ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL

PLAYBOY

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

THE INTERVIEW: MICHAEL SHANNON

20Q: SOFIA BOUTELLA

PROFILE: GLENN GREENWALD

RETURN OF THE COLLEGE PICTORIAL

40 YEARS OF HALLOWEEN

VETERANS VS. POACHERS

CONSENT ON CAMPUS

NEW FICTION BY HERNAN DIAZ

DERAY MCKESSON

WALTON GOGGINS

AN EXCLUSIVE KICK-ASS COMIC

Teyana Taylor

The voice.
The moves.
The curves.

PLAYBOY CLUB
NEW YORK

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Ben Watts

London-born photographer Watts has been translating his fascination with American hip-hop and youth culture into art ever since he began documenting the New York City club circuit in the 1990s. In *More Than Moves,* he immortalizes one of the most exciting artists working today: our cover star, Teyana Taylor.

Steve Palopoli

Journalist Palopoli has the distinction of being the first to deem *The Big Lebowski* a cult phenomenon. While reporting *Queens of Scream* for *Heritage,* he was especially impressed with one Playmate's offscreen cultural impact: "Diane Webber crusaded for the 1960s nudist counterculture and gave key testimony in a landmark obscenity trial."

Karen Lynch

The talented collage artist says that "resuscitating and transforming long-forgotten pieces of the past into colorful, surreal, retro-futuristic landscapes" is a central theme of her work. Lynch's faux-idyllic quad scene, complete with darkly gathering storm clouds, accompanies *The Campus Consent Crisis.*

Katherine Brickman

Half of the art collective Greedy Hen—which strives to create "imagery alluding to playful black humor, unwritten fables [and] subtle off-kilter sinister elements lurking amongst a kinderesque beauty"—Brickman is responsible for the evocative illustration that opens *1,111 Emblems,* Hernan Diaz's powerful short story.

DeRay Mckesson

Mckesson's decision to quit his $110,000-a-year job as a school administrator and join the Ferguson protests made headlines in 2015. He has been a household name ever since. "This world can be better," says the magnetic Black Lives Matter organizer. He talks race, activism and America in *Making the Hard Case for Hope*.

Alexander Wagner

Known for his stunning editorial work, Wagner is a New York City–based photographer and filmmaker who has lent his lens to clients ranging from Levi's to *Teen Vogue.* Wagner captures DeRay Mckesson, one of the country's most important young activists, in a series of candid portraits for *Making the Hard Case for Hope*.

Stephanie Haney

It's a special person who can both pose in the magazine and write a deeply reported feature for it. In *The Campus Consent Crisis,* Haney—a lawyer and DailyMailTV correspondent who repped North Carolina in PLAYBOY's October 2009 *Girls of the ACC* pictorial—unpacks the complicated Trump-era Title IX landscape.

Hernan Diaz

Diaz grew up in Argentina and Sweden, studied in London and now lives in New York, where he is associate director of the Hispanic Institute at Columbia University. He was a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize, as well as for the PEN/Faulkner Award, for his debut novel. *1,111 Emblems* is Diaz's first short story for PLAYBOY.

CREDITS: Cover and pp. 56–63 model Teyana Taylor, photography by Ben Watts, styling by Zoe Costello, hair by Tokyo Stylez, makeup by Michael Dunlap for Japan Faces, prop stylist Sam Jaspersohn. Photography by: p. 4 courtesy Katherine Brickman, courtesy Jason Fulford, courtesy Stephanie Gressick, courtesy Karen Lynch, courtesy Keana Parker, courtesy Alexander Wagner (2), courtesy Ben Watts; p. 14 model Emily Cassie, styling by Angela Solouki, hair and makeup by Bree Stanchfield; p. 15 courtesy Diana Petersen via Carter Events and Entertainment, Dave Benett, Kit Carson, Craig T. Mathew and Greg Grudt/Mathew Imaging (6); p. 16 Corey Brickley, Bryan Rodner Carr, Molly Cranna, Kyle Deleu; p. 22 courtesy Undone; p. 32 courtesy TrickorTreatStudios.com; pp. 71 Mark Wilson/Getty Images; p. 72 Digital First Media/*The Mercury News* via Getty Images; p. 74 Rayon Richards; pp. 134–139 Níall Beddy (4), Michael O'Leary for Greengraf Photography (6); p. 148 courtesy Glenn Greenwald; pp. 159 World History Archive/Alamy Stock Photo; p. 160 AF Archive/Alamy Stock Photo, Everett Collection Inc./Alamy Stock Photo, Pictorial Press Ltd./Alamy Stock Photo; p. 161 courtesy Society Productions Inc., AF Archive/Alamy Stock Photo, Moviestore Collection Ltd./Alamy Stock Photo; pp. 162–176 courtesy Playboy Archives. Pp. 140–145 *Kick-Ass: Vices* © Dave & Eggsy, Ltd. *Kick-Ass: The New Girl Book One* available now. P. 19 hair and makeup by Mutsumi Shibahara; p. 34 styling by Christina Bushner, grooming by Simone for Exclusive Artists using Skyn Iceland and Hanz De Fuko; pp. 39–46 styling by Mary Inacio, grooming by Rheanne White, produced by Stephanie Porto; pp. 48–55 models Devin Bender, Natasha Eklove, Samantha Fernandez, Verity Miller and Katherine Singleton, styling by India Madonna, hair and makeup by Bree Stanchfield and Madeline North; pp. 76–89 model Kirby Griffin, styling by Kelley Ash, hair by Eddie Cook, makeup by Matisse Andrews; pp. 92–97 styling by Sean Knight, hair by Andy Lecompte, makeup by Sabrina Bedrani, manicure by Merrick Fisher at Opus Beauty using Essie; pp. 104–111 model Jocelyn Corona, hair and makeup by Lindsay Cullen, wardrobe by Raven + Rose; pp. 118–132 model Olga de Mar, hair and makeup by Joana Macedo, produced by Gonçalo Jorge; pp. 150–158 model Gabriela Giovanardi, hair and makeup by Michael Goyette, produced by Nick Larsen.

MARK NASON
LOS ANGELES

68667 TPMT

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PLAYBOY

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1953–2017

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ELECTROCOMPANIET

VS.

moods of norway

The finest Norway has to offer

Reader favorite Lorena Medina returned as our August Playmate.

SHOTS FIRED

How about requiring universal background checks regardless of how or where guns are purchased, setting the minimum age for purchasing a gun at 21 and banning major assault weapons that are needed only by the military? None of these commonsense no-brainers would in any way hurt the National Rifle Association, nor any other supporters of gun rights—including the women in Vermont featured in *She Shoots* (July/August). The NRA's claims that current laws (what there are of them) are fine have been tragically proven wrong over and over again. With the way the NRA stubbornly continues to behave, its motto might as well be "Second Amendment at all costs—no matter how young."

Who knew that more than 55 years ago Bob Dylan could easily have been referring to Wayne LaPierre when he asked, "How many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died?" Contrary to what the NRA and all its Republican cohorts want everyone to think, thoughts and prayers are not bulletproof. I'll say this for the Parkland students: They're trying.

Steve Lederman
Princeton, New Jersey

TRIPLE CROWN

I've noticed recently that some models, including Kayslee Collins and Roxanna June, have appeared multiple times in the magazine, so thank you for bringing back Lorena Medina and making her a Playmate (*Hi, Priestess,* July/August). When I first saw her in the January/February issue (*Back at the Ranch*), I was shocked she wasn't a Centerfold. Now that she is, it would be awesome to see her climb the ladder of success and make PLAYBOY history. A third appearance for Lorena would be the icing on the cake—if you crowned her 2019 Playmate of the Year. She's gorgeous as a pictorial and breathtaking as a Playmate; as PMOY she would be legendary. From "priestess" to goddess in just a year—now that's how you make history.

Mike D'Orfeo
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

REGARDING RALPH

What was the point of Ralph Nader's column *Calling All Super-Voters* (July/August)? Nader had the reputation and the integrity to garner the respect and following of super-voters; for more than 20 years he could have helped build grassroots statewide organizations for a new political movement instead of shooting for the moon by running for president. I think he has failed not only former Nader supporters but current super-voters and the country.

Peter Kernast Jr.
Hamilton, New Jersey

FROM PAGE TO SCREEN

I enjoyed seeing in print the best movie scenes in which PLAYBOY makes an appearance (*Our Favorite Cameos,* July/August). Here's one you didn't include: *The Birdcage*. In the movie, before his son's small-minded future in-laws arrive for a last-minute visit, Robin Williams tries to butch up his flamboyantly gay character's home using strategic props. One of them is a copy of the magazine. I think the line is "Who put PLAYBOY in the bathroom?"

Jacob Tynes
Fresno, California

I'm surprised you didn't include *Born on the Fourth of July* or *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* on your list of movies that started off as stories in PLAYBOY (*Playboy Goes to the Movies,* July/August).

John Frankfort
Dallas, Texas

We did indeed publish both of those, but we didn't include them in our Heritage feature because, unlike the other pieces we highlighted, they were excerpts and not created originally for the magazine. But we're glad you noticed—both are great stories that made for great movies. Another famous one we left out for space reasons is Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, which we serialized in its entirety back in 1954.

HEAD TO HEAD

I'm puzzled as to why people in Hollywood feel they need to display their hatred of Donald Trump (*Playboy Interview,* July/August). By using gruesome pictures and profanity to depict him, don't they realize how much damage they're doing to the United States? This hate is definitely dividing our country at a time when

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we need to work together. There's enough hate in the world today without having to listen to people spout vulgarities about Trump just because they don't want him to be president.

Melvin L. Beadles Sr.
Murrieta, California

Kathy Griffin has to be the ballsiest comic working today. I had the pleasure of catching her act in Toronto back in May, and it was three hours of pure magic on stage at historic Massey Hall. Griffin is a gifted storyteller, and her story is one worth telling. It is exactly what I've come to expect from the *Playboy Interview*.

Josh Fehrens
Toronto, Ontario

I'm surprised and disappointed to see that you've given Kathy Griffin eight pages in your July/August issue to express her views. Griffin descended to the lowest levels of civility and public discourse when she was shown proudly holding the severed head of the president of the United States. There's no amount of political spin or publicity that can excuse or put in a positive light this type of behavior.

Bill Davis
Phoenix, Arizona

The funny thing is that Kathy Griffin has more balls than Trump: She can at least say sorry and mean it.

Katherine Albert
Chicago, Illinois

THE BARE TRUTH

Liz Stewart is my favorite Playmate of all time, so I was pleased to see her featured in the *Heritage* section of the July/August PLAYBOY. I noticed that in the full-page reproduction of her Centerfold photo, a pair of black lace panties had been photoshopped onto Liz's beautiful body. Seriously? Fake news from PLAYBOY in the age of Trump? Say it isn't so.

Michael Pastorkovich
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Your eyes deceive you, Michael. The image is actually an outtake from Liz's original Playmate photo shoot. For her Centerfold, the photographer shot her both nude and covered. Those panties you see are as real as Liz's radiant personality.

GIVE US MOORE

The July/August issue is the best so far this year. Your discovery of Megan Moore (*Mane Stay*) is the find of the decade. I hope to see a lot more of her in the coming months. All this and Kayslee Collins too (*Basic Instinct*)? Bravo, PLAYBOY. Keep up the good work.

Dean Mortis
Cortland, New York

Kathy Griffin is back and louder than ever.

TO THE LETTER

A *Dear Playboy* contributor (July/August) states that PLAYBOY "has gotten too liberal." This same person also says, "Name one conservative moral value that you espouse." If this letter writer has truly been reading the magazine for decades, they would know that PLAYBOY has been very liberal since its inception. The true conservative values it espouses are freedom of speech and freedom of the press. If Kathy Griffin chooses to express herself one way and Chelsea Handler (*Playboy Interview,* November/December 2017) another, let them. Let me also remind the no-name contributor that America was founded on radical ideas.

Brian T. McCabe
Panama City, Florida

HEAD FOR THE ARCHIVES

I recently subscribed after watching the *American Playboy* docudrama on Amazon. I hadn't opened an issue of PLAYBOY in many years, but I have to say that between the articles, fiction and stunning pictorials, I'm quite pleased I subscribed. I'm unaware how long you've been running the *Heritage* section, but it's immensely interesting and impressive. I think I speak on behalf of many other readers when I say I wouldn't mind seeing more pages dedicated to *Heritage* in the future.

Luman Walters
Portland, Oregon

AWESOME AUSSIE

The lovely Sarah Stephens (*Sun Song,* July/August) is truly a breath of fresh air from down under. Once again, thank you, PLAYBOY.

Greg Gonzalez
Rowlett, Texas

A GOOD LAUGH

I was drinking coffee while reading the *Harlot's Web* comic in your July/August issue. Big mistake. I spit coffee all over myself and nearly drenched the magazine from laughing so hard. Can we get a sequel, please?

Alex Robles
Miami, Florida

WE MEET AGAIN

Upon receiving the May/June edition of PLAYBOY, I was pleasantly greeted by June Playmate Cassandra Dawn. As a collector of PLAYBOY's special editions, I've admired Cassandra in numerous issues.

Michael Horn
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Cassandra is certainly a woman with a face we'd never forget. She was also a finalist on Playboy Shootout and a Cyber Girl of the Week in 2010.

CHAPO CORRECTION

In the July/August issue we misidentified a host of *Chapo Trap House* in the photo caption for our story *Laughter in the Dark*. Pictured in the group is former producer Brendan James, not Felix Biederman.

COVER STORY

Can you guess what our Rabbit and cover model Teyana Taylor have in common? We'll just say this: Both have learned to play it by ear.

AUSTIN HARGRAVE

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PLAYBOY

WORLD of PLAY

Cottontail Crown

Playboy Club London VIP hostess Emily Cassie has been repping the Rabbit ever since she began toting a Playboy purse at the age of 12. Back in February, we made the brand ambassadorship official by crowning her Bunny of the Year, and the Croydon-bred beauty has fully embraced her new role. In July, we commemorated her first trip across the pond with a sexy old-Hollywood-inspired shoot in Los Angeles, the stunning results of which appear at left and on Playboy.com. But for Emily, the recognition that comes with being a Bunny extends beyond glitz and glamour to pride in a community that celebrates individualism and camaraderie in equal measure. “So many iconic people have worn the Bunny suit,” she says. “To be one of them is really powerful.” Cheers to that.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SASHA EISENMAN**

40 Years of High Notes

In June, the Playboy Jazz Festival took the stage for the 40th time since Hugh Hefner masterminded the inaugural concert in Chicago back in 1959. This year's two-day tour de force at the legendary Hollywood Bowl was especially poignant: As well as being a milestone anniversary, 2018 marked the first fest since the September 2017 passing of Hef, who loved jazz and advocated throughout his life for musicians' right to perform where and what they wanted. Standouts of the event, hosted by six-time MC George Lopez and produced in association with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, included Charles Lloyd, Lucinda Williams and Tower of Power.


4.


1.


2.


3.

5.


6.

1. Cooper Hefner joins the Miles Electric Band onstage to share a tribute to his father. **2.** Anthony Hamilton croons to the crowd. **3.** Headliner Charles Lloyd and the Marvels bring the Bowl to its feet. **4.** What is hip? Tower of Power's epic festival-closing set, part of the band's 50th anniversary tour. **5.** Miles Electric Band channels the Chief. **6.** Jazmine Sullivan brightens the day-two lineup.

Pride Along

As a brand that has fiercely championed sexual freedom and equality for close to seven decades, Playboy, led by a bona fide rainbow of Bunnies, joined thousands of fellow Angelenos and LGBTQ supporters in June to march in L.A.'s annual Pride Parade—a first in Playboy history.

Rule Britannia!

In May, Playboy proudly accepted the 2018 British LGBT Award for best brand or marketing campaign, in recognition of our first transgender Centerfold, November 2017 Playmate Ines Rau. Rau and Chief Creative Officer Cooper Hefner (pictured here with Scarlett Byrne and friends) attended the ceremony following a reception at Playboy Club London.

Bunny Tales

Nearly 350 Bunnies and former employees convened in Wisconsin in May to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Playboy Club-Hotel in Lake Geneva. "Playboy wasn't just a job," says organizer and longtime Bunny Diana Petersen. "It was our family."

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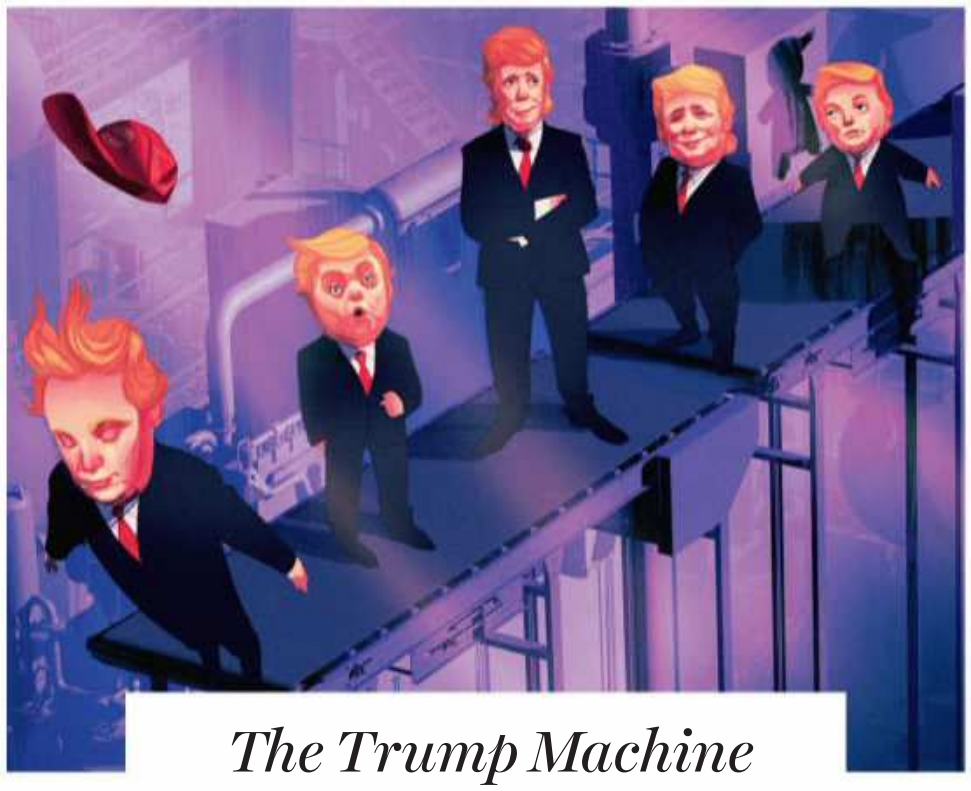
GALLERIES

Live the Dream

We held our Midsummer Night's Dream party at Marquee Nightclub at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas in July. Couldn't nab a ticket? Head over to Playboy.com to unlock an exclusive NSFW pictorial inspired by the enchanted evening.

READ



The Trump Machine

With midterms near, it's safe to say the country is still deeply divided and President Donald Trump's MAGA base is more loyal than ever. Political columnist Art Tavana explores how POTUS continues to appeal to the everyman.

READ

Lean Back and Relax

"Pegging is a more common sexual desire than many people probably think," says columnist and Kinsey Institute research fellow Justin Lehmiller. The sex scientist, whose new book, *Tell Me What You Want,* is out now, explores the culture and stigma of fetishism every month on Playboy.com.

PRODUCTS

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Let PlayboyShop.com be your official back-to-school outfitter with our new line of backpacks, gym bags, fall tees and cozy hoodies. Want extra credit? Sign up for Playboy's e-newsletters, covering the worlds of sex, pop culture and beautiful women, and receive discounts or free shipping.

EXCLUSIVES

Beautiful Beatriz

Stephanie Beatriz has turned heads as one of TV's most sexually liberated characters on *Brooklyn Nine-Nine,* relocating from FOX to NBC this fall. In her Playboy.com profile, the actress gets frank about her much talked-about role and coming out—twice—as bisexual.

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Back in Black: The New Face of Luxury Watches
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I'll Take Mine Black...No Sugar

In the early 1930s watch manufacturers took a clue from Henry Ford's favorite quote concerning his automobiles, "You can have any color as long as it is black." Black dialed watches became the rage especially with pilots and race drivers. Of course, since the black dial went well with a black tuxedo, the adventurer's black dial watch easily moved from the airplane hangar to dancing at the nightclub. Now, Stauer brings back the "Noire", a design based on an elegant timepiece built in 1936. Black dialed, complex automatics from the 1930s have recently hit new heights at auction. One was sold for in excess of $600,000. We thought that you might like to have an affordable version that will be much more accurate than the original.

27 jewels and hand-assembled parts drive this classic masterpiece.

Basic black with a twist. Not only are the dial, hands and face vintage, but we used a 27-jeweled automatic movement. This is the kind of engineering desired by fine watch collectors world-wide. But since we design this classic movement on state of the art computer-controlled Swiss built machines, the accuracy is excellent. Three interior dials display day, month and date. We have priced the luxurious Stauer ***Noire*** at a price to keep you in the black… only 3 payments of $33. So slip into the back of your black limousine, savor some rich tasting black coffee and look at your wrist knowing that you have some great times on your hands.

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LET'S PLAY

YEHA LEUNG

Her lingerie has adorned the bodies of Cardi B, Nicki Minaj and Rihanna, but 26-year-old designer Yeha Leung has more in mind than VIP co-signs. "My goal isn't to just add celebrities to a list like I'm capturing rare Pokémon," says the Brooklyn native. "I started my business for people who are hungry for the same aesthetic." For Leung, that aesthetic took root in an early fascination with Blond Ambition–era Madonna and Asian horror films. She launched Creepyyeha in 2011, and it swiftly morphed from a Tumblr hobby to a high-profile personal brand. These days, customers wait up to nine weeks for their orders as Leung painstakingly crafts each piece. Offering harnesses, garters, chokers and even chain mail, Creepyyeha at once captures hyperfeminine daintiness and a forceful raciness that wouldn't be out of place in a BDSM dungeon. "I've always been drawn to things that have a dark twist in them," she says. "There's a power in being both submissive and dominating." But perhaps the brand's most subversive quality is the fact that its designs beg to be worn in public. As Leung puts it, "Lingerie shouldn't just be seen in the bedroom."—*Anita Little*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KYLE DELEU

The Craft Revolution Just Got Stronger

*Helmed by Hollywood doyens **Walton Goggins** and **Matthew Alper,** Mulholland Distilling adds fuel to the explosion in independent spirits*

BY **JASON HORN** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AUSTIN HARGRAVE**

"I drink whiskey with my friends, vodka with people I don't know and gin with people I'm doing business with," says Walton Goggins as he settles into one of the Mulholland Room's vintage oversize couches. You probably know Goggins from *Justified, The Hateful Eight, Vice Principals* or *Ant-Man and the Wasp,* but the actor is also co-owner of Mulholland Distilling, a downtown Los Angeles–based booze brand that makes all three spirits. Friends, strangers and businessmen: Goggins has you covered.

The Mulholland Room, packed with shabby-chic furniture and locally produced art, serves as the office and private bar for the distilling concern, which is the brainchild of Goggins's longtime friend Matthew Alper. After more than 20 years as a cameraman (working on everything from *Free Willy* to *The Avengers*), Alper happened to meet a distiller at a party in North Carolina. As he tells it, the distiller observed, "Y'all drink a lot in Los Angeles, but you don't really have a local spirit. Why is that?" That conversation took place in 2013. Goggins came onboard the next year, and by 2016 Mulholland had officially launched.

The brand may be small—its spirits are available in just over 100 L.A.-area bars, restaurants and liquor stores—but it's part of a mounting wave of independent booze producers. "There has been this explosion in craft culture that seemed to happen in all aspects of life—beer, coffee, cocktails," Goggins says. "It feels connected to a simpler time, when things were handmade because that was the only way to make them."

Craft spirits appear to be following the path that craft beer carved out in the 1990s. According to the American Craft Spirits Association, the number of producers grew from 280 in 2011 to more than 1,400 in 2016. Their share of the overall American spirits market more than tripled over the same period, from 1.2 percent to 3.8 percent. Craft beer, meanwhile, claims more than 12 percent of the total market share for suds, suggesting that there's lots of room to grow for craft spirit brands.

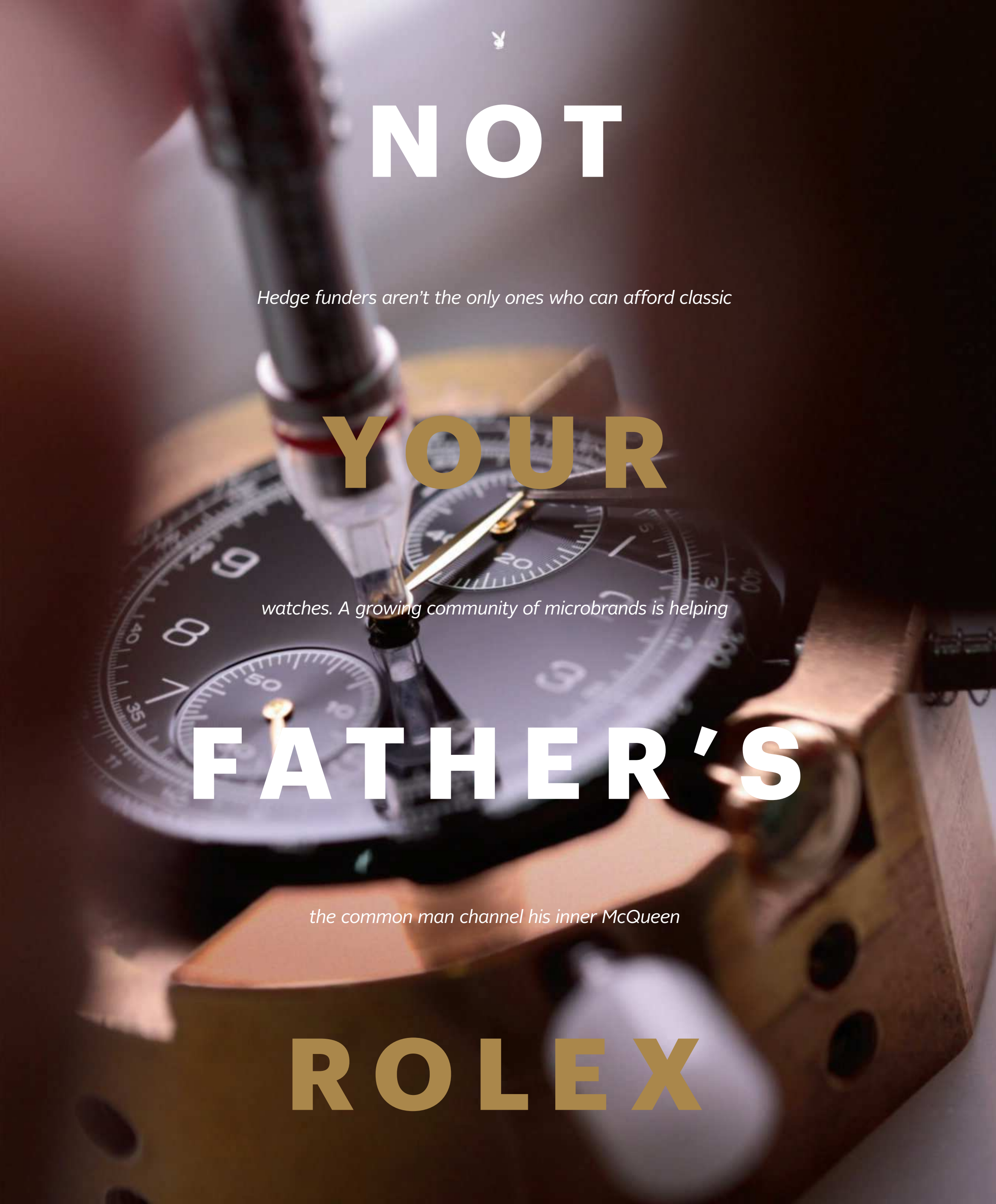
So what does "craft" mean in the context of spirits? The association defines it as an independently owned brand selling fewer than 750,000 gallons of alcohol—just short of 5 million standard-size bottles of 80-proof spirit—per year. (Jack Daniel's sold more than 30 times that amount last year.)

One surprising aspect of Mulholland Distilling is that it doesn't actually do any distilling. Goggins and Alper source their whiskey from MGP, an Indiana distillery that supplies dozens of craft labels, and the base spirit for their vodka and gin from a Missouri producer. The spirits are then blended and bottled at a facility near Los Angeles that specializes in partnerships with small beverage brands. This practice is fairly common: ACSA says the majority of its several hundred members are distillers, but membership is open to anybody with a distilled-spirits-plant license—the federal permit required if you want to distill, age, blend, flavor or bottle spirits of any kind. And it fits in with Mulholland's locally focused philosophy, Alper says. "What is the spirit of L.A.? It's taking the best from everywhere and putting it together."

As a well-known actor getting into the spirits business, Goggins joins celebrity booze entrepreneurs including George Clooney, whose Casamigos Tequila brand sold to British conglomerate Diageo for a staggering $1 billion last year. But Mulholland's founders claim they aren't looking for a buyout. "I'm not George Clooney," Goggins says. "I'm an actor and I'm a storyteller. It took me a long time to get where I am. Mulholland Distilling is a creative experience I wanted in my life outside of my career."

Creativity and storytelling: two essential ingredients in spirit-making. Small production levels allow craft distillers (not to mention craft brewers, winemakers, chocolatiers and others) to tell their stories in far greater depth than the big guys. No wonder craft culture found a home in the myth-making mecca that is Los Angeles. ■

"What is the spirit of L.A.? It's taking the best from everywhere and putting it together."


NOT
Hedge funders aren't the only ones who can afford classic
YOUR
watches. A growing community of microbrands is helping
FATHER'S
the common man channel his inner McQueen
ROLEX

When Paul Newman's Rolex Daytona sold for $17.8 million and became the world's most expensive watch, it was an exclamation point on the recent trend of exploding vintage-watch prices. Nostalgia-starved hipsters, Instagram watch selfies (wristies?) and the ever-rising fortunes of the one percent all play a part, but other modern developments such as crowdfunding and microbrand retail culture are eagerly filling the vacuum—and making classic watches accessible to the rest of us.

BY **STINSON CARTER**

"Microbrands are booming," says Robert-Jan Broer, founder of the online watch connoisseur magazine *Fratello Watches*. "There's not a day that I don't get some Kickstarter e-mail for a new watch project." (A search for *watches* on the crowdfunding site recently returned more than 1,300 projects in the design section.) According to Broer, these new microbrands are for "people who like the look of vintage watches but either cannot afford the originals or are not willing to take the risk." The risk is real: If a single non-original gear or spring has been added to a vintage watch during service, your investment can be deemed a Frankenwatch—the collector's equivalent of a salvage title on a car.

Money may have put vintage collecting out of reach and turned eccentric wrist charms into objects of Gollum-level obsession, but microbrands offer a return to the feeling that compelled collectors in the first place. "I like watches as objects of design and style, and it's harder to enjoy something that's worth a ridiculous amount of money," says Zach Weiss, co-founder of online watch authority Worn & Wound. The result? A growing sense that this new and proudly derivative breed has just as much merit as its progenitors. "The more I've gotten into doing what we're doing," Weiss adds, "writing about these microbrands and getting to know the owners, the more I'm moving away from my interest in actual vintage watches."

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Six true classics side-by-side with the modern (and far more accessible) models they inspired

The Paul Newman Rolex Daytona Ref. 6239 currently sells for $200,000, but you can pick up a mechanical-movement Bicompax from French microbrand Baltic Watches for around $600. Owner Etienne Malec's watches are inspired by a collection of vintage chronographs he inherited from his father. *(baltic-watches.com)*

A Breitling 765 AVI Pilot chronograph fetches around $20,000, but lifelong vintage-watch collector Dan Henry's 1963 Pilot chrono can be yours for $230. "The models I choose to make in my collections are my favorite watches," says Henry, who draws on an encyclopedic knowledge of vintage-watch designs. *(danhenrywatches.com)*

You're unlikely to find a rare 1943 Omega tachy-telemeter outside Timeline.watch, Dan Henry's photographic watch history. A former gray-market Rolex smuggler, Henry has spent the past 35 years scouring the flea markets of São Paulo for vintage pieces. His $220 1939 Military chronograph is far more easily acquired. *(danhenrywatches.com)*

The mid-six-figure Rolex Dato-Compax worn by Olympic skier Jean-Claude Killy is the inspiration behind Undone's Killy model, which retails for just $265. Better yet, the microbrand's customization tool lets you design your own timepiece, from the case finish to the color of the hands. *(undone.com)*

The 1967 Yema Yachtingraf has a red, white and blue subdial for regatta countdowns. It can be found for $6,000, but since the company no longer exists, neither do parts for servicing. Undone's Skipper has a similarly striking subdial for only $295, and its Seiko mecha-quartz movement makes service a much easier proposition. *(undone.com)*

The Heuer Monaco worn by Steve McQueen in 1971's *Le Mans* is still offered by Tag Heuer as a $5,900 reissue, but Kyle Schut, designer and founder of Straton Watch Co., makes the Speciale chronograph with a distinctive square case and bright blue dial for $499, or $1,200 with a mechanical movement. *(stratonwc.com)*

POLITICS

Planet Earth Goes to Washington

Scientists argue that the solution to global warming could be as plain as dirt. But will politicians listen?

BY **JOSH TICKELL**

Melting icebergs, megastorms and heat waves may still raise Al Gore's hackles, but for many of us, signs of a faltering climate just add to what Norwegian climate expert Per Espen Stoknes calls "apocalypse fatigue." In other words: Sorry, polar bears, we're over it.

With all the bad news about our planet, it may come as a surprise that there's a possible solution to global warming, and that it involves a most common thing: dirt.

Since the birth of the industrial revolution circa 1750, humankind has added about 1,000 billion tons (a.k.a. gigatons) of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. It's called the "legacy load" of CO_2. Even if we converted our global society to solar panels and Teslas tomorrow, that mass of gas would still be up there, wreaking havoc on our climate.

There's only one way out of this mess, and that's to move the legacy load somewhere else. But where? It's already in the atmosphere, and we can't put more of it into the oceans; both are maxed out with the stuff. That leaves one place large enough to store all that CO_2: the soil.

Fortunately, there's a mechanism for putting it there. Photosynthesizing plants, working with the billions of microorganisms in the earth, naturally dismantle CO_2, releasing the oxygen back into the atmosphere and storing the carbon underground. That's why a growing movement of farmers, ranchers and climate-conscious organizations wants to increase the carbon content of our soils. They call the solution "regenerative agriculture," and supporters include former San Francisco mayor and current California gubernatorial candidate Gavin Newsom and renowned food author Michael Pollan.

How much carbon can we store in the world's soil? According to Paul Hawken, editor of *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming,* by practicing carbon-sequestering regenerative agriculture, combined with better-known solutions such as solar, wind and energy efficiency, we could reverse global warming within three decades.

Things look even brighter when you consider the other benefits of storing more carbon in our soil—things we'll need in order to make society livable for the 10 billion humans who will be sharing the planet by 2050 (according to UN population predictions). Those benefits could include growing more—and more nutritious—food, restoring lost ecosystems, turning certain deserts into forests and providing tens of millions of new jobs globally.

Regenerative agriculture is already being used on large-scale farms of 5,000 acres in the United States and hundreds of thousands of acres in other countries, including Mexico. It involves replicable and scalable techniques: herding packs of cows across the land to build deep-rooted grasses, keeping soil protected with cover crops, practicing no-till methods and minimizing or eliminating the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. In many cases, soil has been built back after just a year.

While some believe the world's soils can't store enough carbon to curb temperature rise, agricultural scientists are bullish on soil-based carbon capture. This is why France, which has the largest soil-science program in Europe, has come up with the "4 per 1000" program, which aims to increase soil carbon globally by 0.4 percent per year, thereby mitigating humanity's yearly emissions.

But in the U.S., our current legislative system rewards the confinement of livestock and the destruction of soils. It works by giving farmers minimum price guarantees for commodity crops, corn and soy being the largest. Those guarantees stipulate the use of soil-destroying chemicals and agriculture. Once grown, the majority of those crops are given to feedlot animals that themselves emit tremendous amounts of greenhouse gas.

All this is codified in the nearly 1,000-page Farm Bill, which expires in September and is due to be revised. Granted, for the first time, the proposed new bill has stipulations for soil health—a win for the 120 organizations represented by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, which lobbies Congress for greener agriculture. But when I ask a former 30-year employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture about the bill, he responds, "You can put a gold ring in a pig's nose, but it's still a pig." Unless new legislation gets farmers off the chemical teat, American soils won't draw down carbon anytime soon.

What's needed isn't just legislation that deals with soils as the single greatest potential global solution, but a new political process in which lawmakers can't be bought and paid for by chemical and fossil-fuel companies. That would require a plurality of progressive parties (including greens and socialists) and a raft of democracy upgrades such as ranked-choice voting and the end of gerrymandering. Hope may rest with a new crop of millennial politicians who are bucking the system, including Representative Tulsi Gabbard, a Democrat from Hawaii, and socialist-progressive Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York.

Millennials are the largest voting bloc in the history of the U.S., and more young people are registering to vote every day. The 2018 midterm elections mark the beginning of a two-year race to disrupt the status quo. Millennials (and woke people of all generations), as you go to the ballot this November, keep in mind that even our biggest problems often have elegant solutions. We just need to support politicians who are brave enough to enact them. The icebergs might be melting, but your vigilance could still save the polar bears. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY **TOM TORO**

PLAYBOY PROUDLY PRESENTS

DRAWN DATA

ILLUSTRATED BY TIMBA

NEW EDITION

SEPT/OCT '18

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

THANKS, BESSIE

3,000

estimated number of **COWS** required to create one season's worth of NFL footballs

DREAM ON

59 MILLION

number of **FANTASY-SPORTS** players last year in the U.S. and Canada

$7 BILLION

estimated value of **FANTASY-SPORTS** industry

OVER THE LINE

$20,000

per-game cost to networks to show the digital yellow **FIRST-DOWN** line during a regular-season TV broadcast

NO Flipping

3 HOURS, SIX MINUTES, 42 SECONDS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF REGULAR-SEASON NFL GAMES LAST YEAR

$513 MILLION

amount advertisers spent on commercials during NFL games last September

AD BREAK

70 average number of commercials that ran during 2016 NFL games

More MONEY

$75K

annual income that research shows makes people **HAPPIEST**

VS.

More PROBLEMS

$95K

salary point above which emotional well-being and life satisfaction **DECLINE**

Button SMASHERS

628K

viewers who tuned in to watch Drake play *Fortnite* live

2022

year that e-sports will be a medal event at the Asian Games

2024 year the Olympics may include gaming as a demonstration sport

Oompah-pah!

7.5 MILLION liters of beer drunk during Germany's 2017 Oktoberfest

120K beer mugs confiscated from fest-goers trying to smuggle them out

127 oxen prepared and served at the fest

36

hours per year it is illegal to "possess, use, sell or distribute" **SILLY STRING** in public in Hollywood, California (all of Halloween and half the following day)

ILLEGAL BRAND Serious STRING

$1,000 FINE FOR VIOLATING THE ORDINANCE

Safety IN NUMBERS

62

percentage of hetero singles who would consider a

THREESOME

READY FOR HALLOWEEN

$325K

value of Robert Downey Jr.'s original *Iron Man* costume, stolen from storage

$300K

amount paid at auction for Elvis's 1974 peacock-design jumpsuit

$8,054

auction price paid for latex dress Beyoncé wears in her "Green Light" video

$7,088

auction price paid for Nicki Minaj's black lace bodysuit

PASSEL of PUMPKINS

90–95 percentage of U.S.-processed pumpkins grown in Illinois

80 percentage of the country's pumpkin supply available in October

$185,764,000 value of U.S. pumpkin production in 2017

Scent-ual Seduction

40

percentage by which the scent combination of pumpkin pie and lavender can increase penile blood flow

PET PARTY

$420 million estimated amount U.S. consumers spent on Halloween costumes for their pets in 2016

ILLUSTRATION BY TIMBA SMITS

#InstaBANNED

For visual artists, Instagram is a blessing and a curse. We rounded up nine deleted posts in an attempt to discern the platform's famously fine line between art and smut

BY **ZACH SOKOL**

"Instagram is like a business card on steroids for visual artists," says Emily Miller, a 27-year-old New York–based painter who regularly sells her artwork off the sprawling photo-sharing site. Having surpassed a billion monthly users earlier this year, Instagram has become a powerful tool for Miller and her ilk, allowing them to bypass the gatekeepers of the white-cube gallery world and build ever more independent—and financially viable—careers. But it's not all prayer-hands emojis. While Instagram has democratized the art world to a substantial degree, it has also introduced new powers that be: Censorship algorithms, easily offended users and shadowy moderators all have the power to decide if certain images are too "explicit." And it can take only one report to get a post taken down.

When it comes to photography, Instagram's no-female-nipples policy is well-known—though it should be said that "postmastectomy scarring and women actively breast-feeding" have been allowed since 2015. The service's community guidelines state that "nudity in photos of paintings and sculptures is okay," but many artists working in those mediums beg to differ. A surrealist illustration of hardcore sex may fly, while a figurative painting of a vulva could get flagged within minutes. Given that moral and aesthetic gray area (not to mention our own historic trials in this realm), we thought it might be illuminating to gather a range of artwork that has been taken down from the platform, accompanied by the creators' thoughts on social-media censorship.

EMILY MILLER @femilykiller

"Instagram is a huge beast. I can't begin to imagine how they monitor all the content. It will take tremendous effort to get the algorithm right. I bet IG's censorship and promotions are changing the course of art history in ways we're not aware of yet."

