



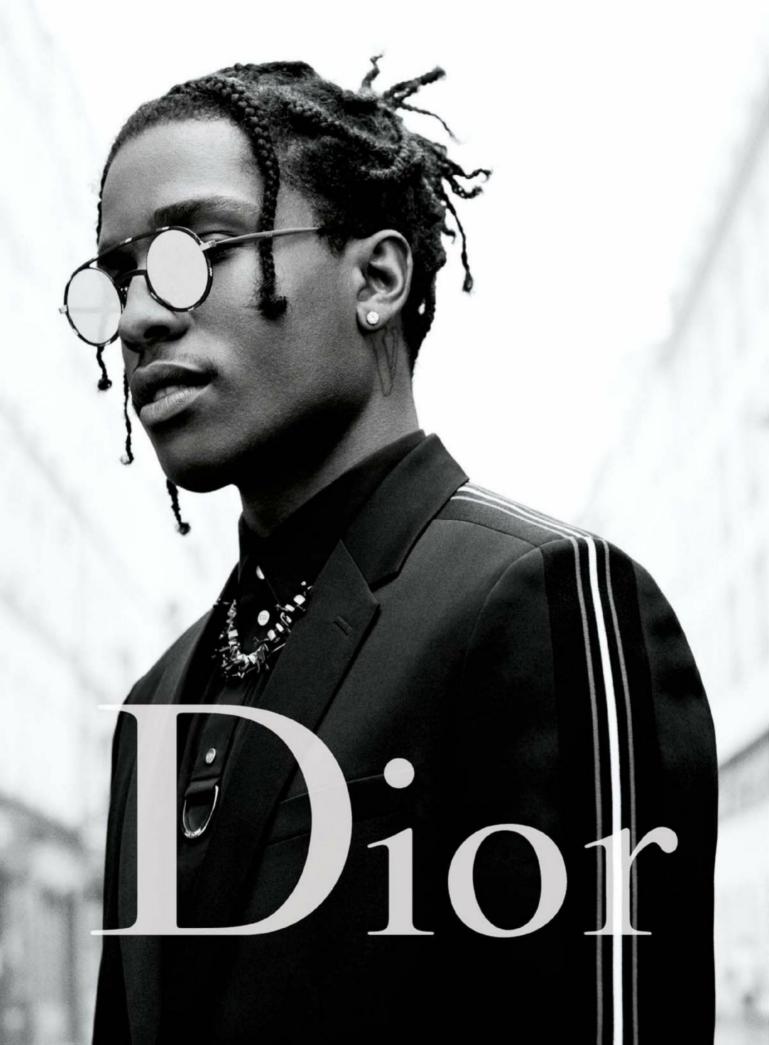
Lifestyle design Lightweight metal frame Mirrored flat lenses





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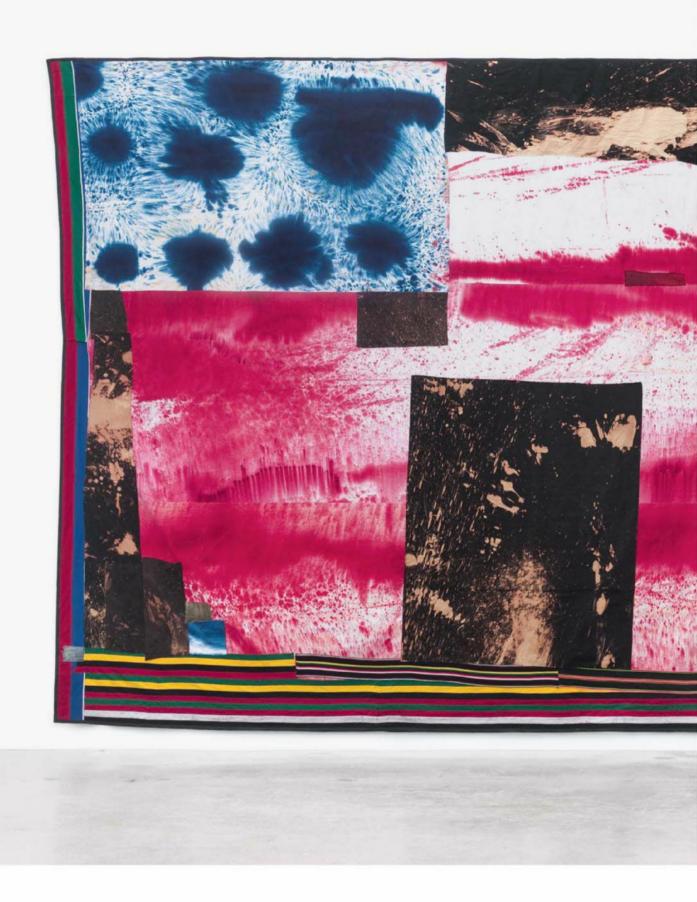






ROBERT DE NIRO and MCCAUL LOMBARDI, LA, 10:30am







CALVIN KLEIN





CALVIN KLEIN





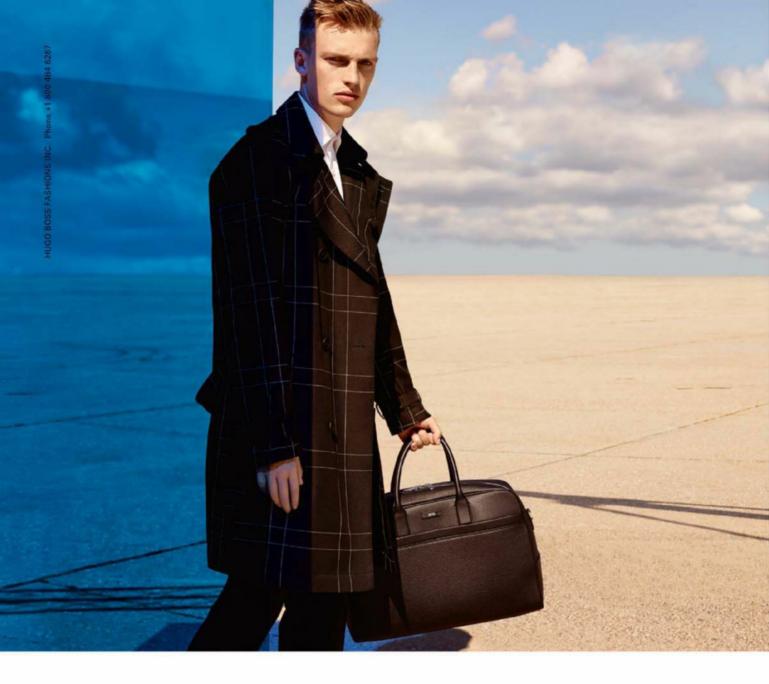




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"GQ.COM IS GETTING A NEW LOOK" -AD AGE





December 2016, Los Angeles

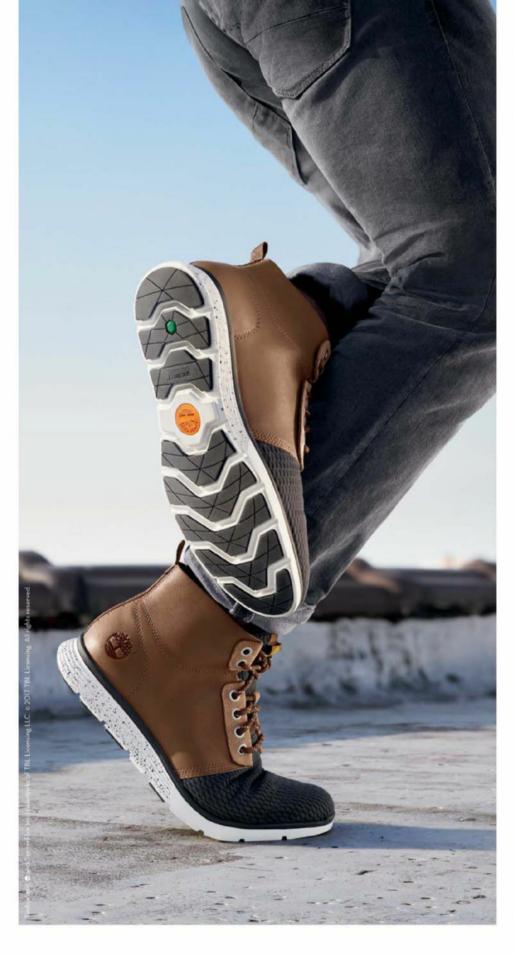
GQ STYLE SUITE

Leading up to our annual GQ Men of the Year event, GQ hosted a week of events including a consumer-facing Style Suite. The luxury lounge and gifting headquarters at Neuehouse LA included VIP gifting and monogramming, a lounge area featuring LG SIGNATURE OLED TV and Air Purifier, Grey Goose specialty cocktails, music by MICK, a pop-up barber shop, a showcase of Ryan Seacrest Distinction (available only at Macy's), cognac tastings by Rémy Martin, and a Sassoregale wine Italian-inspired happy hour. More than 150 guests attended the event, including actors Shameik Moore, James Lafferty, and Olympian Conor Dwyer.











THE KILLINGTON COLLECTION

Available at Timberland and Dillard's





PAGE 1/2 **Departments** 168 Backstory Iman Shumpert and Teyana Taylor, living in harmony **GQ** Intelligence 81 GQ looks at race in pop culture through Jordan Peele's new movie, Get Out Sir Patrick Stewart is so good-looking We—and a crack team of Internet comedy people— call out the most annoying online behavior Raincoat, \$965, by AMI Alexandre Mattiussi. Turtleneck, \$1,095, by Ralph Lauren. Jeans, \$185, by J Brand. Shoes, \$650, by Allen Edmonds. Socks by Gold Toe. Hat by Stetson. Location: Belasco Theatre, N.Y.C. Villanova basketball coach Jay Wright built a powerhouse by injecting some Zen wisdom BY LARRY PLATT 48 GQ.COM MARCH 2017 SEBASTIAN KIM





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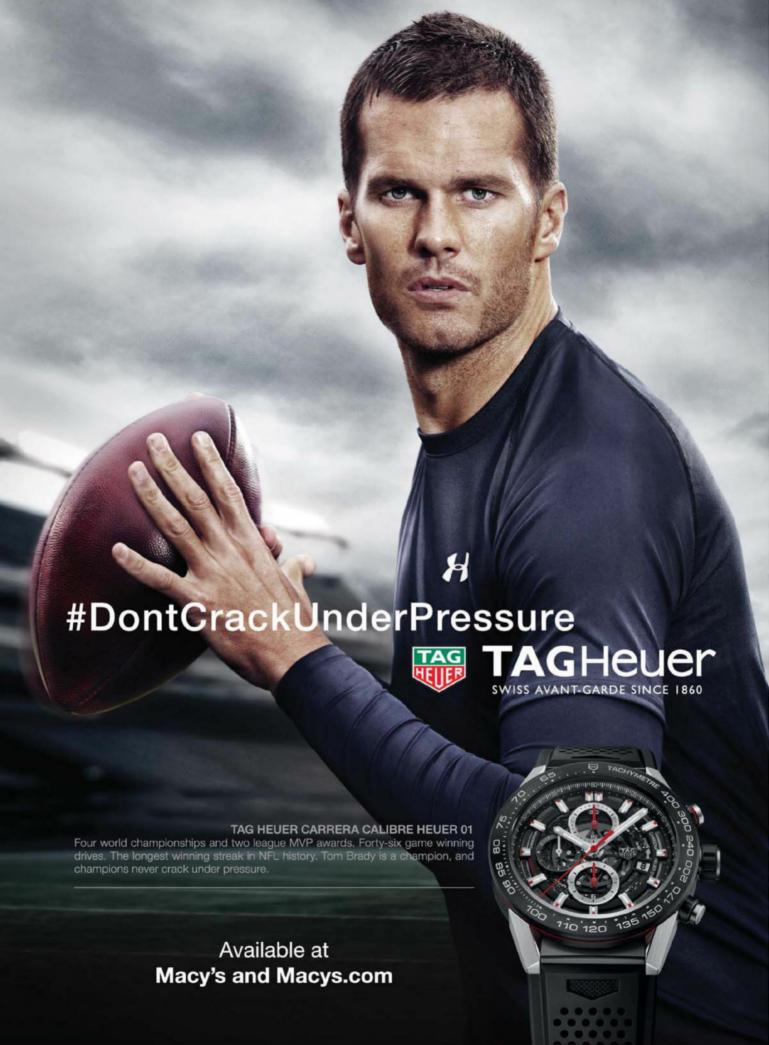
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DRESS: THE ELDER STATESMAN, RED BIKINI (BENEATH): L'AGENT BY AGENT PROVOCATEUR, HEELS: ALEX

new coats BY CAITY WEAVER

PEGGY SIROTA



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- → EACH MONTH, the editors of GQ will select a series of items from our pages available through our online retail partner, Mr Porter.com
- →TO LEARN more—and see what we have chosen for you this month—go to GQ.com/selects

Just a few of our picks from this issue...



