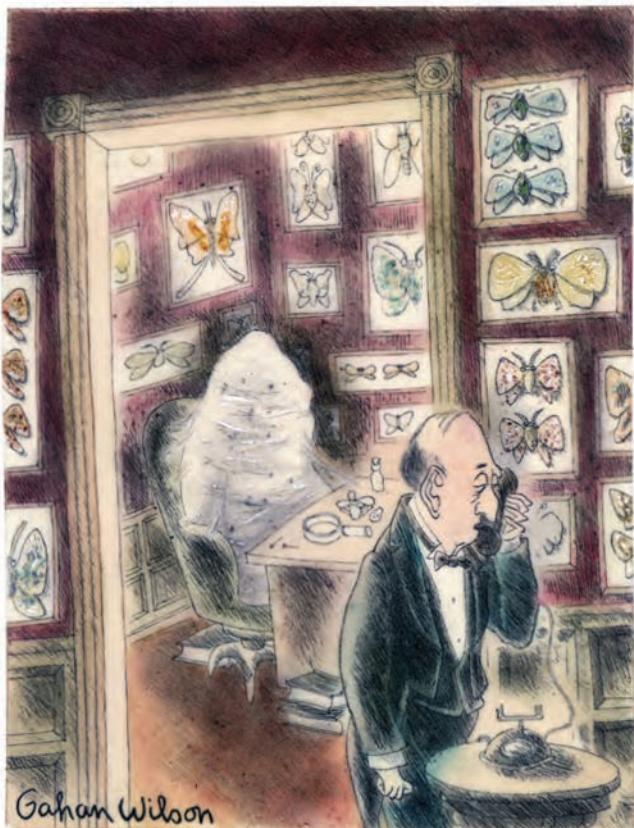




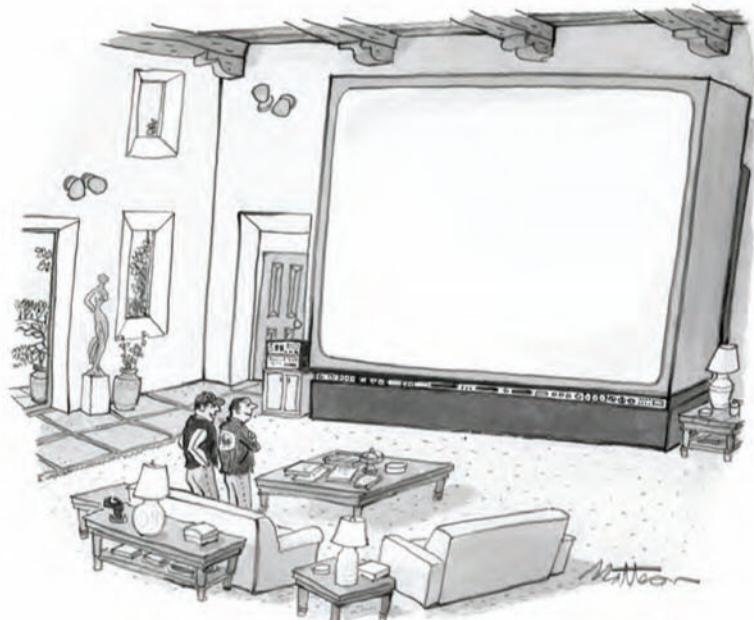
"Most bears hibernate during the winter."



"On your lunch break, would you pick up a Valentine card that doesn't commit me to anything, lovewise?"



"I'm sorry, sir, but Professor Dornley does not wish to be disturbed for the rest of the winter."



"The Super Bowl deserves nothing less."

Read it for the articles.