FRANCES WAITE @franceswaite

"At this point I'm able to predict the types of drawings that will be reported. It's silly. I'm always a little sad when it happens, but Instagram is just Instagram: The drawings still exist. Sometimes I try to think of it as a victory: The drawing was too good."

NATALIE KRIM @nataliejhane

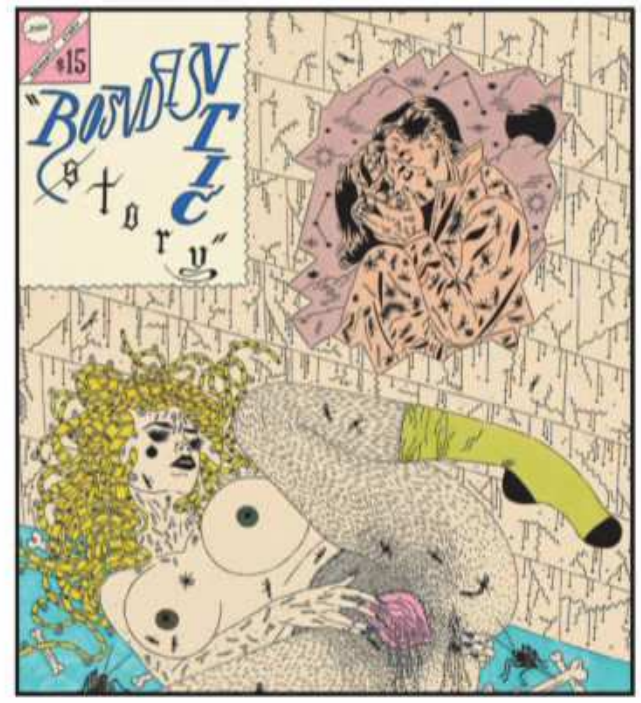
"Users should have the ability to engineer their experience through an expansive set of controls. Seemingly little flags, filters and notifications go a long way; it's a good place to start so that the power of what you see is in your hands."

DESSIE JACKSON @dessiejackson

"I think this relates to a larger, overarching theme of history and art history since the beginning of time: What are women 'allowed' to create as artists? Inequality is forever present; what, as artists and viewers, can we do to neutralize this schism?"

ZOË LIGON @thongria

"Humans review the content, so it's most likely a reflection of society's hang-ups with femme bodies. Regardless of the age, gender, etc. of the moderator, we're all predisposed to be more critical of the taboo feminine than the taboo masculine."



HEATHER BENJAMIN @heatherbenjamin_

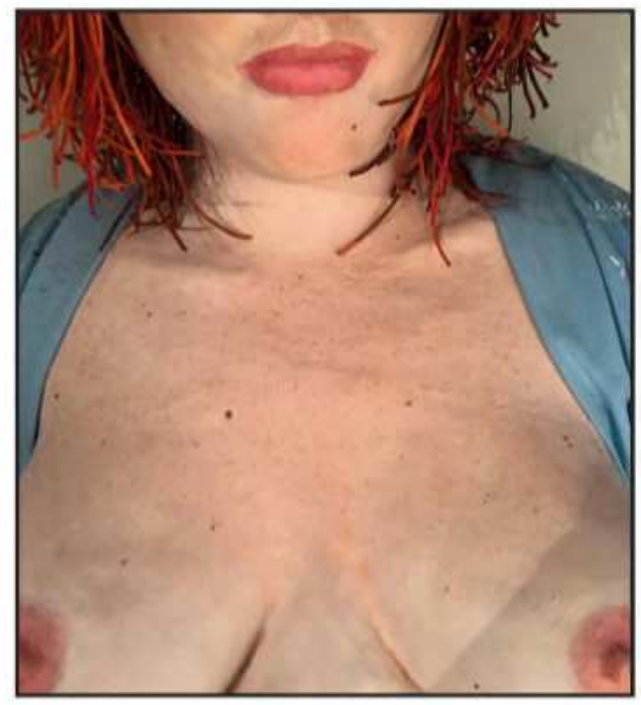
"If I let Instagram dictate what I post, I wouldn't be sharing half the work I want to, which defeats the purpose of using this platform. Deep down, I wish people would keep posting content, uncensored, over and over. Maybe that would get us somewhere."

GIULIA MARSICO @scientwehst

"Sometimes my work so closely resembles something 'explicit' that the viewer ends up conflicted (or offended), not realizing they've completely sexualized a bridge or the Iglesia de San Pedro. Ooh, you don't like that, do you?"

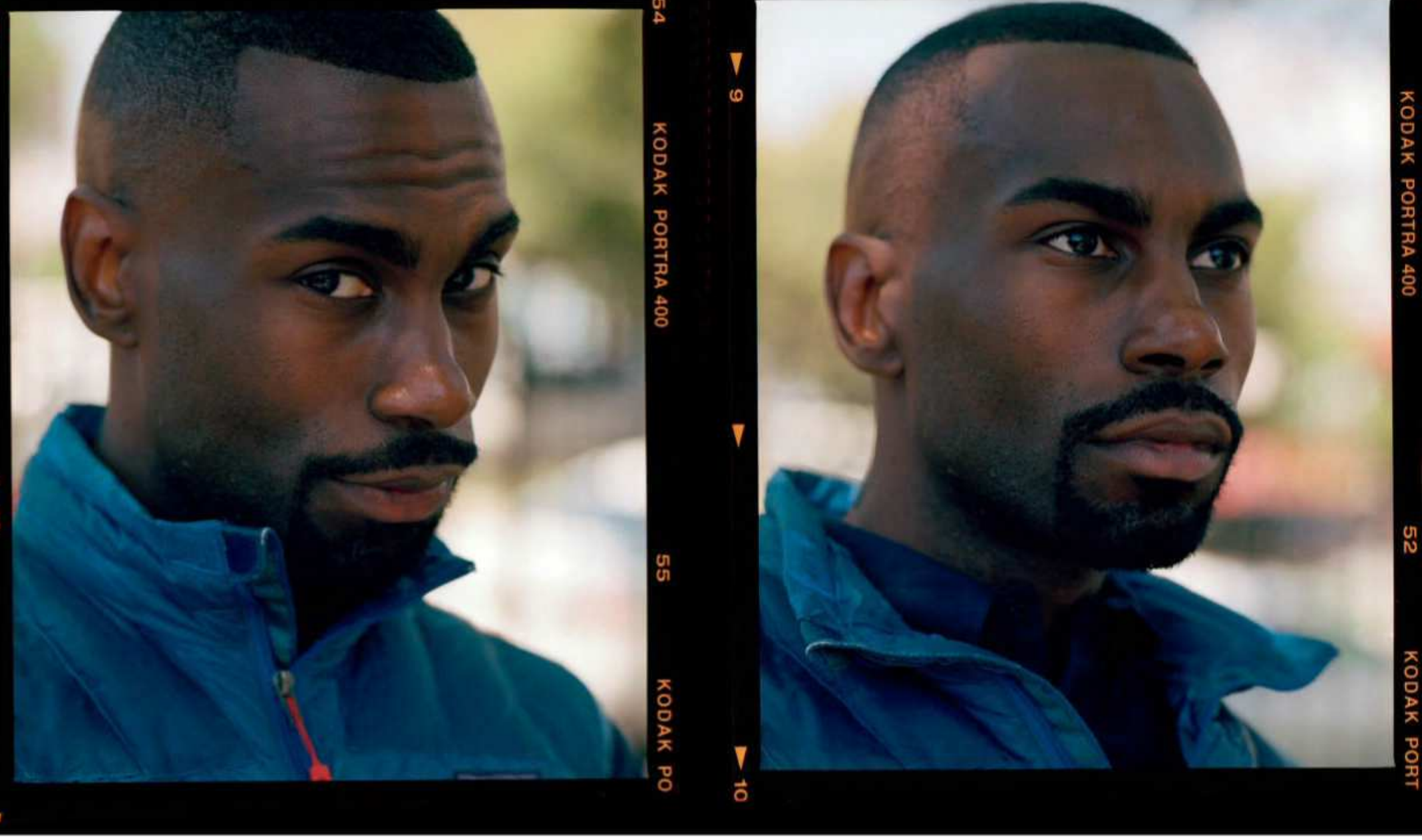
MIKE DIANA @boiledmikediana

"Instagram makes me think of the DMV or the post office—how certain employees really want to control or bully other people. With the moderators, you never know who's going to be the stickler who doesn't let anything slide."



SHONA MCANDREW @shona_mcandrew

"The truth is these problems exist on Instagram because they exist IRL. Female nipples are censored while male nipples are not because of how society views women's bodies and men's bodies—the algorithm came later."



MAKING THE HARD CASE FOR HOPE

One of today's most prominent activists recounts his journey to becoming a voice of reason and resistance in a divided America

BY **DERAY MCKESSON**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALEXANDER WAGNER**

When I made that nine-hour drive to Ferguson, Missouri four years ago, I didn't really know where my head was at.

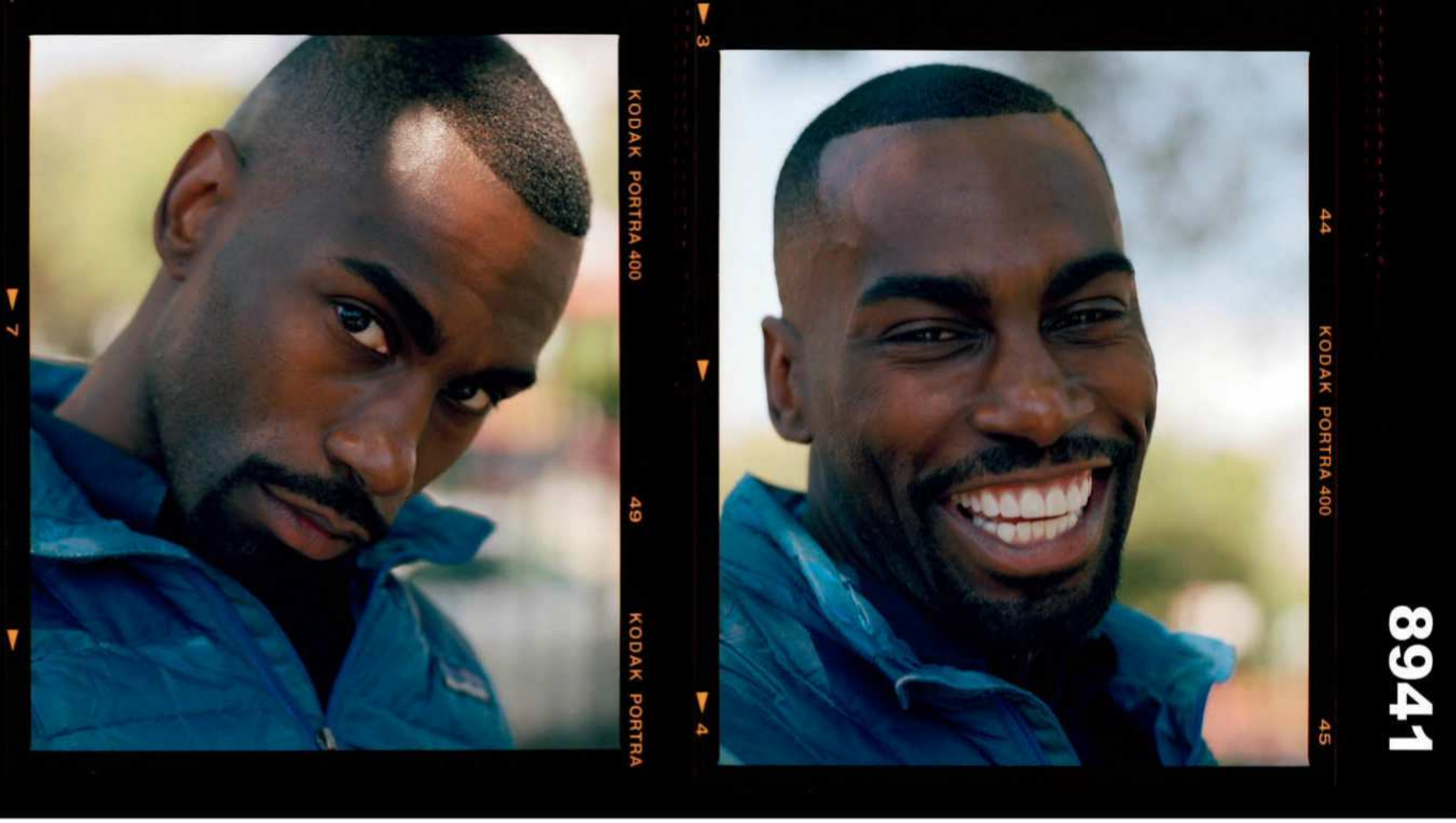
It had been a week since Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black male, was killed there by white police officer Darren Wilson. After watching the chaos unfold on television and Twitter, I got off my couch, jumped in my car and headed to Ferguson to join the growing protests. Within moments of arriving, I was tear-gassed. I just remember thinking I would do whatever I could, give up whatever I could, to prevent what happened to Brown from happening to anyone else. I eventually relocated to Ferguson full-time, quitting my job as a public school administrator and emptying my savings account. In those early days of organizing, I found my path.

A lot of people forget we were demonstrating in the streets for 400 days. That's a long time. People gloss over that when they talk about Black Lives Matter, and that's dangerous because it hides the spirit and the energy that started these protests in Ferguson, across the country and around the world. It erases the uniqueness of the phenomenon: A group of regular folks came together and decided to rise up against the terrorization of their communities.

Now that the world is a little bit slower and I'm not out in the streets organizing every day, I look back and recognize just how many decisions I made in good faith in 2014. I've been able to spend more time reflecting on what I could have done differently and what I've learned.

A sermon I heard not too long ago resonated with me: The preacher said that if you share your story too early, people will see only the pain and not the purpose. If I had written a book two years ago, it would simply have been a play-by-play on the protests. Now I'm at a point where I can see the larger themes surrounding the movement. I can more easily connect the dots across cities and across the years in a way I wouldn't have been able to a few years ago. So it felt like the right time to put this narrative down. The result is *On the Other Side of Freedom: The Case for Hope*.

Four years ago I would have said the problem with police was bad people making bad decisions. Now I understand that there's a layer of laws that protect the police. The problem is systemic and entrenched, but because of the increased capacity for data collection on police violence, today we can do a better job recognizing and addressing it. We have more reliable data on the frequency and nature of violent police encounters, and so we're better able to formulate solutions through initiatives like the Police Union Contract Project and



Campaign Zero that push for greater accountability. Instead of just knowing that the system is stacked against people of color, we know *how* the system is stacked against us, which allows us to pinpoint the harmful policies that need to be uprooted.

People often criticize those who work within the system to bring about significant change, but I feel there is value in coming at these problems from both ends. When I ran for mayor of my home city, Baltimore, in 2016, a lot of people were outraged because of this pervasive idea that all meaningful activism happens outside the system. I was forced to justify my decision over and over again. (This was before Donald Trump became president; today it seems like everyone is running for office, and if you aren't, then you're a punk.) Despite losing, I'm not ruling out an eventual return to politics. We need to make sure the right people are in these powerful roles. For now, I feel I have a bigger influence outside politics, thanks in part to my podcast, *Pod Save the People,* and to Twitter.

Twitter is an incredible platform, and during those days in Ferguson it saved our lives by allowing us to communicate around the police, beyond their grasp. Social media was really the only way for people outside Missouri to witness what we were witnessing, so I don't know where we would have been without it. But despite Twitter being a place where you can get a lot of information, I'm not sure it's the best place to process information, which was my motivation for starting the podcast—and ultimately for writing a book. I wanted the public to gain a new way of thinking about pressing social issues such as mass incarceration and over-policing. I wanted to create tools for those who are hungry to enter social justice activism and community organizing—tools that would make them better at the work.

Something I felt compelled to tweet in the early days of the movement, particularly after a tough time out in the streets, was "I love my blackness. And yours." Throughout everything, that remains a monumental message to me. I'm saying it as much to the world as I'm saying it to myself. Love is what actually sustains us every night.

We understand that this world can be better, and we're going to do something about it.

A GROUP OF REGULAR FOLKS CAME TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO RISE UP AGAINST THE TERRORIZATION OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.

DeRay Mckesson's On the Other Side of Freedom: The Case for Hope is out September 4 from Viking; find him on Twitter @deray.

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SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1930

STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

The indelible Halloween franchise celebrates its 40th anniversary with a new film—quite possibly the most relevant and terrifying installment since the original

BY **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** ILLUSTRATION BY **NATHAN THOMAS MILLINER**

TRICK OR TREAT!

Try telling filmmaker John Carpenter that his dark masterpiece *Halloween,* which first terrified audiences 40 years ago this October, is culturally important, and he'll laugh in your face. "Will you stop?" he implores. "It's just a little scary movie. People come to the theater, they jump and scream, grab on to their dates—that's it. There's nothing more to it."

Granted, *Halloween*'s premise is pretty simple: A psychopath—Michael Myers, identified in the original script as "the Shape"—breaks out of an insane asylum and tries to murder his sister. But unlike the bulk of its nutcase-with-a-knife imitators, this "little scary movie" terrifies us more with what it *doesn't* show than what it does. While most slasher films try to win on blood and carnage, the original *Halloween* makes deadly weapons out of shadows and anticipation.

You couldn't have asked for a better horror movie for 1978, a post-Nixon and post-Vietnam era when many Americans weren't feeling especially hopeful. Our institutions had been rocked, the Cold War was in full swing and the economy was in the toilet. *Halloween* captured the national feeling of dread—a general sense of "Oh God, what now?"

The franchise has been nothing if not profitable, but its nine sequels and remakes never connected with audiences quite like the original did. A new take on *Halloween* is coming to theaters October 19—Michael Myers's 61st birthday—and this one feels different. For one, John Carpenter is back, both as a producer and composer, his first involvement with a *Halloween* film since 1982. The script for this version comes from an unlikely source: Danny McBride and David Gordon Green, a team known for such comedies as *Vice Principals* and *Pineapple Express.* And then there's the sense that we need a movie like *Halloween* in 2018 just like we needed one in 1978.

Tommy Lee Wallace, the editor and production designer for the first *Halloween* (he was responsible for the look of the iconic mask) sees direct parallels between the two movies. "The time is right for a new *Halloween,*" he says. "Our country is a horror show. Trump is in the White House, kids don't feel safe in school, the world feels like it's gone insane. A man running around killing people at random doesn't require a suspension of disbelief anymore. *Halloween* speaks to our collective fears about the future."

Carpenter isn't convinced. His take is more basic and—*gasp!*—more hopeful. "If there's any overarching theme to *Halloween,* it's probably that you can survive the night," Carpenter says. "Maybe that's something people want to be reminded of." ■

BEHIND THE MASK

The mask was painted fish-belly white; the hair, originally blond, was tousled and dyed black. "I wanted to give it that slept-in look," says production designer Tommy Lee Wallace.

In the original, Laurie stabs Michael in the eye and neck (with a coat hanger and sewing needle, respectively). Director David Gordon Green made sure to include the residual damage in the new version of the mask.

The mask, bought at a Hollywood magic shop, was supposed to resemble William Shatner from *Star Trek.* "It looked nothing like him," says Carpenter. "Perfect!"

The sideburns were removed to give the face "a punk look," says Wallace. "I think 90 percent of his creepiness is because of the missing sideburns."

"The aftershave that Nick [Castle, who plays Myers in the original] wore was ever-present when I put on the mask," says Dick Warlock, who plays Myers in *Halloween II.* "It caused me great stress."

Newer masks are seldom as ominous as the original. Wallace believes the thicker latex is to blame. "That first mask was super cheap and really thin," he says. Indeed, it had an ill-fitting authenticity that no professionally molded mask could touch.

"It isn't easy to breathe in that mask," says Wallace, who appears as Myers in several scenes in the original. "You're all sweaty and your carbon dioxide is filling the mask and you feel like you might die in there."

Sequel masks tend to be more form-fitting. "They built the mask to fit my face perfectly," says Brad Loree, who plays Myers in *Halloween: Resurrection.*

KILLING ME NOT SO SOFTLY

Ten of Michael Myers's weapons, rated from most effective to most ridiculous

1. KITCHEN KNIFE Myers uses a knife like Jackson Pollock used a paintbrush.

2. HIS HANDS Surprisingly powerful, especially his thumbs, which can bore through a victim's face with surgical precision.

3. JACUZZI WATER Not just extremely hot water; high-end *spa* water. It has a certain boil-the-rich bourgeois charm.

4. HAMMER If I had a hammer...I'd use the claw part to gouge out your eyes.

5. ICE SKATES The "when life hands you lemons, make lemonade" of psychopath problem-solving.

6. GARDEN CLAW Who knew your grandpa's favorite gardening tool had such a dark side?

7. SCISSORS Yes, it's a blade, but it's also something we tell children not to run with. It just doesn't have the right sinister vibe.

8. JAIL BARS It's hard to be scared of anything that evokes memories of Play-Doh being pushed through a Fun Factory squeeze machine.

9. SCYTHE A bit too on the nose with the Grim Reaper imagery.

10. PHONE CORD Scary only if you're old enough to remember rotary phones.

Halloween
by the Numbers

Original budget:

$325,000

Original gross adjusted for inflation: **$184 million**

Number of dogs killed: **5**

Age of Myers at the time of his first murder: **6**

Cost of original Myers mask, bought at a magic shop in Hollywood: **$1.98**

Original gross: **$47 million**

Number of women who've played Michael Myers: **20**

Total number of actors who've played Michael Myers: **1**

Ratio of men to women murdered in entire series: **16 to 9**

Number of boxes filled with kittens spared: **1**

Amount spent to save original *Halloween* house from bulldozers: **one silver dollar**

Number of actors who play Myers in original: **6**

Number of actors who've worked with Michael Myers the actor *and* the psychopath: **1** (Dana Carvey)

Number of rappers to appear in sequels: **2** (Busta Rhymes in *Halloween: Resurrection* and LL Cool J in *Halloween H2O: 20 Years Later*)

Salary of original Michael Myers actors: **$25 a day**

Total number of victims as of 2009: **100+**

Age at which Myers will qualify for Medicare: **61**

Age Myers was for his most recent killing spree: **65**

WHAT'S SO SCARY?

The cast and crew of *Halloween* and its many spin-offs recall the moments from the original that still chill their blood

"THE SHAPE IS SIMPLY SCARY. HIS ENIGMATIC PRESENCE AND LACK OF AFFECT, THE HEAD TILT—HIS SIMPLE YET TERRIFYING PRESENCE IS WHAT'S SCARY FOR ME."

Jamie Lee Curtis, who plays Laurie Strode in five *Halloween* movies

"THAT KITCHEN SCENE, WHERE MYERS PLUNGES HIS KNIFE INTO A KID'S STOMACH AND NAILS HIM TO THE WALL. IT'S NOT THE VIOLENCE THAT GETS ME; WE HANG ON THE SHOT FOR TOO LONG, WITH JUST THE SILENCE AND THE KID DANGLING THERE, AND YOU REALIZE YOU'RE LOOKING AT PURE EVIL."

Tommy Lee Wallace, editor and production designer of the original *Halloween*

"LAURIE LOOKS OUT HER BEDROOM WINDOW AND SEES MICHAEL BETWEEN LAUNDRY HANGING ON THE LINE. A MOMENT LATER HE'S GONE. SIMPLE AND BRILLIANT."

Rob Zombie, writer-director of two reboots

"THE MUSIC! JOHN CARPENTER'S SOUNDTRACK IS BEYOND CHILLING. THE FIRST THREE NOTES ARE INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE AND SEND US RIGHT BACK TO THOSE OPENING CREDITS, TINGLING WITH ANTICIPATION."

P.J. Soles, one of Michael Myers's first victims

"WHEN LAURIE THINKS SHE'S GOT THE BEST OF MICHAEL AND SHE TURNS HER BACK ON HIM, AND HE JUST SUDDENLY SITS UP. HE DOESN'T STRUGGLE OR ANYTHING, JUST ROBOTICALLY PIVOTS INTO A 90-DEGREE ANGLE."

David Gordon Green, director of the new installment

"NOTHING IN THAT MOVIE FREAKS ME OUT, EXCEPT THE LACK OF FUNDS WE HAD TO MAKE IT."

John Carpenter, *Halloween* mastermind and merciless truth-teller

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

*Actor **Richard Cabral**'s past as a gang member and prison inmate is at least as dramatic as his latest vehicle: the propulsive Sons of Anarchy spinoff Mayans M.C.*

BY **SCOTT PORCH**

If he had taken the first deal a district attorney offered him 13 years ago, one week before he was scheduled to go on trial for attempted murder, things today would be very different for Richard Cabral.

He would not have been discovered by the showrunner for *Southland*. He would not have been featured on multiple episodes of that show and then moved on to *American Crime,* which netted him an Emmy nomination. He would not be starring this fall on the *Sons of Anarchy* spinoff *Mayans M.C.* If Cabral had taken that deal, he would probably be on probation right now, working whatever job he could find with a violent felony conviction—for shooting a man in a gang incident—on his record. And if he had gone to trial and lost, he would still be locked up at Ironwood State Prison in Blythe, California.

"The DA didn't have enough evidence to convict me for the attempted murder," Cabral says, "but he had enough to convict me for the gang allegations. One week before the trial, he offered me 13 years, and I refused it. The day before trial, he dropped it down to five years. That was it." He pled guilty to a lesser charge and went to prison at the age of 20, but he got out at 25 instead of 33.

Cabral grew up in East Los Angeles in the 1980s, back when that area was one of the biggest hotbeds of gang activity in the world. At the age of 13 he did a stint in juvenile lockup for stealing, returned a few months later for felony robbery and was hooked on crack cocaine by the time he was 15. He makes no excuses for his past, but its demons are evident in the rage and violence he brings to his characters. His stories can leave you thinking he was predestined for prison from the beginning.

"I had seen a life at 20 that most people twice my age had never seen," says Cabral, whose densely tattooed neck supports a chiseled, angular face that frequently breaks into a wide smile. "I was actually grateful to get five years. I could have been serving 15 or 20 or 30. I was trained for assault with a deadly weapon. I grew up with guys in juvenile hall, county jail, California Youth Authority and prison. That was my normal. Going to prison for five years started a great change in my life."

That great change didn't actually happen in prison, and Cabral pushes back at the suggestion that his time behind bars reformed him. "The system does not work," he says. "They throw savages in a cage and say, 'Figure it out.' My journey started after prison." He discovered a program for former gang members called Homeboy Industries and got a job at the organization's well-regarded L.A. bakery. There, he found structure, a work ethic and opportunities. Homeboy is also where he met the *Southland* showrunner who set him on his current path, and he goes back there often to talk to other former gang members.

Mayans M.C. (the "M.C." stands for Motorcycle Club) will give Cabral another chance to dig into his past. Set a few years after the end of *Sons of Anarchy,* the new series shifts the Mayans to the foreground and the setting from northern California to the U.S.-Mexico border. "It's a gang world on motorcycles," Cabral says, "and I grew up in gangs."

FX has kept a tight lid on the series' storylines, but a promo in which the Mayans ride their motorcycles along what appears to be a border wall hints that the show will engage on issues of immigration and racism—much as *The Handmaid's Tale* has with sexual assault and authoritarianism and *Black Mirror* has with technology and privacy.

"The Mayans are the same kind of brotherhood that I had on the streets when I was a kid," Cabral says. "I could relate to that."

If *Mayans M.C.* succeeds in channeling Cabral's hard-won magnetism, viewers may find themselves relating too. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JONATHAN WEINER**

Libero Ferrero

Playboy Advisor

*Sex columnist **Anna del Gaizo** counsels a male sugar baby in utero. She then dips a toe in the more extreme end of sex play and offers some tips on ending an affair with a professor*

Q: *I'm a recent college grad who has decided to make a life change: I want a sugar mama. I have an entry-level job and almost no disposable income, and I'd love to get a fixed allowance with minimal effort. I know these relationships are common and can be set up on various websites, but for a straight guy, is it as simple as creating a profile?—J.S., Cincinnati, Ohio*

ILLUSTRATION BY **ZOHAR LAZAR**

A: There's no shame in using what your mama gave you to get yourself another mama, and there's definitely no shame in being a kept man. So why aren't more young men enlisting generous older dames to sponsor their checking accounts? Because nothing is free.

While there are more avenues than ever before to explore a mutually beneficial arrangement with a stranger, expect to earn every Venmo transfer you hope to receive. These relationships involve a lot more than "minimal effort," starting with the search for the right partner. Sugar, SugarD, Sudy and Seeking Arrangement are the most popular apps and websites for facilitating transactional relationships. As with any online dating, more apps mean more potential partners who will request photos and ask screener questions ("What are you into? Are you dominant or submissive? How big is your penis?") but ultimately waste your time by ghosting you.

Before creating an account, you'll need to start thinking about sex differently. Transactional sex is not just about pleasure; it's about focusing on *her* pleasure. Sugar mamas and daddies tend to be older, so you should hook up with an older woman beforehand if you haven't already. Their pleasure points are different, as are their bodies.

When you build your profile, clearly state your expectations. Spell out that you're looking for a fixed allowance. There's power in being direct. And once you've set up a date, get cultured and groomed before seducing a sugar mama. It's silly, but you need to spend money to make money. Invest in a tailored suit from a mid-market retailer like Bonobos or Suitsupply. Learn the basics of wine selection and dining at prestigious restaurants. Familiarize yourself with the best upscale bars in the city—somewhere you won't be gawked at by other recent college grads. Ask your date questions, and be polite. Finally, don't undress in front of her before money has been discussed. As with any transaction, you need to negotiate. Don't lowball yourself. Your tight body and sexual stamina are worth more to this woman than you may think.

While you're at it, consider devoting the same amount of time and energy to finding a better-paying job and securing your future. The only thing more satisfying than spending someone else's money is spending your own.

Q: *I like sex that involves a lot of spit, from kissing to oral. It's hard to keep going with this fetish, though, once lube is introduced. Essentially, once a woman lubes me up, she won't go down on me for the rest of the night. And some women prefer to use lube during intercourse versus me using my spit. Are there any pitfalls to telling female partners that mine is a spit-only bedroom?—T.L., Manchester, England*

A: Spit is sexy, but only in the right context and when there's enough to go around. Swapping spit during a hardcore make-out session? Seductively spitting on your girl's vagina before you push deep inside her? Sloppy, spit-soaked blow jobs? Yes, yes, yes! But even if a partner shares your fetish, what happens when your mouth runs dry and friction settles in? For example, the more alcohol, cannabis or recreational drugs you consume, the drier your mouth gets. Unless you produce more saliva than the average person—enough to sustain multiple reapplications during a marathon fuck—it's smart to keep a bottle of lube bedside. If the silky but synthetic quality of lube is what turns you off, try coconut oil as an organic alternative; just make sure to ask your partner first, as coconut oil upsets the pH levels in some women's vaginas.

Lube isn't usually necessary for traditional intercourse, so I doubt your woman friend will complain if you go natural. If she does, tell her the sight of her slobbering all over you is a major turn-on. If that doesn't do it for her, or if she automatically whips out her own travel-size K-Y Jelly before sex, she's obviously not the right match for a saliva enthusiast like yourself. Whatever you do, do not proclaim your bedroom to be a spit-only zone. Making sex nonnegotiable will turn off many women completely.

Oh, and don't even think about doing anal without lube. You want your bedroom looking like that spit-soaked sex scene between Rachel McAdams and Rachel Weisz in 2017's *Disobedience*—not *Deliverance*.

Q: *I started sleeping with my hot professor but didn't know he was married—he doesn't wear a wedding band because he's in what he calls an "unconventional" relationship. I've since learned his wife also works at the university. I realize I'm just an escape from his boring, middle-aged life and I want to end it, but the semester is only midway through. What's a respectable exit plan for a girl who did something unrespectable?—M.P., San Diego, California*

A: For a man who claims to be unconventional, he isn't very original. As for affairs with college professors, many of us have been there. Such relations are richly appealing to students: They're taboo, they make us doe-eyed dimwits feel special and they ensure lectures are more fun. But as you've learned, almost every illicit affair comes with an expiration date.

Props to you for recognizing how pathetic your professor is, not only for cheating on his wife (unless his "unconventional" marriage expressly permits multiple sex partners) but for using his position as a superior to get laid. If anyone is undeserving of respect here, it's him.

Now let's talk exit strategy. When I was an undergrad, my plan included wearing oversize flannel pajamas to class to send the message that sexy time had ceased. But you're better than that, so here's some advice from a woman who graduated college when you were still learning about the birds and the bees: Take the mature route and tell him, via text or in person, that you know he's married and you can't continue this affair. Block him on social media to make it clear. Tell him you hope this won't affect your class work. (I really hope you're not taking an ethics class from him.) If it does, remember that you have the upper hand. He's one vindictive grade away from sinking his pension—and probably his marriage.

Q: *I've found a lot of women like, and even request, to be choked during sex—but not slapped. I got in trouble recently for slapping my girlfriend while fucking her. We usually fuck aggressively, so now I'm confused. What's the difference in eroticism between choking and slapping?—A.W., Castle Rock, Colorado*

A: Here's some general advice: Nothing makes much sense in life, especially the nuances of carnal desire. Having said that, choking and slapping are in the same category of Abusive Fetishes That Require Consent, but that's where the similarities end.

You're right that many women like to be choked during sex, and most aren't masochists. It's often a turn-on to relinquish control to another human, especially one who is hovering over your pulsing body. A lot of women enjoy coital slapping so vigorous that their cheeks sting, their ears ring and they see stars. I know this to be true because I'm one of those women, but I also know I'm in the minority.

Choking, or the more extreme erotic asphyxiation, is commonplace these days. The dynamics equate to a titillating dominant-submissive power play. There's also the physical effect: When blood flow to your brain is restricted, the release of adrenaline and endorphins causes a dizzying rush. Getting slapped may feel more like punishment, and that sudden stimulus activates dopamine receptors in some women. For others, it just feels like pure physical abuse.

When it comes to pleasure, we're all wired differently. As for your partner's preferences, it's not your job to ask her why; your job is to ask yourself if you can deliver without compromising your own pleasure or crossing her lines. Doing either could eliminate the eroticism of your sexual dynamic completely.

Questions? E-mail advisor@playboy.com.

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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: MICHAEL SHANNON

A candid conversation with the star of screen and stage whose bone-deep empathy leads to indelible, Oscar-worthy performances but stops at the gates of the White House

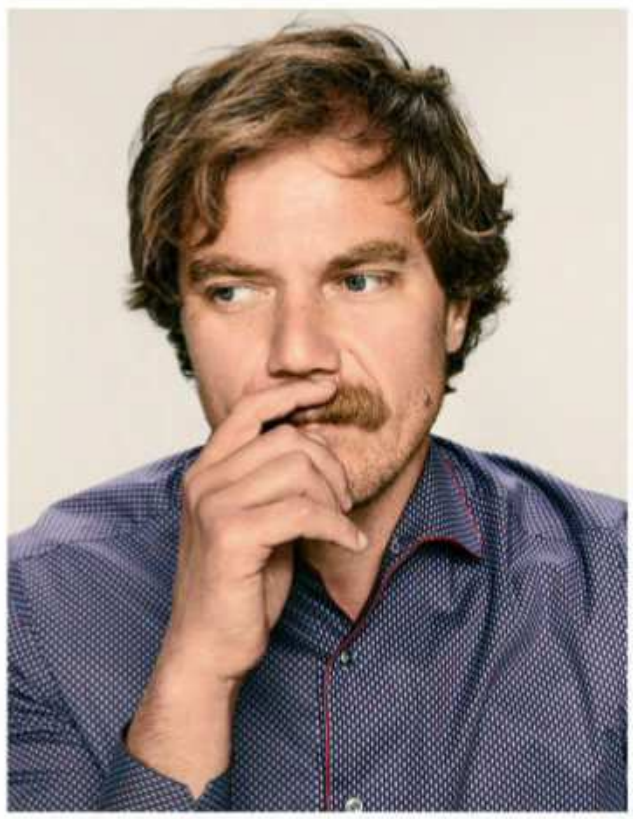
You're not likely to find a better example of the real Michael Shannon than the story of how he spent this year's Academy Awards night. Although he wasn't nominated, *The Shape of Water*—the interspecies romance in which he co-stars as a sadistic government agent—was up for several categories, including best picture. When it took the top prize, Shannon didn't join his director and castmates onstage; instead, he watched it all from the Old Town Ale House, a Chicago fixture where the jukebox never gets turned off and a painting of a naked Sarah Palin with a machine gun hangs on a wall. Shannon was sitting alone at the bar in a puffy jacket, nursing a beer beneath the tiny TV. If any other A-list actor had done this, it would have felt like a bad PR stunt. But when Shannon skips the red carpet to slum it at a dive bar, it feels exactly right—the perfect expression of his mercurial spirit.

If Shannon has a master plan for his career, it's difficult to pinpoint; then again, the same could be said of his entire life. From an early age, he was a natural vagabond: Born in Lexington, Kentucky, he bounced between living with his mother, a social worker in Lexington, and his father, an accounting professor in Chicago. After dropping out of high school, he co-founded A Red Orchid Theatre in Chicago, then broke into movies, first as a bit player in *Groundhog Day,* before deciding he wanted to do theater instead. He fled back to Chicago to do plays including Tracy Letts's *Bug* and *Killer Joe,* both of which went on to critical acclaim in New York and London, which led to bigger roles in such blockbusters as *Pearl Harbor* and *Bad Boys II*, which led to filmmaker Werner Herzog, who has cast Shannon three times to date, calling him "arguably the most important [actor] of his generation."

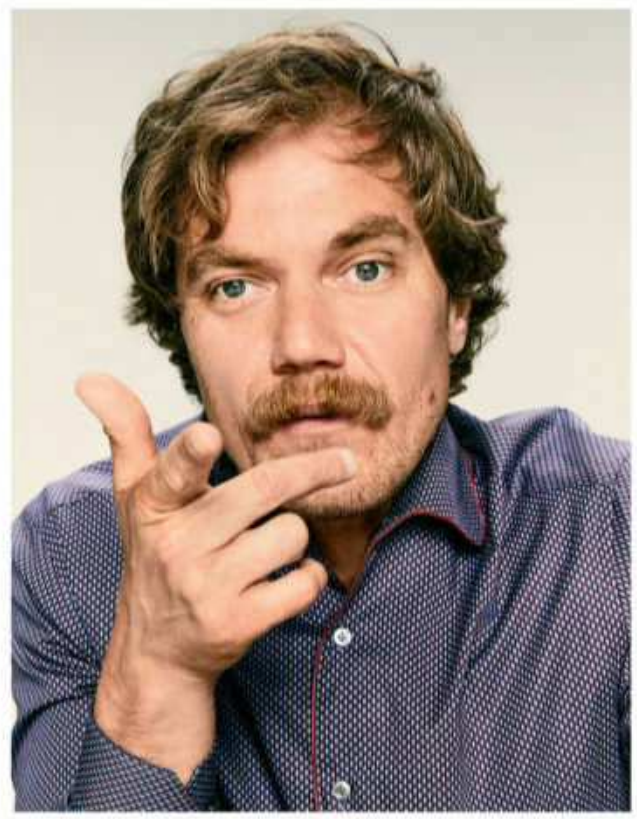
Shannon manages to appear in at least one prestigious art-house movie every year, two of which—*Nocturnal Animals* and *Revolutionary Road*—have earned him Oscar nominations. But beyond that, his choices are all over the map. He has played a lot of bad guys, from an abusive boyfriend in *8 Mile* to a contract killer in *The Iceman* to a corrupt Prohibition agent in the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire,* but he bristles at any suggestion of typecasting. Whether it's a book-burning zealot in *Fahrenheit 451* or a pissed-off sorority girl in a Funny or Die video, he can be simultaneously ferocious and achingly vulnerable.

In his new movie, *What They Had,* about a woman with Alzheimer's and the family struggling to protect her, Shannon ventures into new territory as the funniest character in an otherwise heart-wrenching drama. When he

"The people I play—whatever reductive term you want to use, villains or whatever—they're all in their own private shit box. They're all suffering as much as any other human being on earth."



"Harvey Weinstein grabbed my arm and said, 'I've got my eye on you. You're getting there.' I didn't know what to say, so I was like, 'Thanks, Dad.' He just made me feel gross."



"You don't have to know the answer to every question. That's not how life works. We don't necessarily know what the fuck we're doing. We're just winging it. And that's how life is."