Hugo suit p. 109



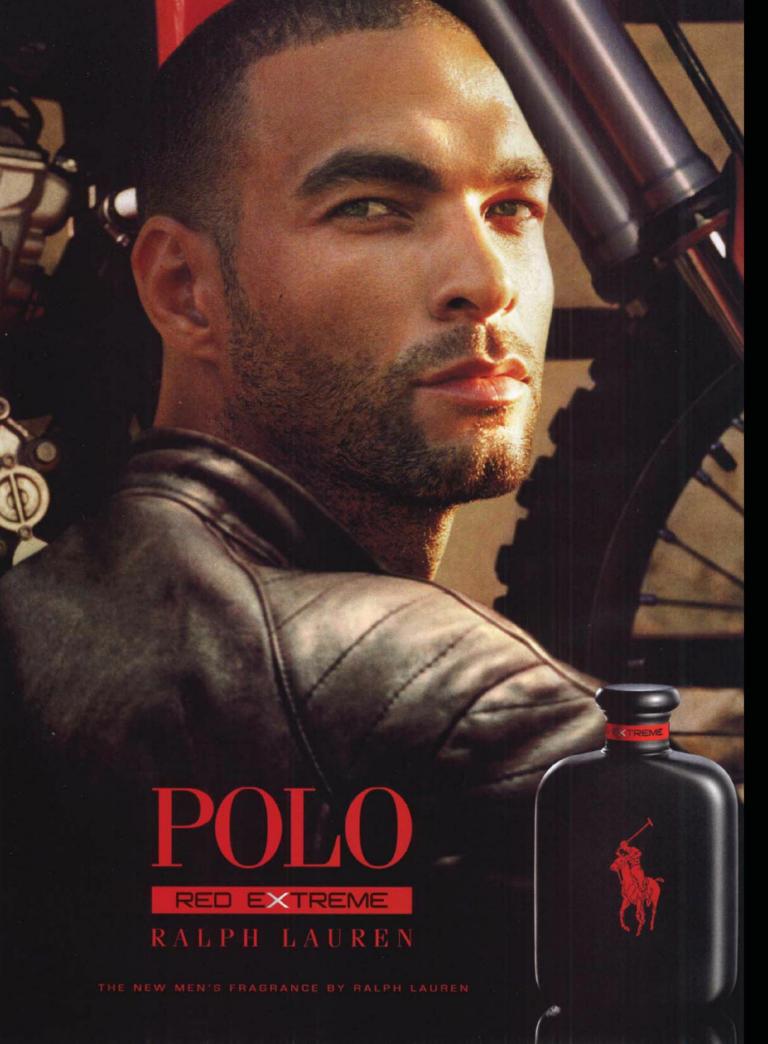
Tom Ford sweater and henley p. 150



Bremont watch p. 62



Dolce & Gabbana shirt and jeans p. 135



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POLO RED EXTREME RALPH LAUREN



HE NEW MEN'S FRAGRANCE BY RALPH LAUREN



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1. Guests in conversation before dinner, from L-R: Actors Chrishell Stause and Justin Hartley, GQ Social Engagement Editor Freddie Campion, and actor B.J. Novak 2. Olympic gold medalist Usain Bolt 3. Rappers Macklemore and French Montana, singer Kelly Rowland, and actor Kevin Hart 4. Actor Edgar Ramírez 5. Actor Ryan Reynolds 6. The all-new Genesis G80 Sport

December 2016, Los Angeles

GQ AND GENESIS CELEBRATE MEN OF THE YEAR

In early December, GQ took over Los Angeles to toast the most stylish and notable men and women of the year. Together, **Genesis** and GQ hosted a private dinner in the Hollywood Hills with 20 luminaries from the worlds of style, film, and entertainment. Guests were treated to a first-class dining experience and greeted with an exclusive look at the all-new Genesis G80 Sport and G90 upon arrival. The following night, GQ and Genesis chauffeured some of the biggest names of the year, such as Usain Bolt, to GQ's Men of the Year party.

→ The latest news from the monthly. the daily, and the all-the-time-ly world of GQ.

GQ®MOST STYLISH MEN | 20



Meet Taffy

Brodesser-

Akner

- → This month GQ correspondent Taffy Brodesser-Akner strolled through London with Tom Hiddleston, the star of Kong: Skull Island (and some Taylor Swift paparazzi shots). Here, the interviewer becomes the interviewee.
- What happened the last time you said. "What's the worst that could happen"? My children are a blessing.
- 2 How long did you have "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" stuck in your head after your interview? I shook it off pretty quickly.
- 3 What's your drink? Sparkling rosé.



Write a haiku about Whole Foods.

Can someone help me? The chia seeds evade me God, I hate muself

6 Where are you least likely to shop? At not the Gap.







GQ Does a 360

Take an All-Access Trip to Our Latest Cover Shoots

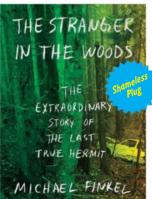
→ If you're curious about what happens outside the frame during a GQ cover shoot, head to Facebook.com/GQ. We've brought you 360-degree looks at The Weeknd's and Chance the Rapper's cover shoots for our February issue. See if you can spot photographer Eric Ray Davidson and GQ creative director Jim Moore working (and werking) in the background.

gq prefers that letters to the editor be sent to letters@gq.com. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED.

Game, Set, Match:

Readers Vote on the Most Stylish Men

→ Roger Federer knows how to stay cool in the heat of cutthroat competition, which may be why readers voted him 2016's most stylish man. The race came down to Tom Hiddleston and Federer, and in the final showdown. Federer took 61 percent of the vote. At the Australian Open in January, Federer joked in a post-match interview, "It's the most important award of the year for me. At least I won something last year."



The Gripping Story of the Last True Hermit

→ In 2014, Michael Finkel captured our imagination with his GQ story "The Strange & Curious Tale of the Last True Hermit." This month Finkel revisits the saga of Christopher Knight, who lived alone in the woods for almost 30 years, in The Stranger in the Woods. Check out the original story on GQ.com and read Finkel's book. Preferably alone. In the woods.



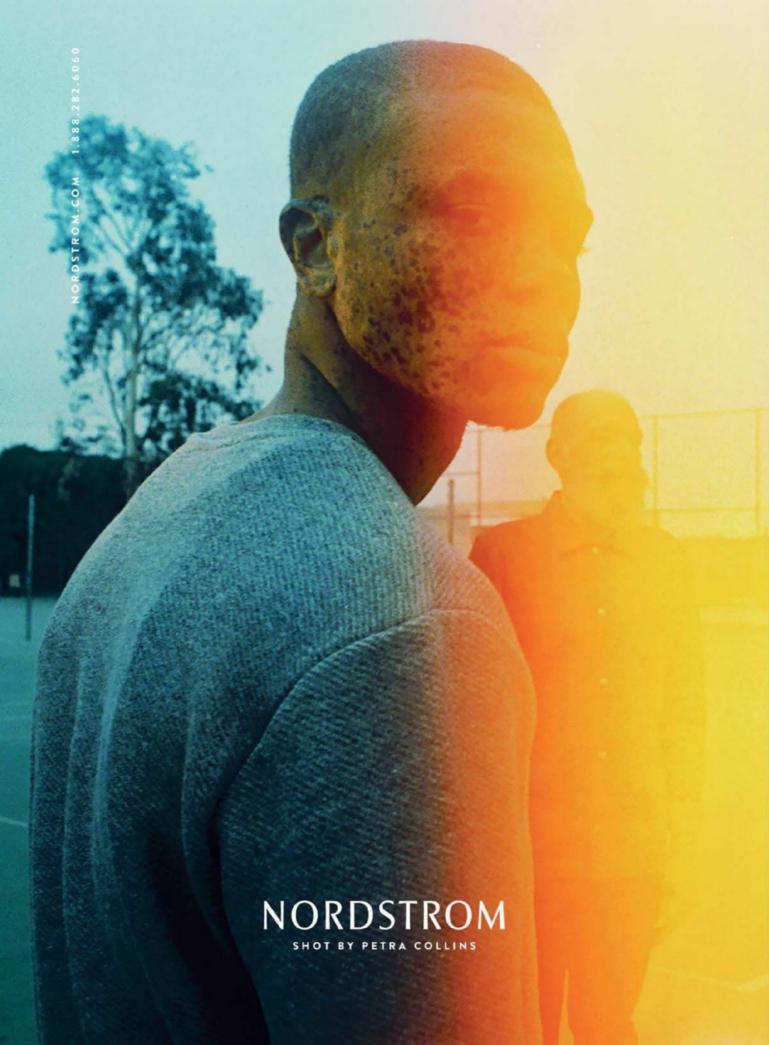
BEST LONGREADS of the year

In December, Longreads.com celebrated two GQ features in its "Best of 2016" lineup: Jeanne Marie Laskas explored $how {\it federal employees track guns without a searchable}$ database, and Sean Flynn showed how prosecutors made Tamir Rice's death disappear. Read both on GQ.com.

THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF WAY TOO MANY GUNS Jeanne Marie Laskas September 2016

THE BOY THEY BURIED TWICE Sean Flynn August 2016

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VERSACE

GQ Endorses

The High-Fashion Varsity Jacket

· We've loved 1980s-style varsity jackets ever since Teen Wolf and The Breakfast Club, but at this point the ultra-sporty kind feels a little...junior varsity. The re-imagined version that Dev Patel wears here is way more sophisticated. With the dark color and extra zippers, it's closer to a motorcycle jacket than to what you earn when you make the baseball team. Wear it with anything from a tie to a tee, and you'll look less like a high school jock and more like a style superstar.-JIM MOORE

Coach 1941 \$995 | coach.com

RETRO

REVOLUTION

Look around the present and you'll notice everyone finding inspiration in the past. There's La La Land; there's Bruno Mars; there's probably a senator advocating for Prohibition somewhere. It makes sense: We're in an era where looking back is a lot more fun than looking forward. Here's how to embrace the newest and best in retro style-without feeling like a relic.

Manual Look Sharp | Live Smart

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR DEMARCHELIER

RCH 2017 GQ.COM 59

Back from the Dead >Are We Ready to Pleat Some Pants?

The last time we saw pleats was in the early 1990s, when they added inches of useless fabric to our dads' waistlines. When they finally died, we thought: Good riddance. So we're as surprised as anyone about their unlikely return—and how we feel about it



• When fashion nerds say all trends are cyclical, they're mostly right—some trends just take longer than others to return. While every new generation seems to discover Chelsea boots and tracksuits, we won't see boot-cut jeans

or Zubaz back in style until at least 2103. Pleated pants are somewhere in the middle: We last took ours off in the spring of '93, and we've never regretted it. But after a quarter-century hiatus when they were harder to find Pants \$1,150 | **Lanvin** at 807 Madison Ave., N.Y.C. 212-812-2866

Shirt and key chain by Lanvin. T-shirt by Velva Sheen. Belt by Dolce & Gabbana. Necklace, vintage. Bracelet by A.P.C. Ring by John Hardy. Shoes by Church's. than four-inch-wide ties, pleats look fresh all over again—which is why menswear heavyweights (Hermes, Ralph Lauren) and upstarts (Ami, Lemaire) are all rolling them out for spring.