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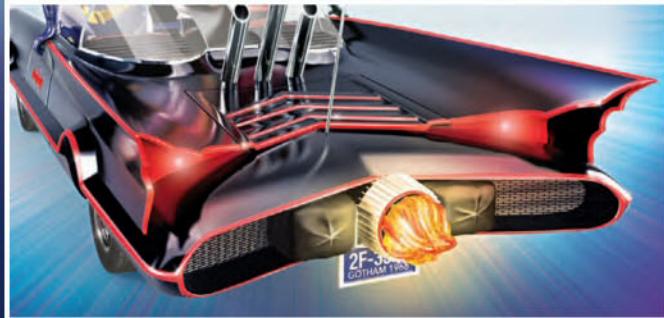


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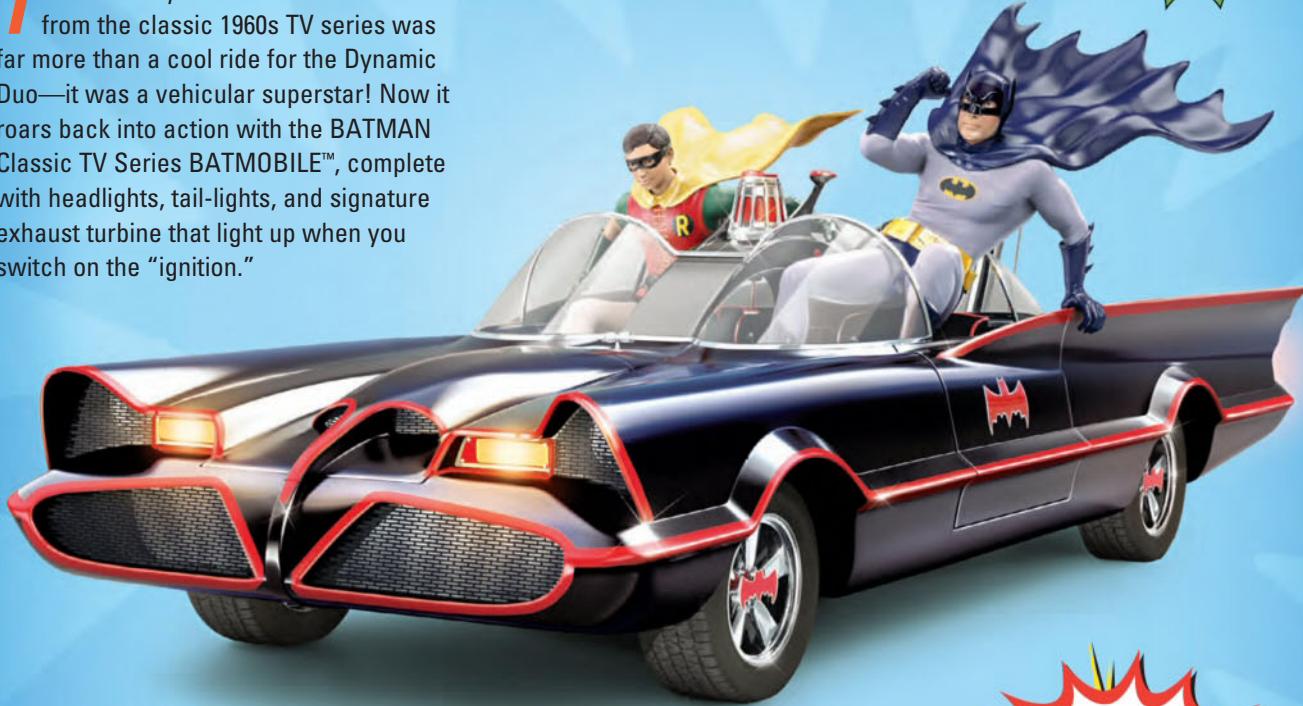
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THE DYNAMIC DUO IN THE BATMOBILE™!



Turbines to speed! The BATMOBILE™ from the classic 1960s TV series was far more than a cool ride for the Dynamic Duo—it was a vehicular superstar! Now it roars back into action with the BATMAN Classic TV Series BATMOBILE™, complete with headlights, tail-lights, and signature exhaust turbine that light up when you switch on the "ignition."



Authentic in every detail, this 1966 model BATMOBILE™ is impeccably hand-crafted, hand-painted, and equipped with the futuristic details that made it a classic: custom body design, five-spoke wheels, authentic paint colors, and BATMAN insignia in all the right places. It includes the BATMOBILE™'s custom control levers as well as the iconic curved windshield and rear windows that helped BATMAN and ROBIN make fast getaways. Capes rippling, our heroes are included here in meticulously recreated costumes and likeness that honor the classic 1960s TV series. It even plays the TV theme song.



CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE



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FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 73554 CHICAGO IL

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THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE! ORDER NOW.