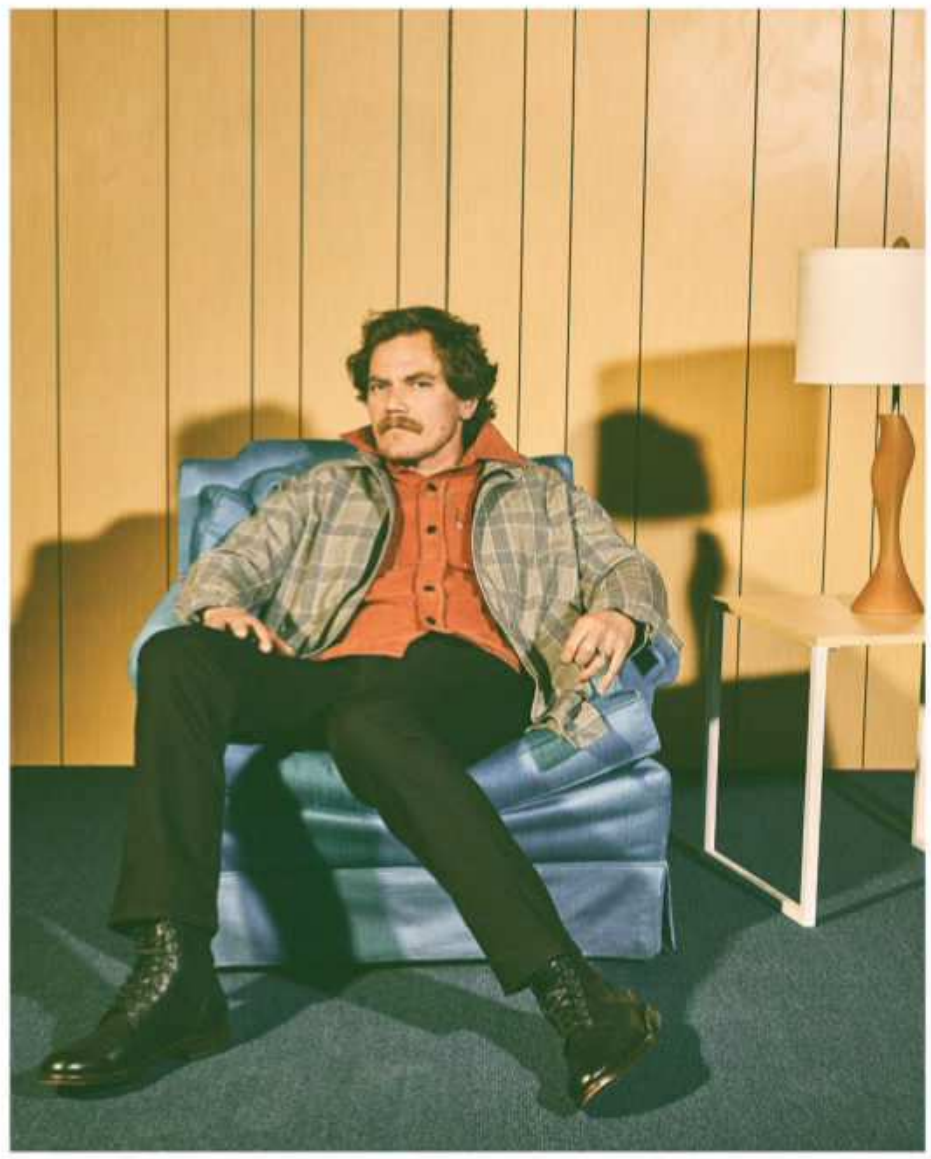
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DANIELLE LEVITT**

tells his sister, played by Hilary Swank, how their confused mother tried to seduce him, it's a welcome moment of comedic relief. "I just kept calling her Mom," he explains. "Thanks, Mom. It's nice to see you too, Mom. I'm really glad you birthed me, *Mom*." His character calls his sister "Dingleberry," makes jokes about pants-shitting and responds to news that their grandmother drank the holy water in church with "At least she's hydrated."

Playing the laugh lines may seem to be a stretch for the 44-year-old Shannon—who lives in Brooklyn with his wife, actress Kate Arrington, and their two daughters, Sylvie and Marion—but it's business as usual for an actor accustomed to defying expectations. In just the past five years, his roles have ranged from Elvis Presley to Superman's archnemesis.

We sent Contributing Editor **Eric Spitznagel** to meet with Shannon in New York City. He reports: "I've known Shannon since the early 1990s, when he was still a teenager. He acted in a few plays that I co-wrote and directed in Chicago, at a theater in a crime-ridden neighborhood where an audience of three was considered a packed house. For this interview, we huddled in the corner of a restaurant in the Gramercy Park Hotel and drank several glasses of wine. Later, we went to the *Late Night With Seth Meyers* studio, where he was a guest, and after the show we drank another bottle of wine in his dressing room while talking jazz and theater with Common. Shannon is an imposing presence, six-three with gangly limbs, a bushy mustache (he grew it for a role, his first authentic facial hair in a movie) and a hardboiled detective's jawline. Regardless of what he's saying, there's an intensity to him—he orders food like he's trying to get a confession out of the waitress—and he has a super-dry sense of humor that's easy to miss if you're not paying attention. But if Shannon has a tendency to stare at you until you think his retinas are going to burn into your brain, it's only because, unlike a lot of actors, he seems more interested in listening than hearing the sound of his own voice.

"Just moments after we found our table, Shannon glanced at the menu and noticed a dish called Charred Suckling Pig Hearts. 'Are you kidding me?' he said. 'I want that. I want that *so* much.' It was not how I envisioned our interview beginning, but it also seemed weirdly perfect—like, if I randomly walked into a bar and sat down next to Shannon, this is exactly how it would go."



PLAYBOY: Eat a lot of hearts, do you?

SHANNON: Not really. I mean, I don't eat them regularly. I might if they were offered to me. This reminds me, when I was in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore,* back in 1997 I think it was, there was a scene where I'd carve my sister's heart out of her chest. We needed a heart, so I went down to the meatpacking district in Chicago. I got this cow heart and brought it to the theater, and we covered it in fake blood and used it in the show.

PLAYBOY: Just one cow heart?

SHANNON: We could make a heart last for a few weeks. You don't want to keep it too long because then you're playing with fire. In this play, I was kissing the thing.

PLAYBOY: You kissed the heart?

SHANNON: Yeah. [*pauses*] With lots of tongue.

PLAYBOY: Here's the thing that almost never gets mentioned about you in the media: You're a funny guy.

SHANNON: I guess so. I think I have the capacity to make some people laugh.

PLAYBOY: Do you approach comedy and drama differently?

SHANNON: I approach everything differently. I don't have a system. I have my consciousness, my attention and I guess whatever muscle memory I've worked up over the years. I find categorization mundane. Who cares whether something is a drama or a comedy? Laughter leads to tears anyway, and tears lead to laughter. Everything in life is a circle.

PLAYBOY: When was the last time you had an uncontrollable giggle fit?

SHANNON: If I'm onstage and someone is really struggling with their lines, that makes me giggle. I have to bite my lip. Usually when things go wrong or fall apart, I find that funny.

PLAYBOY: You like the chaos?

SHANNON: I do, yeah. I'm incredibly amused by that movie *The Room*. An old friend of mine said that when I watched it for the first time, it was the hardest he's ever seen me laugh. I like watching things not work.

PLAYBOY: Do you want to do more comedy?

SHANNON: Sure. I don't know what that is. What would you classify as "more comedy"?

PLAYBOY: Comedy films.

SHANNON: Where the point is to make people laugh?

PLAYBOY: Yeah.

SHANNON: Your question is more organized than how I think about my career—or anything in my life, really. I don't know what I'll do in the future. I don't know what's going to happen. It's not interesting to say, "Yes, I will do more comedy." What's interesting is to say, "I have no fucking idea what's going to happen next."

PLAYBOY: That takes bravery.

SHANNON: It does?

PLAYBOY: Sure it does. Most people want to know where they're heading. They want to prepare for their future, feel like they're in control.

SHANNON: I wish I could claim I felt courageous, but at this point it's the only way I'm capable of existing.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever feel scared when you show up on a movie set?

SHANNON: All the time, particularly on the first day. It's like the first day of school times a hundred.

PLAYBOY: Even though you've probably done it all before?

SHANNON: That doesn't make it easier.

PLAYBOY: What about shooting a sex scene? Does that get less terrifying the more you do it?

SHANNON: You never get used to sex scenes. Sex scenes are absurd, but in some ways they're just like real sex. They have all the fear, anxiety, sadness and loneliness—but with none of the pleasure.

PLAYBOY: Your first sex scene was with Kim Basinger in *8 Mile,* right?

SHANNON: That was like skydiving. It was jumping out of a plane. But she was very nice to me, very kind.
PLAYBOY: How so?
SHANNON: She just had this look in her eyes. Everything about her was calm and reassuring. She was like, "It's going to be okay. It's fine. Don't worry about anything."
PLAYBOY: Was she picking up on your anxiety?
SHANNON: I don't know. Maybe. I was a child back then. Well, no, I don't want to make it sound like pedophilia or something.
PLAYBOY: You were 28 when that movie came out.
SHANNON: But in terms of life experience, I was out of my depth.
PLAYBOY: You did a sex scene with James Franco in 2011's *The Broken Tower,* and according to Franco it made you "uncomfortable."
SHANNON: Is that what he said? I was only uncomfortable because right before we shot it, James was eating a giant slice of pizza. He had tomato sauce all over his face, and his breath smelled like garlic. He was explaining how the sex scene was going to go, and I was like, "Could you not be eating pizza right now? Could you put that down, please?"
PLAYBOY: That's not sexy.
SHANNON: That's not sexy at all. We were shooting it over a pizzeria, so I understood. I'm sure he was hungry. I get it. But my main discomfort in that moment wasn't the sex; it was the tomato sauce on his face.
PLAYBOY: You did another film with Franco, and he asked you to fuck a corpse.
SHANNON: That was our first film together. It was a short called *Herbert White.* I only agreed to do that because—well, it's kind of a surreal story. I was in Boston, doing press for a movie and visiting my sister, and when I was waiting at the station for a train back to New York, I noticed this really weird-looking cat in a trench coat looking at me. He's in a ball cap and big sunglasses and he's got a big, bushy beard. From a distance he looked like a homeless person. He started walking toward me, and I'm thinking, Who the fuck is this guy? Then he gets right up in front of me and is like, "Hi, Mike. I'm James Franco." In my head, I'm like, What's happening right now? He says to me, "I've written a screenplay based on one of my favorite poems. It's a short film, and I'd like you to star in it. It's really dark and twisted. Would you consider doing that?"
PLAYBOY: Why was he so disheveled?
SHANNON: He was in Boston to get the Hasty Pudding award at Harvard or something. He was incognito. If I were him, I'd probably be incognito too. I think it was a real beard. [*pauses*] I think. I didn't tug at it or anything.
PLAYBOY: You're very loyal to directors. You've repeatedly appeared in films by Werner Herzog, Jeff Nichols and Franco. Why do you keep coming back to them? Do they just have the best scripts?
SHANNON: It's not just the story. For me, it always come down to, Do I want to work with this person? I mean, if the script is absolute garbage, I won't do it. But if I like the director and think they're smart and have something interesting to say, that's more likely to convince me than anything else.
PLAYBOY: Do you feel the same directors are less likely to typecast you? Can they be counted on to challenge you rather than pigeonhole you in predictable villain roles?
SHANNON: I never thought of it that way. The whole typecasting thing has been imposed on my psyche, but it's never been a concern of mine. I'm aware of it only because other people bring it up. To me, it reeks of laziness, people not paying attention to what I'm doing. I think if you're really paying attention, you'll see what I'm talking about. Most people barely pay attention to anything. As an actor, you have to grab them by the lapels to make them sit up and notice you. And people who are good at doing that tend to get rewarded for it, unfortunately. I'm not going to play it that way.

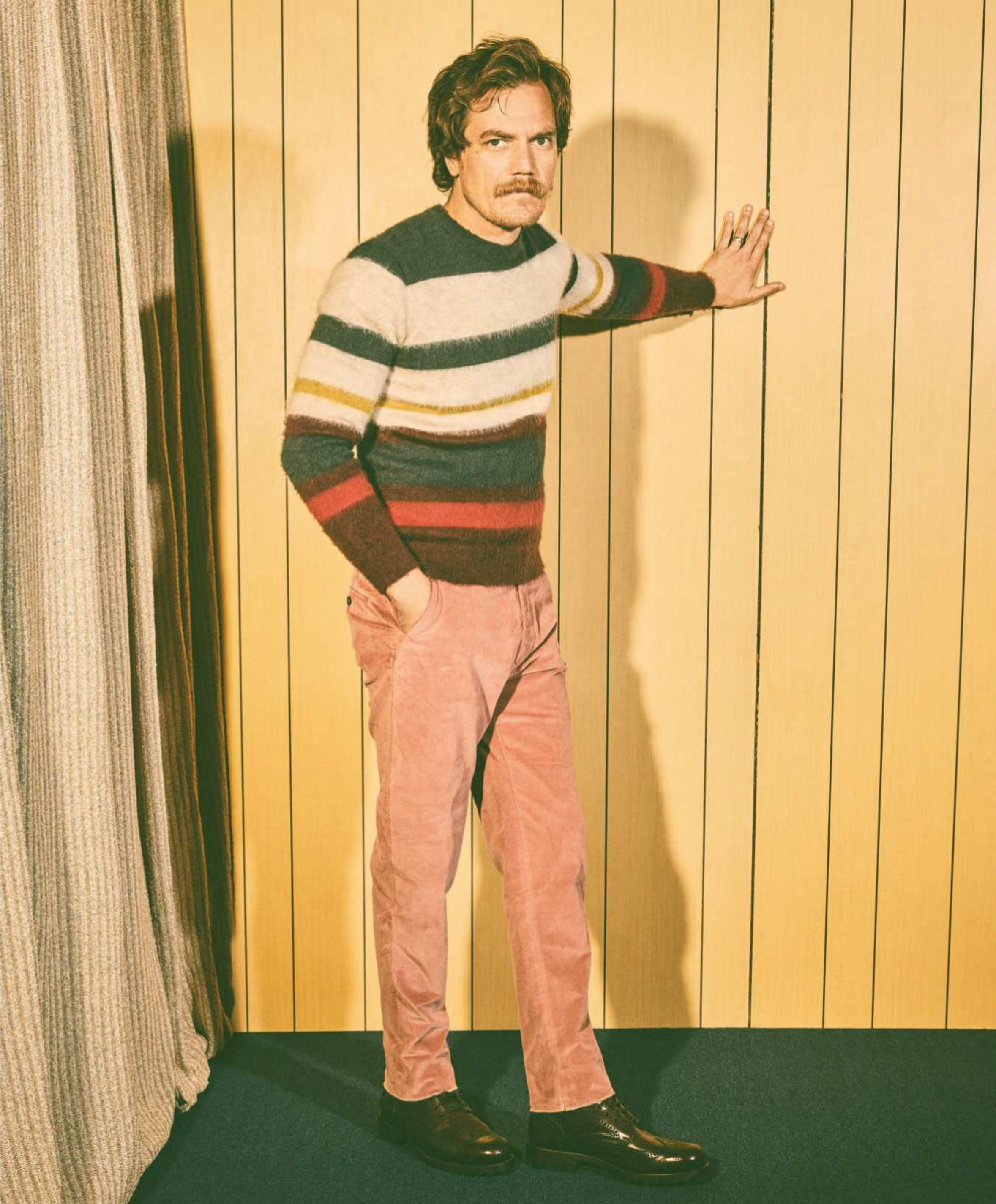
I can't help it. I have empathy for other people. That's how I make a living.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a lot of interaction with fans? Do they walk up to you and say hello?
SHANNON: Sometimes. The one question I get a lot, which I find bewildering, is "You're the actor, right? You're the actor!" Yes, I am *the* actor. I do it all. Everything you watch, that's me.
PLAYBOY: Do they have strong opinions about your characters—who they like, who they don't?
SHANNON: I used to get that a lot during *Boardwalk Empire.* People would come over and say, "You're so great as Van Alden. I hate him so much!"
PLAYBOY: Did that bother you?
SHANNON: It irritated me a little. I feel if you hate Van Alden, you aren't getting the whole picture. Van Alden wasn't a bad person, and nobody suffered more than he did. He tried, man; he tried. He was kind of like Job. Life kept throwing him curveballs. He couldn't handle it.
PLAYBOY: When you spend enough time in a character's skin, do you start to empathize with him?
SHANNON: Oh yeah, all the time. When I played Captain Beatty in *Fahrenheit 451,* about halfway through shooting I was like, "Maybe he's right. Maybe people do know too much. Maybe people are better off not knowing anything." I certainly see a lot of evidence of that in the empirical world. People are so overwhelmed and burdened with "knowledge" that they have absolutely no idea what to do with or about it. So maybe he's got a point. Maybe ignorance is bliss.
PLAYBOY: But Beatty doesn't seem that happy.
SHANNON: Sure. He's in his own private hell. That's the thing about all these people. The people I play—whatever reductive term you want to use, villains or whatever—they're all in their own private shit box. They're all suffering as much as any other human being on earth. Beatty is in agony. The only way he can function is to hold on to his worldview with white knuckles. It's the only thing he has. He has no home, no family, nothing except his job and the voices in his head.
PLAYBOY: Does playing all these bad men and learning to see the world through their eyes make you more empathetic with bad men in the real world?
SHANNON: I was talking to somebody today, and Harvey fucking Weinstein came up. I said something that, I don't know, I'm starting to regret.
PLAYBOY: You weren't defending him?
SHANNON: No! I think Harvey Weinstein is a terrible human being. I could never stand the guy. When I got in close proximity to him, I just didn't feel good. He did not inspire good feelings in other people. I remember the first time I met him, at Chateau Marmont. I was there having dinner, and as I walked past his table, he grabbed my arm and said, "I've got my eye on you."
PLAYBOY: Yikes.
SHANNON: And then he said, "You're getting there." I didn't know what to say, so I was like, "Thanks, Dad." He just made me feel gross.
PLAYBOY: Didn't you make a movie for Weinstein that's stuck in limbo now?
SHANNON: *The Current War.* He produced it, and we're trying to sell it to somebody else, have another studio put it out. But the Weinstein Company won't let go of it, and now it's all tangled up in this legal bullshit. Probably nobody is ever going to fucking see the damn thing, and that makes me really sad. It's a beautiful, relevant story, and I want people to see it. On one hand, I'm angry that this movie I love is probably going to disappear because of what this monster did. But on the other hand, after everything that happened...I feel sorry for him.
PLAYBOY: You feel sorry for Harvey Weinstein?

SHANNON: Listen, I know he's terrible. He did a bunch of terrible shit. But the guy's life is fucking over, man. He's probably shattered, you know? Now I'm just waiting for the headline: MIKE SHANNON IS A HARVEY WEINSTEIN SYMPATHIZER.
PLAYBOY: No, I get it. You're not saying he's innocent, or even a good person. You're just saying, as a human being, he must feel empty and alone.
SHANNON: I don't know how he gets out of bed in the morning. Why does he bother? If I was him, I would just walk in front of a bus and end it. What's he got to look forward to?
PLAYBOY: I'm sure they all feel that way. Kevin Spacey must be feeling pretty miserable right now.
SHANNON: I didn't know Kevin very well. Some people think we're friends, but we worked together for only five days on *Elvis & Nixon*. I'm sure he's suffering, and I'm not sure if anyone's reaching out to him. Those guys, Kevin and Harvey and all the rest of them who've been accused, they're like untouchables now. They may deserve it; they may not deserve it. I don't know. But I wonder what's going on in their heads.
PLAYBOY: It's not all that different from how you approach your characters.
SHANNON: Yeah. I can't help it. A lot of what I do is empathy. That's what I do. I have empathy for other people. That's how I make a living. I try to see things from other people's points of view.
PLAYBOY: Does it make you more aware or sensitive to human suffering? Can you look across a crowded restaurant and say, "Oh yeah, that person over there, they're in pain"?
SHANNON: I don't know if I'm super clairvoyant that way. [*scans the room*] All these people seem so much happier than I am. Why is that?
PLAYBOY: That might change if they suddenly noticed a creepy guy with a mustache staring at them from across the room.
SHANNON: As he eats charred pig hearts. [*pops another heart into his mouth*]
PLAYBOY: Do you think the world's in trouble?
SHANNON: There are a lot of things happening right now that I find deeply unsettling and upsetting. I'm primarily worried about what's happening with the EPA. I think the environmental issues are paramount. If you can't breathe, who gives a shit about anything else? And then the thing that kills me is they get philanthropic with the money. They make all this money destroying shit, and then they give it away. The Koch ballet theater at Lincoln Center in New York is named after one of the Koch brothers.
PLAYBOY: Didn't you meet a Koch brother once?
SHANNON: Yeah. It was at the *Great Gatsby* premiere in New York. I think it was the more docile of the two. Someone introduced us, and he kind of looked frightened, actually. He looked like a deer in headlights. He was surrounded by artists. I didn't know enough at the time to punch him in his face, but I knew enough to be slightly horrified that we had shaken hands.
PLAYBOY: If you could go back and do it again, would you say something to him or actually punch him in the face?
SHANNON: What could I say? The thing is, he knows how terrible he is. If I said, "You know, what you're doing is not very nice," it's not like he would say, "Really? I didn't know that! This is such a surprise. If somebody would've told me, I would've stopped." He knows. They all know what they're doing.
PLAYBOY: You predicted that Trump was going to win long before it happened.
SHANNON: I did?
PLAYBOY: In an interview for the *Chicago Tribune* in September 2015, you said, "He's going to win the election."
SHANNON: Well, sure. It had to happen. And here's the thing: I think it would've been a disaster either way. If Hillary had won, the shit would've hit the fan in a totally different way. There might have been a civil war or something crazy.
PLAYBOY: You really think that?
SHANNON: Well, they've got all the guns, apparently. For some of these people, the feeling about Hillary was kind of "Over my dead body." Well, now they've got their dream president, and they can see how that's worked out for us. A lot of them are still sticking to their guns, saying he's doing a good job. It's mystifying to me.
PLAYBOY: Do you think their minds can be changed?
SHANNON: Somebody who thinks Trump is doing a good job, there's no conversation to have with that person. I know they say you should reach across the aisle and all that crap, but to me it feels like putting your hand into a fan.
PLAYBOY: If or when they make a movie about the Trump presidency, who would you want to play?

How is Trump suffering? He's having a blast! Are you fucking kidding me?

SHANNON: Obviously I would be John Bolton, because of my mustache. No, I don't know. I honestly don't think I'd want to be in a movie about this administration. I wouldn't want anyone to make a movie about it. My preference would be that it just fade into nonexistence. I wouldn't want to memorialize it or celebrate it in any way.
PLAYBOY: Even if the film were critical?
SHANNON: It wouldn't matter. People feel the way they feel about Trump and his coconspirators. It's like what I said about the Koch brothers: People know what's happening, and they feel one way or the other about it, and nothing you do is going to change that.
PLAYBOY: There's no part of you that would want to play Donald Trump?
SHANNON: No.
PLAYBOY: Just to get inside his head? You talked about being fascinated with bad men who are suffering.
SHANNON: How do you mean? How is he suffering?
PLAYBOY: You don't think Trump struggles with demons?
SHANNON: He's having a blast! Are you fucking kidding me? That guy is having so much fun.
PLAYBOY: And there's no self-doubt or fear?
SHANNON: He's having the time of his fucking life. He doesn't even have to work. All the hard work that most people have to do to get to be president of the United States, he just skipped all that. The fucking guy doesn't even know what's in the Constitution. He doesn't have any grasp of history or politics or law or anything. He's just blindfolded, throwing darts at the side of a bus.
PLAYBOY: So Trump is where your capacity for empathy ends?
SHANNON: What is there to be empathetic toward?
PLAYBOY: What do you think is going through his head at four A.M. as he's lying in bed and staring at the ceiling?
SHANNON: He's probably thinking, I want some fucking pussy. I don't know. I'm not going to remotely contemplate the notion that Trump is capable of deep reflection.
PLAYBOY: In any form?
SHANNON: In any form! It doesn't happen. Fuck that guy. When he's alone with his thoughts, he's not capable of anything more complex than "I want some pussy and a cheeseburger. Maybe my wife will blow me if I tell her she's pretty."
PLAYBOY: You really don't think if you made a movie about Trump, as you perceive him to be, that it would make any difference?
SHANNON: Probably not, no. People believe what they believe. I do believe in the arts' capacity to make people think. I believe that happens. Not all the time but most of the time.



PLAYBOY: What was the last movie that changed you or made you think about something in unexpected ways?
SHANNON: For an actor this is going to sound terrible, but a lot of times it's documentaries that do that to me.
PLAYBOY: Why is that?
SHANNON: The truth is much more interesting than fiction. When I'm in a movie about actual events, there's a terrible process where people take something that's intrinsically interesting and don't have enough faith in it to just leave it alone. So they mess with it, thinking they're making it more compelling, which inevitably doesn't happen. But in documentaries that's never going to happen. You have the real story, and you either care or you don't.
PLAYBOY: Do you go back and watch any of your movies, studying your plays like a quarterback?
SHANNON: No. I approach it the way I think Bob Dylan does. The past is the past, you know? He doesn't sit around listening to *Blonde on Blonde*. He could listen to it and think, Man, I did this; that thin, wild mercury sound is just so cool. But he doesn't. The tricky thing about acting is that the longer you do it, the more difficult it gets.
PLAYBOY: And yet you've spawned your own verb: *Shannoning*.
SHANNON: That has absolutely nothing to do with me. I did not originate that term. I don't even necessarily agree with it.
PLAYBOY: It came from Octavia Spencer, who acted with you in *The Shape of Water*. According to her, you had a reputation for nailing a scene in one take.
SHANNON: I don't know if that's true.
PLAYBOY: It was true enough for her that she created the word *Shannoning* to describe getting something so right the first time that you don't need to do it again.
SHANNON: But I never want to do just one take. I always want to do more. I guess sometimes what I do on the first take is plenty sufficient.
PLAYBOY: It seems like you tend to avoid overanalyzing or over-rehearsing a scene. You just want to do it and see what happens.
SHANNON: That is true. I do have a loathing for that kind of navel-gazing. I think a lot of times people are stalling when they do that. They're trying to make it less scary or something. But to me, it kills the moment. You don't have to know the answer to every question. That's not how life works. You and me sitting here, we're talking, and we don't necessarily know what the fuck we're doing. We're just winging it. And that's how life is.
PLAYBOY: And it's how you want acting to be?
SHANNON: Everyone wants it to be "This line means this and this moment means this." I'm comfortable not knowing what things mean. I don't feel that's my job, to know what things mean.
PLAYBOY: In terms of the story or the character you're playing?
SHANNON: All of it. Certainly the story. People always ask me, "What do you hope audiences will take away from this?" I don't mean to be rude, but are you really asking me that question? If I answer that, why would they need to watch the thing in the first place? They could just get my answer. For me, it's more experiential. It's about having an experience and realizing you have limited control over what that experience becomes.
PLAYBOY: You want that in your career and your life?
SHANNON: It's certainly the way I've lived my life. If I had some sort of plan, I wouldn't be here right now.
PLAYBOY: When you were 15, did you have any thoughts about your future?
SHANNON: At 15 I was living moment to moment. I wouldn't even have been interested in discussing my future. I knew I loved acting. When I started acting in Chicago, I loved it so much. You know; you were there. I would do anything. Anything, anywhere.
PLAYBOY: Nobody was more committed than you.
SHANNON: But I wasn't thinking that maybe one day this will lead to something. I was fortunate; I got some help from my dad when I really needed it. I had a safety net, which gave me the opportunity to have that attitude.
PLAYBOY: He gave you financial help?
SHANNON: There were times when, if I was really crashing and burning, he would bail me out. Which he could do, because he was a professor and they do all right.
PLAYBOY: There were rumors that when you started out you were sleeping in the park.
SHANNON: That paints a picture I'm not entirely comfortable with. I know Tracy Letts gets mad when I say that, because he's the one who put it out there. If and when that happened, it was very sporadic. I was not someone who needed to be worried about.
PLAYBOY: Did a part of you know it would all work out?
SHANNON: I didn't know anything. I was ambitious but only to an extent. I didn't move out to L.A. and put my head shot on everyone's windshield. I had no interest in leaving Chicago. People would move to L.A. or New York, and I thought they were crazy. I was having so much fun in Chicago. I knew if you moved to New York or L.A., scary things happened, like nobody hired you or you had to work some terrible day job.
PLAYBOY: That doesn't happen in Chicago?
SHANNON: Well, okay, people had to work terrible day jobs in Chicago, but at least on the weekends you could go act in a play and tell a story and feel like you were exercising that part of yourself. I'll never forget when I went to L.A. once and saw these four actors I had tremendous respect for in Chicago, and they were all delivering pizzas. They were all in a parking lot, playing hacky sack and waiting for pizza delivery orders. I thought, This just isn't right.
PLAYBOY: You got into acting because you didn't want to play sports, right?
SHANNON: I was not an athlete, and I wanted something to do after school. I was living with my mom, down in Kentucky. They had a bulletin board at school with various activities, and one of them was speech team. That's how the whole thing started.
PLAYBOY: You did a monologue about boogers.
SHANNON: It's called "Booger Days," from *Lake Wobegon Days* by Garrison Keillor.
PLAYBOY: Did you know right away, "This is what I should be doing with my life"?
SHANNON: No. It wasn't like some woozy fever dream. It was just, This is kind of interesting. Some people know as soon as they're old enough to be conscious of themselves that they want to be actors. I had other thoughts about what I might end up doing.
PLAYBOY: Like what?
SHANNON: I thought architecture was interesting. And I always loved music. I played bass in the orchestra.
PLAYBOY: You still play in a band, right? Corporal.
SHANNON: Yeah, but it's hard to make a living from music. There are people who have devoted their whole lives to making music who don't make any money.
PLAYBOY: You skipped the Golden Globes ceremony earlier this year to sing Iggy Pop songs for a David Bowie tribute in Chicago. That sure sounds like a guy who'd rather be rocking than hanging out with actors.
SHANNON: I did five songs as my feeble

I do believe in the arts' capacity to make people think, most of the time.

version of Iggy Pop, and when I came off the stage I felt like I was going to die. The real Iggy Pop does this for two hours a night on tour.

PLAYBOY: And he's in his 70s.

SHANNON: Right! I can't do that. My friend Matt Walker, who was drumming with us that night, told me a story about Iggy. Matt is Morrissey's drummer and goes on tour with him. Morrissey did a co-headlining thing with Iggy Pop at some sort of music festival, and Matt was watching from the wings. Iggy killed it, as he always does, because he's Iggy fucking Pop. After the show, these two guys had Iggy's arms around their shoulders and were dragging him back to the green room. Iggy was just depleted. He had nothing left.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever felt like that, utterly depleted, after an acting performance?

SHANNON: When I do theater. Doing eight shows a week is an adjustment. In Chicago we were lucky to get two shows a week. But when I came to New York and started doing *Killer Joe* and *Bug,* that was eight shows a week, two on Saturday and two on Sunday. Between the Sunday matinee and the night show, I was usually like, "Please Lord, I can't do this anymore. I can't." I'd be on the floor in the fetal position, listening to Radiohead, losing my mind.

PLAYBOY: Doing a film isn't as exhausting?

SHANNON: People have a tendency to overreact in this business. They act like coming to a set and sitting around a trailer all day is hard work. It can be tedious sometimes, but it's not torture. Compared to, like, a Syrian refugee, our life is not that brutal. Actors can be babies.

PLAYBOY: Your parents sent you to therapy as a kid.

SHANNON: My dad did, yeah. But that was unrelated to acting in any way, shape or form.

PLAYBOY: What was it related to?

SHANNON: I had been jostled about a fair amount in my childhood, back and forth. I was feeling a little discombobulated. It wasn't like I was hearing voices or anything.

PLAYBOY: But you did apparently trash your therapist's office once.

SHANNON: Well, yeah, but I don't think that's the makings of any thrilling saga. There are children doing that as we speak. There are children being unruly and unwieldy and expressing themselves in outlandish ways all over the city of New York at this exact moment.

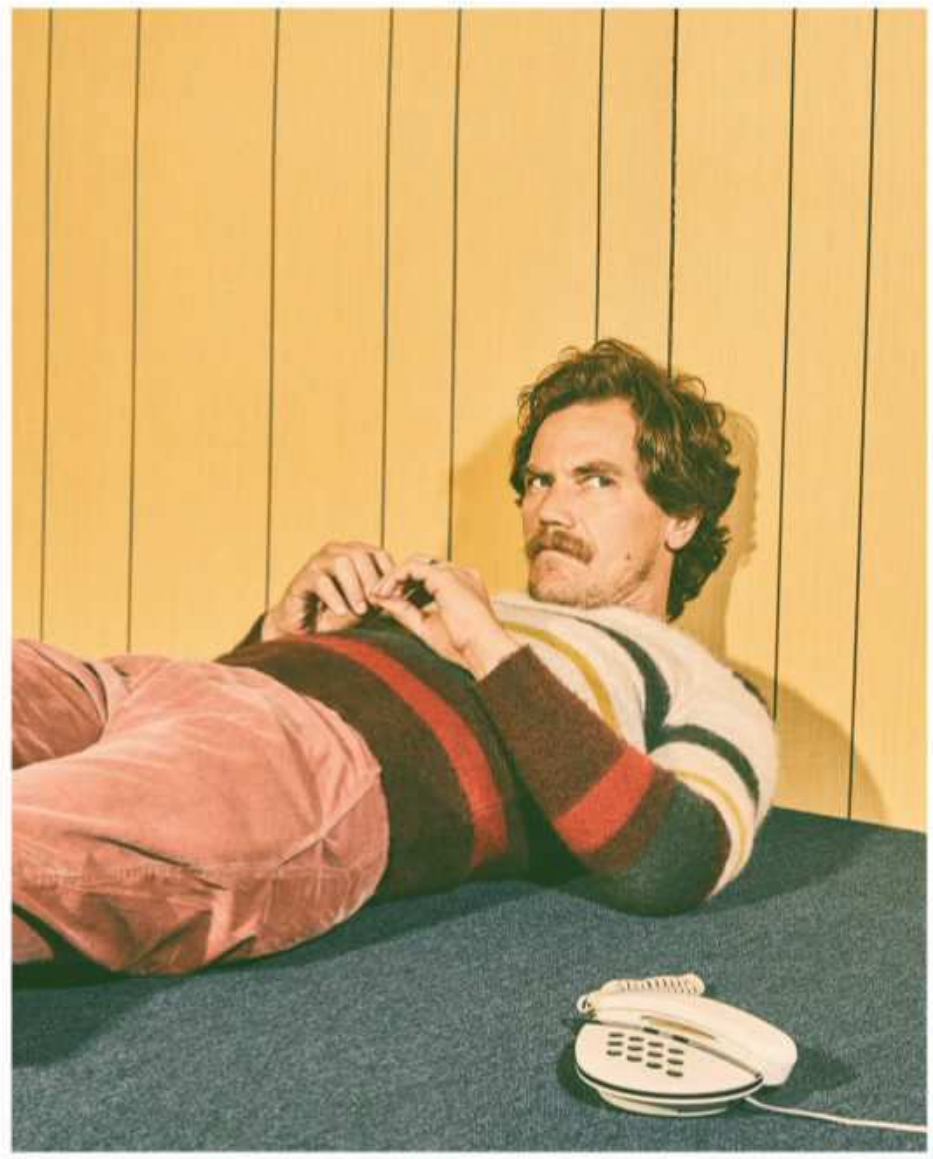
PLAYBOY: Have you ever tapped into that adolescent anger in one of your roles?

SHANNON: Not really, no. It was such a long time ago. I'm nothing like that anymore. I'm a totally different person.

PLAYBOY: I don't mean for you. I mean if you're playing a character with a lot of anger, do you draw on memories of your own anger as a teen?

SHANNON: Never. I rely on my consciousness, and my consciousness is composed of all my life experiences. I'm sure something akin to what you're describing takes place, but do I sit down and say, "Oh, this scene in *What They Had* is like the time I got fired from Homer's Ice Cream for throwing a pickle at a customer"? No, I don't do that.

PLAYBOY: So when it's over, you just clock out like it's any other job?



SHANNON: It's not about emotions for me—at least not anymore. Maybe in the beginning, when I was a kid, it was more of that. "I'm going to express my emotions all over the place! All over you!" It's really not about that anymore for me. Now it's just about asking, What's the story? What is this about? What does it mean? What could it mean potentially?

PLAYBOY: That sounds so cold and analytical.

SHANNON: It's much more analytical. I don't think acting is ultimately a good way to deal with your own emotions.

PLAYBOY: There's a scene in *What They Had* where your character is crying over the death of his father.

SHANNON: Well, okay, okay.

PLAYBOY: Your own dad passed away, so I thought maybe——

SHANNON: Fine, yes, that's one rare instance when I do bring myself into it. Of course you want to think about the people you love who you've lost if you're portraying that on camera. But when it's over, when the director says "Cut," I get up and go get a cup of coffee. I don't stay there on the sidewalk, wailing and rolling around on my back. I think about it enough to tell that particular beat, to accomplish that scene, and then when it's over I get up and walk away.

PLAYBOY: Is acting satisfying to you?

SHANNON: Most days it can be. And some days when you're working it's just, "I want to go home. I want to get the fuck out of here." But that's like anybody. [*pauses*] I remember one time I was doing a play at the Public Theater in New York, *The Little Flower of East Orange,* and Philip Seymour Hoffman was directing. The main prop in the play was a hospital bed, because my character's mother, who was played by Ellen Burstyn, was in the hospital. We had this bed in the rehearsal room. One day we took a lunch break and everybody split, but I didn't typically go anywhere for lunch; I'd just look at my script out in the hallway. So I'm out there, and I walk back into the rehearsal hall, and Phil is there all by himself. He's just lying on the hospital bed in the middle of the room, staring at the ceiling. I walk up to him and I'm like, "Are you okay?" He just kind of blinks. And finally he says, "You know, Shannon, one day you're going to know what I'm feeling right now."

PLAYBOY: What did you say?

SHANNON: I didn't know what to say, but in my head I was like, Shit. Then he says to me, "Sometimes I wish I could change my name and just drive away and go work in a gas station somewhere, where nobody knows who I am. Just disappear."

PLAYBOY: Why do you think he needed that?

SHANNON: You get to a certain point, like he did, and everybody wants something from you. People loved Phil. Everyone was like, "Phil, Phil, Phil, we need Phil!" I think he just felt overwhelmed. When he told me about wanting to disappear, I imagine he'd probably just gotten off the phone with his agent and there were like 10 offers pending. "Have you read this script? What do you think about that? I really think you should do this." Meanwhile

he's trying to direct this play his friend wrote. You can't even have the experience you're having right now because somebody is constantly asking what you want to do a month from now.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel the same way?

SHANNON: People ask me, "Don't you ever say no?" Yeah, I say no all the fucking time. If I wanted, every minute of my life could be accounted for. My next three years could be totally booked up. And then you're just crossing shit off a list. It sounds obnoxious to complain about that, because isn't it the dream? But some days you just want to have a cup of coffee and go for a walk. You don't want to go to the set and do the scene where the thing blows up or your dad dies or whatever. You just want to hang out. [*pauses and stares out window*] It's certainly not the way it used to be. I've had a lot of really good, worthwhile experiences. But you get tired. I don't know how long I can keep doing it.

PLAYBOY: What do you do when you get tired?

SHANNON: I try to take breaks. There were a couple of years when it kind of got out of control. I was going from one thing to the next. But it's not so bad now. The work is demanding, but the part where you're not working is demanding too. The part where you're just a dad and you're taking the kids to school and doing the dishes and washing the laundry and cleaning the litter box and taking out the garbage. They're both demanding. They're demanding in different ways, but they're both demanding. I still get rejuvenated by being at home.

PLAYBOY: Would you ever quit acting?

SHANNON: I don't know. It scares me because it's my job, and I have responsibilities. If I quit, I'm not exactly sure how I would make a living. Sometimes I think we should just stop making movies altogether. Not only me, the whole industry.

PLAYBOY: Stop making movies entirely?

SHANNON: I think we'd all be better off. It's distracting us from stuff we really need to be dealing with. No matter what kind of movie you make, it's ultimately an escape. That's what movies are: an escape.

PLAYBOY: People would still be staring at their phones.

SHANNON: Yeah, that's true. I don't know what to do about that.

PLAYBOY: You're not on Twitter, Facebook, any of it.

SHANNON: I don't do social media. I wish I could say it's hard for me to restrain myself, but it's not. I don't understand people's fascination with it. I wish I could claim it was some sort of heroic gesture on my part, but I'm simply not interested. Who fucking cares?

PLAYBOY: I notice you've upgraded from your usual flip phone.

SHANNON: I literally couldn't get a flip phone. My provider wouldn't give me one, so I had to get this. [*picks his iPhone up off the table like it's a turd*] But honestly, it doesn't fucking matter. I use it the same way I use the flip phone. If I need to make a call or text somebody, I do that. But I don't get internet on this. I don't have wi-fi. I can't get e-mails. I don't have games. Until I met Kate, I didn't have a cell phone. It used to be if you wanted to get hold of me, you had to call Red Orchid. When my girlfriend before Kate and I broke up, she left this nasty message on the answering machine at Red Orchid about my stinky feet. That was a little embarrassing.

PLAYBOY: Were your feet the reason the relationship didn't work?

SHANNON: No, she was just mad at me. I'd broken up with her. It was fated to end, let's put it that way. Ultimately she was angry and had to get in one more dig at me. My point is, when Kate and I started seeing each other, she asked me if I would get a cell phone, and I did. And that was that.

Sometimes I think we should just stop making movies altogether.

PLAYBOY: You've been with Kate since 2006.

SHANNON: It's the longest relationship I've had in my life.

PLAYBOY: Did you think you'd make it this long?

SHANNON: It's not anything I'd ever envisioned for myself, but here it is.

PLAYBOY: You didn't grow up with good marriage role models. Both of your parents got married five times.

SHANNON: I don't think there's any guarantee, just because your folks stayed married for 70 years, that you're going to know what the fuck to do with another human being. You're not them, and they're not you. You don't have to be like your parents. It's such an arbitrary thing, how and why relationships work. You could get all the lessons you want, but that doesn't mean you won't fuck it up somehow. I guess I learned a little of what not to do. My mom married people and tried to fix them. That's never a good idea. My dad figured it out on his last go-around. He was with his last wife until he passed away, and she's still very much a part of my life. She's a sweet woman. She's coming to New York this weekend to watch the kids.