Fresh off the runway, they have

crazy variety: You can get them shallow or deep, forward or reverse, single or double (or even triple!). You can find them on slouchy drop-crotch trousers and tailored suit pants alike—though if you see them on jeans or sweatpants, go ahead and set them on fire and send us the bill.

The new pleated pants are subtler than the waistspreaders you may remember, the taupe slacks that made your lap look like a giant geisha fan. They're slimmer now, but definitely not skinny. They fit elegantly, riding high on your hips and falling to your shoe with a gentle taper.

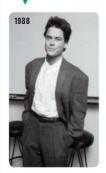
Still skeptical? We don't blame you. "It took us designers years and years to get men into slim-fit pants in the past decade," says Lucas Ossendrijver, menswear designer for the French luxury house Lanvin, which makes the look you see here. "And now it's the other way around: It will take some time again to get men to wear

larger pleated pants." When you're ready, be advised that pleats look better the taller you are. A belt is essential. And this is not an excuse to dust off vintage Dockers from the Reagan era. Get a new pair. I did, and they're a revelation-they relax any jacketed look, class up a tee and sneakers. and draw double takes from strangers who haven't seen pleats in decades (or ever). They feel roomy. They feel lavish. They make plain-front pants look just that: plain.

-SAMUEL HINE

The Pleat Elite

Three trouser icons show you how it's done. Welcome to the fold



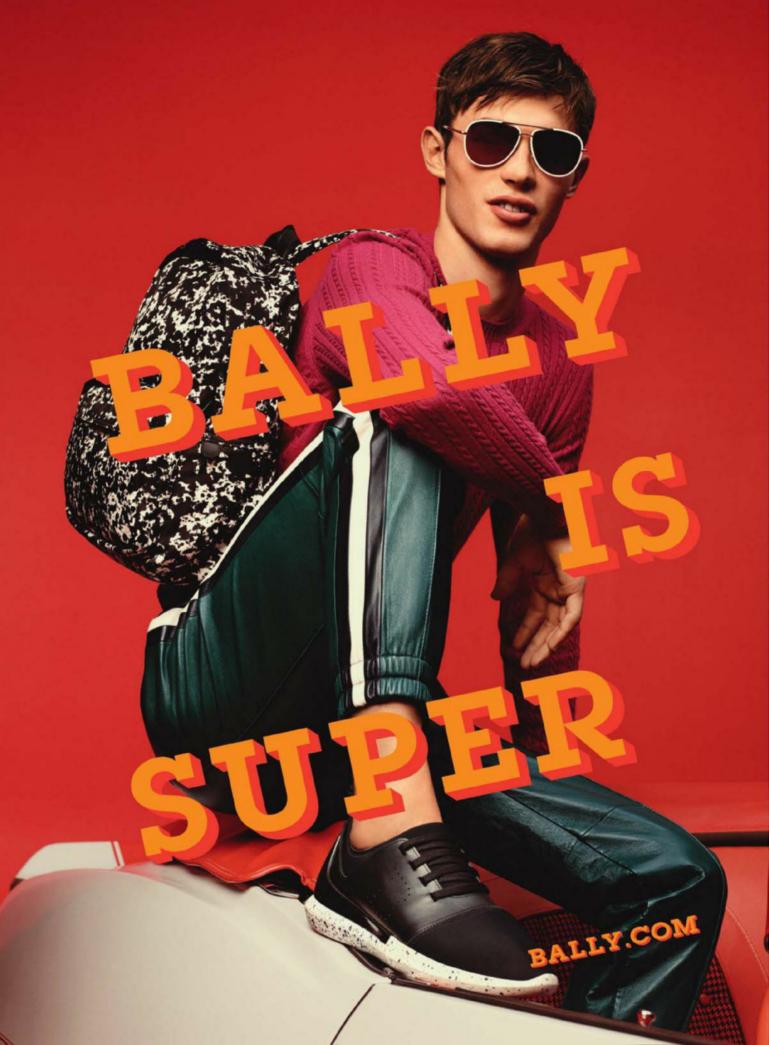
ROB LOWE
When you're decked
out in pleats, you
don't need a tie.



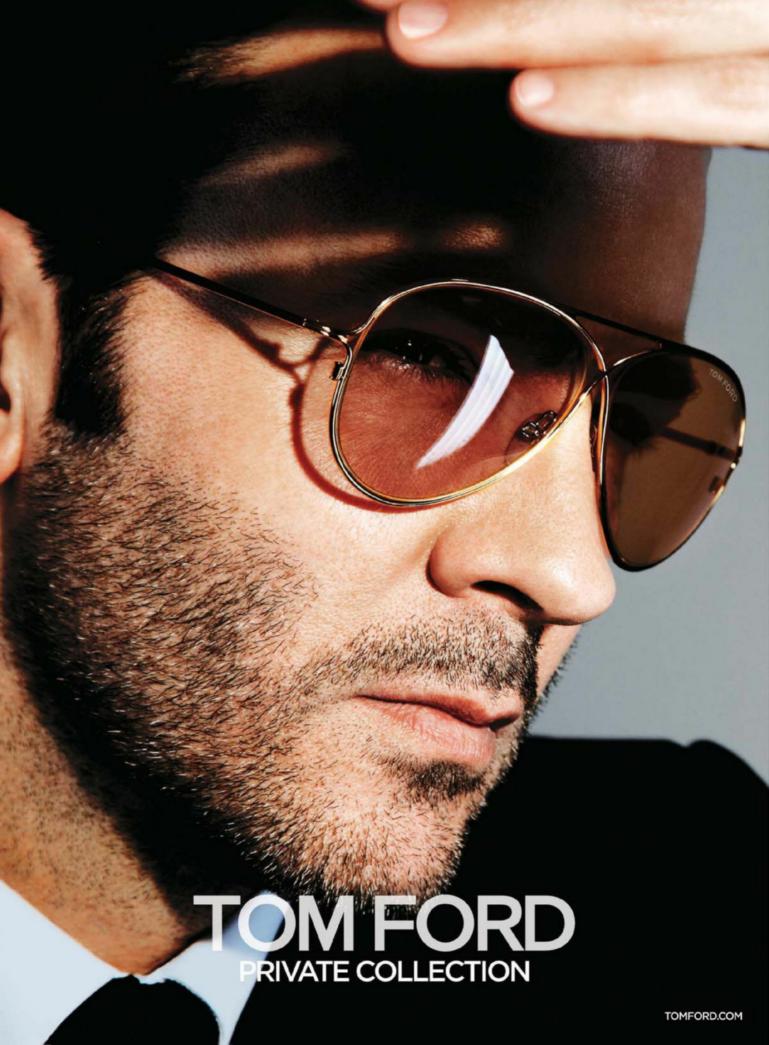
DAVID BOWIE
Helps if you're built like
the Thin White Duke.



ARNOLD PALMER Room for 12 tees and an entire carton of smokes!









NEW YORK MADISON AVENUE MIAMI DESIGN DISTRICT & AVENTURA MALL LAS VEGAS WYNN

GIVENCHY







HERNO





RETRO

The texture's rougher on this one because the detail freaks at Oris use vintage Italian leather.



Oris... \$1,990 Timex. .\$55 \$1,695 Hamilton. Panerai. \$11,700 Rado. \$2,700 Shinola ...\$650 Bremont. \$3,695 Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/style

/fashion-directories

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It's 2017. There's probably some fancy "app" on your "device" that can tell you what time it "is." But there's still no app for eternal style. And nothing captures the classic appeal of 1930s watches like these reboots

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIAN GAUT



Your Next Move





Make the Vertical Leap

Unless you have a side gig as a referee, you've probably spent your life wearing only subtle, thin vertical stripes. But right now, the standout move is to go wider and wilder

Through Thick and Thin

• Pairing stripes with more stripes might seem like voodoo magie, but there's actually a simple trick: Just make sure some are wider than others. With that one change in scale, all those vertical lines will slim you down and raise you up.

Polo \$620 **Dsquared2** dsquared2.com Pants \$295 **The Kooples** thekooples.com • In the fashion rule book, right alongside "Show a little cuff" and "Easy on the jodhpurs" is: "Wear light shirts with dark stripes." Well, it's time to retire that rule. Because what fun are stripes if you can't turn them on their head?

Shirt \$170 Reiss reiss.com

Put It in Reverse



PHOTOGRAPHS BY

GROOMING: LISA-RAQUEL USING R+CO. LEFT, RING: DAVID YURMAN. BRACELET: A.P.C. NECKLACE: MIANSAI. RIGHT, JACKET: BURBERRY, PANTS: GIORGIO ARMANI. PINKIE RING: GEORGE FROST. LOAFERS: TOD'S.

arvatos

Rock is Dead long live Rock

Vintage Trouble, 2017 Kings Theatre, Brooklyn, NY

M

The Style Guy





> Sometimes a trend comes back around-like acidwashed jeans-but I never know when I can start wearing it. I worry I'll look fashion-behind, not fashion-forward. How do I nail it? » I go through this myself. My favorite designers are making wide-leg trousers again, but every time I try on a pair, they look less fashion and more frumpy. (I can picture my fit mentor, Sid Mashburn, shaking his head somewhere in Atlanta. Sorry, Sid.) Wide-legs are just not in the cards for me. But it works both ways. I'll wear Chelsea boots until they're declared

illegal. (Don't get any ideas, Donald.) So try on those jeans and look in the mirror. If you see a sad, confused teenager from 1986 staring back at you, then ditch them. But if you feel like you can almost pull them off, embrace the look. It'll grow on you—again.

I have no idea what it means. Educate me, Style Guy.

» You have a tuxedo, right? Good. Don't wear that. Find the dark-suit/dark-shoe/crisp-shirt/pocket-square/pinkie-ring combo in your closet and wear that. But just not a tux. (Pinkie

ring optional.)

> I see "semiformal" on an invite, and

I'll wear a jacket when it's 65 degrees and a parka when it's 30, but what the heck do I do when it's 50 and maybe going to rain?

With all due respect, 50 degrees is the sweet spot from a sartorial standpoint, because you get to wear layers without one of those layers being a giant coat. A thick sweater and a leather jacket should be perfect. Or a cardigan and a military jacket. Some bombers are down-filled and therefore super warm and cozy. And all of those should hold up in the rain just fine. Bottom line: Add one more layer to your 65-degree outfit and you should be good. But I have to ask: Are you generally hard to please? Are you having trouble finding joy in perfect things? Were you one of the three people who disliked *Breaking Bad*? Let's get to the core of it, my brother. I'm here for you.

The Style Guy is in! Send questions to styleguy@GQ.com or @GQStyleGuy.



Hey, Style Guy, what's in your pockets?

Kind of a strange question. You're not the authorities, are you? I don't carry a lot, but I always have the same things on my person.

KEYS: Because I don't live in Canada, where people leave their doors unlocked.

PENS: Even if I'm just doodling in a meeting, these Caran d'Ache pens make me look like a pro.

CANDY: Go Haribo or go home.

CARD HOLDER: I slimmed down from a wallet a few months ago. What do I miss? Nothing.

LIP BALM: If the Nobel Prize committee ever gave me a vote, I'd nominate Burt, hands down.

Card holder by **Goyard** | \$425 | goyard.com/store Key chain by **Louis Vuitton** | \$225 | louisvuitton.com





WHAT MOVES YOU?