Act now to acquire your BATMOBILE™ for just \$99.99, payable in four installments of \$24.99, the first due before shipment. Your purchase is protected by our unconditional, 365-day money-back guarantee, so there's no risk. Send no money now. Just return the Reservation Application at ZAP speed!

*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax

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ALIENS

XENOMORPH SCULPTED STEIN



Shown smaller
than actual size
of about
10 1/4 in. H
x 6 1/4 in. W.

- ◆ From egg to warrior, the four stages of the Xenomorph's terrifying evolution are depicted with exquisite sculptural precision
- ◆ Hand-crafted of Heirloom Porcelain® and hand-painted by master artisans
- ◆ Biomechanical design handle with intertwined Xenomorph tail
- ◆ Zinc alloy lid with chest burster topper
- ◆ Certificate of Authenticity

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RESERVATION APPLICATION

SEND NO MONEY NOW

THE
BRADFORD EXCHANGE
HOME DECOR

9345 Milwaukee Avenue • Niles, IL 60714-1393

YES. Please reserve the Aliens® Xenomorph Sculpted Stein as described in this announcement. **Please Respond Promptly**

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City

State

Zip

Email (optional)

*Plus a total of \$17.99 shipping and service; see bradfordexchange.com.

01-26110-001-E30202

Limited-edition presentation restricted to 95 firing days. Please allow 4-8 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

EASY TO ORDER! www.bradfordexchange.com/aliens

ALIENS™

FOUR STAGES OF FEAR.

STAGE 1: EGG



STAGE 2: FACE HUGGER



STAGE 3:
CHEST BURSTER



STAGE 4:
FULLY GROWN,
RIDGED-HEAD
WARRIOR

With blood-chilling indifference, the universe delivered the ultimate predator, a perfectly adapted killing machine, into the world of Ellen Ripley. Suddenly, fear had not only a name, but a life cycle — one that morphed horrifically before our very eyes, escalating with ruthlessness and precision with every step.

Now the four stages of Xenomorph evolution are captured with breathtaking intensity in the originally designed Aliens® Xenomorph Sculpted Stein. A nearly one foot tall sculptural triumph in fine porcelain, its wraparound design captures the Xenomorph from egg to face hugger to fully grown warrior. Biomechanical design touches pay homage to the H.R. Giger original art, and nuanced hand-painting in a custom palette adds atmospheric color. The custom handle is intertwined with the whip-like tail of a warrior and the zinc alloy lid is topped with a sculptural chest burster. An Aliens® logo completes the brushed metal base of this 40-oz. ultimate fan must-have.

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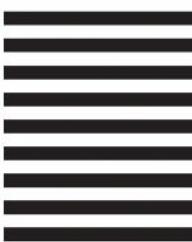


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**BRADFORD EXCHANGE
DESIGN ORIGINAL.
ORDER NOW!**

Strong demand is expected, so reserve your Aliens® Xenomorph Sculpted Stein now in four installments of \$32.50, for a total issue price of only \$129.99.* Your purchase is backed by our 365-day money-back guarantee so there's no risk. Send no money now, but don't wait. Return the Reservation Application today!

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ARMED FORCES MEN'S SWEATER JACKET



★ ★ ★
Comfortable cotton-blend fabric

★ ★ ★
Available in 5 sizes from medium to XXXL!

★ ★ ★
Custom art patch on the back

★ ★ ★
Handsome faux suede accents

AVAILABLE ONLY
FROM THE BRADFORD
EXCHANGE

Over, please

PRIORITY RESERVATION

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YES. Please reserve the sweater jacket(s) for me as described in this announcement in the size(s) indicated.