PLAYBOY: Other than getting a cell phone, did you change at all for Kate?

SHANNON: I've had to change a little bit here and there. [*pauses*] I bought a house. That was a big change for me.

PLAYBOY: You didn't want to own property?

SHANNON: We have a place in Chicago, but buying in Red Hook was something we just avoided. It was mostly on me.

PLAYBOY: What made you change your mind?

SHANNON: We would look at houses from time to time because my wife really wanted to get a house. We'd go on these spurts of looking at 10 or 15 different houses, and I'd be like, "I don't want to get any of these." They would go away, a year would go by, and then she'd get obsessed again. I'd be like, "Nope, I don't like any of these." I just thought I could keep her at bay indefinitely.

PLAYBOY: What didn't you like about the houses?

SHANNON: I don't know. It was just a feeling. When I walked into them, I was always like, "This isn't my house. Someone else lives here."

PLAYBOY: You know the other people move out when you buy it, right?

SHANNON: It just feels weird. It gives me the heebie-jeebies.

PLAYBOY: What made you feel okay with the house you eventually bought?

SHANNON: I don't know. I walked in and just immediately felt, Oh, okay, I could live here.

PLAYBOY: How did you become a parent?

SHANNON: Are you honestly asking me that question? Come on, we all know how it works. This is PLAYBOY, for Christ's sake.

PLAYBOY: I don't mean the fun part. How did you make the decision? Was it like getting a house? You avoid and avoid and avoid, and one day it inexplicably feels okay to make that leap.

SHANNON: It was not... How do I talk about this? We weren't... It just... We rolled with the punches, let's put it like that.

PLAYBOY: Ah. There were no "Are we ready?" conversations?

SHANNON: No.

PLAYBOY: So you Shannoned it?

SHANNON: [*Laughs*] I guess I did.

PLAYBOY: If there's a common thread running through your life and career, it sounds like your philosophy is "Let's not plan for anything; we'll just figure it out as we go."

SHANNON: That's it, man. You hit the nail on the head. People ask me what my five-year plan is, what projects I want to do. I don't think that way. It's how I've always been. It's the way I'm capable of coping with existence—with the fact that I'm alive. ■

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KATHERINE

HOMEC

VERITY

NATASHA

With the help of five extraordinary undergrads, we proudly reintroduce our annual college pictorial

COMING

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRISTOPHER VON STEINBACH**

"The only thing that is constant is change." Attributed to Heraclitus, a Greek thinker who walked the earth around 500 B.C.E., that sentiment is more astute than ever in our warp-speed era. It's also the kind of thing an undergrad might pick up in a philosophy course—which is significant because the women on the following pages are all college students, not professional models.

In the magazine's long tradition of college pictorials, this one represents many firsts. It's the first time we've brought all the models together for the photo shoot, the first time the women spent days getting to know one another before stepping into the studio and the first time the pictorial was cast via social media, without middlemen of any kind.

Out of a deluge of applications, we selected just five undergraduates, all as ambitious and intelligent as they are beautiful. They're something else too: complete naturals in front of the camera. Of course, these women are digital natives, having grown up with the internet at their fingertips and camera phones in their pockets. Social media and selfies were part of their coming of age; savvy personal branding is second nature to them. Make no mistake—they're in charge of their presentation and their sexuality. They're young, yes, but self-assured beyond their years.

Before photographer Christopher von Steinbach uncapped his lens, Playmate Editor Anna del Gaizo treated these women to two days of L.A. life at its dreamy best. Flying in from all over the country, they thought they were in for sun, sand and surf. They were right—they certainly hit the beach and boardwalk in Venice—but had no idea that on their second night out they'd end up partying with Drake at a swanky West Hollywood restaurant.

"It was the best first experience of any city I've ever had," says Samantha Fernandez. A psychology major, Samantha pushes back at the notion that women should hide their innate beauty. "Sexuality is something everybody has. I encourage women to do whatever they want, with no shame involved."

As her new friend Verity Miller says, "If an intelligent, educated woman shows strength and power, that *is* sexy." Change is indeed constant, but that truth remains, clearer than ever.

Ladies and gentlemen, without further ado, allow us to introduce the class of 2018.

KATHERINE SINGLETON

▼

University of Houston
Major: Marketing
Class of 2021

My passion: I love fashion and graphic design. Art is a big part of my life. I'm studying marketing and minoring in creative work so I can invest in my designs and bring them to life someday.
Stay chill: Meditating frees my mind from stress and allows me to connect more with my work. I also try to be mindful and thoughtful with whatever I do so I'm prepared for that "next step."
What I want: I try to steer clear of on-campus dating—everyone knows everyone. I'm attracted to a bright personality and a great sense of humor. And displaying a dedication to something is very alluring—hard work always pays off!

SAMANTHA FERNANDEZ

Miami Dade College
Major: Psychology
Class of 2021

Mind reader: I've always been fascinated with what's inside people's heads. I'm considering going for my doctorate in psychology. I intend to use my education to help others. I'd like to help patients get the right treatment.

Staying focused: I'm not dating much right now—I see it as a distraction. When I need to concentrate on papers or finals, I remind myself to think about the long term. Studying may be annoying, but it brings rewards in the end. I think it's important to give 100 percent in whatever I do.

Sexiness is: Myself! Just kidding—sort of. Sexiness is having the confidence to be cutthroat when it's necessary and to be soft and sweet the rest of the time.

DEVIN BENDER

▼

Florida State University
Major: Business Marketing
Class of 2020

Early bird: I'm the type of person who gets everything done as early as possible to avoid stress. In addition to school, I have a job, so I need to be responsible with my time. The trick to success in college is study, study, study!

Art and craft: Modeling is not just a skill; it's an art form. I love modeling and being myself in front of the camera. It's beautiful, fascinating—it is *life*.

Sell it: I've excelled at marketing since high school, and I love brand marketing. It's a field with so many opportunities. After I graduate I want to have a career in sales—right now I'm thinking I want to work in medical technology sales, because it's an area that's always evolving.

VERITY MILLER

▼

West Virginia University
Major: Multidisciplinary Studies
Class of 2021

Quick learner: My major is perfect for me. I'm studying all the different fields I need to master—fashion merchandising, public relations, advertising and strategic social media—in order to build my dream career.
Outside class: I'm very social. I love to meet new people and spend time with friends and my boyfriend. I also travel, model and work out a lot.
Postcollege plans: My goal is to start my own clothing line that helps women feel strong and sexy. I want to promote the idea that the human body is nothing to fear or to hide. Every single body is beautiful!

NATASHA EKLOVE

▼

Arizona State University
Major: Anthropology
Class of 2019

Staying on target: I need to keep focused, so I go out only on weekends now. Weeknights out weren't working for me—I didn't get anything done the next day.
Me and you: I'm a free thinker and an open-minded person, and I'm always trying to learn new things. What's most attractive to me is someone who's confident—confidence is everything.
Goals: I decided to study anthropology because human evolution has always interested me. As an anthropologist, I want to travel the world and learn about other cultures.


DOLCE&GABBANA

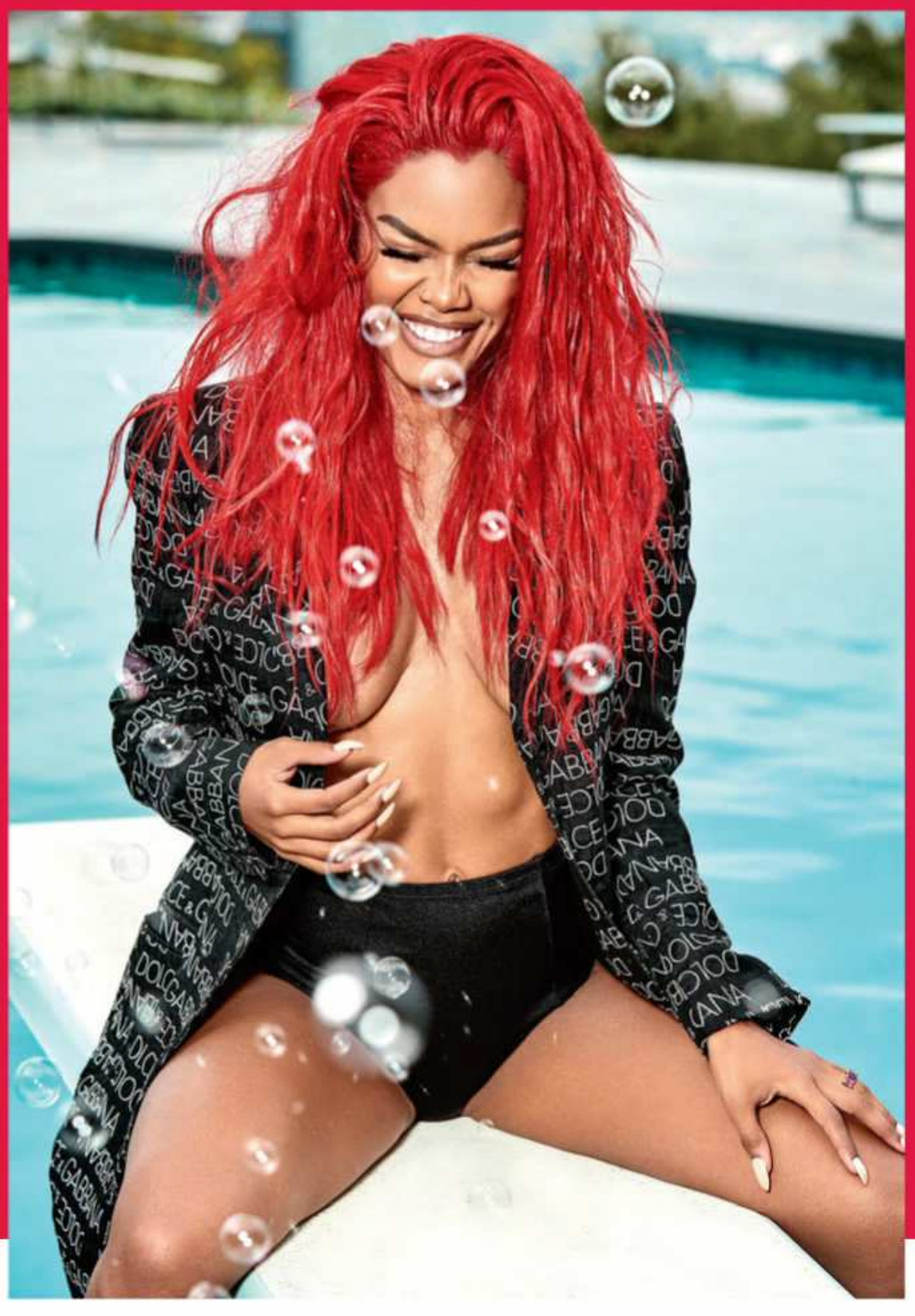
More than moves

BY **REBECCA HAITHCOAT**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BEN WATTS**

With her second album, the multihyphenate ***Teyana Taylor*** *proves her ferocious gifts on the mike. But is the world ready to accept her as a pop star?*

Teyana Taylor really wants pizza. Per a request filtered through her press team, towers of grease-splotched cardboard boxes are delivered to a mansion perched in the hills of Laurel Canyon. One of Taylor's assistants-slash-friends hurries through a throng of photographers, handlers and hangers-on with a few boxes for Taylor, who is sequestered in a small bedroom that can barely contain her stuff. Occasionally she'll erupt into a "*Haaa!*" when another friend, flipping through a playlist, lands on a particular track. Mostly, though, Taylor is brisk and businesslike, despite having her singular frame, somehow sinewy and voluptuous all at once, clad in a barely there bikini—the sort of ensemble that would prompt most women to sigh and choose a diet soda over a couple of slices.



But Taylor is not most women. "I've had this six-pack since I was, like, six," the 27-year-old says. "I was like a Ninja Turtle." She elicited gasps—and more than 100 million YouTube views—when she appeared oil-slicked and fitness-model shredded in Kanye West's 2016 video for "Fade" just eight months after giving birth to her first child with husband Iman Shumpert. With no formal dance or vocal training, she signed with Pharrell Williams's Star Trak label, choreographed Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" video and popped in Jay-Z's video for "Blue Magic" before she could even vote. And when *VII,* her gutsy 2014 major-label debut on West's G.O.O.D. Music, performed miserably after myriad delays, she cried—but she didn't crumble.

"Everybody knows, as far as the music side, it's been a long journey for me—which it has been for any person who's great in the industry," Taylor says, shaking out her popsicle-red hair as she unself-consciously strips and steps into some sweats. Up close, her face is as sculptural and her skin as flawless as photos depict, but everybody else seems to care about her looks more than she does. She's still no-nonsense, but with her tummy full and her PLAYBOY shoot wrapped, she's smiling more easily. The more she talks, the clearer the sense that she still has something to prove—and that music is how she'll prove it. "I definitely feel overwhelmed sometimes because I'm doing so much to occupy my mind from the things that are not quite happening the way I want or need them to happen," she says. "The other 100 things that I do are just until it comes to fruition."

That lengthy to-do list currently includes touring with Jeremih, opening a nail salon in her native Harlem, collaborating with various clothing and sneaker brands, and starring in the Netflix film *The After Party,* the BET series *Hit the Floor* and the movie *The Trap.* In June, she finally released her long-overdue sophomore effort, the entirely Kanye West–produced *K.T.S.E. (Keep That Same Energy),* much to the relief of her fans, and herself.

But on this afternoon in the hills, the album is still under wraps. "Once this music is out, I might really consider that I've done damn near everything I've ever wanted to do," she says.

A trace of Harlem lingers in Taylor's voice, the elasticity of her native New Yorker's speech patterns turning her sentences muscular. But anytime she talks about her music, an ever so slight hesitation slows her replies. Her career as a singer has been so long delayed—and so clearly longed for by her—it's as if she doesn't quite believe it will materialize. As if talking about it might scare it back into the shadows.

• • •

An hour earlier, wearing skyscraper Lucite heels and edging dangerously close to the pool, Taylor is arching into a backbend. Her friends-assistants gasp as images of sopping red hair and ruined makeup flash before their eyes. Taylor, on the other hand, seems unconcerned about any possible catastrophe. That's the way she's been her whole life.

Growing up, she was a tomboy and a daredevil. Her mother, who is also her longtime manager, homeschooled her. An only child, on her mother's side at least, she made friends in the neighborhood and quickly became the de facto leader of a squad that skateboarded and rode BMX bikes all over Harlem. All big hair, bold fashion sense and bravado (she remembers attempting handstands on her board), she naturally stood out.

"I'M GOING TO BE A STRONG WOMAN WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO GET WHERE I WANTED TO BE."

"I have a leader vibe about me," she says. "Because I was homeschooled, I had no choice but to raise my hand even if I didn't want to. But I was fearless—pure, raw. I would see groups of people dancing, and instead of joining in, I would actually want to make up the moves. I've always been a person that wants not just to do it; I want to *be* it."

She loved singing along with Aaliyah and mimicking Michael and Janet Jackson's dance moves. Hints of her husky, richly textured voice were already evident, so she joined a group called the Sunshine Girls. They would sing on subways and ferries, and soon they were winning talent contests at the famed Apollo Theater. Still, she was not the stereotypical child star with a pushy stage mom.

"I wasn't one of those kids that was in the studio 24/7," she says. "Harlem is so small and has so many talented people that we'd all just sing and dance and rap. I never looked at it as a way to get signed."

But an industry friend of her mom's did. Catching Taylor riding by herself one day, he swept her up and took her to a recording studio. "I didn't have no bio, no demo, no nothing. I just went with my skateboard," she says, chuckling. "Sassy, just sassy."

As she sang and rapped her heart out, she suspected she was serious about making music her career. When she later met Pharrell Williams, who was curious to meet the Harlem kid everybody kept telling him was the "female version" of him, he instructed her to stop skating for fear of broken bones. Acquiescing, she *knew* she was serious.

• • •

Given the fairy tale nature of her rise, few could have fathomed that, more than a decade later, Taylor would still be waiting to break out. But New Yorkers have a gift for spotting potholes in the yellow brick road.

"Being in the business of this dirty, dirty game, I had to grow up pretty fast," she says. "You gotta be careful. You got to know what's going on, because some people are intimidated that you know too much at a young age." She pauses, briefly turning inward, and then adds, "Patience has been my biggest challenge. There's times where I'd just be laying in bed, crying. I'd been doing this for so many years and it was just not happening."

It's strangely reassuring to hear that Taylor, a woman whose most striking feature may be the fierce self-confidence radiating from her center, harbors doubts too. But everybody is vulnerable to expectations, and multiple music magnates told her she was the next big thing at an age when most of us have only our moms boosting our self-esteem. Her split with Williams in 2012 was amicable, but in interviews she expressed frustration that, six years after signing, she still didn't feel she'd had the chance to prove her talent. After releasing a well-reviewed mixtape at the top of 2012, she brokered a joint venture with G.O.O.D. Music and Def Jam. *VII* sold fewer than 25,000 copies, partly because of poor promotion. Low sales usually lead to scared labels and delayed projects. It's a domino effect.

Taylor doesn't shy away from these details. If you listen to "Rose in Harlem," her favorite track on *K.T.S.E.,* the struggle's all there:

Been through more than a lil' bit…
I been down, I been loyal
When you really hold it down
Niggas ain't even really down for ya
Oh no, what a shame
Ten years in the game
Niggas like, "You ain't hot? You ain't pop yet?
What's up with you and Ye?"

Ultimately, it was Junie, her two-year-old with Shumpert, who lifted her out of the slump. "She'd be like, 'Mommy, what's wrong? Don't cry.' And I'm like, 'You right. I'm happy. I got you. I have my wonderful husband. Life could be much worse,' " she says. Still, the stalling vexed her.

No wonder. Although it was the least hyped installment in West's so-called "Wyoming sessions"—a series of five Ye-produced albums by G.O.O.D. signees—the sensuous *K.T.S.E.* is in the top two. Taylor's voice drips luxuriously over West's sunset-hued soul samples. (The exception is the electro-twerked "WTP," which takes its inspiration from the drag-ball culture birthed in Harlem.) Ripe for late-night, between-the-sheets spins, *K.T.S.E.*'s main problem is that there isn't enough of it.

But Taylor made sure all eight songs say exactly what she intended. "That's the beauty of working with someone like Kanye: He gets how creative people work. I would never let someone tell me, 'This is what you're going to sing today.' " She laughs. "That's the Karl Lagerfeld in me. I got to grab the camera myself, because you don't see what I see, baby. I need you to be able to *feel* me. I need you to be able to touch me."

Of course, a woman who asserts herself like that in a dick-centric industry is bound to be branded with another *D* word: *difficult*. It's a charge Taylor promptly shoots down.

"I'm not difficult; I'm just not willing to belittle myself—to settle," she says. "I'm going to have self-respect. I'm going to be a strong woman all across the board whether you like it or not. Maybe that's why it took me so long to get where I wanted to be. I was never willing to be what someone else wanted." Her face takes on a mischievous cast. "Hey, if we don't bust it wide open, there ain't gonna be no you! So put some respect on that capital *W* in *Woman*. Wo-*man*."

The day of this interview, Taylor seems flush with giddiness over finally letting *K.T.S.E.* loose into the world, but its release, one week after our interview, is marred. Not only is it dropped a day late, it's also apparently not the project she hoped to share. As she explains on a subsequent press run, an updated version with various missing samples and interpolations will arrive a week later. When a fan on Twitter asks where the promised update is, Taylor's response sounds exasperated: "I guess we ain't getting one. Shit takes time. At this point I will leave album the way it is & will just debut the extended record thru my visuals."

Exasperated, that is, but not resigned. After all, Teyana Taylor has waited long enough. ■

Madrigal

FICTION BY **JOHN WRAY**

The day ends with a call from her insufferable brother. Insufferable when he calls, carping endlessly on about a portfolio of problems that anyone not living in the culture capital of the world would be grateful to have—Quaker schools and alternate-side parking and something actually called "mansion tax"—and even worse during those stretches of absolute radio silence in which it's obvious that he could take or leave the family altogether. He launches straight into his feud with Hunter Wagoner, the latest middle-aged white Southern writer whose Moment has proved slightly more extensive and sparkly than her brother's own Moment, but for the first time in more than 10 years of this unvarying, soul-killing rite of auto-pietà she cuts him off.

"I don't have time for this shit, Teddy."

"What's that?"

"You heard me. No more Hunter Wagoner."

"I feel the same way, Maddy. Believe me. The thing is, though, that's exactly what Hunter——"

"I could recite all the stuff you're about to tell me down to the tiniest, most piddling detail. I'm even pretty sure about the order."

"All right. Sure. I just——"

"I know that his book got on the cover of the *TBR* and yours didn't, even though his was just a story collection, and I know that everyone raves about the humor in his writing in spite of the fact that he's not actually funny, and I know that you once heard him hitting on a grad student at a party by telling her about the year he spent reading nothing but the New Testament, and I know that it worked. Can we skip to the part where I tell you that you have a better ear?"

A long silence. Change being registered.

"Okay."

"Okay."

"I was calling to ask about your new meds, actually. That's why I called. You're right about Wagoner. Fuck that guy up the ass."

She says nothing to that.

"Maddy? You there?"

"I'm not on any new meds."

He actually laughs. "There's probably some new term for them now, like Best Life Enablers, but you obviously know——"

"I'm not taking the Paxil anymore. I'm not taking the Zoloft. I'm just not taking them."

A more profound silence. Corroded gears turning.

"I was talking to Dad today, which is maybe another reason I called. He seemed kind of concerned."

"I know it's a cliché to say you never call," she tells him. "Or that you only call when you want something from me."

"You're right, Mads. That *is* a cliché."

"But you never call."

"How can you say that? Here we are——"

"Or you only call when you want something from me."

"I'm sorry, Maddy. I'm sorry. Okay? I love you very much. I love you and I'm worried about you. Are you yawning?"

"I love you too, Teddy."

"It's just—you're not always the easiest person to talk to, you know? And I'm not the easiest person."

"Somewhere on this planet is the easiest person to talk to," she finds herself saying. "But I'm pretty sure he doesn't live in Vicksburg."

"I'm going to go ahead and guess one of the tea-producing countries," says Teddy. "The betel-nut-chewing countries. Sri Lanka, maybe. Or Bangladesh."

"Okay," she says. "Okay. Bangladesh."

They've found common ground again, and she's grateful for that, because it means that she can end the conversation. She hangs up the phone, an ancient gray rotary, then crosses the kitchen to the jack and disconnects it.

She exhales slowly, feeling her shoulders go slack, standing motionless and barefoot in the middle of the room. She can hear the fridge buzzing. She feels surprised, as she often has before, by how much the sound soothes her. The buzzing grows fiercer, then settles, like a sleeping dog's breathing. She tries to remember the last time Teddy asked her about her own writing. Her Royal ML 100 Standard Electric is sitting where it always sits, on the ell at the end of the counter, but today there's actually a sheet of paper in it: a bright new sheet of yellow bond legal paper, eight and a half by 14. Legal paper is less intimidating, for some reason, although the opposite ought to be true.

She opens a beer and sits down at the counter.

The novel she'll write if she ever writes again, if she manages to have two thoughts that fit coherently together, will be set in a world of such near-perfect equivalence to ours that it will take the reader half the book to guess that something isn't right. The difference will make itself known in the most subtle of ways, largely through dialogue: slight quirks of the vernacular, as though the characters were speaking English as a second language. The marsh a woman's house looks out on is referred to as "a dampness," her car seems to run without fuel or electricity, and she tells her husband to hurry "because I don't have all the tea in China." The woman in question is called Madrigal, a common name in this alternate universe, and she works four days a week—as Maddy does

ILLUSTRATION BY **MARC BURCKHARDT**

herself—making cold calls for a collection agency out of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

It will be a great universe, Maddy tells herself. It will be the universe we actually deserve: one in which the innate tendency of events is not in the direction of entropy but of order, one in which bodies and relationships and plans and careers tend to not-turn-to-shit. But certain lives must still, on rare occasions, come to grief. Otherwise: no story.

Madrigal adores her job, her warm, supportive marriage and her picturesque commute—but for some time now she's sensed that something's off. Her work is deeply satisfying and her career prospects are rosy and her husband is attentive and obliging, but something is wrong, something gray and indefinable, that seems to radiate outward from the middle of her spine. Life is strangely unconvincing, the way the bewigged and costumed divas always seemed to her when her parents dragged her to the opera as a child. Beautiful but inhuman, inorganic, overacted. This is how Madeleine Wells's protagonist will see the world.

One evening Madrigal is driving home along the dampness in her blue cold-fusion hatchback, admiring the play of sunlight on the water, when a rush of emotion—an almost physical sensation, as if the wind were picking up—compels her to veer from what the navigation system cautions her, with condescending equanimity, to be the shortest distance home. The car comes hoveringly to rest against a wind-tossed bank of cattails. She leans forward, clutching the steering cone in panic, trying to make sense of what is happening to her. How many times, Madrigal asks herself, has she passed this particular bend in the road, this extraordinary, heartbreaking spot with its high bank of thatch? Was it always so excruciatingly scenic, so radiant with hidden meaning? And what has made her stop the car today?

Then, through a break in the cattails, Madrigal sees it.

She has no words for what she's seeing, no adequate points of comparison. She knows only that this is the answer, the key to the riddle, the reason she stopped. It rides low in the water, an oblong gray something, and when it dips its neck beneath the surface it might almost be mistaken for the back of some great snake or eel—but that's wrong again, it's nothing like either, it's simply that she has no frame of reference. A fish or a snake would have scales of some kind, would move quickly, would appear to have weight. This creature seems weightless. It's covered in what looks to be fabric, perhaps a kind of fur. Something under the water is propelling it forward, smoothly and unhurriedly, but from where she sits she sees no limbs at all. She presses her forehead to the windshield, afraid to roll down the window, afraid to fog the glass by letting out a breath.

The creature moves in fussy, aimless circles, indifferent to the idling car, and when its neck and foreparts catch the sun, Madrigal sees that her eyes have misled her: It's dark blue and ivory and rufous and silver. Its seemingly unbroken skin is in fact made up of overlapping segments, too many to count, fitted so precisely together that they appear a continuous whole. The creature does have scales, then—scales that catch and hold and even warp the light. Madrigal wipes at her eyes with her sleeve. She wants to push the door quietly open, to step into the damp brown grass in her bare feet, to wade into that tepid, reeking water.

She's just kicked off her work flats when a second creature glides into view, slighter and more darkly patterned than the first. A feeling close to envy overcomes her. She opens the door, more abruptly than she'd intended, and in that instant the event occurs that marks her.

The larger of the two seems to unfold itself, to clap itself open, to expand upward in some esoteric way. It becomes another form of life entirely, wider and brighter and more intricately shaped. It has arms now, or something resembling arms—gray, finlike appendages that taper off to nothing. Its companion unfolds itself as well, and together they seem to attack the water, to hack at its surface, then suddenly to leave it altogether. At first Madrigal's mind rejects what it is seeing. The water is breaking and heaving and rippling toward her. Never once has she seen this. They take to the air.

That night Madrigal is incapable of explaining to her husband what she has seen. He's used to being perplexed by her, and she's grown accustomed to his lack of understanding, but this is failure of a different magnitude. For once she's not trying to describe some diffuse, abstract emotion, but a tangible, visible, living, breathing creature. Living and breathing and flying.

The pair gave a cry just before they took flight—a choked-sounding warble, nothing at all like music. Madrigal struggles to describe the sound to her husband, does her best to imitate it in the comfort of their den, and although he's attentive and not the least annoyed it's obvious to her that he's baffled. Her husband tells her he's never seen her so frustrated, so angry, and he's absolutely right. She stands in a kind of boxer's stance between him and the TV, blocking his view of the flatscreen, shivering and weeping at the sight of him staring blandly up at her. It takes all her self-control to keep from kicking him in his well-intentioned pancake of a face.

That same night she sits down at her husband's outmoded desktop PC and starts searching. She's always been terrible at using search engines—the first keywords she enters are WATER + NO ARMS + DAMPNESS—but within 15 minutes she's found it. ANIMAL + WATER + LONG NECK + CHESTNUT FRONT + AIRBORNE. The creatures she saw flying were a pair of red-necked grebes.

So rare is this animal in the world she inhabits, and so perfect her exurban ignorance, that Madrigal learns the Linnaean classification of the red-necked grebe, *Podiceps rubricollis,* before she grasps that it's a kind of bird. The term itself is palely familiar—she remembers, now, a set of illustrations in an old clothbound book of her father's—but the only flying creatures she's encountered in her 37 years (most of them, admittedly, spent avoiding the outdoors) have been gnats. And houseflies, she corrects herself. And yellow jackets. Nothing like those two gray shapes dispensing with the earth.

She spends all night reading, clicking on link after link, progressing from *grebe* to *waterfowl* to *avifauna* to the minutiae of "bird topography," the grouping of feather types on the wing, primaries secondaries coverts scapulars mantle, and outward from there to molt cycles and distribution patterns and the past century's catastrophic cycles of extinction—feeling queasy by then, as if she's been watching pornography—and occasionally letting her forehead come to rest against the screen. Before dawn she happens on the field journals of a continental ornithologist, written sometime during the Second Global War, and on a whim decides that this is where her nightlong search will end. She prints a handful of pages and curls up on the sofa in the kitchen-living-dining module and starts to read.

The ornithologist, whose name is Benedikt Weisshaupt, is midway through an expedition to the Bosavi rain forest of Papua New Guinea in the first entry Madrigal reads. He seems to be in flight from something: from fascism, perhaps, or military service, or some more personal disgrace. He's come to this particular swath of trackless, parasite-infested jungle in search of a heretofore-unidentified species of bowerbird, known in the Bosavi language as "He-Who-Waits," endemic to the slopes of a nearby volcano.

"Does intense longing always lead one to extremes?" Weisshaupt asks at the close of the entry. "Perhaps only behind mosquito netting."

He petitions the Bosavi elders for a guide, a cook and an armed escort of seven men but finds them distinctly unimpressed with the anodized steel ax heads he is offering in exchange. He comes to the conclusion that the Bosavi have never encountered steel and is struggling to make clear to them its advantages over hardwood and stone, when a youth with "a corrupt, knowing smile" informs him that the ax heads on offer can be purchased at the Port Moresby depot for the price of half a bundle of tobacco. Weisshaupt's journal lapses into a racist diatribe at this point, which Madrigal discreetly skips over. She picks the narrative up again at the next entry, which is made up of only one line: "Once again my propensity for admiring marvelous landscapes (sometimes imaginary) has played a trick on me."

Weisshaupt is moving tortuously up the west face of the mountain now, hacking a path

through the jungle with one of the cheap steel axes he bought in Port Moresby and griping about the pandanus trees in his way, the rain-slick clay under his feet, with the one man the elders have seen fit to give him: Iguakallalianakup'a, a.k.a. "Ginger," the grinning youth who caused him so much bother. The forest to every side is riotous with birdsong, all manner of cries and shrieks and gurgles, nearly all of which he can't identify. Ginger's response whenever Weisshaupt asks him, however, is always one of two answers: simply "animal" or "He-Who-Waits."

" 'What call was that now, Ginger? And don't say He-Who-Waits. That was no bowerbird.'

" 'Yes, Weisshaupt. That was animal.'

" 'What kind of animal, damn you? Just any kind?'

" 'No, Weisshaupt. Not any kind of animal.'

" 'Well then, what kind was it?'

" 'He-Who-Waits.' "

A vine ejects a "vicious, scalding resin" onto the back of Weisshaupt's neck at this moment, and another torrent of abuse ensues, at the end of which we find him shivering in his tent high on the north rim of the crater, fighting to finish the day's journal entry in spite of a burgeoning fever. He manages, with the aid of a steady stream of profanity, to note down the rough outline of a talk he's just had with Ginger: a conversation which has radically changed his understanding of the boy, of the forest and—most of all—of the song that still surrounds him.

"I had asked Ginger, for the hundredth time, to cease his constant, tuneless whistling, and for the hundredth time he'd grinningly refused. I told him he was competing with the birdsong around us, and he laughed more merrily than he had since we'd set out. I lost my temper yet again, cursing him in my frustration, and he took me gently by the wrist, as one might the smallest child, and explained to me that the instant he stopped whistling, we'd be lost.

" 'What on earth do you mean, Ginger? Are you a blind cave-fish, perhaps? Are you a bat?'

" 'No, Weisshaupt,' he said, suddenly solemn. 'I'm a learner of the country. I'm a drawer of the map.'

" 'I see,' I said archly. 'A cartographer, are you?'

"He asked me to repeat the word, then broke into his maddening smile again. 'Yes, Weisshaupt. Exactly so. I'm a cartographer.'

"It was then, over the next thousand vertical meters of unforgiving terrain, that I began to comprehend. I began, slowly and reluctantly, to grasp the bewildering fact that Bosavi songs are *vocalized mappings of the rain forest,* that they are sung *from a bird's point of view* and that I must understand their melodies as *paths of flight* along forest waterways; to discover where we are, in other words, I have only to lift my feet, and flap my arms, and slowly leave the surface of the earth.

" 'Who is He-Who-Waits, Ginger? Is he a bird at all?'

" 'Yes, Weisshaupt. He is of course a bird. And so are you.' "

Weisshaupt's thoughts are drawn toward home as his delirium mounts, back to the past, to the upheavals he's crossed half the world to escape: to the marches and the rallies and the mounting persecutions, to the faces of family and neighbors, dewy-eyed with devotion to their lumbering, self-justifying, perpetually cornered-seeming leader, affectionately known as the Redeemer—and lastly, with nightmarish inevitability, to the Redeemer himself, embattled but snug in his fortified tower, surrounded by counselors and sycophants he barely seems to see. Ginger is running his marvelously cool fingertips along the ornithologist's receding hairline as he suffers these visions, whistling sweetly. Magic is being practiced, of this Weisshaupt is certain. He is with the Redeemer now in his personal suite: the twilit chambers in which he communes with his angels and demons, perceiving the convulsions of history from his perch in the dark, indirectly and imperfectly, shadows cast by the Real on the walls of his cave. There seems to be no boundary between Weisshaupt's consciousness and that of the Redeemer any longer. They are witnessing the world through the same bloodshot, sociopathic pair of eyes.

"Does intense longing always lead one to extremes?"

The Redeemer sits in a state-of-the-art reclining chair in his Versailles Room, feeling brittle-boned and child-sized, harkening to disembodied voices. The radio's oculus pulses and flickers. Independent broadcasting still exists—at least for the moment—and occasionally he finds himself listening to it long after midnight, driven by some exquisite, masochistic yearning that he's helpless to explain. Right now a self-satisfied voice, the voice of a "noted memoirist and critic," is describing him—who else?—in terms of animal husbandry.

I think it's useful to go farther back than the obvious totalitarian models, Jeri, and take a look at advances in selective breeding made during the British Agricultural Revolution.

[laughter] Mr. Wells, are you suggesting——

I'm just pointing out that He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named's obsession with control of our borders, and with ethnic demographics in general, isn't too different from a 17th century sheep breeder's take on the care of the herd.

[laughter] These are dangerous times, Mr. Wells. As a journalist——

Journalist and memoirist.

As a journalist and memoirist, apologies, are you sure you want to be making assertions of this nature on the air?

I'm just drawing a parallel, Jeri. If you take a closer look at statements he's made in the past calendar year, on the record, especially with regard to his own flesh and blood——

The Redeemer stares down at his delicate hands. He begins each day thick-boned and massive, as heroic in scale as that statue of the Italian in the roundabout outside his tower, and crawls into bed at night no bigger than a sparrow. He sees himself as a bird in the wee hours, a flightless bird—a kakapo, perhaps, or a kiwi—with flexible, aerated bones. The self-satisfied voice is still talking, still sneering, still characterizing him in the nastiest possible terms.

Listen, Jeri. I'm not crazy enough to come right out and say it. But anyone with two or three functional fingers, you know, and access to a personal computer——

The Redeemer listens for the man's name, his full name, and fixes it in his memory. No sooner has he done so, however, than it begins to drift. An occupational hazard. He writes the name down in blue ink on the back of his hand, over other names, faded but still faintly visible.

The pundits, useful up to a point—if only as stooges, as straw men, as figures of fun—have become a liability. On this point all are in agreement, especially those who pose a threat themselves. The secretary of the exchequer,

for example, with his mincing smile and high, Semitic forehead. Or the minister of war, the one with the unpronounceable name, whose staff has been leaking classified documents faster than a five-year-old can wet the bed. In his heart, the Redeemer prefers the reporters, the hatchet men, the whingers, the hacks—even, on his darkest days, the protesters—if only because they've made their bias clear.

But this one. This smug little squeaker. This one gets under his skin.

The Redeemer's phone has been digging uncomfortably into his paunch for some time and he works it free now, checks for reception, then reads the man's name off the back of his hand. He feels wide awake, lucid-brained in his anger, solid again, person-sized, righteous, as he often does in the wee hours. The squeaker is a nobody, a nonstarter, a Brooklyn-dwelling writer of modest-selling essay collections, parents both living, no children, one sister. All this information is readily available, and the Redeemer, especially in the early-morning hours, is a talented seeker. Theodore Avery Wells, 36 years of age, Guggenheim recipient, unmarried. Sister Madeleine Bethany Wells, 38. Resident in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Seventeen Arbuckle Court.

The sister—the sister is of interest. The Redeemer's pre-dawn instincts rarely fail him. A few more clicks with his well-defined fingers and he has all he needs. The fellowships, the honorary mentions, the master's in creative writing from some quaint New England nunnery. No publication record. Hospitalizations, cause unspecified. The smirking pundit brother. He has all that he requires.

The clock on his flatscreen reads 0345 when he rises from his recliner, distinctly larger than life now, sits down at his PC and starts to write. The first order of business is to send a missive to his 18 million followers, farmers and housewives and roofers and attorneys and debt-collection agents and corrections officers and poets and pastors and dental technicians, who take comfort in his late-night *pensamientos.* He no longer feels angry, but indignation is what they've come to expect from him, and the squeaker's case will serve as well as any.

Decadent sniveling (alcoholic?) propagandist @WellsTeddy was ungenerous to me on Who-Listens-to-the-Radio-Anymore tonight. Give sister a call, @WellsTeddy. Maybe she'll answer.

The writer sees the post and calls his sister. He wants to make the call, to hear her voice, before the weight of what has happened hits him. It's been a month since their last conversation, possibly more. She's been doing better—she's finally found a regimen that works for her, some intricate combination of exercise and meds and "mindfulness" that depresses him even to think about—but he got a message from their father just that morning, urging him to check in. He's thinking about the tightness in his father's voice when his sister picks up.

"Maddy!"

"Jesus, Teddy. Why does every word out of your mouth have an exclamation point after it?"

He's always been morbidly attuned to his big sister's moods, and today he can tell instantly, after less than a sentence, that she hasn't seen or heard about the post. Her voice has the damp, leaden tone that it's had for the better part of the last decade, but its dullness is a comfort to him now. His mind floods with relief. Then he realizes he has no idea what to say next.

She the eagle, he the sparrow. No one else in all the world.

"I came across a quote today that made me think of you."

A long pause. "Okay."

" 'We spend our lives betting on three-legged horses with beautiful names.' "

"Why?"

"I don't know *why,* Maddy. I didn't write the damn thing. It's by Bohumil Hrabal, the famous Czech——"

"I know who Bohumil Hrabal is. That's not what I'm asking. I want to know why it made you think of me."

"I thought you might like it," he stammers. "No particular——"

"Am I the three-legged horse, Teddy? Or am I more like the one who made the bet?"

It's going wrong so quickly. He's forgotten how to talk to her, how to wriggle his way through her defenses, how to find the hairline fissures in the wall. He used to be able to slip effortlessly into the sibling frequency, to change her mood as easily as he could gauge it. In his desperation he now finds himself falling back into his well-established role: the pampered, entitled, narcissistic author, whinging over half-imagined slights. He does his Hunter Wagoner routine.

"Guess who won a 'genius grant' today. Just take a guess."

He hears, or imagines that he hears, his sister break into a grin. "Shit, Teddy bear. I can't even imagine."

"The poet laureate of Methedrine, Alabama. The hillbilly Hemingway. The mouth-breathing Melville."

She laughs at his Wagoner jokes—she always has. It's a way to make contact, to draw her out by making himself contemptible. A sick exchange, he sometimes thinks, but an exchange just the same. Tonight, as so often before, it seems to do the trick. Then suddenly she's telling him she's stopped her medication.

"I'm sorry, Maddy. I'm sorry, okay? I love you very much. I love you and I'm worried about you. Are you yawning?"

An endless-seeming pause. "I love you too, Teddy."

"It's just, you're not the easiest person to talk to, you know? And I'm not the easiest person."

"Somewhere on this planet is the easiest person to talk to." She sighs. "But I'm pretty sure he doesn't live in Vicksburg."

A surge of love and gratitude runs through him. "I'm going to go ahead and guess one of the tea-producing countries," he finds himself saying. "The betel-nut-chewing countries. Sri Lanka, maybe. Or Bangladesh."

"Okay," she murmurs, and suddenly he's riding with his sister in the back seat of a Volkswagen Passat, five years old, maybe six, staring up at her in hopeless admiration, making a study of her every word and gesture. She the eagle, he the sparrow. No one else in all the world.

"Okay," she says a second time, more clearly. "Bangladesh."