BANANA REPUBLIC





The Golden Age of the Instant Camera...Just Got Started

It took a while to develop, but an anti-Instagram era is here. We gave a few new models to our own Fred Woodward to test, but he only has eyes for one









charge of design for GO, but no creative activity in this world makes me feel happier and more fully alive than the simple act of taking pictures. I've always fiercely guarded my amateur status, so İ was lucky to start shooting at a time when the camera had evolved to be semi-automatic enough to be operated semi-successfully by a semi-pro like myself. I was lucky to have

> I may be in

an SX-70.

Long before there was the point-andshoot or the iPhone

or Hipstamatic or Instagram or Snapchat, there was the SX-70 Polaroid. a modern (in 1972) miracle of technology. a sleek and sexy slab of folding sculpture. Crafted from chrome and leather-cool and warm to the touchthis bad baby spit out perfectly proportioned instant images of soft velveteen, each crisply framed in matte white, all to a somewhat jarring whir and gnashing of gears—as if to proudly announce with every snap, "A camera is and will always be a machine!'

So I felt as though Dr. Land' had made it just for me.

The SX-70 has been resurrected by the Impossible Project and is finally back among the living-just for you. It remains nothing short of a miracle-the machine and what it took to revive it.2

True, you'll have to slow things down a bit, adjust your idea of what passes for "instant" today. And if it's deeply saturated color you're after, vou'll have to dial that dream down a bit as well. You'll even

have to remember to manually focus the blessed thing. And learn to embrace the pressure that comes with an all too finite eight-pack of film. Talk about impossible.3

But...trust me. You'll find yourself slowly falling hard for the whole temperamental, charmingly flawed, drop-dead-gorgeous package. Like we always do in matters of the heart.

As I tell my two very own artist-intraining kids whenever I pull a favorite book off the shelf or an old camera out of the bag for them to get to know: If it was good enough for Walker Evans, Ansel Adams, David Hockney, Helmut Newton, Guy Bourdin, and Andy Warhol, then it's plenty good enough for the rest of us.

- 1. Edwin Land, the inventor of the instant camera and a founder of Polaroid.
- 2. Eight years ago, the Impossible company bought and revived the last Polaroid factory making instant film, and then it started refurbishing SX-70s (\$400 impossible-project .com). It was a catalyst for a new era of instant cameras. GQ's favorites are Impossible's own hardware debut, the **I-1** (\$350), with its Bluetooth app (clap and it takes a picture!), and the Leica Sofort (\$300, leica-camera .com), the first instant camera from the iconic brand. If Leica's getting involved, you know you've got a photo movement on your hands.
- 3. Other tips: Get closer than usual. And wake up your subject with a flash. A raw medium is perfect for a raw expression, so don't worry about a slightly off smile.





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Why It's Time to Go Back to the Mall

Men today are always searching for a miracle cure—the magical face serum that reverses aging, the world's lather-iest shaving cream. We went searching for the best source, and the miracle is: We found it. It was right past Auntie Anne's Pretzels!

• IF YOU HAVEN'T been to the mall in a while, you may have PTSD from the time in 1998 when a phalanx of department-store employees doused you with Drakkar Noir on your way to Camelot Music. Today's versions are different, overflowing with grooming spots where you can obtain face moisturizers, badger-hair brushes, and piney beard oils just as worthy as those in your old-timey neighborhood apothecary. Sure, you're still within eyeshot of a Dick's Sporting Goods and a dozen kiosks selling bootleg phone cases, but with these tricks you can be the first to discover the mall's secret grooming powers. And maybe, in the process, grab a Cinnabon.-JEFF VRABEL

STEP 1: Befriend the spritzer ladies.

Hit up the anchor stores first. At luxury malls like Lenox Square in Atlanta—or even at the one near me in Indianapolis (represent, Fashion Mall at Keystone)—the counters are staffed by skin wizardesses who double as grooming concierges. With knowledge gleaned from hundreds of previous clients, they can diagnose your skin needs in one glance, then suggest a product or treatment on the spot.

STEP 2: Sample yourself silly.

Malls, like drug dealers, want repeat customers. So sometimes they give you that first hit free. I scored a dozen gratis packets of lotion, hair gel, and eye treatments, plus body wash and an anti-wrinkle serum by Kiehl's. All you have to do is ask.

STEP 3: You can go indie if you want to...

Sure, you're in a mall, but that doesn't mean you're limited to mass-market designers and celebrity vanity products. Bloomingdale's carries Malin+Goetz. Nordstrom stocks *GQ* favorite Anthony. Bluemercury will even sell you sugarinfused deodorant, which is obviously not for eating—because sugar's bad for you.

STEP 4: ...Or give the chains a chance.

For the first time in your life, consider venturing into Sephora, which is like the Victoria's Secret of grooming except for one big difference: Although it's overwhelmingly *marketed* to women, the skin-care products are gender-neutral. I've been using FAB Pure Skin Face Cleanser for months now, with nary a pimple. If you are so moved, feel free to coat your own mug in Whipped Argan Oil Face Butter. (It does smell nice.) And pick up something for your girlfriend while you're there.

STEP 5: Treat the mall like a spa.

A mall haircut does not have to mean Supercuts. The hair obsessives at Aveda offered to inspect me with an honest-to-God "scalp camera." The Art of Shaving had a \$70 shave-and-a-haircut deal. If you're a pedicure guy, you can do that at the mall, too. I'm not a pedicure guy. I am, however, still looking for a Sharper Image so I can sit in one of those massage chairs.









A Modest Proposal

>Keep Your Relationships Strong Through Awkwardness





You might say that Jimmy Kimmel has complicated relationships. He's married to his (now) lead writer, he's had his ex as a guest on his show—multiple times—and he can't stop pranking his friends. This is a man who believes that discomfort is a small price to pay for affection



When You Work with Your Wife, She's Your Work Wife, Not Your Wife Wife

It's hard to make the flip from boss to equal partner. And it's especially hard for my wife [Jimmy Kimmel Live! co-head writer Molly McNearney], who's under the impression that she's the boss and I'm the equal partner. She says, "K.I.P." Keep it professional.

Because I embarrass her here at work. When we have our writers' meetings, I'll sit real close, as if we're at a party. She really doesn't like it. She doesn't want to be touched by me here at the office. No one does. No one will let me touch them here.

Never Prank Anyone Richer Than You

I was at George Clooney's house, and he said, "No one

has ever swum back and forth in this pool four times without coming up for air." And I looked at the pool, and I thought, Huh, I think I could be the first guy to do this. I have pretty good lung capacity. Everyone cheered me on. And I go underwater, and I swim the first lap and the second lap. And the third lap, I'm really running out of air. And the fourth lap, I'm like, "Oh, my God.

I might die in here." But I was determined to impress George Clooney. And when I made it to lap four, I came up triumphantly...and no one was there. He had escorted everyone back into the house. I know better than to get him back. He's got a devious mind and an unlimited amount of money.

If You Don't Know How to Have Adult Relationships, Date Someone Who Does

Sarah [Silverman] and I. we're like brothers. It doesn't make sense to me that people would erase a big part of their lives. It's not like we didn't spend every day together for many years. We did, and we have a lot of things in common and mutual friends. I'll see something in the news and think, Oh, my God. I have to tell Sarah about this. She has a very good relationship with pretty much all of the guys she's dated. She is very mature about it. And I'm nothing if not mature, as you've probably gathered from this interview.

Everyone Likes Being Told They're Funny— Even Me

Every year, my wife makes a book of stupid things I've said to her in bed—"I'm gonna dump the contents of your purse all over your stomach," "Everyone is now calling the

battlehole. I changed the game," stuff like that-because she knows there's nothing I find more entertaining than things I've said. I think that holds true for anyone. That's a great note for people who are going to speak at a funeral or a wedding or a major event of some kind: The best way to honor someone is to tell a funny story in which the person you're telling the story about was funny.

It's Harder to Screw Up Kids Than You Think

My mother used to prank us by lying on the ground and pretending to be dead until we cried. That's the number one piece of parenting advice that I would say not to follow. But my mother also used to do these weird characters every night. One of them was like a hunchback character. Another one was a street fighter. She would take me on these emotional roller coasters. I think parents worry too much. Ultimately, we can allow our kids to consume anything-thoughts or things that we see or a half pound of pasta every day-and they'll be no different from any other kid by the time they hit 12. Parenting is like sports: If you're too careful, you're going to lose. But, to reiterate, do not play dead.





The choice is yours, and it's simple.

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Jordan Peele Is **Terrifying**

The Key & Peele star goes solo with a real horror story: being black in America

JORDAN PEELE'S directorial debut, Get Out, is the story of a black man who visits the family of his white girlfriend and begins to suspect they're either a little racist or plotting to annihilate him. Peele examined race for laughs on the Emmy-winning series Key & Peele. But Get Out expresses racial tension in a way we've never seen before: as the monster in a horror flick. CAITY WEAVER talked to Peele in his editing studio about using race as fodder for a popcorn thriller and just how evil you can make the white people.

GQ: A race-based horror movie feels extremely well timed in 2017. How long have you been working on 'Get Out'? JORDAN PEELE: I started messing around when Hillary and Barack were going at it for the Democratic nomination. It was the first time I looked at the gender and racial civil rights movements in relation to each other, and I realized that horror films about gender are some of my favorite movies. Rosemary's Baby and The Stepford Wives explored the fear of men making decisions for women in such an artful, fun, scary way.

Does the African-American experience have an equivalent? No, except [zombie classic] Night of the Living Dead. In the post-civil-rights movement era, there are no movies that really tackle the horror of race.



Why do you think that is? Black creators have not been given a platform, and the African-American experience can only be dealt with by an African-American. That might be problematic to say. And now that I think about it, [The Stepford Wives author] Ira Levin is a man, and he and Roman Polanski wrote Rosemary's Baby. Let's say it would be scary for a white writer and director to do something that includes the victimization of black people in this way. Of course, we have this trope where the black guy is the first to die in every horror movie-that's a way for [white filmmakers] to have their cake and eat it, too.

A lot of the horror in the movie comes from the fact that it can be scary to be black. In some situations, it's just social anxiety, but in others, there's a real threat that just doesn't exist for the white characters. One of the [great] things about Guess Who's Coming to Dinner that anybody can relate to is the uncomfortableness of meeting your in-laws for the first time and being at a party where you're the outsider. So

the layer of race that enriches and complicates that tension [in Get Out] becomes relatable.

My dad is a black guy from Philly. I once dated a white guy from the South. Before they met, my only request to my father was "Please don't bring up slavery." Within two minutes: "Your family own slaves?" Have you ever had a meeting with parents go awry? No, I'm pretty good with parents. But there are situations where I'll feel racially isolated, and I don't necessarily know how much of it is warrantedam I being the racist one? That is what this movie is about.

 $The {\it fraught relationship}$ between black people and cops is touched on early in the $movie.\ The\ main\ character\ in$ 'Get Out' is played by British actor Daniel Kaluuya, who sued the London police in 2013 for allegedly assaulting and falsely imprisoning him after mistaking him for a drug dealer. Still, were you hesitant about not using an African-American actor for this role? Most important was having an actor who related to the isolation of being the only

EGG ON YOUR (BLACK)FACE An index of racially

questionable role-playing



Multiracial women played by Angelina Jolie: 1 (A Mighty Heart)



Asian-Americans played by Emma Stone: 1 (Aloha)



Native Americans played by Johnny Depp: 2 (The Brave, The Lone Ranger)



People of color played by celebs on Halloween: countless (e.g., Julianne Hough, left, as Crazy Eyes; Jason Aldean as Lil Wayne)



Michael Jacksons played by Joseph Fiennes: 1 (Urban Myths, mercifully canceled before its 1/19 premiere)

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black person in a given space. My presumption was that might be a uniquely African-American experience. But when I asked Daniel, he was like, "No, bro. This is what my friends and I are always talking about, bro."

Let's talk about white people. Were you ever concerned about making the ones in this movie too evil?

Part of what horror is is taking risks and going somewhere that people think you're not supposed to be able to go, in the name of expressing reallife fears. I put a lot of thought into [the evil of the white characters], and no one ever suggested that I change it.