M (38-40) L (42-44) XL (46-48) XXL (50-52) XXXL (54-56)

"U.S. Air Force" Sweater Jacket 01-26286-001 **Jacket Size** _____
 "U.S. Army" Sweater Jacket 01-26290-001 **Jacket Size** _____
 "U.S. Marines" Sweater Jacket 01-22369-001 **Jacket Size** _____
 "U.S. Navy" Sweater Jacket 01-26288-001 **Jacket Size** _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

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State

Zip

Email

E30201

*Plus a total of \$15.99 shipping and service each (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 2-4 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO SERVE



Four service branches available and feature logo and motto on the back



The United States Armed Forces have a rich history of tradition, honor and pride. Show your love and respect in style with our exclusive *Men's Sweater Jacket*. This men's jacket is custom-crafted of a cotton blend heather gray sweater knit with black faux suede accents on the front, the pockets and the elbows. The back of this front-zip jacket features a striking full-color appliquéd patch that features the service branch logo along with embroidered stars and a black banner that is embroidered with the service branch motto. The front of the jacket features *U.S. Air Force*, *U.S. Army*, *Semper Fi* or *U.S. Navy* embroidered in gray.

A Limited Time Offer... Don't Miss Out!

Available in five men's sizes, M-XXXL, each custom sweater jacket is a remarkable value at \$149.95*, payable in 4 convenient installments of \$37.49 each, and backed by our 30-day money-back guarantee. To reserve your jacket, send no money now; just return the Priority Reservation. Don't miss out—order today!

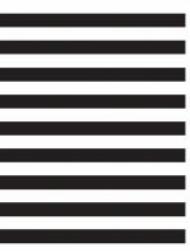
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KISS®

Rock 'n' Roll Express

A real working HO-scale electric train collection
inspired by the Heavy Metal legends!

Lights Up



YES!

Please enter my order for the KISS Rock 'n' Roll Express electric train collection, beginning with the "KISS" Diesel Locomotive as described in this announcement.



SHIPMENT FOUR—The "Destroyer" Flat Car
features removable sculptures of KISS
onstage rockin' hard as a fury of
Pyrotechnics explode behind them!

SEND NO MONEY NOW.

NOT AVAILABLE IN ANY STORE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO RUN YOUR TRAIN!

Along with Shipment
Two you'll receive a
FREE 14-piece track
set, power-pack and
speed controller—
a \$100 value!



Fine collectible.

Not intended for children under 14.



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**Certificate of Authenticity
& 365-Day Money-Back Guarantee**

www.bradfordexchange.com/KissTrain

*Plus a total of \$9.99 shipping and service—see bradfordexchange.com. All sales are subject to acceptance and product availability. Allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for shipment.

917-982-E30202

KISS

Rock 'n' Roll Express



Shipment One

"KISS" Diesel Locomotive
"Dressed to Kill" Engine with **FREE**
14-pc. Track Set, Power Pack & Speed
Controller

Thunderous fist-pounding rock. Fire breathing. Studded black leather costumes and eerie white makeup. Smoking guitars. Levitating drums. And more fireworks than the 4th of July. It can mean only one thing ... KISS! For more than 40 years, the Demon, the Starchild, the Spaceman and the Catman have been rockin' the world with their own extreme brand of heavy metal that has earned them 30 Gold Album Awards—more than any other American Band—and induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Now Hawthorne is thrilled to present the *KISS Rock 'n' Roll Express* featuring awesome

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Mail this today to reserve your
awesome train collection!

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Shipment Two

"Dressed to Kill" Engine with **FREE**
14-pc. Track Set, Power Pack & Speed
Controller

concert images of the band and KISS-themed art. Plus some cars will carry handcrafted, hand-painted sculptures of KISS onstage and rockin' hard that are removable for display anywhere you choose! If you love to rock and roll all night and party everyday, this is the train for you! **An incredible train at an incredible value!**

Begin your train collection with the "KISS" Diesel Locomotive, yours for three easy payments of \$26.66 each*, the first billed before shipment. Subsequent coordinating train cars will each be billed separately at the same attractive price and sent about every other month—some including removable sculptures! Your Second Shipment will be the "Dressed to Kill" Engine including the FREE 14-piece track set, power-pack and speed controller—a \$100 value! You may cancel at any time and your satisfaction is assured with our best-in-the-business 365-day guarantee!

Shipment Three

"The Demon" Dome Car

Internet demand from the KISS Army has already exceeded expectations, so don't miss out! *Send no money now.* Simply log on or complete and mail the post paid Reservation Application today!

*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax



Everything you need to run your train!



included FREE

With Shipment Two, you'll receive
a 14-piece track set, power-pack &
speed controller—a \$100 value!

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This way to the after party



moods of norway

moodsofnorway.com