He hears the dull click as she hangs up the phone—the clunky gray rotary she still insists on using—and leans back carefully in his ergonomic chair. He pictures his sister standing mutely in the kitchen, lost in thought, half-listening to the hum of the refrigerator. After a time her eyes regain their focus, coming to rest on the kitchen counter, then—shyly, reluctantly—on the typewriter at its far end. It's usually empty, it's always empty, but he imagines a sheet of paper in it now. The paper is textured, substantial. She takes a beer out of the fridge and opens it. She takes a slow sip. He pictures her crossing the room to the counter, staring into space for a moment, then starting to write. ■


bob
ROMEO & JULIET & RON

The CAMPUS CONSENT CRISIS

From Title IX offices to state and federal courts, the process for adjudicating sexual-assualt cases between college students is shockingly flawed; here, we search for hope amid the chaos

BY **STEPHANIE HANEY**

It's a warm, late-summer day on an American college campus, and the freshman invasion is in full swing. After the flights, the unpacking and the tearful good-byes, a crowd of new faces heads out to celebrate the hard-earned victory of independence. That's when our two underclassmen meet.

Phone numbers are exchanged during a night of conversation, dancing and furtive partaking. But after a few hours of getting to know each other, neither student is ready to call it a night just yet. The two walk, hand in hand, back to one of their rooms.

In a rare twist of luck, they have the place to themselves. They sit on the bed, which in the months ahead will also serve as a dining room table, couch and study hall, and look into each other's eyes.

"Can I kiss you?"

"I would love that."

And kiss they do. One of them hits the lights.

"There are so many things I want to do to you, and you to me."

"Oh yeah? Like what?"

"I want to run my hands all over your body, feeling every inch of you."

"That sounds nice. Let's start with that."

They lie down, side-by-side, and begin exploring each other's bodies.

"What else do you want?"

"I want to take off all of your clothes, and all of my clothes, and feel your skin next to mine. Is that okay?"

"That's more than okay."

They undress each other, appreciating their respective views.

"I want to press my naked body against yours and kiss you all over, from head to toe. Can I do that?"

"Please, do that."

Now comes the moment they've both been waiting for.

"Can I put myself inside you?"

"Yes...yes...yes!"

"Does that feel as good for you as it does for me?"

"*So* good. Please don't stop."

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What we have just witnessed is a demonstration of affirmative consent, defined in California, one of the four states that legally recognize it as the standard on college campuses, as "affirmative, conscious and voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity." Although Ohio isn't one of those states, you may expect this kind of interaction on the sleepy campus of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. At this school, which looks like something straight out of a summer-camp brochure from the 1970s, the culture of consent is so strong that even as students talk openly about the kind of sex they want to have, they're taken aback when someone attempts a hug without first asking permission.

Affirmative consent was first brought to national attention in 1990, straight from the campus of Antioch. It was revolutionary at the time in that it demanded an unequivocal "yes" at each stage of sexual interaction. The activists who fought for its inclusion in the college's sexual-offense-prevention policy, or SOPP, became a national joke, accused of killing romance and depicted in a *Saturday Night Live* sketch as loonies who didn't understand the difference between a hookup and date rape. It became easy to overlook the fact that the new policy stemmed from the rapes on campus of multiple Antioch students that fall—and those students being forced to face their rapists every day at school.

That was when the "Womyn of Antioch" declared that only "yes means yes" and that silence or "lack of protest or resistance" does not equal a yes. Back then, the idea was that you had to communicate "yes" verbally, but now the understanding across the United States is that affirmative consent can also be shown through body language, which arguably creates a gray area around sexual assault. Regardless of how it's conveyed, affirmative consent must be "ongoing throughout a sexual activity and can be revoked at any time," according to some of the state laws that have established it as a standard at institutions of higher learning in California, Connecticut, Illinois and New York.

Although it's not required by law in all states, affirmative consent is the prevailing policy at most schools in the country, according to Michele Dauber, a Stanford University Law School professor who teaches a class on college policies regarding sexual assault and gender-motivated violence on campuses. Dauber is also a close family friend of a young woman known as Emily Doe, whose sexual assault by Brock Turner in northern California in 2015 exposed an alarming array of biases and blind spots when it comes to campus assault cases.

Stories like Emily Doe's raise the question: Were the Antioch activists in fact loony, or were they just ahead of their time?

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According to a January 2017 report by the Obama administration's White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, one in five women and one in 14 men are victims of sexual assault while in college. The numbers are worse for transsexual men and women, with more than one in four experiencing sexual assault in college. Even Antioch reported five forcible rapes between 2015 and 2016, and that's with an average student body of fewer than 250.

Essential to this issue is a federal law that most people associate with college sports. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 applies to all colleges and universities, both private and public, that receive federal funding, even if only through financial aid programs used by their students. The law states that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has undone many of the previous administration's Title IX guidelines.

Title IX became somewhat clearer in 2011, when the Obama administration's Department of Education issued a letter from the Office for Civil Rights. A supplementary Q&A document followed in 2014; both sought to lay out how the department would evaluate a given school's Title IX compliance and therefore its eligibility for federal funding. Six years and one administration after Obama's DOE letter, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos issued her own Q&A. That "interim" document rolled back the much more extensive Obama-era guidance, which has been criticized as being too victim-focused. Significant changes in DeVos's document include no longer requiring schools to provide interim

ILLUSTRATION BY **KAREN LYNCH**

measures to protect the complainant during the investigation; asserting that "gag orders," which prevent parties from discussing investigations, are likely unfair; letting schools decide whether to allow appeals from the person filing the claim (a.k.a. the "complainant") when they choose to allow them from the accused (referred to as the "respondent"); and removing the recommended time line of 60 days for completing a Title IX investigation.

Perhaps the most momentous change resulting from the DeVos Q&A is this: Schools can once again choose between two standards of proof in cases of alleged sexual assault. Under the Obama guidance, the standard required was the "preponderance of the evidence." By this standard, which is currently law in California, school authorities must find a given narrative "more likely than not" to be true in order to find a person responsible for an allegation; it's also known as the "50 percent plus a feather" standard. But now the higher standard of "clear and convincing evidence," defined as "so clear as to leave no substantial doubt," is allowed, except in California. Given that most of these cases lack the benefit of witnesses or evidence typical in other disciplinary matters, the higher standard in effect favors the respondent.

DeVos, acting assistant secretary for civil rights Candice Jackson, the Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights did not respond to queries about when official guidance would replace the 2017 interim Q&A.

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The struggle to balance the interests and rights of both complainants and respondents has breached the walls of academia, spilling over into legal battles and media frenzies. One year into the #MeToo movement, which has brought down powerful men across multiple industries as stories of sexual misconduct and abuse of power have come to light, the arguments are familiar: Some say that those accused of sexual assault are being vilified without a fair review of the facts. Denver-based attorney Pamela Robillard Mackey, who chaired and convened the American College of Trial Lawyers Task Force on the Response of Universities and Colleges to Allegations of Sexual Violence, says that while the sentiment may be unpopular, it is fundamentally true from a trial lawyer's perspective.

"Politically, and in the changing social climate, there is this prevailing notion that survivors must be believed at all costs," she says. "This is a concern. There is a place for a complaining witness to be believed, but you simply cannot begin a truth-finding process assuming that either side is truthful. You have to start by believing no one and then seek to find that truth."

Experts such as Lynn Hecht Schafran, senior vice president at Legal Momentum, a New York–based advocacy group for the legal rights of women, note that under Title IX, schools have an equal obligation to both parties in these cases, as well as to their community at large, with the goal of protecting students from a hostile environment rather than incarcerating someone guilty of a crime.

Stanford law professor Michele Dauber (right) fought to unseat the presiding judge in the Brock Turner case.

In arguing for the need to take seriously and respond quickly to students who report sexual assault to their academic institutions under Title IX, some experts point out that schools can take immediate actions—such as changing students' dorm rooms and class assignments to keep the alleged victim and offender apart—that are not possible in the criminal justice system.

Clearly there are a variety of reasons victims of sexual violence in college might first seek help from their schools—including the various ways in which law enforcement has failed survivors. "Some people simply don't want to get involved in the criminal justice system," says Schafran. "They know how invasive it is and that it can take years."

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Only an average of 310 out of every 1,000 sexual assaults are reported to police, according to the Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey from 2011 to 2014. That means more than two out of three go unreported. But even if an assault is reported, Schafran says, police are generally the ones who ultimately determine whether to refer a case for prosecution. Of those 310 reported cases, it's estimated only 57 will lead to arrest and only 11 of those will be referred for possible prosecution, according to FBI data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, as analyzed by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, or RAINN. This is to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of untested rape kits that have been uncovered across the country.

"Even if a case is referred for prosecution," Schafran says, "it is still rare for prosecutors to have specialized training in techniques for interviewing traumatized victims, and because they haven't elicited evidence in the most effective and complete way, they may think they cannot meet the burden of proof and decide not to take the case." Schafran explains that "trauma-informed interviewing is based on understanding how the neurobiology of trauma impacts victims' behavior and thought processes during and after a traumatic event, whether it's a sexual assault, home invasion or bank robbery. Because sexual assault victims' reactions often appear counterintuitive—why didn't she run?—being able to explain why to a jury is crucial."

Schafran recalls a sex-crimes prosecutor once telling her, "If you have a good win-loss record in this role, that means you're not taking the hard cases and educating the community."

Out of the 1,000 sexual assaults we started with, on average only seven will lead to a felony conviction, and only six of those convicted will be incarcerated, according to RAINN's analysis. And the time served can be scandalously short, as in the case of Brock Turner.

For sexually assaulting Emily Doe behind a Dumpster while she was unconscious on the Stanford University campus, in front of witnesses, Turner, a student athlete, was

sentenced to six months in jail, three years of probation and lifetime registration as a sex offender. He served three months. Turner's sentence was so controversial that Judge Aaron Persky, who presided over his case, was recalled from the bench on June 5. But leading up to his recall, Persky was supported in his sentencing by legal scholars, fellow judges and attorneys in the Bay Area.

"Women need better access to justice in the criminal courts," says Dauber, who led the Persky recall effort. "When justice isn't served in criminal courts, it has a deterring effect on victims and, concurrently, a lack of a deterrent effect for perpetrators. In a context in which the criminal justice system continues to fail survivors of sexual violence, colleges and universities will have to do better."

So why didn't Doe pursue sanctions against Turner through Stanford's Title IX office? According to Dauber, Stanford has expelled only one student for sexual assault. The student in question was not Turner, who was allowed to withdraw from the university, quietly and voluntarily, shortly after his arrest, thus preserving his NCAA eligibility.

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Like Emily Doe, the overwhelming majority of victims of sexual violence in college do not report their attacks to school officials. In fact, 93 percent don't, according to a 2016 Bureau of Justice Statistics study. And when they do, the results can be similarly lopsided. Just ask Emma Sulkowicz, a Columbia University student who reported an assault and lost the Title IX claim against their alleged attacker. (Sulkowicz identifies as gender nonbinary and uses the pronouns *they, them* and *their*.)

Before Sulkowicz began carrying a 50-pound mattress around campus for an entire academic year as a college-sanctioned piece of performance art, the man who allegedly committed anal rape in the midst of consensual vaginal sex was found "not responsible" following a hearing.

In a November 2013 letter addressed to Columbia College dean James Valentini, Sulkowicz sought an appeal of the school's finding. Regardless of whether you believe Sulkowicz's account, the letter paints a grimly resonant picture of the system's weaknesses. Sulkowicz described Columbia's significant departures from its own gender-based misconduct policies, including delays far in excess of the school's recommended time line for a hearing and a careless approach to investigating, as well as a general feeling of not being taken seriously.

Before Sulkowicz graduated, mattress in tow, in the spring of 2015, Columbia launched a $2.2 million study known as the Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation. Its results largely follow existing national data on prevalence and underreporting of college campus sexual assault. The study is irrelevant and unnecessarily expensive, says Sulkowicz. "It doesn't cost a thing for the people in power to do the right thing," they say, referring to Dean Valentini's denial of the appeal and Sulkowicz's claim that he ordered them to "get out of his office" when they came by in person to discuss the matter.

"IT DOESN'T COST A THING FOR THE PEOPLE IN POWER TO DO THE RIGHT THING."

A Columbia University representative had no comment on Sulkowicz's response to the study.

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Cases like this hit close to home for New York–based attorney Andrew Miltenberg, who has three children, including a son and a daughter in college—and whose clients include the man accused of raping Sulkowicz.

Miltenberg estimates that over the past five years his office has represented more than 250 clients—mostly male respondents—in disciplinary matters in more than 30 states. He says that due process has been violated in Title IX cases everywhere from Division I and Ivy League schools to small programs many of us would have a hard time finding on a map. The cause? Overcorrecting after years of being asleep at the wheel when it comes to handling claims of sexual harassment and assault.

"I think the implementation of what was otherwise a well-intentioned policy has been a disaster," he says of the Obama guidance.

He cites a lack of consistency between schools and within them, boiling it down to a "genuine misunderstanding and misapplication of policy and protocol"—a critique that strangely echoes that of Sulkowicz.

Miltenberg says that all too often poorly outlined investigation and hearing policies in student handbooks make it impossible to know what anyone involved in a Title IX investigation should expect to happen, what the time frame will be and whom they will be dealing with. He has also seen interim measures, such as changes in class schedules and living arrangements, disproportionately impacting respondents.

"I'm not a men's rights proponent," Miltenberg says. "I'm a due process and civil rights advocate, and what I know is that the process as it has been executed in the majority of cases I've seen is at best confusing, not well developed and not well thought-out."

And while Miltenberg doesn't necessarily take issue with the preponderance-of-evidence standard, he says that "starting with trauma-informed investigating creates a situation where that standard of proof is very hard to overcome for the respondent."

Miltenberg also feels that, often, investigators act as context-blocking gatekeepers rather than collectors of evidence. He has seen cross-examination excluded from school proceedings and feels most appeals are not truly independent. Even so, he acknowledges that college campuses have to step up their response to sexual assault.

"On the one hand," he says, "we have a place to do this, and that's the criminal justice system. But on the other hand, municipalities are stretched, and also not everything that happens on college campuses rises to the level of what would interest the police. So as a practical matter there still has to be some mechanism on campus to protect people from sexual assault and misconduct."

Which brings us back to Title IX—at press time still twisted between the mandates of two wildly different administrations.

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SurvJustice, Inc., Equal Rights Advocates and the Victim Rights Law Center have sued

DeVos, Jackson and the Department of Education, seeking to have DeVos's new guidance thrown out, which could effectively reinstate Obama-era guidance. The complaint argues that the 2017 Title IX policy conflicts with the law's requirements, is discriminatory against women and is based on a mistaken view that Obama-era guidance limited due process—while noting that there have been problems with the way schools have put more recent policies into effect.

The defendants have filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit. Whether the case moves forward or not, the arguments made by the plaintiffs highlight the tension between the rights of alleged survivors and those of the accused in the college setting. When it comes to solutions, opinions are no less divided.

Things Miltenberg would like to see implemented across the board include investigators with more training, full panel hearings and a move away from the single-investigator model in which one person must collect evidence, issue findings of fact and issue a determination of responsibility, as well as an independent appeal process that is completely removed from the school and conducted by someone with training in adjudication.

"A thoughtful, transparent process that gives everybody a full and fair and reasonable opportunity to be heard, and heard by people who don't have a predetermined bias and have been trained properly, would go a long way," Miltenberg says.

Mackey, of the American College of Trial Lawyers Task Force, says quite the opposite. In a white paper published in March 2017, after the ACTL's yearlong investigation, the organization recommended raising the standard of proof to that of clear and convincing evidence to strengthen due process for respondents while avoiding more procedural safeguards.

"What is happening in these processes is so far away from what happens in civil proceedings," she says, citing a lack of resources and training. "We needed to present a compromise that was usable, accessible and practical for campuses or universities but gave all involved fair due process. Heightening the standard of proof was one way to add process without turning these investigations into full-blown criminal trials."

Other recommendations from the ACTL include the use of completely impartial investigations, right to counsel, access to evidence, more complete notice of allegations given to respondents and some form of cross-examination. Whether those measures, or Miltenberg's recommendations, will be implemented, and whether they'll actually turn the tide, is anyone's guess.

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Back at Antioch, three students at a picnic table behind the main hall on a cool spring day have a few ideas about how to confront sexual assault.

Media arts major Zoë Ritzhaupt—a 20-year-old who grew up within miles of the school and identifies as genderqueer-nonbinary—believes that the person attempting the action is the one responsible for obtaining consent. Understanding that may head off situations such as the one involving Aziz Ansari that was described on Babe.net in January.

Attorney Andrew Miltenberg, known for representing respondents in campus sexual assault cases, insists he's not a men's rights proponent.

"I've had lots of experiences like that, and I know other people have too," Ritzhaupt says. "If we remember that simple fact, then it's not up to someone to have to say no to something that's already happening to them, which is a really hard thing for a lot of people to do."

Twenty-two-year-old Marcell Vanarsdale adds that prevention has to start at the community level.

"There has to be a culture around consent," he says. "Other college campuses may have an affirmative consent policy, but if there isn't a strong culture supporting that policy, I don't see how it can be as successful as it is at Antioch."

Vanarsdale is referring to students respecting one another and feeling comfortable holding one another accountable when boundaries are crossed. That kind of culture requires work to create, such as devoting two weeks to sexual-awareness education, as Antioch does every October.

Meli Osanya, a 22-year-old from Iowa who identifies as pansexual, expands on Vanarsdale's thought. "There also needs to be a commitment to responsiveness from the administration beyond building the culture of consent within the student body," Osanya says. "I think the administration's responsiveness is one reason the SOPP is so effective here."

All three Antioch students seem to agree that consent education needs to begin well before college, with age-appropriate instruction entering the curriculum as early as kindergarten. In fact, two of the students have come directly from the local high school, where they've just led a session on affirmative consent.

Some Antioch undergraduates are lobbying to have the SOPP include language requiring affirmative consent for platonic touch, such as hugs and handshakes. That may not be necessary, other students feel.

"We already ask if we can give each other hugs, for example, and it's something we teach new students when they arrive for orientation," Osanya says. "Every interaction that invades a personal space bubble should be consensual."

Vanarsdale agrees. "Sexual assault and sexual violence are not always an intended sexual thing," he says. "That's why it's important to be mindful of the space that we engage in."

The lesson? People don't always want to be touched, but when they do, and when they fully express that desire, the result can be far more stimulating than the inebriated fumbling so typical of college life. When you look at it like that, today's Antioch students appear to have their fingers on the pulse of a cultural shift—a steady calibration of the movement their predecessors started nearly 30 years ago. While the gears of political and academic bureaucracy grind their way to a more equal environment, they may be our only hope. ■

"And then he just…never texted me back. Like he totally…what's the word?"

PLAYMATE

God Bless Americus

*September Playmate **Kirby Griffin** plants her small-town Georgia roots in the desert wilds of southern California—and the bloom is breathtaking*

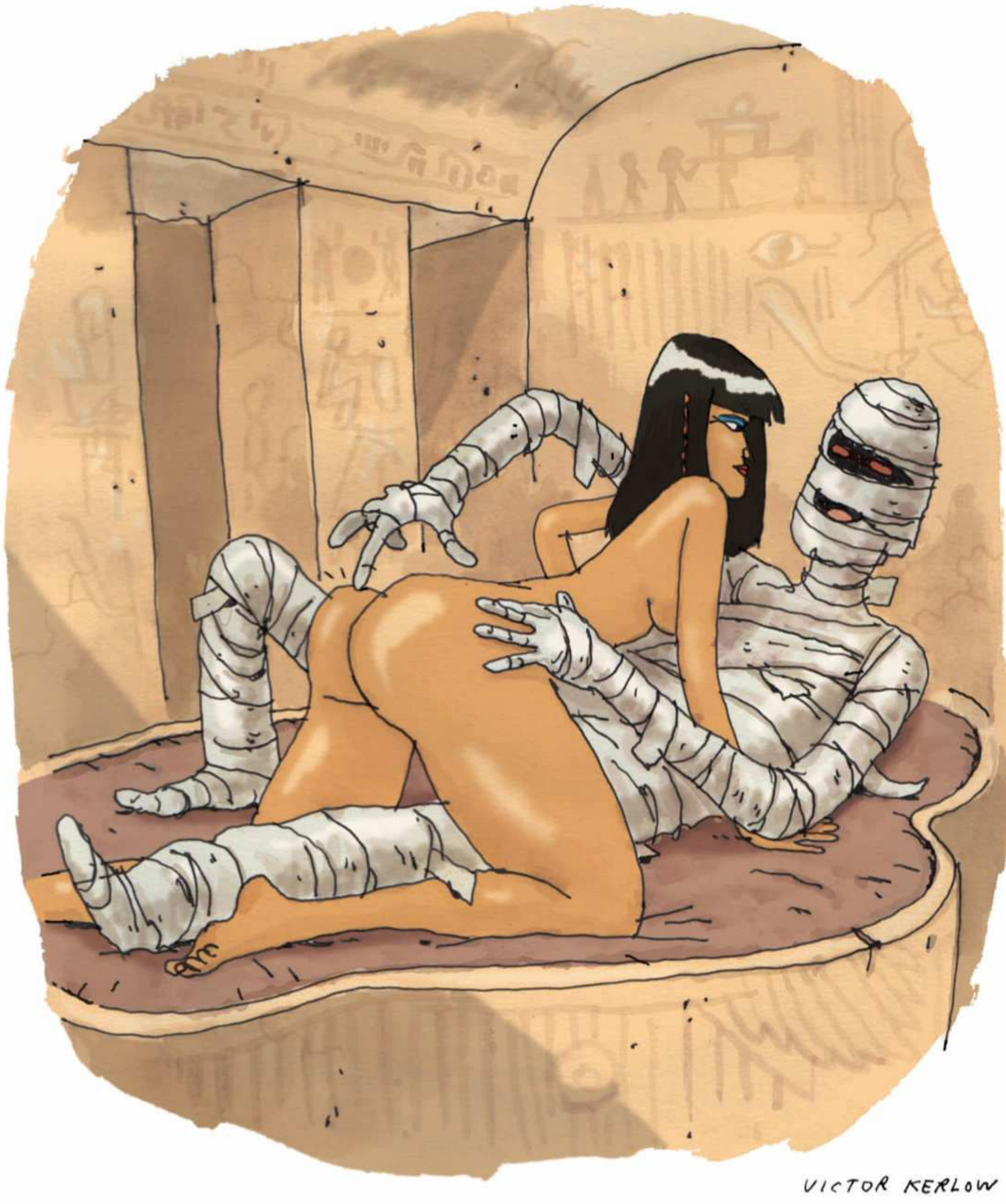
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALI MITTON**

"People can sense my energy," says Kirby Griffin, almost laughing at herself. "I'm super chill." The millennial archetype of "the cool girl"—somehow impossibly hot and totally indifferent to said hotness—may be a myth, but our September Playmate is something of a unicorn. Kirby is next-level gorgeous (a young Tyra Banks comes to mind), but with her up-for-anything attitude, she's also thoroughly unpretentious. "I'm just a nice girl," she says. "That's my mama's doing. She encouraged me to talk to people, especially shy people, from a really young age. I didn't wait for them to come to me."

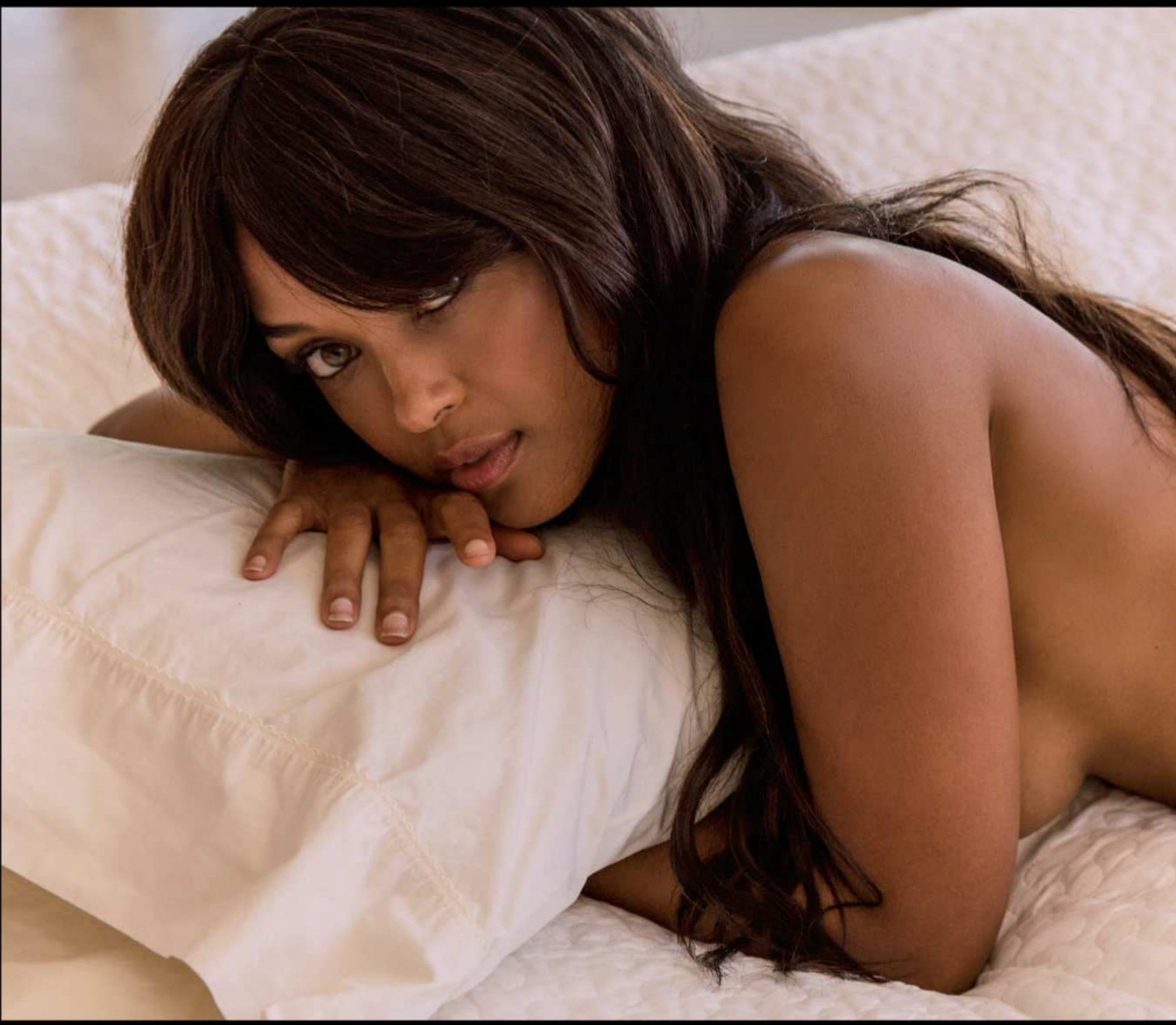
Kirby's small-town upbringing, in the southern Georgia city of Americus, also plays a part. "I had the best childhood ever," she says. "Of course you're exposed to more when you're from a city like L.A. or New York, but I grew up around acres of peach trees, riding bicycles with my girlfriends and go-karts with the boys." When she was 13 years old, she and her family, including four younger siblings, relocated to Wisconsin—an exercise in culture shock that she came to appreciate. "It exposed me to other things and broadened my perspective. Now I welcome change with open arms." Kirby attended the University of Wisconsin for about a year and a half before being discovered by a model agent while celebrating spring break in Miami's South Beach. Her career took off; by 2012 she was in Zambia, shooting for *Sports Illustrated*.

Outside of modeling, Kirby's interests include exploring the world of real estate, making investments, acting and, most recently, taking DJ lessons. "When I get into something, I get *into* it," she explains. "I'm very passionate. It's a Scorpio trait, if you believe in that sort of thing." With her wide-ranging curiosity, it comes as no surprise that Kirby isn't tied down. "I'm as single as a dollar bill. I'm *so* single. That's probably why I have so many hobbies, huh?" It's not for lack of desire: "I'm always open. But when you look, you never find it. You've got to just do your thing, and the right person will come along."

Words of super-chill wisdom, Kirby. It's our pleasure watching you do your thing. ■



"My wife's coming home soon. Let's wrap this up."



SEPTEMBER 2018 PLAYMATE

DATA SHEET

BIRTHPLACE: Americus, Georgia **CURRENT CITY:** Los Angeles, California

GEORGIA PEACH

I grew up on acres in southern, *southern* Georgia. I don't even think we were on the map for a couple of years. I feel like a quarter of the town is my family. I grew up playing on tire swings, picking peaches and riding bicycles—running through fields and fresh everything. It was a great time.

POSITIVE POSITION

I don't think I have a type. I like fun, funny guys. The three things I look for in a guy are a good heart, a sense of adventure and the desire to enjoy life and not take it too seriously. We're here for only a little bit, so a nice mixture of work and play is perfect for me.

BARE NECESSITIES

I feel sexiest when I'm chilling—naked and natural, just being myself.

EYE TO EYE

There is, 100 percent, a difference shooting with female photographers. It's not necessarily positive or negative, but women tend to have a different eye. What's sexy to women is different from what's sexy to men.

MODEL CITIZENS

I think the perception of models is changing because of reality TV and social media. An audience can now understand more about models' day-to-day lives, what it takes and the industry as a whole. There will always be those who think of *Zoolander* when they think of models, but that's okay.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

I'm a happy girl. I'm a people person. When I go out, I don't go out to *not* socialize. If I'm going out with friends, why wouldn't I talk to other people too? If a person's nice to me, I have no reason not to be nice back. People sense when you're open and truthful.

SERVES YOU RIGHT

I like to stay active. I love going to the beach and playing volleyball. I love hiking. I make a point of getting out and enjoying what southern California has to offer.

WOMAN OF THE WORLD

My favorite place I've traveled to for work is Africa. In Zambia there was this one monkey that used to come to my window every morning. I would wake up and he'd be there looking at me. I'd be like, "My little buddy's here!"

SAGE ADVICE

Stay true to yourself, treat people the way you want to be treated and wake up grateful every day.

Kirby V Griffin.

@kirbygriffin21

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Halloween Costume Pro Tip: Put on an old suit you haven't worn in years and say you're dressed as Guy Who Didn't Want to Put Any Effort Into His Costume So He's Pretending He's Don Draper.

An old widower goes to a brothel.

"I want someone who reminds me of my deceased wife," he says.

"Certainly," the madam replies. "Now, was she blonde or brunette?"

"I don't remember," says the widower.

"Well, was she short or tall?"

"I don't remember."

"Was she petite or voluptuous?"

"I don't remember."

Growing impatient, the madam asks, "What the hell *do* you remember?"

To which he replies, "Nothing—that's why I want someone who reminds me!"

If you're a pot dealer in Oklahoma and you hear "I'm a cop," you know you're going to jail. If you're a pot dealer in California and you hear "I'm a cop," you recommend a soothing indica from your well-lit display case and remind the officer to get a free dab hit on the way out.

Speaking of California cops, we heard about a Humboldt County police sergeant addressing his force one morning: "As you know, it's harvest season, so I want you to keep an eye out for any motorists who are driving under the influence of marijuana."

"What do we look for?" asks another cop.

"Anyone driving at a reasonable speed and coming to a complete halt at stop signs."

Two women are sitting on a park bench, mulling over their love lives.

"My husband should be a newscaster," says the first. "Every time we make love, he says, 'This just in!' "

"Well, my husband should be an anesthesiologist," replies her friend, "because *he* always says, 'Don't worry—you won't feel a thing!' "

The trouble with political jokes is that they sometimes get elected.

Here's a lesser-known story from the Old Testament. God is dictating the Ten Commandments to Moses:

"Thou shalt honor thy father and mother," says God.

"Your will be done," Moses replies, carving the words into a stone tablet.

Then God says, "Thou shall not kill."

"Praise be unto you," quoth Moses, carving away again.

Then the Lord says, "Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his wife, nor his——"

Moses pauses his labors.

"Excuse me, Lord," he says. "What does *covet* mean?"

"It means envy," says the Divine Creator.

"*Phew!*" cries Moses. "I don't want to covet her, Lord. I just want to fuck her."

One Halloween night, a little girl with a mortal fear of ghosts is tucked in by her mother and father. An hour later, she wakes to low moans seeping through the wall—the one her room shares with that of her parents. Convinced the house is overrun with vengeful spirits, she runs down the hall and bursts through her parents' door. Unfortunately, the sight of Mom and Dad under the white sheet, frantically untangling themselves, serves only to confirm the girl's fear that a portal to hell has opened up in her home. She runs screaming out the door.

"Get her!" cries the wife. "We have to explain!"

The husband shakes his head. "Sit tight, honey," he says. "You can outgrow a fear of ghosts, but you never, *ever* get over the horror of seeing your parents fucking."

Little-known fact: The literal translation of *karaoke* is "Go home, you're drunk."

If you're telekinetic and you know it, clap my hands.

Still pining for summer travel? Let yourself down easy by buying used hotel sheets, breaking your thermostat and hiring a guy to stand in your hallway, screaming gibberish.

SOFIA BOUTELLA

Born in Algeria, raised in France and honed to lethal sharpness on stadium stages, the actress, dancer and erstwhile licker of Tom Cruise's face takes on her edgiest project yet

Q1: *With Kingsman: The Secret Service, The Mummy and Atomic Blonde, you've earned a reputation for playing characters that are sexy and deadly in equal measure. Do you enjoy taking on seductive roles?*

BOUTELLA: I feel great about it. We all have sexuality. I recognize traits in myself and I use them for the characters. I wouldn't do penetrative sex; I think that would be a bit too much. But at the same time, other people have done it—like in the Gaspar Noé movie *Love,* they had real sex. If people want to explore having sex for real, I'm not judging it. I don't mind proximity or intimacy. Even licking Tom Cruise's face in *The Mummy* was fun. He kept saying to the makeup artist, "Make sure to clean my face. It's fake dirt and fake sweat, so make sure it's clean for Sofia!" It was so sweet. We laughed a lot during that scene.

Q2: *When Atomic Blonde came out last year, the media made a big deal about your sex scenes with Charlize Theron. Did that bother you?*

BOUTELLA: It was not annoying, but why is it such a big deal to see people having sex? You see people kill each other on-screen all the time. That's not a big deal; they're just movies. People are giving Noé shit for having so much sex in his films. Why put so much energy into that? What's wrong with sex?

Q3: *Noé also sequenced what is probably cinema's longest and most brutal rape scene, in his 2002 film Irréversible. Now you're starring in his new film, Climax. Were you nervous about working with him?*

BOUTELLA: He didn't glorify rape. It's controversial, but he's still very talented. I love that movie. It's a hard watch, but you know what? It makes you feel something. I was nervous to work with him, but not because of that; I was terrified of not understanding the character I was playing. I studied him before *Climax.* I spoke with him about the recurring themes of violence, sex and drugs. He said that he's fascinated with people using drugs. In *Climax,* I play a choreographer, and we're spiked with large amounts of LSD. First of all, I was turned off because I did not want to dance; I hadn't done it in five years. And I've never done LSD.

Q4: *Was it exciting to research mind-altering drugs?*

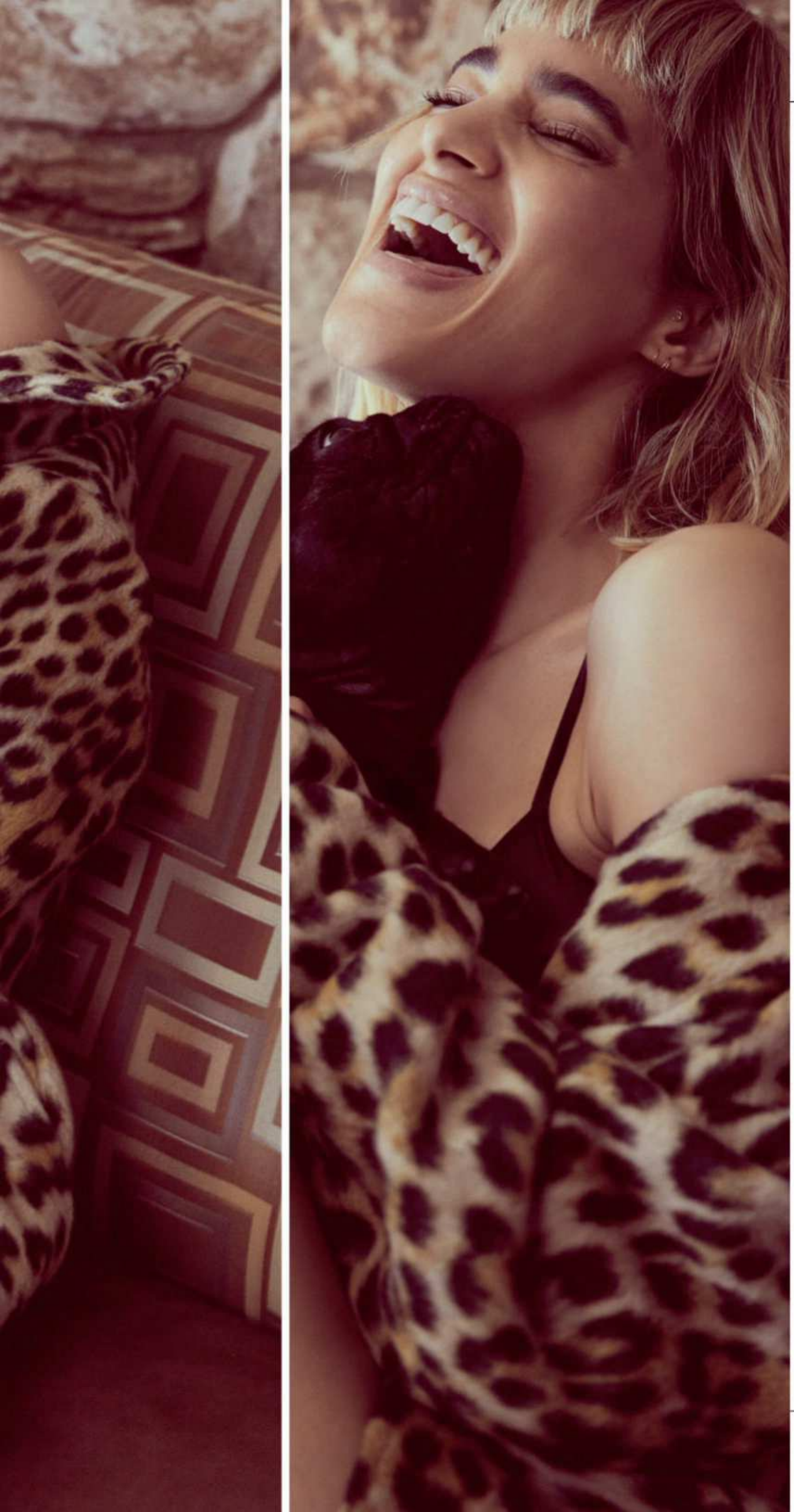
BOUTELLA: Have you heard about Flakka? It's the worst fucking drug. According to the nurses I talked to, it's more fatal than heroin. I watched these videos: This guy was high, killed someone and was eating the person's face. It was the scariest thing I'd ever seen. I did *Climax* without drinking or indulging in any substances at all. I didn't want to alter my state of mind. I could never try meth or anything, because I would love that shit.

Q5: *You've mentioned being hyperactive. Do you still struggle with ADHD?*

BOUTELLA: Yes, but I'm good at hiding it. I have trouble focusing. I think if I'd grown up here, I would have been diagnosed. When I was a kid, my grandmother would put all the porcelain vases away because I was a tornado. I was exhausting for everybody, even myself. My teachers always told my mom I wasn't paying attention. It was hard for me to listen to the same person talk for hours on end. I still catch myself thinking about something else. If I'm reading a book, which I love to do, it's really hard. I will back up and read a line, then read it again, even if it takes me longer. I always think, What's going on with me? But I have a lot of energy!

Q6: *Were you a troublemaker growing up?*

BY **DANIELLE BACHER** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PATRICK MAUS**



I COULD NEVER TRY METH OR ANYTHING, BECAUSE I WOULD LOVE THAT SHIT.

BOUTELLA: I went through a phase. It was never anything dangerous. When I was a kid in Algeria, we were not poor, but I wore the same clothes all the time. I had a few outfits and one pair of shoes. When I moved to France, I realized I was not cool, and kids made fun of me for it. From 10 to 15 years old, I was picked on. They made fun of my lips because they were big. The kids would pucker their lips and make fun of how I spoke. It wasn't a great feeling. Then I went straight into dancing and the arts; that's what made me feel good. You can be valued because you're talented, and you're respected no matter what. I felt like I fit in there. It saved my life.

Q7: *Was your parents' divorce difficult for you?*

BOUTELLA: I was four years old when they split. My dad was already in France. I didn't see him much when I was young. It was tough not having him around, but he came back to Algeria to help us move. I came home from school one day and the house was empty. I had no idea. When it happened, there was a civil war going on in Algeria. There was no water running through the faucets, and we had a curfew of seven P.M. It was brutal. My dad is a composer and a public figure there. He was very opinionated, but if you voiced your opinions about the situation in Algeria, you would get killed. It was too dangerous for my mom and me to stay. It was also dangerous to leave, so we had to sneak out. But I wasn't scared; I was excited.

Q8: *You didn't drink alcohol until you were 28 years old. Why?*

BOUTELLA: Once, when I was 14, my mom was on a work trip and I was home alone. She

always made crepes with some sort of rum or hard liquor. I was curious, so I started drinking by myself. I drank to the point that I made myself sick and puked in the middle of the living room. I had to clean it all up. My mom never knew. On my first tour with Madonna, I never drank alcohol. Then on my second tour, I thought, I want to have fun and explore these things! I remember we went to Noble in New York, and I had a glass of champagne. The next day I was hungover.