Besides systemic racism, what are you afraid of? Ghosts? I want to believe in ghosts. I love ghost stories. We were shooting *Keanu* in New Orleans, and the whole cast went on this ghost tour, led by this sexy, swarthy guy. Like, "If these streets could talk, they'd tell some pretty scary stories. But you probably don't want to hear about that...." I was looking over at Method Man like, "Oh, my God, I brought a member of the Wu-Tang Clan to this fucking ghost tour. He's going to hate it." At the end of the tour, Method Man raises his hand. I was like, "Oh, here it comes." He goes, "Sometimes I wake up and I feel something sitting on my chest. What is it?" And I'm thinking, It's blunts, it's blunts, stop smoking blunts. But the tour guide is like, [nodding] "That's going to be a night hag."

One more question: Is 'Get Out' coming out during Black History Month on purpose? Yeah!

TV: Black-ish (But Mostly Still White-ish)

Though I am a conscientious black woman, I mostly watch TV while trying to fall asleep rather than looking for nuanced differences between shows geared toward black audiences and those that, well, aren't. Turns out when you watch television while fully conscious, there are discrepancies.

THE MARVEL SHOWS Luke Cage (Netflix) vs. Daredevil (Netflix)



Most superheroes have endearing ailments that impact how the world responds to them. Like, Daredevil/ Matt Murdock (Charlie Cox) is blind. Luke Cage (Mike Colter) is black. Although he

is able to use the power of echolocation to dodge bullets, people sometimes try to help Murdock cross the street. Meanwhile, Cage has super strength and impenetrable skin. He still deals with things that better on Luke Cage.

regular black men trying to look out for themselves in Harlem face: Cage struggles to make rent while working two jobs as a dishwasher and a janitor. Also, the music is much, much

THE MAINSTREAM HITS Empire (Fox) vs. Madam Secretary (CBS)



Empire is a celebration of the black nouveau riche—hoverboards as actual transportation. wigs for miles. But the show also confronts race. In the season-two premiere, Taraji P. Henson, a.k.a. Cookie

Lyon, dresses like an ape at a rally to free her ex from prison. Watched on mute, it looks like a Black Lives Matter protest. That's a beautiful thing to see on TV.

On Madam Secretary, there's one recurring

black character. (She works for Téa Leoni's Elizabeth McCord.) If Cookie were in Elizabeth's world, she wouldn't be the hero. She'd be a punch line. Or worse: a victim for Elizabeth to save.

THE INDIE-AUTEUR SERIES Atlanta (FX) vs. Girls (HBO)



Just like Girls' Hannah, I'm a young woman. A self-centered writer living in New York, even! Unlike Donald Glover's character on Atlanta, I'm not an unemployed single parent with a criminal record. But wouldn't you know which show I connect with more? On Atlanta, a woman wears a headscarf while she sleeps. A

white acquaintance feels overly comfortable saying "nigga."

Girls got some backlash after season one for its treatment of race. (Ignoring it.) Creator Lena Dunham responded by bringing on Atlanta's Glover to play Hannah's black Republican boyfriend. Like Dunham, Hannah sees a lack of diversity in her life and comes

up with a half-assed solution. Glover's arc ends when Hannah. claiming she doesn't "see" race, dumps him with an accusation of fetishizing her whiteness. Dunham winks at the audience to show her self-awareness. Then, like Hannah, she makes them feel bad for pointing out racial problems that she doesn't want to think about.

Even as culture changes, a series like Atlanta, by and for black people, is a rarity. But as we see more shows like this—when fictional black people can be regular and boring like fictional white people—then we can truly ascend, on TV and everywhere else. Glover, Issa Rae (HBO's Insecure), Michaela Coel (Netflix's Chewing Gum), and many others have furthered that movement. I'm grateful for that, and even more grateful that this means more very hot black men will be on my screens ASAP.—магіан sмітн

A SPECTRUM OF WOKENESS



The Carmichael Show's Cosby episode, which also grapples with Mark Wahlberg's '80s hate crime and Michael Richards's N-word rant.

Matt Damon playing a hero in ancient China in The Great Wall. Asian-Americans saw whitewashing. The Chinese were reportedly psyched.

Awards shows portraying Sofia Vergara (the highest-paid TV actress) as a sexy foreign doofus somewhere between Salma Hayek and Borat.



Lena Dunham publicly imagining Odell Beckham Jr.'s sexist inner monologue at the Met Ball: "That's a dog... do I want to fuck it?"

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RATION

The Unlikely Recommendation

MANDY MOORE

My love for Mandy Moore is still, to this day, like candy. How could this be? Why would this be? By any fair estimation, her career has been as ordinary as her talent. (Forgive me, M.M., heart of my heart!) She currently stars in the worsttitled show in TV history, NBC's This Is Us. It's a nice show. The Golden Globes, and my mom, love it enough for it to have been renewed for two more seasons. Her most memorable previous role was as...herself, briefly, on Entourage, as one of Vinny's ex-flames, a signifier of B-list



This Month in Superheroism

MARVEL'S 'IRON FIST'

(March 17 on Netflix)

WHO'S THAT? Orphan/kung fu expert/ Buddhist/billionaire entrepreneur Danny Rand (played by Finn Jones)

BEFORE WE GET ANY FURTHER... Yes, he's white. (See previous page.)

OFF-DUTY WARDROBE Freshman-year-dorm-weeddealer bathrobe

ON-DUTY WARDROBE Freshman-year-dorm-weeddealer tracksuit (featuring a life-size rendering of Rand's enormous dragon chest tattoo)

AT STAKE

Defeating "the criminal element corrupting his world around him." (No word on whether season two is set in D.C.)

HOW'D HE GET HIS POWERS? He "slew Shou-Lao, a feat no other warrior had ever accomplished, and plunged his hands into the brazier, imbuing himself with the mystic energy of the Iron Fist."

BRAZIER? It's like an oven.



The Cultural Saturation Chart

Start at the top to learn about the things you won't be able to escape this March. Read lower to check out the weird stuff you can't afford to miss

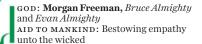
THANKS, GOD! In addition to his labors on earth, our Lord and

In addition to his labors on earth, our Lord and Savior watches over his on-screen flock. *GQ* reviews the work of the most helpful fictional deities



God: **George Burns**, *Oh*, *God!* AID TO MANKIND: Bringing the Word to non-believers

GOD: Alanis Morissette, Dogma AID TO MANKIND: Smiting demons





GOD: Will.i.am, Joan of Arcadia AID TO MANKIND: Begetting Will.i.am's acting career

GOD: Octavia Spencer, The Shack (March 3) AID TO MANKIND: In the book this is based on at least, testing a man of faith by letting a serial murderer nicknamed the Little Ladykiller (because he kills little ladies) kill a little lady (the man's daughter). Actually, this is just a dick move by God.



The GQ Survey

ADAM PALLY IS A MASTER...

...of writing in crayon and stickers (in real life) and time travel (on the Fox comedy *Making History*, premiering March 5).

How to answer these assistions while doing crafts with my daushter.

Would you prefer a beer in the shower or wine in the bath?

BEER IN THE BATH

Please describe your recurring nightmare.

in Baton Rose. Somehow I end up caring for the Youngest Kushner baby who has been or phaned after its parents, Jake + Evanka have been Killed for having Jew Blood by Bannon.

What movie or television scene do you most regret watching with your parents?

Private Parts "have sex with the speaker" scene. Saw it with my bad... wish my mom was those too i) JK





Two irresistible flavors





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GQ Insider Spotlight

SAGE GOLDNIK + JEFF CAFONE

New York City

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT PROJECT.

We first met at a GQ Insider event, and immediately hit it off on a creative level. Friendship grew into a collaboration, and we set out to design pieces that are much sought-after, but little-found in the marketplace. We combined an influencer's progressive style with bespoke craftsmanship to create a collection that was both individual in design, and personal in fit. The result is Sage Goldnik x Jeff Cafone, a small capsule collection featuring an oversize faux-fur coat, a crushed blue velvet and suede motorcycle jacket, and a black moto with gold rope accents inspired by iconic Naval officer uniforms. Each made-to-order piece is available online, or clients can be custom-fit in NYC.

WHAT INFLUENCE DID GQ HAVE ON YOUR COLLABORATION?

This collection was born from a GQ-inspired shared vision of classically tailored statement pieces. GQ has paved the way for collaborations like ours by providing aspirational and accessible style to its readers throughout the years.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AS GQ INSIDERS BEEN?

First of all, it's an honor to even be considered GQ Insiders! The Insider community is a place where diversity of background, culture, and style are appreciated and supported. It's encouraging to have a network of like-minded individuals who share the same passion for thoughtful design and progressive styling. We reached out to many Insiders for feedback during the design phase of Sage Goldnik x Jeff Cafone, and the positive response was overwhelming. Their feedback gave us much-needed insight into what these tastemakers and their audiences want next.

HOW DOES GO IMPACT YOUR SOCIAL INFLUENCE?

Our audiences and clients truly trust the GQ name, and GQ's social and editorial content definitely sets the standard for quality.

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under 200 calories.

I don't like the way people are looking at us.



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The 20 People You

Hate on Social Media

And How to Avoid Becoming One

We searched high and low for the most eareaious offenders of our online sensibilities—and tapped GQ staffers and funny Internet people to @ them in the comments and help them become less terrible



(X) ::::



Guy Flirting with World Dictator on Twitter @realDonaldTrump

Great move on delay (by V. Putin) - I always knew he was very smart!





Left-Wing Nutjob Replying to Every Trump Post @FeelTheBern

@realDonaldTrump Putin can't save you from history, you piss-loving, micro-dicked daughter fondler



Guy Who Snaps Up Twitter Handles for Fleeting Internet Moments

@KenBoneSweater Lol, I'm a sweater.



Drew Magary @drewmagary

@KenBoneSweater Parody accounts are the worst. We don't need 500 assholes all rushing to seize that handle the moment it reaches the zenith of its fleeting relevance. You're not getting a movie deal out of that Twitter feed.





Man Using Twitter Thread to Hold Forth

@mansplainer

39/ ...and that's why I say good riddance to Obamacare. 2 replies



Taffy Brodesser-Akner @taffyakner

@mansplainer 1/ A twitter thread indicates frustration with the form, like an Incredible Hulk ripping through the very mechanism you've agreed to use...



Taffy Brodesser-Akner @taffyakner

2/ i.e. someone who needs special rules (a branding problem men have anyway these days). So thread if you must. You're the king of this place, dude. Which is my way of saying you can go f



000

Influencer Traveling the World to Market Obscure Coconut Water Can't believe I actually do this for a

living. #blessed [4] Couldn't do it without staying hydrated on @BallsWater #sponsor



Résumé Padder added Passion for Excellence to his skills





Lauren Larson On LinkedIn your douchey at-work persona meets your at-home-and-in-bed persona. Your friends can read your lies ("fluent in French," my ass) and people you boned eight years ago can endorse you for things like "leadership" and "Photoshop." Just because you have 500+ connections and are "CEO" of your own company doesn't mean you are wellconnected or a CEO.

⊗:

6.



WE FOCUS ON HIV TO HELP YOU FOCUS ON

Ask your doctor if a medicine made by Gilead is right for you.

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What's on your mind?



Armchair Activist Yelling into Abyss It's too late to say "sorry," Justin



30 minutes ago · Comment · Like

THEY DESERVED BETTER THAN THIS



8.

Devil's Advocate Accidentally Revealing He Might Be a Rapist

Radical judges need to stop branding everything as sexual assault or men will become too afraid to try to have sex and our species will end in three generations (Google "Pop-Zero Cuck Theory"). Besides, when did it become "rape" to meet someone at a party, have a few drinks, escort her to safety in your lemon yellow Mitsubishi Eclipse? No comments please, I can already hear the "Political Correctness Police" outside.