Q9: *You toured with Madonna for 10 years. Did you ever have that moment when you thought, I'm dancing with one of the biggest artists in the world?*

BOUTELLA: She's the best! I loved dancing together. I own a copy of the PLAYBOY issue with Madonna on the cover. I was at a record store in Algeria with my father when I was six years old, and I picked out Tina Turner, Madonna's *Like a Virgin* and Michael Jackson's *Bad*. I listened to Madonna on a red cassette player with a yellow microphone all the time. I destroyed the Michael Jackson tape from listening so much. I had no idea how big they were; it was just my jam. I remember asking my mom, "Why doesn't Madonna marry Michael Jackson? He's the best and she's the best."

Q10: *You were cast to be on Michael Jackson's This Is It tour, but he passed away before you ever got to dance with him. Were you at least able to meet him?*

BOUTELLA: I want to cry now just thinking about it. I was on tour with Madonna, but we had a hiatus of five months. I was sent a personal invitation to audition for him, and I just knew I had to go. I did not think I was going to get picked; I'm not very good at auditioning. But I got a callback the next day. I was in my fourth round, and then Kenny Ortega, the choreographer, called my name. It immediately broke my heart, because I was like, I'm fucked. I didn't want to let Madonna down. We decided I would work with Michael after her tour. I was driving down Sunset Boulevard when I got a surprise call from him. I pulled over and he said, "Hey, Sofia, I just want you to know that you're an amazing dancer. God blessed you, really, God *blessed* you, and I really want you in my show. We will make that work." It meant so much to me. Soon after, he passed away. It was so tragic.

Q11: *You spent two years jobless in Los Angeles before booking Kingsman: The Secret Service. How did you manage?*

BOUTELLA: I literally woke up one morning and I didn't want to dance anymore. I was terrified. I didn't care about being fancy; I just wanted to pay my rent. It's all I cared about.

Then my agent fired me and I cried so much. I was so broke my dad had to help me a few times. I started housekeeping and living off savings. It took me another year before I booked *Kingsman*. They loved my audition, and the next day, I woke up to a message saying to pack all my stuff: I was leaving for London that afternoon for a second audition. The director, Matthew Vaughn, read two scenes with me and said, "All right, I'm happy." I called my parents right away. They needed the news more than I did.

Q12: *Why was Tom Cruise a mentor to you on The Mummy?*

BOUTELLA: He taught me a lot on set. It's observing his dedication. His acting is what taught me the most. He would tell me at length about lenses and anamorphic format and all that sort of technical stuff. I thought, Oh my God, he knows all this shit, and I know nothing. He would never just sit in his chair and watch. He was always hands-on. He was also always early to set. If I were the director, I would love to work with people like him.

Q13: *You did a #TimesUp post on Instagram about wearing black to support women. What does the movement mean to you?*

BOUTELLA: It means a lot. I was proud to be part of the 5050×2020 movement at Cannes, where Cate Blanchett spoke about equality for women. Women need to be respected. Women are strong, valuable and important. Women *matter*. When I was younger, I was working on a commercial, and there was a producer who was seducing me. I was naive. I was told to go grab a bite with him. I thought the entire crew was coming, but then I was sitting there and seeing weird behavior from him. I had to face that. We need the movement in order to make a difference, and it needs to be strong. We need to voice it as loud as we can until everything is equal. I first heard about feminism when I was quite young; I didn't know what it meant or understand the importance of it. Now that I'm more educated, I know that you need to be a feminist. If you're not, go fuck yourself.

Q14: *Have you ever feared for your life?*

BOUTELLA: I had a stalker. We dated when I was 24, and he stalked me for two years after we broke up. Once, at two A.M., I was driving down the highway and he was following me. I was shaking. As I was trying to get away, my car spun uncontrollably. I hit a tree and the car ended up upside down. The moment I opened my eyes, I took a breath, went straight to unbuckle the seatbelt and crawled out of the car. A woman grabbed me and started praying to Jesus. I was like, "What's going on?" I had a piece of glass in my eye. I was so shocked. See, again, this is men thinking they can do whatever the fuck they want with women. This guy would control my life with fear. Fuck that shit.

Q15: *Algeria recently expelled more than 13,000 migrants. It has been reported that people were left to travel across the Sahara, often at gunpoint, without money, food or water. Did that have a personal resonance for you?*

WOMEN MATTER. YOU NEED TO BE A FEMINIST. IF YOU'RE NOT, GO FUCK YOURSELF.

BOUTELLA: It's a tough one. My dad always goes back to do projects there and is working on a documentary now. He has revolted against what's going on. It breaks my heart. I remember when I was a kid, people would always knock on my grandparents' door. They were from the south, and they would ask to do work in exchange for food and a place to sleep after a long journey. My grandmother would always say yes. Every time I came to visit, there would be a new person staying there. We got lucky and left under different circumstances. Imagine the people who are less fortunate. It's not normal to me, and something needs to be done.

Q16: *The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Trump's travel ban, even after the disgrace of separating children from their families at the border. As an immigrant, what are your thoughts?*

BOUTELLA: It's depressing and it's awful. I'm an immigrant coming from Algeria to France and then to America. I can't believe what's being done, and it's not okay. You know, I feel very weird: For a long time, I have felt bad that I got to live in France and then America. Every time something good happened to me, it would always be laced with guilt. It's why I can't be interviewed in Algeria. I can't sit across from someone and have such a strong opinion and not say it. That's why I try to be careful.

Q17: *Let's get back to your personal life. What does love mean to you?*

BOUTELLA: It's about sharing on a deep level. It's important when I feel it. I think we are all driven by that. That's why people do the craziest things ever. That's why people built the Taj Mahal—for a feeling. I don't search for it; I've always been baffled and surprised by it. It's interesting, because when I was growing up, I thought life is great: You meet people, you go on a journey, then you meet someone else. You change boyfriends. That's normal. When I was 28, I thought, I want something else. I want to value it. I love strongly.

Q18: *How do you identify sexually?*

BOUTELLA: I don't like labels. I love people. I have had more men in my life. I've never been in a relationship with a woman, but I wouldn't be surprised if I do. If I feel it, I'll be honest with it. Am I heterosexual? I guess. Who knows? I think I feel more attracted to men. I've kissed women. It was fun. I fall in love with people all the time, but I've never been in love with a woman. I'm sexual, and it shouldn't be taboo to talk about it.

Q19: *Are you single?*

BOUTELLA: I don't know.

Q20: *You're 36 now. What have you learned about yourself over the years?*

BOUTELLA: All sorts of things. I shape myself every day. I learned that I have courage. There isn't a day that I don't realize where I came from and what I get to do today. I've just been invited to be a member of the Academy, which is insane. I feel blessed with life. If I tried to do in Algeria what I'm doing now—if there wasn't a civil war and my mom wanted to stay—it would be really difficult for me to exercise my art. I feel very grateful. ■

OF HUMAN BONDAGE

BY **JONATHAN TASINI**

Around the world—America included—forced labor is alive and well. Our correspondent meets survivors and activists striving to break the chains once and for all

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JAKE FOREMAN**

Consider this: Just about every product you consume and every service you use is at least a tangential result of forced labor. Someone put his or her sweat into giving you something, and she or he did so not out of free will but because of fraud, coercion, threats or abduction.

Your clothes almost certainly came from a country where people labor for wages of less than $2 a day while enduring threats, beatings and hazardous working conditions. Your food—whether eaten at a restaurant, handed to you by a roadside vendor or purchased at a grocery store—landed on your plate thanks in part to farm workers who were victims of human trafficking. The domestic worker who cleans your home or watches your children may have been a teacher in the Philippines before being lured here by a bogus recruitment agency.

The International Labor Organization, which tries to police the global agreements banning human trafficking, estimates that for every 1,000 people in the world, 5.4 are victims of modern slavery: 16 million people in the private sector; 4.8 million (mostly women) who are victims of forced sexual exploitation; 4 million in state-forced labor such as prisons; and 15 million—virtually all of them women—trapped in forced marriages, which we don't usually think of as slavery.

In fact, modern-day slavery bears little resemblance to the familiar depictions of malnourished people in chains. Threats are mostly subtler than physical violence: If the victims don't comply, the traffickers can get them deported or make veiled threats against their families, which is especially effective with workers who have little contact with their loved ones. Traffickers can fill out all the proper immigration forms but mask the true destination of workers, knowing that enforcement is scattershot and the penalties minimal—mostly falling on the workers themselves. The forced laborers, who often speak little if any English, have scant knowledge of workplace laws, leading to stolen wages, exhausting work hours and arduous accommodations. And it's likely worse than current statistics would have you believe. According to Polaris, an international antislavery advocacy group, "the individuals whose cases were reported likely represent only a very small fraction of the number of actual victims."

If we want to eradicate slavery once and for all, we'd better start with a good hard look at the masks it wears.

• • •

Jose Rodriguez heard from a friend about a job working state fairs in the eastern United States. Eager to make more than his meager earnings in Mexico, he leapt at the opportunity. "The whole point of coming to the U.S. is that the little money you make here seems to be 10 times more than what you can make in Mexico," he tells me. So one day in 2010, the then 20-year-old left his home in the state of Veracruz, Mexico to join up with four other men on a day-long bus trip to a Texas border crossing. At the border-control post, a lawyer met the men and assisted their processing under the H-2B visa program, which covers nonagricultural temporary work. The next day, the five men flew to LaGuardia Airport in New York, where they were hustled into a van and driven to a state fair in New Jersey.

At the fair, Rodriguez would set up tents, lights and grills and do food prep. He often worked 12 hours a day, with no breaks except to run to the bathroom. It wasn't till he had made it through the first fair that he learned he would be making $400 for the week. "Because I didn't know English, I didn't know my rights at all," he says.

But working so hard for so little was only the beginning. The men, 10 in all, lived in a single-bedroom mobile home. They slept on small beds, one of which Rodriguez had to share with a friend—"family style," he calls it. They had no heat, no food, no working toilets or even running water. Electricity was supplied by a gas-powered generator.

When Rodriguez's last fair job finished, the trafficker hooked up the mobile home to a truck and drove it to Astoria, New York, where he parked the vehicle in a locked car wash. Then he left. The men were stranded without food or water and with no idea what would happen next. Eventually they managed to pool a few dollars, slip under the fence and buy some coffee and cookies. The activity raised suspicions, and thanks to the police and a nonprofit organization that assists immigrants, the men were relocated to a nearby refugee hotel. When the trafficker arrived back at the car wash, he was arrested and forced to pay the men a part of the money they were owed. Rodriguez was able to get a work permit to stay in the country in exchange for agreeing to testify, two years later, at the trial of the trafficker. He is now a citizen.

• • •

Although slavery has existed for as long as people have congregated into organized societies, today it's a $150 billion worldwide business. The problem is metastasizing at a scale we've never encountered before due to three major factors: global commerce, war and the planetary climate crisis.

First and foremost, forced labor is an integral part of the machinery of the global economy. Most industries profit less from innovation than they do from a dogged reliance on lower labor costs. To that end, labor brokers feed an economic supply chain across continents, creating a tangle of relationships that stretches from the factory floor to the executive suite—all to create a sheen of plausible deniability about the conditions under which human beings work for pennies. Meanwhile, deals such as the North American Free Trade Agreement impose austerity on small producers who cannot compete against better-equipped and relentlessly cost-cutting companies, turning farmers into for-hire laborers. This system hums along unchallenged largely because unions, especially in the U.S., have been cut down in size and power.

Second, wars envelop vast areas of the globe and sometimes last for decades. Of the unprecedented 68.5 million people displaced from their homes by late 2017, 25.4 million are refugees who have fled because of government-sponsored armed conflict. The brutal civil war in Syria has generated an astonishing 5.6 million refugees, most of whom have fled the Assad regime's relentless conventional and chemical warfare attacks on civilians living in rebel-affiliated areas.

And then there's climate change. Human

rapacity and political dysfunction have intensified droughts and famines, bankrupting millions of already desperate people, especially in Africa, and forcing them off their small plots of farmland or from villages where wells have dried up and crops have withered. All those people end up desperately trying to scratch out an existence, making them prime targets for human traffickers, who are increasingly part of sophisticated organized-crime groups.

Global inaction or indifference has been a persistent obstacle. The 1930 Forced Labor Convention mandated an end to forced or compulsory labor, but eight decades later governments are still quibbling over how it should be enforced. In 2014, an update to the original Labor Convention passed, detailing new legal and educational steps governments and employers should take to end the scourge. But in 2018, Mozambique became only the 25th country to adopt the new document.

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Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz,* Ronny Marty found himself not in Kansas, where he had been promised a job by a supposed recruiter in his native Dominican Republic, but headed to Huntsville, Alabama, crammed in a van with other bewildered workers. He had come to America for a $9-an-hour job at a Kansas hotel; instead, he ended up earning $7.25 an hour at a local manufacturer—an amount that dwindled to $40 a week after a raft of deductions demanded by the trafficker. Marty and three other men had to cough up gas money for the trip to Huntsville and $300 each per month for a tiny, shabby apartment. He also noticed that his visa was for only three months, not the promised nine months, which would mean more fees for an extension.

There was a point at which the workers were forced to pool their money just to feed themselves. "Everybody was pitching in, putting money there to buy the groceries, and I didn't have money," he recalls. "I sometimes stayed in my apartment and cried."

Marty got his freedom only because of the trafficker's greed. It turned out the latter was collecting the rent total from the men, paying the landlord half and pocketing the rest. When the rent was long overdue, the landlord became suspicious and connected the men with a local reporter. The employer threatened to have them deported if they spoke out, but Marty reasoned he had nothing to lose and told his story publicly. Months later, he gained permanent-resident status. Soon after that, he eagerly agreed to do something unusual: He become a member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. It was unusual because most trafficked people want only to find a job and remain anonymous, fearing a system that could inflict more pain if they make waves. And fear, of course, is what keeps the trafficking wheels greased.

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It isn't just unskilled labor at risk. Noel Abalos was a teacher in the Philippines; he also held down jobs as a sports coordinator, a soccer coach and head of a school physical education department. Working seven days a week, he earned 22,000 pesos (equivalent to roughly $500) a month. "I'd been working my ass off," he says as we sit in a small coffee shop in Burlingame, California, just south of San Francisco. "I think I won't be able to give my children a good future, and my wife was pregnant back then, so I had to think of the future." He heard about an opportunity other friends had leapt at: to teach in the United States. "They were able to become rich so fast. They were able to buy houses that are nice, and they were able to send their kids to a prestigious school."

Abalos scoured newspaper advertisements for teaching opportunities. He finally found a local agency that seemed to have links with recruiters from the U.S. Before getting the first job offer, though, he had to pony up an ever-increasing amount of cash for various services, with the agency taking some or all of each payment. It started with an agency membership fee of 1,000 pesos, then a résumé-preparation process for 25,000. Each time an American human resources person would arrive, the recruits were dunned $200 for a "training class," which amounted to the foreigner marketing a U.S. school district. Then came a torrent of certification tests administered by U.S. school districts—each with its own price tag.

All told, Abalos says, he laid out $12,000 before he set foot in the U.S. He had to borrow $6,000 to cover the costs, at interest rates so high that he ended up owing $16,000 on the loans. Of course, the "authorized" lending firms were all in cahoots with the recruiting agency. While waiting for a job, "I had to find work just to pay for the interest," he says. He might have been lucky: A friend of his, Saturnina Encarnado, who would also be exploited by the same trafficker, estimated her costs to be more than $23,000.

And then he waited. Waited for the offers to come. Waited for shoddy visa documents to be corrected by the agency he was already paying. Waited for the chance to start climbing out of his deep debt hole.

He finally got a job offer in the middle of a school year. After shelling out money for his own ticket and agreeing to pay yet another $1,600 for three months of local transportation and lodging, he landed in Wilson County, North Carolina. Except when he arrived, there was no job. And to make matters worse, he heard that a group of other teachers he knew had been crammed into a van and driven to a building in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina that had no internet, no phone and virtually no neighbors. The recruiter wanted to isolate them—essentially, to hold them captive—until he could move them into jobs so they couldn't report back to the Philippines.

Abalos was close to cracking, especially

A PIMP MADE HER TATTOO HIS NAME ON HER CHEST, AS HE DID WITH HUNDREDS OF OTHER GIRLS, TO SHOW OWNERSHIP.

because of what his wife was going through halfway around the world. “She’s the one getting all the harassment from these lending firms and from the people we owed money to. She’s getting distressed too. That, for me, was terrible. I was really at the point where I couldn’t talk anymore,” he recalls, his eyes moistening at the memory.

Still, Abalos was lucky. He and the other teachers were able to extricate themselves, thanks in part to the advocacy of GABRIELA Washington, D.C., a chapter of an alliance that advocates for the rights of Filipino women and teachers. With the financial help of a sister, he made his way to California, where he now lives. He has stood in line on the side of a road near a Home Depot to get construction gigs, worked as a caregiver and taken on some substitute teaching while he tries to get full-time teaching credentials. In some of the jobs, “I wasn’t getting the rate that I was supposed to be paid,” he says. “But you can’t do anything, because that’s the only job available. It’s about survival. You have to survive.”

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When it comes to sexual exploitation, there is debate about what it looks like and who is inflicting it. Ninety-nine percent of its victims are adult women and girls, according to the International Labor Organization; are they controlled by criminal organizations, small-time pimps or predatory boyfriends? It appears that in the areas of highest exploitation—Asia and the Pacific region account for more than 70 percent of forced sexual-exploitation cases—organized crime rings, sometimes modest in size, control a significant part of the activity.

Victims include women who find themselves working in massage parlors that act as fronts for transactional sex. In other cases, the reality can lurk behind a romantic veneer. “Sex traffickers are boyfriends,” argues Lois Lee, founder and president of Children of the Night, a nonprofit organization (started with a grant from the Playboy Foundation in 1979) that provides services and advocacy for children and young people who are sexually exploited in prostitution worldwide. “The sex-trafficking thing is bullshit,” she says. “These guys fill them up with this pipe dream: ‘I’m going to build a business and I’m going to have a house and you’re going to have my baby.’ And these girls want what every other little girl is told she’s supposed to want.”

When I speak with Jocelyn (not her real name), she gives some credence to Lee’s view. “It started off by running away from home,” she tells me by phone from her residence in Dallas. “I was flushed through the system—foster care, group homes, juvenile hall. I had a friend who was in the system, and she was recruiting me even though I didn’t realize it. I met this guy. We were hanging out, and he said I could make money. He took me to his home, gave me food, and he took my virginity.” Within a few weeks, he had drugged the then 15-year-old. While she was unconscious, she was raped by multiple men, she says, who paid money.

Pimps came and went in her life, until she linked up with one who made her tattoo his name on her chest, as he did with the hundreds of other girls he controlled, to show ownership. “I portray myself as his girlfriend, but it is a business,” she says. Today, 20 and pregnant, Jocelyn has moved off the streets, which were increasingly dangerous, and into a strip club. Although she can quit, she is still in many ways in forced labor. “The men are breaking the girls down so that even when they’re adults that’s all they know how to do,” she says.

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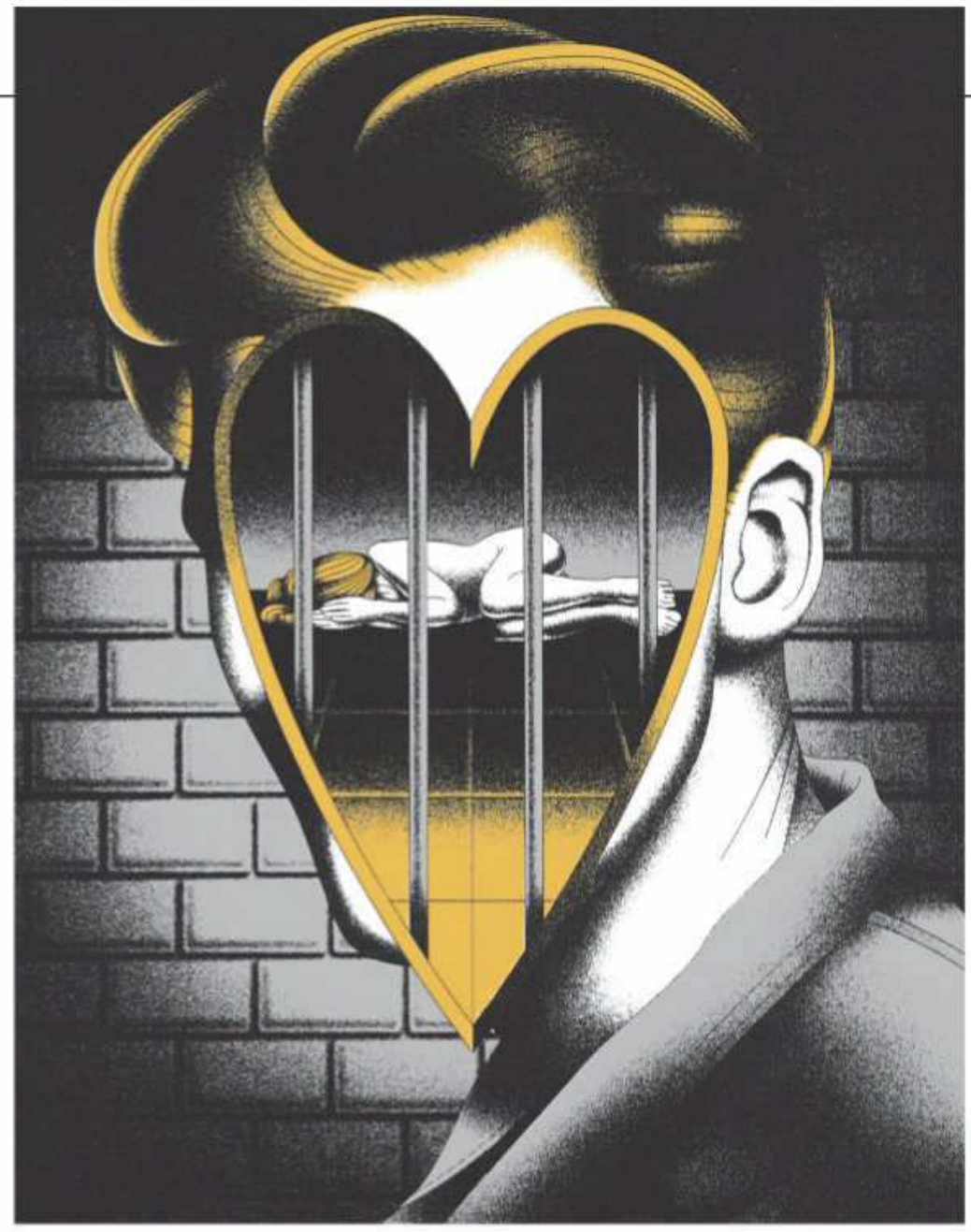
Beate Andrees has been working on global slavery for close to two decades, brought to the issue by personal experience. Born and raised in the former East Germany, she had a friend who was imprisoned, for political reasons, in a forced labor camp. That sent Andrees, some years later, into academic research on the topic, which in turn led to a job for the German parliament and a lecturing position at the Free University of Berlin. In 2003, she joined the International Labor Organization, where she oversees its main initiatives to end forced labor. Her job is a strenuous exercise in global human rights diplomacy: trying to get governments, companies and the lower-level labor brokers to play by new rules.

When I press her about the perceived inevitably of human trafficking, she calls herself a “reasonable optimist.” She explains: “A few years ago, before the Syria crisis broke out, we had worked with the Jordanian government on child labor for many years, and we were quite close to basically declaring Jordan child labor–free because they had taken very effective measures. Then the war breaks out, you have millions of refugees pouring into the country....” Result: Child labor skyrockets. “It’s very difficult for parents to find a job. Usually the children get picked up by the labor workers, and they work on the plantations because they’re cheap and available and there are no schools, with some exceptions. So it’s a tough choice to make for those families, who are basically struggling for survival.”

She points to a breakthrough, also involving Jordan. Unscrupulous brokers would typically recruit women from Nepal to work in Jordan



for apparel companies that were, at best, willfully ignorant of the rampant exploitation of workers. Once the women arrived, they usually found the pay to be half the promised $300 monthly salary, but many were too poor to return home. Enter the ILO and other partners, including companies such as Gap Inc. (which had been on the wrong side of the issue), and a program that essentially eliminates the middlemen and educates women at the village level about their contracts and rights. Now, says Alix Nasri, an ILO specialist based in Qatar, the women do not pay fees to get work and "are much more likely to understand the terms of their contract, are less likely to report being deceived about working conditions and are more confident in their ability to voice their opinions at work."

Another ILO approach is the economic carrot on a stick. As Guy Ryder, the ILO general director, told 1,000 CEOs at a June 2018 consumer goods summit in Singapore, "Businesses have a central role to play in fighting the global scourge of forced labor. It is not just the right thing to do; it makes economic sense too. Value chains that are free of forced labor are much more productive and sustainable than those that cut costs and whose workers toil in conditions akin to slavery." Ryder's point is that, putting morality to one side, low-wage labor turns over rapidly, forcing companies to constantly spend money to find new hires.

The Nepal-to-Jordan experiment, the tireless work of people like Andrees and the prodding of leaders like Ryder do make a difference. The number of child laborers, for example, declined by more than 94 million between 2000 and 2016—though no one can explain precisely the reasons for the drop. Indeed, child-labor statistics can highlight the maddening challenges antislavery activists face. Because of insufficient funding for research, they buttress their arguments with data that is sometimes contradictory and incomplete. (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime database, for example, tracks cases only up to 2015.) They brandish international agreements signed by governments whose commitment to enforcing national laws ebbs and flows with time and shifting political leadership.

Overlapping, chronically underfunded and often competing, nonprofits do not have the wherewithal to scale up a Nepal-to-Jordan success. Without painful penalties—such as long prison terms for corrupt or negligent executives—they must rely on the willingness of companies to obey higher standards. Every manager, up and down the corporate ladder, wants to show profits to keep their own job, and so a constant hawklike vigilance is called for.

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Ultimately, the only way to come close to shrinking human trafficking is to ensure that workers have real power. In the U.S. and throughout the world, even as they confront dwindling union influence, workers and their leaders are pushing back, sometimes looking to harness power inside new pre-union organizations. Populist uprisings in response to economic austerity have manifested themselves at the ballot box: Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who once led a mass refusal to pay sky-high electric bills, rode the long-term economic crisis in Mexico to victory in the country's recent presidential election.

The current efforts to end forced labor are crucial, but Andrees is clear: "The NGOs will focus on short-term assistance. You need to change the bargaining power. NGO work doesn't replace the need to invest in collective bargaining and the empowerment that comes from having your own organization that engages in collective bargaining and also in social dialogue on policy matters with the government."

Still, because Andrees has to work with businesses, she is extraordinarily diplomatic, using slightly wonky language to telegraph an uncomfortable truth about slavery: It exists because workers are at the mercy of a harsh economic system and a set of laws that can't always distinguish between permissible and nonpermissible exploitation. It's a fine line between forced labor that violates international law and Walmart producing billions of dollars' worth of goods in Chinese factories that operate legally but pay people subsistence wages, if that. The law-breaking traffickers are always looking for the seam through which they can make a buck at the expense of workers—but so are Walmart and its corporate brethren.

Or to take it closer to home: Jose Rodriguez, Ronny Marty, Noel Abalos and "Jocelyn" fell victim to predatory traffickers who broke laws, but they were exploited within the U.S., where earning the minimum wage is a license to live in poverty. And every day, from the Supreme Court down to the factory floor, workers face a narrowing of rights that translates to smaller paychecks and less security.

In essence, the end of human trafficking will come when workers have the leverage in an ever-mutating economic system to make sure they get paid what they deserve. Just imagine: the demon of slavery exorcised from all the underpriced possessions that surround and sustain us. You can't put a price on that. ■

NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

La Reina

Spend an afternoon with Mexican-born model **Jocelyn Corona,** one of the most exciting names in the game

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RUBY LAW**

1,111 EMBLEMS

Indebted for life to pay for death

FICTION BY **HERNAN DIAZ**

ILLUSTRATION BY **GREEDY HEN**

"I know Mom's out hunting," she said to break the long silence. "I'll leave before she comes back."

He held on to the door handle. The droning voice on the radio seeped out from the house and into the forest. He hadn't seen his daughter in over two years. What should he say? Could he touch her? He moved to let her through. Their heads hung low. She walked sideways as she passed by her father, who closed the door behind her.

He turned off the radio and, faced with the ensuing silence, repressed the desire to turn it back on. An ill-chosen word, a misconstrued gesture, a poorly timed pause, and she could turn around and leave again. A log crumbled in the hearth; the fire hissed. He sat down and gestured to her chair. It was still her chair.

They sat in silence.

Because he didn't dare to look at her openly, he got up to get some food so he could glance in her direction as he moved around. She was the same, only thinner and harder. There was something strange about her mouth—her left cheek was unnaturally concave, as if she were missing a few teeth on that side. He knew that she knew that she was being observed. He rinsed some radishes in a pail with cloudy water and put them on a tin plate together with a few nuts.

"You're so thin," he said as he put the plate in front of her.

"Closer to the essence," she replied, looking at the plate and then closing her eyes.

It was this kind of talk that had driven them apart. He didn't respond and didn't expect her to touch the food. But to his surprise, after whispering with her eyes shut for a moment, she picked up a radish. She stared at it for a long time and bit a piece off. From how she moved the morsel in her mouth, he confirmed that she was missing at least a couple of molars.

“I’m sorry,” he said. And he was. Sorry for her and for her missing teeth. For his wife and for himself. But he hoped his daughter would take this as an apology as well. Before she left them, he had lost all patience with her. Snapped and yelled at her. Even mocked and derided her. That was what he regretted the most: his jeering. Still, he also had to admit to himself that he had said sorry just now because it was the only safe thing to say.

She swallowed the bite of radish almost whole.

“Your feelings are yours,” she said. “They have to become not you to touch the world.”

Always an answer ready, as if someone were transmitting the words through her. That’s how their fights had started: Those blocks of meaning made him furious. They were, for the most part, impenetrable and hard but could also be intangible and pervasive, like a gas invisibly filling a container and taking its shape. Many of these ready-made phrases (that’s how they sounded to him) were platitudes; others were nonsense; a few were truly insightful, which he never admitted to her.

“We’ve missed you so much,” he said. “Your mother has been”

“I know,” she said over him. “That’s why I came while she’s away. I trust you will let me go without making a scene.”

His wife had never stopped fighting for their daughter. When she understood that she was losing her child, she tried to change—become more like her. She read everything her daughter read, tried to engage her in conversation and went to some Gatherings with her. And whenever he went on one of his scornful tirades, she always stood up for her girl.

“One is where one is,” she said at length. “But I can’t be here. I’ve put others at risk by coming.”

“What’s wrong?” he asked.

“Our perception of things.”

“I mean, are you all right?”

“Look at me.”

He was ashamed to have asked.

“What you see is how I am to you,” she added. “Ask yourself if your perception is all right.”

“I can. We can help you.”

“Help is only an interference. Help is only a delay.”

The oppressive feeling of being forced into that language came back. She imposed that dialect on him, throttled him with it and took everything he said and translated it into her jargon. It had all started with a few pamphlets and books she read. As she began attending the Gatherings and spending more time with the Coach and the Bond, this new language had taken over her speech almost completely. Then she left for the first time. Nine days of despair. He and his wife knew she had left with the Bond, of course, but they didn’t know where they had gone or for how long. When she came back, nothing of her own voice remained. It was only this language. These blocks, this vapor. At first, he tried to pull her back, responding with kind words—everyday words—to her terrifyingly distant slogans. Eventually, his patience wore off, and he started arguing with her. His wife tried to be understanding and even tended to side with their daughter, who was invariably indifferent to her support. Frustration yielded to rage, and he went on long rants, trying to reduce his daughter’s beliefs to mere superstitious gibberish. He was not angry at her but at the puppeteer whose voice he heard in her stiff utterings. She kept calm and won every fight by not fighting back. His arguments crashed against the irrefutable blocks or got lost in a mist that was vague and esoteric enough to fit any context. That’s when he started to mock her, ridiculing her ideas and scoffing at her jargon. He even used to caricature her intonation and gestures. Overcome with remorse after his one-sided quarrels with her, he would tell himself that it was not his daughter he had mocked but the ventriloquist behind her. In the end, after she left for the second time, he was disgusted to realize that it was in fact his daughter whom he had been ridiculing all along.

“I’m. I would do anything,” he managed to say.

“*Would* is a closed door to a parallel universe. You are never the subject of a conditional”

“Anything,” he said, interrupting her and immediately regretting it. “Anything at all to have you back with us. We could. I could start going to the Gatherings with you. Maybe you could teach me.”

“We go to the Gatherings to scatter, not to gather.”

“I have so much to learn,” he said, watching for the slightest trace of condescension in his

She kept calm and won every fight by not fighting back.

voice. “Maybe you could introduce me to the Bond? Show me?”

She looked up and into his eyes. He didn’t allow himself to cry.

“We may not see each other again,” she said.

For the first time in years, it sounded like her.

“I won’t let that happen.”

The generator started to rumble in the distance, making the walls tremble. It picked up speed with each cycle, and when the roar became a high-pitch purr, the house stopped vibrating.

“They turn it on during the daytime?” she asked.

He tried to hide his surprise. She hadn’t shown any interest in everyday matters in a long time.

“Yes. Things are better here now.” It was probably impossible to convince her to come back, but he tried. “We get four units a week, can you believe it?”

“I came to say good-bye.”

“Please don’t say”

“I have this debt. A huge debt,” she said, seeming almost pleased.

“I. With whom?”

“With them.”

“With them?”

“With the Bond. With the Coach. It will take my entire life to pay it off.”

His blood thinned.

“No, no, no. Listen.” His skin tingled with despair. “I’ve been saving most of our units. How many do you need?”

“Thousands of units wouldn’t help.”

“I can borrow. I can borrow from the system. And from our neighbors. How much?”

She looked at the half-eaten radish.

“We have that hidden gold, remember?” he said with a smile that felt like a grotesque grimace. “From Grandma?”

She put the radish down and gazed at the plate, shaking her head.

“We’ll sell the house,” he said. “Houses sell in a second, you know that. We can build a shelter inland. You won’t believe what a good hunter Mom has become. We’ll manage.”

“My debt can’t be paid back in units.”

He stared at her, feeling death in his chest.

She looked up and faced him.

“What kind of debt is this that units can’t cover?”

“I owe the Coach. I owe him directly. And he’s not interested in units.”

“Oh love.” He faltered.

“Oh no. Nothing of the sort,” she said, waving her hand. “The Coach has started a new currency. The Emblem.”

“What do you mean?”

“The Coach has started a new currency. The Emblem.”

“And what’s the exchange rate?” His rage was mounting. Had he managed to suppress every hint of sarcasm? “How many units to the Emblem? There must be a way to settle this.”

“Units mean nothing to the Coach. He now emits Emblems. It’s the only legal tender at the Gatherings. You can’t buy Emblems with units. You can only earn Emblems by selling your labor or your things. No exchange.”

He took a few moments to think.

“Good,” he said at last. “Good. So it’s play money. Means nothing. You don’t really owe him anything.”

“But I do. In fact, few members owe him as much as I do.”

“You seem proud of this.”

“We all try to acquire as much debt as possible. It shows our commitment.”

He looked at her. She focused on some point above his head.

“But what did he give you? How did you get into this debt?”

“It started about a year ago. First we had to pay for our food with Emblems.”

“You bought food from the Coach with the currency he emitted and lent to you?”

She ignored his false question. It was for the best. He feared he wouldn’t be able to restrain his indignation much longer.

“Food, lodging, clothes, the use of the generator. All paid for in Emblems.”

She picked up a nut and repeated the ceremony she had performed with the radish—closed her eyes, whispered, opened her eyes, stared at it for a long time and finally took a small bite. Again, she found it hard to chew.

He got up, looking for something soft for her to eat. There was only some smoked fish, which he cut into small pieces and put on her plate. Dicing the food and transferring it from one plate to the other, he remembered feeding his daughter as a toddler.

“Then the Coach had one of his realizations,” she continued. “A transcendental realization. A transcendental realization means bringing something that is beyond reality into the real. His TR was that the Bond would take over the world. The world would be the Bonded.”

“Please have some fish,” he said, exhausted in advance by the effort of trying to pull her out of the maze that she was starting to create with her exposition. Once more, by asking her to eat her food, he felt, faintly, like her father.

“Units are not really a currency,” she said, ignoring him. “They serve a purpose. They make all our devices and vehicles run. But money—bills and coins—never stored energy or *did* anything. Money was a token, with no practical use in itself. This is what the Coach is bringing back. The symbol. A symbol that will unite us. Bond us. The Emblem will be the realization of the Bond in the world.”

“You realize that resurrecting money—any form of currency—is a step *back,* right? If anything good came from the war, it was the collapse of the financial”

“There is a void,” she said, showing the slightest irritation in the way in which she closed her eyes for a moment while speaking over her father. “The void created by the absence of value. We live in a world limited to our hand’s reach. A world where everything is immediate and present. We have forgotten that our power of abstraction is what makes us human, which means we have lost our sense of value. Because the greatest values are always abstract. Abstraction and value go hand in hand.” She paused and shifted her tone, apparently regretting having condescended to engage in an open discussion with her father. “In order to spread the Emblem, the Coach needed to make its use compulsive and compulsory.”

“I see where this is going.”

“He realized that it was shortsighted to limit the use of the new currency to the usual goods and services bought and sold in the marketplace for millennia—food, fuel, shelter, safety and so on. No. The Emblem would go beyond that. It would go beyond the articles that support life. The Emblem would be intertwined with life itself.”

He stared at her, disoriented.

“Sleep. One Emblem per hour. That was the first biological function the Coach put a price on.”

“What?”

“Then the Coach announced that eating would cost two Emblems. That wasn’t the price of the food. The food was separate. Two Emblems was the price for the act of eating.”

“I don’t understand,” he said. But he did.

“I owe him two Emblems for having this food here.”

“Just because he says so,” he chortled. “Just because the ‘Coach’ says so.” He put air quotes around the word. “That’s the only reason you could possibly be in debt for eating a radish.”

“Half an Emblem for excretions. Drinking, a quarter. Reproduction is free. As is breathing. Sickness is expensive—the cost depends on the illness. Any form of bleeding, five. The list goes on. Dying is 1,111 Emblems. It’s the first thing we pay for. Until that amount has been fully covered, everything is debt. It takes a minimum of 10 or 12 Emblems to live one day, so by the time we’ve paid off death, we owe a few thousand for our living expenses.”

“This is absurd,” he said, knowing that his indignation had taken over and that he had lost again. “Who keeps the tally?” He chuckled. “Who keeps count? I mean.”

“Who would want to cheat?” she said and coughed hollowly into her fist.

“How much was that?” he asked with a sneer.

Before she could even breathe in, she started coughing again. A rusty roar. Barely able to inhale, her hands clenching the edge of the table, she looked around in despair and gasped but could only cough out, in short spurts, the air she didn’t have. Swollen veins and tight tendons seemed to be about to burst under the reddened skin of her neck. The chair screeched under her when she kicked away from the table, as if she were drowning.

“Whoa, wait! Are you sure you can afford to cough like this?”

Her eyes bulged out and teared up, and she trembled from the exertion. Once she managed to breathe in, wheezing, she seemed to choke, until she finally exhaled in a dry hoarse bark.

“Every Emblem counts,” he added with a condescending lilt.

When the fit subsided, she wiped the sweat from her forehead and looked at him, briefly, with unfocused coldness.

The generator slowed down and the purr became a low vibration. The house rattled. The small pieces of fish danced wildly on the tin plate. With a whistle, the generator came to a stop. It took the forest sounds a while to find their way back through the silence.

“Little by little, the use of Emblems is spreading beyond the Bond.” She was still winded, clearly focusing on regaining control of her breathing as she spoke. “Some outsiders have started to accept Emblems, knowing they can always use them with us. In fact, they are glad to save their units and pay us with Emblems for the work we occasionally do for them. The Coach says this is the first step.” She paused, inhaled and started breathing normally again. “It’s only a matter of time until the Emblem becomes the general currency. And then the Bond will be effective. Then we will all be Bonded together.”

“There is nothing in what you are telling me that makes this Emblem of yours actually valuable. Units, as you said, have a practical use. And the dollar and all those other currencies first were backed up by gold and later derived their value from interconnected”

“Emblems are backed up by our lives. It is the sum of our debts—of our abstracted bodies—that makes the Emblem valuable. Human existences Bonded together.”

“Just because he says so,” he repeated.

“Because we say so. Because we all say so. That is precisely what the Emblem stands for.”

He thought he detected a touch of impatience in her tone. This gave him hope. Anything that was genuinely hers gave him hope.

“I have now reached a point where I can’t possibly pay back what I owe in my lifetime,” she continued, without a hint of emotion in her voice. “I am Beyond, as the Coach explains. Those of us who are Beyond will be relocated. Banked.”

“You are not leaving this house.”

“Be reasonable,” she said. And now he definitely recognized, for a moment, her voice as her own. “You can’t hold me here forever. I’ll leave sooner or later. And what would be worse for Mom? To never know I was here or to have me for a few days and then lose me again forever?”

She got up.

“And if you tell her about this conversation, you know she’ll leave everything to come and join me. Even if I’m Beyond, deposited in an unknown place.”

He got up and embraced her. She hugged him back limply. He was surprised and overwhelmed, but also (despite the immense love he felt for her right then) angry at her gesture of reciprocity—part of him wished she hadn’t hugged him back, so that he could have preserved his rage intact.

“Please,” he whispered.

“Nobody can please.” It was the distant voice transmitting through her again.

Somehow, she dissolved between his arms and slipped out of the embrace. Without turning back, she walked to the door, opened it, stepped outside and closed it with her arm outstretched behind her. From inside, he looked at the handle being released, slowly, until it reached its resting horizontal position. That spectral movement, he thought, would probably be the last he ever saw of his daughter.

• • •

He woke up with a startle, relieved to see he had slept only a few minutes. After his daughter had left, he had sat at the table, rested his head on his arms and wept. He didn’t remember dozing off.

The radish with grooves made by his daughter’s incisors had started to shrivel. He picked it up and looked at the marks. She had left another ghostly trace behind her, after all. He thought of the way she had looked at the radish before biting a piece off, and then he ate it.

“The greatest values are abstract.”

The beasts snorted like they always did uphill. His wife was getting closer. He cleaned up the food, put the tin plate away and pushed his and his daughter’s chairs back into place. Now he could hear the wagon creaking. He turned the radio back on. His wife talked to the beasts as she tethered them out front. He opened the door.

“Hi, love,” she said. She was sweaty and grimy but beaming. “I got a huge one. Maybe the biggest ever. You won’t believe it.”

She uncovered the wagon and showed him the mangled, blood-spattered body.

“We should get at least 12 units for this, even after saving the best parts for ourselves.”

He stared at it.

“Come on, give me a hand,” she said.

He walked over to the wagon and set to work with his wife. ■

we'd better play it safe

NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ANA DIAS**

GAME SET MATCH

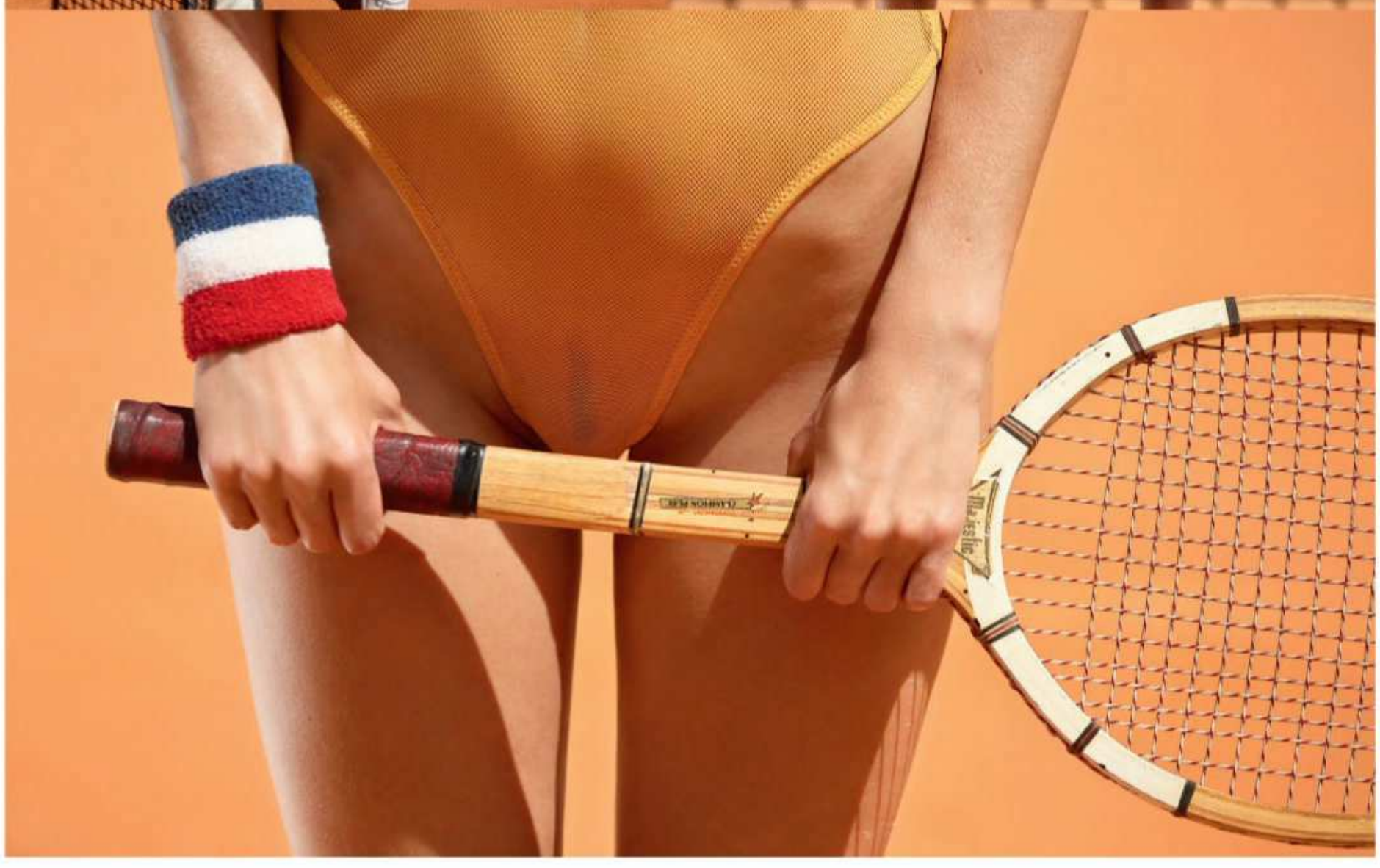
PLAYMATE

Tennis, anyone? Latvian beauty Olga de Mar hits the sweet spot

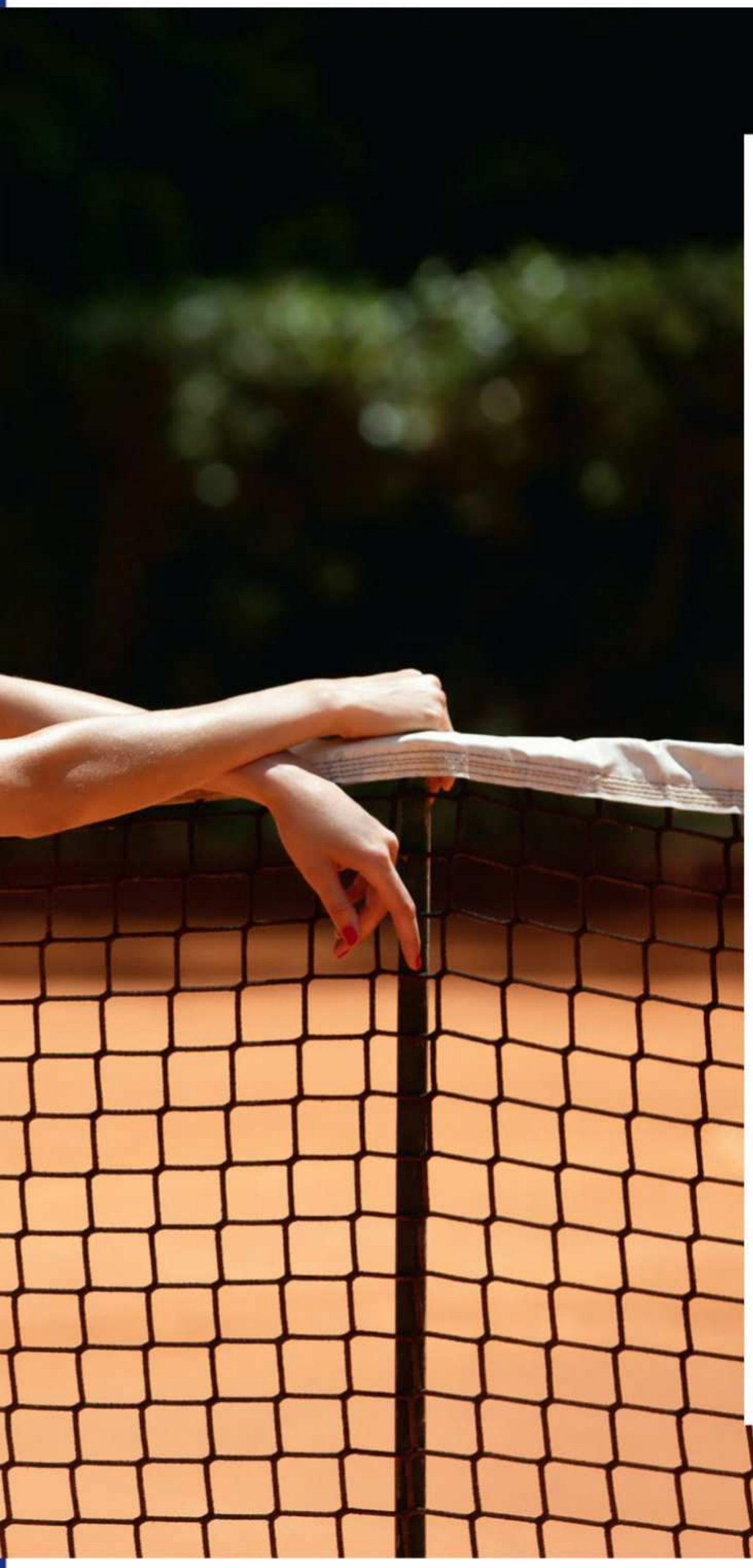
"I want 110 percent of what life offers me," says Olga de Mar. "Why should we put boxes around ourselves? Just enjoy it. Experience the world." Our October Playmate practices what she preaches: In the days leading up to her interview with PLAYBOY, Olga crushed photo shoots in Spain, Germany, Portugal and Italy, where she's currently based. "Usually I'm leaving my house at three in the morning to catch the first flight out and I'll get back around midnight, which gives me three hours to sleep," she explains. "But I'm used to it! If I have two days off, I get bored."

Born and raised in Latvia, Olga got her start in fitness competitions, but she always knew what she wanted to be. "I've been posing since the first time I saw a camera. I set up photo shoots with my cousins when I was a little kid." As it developed, her modeling career was met with a measure of parental doubt. "My mother said, 'What kind of job is that, posing in front of a camera? Who would pay you for that?' " A lot of people, as it turns out. And after stints as a bartender, waitress and housekeeper (oh, and she had a job on a sailboat), Olga went all-in on her lifelong dream.

While she might be described as the jet-setting European supermodel next door, Olga would like to remind us not to judge by appearances. Sure, she speaks seven languages and exudes classic sex appeal, but this woman of the world insists that what you see on social media isn't the whole Olga de Mar. "My persona is provocative, but in real life I'm soft and simple," she says. "People expect me in minidresses with eight-inch heels and my hair done, and they're pleased to discover I'm not that kind of person." So what kind of person *is* she? Olga puts it best: "I'm a gypsy." ■




Majestic
CHAMPION PLAY

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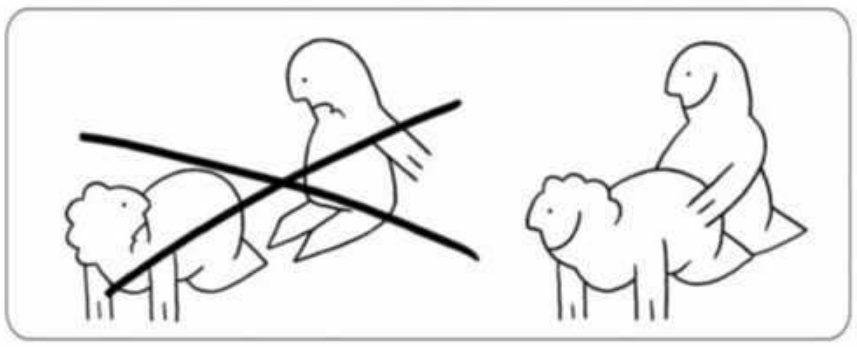

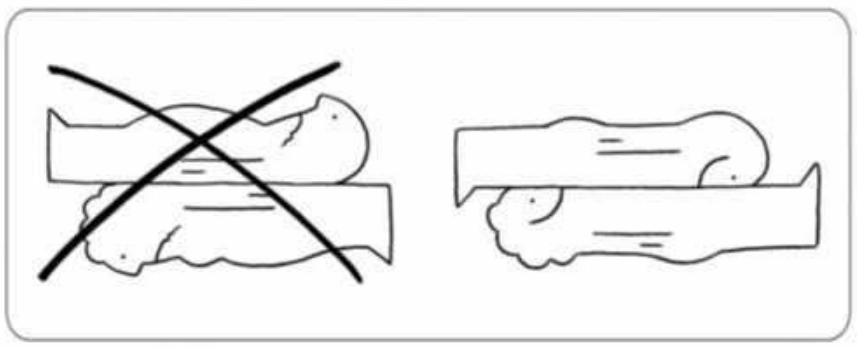

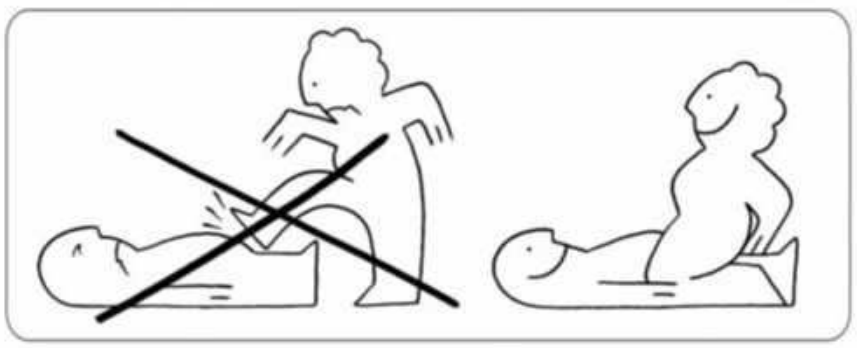

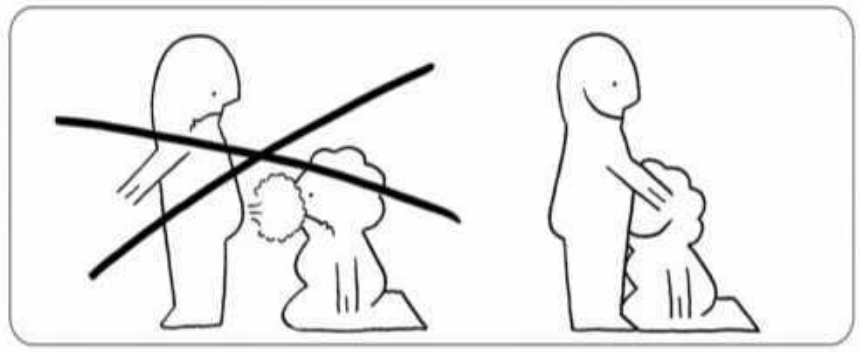

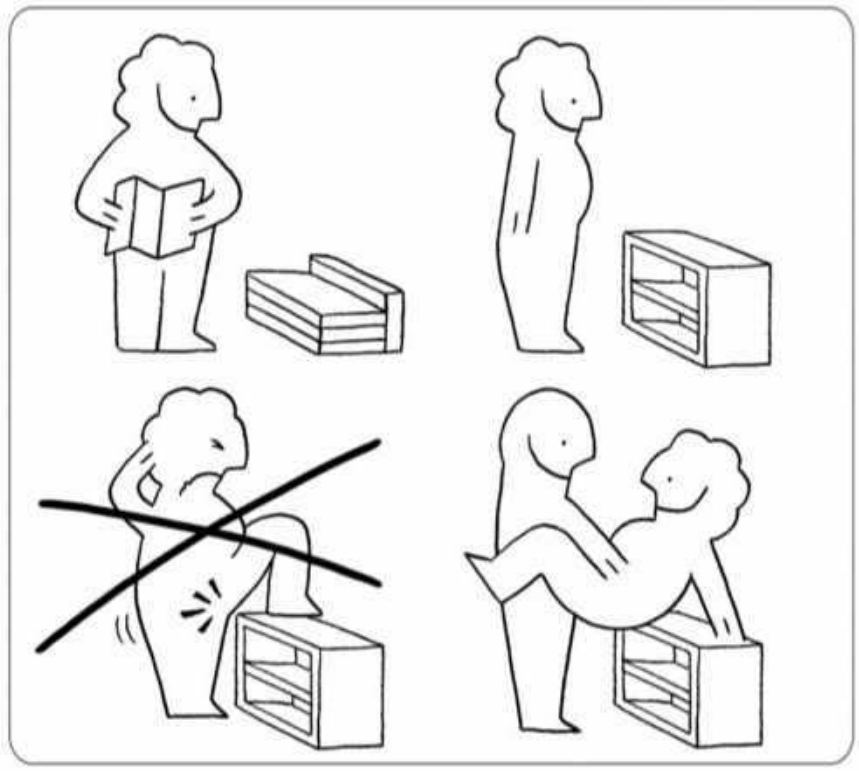

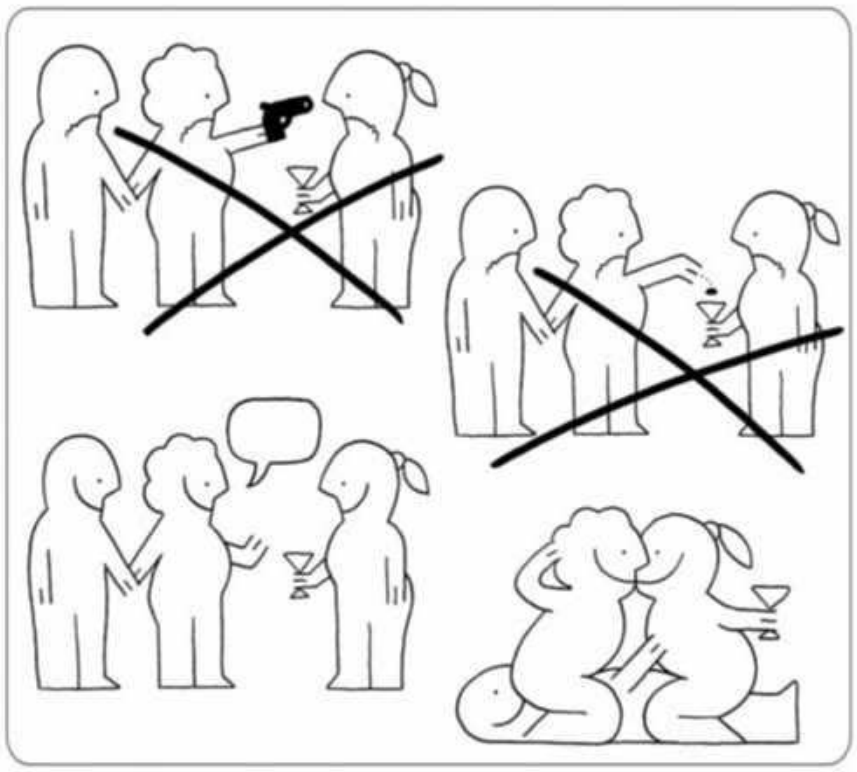

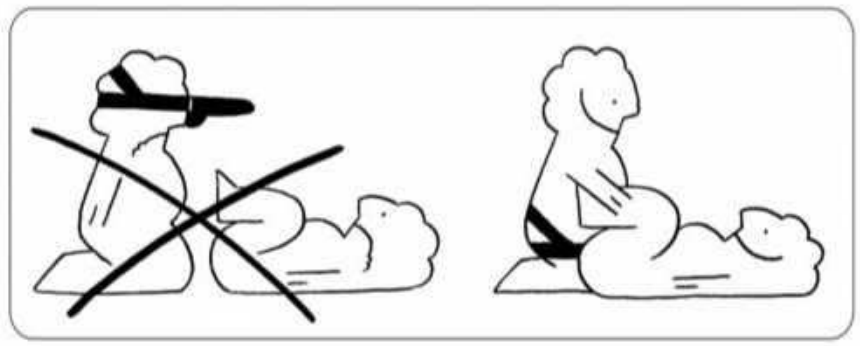

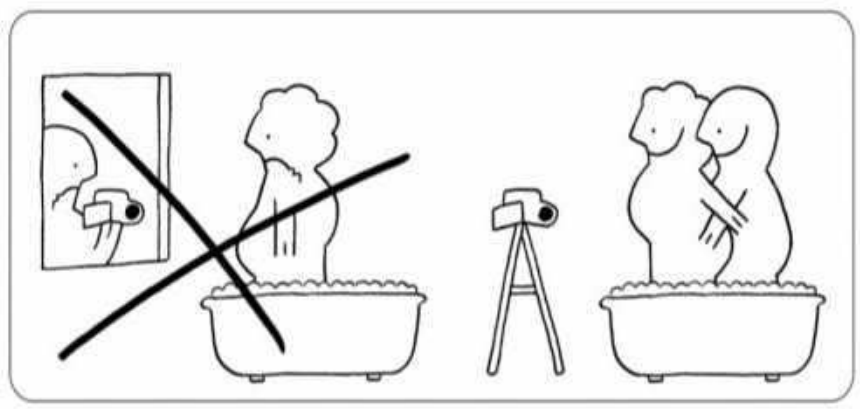

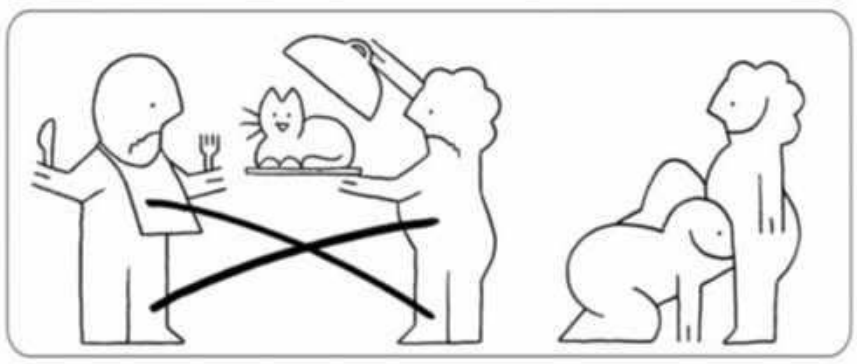

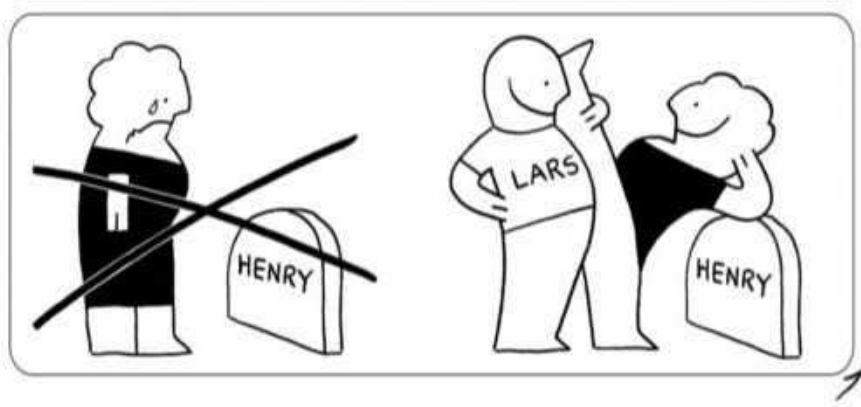

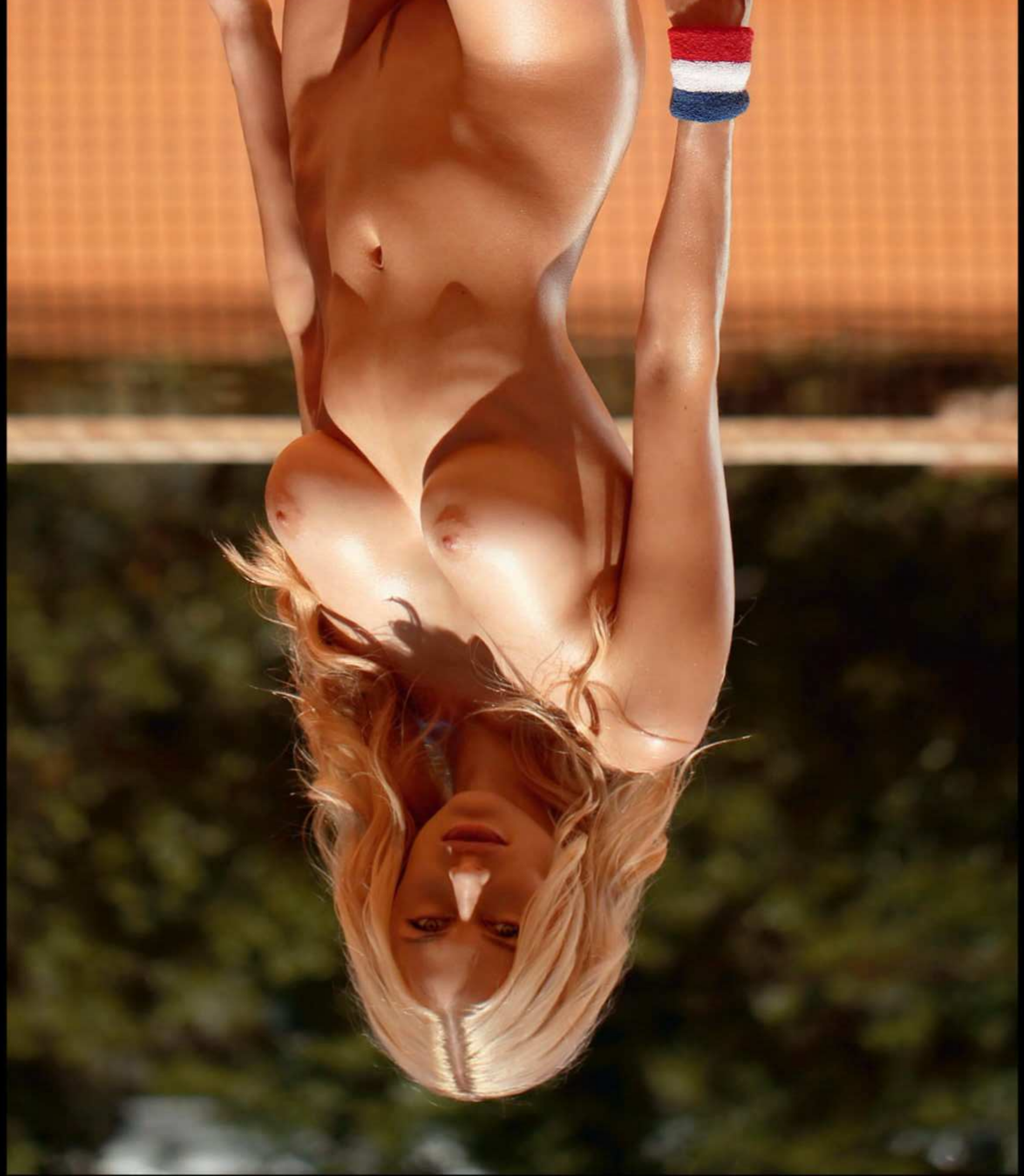

OCTOBER 2018 PLAYMATE

DATA SHEET



BIRTHPLACE: Daugavpils, Latvia **CURRENT CITY:** Milan, Italy

ITALIAN LESSONS

The first time I went to Italy, I thought, Oh my God, I feel like this is my country. People smile! The food is tasty! Everyone is so beautiful and nice! It was like paradise. Still, it was a hard adjustment. In Latvia, if I plan something, that means I'm going to do it. In Italy, it's like, "Come on, let's go drink!"

FREE STYLE

I like a guy who's curious about life and wants to discover all it has to offer. Someone who's intelligent with a lightness of character, never complaining and always smiling. A hippie without the hippie lifestyle!

OPEN YOUR HEART

Inspiration from many sources can make me feel sexy. It could be a beautiful flower, a good book or a dramatic film that makes you cry.

JEALOUS MUCH?

Jealousy is a turn-off. I don't agree when someone says, "If you're not jealous, you must not love me." It's the opposite. If you're jealous, then you're not sure about me—and you're not sure about yourself.

BUON POMERIGGIO

I could die for good food. I never drank wine or coffee before moving to Italy. It's so good and so cheap here! Now if I'm having lunch and it's not with a glass of wine, it's not a good lunch.

STRONG ENOUGH TO BE WEAK

Feeling feminine and showing weakness is beautiful to me. Women like Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Loren—they could be emotional, laugh and cry. Never shy and always open. Only a strong woman can show herself to be weak, and the same goes for men. If a man can cry and say he's sorry, it means he's strong.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

Your life is so rich. Don't waste time comparing it to someone else's. There is plenty of happiness to be had. If you make people around you happy, you'll be much happier. Make lots of friends, because they will bring life to *your* life.

CHARACTER STUDIES

When I started out, I was living in an apartment with eight other models—some of the most beautiful girls in the world. I was working like crazy while some of them booked zero jobs. That showed me it's about your character and not just what you look like. If you're annoying or don't actually like your job, you won't get hired.

Olga De Mar

@olgademar

HEARTS

and

MINDS

and

RHINO

HORNS

A week in the bush with VETPAW, a veterans' organization fighting to save endangered African wildlife while healing the wounds of war

It is just past one A.M. and I am deep in the South African bush with Ryan Tate, a 33-year-old native of Fort Myers, Florida and former United States marine. We are following the perimeter of an electrified fence that surrounds a 26,000-hectare private wildlife preserve situated in the northern fringes of Limpopo province. Just over the horizon lies the trinational border between South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, a hotbed of smuggling nicknamed Crooks Corner.

BY **PETER SIMEK**

In recent years some denizens of Crooks Corner have been trafficking in a new and peculiar contraband: rhinoceros horn. Between 2007 and 2014 rhino poaching increased by 9,000 percent; some 7,245 rhinos have been killed in the past decade. Most rhino species are now endangered, which is why Tate is out here, under cover of night. In 2013 Tate founded Veterans Empowered to Protect African Wildlife, or VETPAW, an antipoaching security organization staffed by U.S. military veterans who use the skills they sharpened in war to combat poaching in Africa. After launching in Tanzania—a rocky start, but more on that later—VETPAW has spent the past three years patrolling this private South African wildlife preserve that's home to all of Africa's "big five": lions, leopards, giraffes, water buffalo and one of the few thriving rhino herds left in the region.

Before landing on the continent, the closest Tate had ever come to African fauna was at a local zoo. Now he is one of the more controversial figures in the world of wildlife conservation. Some laud VETPAW for its innovative approach to the poaching problem—offering veterans a way to lend their military training to a peacetime cause. Others see Tate's organization as a dangerous misapplication of American-style militarization to an already violent corner of the world.

Tate is decked out head-to-toe in camouflage, a pistol on his hip. He points a flashlight at some human footprints alongside a tangle of impala tracks. He picks up a stick and measures a print. It looks like the sole of a worker's boot, probably belonging to one of the men from the nearby Venda tribal villages who slip under the fence each day to work on the property. But a second set of prints, this one from a pair of sneakers, concerns Tate. They seem to have come from the same direction as the worker, and Tate knows that those villages are also home to suspected poachers.

Apparently animals aren't the only ones prowling the darkness beyond the fence.

• • •

Many veterans struggle to adjust to life after combat, but Ryan Tate wasn't one of them—not at first, anyway. He served in Ramadi during the bloody years of 2005 and 2006. He was the point man on neighborhood patrols. Each time he busted down a door, it was "like playing Russian roulette," he says. But he loved his time in Iraq; it was "just like being a G.I. Joe." When it was over, he found a job on a security detail for the Department of State, where he served as a bodyguard for dignitaries including Hillary Clinton. As boring as it was at times, Tate took pride in the work, which matched his military training with a career that served his country. The only curious thing he noticed following his military tours was that he no longer got the same adrenaline kick riding dirt bikes.

Members of team VETPAW circa June 2018, with founder Ryan Tate standing second from left.

Then, one Sunday afternoon in 2012, Tate was home on his couch in New York City, watching a nature documentary, when he saw shots of elephants with bloody stumps where their tusks once were and rhinos with their faces hacked off. For five days he couldn't bring himself to leave his apartment. He called in sick to work. He wept uncontrollably. He didn't understand what was happening.

Tate was angry; he wanted to fight. He wanted to fly to Africa and "kick some ass." But he also felt helpless, bewildered. How had he not known such horrible things were going on in the world? Why couldn't he do anything about it? It took him almost six years to realize that the rage and sadness he was feeling that week were bound up in emotions he'd buried with his experience of war.

"It unscrewed the lid," Tate says back at VETPAW camp. (In the light of day, Tate has broad shoulders, thick forearms and an intense gaze, but when he smiles, his bearded cheeks flash a rosy red.) "You see a lot of things in war. You see children die. You see your friends die. You take lives. You destroy homes. You're sleeping at night and bombs are going off. Your next-door neighbor's house is getting raided and gunshots are fired and women are screaming. These people have to live with that. That wore on me."

When Tate finally dragged himself back to work, he did so with a new sense of purpose. Somehow, he would get to Africa. He would recruit fellow veterans to join him, and together they would use their military skills to counter the poaching epidemic. He believed that a lot of things he and his fellow soldiers did in Iraq and Afghanistan—gathering intelligence, disrupting terrorist networks, conducting war zone diplomacy, halting the flow of contraband—would translate into the field.

It took a few months of leveraging contacts in the State Department to generate interest in his new venture. VETPAW's first break came in 2013 when officials from Tanzania invited his young organization to train their rangers. Tate and five other vets dropped into the East African nation, where they resided in government housing, drove government-issued Land Cruisers and flew around in government helicopters. The operation focused mostly on gathering intelligence on poaching networks.

"I wanted to be a force multiplier," he says. "I wanted to take these park rangers and make them the equivalent of 20 park rangers."

The approach seemed effective. Working alongside local rangers, VETPAW managed to identify several poaching networks. Tate sums up their MO with a story: After rangers had apprehended a poacher, Tate came to have a talk. The suspect was a middleman, a guy who paid off local poachers with money from the larger syndicates that trafficked in the rhino horns. Tate saw an opportunity. As he had so many

Above: VETPAW's conservation efforts include humanely removing the horns of some rhinos before poachers can get to them. **Opposite page:** The sandy earth offers clues to the movements of the animals VETPAW seeks to protect—and the humans hunting them.

times in Iraq, he sat the man down and asked him if he had a wife or kids.

"Yeah, yeah, I have two daughters," the man said.

"You know what, man?" Tate said. "I know that you were just trying to provide for your children. I know that you've got to put food on the table."

The man nodded. Tate continued.

"But what you're actually doing by poaching these animals is you're destroying the heritage and the future of your community," Tate recalls saying. "If you don't have these animals, your community will crumble and criminals and terrorists will thrive in this region. What you're doing by providing for your kids in a dishonorable way is you're taking away their future. You're actually not providing for them."

The next day, Tate says, the man led the soldiers and rangers to the homes of several other poachers.

• • •

The reason rhinos are being slaughtered in Africa is almost as incomprehensible as the drop in their population. Already established in China, a booming market for rhino horn has opened in Southeast Asia. Folk doctors grind down the horn, which is virtually identical in substance to the human fingernail, and sell the powder as a treatment for cancer and erectile dysfunction. These presumed effects and the amount rhino horn can fetch on the black market—upward of $65,000 a kilogram, more than gold or cocaine—have transformed it into a status symbol for the growing middle class in countries like Vietnam. It is an appetite that underworld crime syndicates are more than happy to satisfy.

But the Southeast Asian market represents only one of the threats to wildlife in Africa, which has seen tremendous declines in populations of elephants, giraffes, lions and other animals. Natural habitats are shrinking as the human population expands. Political corruption often undermines official antipoaching and conservation policies. Different countries employ differing approaches to conservation, with varying degrees of success, and a crowded nonprofit and NGO sector struggles to focus on a singular strategy. The wildlife crisis touches on many of Africa's other crises: overpopulation, resource mismanagement, unproductive intrusion from well-meaning outsiders and deeply entrenched inequality that dates back to colonialism.

This is the world Tate and his veterans entered when they started working with the government of Tanzania. Tate soon discovered it was a combustible environment. In early 2015, just before they set out on the mission, a now former member of Tate's team named Kinessa Johnson gave an interview at the National Shooting Sports Foundation's annual SHOT Show in Las Vegas in which she said she wanted to "kill some bad guys and do some good." When the interview surfaced online months later, the Tanzanian government asked VETPAW to leave the country.

Johnson's comments struck a nerve with governments and organizations concerned that the introduction of foreign military personnel would further militarize the poaching crisis, which had already seen increased activity of heavily armed poachers in places such as Kruger National Park. Ever since the experience in Tanzania, Tate has been focused on refining his model—tempering the "kick some ass" fantasies he'd nurtured a few years earlier. He found the preserve in South Africa essentially by going door-to-door, looking for landowners who would accept free security services in exchange for providing VETPAW a base of operations. (VETPAW pays its veterans by raising money, mostly from American donors.) The goal: to create antipoaching teams that do more than conduct raids and collect intelligence. Tate wants to offer monitoring, security and training services that can be easily adopted around the continent.

VETPAW's rangers typically rotate through three-month deployments; at any given time four to six veterans are on the ground. The soldiers' days are framed by morning and evening patrols and shifts with Níall Bedzer, an Irish expat who runs the preserve's rhino-monitoring program, helping him keep tabs on the movement of the herd. After nightfall, they head into the remote corners of the preserve, sometimes spending days camping out in the bush. They are there to monitor intruders but also to send a message. "We like to own the night," Tate says.

Team VETPAW lives in a small house fitted out like a stage set from *M.A.S.H.* Workout equipment is scattered around outside, and a hammock is strung between the branches of a

“JUST BECAUSE YOU’RE SPECIAL FORCES, RICKY RECON, BILLY BADASS, DOESN’T MAKE YOU THE PERFECT SOLDIER FOR THIS.”

massive baobab tree. Inside, the walls are covered with maps, whiteboards and signs warning of poisonous snakes.

Beyond the property's gates, the preserve is massive—two dusty, tree-dotted valleys that nearly span the horizon. Great journeys of giraffes, two herds of elephants and countless impalas, kudu, muskrats, wildebeests and water buffalo roam the landscape. Down the center, a spindly mountain ridge is dotted with the clay brick walls of ancient Venda tribal ruins. One evening, Bedzer takes me up the side of one of these ridges to a rock shelter a hundred feet above the valley floor. Standing up to our ankles in baboon droppings, we see the faint outline of a rhino painted on the limestone wall—evidence that the giant mammals have been roaming these lands for millennia.

During full moons, when the sky is bright enough to navigate without a flashlight or torch, the patrols increase in frequency and length. But when the moon is in its first phases, evening life revolves around the *braai* pit, where the vets, most in their late 20s and early 30s, sit around a roaring fire while fresh springbok meat roasts nearby. The conversation drifts from black-mamba sightings to lighthearted ribbing. During the week I spend with the team, Ben Powers, a former Army field sniper, takes most of the punishment, thanks to his constant Tinder messaging.

Watching the banter, I'm reminded that, as much as VETPAW is an antipoaching outfit, clinical care or whose recovery is long and slow with problems not so easy to diagnose, organizations like VETPAW offer a way to process the lingering hurt that is the quiet cost of service.

"It's an empowerment thing for me, showing that these guys are more than just machines that go to war for the government and politics," Tate says. "The veteran skills that we're putting to use here, that's just one part of it."

The next day, I find Powers in camp, paging through a copy of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*. Life with VETPAW, Powers tells me, resembles deployment because of the regular patrols, the long hours in the field, the suiting up, the weapons and the communal life—but that's not all. Before he came to South Africa, he was working long hours for a steel-fabrication company, getting up at four A.M. for his commute and crashing into bed around nine or 10 at night.

"There was not a lot of time to spend working on myself," Powers says. "When on deployment, there's a lot of sitting around and learning how to utilize that time productively. That military community, that military lifestyle is what I missed."

In South Africa, Powers has something you can't find in therapy alone. He has time to read, work out and socialize with peers who know firsthand what it's like to have lived in a war zone. And unlike many other military contracting jobs, VETPAW offers an opportunity to recapture something of the military life on of cultural and political issues, and a tendency in the media to portray them as "the answer to Africa's poaching woes."

We are sitting around a firepit at VETPAW's camp when I present some of these concerns to Tate. He rests his elbows on his knees, as he often does when the conversation turns serious. He says that VETPAW has reached out to countless antipoaching organizations and government officials. Mostly he has found the various players standoffish and territorial. He tells a story about the manager of a nearby preserve, an Afrikaner, who refused VETPAW's offer to patrol his preserve for free. The Afrikaner bragged about how he had killed a poacher on his property and had the situation under control. A few weeks later, all but one of his rhinos were slaughtered.

Still, the lesson of Tanzania is not lost on Tate. VETPAW has changed the way it selects rangers, and this summer it conducted its first training and recruiting event in Arizona. Over 10 days, veterans interested in joining up participated in a variety of training exercises, including role-playing scenarios designed to weed out hotheads.

"Just because you're Special Forces, Ricky Recon, Billy Badass, doesn't make you the perfect soldier for this," Tate says. "You're not in war. Even just a shot fired that doesn't hit anybody, those people are going to go tell the community, and then I got to answer to an elder. It can wreck everything. And certainly if you kill an innocent person, it's done."

"IN REALITY, WHEN THEY'RE OUT HERE, THEY'RE NOT SOLDIERS ANYMORE. THEY'RE CONSERVATIONISTS."

Tate's group is also serving another mission. The organization offers a way for these guys to recapture something of the camaraderie they knew during wartime, a less talked-about aspect of military withdrawal that can be just as demoralizing as the sudden drop in adrenaline. In this way, VETPAW is part of a growing number of organizations that are helping veterans via unconventional means—from Operation Surf, which teaches vets to ride the waves, to Force Blue, which employs them to help restore damaged coral reefs. According to a major RAND Corporation study, nearly 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan military vets suffer from PTSD or depression, and 19 percent suffer from traumatic brain injury—and yet as many as 50 percent of those diagnosed do not seek treatment. For vets who may not find their way to a mission that isn't, as Powers puts it, "gray."