10 minutes ago · Comment · Like



Daniel Kibblesmith

Yikes, that's...incriminating?

2 minutes ago · Comment · Like



⊗:

9.

🛱 reddit

• [-] Condescending Professor of **Everything**

Hmmm, I'm not sure why you think that was a GOOD idea, but...did you try turning it off and on again?

[-] Rob Corddry 27 points 1 hour ago

Ah, the insufferable know-it-all, lurking deep in reddit technology forums. Your mastery of seemingly polite passive-aggressivity rivals the smiliest flight attendants on Air Canada. I'm not sure who I dislike more!







⊗:

10.

11.

12.

Parent Running Fashion-Forward Instagram Account for Their Pre-Verbal Child

Caleb looking so dapper today.



Parent Just Learning About Hashtags

What a #LittleTrendSetter!



Right-Wing Troll with Egg Avatar

@OriginalPepe

Deplorable and proud of it. Self-investigating Hillary's sex crimes. #Soros #Benghazi

TWEETS

FOLLOWING

FOLLOWERS

•



Father. Husband. Voter. Go Orioles.

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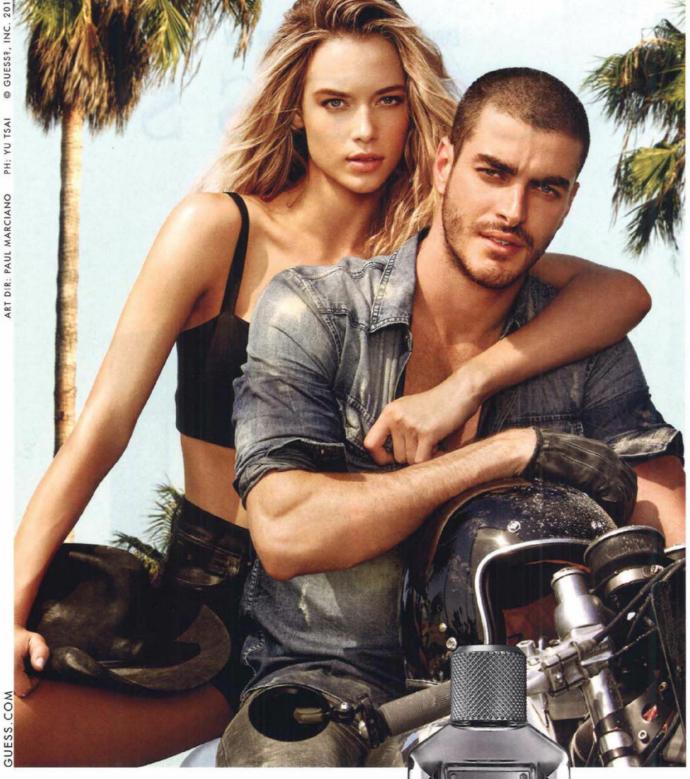
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Handcrafted, stylish, and completely wireless, the new Pryma Aria headphones are tech's newest must-have accessory. Launching this spring, the Pryma Aria by McIntosh Group seamlessly integrates Pryma's hallmark, classically refined style with unparalleled sound from Sonus faber-no headphone jack required. The aluminum shell of each Pryma Aria hosts tactile buttons that let you manage music and phone calls with ease, while the interchangeable leather headband allows you to switch up your look to suit your mood. Available at pryma.com this spring.

pryma.com





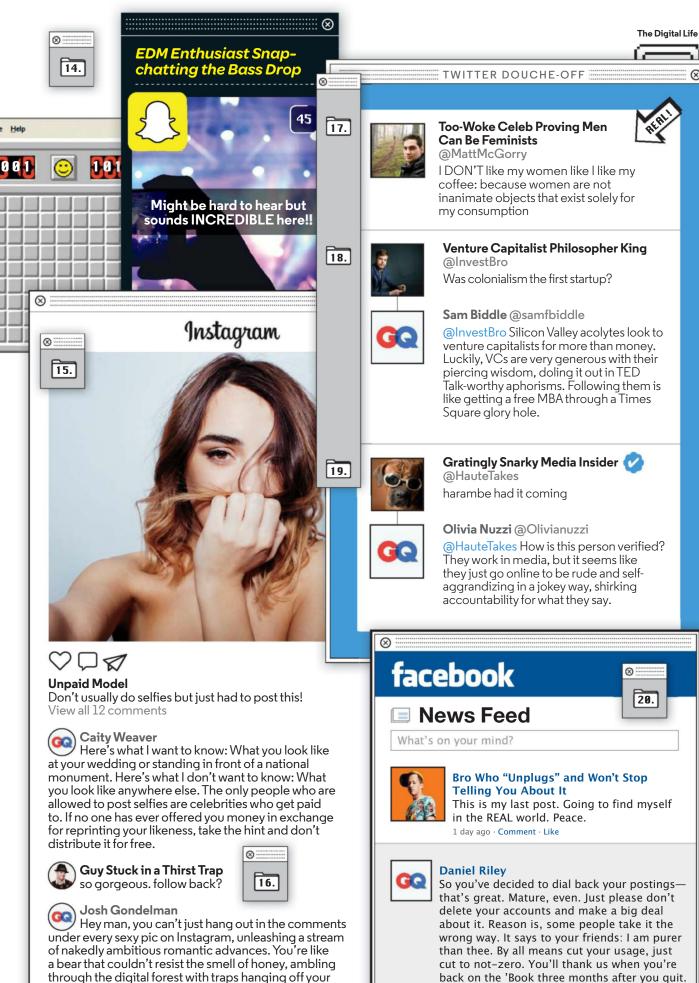
December 2016, Boston

GQ AND LORD & TAYLOR CELEBRATE WINTER STYLE

Lord & Taylor and GQ threw a stylish party in Boston honoring New England Patriots star Danny Amendola. Top GQ readers and VIP customers met Danny and received a custom signed football. Guests also shopped this winter's key essentials while enjoying specially crafted drinks and great tunes.



8



paws, muzzle, and genital area.

⊗ 98 GQ.COM

1 day ago · Comment · Like





• Jay Wright—forever focused on the mental game—has become one of college basketball's most effective motivators.

Anti-Coach

sitting in his spartan office on the Villanova campus, Jay Wright conjures up a high-drama memory that offers, he says, a perfect example of his approach to coaching. (Spoiler alert: His anecdote is curiously lacking in what you'd typically call coaching.) So he draws the scene. It's a familiar one: Houston;

last spring's NCAA championship game, which you

With a coaching style that's more about Zen aphorisms than zone defenses, JAY WRIGHT has built a powerhouse at tiny Villanova. Now, as his Wildcats enter the tourney as defending champs, he's confronting a new koan: What happens when the underdog is on top? → LARRY PLATT



GREAT TASTE GOES WITH ANYTHING

The Original Light Beer



probably remember as culminating in one of the most frenzied finishes in college basketball history. Sure, the buzzer beater that won Villanova the game was plenty memorable, but for Wright, the night's moment of real drama was at halftime.

With his team down by five to North Carolina, Wright was walking toward the locker room, trailing a retinue of assistants. (The pack included Jim Brennan, an army veteran and devotee of Tibetan Buddhism whom Wright calls his team's "performance consultant" but who once referred to himself as Wright's "dream interpreter.")

As Wright reached the door, it swung wide before the coach could even lay hand to handle, and there stood senior center Daniel Ochefu-all six feet eleven inches of him. Ochefu put his giant hand on his coach's shoulder.

"We need you to stay out," Ochefu said, looking serious. "We got this. Me and Arch [senior point guard and co-captain Ryan Arcidiaconol got this."

Wright was stunned. The most important game of any of their lives and the players were telling Wright that they'd handle the coaching. He could hear his assistants behind him.

"Fuck that!" one yelled.

"Get in there!" another said.

"We got this," Ochefu repeated in a stern baritone.

If Wright is known at all outside of basketball circles, it's mostly for the pinstriped suits that complete the somewhat George Clooney-esque figure he cuts, an appearance that belies the heady and introspective nature of his character. He is an inveterate dispenser of motivational witticisms and the kind of guy who sits a Zen master on the bench with him. In other words, Wright is the sort of coach prone to wonder about the life lessons afoot when an enormous star player physically bars him from the locker room during the national-title game.

Wright's hands went up, and he backed off. Ochefu closed the door. Wright and his staff stood helplessly outside, listening to the center rip into his teammates: "If we're going down, we're going down playing 'Nova basketball!"

They did not go down, of course. And later, after a stunning second half and a last-second jumper to win the national title, Ochefu would talk about how it couldn't have gone any other way. He'd admit that he used to resist Wright's New Age talk, smirking at the humble and hungry bracelets he and his teammates were required to wear and all the clichés they were made to memorize. But he'd become a believer.

There is a different kind of coaching going on here. By all appearances, Villanova has no business being-as Wright has made it-the

most dominant team in the nation over the past three years. In the era of the one-anddone collegiate career, whereby 18-year-olds spend a year as rent-a-students auditioning for the NBA, there's something truly remarkable about Villanova, one of the last small Catholic schools (only 6,000 undergrads) to compete at the game's highest level, a college in the swanky suburbs of Philly that produces hardly any NBA stars and graduates nearly 100 percent of its players.

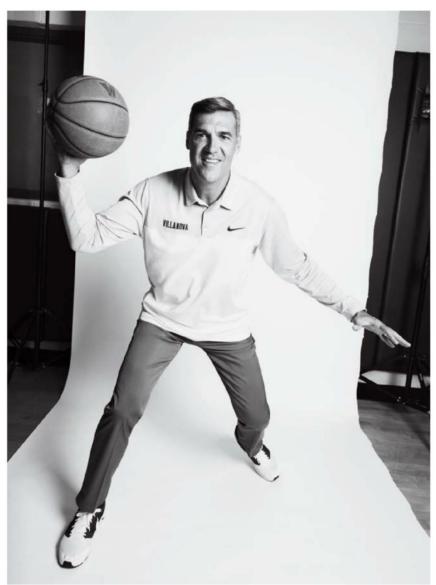
Yet for all that Wright had accomplished in his 16 years at Villanova, prior to last season the school hadn't won a title since 1985. In this, Wright got his scrappy overachievers to glimpse motivation, not frustration. And he concocted a coaching style all his own-a dash of old-school this and a dollop of New Age that—to steer his players ever upward. Of course, now a new mystery looms for a band of self-imagined underdogs adapting to life on top: How does Wright keep success from spoiling everything?

THE NIGHT BEFORE home games. Wright and his players stay at a local hotel. The team eats a meal together and watches video of the next day's opponent. And then the coach dispenses a little insight—along with bottled water and a healthy snackbefore everyone heads for bed.

One such night this winter, with his topranked team seemingly on a cruise course to the tournament, Wright stood to address the players. As usual, he began by plunging a dagger into the group's collective ego.

"Being ranked number one?" Wright says. "It's bullshit. We haven't played teams like Kentucky or Kansas. It means nothing. This season is all about dealing with the 'disease

• Wright is counseled by a Zen devotee who once referred to himself as the coach's "dream interpreter."



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of me.' You're 22 years old, and you're walking around campus and everyone is telling you you're a rock star, which is why I'm inspired by you seniors, because you work to get better every day."

The struggle, Wright makes sure his players know, is the same for him. Ask him about his new book, Attitude: Develop a Winning Mindset On and Off the Court, and his modesty borders on ambivalence. "You win one national championship and now you have all the answers?" He sighs. "All the attention, it's really scary, because it's intoxicating."

Thankful as he is to be winning, Wright, 55, seems perpetually attuned to a subtle frequency of worry—to an internal signal reminding him of the precariousness of the human psyche. He wasn't always this way. When he became a head coach at Hofstra in the mid-'90s, he obsessed over the game strategy. He thought, as many coaches do, that the intricacies of play design and the sheer force of his will were the lone keys to winning.