"It is a pure kind of mission," he says.

• • •

Of course, no mission is 100 percent pure. The exile from Tanzania has left a mark on VETPAW that the organization still hasn't managed to shake. Several conservation organizations I reached out to either didn't respond to a request for comment or expressed reluctance to speak about VETPAW. One representative said off the record that he didn't want his name in an article associated with the group. The Game Rangers Association of Africa wouldn't speak to me about VETPAW but instead sent a five-page statement. Without naming names, it lists a variety of complaints about foreign ex-military entering the antipoaching sphere, including a lack of coordination and appreciation

Tate has also learned that success in this arena requires matching shows of force with acts of kindness. When VETPAW first arrived on the preserve, it was more common for nearby villagers to cross onto the land. Once, Tate received a call from one of his scouts that a suspected poacher was on the property. Tate went up in a helicopter with the game-preserve owner to track the intruder. They followed him all the way back to a village and brought the chopper down right in the man's front yard. It was a strong warning: There were new consequences for trespassing. A few weeks later, when the VETPAW team returned, they noticed the village well's water pump had broken. They came back and fixed it.

The specter of a jacked-up army implied by the Game Rangers Association's statement

Game capture: Over one dramatic week, VETPAW teams up with local antipoaching forces to transport dozens of animals to other preserves.

doesn't jibe with the VETPAW team members I meet on the ground. If anything, the organization resembles a Boy Scout camp for grown-ups. When they're not on antipoaching duty, the soldiers assist the preserve managers in running the property, capturing game, administering medicine to the elephants with the veterinarian, and feeding and monitoring the rhinos.

"In reality, when they're out here, they're not soldiers anymore," Tate says. "They're conservationists."

It's all part of Tate's ever-expanding vision for how his organization can not only save rhinos but also save veterans. He wants to add a garden near the barracks so vets suffering from severe PTSD can participate in horticultural therapy. He wants to expand VETPAW's footprint in Africa so more veterans can use their training for a good cause. To date, the group has been invited to set up a second base of operations at a private preserve in South Africa's Eastern Cape region. The team will include some who have experience running VETPAW's program and some new recruits. If all goes well, the new venture will demonstrate that the organization's success at protecting rhino herds, as well as its operational culture, will be replicable in any number of settings.

It is perhaps not surprising that while other antipoaching organizations have cast doubt on VETPAW, private preserve owners have taken note of its potential. VETPAW's approach reflects Tate's blunt, clear-headed style. The complications around the various bureaucracies of the counter-poaching world—from governments to NGOs to protective personalities—he sees as noise. VETPAW can avoid all of it by focusing on a simple mission: protecting the rhinos that are placed under their care.

"We're just focusing on doing the work here and doing a good job," Tate says. "We've never had a poaching incident anywhere we've worked. Everyone wants to be the person who saves the rhino. I could give two shits who saves it. Just save it."

At the end of the day, the only real evidence of an antipoaching organization's success is the health of the wildlife. Although for security reasons VETPAW can't say how many rhinos now live on the preserve, since the organization began operating here the herd has remained healthy and is growing.

• • •

Just as Tate's initial vision of VETPAW was tinged with G.I. Joe testosterone, my expectations of this trip borrowed heavily from war-movie tropes. But most of the action I see during my week with VETPAW is related to conservation, not confrontation. I watch the former grunts help the preserve managers conduct a game capture—a helicopter swinging back and forth across the bush, scaring kudu from the undergrowth and driving them miles across the property and straight into a set of massive green curtains, where hidden workers then herd the animals into the back of a truck. For a routine delivery of birth control to the elephant cows, the men spot the elephant herd and radio the preserve owner and the veterinarian, who swoop down in a helicopter and shoot medicine-filled darts into the scattering animals. "South Africans are the best helicopter pilots in the world," Tate says.

In a few weeks the vets will also participate in a dehorning. Rhino horns can be removed without harming the animals, and game managers have turned to this practice as a way of protecting them against poachers, who tend to shoot the animal and hack off its face, sometimes while the rhino is still alive.

By the looks of it, that gruesome scene will not play out tonight on VETPAW's watch. Back in the bush on night patrol, we track the footprints into a thicket not far from the fence line. They could tell the story of an employee who simply forgot to wear the correct shoes to work. They could belong to a villager who hoped to catch a little bush meat to feed his family. Or they could be the imprints of a poacher. After following the tracks in a circle, Tate decides they will check with the preserve's foreman the following morning to see if any of his men showed up to work that day in the wrong shoes.

The moon is waxing. In a few weeks, when it is full, poachers will likely begin to sneak into the property once again. For now, the VETPAW team decides to take advantage of the quiet night and head in early. On the way back to camp, we pass a spotted owl perched on a fence post, glimpse some water buffalo in the shadows outside the headlights and dodge multiple herds of impala emitting their low-throated groans as the 4x4 rumbles by.

Then, as we approach the gate, our spotlights catch the soft gray outline of two female rhinos and a calf standing in a small clearing. We pause and watch. They are strange, primeval-looking beasts, hulking bodies affixed to stubby legs. It's difficult to discern what Darwinian advantage gave birth to their awkward form, so strong and yet so vulnerable. They crane their necks, dragging their $100,000 horns through a few bales of hay that have been left out for them to eat. One grunts and stomps her feet, kicking up dust. The calf jostles for position before the feed.

They are oblivious to the veterans in camouflage, who are now leaning out the windows of the nearby car, mouths agape in silent awe. ■

KICK-ASS

"VICES"

WRITTEN BY
Rob Williams

ART BY
Özgür Yildirim

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO.

I'M REALLY SORRY, PATIENCE.

WE HAD TO SHUT DOWN THE SCHOOL'S BREAKFAST AND AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB. A BUNCH OF THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS TOO.

BUT...I NEED THE CHILDCARE, TONY. THE KIDS NEED THOSE CLUBS...

I KNOW. BELIEVE ME, I SYMPATHIZE. BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE. THEY'RE SHUTTING THE LIBRARY. THREE TEACHERS GOT TOLD THEY'RE BEING LAID OFF TODAY TOO. MISS HAVENSTEIN WENT HOME IN TEARS.

IT'S JUST MONEY.

WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.

"I'M SORRY TOO..."

"AND I'M GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT."

"THIS PLACE BELONGS TO HOT WHEELZ, A LOW-LEVEL HOOD. FENCES STOLEN CARS. BEEN STAKING OUT HIM AND HIS GOONS FOR WEEKS."

"MORE GUNS THAN I SAW MY ENTIRE TIME IN AFGHANISTAN."

"FIGURE THEY'VE GOT TO HAVE A SAFE IN THE OFFICE. MIGHT BE 20, 30 GRAND THAT THE SCHOOL CAN..."

WHUMP!

HOT WHEELZ

THIS SHIT'S DISGUSTING. I TELL YA, MY DOGS WENT CRAZY.

AW, MAN. STINKS! IS IT DRIPPING? I THINK IT'S...

LOOK. THE MAN GOT HIS VICES, RIGHT? EVEN IF THEY BE CRAZIER THAN A SHITHOUSE RAT.

I MEAN, DON JOHNSON? WHO THE FUCK EVEN IS...?

ACTOR, MAN. OLD-ASS ACTOR. PREHISTORIC SHIT.

C'MON, WE GOT THE BIRTHDAY OFFERING. WE SHOW FACE, OR HE CUTS OURS OFF. YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY. SO NEXT STOP, SAN DIEGO, MUCHACHOS!

HOT WHEEL

THUMP!

"FUCK!"

"FUCK!"

MAN, THAT SHIT SMELLS. TURN ON THE A/C, YO.

GONNA BE HOT AS HELL BY THE TIME WE GET THERE IN THE MORNING.

"TEN-PLUS HOURS."

"I HELD OFF LOOKING IN THE SACK FOR THE FIRST HOUR."

"THEN I REALLY WISHED I'D NEVER LOOKED."

AH, I GOTTA PISS, BRO.

GO PISS IN THE OCEAN. DON'T DO IT ON HIS DAMN BOAT WHATEVER THE FUCK YOU...

THLUNK!

(GASP)

AH... AH... I CAN BREATHE.

I HATE THIS FUCKING SACK!

THUMP!

AH...

AH...

DAMN, I CAN STILL SMELL IT... WHERE... WHERE ARE...?

PARTY MUSIC... IT'S A PARTY...?

IS THAT YACHT? ...IT'S... NO WAY.

"IT'S MADE OUT OF *GOLD?*"

THE PARTY. THE BOAT. WHAT'S GOING ON?

I CAN'T FEEL MY BALLS, MAN...

WELL, I SURE AS FUCK AIN'T DOING IT FOR YOU. *WHAT'S. GOING. ON?*

"HIS NAME'S *EL CAPITÁN!* MONDO COKE DEALER."

"IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY."

ISSSS MY BIRTHDAY, BITCHES!

"DUDE'S CRAZY. HE *REALLY* LOVES THIS OLD TV SHOW CALLED *MIAMI VICE.*"

"HE'S MODELED HIMSELF ON THIS DON JOHNSON ACTOR CAT."

"APPARENTLY HIS CHARACTER LIVED ON A BOAT AND HAD A PET ALLIGATOR THAT ACTUALLY LIVED ON THE BOAT WITH HIM."

"WHICH MAKES NO FUCKING SENSE WHATSOEVER."

"COCAINE, MAN. *LOTTA* COCAINE IN THE '80S."

WHERE'S HE KEEP THE KEY FOR THAT CHAIN?

DUNNO. HIS POCKET? THAT'S WHERE MOST PEOPLE KEEP THEIR DAMN KEYS... OW...

GOOD POINT.

HOT

WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?

EL CAPITÁN'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT. HE ORDERED A GIMP.

I... THAT'S... PLAUSIBLE... BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY...

NAME'S KICK-ASS!

THWUMP!

AND I'M TAKING THIS DAMN BOAT!

WHO IS THIS? AN UNINVITED GUEST! AHAHAHA! YOU COME AT ME? YOU COME AT ME ON MY BIRTHDAY?

YUP.

I WILL FEED YOU TO MY GUARD DOG, LITTLE TWIG!

ALREADY GOT A MEAL FOR HER RIGHT HERE.

I'VE BEEN LOCKED IN A CAR TRUNK WITH THIS SHIT FOR 10 DAMN HOURS...

I HOPE IT MAKES HER CHOKE.

KILL YOU! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY CALL MY DEATH GRIP?

MIAMI VISE, RIGHT?

I...

YES?

OH, HO, HO! NOT SO FAST, LITTLE TWIG! PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT LATER!

I'M SORRY.

FOR WHAT? DYING?

NO. FOR FREEING YOUR LITTLE "DOG" AND TAKING YOUR OBSCENE FUCKING BOAT.

BUT THIS IS ALL ABOUT MONEY.

CLICK

Kick-Ass: The New Girl Book One **is available now!**

The ADVERSARIAL JOURNALIST

Five years after he broke the Edward Snowden story, reporter ***Glenn Greenwald*** *is speaking truth to power again—whether you want to hear it or not*

BY **JOHN MERONEY**

Just before President Donald J. Trump met with Russian president Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in July, Glenn Greenwald flew to Moscow. The investigative journalist and former lawyer, in town to participate in a cybersecurity conference, was on his own audacious mission: to challenge the Trump-era tendency among politicians and mainstream media outlets to characterize anyone who engages with Russians—let alone visits the country—as suspicious, if not downright treacherous.

"The panel itself didn't generate controversy," says Greenwald, speaking from his adoptive home of Rio de Janeiro. (In this context at least, he projects unflappable calm whether he's talking about tennis or Trump.) "That started afterward, when I gave an interview to RT," Russia's 24-hour English-language news channel. Greenwald told RT that Americans on both sides of the political spectrum are obsessed with "viewing Russia not just as an adversary but as an actual enemy." He added: "There's actually talk a lot now about how what they regard as the interference in the 2016 election is similar to Pearl Harbor...or Al Qaeda and 9/11." Greenwald continued: "Despite all the claims that... Trump is a puppet of Russia, in many ways Obama was more cooperative with the Russian government than Trump was."

On the same trip, Greenwald met with Edward Snowden, the former CIA analyst and NSA contractor who leaked top-secret documents exposing mass surveillance of U.S. citizens—and whose whistle-blowing Greenwald helped facilitate via *The Guardian,* launching both men onto the global stage. Greenwald posted multiple smiling selfies of the two on Instagram.

Soon after the RT interview, retired naval intelligence officer and MSNBC analyst Malcolm Nance suggested to his 420,000-plus Twitter followers that Greenwald was "an agent of Trump & Moscow" who "helped Snowden defect." Nance later added, "#KissPutinforUs."

"I've been attacked since I began writing about politics," Greenwald says, "but this is different."

Nance's assertions are "outright lies." When a serious fabrication is made by "somebody who's presented as part of a journalistic organization, that becomes grave," he says. Greenwald has thought of suing Nance, but, he says, "I don't want to be one of those people who go around using lawsuits to prevent or suppress criticism. On the other hand, there are limits on what you can say about people." (Nance did not return calls for comment.)

Greenwald got a preview of this kind of attention a few years ago when prominent Democrats began to suggest that Trump was conspiring with Putin during the presidential campaign. Greenwald doubted this claim because, he says, there was no evidence. When Hillary Clinton began losing primaries to Senator Bernie Sanders, her operatives and allies used the same "smear tactic," as Greenwald calls it, to try to align Sanders with Russia. This approach also surfaced in TV news. "You honeymooned in the Soviet Union," said CNN's Anderson Cooper, addressing Sanders during the primaries.

Greenwald's position, summed up in his 2016 headline DEMOCRATS' TACTIC OF ACCUSING CRITICS OF KREMLIN ALLEGIANCE HAS LONG, UGLY HISTORY IN U.S., drew loud denunciations. Former Vermont governor Howard Dean, who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004, tweeted about the news site Greenwald co-founded: "Would be interesting to find out if the intercept gets money from Russia or Iran." Robert Shrum, Democratic campaign operative and chief strategist for John Kerry's failed 2004 campaign, tweeted,"You are a criminal agent of Putin conspiracy."

"Democrats were so disoriented, shocked and outraged by Trump's victory that they looked for culprits, for villains, that they could blame instead of themselves," says

ILLUSTRATION BY **NIGEL BUCHANAN**

Greenwald. “I became one of those villains because I was doubtful of what became a religion for a lot of liberals.”

Whether or not you agree with his views, it’s hard to deny that, roughly five years after the peak of his Snowden coverage, Glenn Greenwald still knows how to confound our deepest assumptions about politics, the media and what it means to be American.

• • •

Raised in a suburb of Fort Lauderdale, the now 51-year-old Greenwald has been taking on hot-button issues since Snowden was a teen. His track record is nothing if not wide-ranging; he is, after all, a gay man of Jewish descent who represented white supremacist Matthew Hale in a series of First Amendment cases. He also brought lawsuits alleging disability, race and age discrimination in cases against large corporate employers defended by major law firms. “I knew that I didn’t want to be representing rich people,” he said in a 2013 interview. “I wanted to be suing them.”

Having launched his own firm at the age of 28, Greenwald abandoned law for journalism in the years following 9/11. His Snowden coverage won *The Guardian* a Pulitzer Prize, and he played a key role in Laura Poitras’s Oscar-winning documentary *Citizenfour*. Director Oliver Stone recognized that story’s dramatic potential and put together a Snowden biopic—a study in unintentional surrealism: “John Cusack is a friend of mine, and he asked Oliver if he could play me. Oliver said, ‘Glenn has this unique combination of extreme femininity and extreme masculinity, and I don’t think you can capture that. We need a gay actor.’ That was more the by-product of some weird psychological issue in Oliver’s head, as opposed to an accurate reflection of me,” says Greenwald, laughing. “I thought he might cast Nathan Lane. Instead, he got Zachary Quinto—and *he* played me as an overwrought queen.”

Greenwald prefers *Citizenfour,* which shows him reporting the Snowden story in real time along with Poitras and fellow reporter Ewen MacAskill. “I find that to be the more enduring record of what I did,” he says.

Today, Greenwald is involved in another documentary—one whose outwardly apolitical milieu obscures the through line that connects all his endeavors. For starters, he’s producing this time, in collaboration with Reese Witherspoon’s Hello Sunshine company. And this one is something of a labor of love: During the tennis craze of the late 1970s and early 1980s, while Greenwald’s father cheered for the sun-kissed neighborhood champion Chris Evert, Greenwald found a hero in Martina Navratilova. She, not an exiled hacker, is at the center of his new project.

“She was just so deviant of the societal norms,” he says. While Evert’s tournament guests were her boyfriend and Catholic nuclear family, Navratilova’s were “a bunch of dykes, her lover and her trans coach, Dr. Renée Richards, at a time when there was no vocabulary to even talk about these things,” Greenwald says. “She made everybody uncomfortable.”

From Russia with love: Snowden and Greenwald in Moscow earlier this year.

Compare that with Greenwald’s take on Billie Jean King, another tennis legend who has reappeared on the big screen, portrayed by Emma Stone in last year’s *Battle of the Sexes*. “King was very self-consciously a political pioneer who regarded herself as a leading feminist cause. But she didn’t come out voluntarily; she was dragged out of the closet in a cloud of scandal and shame. And when she got outed, she just said she was bisexual. She was kind of apologetic about what happened and made it seem like a phase. There was nothing affirming about it.”

Apparently King lands somewhere near President Obama on Greenwald’s ever-growing list of left-leaning sacred cows.

• • •

After his Snowden stories, Greenwald was looking for a unique platform to continue what he calls “adversarial journalism.” The idea attracted the attention and funding of billionaire eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, and out of that partnership came The Intercept. Omidyar has no active editorial role, and the site’s nonprofit backing means it doesn’t rely on clicks or advertising. Greenwald is free to focus full force on afflicting the comfortable—an ethos he finds lacking in the national press.

“Journalists didn’t used to go to cocktail parties and send their kids to the same private schools as oligarchs and generals,” he says. “They were just schlubby, middle-class or lower-middle-class people who said, ‘Let’s poke these powerful people in the side.’ Then, with the proliferation of television, journalism became owned by the biggest corporations, and media outlets became divisions of huge conglomerates. Instead of being outsiders, journalists are very much a part of the elite culture and don’t want to do anything to disturb it. That’s changed how journalists think about state security agencies.”

Being this kind of contrarian is a quintessentially American choice. Ironically, it’s a choice Greenwald might not have made if he hadn’t relocated to Rio.

“I was kind of forced to live in Brazil,” he says. His Brazilian husband, David Miranda, couldn’t get a visa in large part because the U.S. wouldn’t recognize their marriage. “We’ve built a life here now,” Greenwald says. Miranda is on the ballot for Brazil’s Congress this October, and they’ve adopted two children. Besides, Greenwald is in no hurry to re-enter the American media bubble.

“Its assumptions, belief systems and mentality would shape the way I see the world,” he

"JOURNALISTS DIDN'T USED TO SEND THEIR KIDS TO THE SAME PRIVATE SCHOOLS AS OLIGARCHS AND GENERALS."

says. "The distance I have from the East Coast media and political culture—and the fact that I'm not in any way dependent on it—gives me the mental space to think more critically about it. I don't rely on them for anything."

That distance may account for Greenwald's take on Robert Mueller, James Comey and other recently minted stars of the U.S. intelligence firmament. "It's always true that in a time of war, people unite behind the government, especially military intelligence authorities," he says. But the post-9/11 years have eroded our skepticism of all things militaristic and nationalistic: "Remember, we've been at war for 17 years—bombing multiple countries, constantly being warned of great national security threats." With Watergate, reporters and the commentariat became dubious of our intelligence agencies. "The old CIA tradition" of openly lying, as former top spy Tom Braden once explained it to me, became obvious in the wake of congressional investigations and hearings in the 1970s. Today, those agencies are granted saintly status in the press. Intelligence veterans and loyalists are a news staple: In addition to Nance, MSNBC employed former CIA director John Brennan, and CBS hired former CIA acting director Michael Morell as an on-air contributor in 2014.

"I think one of the untold stories of the 2016 election is the extent to which the CIA intervened," Greenwald says. "CIA directors from both Republican and Democratic administrations wrote op-eds in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times,* accusing Trump of being a Russian asset controlled by Putin, and they endorsed Hillary Clinton. The CIA has been opposed to Trump from the start."

With Greenwald's distance comes a sobering view of what happened after that election. "In a lot of ways, Trump's primary opposition has become these security state agencies, so anybody who hates Trump, as the Democrats do, and wants to see him gone at any cost, has aligned themselves with the military and intelligence community," he says.

Views like these don't play well at MSNBC, where Greenwald used to be a frequent guest. "I'm never invited anymore," he says. "My suspicion is that I'm banned."

I asked Tucker Carlson, the Fox News commentator who often uses Greenwald as a source for his show, for his take. "I doubt Glenn's core views have changed much in the past 10 years," he says. "The world has changed around him. He's still an absolutist on civil liberties." What does Carlson think about Nance and others accusing Greenwald of being an agent of Trump and Moscow? "Glenn's commitment to principle embarrasses them, so they try to silence his voice by baselessly accusing him of loyalty to a foreign power. It's completely disgusting."

What, then, does Greenwald think of the current case against Russia or the country's shaky human-rights record? He's "willing to accept that there was Russian meddling." Regarding its leadership, "I don't argue that Putin's government is freedom-loving, has a propensity to tell the truth or anything like that." But he adds that even if you believe all the evidence, Russia's chicanery is not much different from "what the United States and Russia have been doing to other countries, and to one another, for many decades. Having countries interfere with one another's domestic affairs is something that's been going on for a long time—and it's still going on."

General Michael Hayden may call him more "activist than journalist," but then nothing about Greenwald has ever been neutral. Like his hero of the tennis court, he sees the power that lies in making us uncomfortable. With Trump dominating the headlines, a little discomfort amid the outrage might do us good. ■

GADFLY

A selection of Glenn Greenwald's characteristically contrarian quotes

"A lot of liberals thought my exposing the U.S. government's mass surveillance reflected poorly on President Obama. I'm criticized a lot more by prominent liberal figures than I used to be—but politics is a zero-sum game, so I have new fans who are Fox News viewers."

• • •

"If you're a Democrat, it's difficult to explain how your party and the person you chose to nominate could lose to a game-show host, a buffoon who was by far the most unpopular nominee in modern American presidential politics—other than the person the Democrats chose to nominate, who was just as unpopular."

• • •

"Imagine going back to 2004 and telling liberals that 12 years from now their icon of justice, democracy and truth was going to be George W. Bush's FBI director. Robert Mueller oversaw the roundup of Muslim Americans in the wake of 9/11 and an incredibly bungled investigation of the anthrax attacks; he identified a completely wrong suspect who was publicly accused. Mueller's personal history is filled with error and deceit, and now we're being ordered to treat him as an unquestionable oracle of truth."

• • •

"MSNBC gets segment-by-segment ratings. If they do a segment that's at all critical of the Democratic Party, you can watch viewership plummet because MSNBC viewers want to feel angry at Trump or vindicated in their world view. This creates a punishment scheme for every time you step off the path that has been laid out for you. It's very powerful."

• • •

"I wouldn't call the Mueller investigation a witch hunt. From the beginning there's been enough serious questions raised that merited an investigation. But like most of these Washington special-counsel investigations, it's gone far off into all kinds of other areas. There have been prosecutions, indictments and guilty pleas that have nothing to do with the original allegations that led to Mueller's appointment."

• • •

"If you are privileged to have some influence, the best way you can spend it is by being adversarial to powerful factions, because those are the ones people are most afraid to oppose."

PRINCESS OF TIDES

Basking in the limpid waters of Mexico, ***Gabriela Giovanardi*** *proves that, with the right company, summer is a state of mind*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DOVE SHORE**

HERITAGE

Queens of Scream

From creature features to splatter flicks to psychological thrillers, Playmates add a special delight to fright films

In 1963, B-movie producer David F. Friedman visited the Playboy Club in Miami, looking for a beautiful woman with a big mouth. Friedman and his partner, director Herschell Gordon Lewis, had decided to get out of the crowded nudie-films market and create something new: the world's first gore film. For a small but memorable role in the project, *Blood Feast,* they needed an actress with a kisser large enough to facilitate a low-budget special effect: a sheep's tongue that would be ripped out by their movie's maniac in a scene that, despite its extreme camp factor, would go on to scandalize audiences.

BY **STEVE PALOPOLI**

That night at the club, Friedman did find an orally endowed actress in the form of Playboy Bunny Astrid Olson. He met someone else too: Connie Mason, who was set to be PLAYBOY's June 1963 Playmate.

Olson took the mouthy part; Mason signed on to star in *Blood Feast* and in Friedman and Lewis's follow-up—the 1964 Southern splatter-fest *Two Thousand Maniacs!*—and for the first time ever a horror movie was marketed to audiences using an actress's Playmate status as enticement. Under blood-drip lettering and a lurid illustration, the *Blood Feast* poster showed Mason with the come-on "You read about her in PLAYBOY!" The promo for *Two Thousand Maniacs!*—tagline, "Gruesomely Stained in Blood Color!"—promised "Connie Mason, PLAYBOY's Favorite Playmate."

Audiences went for it, turning *Blood Feast* into a smash hit that earned $4 million against its tiny $24,500 budget. Mason maintained a sense of humor about the gig. "It's all about sacrificing beautiful young virgins to Egyptian deities. You know, a typical, everyday kind of story," she said in the article accompanying her Playmate pictorial. "I'm rather proud of the fact that at the end of the show I'm still healthy, while every other girl is either dead or horribly mutilated."

• • •

Although it was a milestone in modern horror-movie history, *Blood Feast* was not the first fright film to feature a Playmate. Centerfolds Mara Corday (October 1958), Marilyn Hanold (June 1959) and Yvette Vickers (July 1959) had blazed that trail in the 1950s and early 1960s in sci-fi-tinged B-thrillers including *Tarantula!, The Black Scorpion, The Giant Claw, Attack of the 50-Foot Woman* and *The Brain That Wouldn't Die.* Unlike later Playmates, who tended to establish themselves as models before breaking into acting, Corday and Vickers actually made most of their movies before appearing in the magazine.

Playmate Joan Staley, on the other hand, seemed to step out of her November 1958 Centerfold and directly into a successful acting career. She was also the first Playmate to leave her mark on the psychological thriller genre, playing the bowling alley waitress menaced by Robert Mitchum in 1962's much-lauded *Cape Fear.*

Perhaps the most critically acclaimed horror movie to feature a Playmate is 1968's *Rosemary's Baby.* Victoria Vetri's part is small, but it may be the cleverest use of a Playmate in any film, horror or otherwise. Appearing under the stage name Angela Dorian—which she often used in her acting and modeling work, including her September 1967 Playmate and 1968 Playmate of the Year pictorials—Vetri plays a recovering addict named Terry Gionoffrio. When Mia Farrow's Rosemary meets Gionoffrio in a basement laundry room, the former sheepishly apologizes for staring, saying, "I'm sorry, I thought you were Victoria Vetri, the actress." "That's all right," says Vetri-as-Dorian-as-Gionoffrio. "A lot of people think I'm Victoria. I don't see any resemblance." Five minutes later, the character is dead on the sidewalk, having delivered her multilayered meta moment.

Another highlight from the annals of Playmate horror cinema is 1969's *The Witchmaker,* later known as *The Legend of Witch Hollow* and *The Witchmaster.* It's remembered today, if at all, mainly for the scintillating performance by two-time Playmate Marguerite Empey (May 1955 and February 1956), billed

Previous page: Movie poster for 1955's *Tarantula!* starring Mara Corday. **Right:** Corday plays a lab assistant whose boss does sketchy research. **Below:** An ad for *Two Thousand Maniacs!* features Connie Mason.

Far left: The first twin Playmates, Madeleine and Mary Collinson, anchored 1971's surprisingly good *Twins of Evil.* **Left:** Jenny McCarthy and Pamela Anderson made fear fun in the horror spoof *Scary Movie 3.* **Below:** Bizarre and beloved 1989 cult favorite *Society* stars Devin DeVasquez as the hero's love interest.

under her married name, Diane Webber. Webber plays a witch ("the Nautch of Tangier") who twice belly dances for her coven. If writer-director William O. Brown was looking to pad out the running time, he found the perfect filler in the spellbinding Webber. It's a shame she appeared in only one other horror film, *Sinthia: the Devil's Doll,* directed by psychotronic-film fan favorite Ray Dennis Steckler.

Smart producers like Friedman and Lewis realized that Playmates gave them access to a built-in audience. When Harry Fine saw Mary and Madeleine Collinson—the first identical-twin Playmates—in the October 1970 PLAYBOY, he decided to build a film around them. The craziest thing about the result, 1971's *Twins of Evil,* from legendary horror house Hammer Films, is that it's actually good, and the Collinson twins are downright mesmerizing as orphaned sisters who are coveted by their vampire uncle.

• • •

As the home-video market took off and producers realized they could make a buck on practically any low-budget horror movie, they hired more PLAYBOY scream queens than ever before, with more than two dozen Playmates appearing in various fear films through the 1980s and 1990s. Movies with multiple Playmates include 1980's gruesome *Motel Hell,* featuring Rosanne Katon (September 1978) and Monique St. Pierre (1979 Playmate of the Year), and 1992's grisly *Auntie Lee's Meat Pies* with Pia Reyes (November 1988), Teri Weigel (April 1986) and Ava Fabian (August 1986). But it's a 21st century flick—the 2003 horror spoof *Scary Movie 3,* starring 1994 Playmate of the Year Jenny McCarthy and February 1990 Playmate Pamela Anderson—that offers perhaps the most Playmate celebrity power.

"Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, the T&A genre—B-movies, C-movies—was enormously popular," remembers February 1986 Playmate Julie McCullough. "A lot of times they just wanted naked or half-naked girls running through scenes with attractive bodies and attractive faces."

But McCullough—best known for her role on TV's *Growing Pains* and her later stand-up comedy career—had some interesting parts in horror and sci-fi during that era. She's also the only Playmate to appear in two generations of horror cinema: She had a small part in the ahead-of-its-time 1988 remake of *The Blob,* and she played a newscaster in 2013's absurdist megahit *Sharknado* and the subsequent mockumentary *Sharknado: Heart of Sharkness.*

Another Playmate to land a one-of-a-kind role was Devin DeVasquez, who nabbed a lead in the vicious 1989 cult film *Society* from director Brian Yuzna, producer of the acclaimed 1980s H.P. Lovecraft films *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond.* A black-hearted piece of social satire about the rich literally eating the poor, *Society* features perhaps the most bonkers ending of any fright film—a latex-and-lube body-horror set piece that would make David Cronenberg blush.

"It's the strangest movie I've ever done or seen," says DeVasquez. "When I read the script, I thought, How on earth are they going to put this on the screen?" The film became a classic; nearly three decades later, DeVasquez is still invited to *Society* screenings, including one she'll attend this September in Scotland, where she will also participate in a question-and-answer session.

So why is it that Playmates are still called on to bring their style, sex appeal and mystique to some of Hollywood's darkest, weirdest and most frightening films? The answer, McCullough says, can be found in a classic formula: "It's beauty and the beast." ■

The Writers' Bloc

In 1971 Playboy hosted the world's literati for days of debate and nights of carousing

First, assemble the writers. Only grade A stock will do: Ray Bradbury, Gay Talese, Shel Silverstein, Michael Crichton and dozens more. Add a handful of equally notable activists, economists and academics such as Jesse Jackson, John Kenneth Galbraith and Virginia Johnson. Entice them with panel discussions, public readings and a lounge for private tête-à-têtes—plus evening parties at the Playboy Mansion and Playboy Clubs. Then muddle the whole thing in booze, courtesy of all-hours open bars.

The result: the October 1971 Playboy International Writers' Convocation, a one-of-a-kind event that delivered both creative commingling and bursts of intellectual brinksmanship. Costing the company more than $100,000 (that's $615,000-plus in 2018 dollars), it was also a testament to Playboy's ability to throw a lavish bash for the cultural elite.

More than 70 guests, plus spouses and dates, traveled from around the world to the Playboy Towers hotel in Chicago for three days of conversation and workshops—not to mention brunches and banquets—followed by an all-inclusive weekend after-party at the Lake Geneva Playboy Club. Founder and publisher Hugh Hefner declared the intent of the gathering to be threefold: "To have a good time, to explore ways in which we and our contributors might work more fruitfully together, and to learn what [they] think about PLAYBOY."

But for Barbara Nellis, who at the time worked in PLAYBOY's research department, the goal was simpler. "It was to bring glory, to say to other people that PLAYBOY was not just a magazine with naked people in it," she says. "It was a magazine with writers and with thinking."

BY **LORRAINE BOISSONEAULT**

The convocation kicked off on a Wednesday morning with cocktails and a penthouse brunch, leading into an afternoon panel called "Beyond Journalism," where editors and writers discussed the state of the media. Garry Wills, who went on to win a Pulitzer for his reporting, opined that the "new journalism" mingled fact with advocacy, while newspapers and broadcast news acted as pulpits for the establishment. Panels over the subsequent two days ranged from the personal to the political. Harvard economist Galbraith expounded on the Vietnam quagmire during a banquet speech, calling President Richard Nixon "a loser who happened to win." And in a talk on "Paranoia: The New Urban Life Style," the panelists themselves became subjects of scrutiny. Art Buchwald, Studs Terkel, Bruce Jay Friedman, Jules Feiffer and Brock Yates, three of them smoking cigars, speculated on the origins of paranoia, touching on the JFK assassination, a surfeit of news media and a rise in violent crime. Dr. Mary Calderone, a sex-education advocate and public health expert who had been the subject of a 1970 *Playboy Interview,* wryly commented from the audience that perhaps the real cause of paranoia was too much smoking.

Sci-fi master Arthur C. Clarke addresses the convocation.

It wasn't her only provocative moment. While participating in a panel on "The Future of Sex," Calderone complained that her male colleagues were claiming her points as their own without acknowledging her as an expert, all because she was a woman. Weeks later, Calderone received a letter from Nora Ephron. Ephron, who had yet to make her name as a writer, attended the convocation with her husband, journalist Dan Greenburg.

"Let me assure you that one did not have to be a male chauvinist to be hostile toward you," Ephron wrote. "You earned their antagonism. I also suspect that in venting it at you, they were treating you not as a woman but as an equal."

Calderone wrote back that she took Ephron's critique seriously. "My impression was very simply that they may have listened to me but they did not hear me," Calderone wrote. "Nor apparently did you."

Guests didn't shy away from debating PLAYBOY'S attitude toward women, recalls Stephen Yafa, who at that time had reported on college sexuality for the magazine. Yafa says that Talese and others had side conversations about whether PLAYBOY empowered women to move up in the world or hurt them by treating them as sex objects. It was "an interesting exchange," Yafa says, with no consensus.

The discussion of writing was naturally at the epicenter of convocation activities, and though the topics may have sounded dry, passions could run high: Nellis recalls seeing a writer and an editor nearly come to blows over the merits of novelist James T. Farrell.

Meanwhile the younger crowd, including Michael Crichton and Yafa, retired to a more private room to smoke dope. Yafa remembers chatting and having a good time when he noticed some of the older guests walk by, holding glasses of bourbon and raising their eyebrows at the young men. "It was still kind of a renegade sport," he says of their partaking.

Left: Partying at Hugh Hefner's Chicago mansion was a highlight for many convocation participants. **Middle:** Attendees got a sneak peek of *Macbeth,* the first Playboy Productions movie, two months before its release. **Right:** Clarke, Dr. Mary Calderone and Dr. Frank Calderone in the audience of a panel discussion.

A select few participants were asked to give readings from their works in progress. James Dickey, the 18th U.S. poet laureate and author of *Deliverance,* read a selection of his work, as did Irish short story writer Sean O'Faolain. Stanley Booth, who'd recently won PLAYBOY's award for best new nonfiction writer, read from his unfinished book on the Rolling Stones, which later became known as the definitive text on the band. Alex Haley, who had been a PLAYBOY collaborator for nearly a decade, rounded out the group with a passage from his as-yet-unpublished novel *Roots,* which would become an American classic.

Journalist John Skow later wrote, "After hearing old Sean O'Faolain and Dickey and those two print-drunk obsessives, Booth and Haley, how could a man think of anything but being a writer?"

For Booth, writing for PLAYBOY and receiving an invitation to the event were almost unfathomable pleasures. He had recently been arrested for growing marijuana in his Memphis backyard, and he was dazzled by Playboy's hospitality and by the other attendees. "I met John Cheever, Roman Polanski, J.B. Priestley, Larry King—it turned out to be a hell of a thing," he says.

Despite the literary ambitions of the organizers, it was arguably the convocation's social aspect that people enjoyed most. Michael Laurence, a contributing editor, recounted playing Ping-Pong in Hefner's garage with a group that included Arthur C. Clarke, who, along with Stanley Kubrick, had been nominated for an Oscar in 1969 for the screenplay developed concurrently with Clarke's book *2001: A Space Odyssey.* "Feiffer, [Calvin] Trillin and Garry Wills are all really exceptional players, and Clarke bested the lot, myself included, though I had been drinking and he had not," Laurence wrote to editorial director A.C. Spectorsky after the event.

Even as the participants praised and thanked PLAYBOY for hosting them, the media were not so kind. *Newsweek* called it a dull affair, *The New York Times* noted how rare it was for so many luminaries to assemble in one place with so little said about it, and city papers suggested it was ironic for PLAYBOY to position itself as a serious purveyor of the written word. Clarke advised Spectorsky to ignore the negative coverage. To Clarke, the event was a rousing success, and he was sure that in the coming years the "intellectual cross-fertilization and stimulation" would bear fruit. At the very least, it yielded PLAYBOY bylines for many of the writers who attended.

Harvey Kurtzman, the famed *MAD* cartoonist who created *Little Annie Fanny* for PLAYBOY, had a different take on the press's cold shoulder. He'd visited the *Esquire* offices, where all the staff expressed curiosity about the event. "And why not?" he wrote of their fascination. "I had such a good time, I know if I don't give thanks, God will punish me."

Maybe the rest of the print world was just sore they hadn't been invited. ■

PRESTIGE PLAYERS

Already established at the time of the convocation, these attendees went on to even greater acclaim

Richard Rhodes
The historian's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* won the 1988 Pulitzer for nonfiction, among other literary prizes.

Alex Haley
(*Pictured at right*) The miniseries adaptation of Haley's blockbuster book *Roots* broke viewership records when it aired on network TV in 1977.

Michael Crichton
The novelist adapted his sci-fi title *Jurassic Park* for the silver screen; the film went on to make more than $1 billion at the box office.

Shel Silverstein
The prolific poet and cartoonist also wrote music; he won two Grammys (1969 and 1984) and was nominated in 1990 for a best-original-song Oscar.

Dalton Trumbo
Blacklisted for refusing to testify before Congress on communism in Hollywood, Trumbo received a posthumous Oscar in 1993 for his *Roman Holiday* script.

Carl Stokes
A former Ohio congressman and Cleveland mayor, Stokes became a judge before President Bill Clinton named him ambassador to the Seychelles.

John Cheever
In 1979 a collection of his short stories won the Pulitzer for fiction; he was awarded the National Medal for Literature in 1982.

Allison Parks

OCTOBER 1965 PLAYMATE

“I’d like to do something exciting and different in my life before settling down,” declared then 21-year-old Allison Parks. Our October 1965 Playmate was a young woman of many interests—including landscaping (a ranch-size floral nursery served as her family business), teaching swim class and designing her own clothes—but it was her appetite for aviation that set her apart from her contemporaries. “The moment I took the controls for the first time, I was hooked,” said Allison, who belonged to a flying club called the Sky Roamers. “There’s something almost ethereal about sitting in a cockpit thousands of feet above the earth with nothing around to distract you.” At the time of her photo shoot, the Glendale, California native was banking hours toward her private pilot’s license. Allison flew directly into the hearts and minds of PLAYBOY editors, who unanimously selected her as the magazine’s 1966 Playmate of the Year.

Morena Corwin

SEPTEMBER 1992 PLAYMATE

Morena Corwin is the American dream incarnate. Born in Seoul, South Korea, she moved with her family to a small village in Michigan when she was just one year old. When her parents split up about a decade later, her mom relocated with the kids to Orlando. But it wasn't all sunshine; the pre-teen Morena had the weight of adult responsibilities on her shoulders. "It was a pretty hard life when we first got to Florida," she said. "Mom worked, so I'd come home from school and make dinner for my younger brother and sister and then read *Pippi Longstocking* out loud to put them to sleep." But moving to a metropolis had one major benefit: It helped Morena accept herself. "Being around other Asians—and members of other cultures in general—made me feel less like an outsider. I even started to think, Hey, maybe I'm not so goofy-looking," she said. "I'm really proud of my heritage now." Speaking of heritage, Morena is descended from royalty, the great-great-granddaughter of a Korean emperor. Royal blood or not, to her we pledge our fealty.

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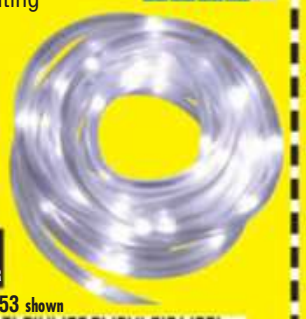

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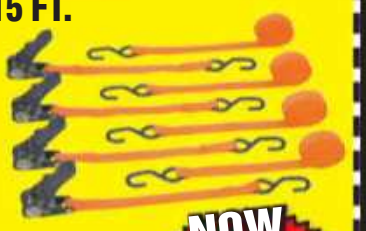

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CENTRAL PARK, 1963

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