But after three losing seasons, Wright's job was in jeopardy. His team would invariably lose close games by unraveling when setbacks occurred. A late three-pointer by the opposing team might demoralize his team on the next play. Maybe, he thought, the difference is attitude. If his guys could learn to be unaffected by the last play, and to play for one another rather than for the adulation from the stands, maybe they could get out of their own way.

And so Jay Wright embraced a new approach that emphasized how his players thought about the game, and he brought it to Villanova in 2001. These days at the team's facility, there's ample evidence of Wright's focus on the psychological. "See, we think about every message they hear and see," he told me on a recent tour, pointing to phrases painted everywhere, slogans like players play for their TEAMMATES AND COACHES; ACTORS PLAY FOR THE CROWD.

"We're not complex in what we do X-and-O-wise," he tells me. "But we do spend a lot of time on how we react mentally to every situation." The idea isn't to draw up lots of plays but instead to give his guys the confidence and the freedom to make plays. And here is where Wright's psychological approach feels unique. While just about every coach in America rallies his or her players with motivational verses or tries to summon an inner-dwelling Tony Robbins, Wright wants his players to feel as if they're in control on the floor, admonishing them to play with a "free mind."

There's an element of the True Believer in Wright. When a kid approaches for an autograph, he'll take the ATTITUDE or HUMBLE AND HUNGRY bracelet from his wrist and, as though passing along a sacred text, bestow it on the fan-with an elevatorpitch-length exhortation to try to overcome selfishness. The approach can sound corny, sure—and Wright's aware of that. But he's found that impressionable college kids provide a willing audience for his proverbs. Which is why, even though rumors often circulate that Wright may soon try his hand at an NBA gig, he seems uniquely suited to the college game. After all, what are the chances that a millionaire pro athlete is going to gleefully wear Wright's motivational bracelets and, the night before a game, thankfully gather with his teammates for a healthy snack?

TO SPEND SOME fly-on-the-wall time backstage with a major college basketball program is to marvel at the diversity of decisions that confront the head coach. He is a CEO toiling at a strange and singular work, running a lucrative, persnickety operation. Wright focuses on minimizing his choices and the worries. This is how the Philadelphia-area tailor Gabriele D'Annunzio found his way to Wright's office one day when I was hanging out there.

The 72-year-old D'Annunzio has outfitted the likes of Frank Sinatra and Frankie Avalon. On this day, though, D'Annunzio comes to Wright, and the coach barely interrupts a day focused on Villanova basketball. To further aid in eliminating decisions, D'Annunzio will later give Wright photos of outfit combinations that populate his two spacious closets—one dedicated to his suits and just shy of 50 shirts, another providing a home to his shoes.

While the coach and the tailor huddle over a table full of fabrics, a parade of Villanova staffers burst in to run a variety of pressing matters by Wright. As he discusses team chemistry with associate head coach Baker Dunleavy, he drops his gym shorts and slides on a pair of tuxedo pants.

Handling humdrum chores (like suit fittings) in his office helps streamline the coach's day, but there's another, more psychic benefit, too: Wright wants to stay connected to his priorities. In 2009, after his team went to the Final Four and he encountered his first rush of major attention, Wright grew distracted. "I didn't handle it well," he says. "I realize now my job wasn't to be on ESPN. I'd be out doing all that stuff, come back here and vell at someone at practice, and they're thinking, 'Well, you haven't been here for three days!' So I know this time I need to be present."

Wright admits that back then, when his team was first being mentioned in the same breath as Kentucky, Kansas, and UNC, he let the accolades change his thinking. He and his staff-who'd always amassed rosters of underachievers—were suddenly

Zen and the Art of Ass-Kicking

More and more, the coaches winning everything are the ones preaching that winning isn't everything.—CLAY SKIPPER



The World Series winners ended the most storied drought in sports by following the wisdom of their carefree manager: "Try not to suck."

Got his team to a single-

season record 73 wins with four "core values"—joy, mindfulness, competition, and compassion.

Hired a "human optimization specialist." Doesn't believe in yelling at practice—in a sport where people are paid to hit one another for points.

Before this year's College Football Playoff, said, "Winning is not our number one goal." They won anyway.

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President Obama lauded Jay Wright as "the best-dressed man in college basketball."

chasing the blue-chip recruits pursued by the ultra-elite programs. He was letting others define his program. By the 2011–12 season, Wright's team had a losing 13-19 record, the nadir of his tenure.

Watching a man get fitted for a tuxedo while discussing his path to self-betterment raised an obvious question for me: Aren't the pinstriped suits and pleated shirts and even D'Annunzio also about ego?

"That's a good question," Wright says, pausing, mulling for a moment the strangeness of a job that requires him to wear either custom-made suits or gym clothes. "I think I dress like this because I have a job to do and want to look professional." He's quiet for a bit. Something about his answer doesn't satisfy. "I'm going to have to think about that," he says softly.

Wright is used to being challenged, whether by Brennan; his wife, Patty, a straight-shooting lawyer who watches game film with him; or team chaplain Reverend Rob Hagan-Father Rob to the players. Within minutes, the ever introspective Wright is confessing to D'Annunzio that he has to force himself to wear his brown suits-"The only reason I do is because my mom likes them," he says. Is there a lesson here? For Jay Wright, there always is. "I tell our guys this all the time," the coach says, eyeing a lavender swatch of fabric. "When people you trust tell you the truth about yourself? Moments like those? Man, that is where you grow."

TO WRIGHT, WHAT happens when no one is watching dictates what happens when everybody is watching. Take the evolution of Josh Hart, a leading contender for National Player of the Year this season. When I met with Wright last summer, the coach was concerned about how Hart would accept the mantle of leadership.

After winning the NCAA title, Hart went through the process of talking to NBA teams, trying to gauge if he'd be a first-round draft pick. After he decided to come back for his

senior season, Hart made the mistake of telling Wright what he'd gleaned from the process—namely that to become a top pick, he'd need to become a "3-and-D guy."

"A 3-and-D guy, what's that?" Wright asked.

"All I gotta do is hit threes and play defense and I'll play in the NBA," Hart told his coach.

"I went off on him," Wright said, recounting the story to me and Brennan. "I was telling myself, 'This kid's gotta trust you, so don't lose it with him.' But I couldn't help myself. I told him that sounded like some bullshit an agent told him, someone looking to make money off him. I don't want you coming out of here just hitting threes and playing defense. I kicked him out of my office. I was sure it was the last thing the kid wanted to hear."

Though Hart is averaging roughly 20 points a game this season, it's been his all-around play that has caught the attention of NBA general managers. He's taken over with clutch assists, big steals, and key defensive stops—and given interviews pointing to Wright's summertime dressingdown as a wake-up call. "The kid listened," Wright says now, sounding surprised.

Brennan, though, is not. Each year he administers a character test that he calls the team's "Rosetta stone." "One thing about Josh that the personality survey points out is that he does not like to disappoint people he cares about," Brennan tells the coach.

Brennan, who also consults for the U.S. military, thinks Wright's approach with Hart represents a kind of reverse engineering: "We believe selfishness isn't natural, that human beings evolve into selflessness if given the chance."

That's why, at the team's practice facility, there are no championship banners or retired jerseys, no photos of Villanova greats in the NBA peering from the rafters or from the walls. On the court, Wright is interested in how his players relate to one another, which means practicing things you might

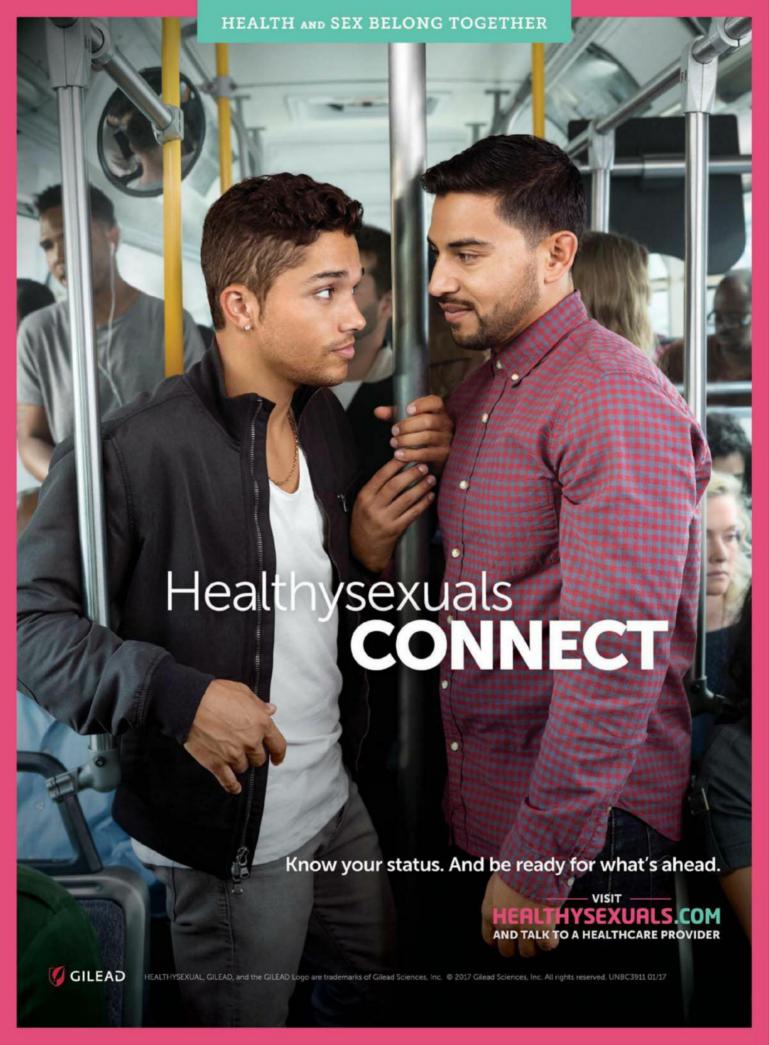
not expect. If a Wildcat takes an offensive foul or dives for a loose ball, the other four players are expected to run to him and help him up. Similarly, if a player hits a big shot in a game and gestures in celebration to the crowd, he'll incur the wrath of Wright, who spends as much time policing his kids' public displays as Duke's Coach K might spend diagramming backdoor picks. Wright doesn't mind when his players are demonstrative on the court—worrying about that is an old-school coach's concern, more about repression than peak performance. He just wants the enthusiasm directed toward the team. "If you're excited, you have a lot of energy; turn and give that energy to your teammates," he'll say.

With Brennan's help, Wright has focused his players-and himself-on paying attention to what they're experiencing, urging them to "Be Here Now," borrowing the countercultural '70s yogi edict. Last season, the Wildcats found themselves in hostile territory at Providence. As usual, the last three men in the Villanova locker room were Wright, Brennan, and Father Rob. Even there, the chants from the hostile students' section were deafening. Wright paused. "How great is this?" he said to his two spiritual advisers. "What I feel right now is gratitude. If I wasn't here, I'd be home, watching this game. I'm so lucky." With that, he was on his way to the court, before turning with one final thought: "Of course, at the first bad call, I'll go fucking nuts," he said, laughing.

Wright's embrace of the moment at Providence explains why Villanova is winning-and why they're able to bounce back when they don't. As I watch Brennan and Wright compare notes on game day, the Zen master says something that makes the coach blanch. "Last year our championship run started with that devastating loss to Seton Hall in the Big East final," says Brennan, a devotee of the social-science research that finds resilience to be a greater predictor of success than talent. "I don't know if we can win another national championship without another really tough loss. Like, one that just kills you."

There is silence for a second. I wonder: Has Brennan gone too far? Wright may have an appetite for high-minded aphorisms, but he's still a coach; in that hyper-competitive fraternity, to wish for a loss is heresy. He fixes Brennan with a hard stare. "I don't think like that," he says. "My instinct is 'Let's see if we can go 31-0." But then Wright pauses again and smiles, no doubt wondering, as always, whether he should be more open-minded. "This is why I need you, man."

Larry platt is a co-author of 'Every Day I Fight,' the posthumous memoir of ESPN's Stuart Scott.



WET.H.





Tom! Hiddleston! Loves! This! Bolognese!

It's amazing Bolognese, the most incredible Bolognese you've ever had. You think vou've had great Bolognese? Try Tom Hiddleston's Bolognese before you continue to talk about great Bologneses you've had in your life. (You braise it in the oven after browning it on the stove—that's the thing. Also: Bacon! Also: Butter! He also loves bacon and butter!) He made this Bolognese last night, after we'd parted following day one of our two-day early-January walking tour of London, which was half Before Sunrise ten-mile stroll-and-chat through the city, half My Dinner with Andre philosophy symposium. He settled into his Camden house (alone) and spent the evening cooking and watching a screener of Moonlight (alone), which he could now confirm for me was as amazing! and riveting! and touching! as everyone has said.

He heats up some Bolognese for me and we make our plan for the day, which I correctly predict will involve another walk through another astonishingly beautiful park. Yesterday, it was Regent's Park. Everyone knows about Hyde Park, but do they know about Regent's Park? No, and I must see it. In the park, I pulled out my old Olympus digital mini tape recorder, and Tom Hiddleston looked at it and whistled in admiration: "Hello, Olympus! This is a great Dictaphone!" He'd used one to test himself on accents when he was at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Long walks, that's his thing—to think stuff over, to figure out his lines, to process what's going on in his life, both the triumphs (turning a routine Marvel villain into a fan favorite; a Golden Globe win for *The Night Manager*; the occasional Bond rumor; a UNICEF UK ambassadorship to South Sudan) and the heartache ("Hiddleswift"). On New Year's Day, he says, Regent's Park was even more beautiful than it was during our walk: It was foggy, and the lanterns were lit, but you couldn't see anything beyond the

▼ The infamous shirt. It was protecting a mere scratch, but this wound would never heal.



mist. It reminded him of the London of old, the one he loves so much, the London of J. M. Barrie. It was a simpler time then. Lately he's been thinking a lot about simpler times.

The Bolognese is even good cold! He's heated it up, but it's even good cold!

Please don't think he's being full of himself being full of his Bolognese. Tom Hiddleston is enthusiastic about everything: Barack Obama ("An enormously temperate man!"); his *Thor* director, Kenneth Branagh ("Such a humanist!"); Jonathan Franzen's Purity ("It holds the Internet to account—it shows you how it can distort identity in an unhealthy way!"); Moana ("Incredible!"); Dwavne Johnson in particular ("That man radiates joy!"); Matt Damon ("I think he's got real integrity!"); Michael Fassbender ("Extraordinary!"); Chiwetel Ejiofor (Amazing!"); this porridge he makes, which is just oatmeal and almond milk and chia seeds ("I'm obsessed!").

This is important to keep in mind while you're getting to know Tom Hiddleston: His zeal is bottomless. It's one of many things that were it not for what we know about his personal life, we might already know more about. For example, you might already know he's the kind of compelling, versatile actor who can leave his mark on all kinds of roles—as a slick spy in *The Night Manager*, an emo vampire in Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive*, a condescending Asgardian god in *Thor*—but maybe instead of it being a thing you know about Tom Hiddleston, it'd be the thing he's known *for*.

You might know, instead, that he's an English gentleman of the purest caliber who has never spoken out of turn about any of his relationships, who roots for his co-stars and colleagues loudly (really loudly) over social media, who has never been caught flipping the bird at the paparazzi who hunted him after his famous breakup, who wouldn't curse during my many hours with him no matter what the circumstance because his mother would be so disappointed to read it. If you took the measure of Tom Hiddleston without any influence from Daily Mail and In Touch Weekly stories, you might think to yourself: Here is a handsome, thoughtful man who is not wasting his potential, and that is a heartening thing to see in this world. Also, he's tall. A thing you learn doing these interviews is that actors are always far shorter than you ever imagined. Tom Hiddleston isn't. He is tall and strapping, and I kept thinking that it is so Tom Hiddleston to live up to the hype.

In his kitchen, he makes our third cup of tea of the day; by the end of my interview, we will both be in kidney failure from all this tea, and we will finish talking while hooked up to dialysis machines. We sit





beneath a large canvas photograph of the big De Niro-Pacino confrontation scene in *Heat*, which is one of Tom's favorite movies; there's another *Heat* poster in the library. *Heat* is the best!

But in the pantheon of things Tom loves, the thing he loves most is Tom Hanks. Tom Hanks is the greatest-what a career that guy has! It's clear why he might love him so much: Tom Hanks seems as all-in as Tom Hiddleston. "His decency is poured into everything he does," he says of Hanks. Even the comedies. Even in Turner & Hooch! "I'm nowhere near Tom Hanks's contribution or even close. All of it's not high art, you know? But there is a value in it, you know, somehow, somewhere." What he's saying is: It's worth it for us all to think about what we're putting into the world. He's saying it would be great to be known for your decency.

And here Hiddleston does a brief impression of Tom Hanks (he does very

good impressions of everyone, including me after a day) that is hard to describe, except to say that it summons Tom Hanks in a very profound way. Its only flaw is also part of its charm: While he does the impression, he's also looking at you to see how much you're enjoying it, and then he can't stop smiling when he sees that you are, so ultimately what you get is an impression of Tom Hiddleston enjoying himself doing a Tom Hanks impression.

This seems like a wise moment to address a sneaking suspicion that I batted away at first—inconceivable, given the physical specimen in front of me—until it became unavoidable: By most definitions, Tom Hiddleston is...uncool. His vulnerability, his enthusiasm, his Bolognese, these are not trademarks of a dashing movie star. And yet here he is, a sweet-natured bookworm trapped in the second act of a movie where the overlooked geek has been given the face

and body of the only man who should ever be allowed to wear a suit (or jeans, or that long-sleeve navy T-shirt he wore when we had dinner).

But now consider uncoolness as a general thing, how in its most concentrated form it frees a certain 1 percent of people to be who they truly are, turning uncoolness into the ultimate coolness. Tom Hiddleston's sincerity and eagerness to engage, to connect, go from making a confounding first impression to a genuinely winning second one.

On every level, Hiddleston is in: He's there, he's present, he's yours, he's heartfelt, he's real. And that can be a double-edged Chitauri Scepter, since it leads to the stuff about Hiddleston that wounds him: the Golden Globes speech in which his enthusiasm for his UNICEF work plunged him into a YouTube-able-forever moment (and its subsequent apology) that I can only watch through my fingers; the infamous I ♥ T.s. tank top, which is now synonymous with the words "Tom" and "Hiddleston." The world might not be ready for the kind of earnestness and sincerity that comes along with Tom Hiddleston. I am here to tell you that we would be a much happier race of humans if it were.

His conscientiousness was built into him as a boy by his father, who is the best chemist in the world. They lived in a modest home in Wimbledon along with his mother, who is the most compelling arts fund-raiser alive; his elder sister, Europe's best journalist; and his younger sister, a gifted midwife with a singing voice that comes directly from God. The Hiddlefamily was solidly middle-class, but Tom's parents sacrificed to send him to the best schools-Eton, Cambridge, and then RADA. He learned the basics of scrupulosity, though, from his father, who taught him that there is right and wrong, fact and myth, and that sometimes you have to work hard to spot the difference. This was a life lesson for Tom Hiddleston, passed down from father to son, but it's also an acting lesson.

See, he thinks the audience deserves people who have studied. Acting isn't about lying or pretending, the way people sometimes say it is. It's about getting the experience of the person you are portraying exactly correct, and the way you do that is by going to the experts. In *Skull Island*, the *Kong* reboot, he plays a former British SAS soldier who is a renowned tracker, hired to help find whatever it is they're looking for (which turns out to be monsters). For that performance he: read *The Tracker*, the seminal (text continued on page 162)













QUEENS

OF THE



THERE ARE A THOUSAND WAYS
TO BUY WEED IN NEW YORK CITY,

but the *Green Angels* devised a novel strategy for standing out:

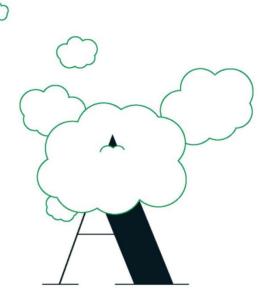
They hired models to be their dealers.

In the eight years since the group was founded—by a blonde, blue-eyed Mormon ex-model—they've never been busted, and the business has grown into a multimillion-dollar operation.

Suketu Mehta spent months embedded with them at their headquarters and out on their delivery routes to see where this great experiment in American entrepreneurship might lead

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN FINKE





A friend tells me about the Green Angels, a collective of about 30 models turned high-end-weed dealers, and he introduces me to the group's leader, Honey. The first time we speak, in the spring of 2015, she comes to my house in Greenwich Village and we talk for six hours.

She is 27 and several months pregnant. Her belly is showing, a little, under her black top and over her black patterned stockings. But her face is still as fresh as hay, sunlight, the idea the rest of the world has about the American West, where she was born—she's an excommunicated Mormon from the Rocky Mountains. Honey is not her real name; it's a pseudonym she chose for this article. She is over six feet tall, blonde, and blue-eyed. Patrick Demarchelier took photos of her when she was a teenager. She still does some modeling. Now that she's pregnant, I tell her, she should do maternity modeling.

"Why would I do that when I can make 6,000 a day just watching TV?" she asks.

Honey started the business in 2009. When she began dealing, she would get an ounce from a guy in Union Square, then take it to her apartment and divide it into smaller quantities for sale. She bought a vacuum sealer from Bed Bath & Beyond to make the little bags her product came in airtight. She tells me that part of her research was watching CNN specials on the drug war to find out how dealers got busted.

Today her total expenses average more than \$300,000 a month for the product, plus around \$30,000 for cabs, cell phones, rent for various safe houses, and other administrative costs. She makes a profit of \$27,000 a week. "I like seeing a pile of cash in my living room," she says.

I want to see Honey's operation up close, to understand how she was able to build this business from scratch, but she's understandably wary. The one advantage I have is that she wants her story told—as a way to expand the business, or to leave it behind, or both in succession—which is why she agreed to meet in the first place.

The Green Angels, she tells me, are selling a fantasy of an attractive, well-educated, presentable young woman who wants to get you high—a slightly more risqué Avon lady. Not all of the Angels are working models, but they are all young and attractive. In eight years, they have never been busted by the cops. The explanation is simple: Good-looking girls don't get searched.

In New York, it's currently a felony to sell more than 25 grams of pot—the equivalent of about 40 joints. Honey has been working on a

business plan to see her through legalization, but that might be on hold under the Trump administration. The Green Angels could also profit no matter what happens. If the penalties go up, so will their prices. If the drug is legalized, they have a trafficking, packaging, and delivery network already in place.

A few years ago, Honey says, she began delivering weed, for free, to Rihanna. Her hope is that Rihanna will endorse the Green Angels' products if legalization ever goes national. "She's very smart, vicious," Honey says. "I can see she's not someone to fuck with."

Justin Bieber occasionally calls the Green Angels when he's in town, she says, but he gets charged. So do Jimmy Fallon and various actors and hip-hop artists whose names I don't recognize. The musicians Peaches and FKA Twigs: both clients. (None of the above confirmed any business relationship with the Green Angels.)

Honey is clear-eyed about the nature of her operation: "I tell the girls, it's not a club; it's a drug ring." The whole business is run via text messages between her, the dispatchers in her headquarters, the runners who do the deliveries, and the customers. "I have carpal tunnel in my thumb from all the texting," Honey says. Dispatchers get 10 percent of each sale; the runners get 20 percent, which averages out to \$300 or \$400 a day. Several of them, according to Honey, "are paying off their NYU student loans."

Many of the Angels are NYU students? I ask. (I teach journalism at NYU.)

"Half the city seems to be going to NYU," Honey says.

Most of her employees are in their 20s; a few—those who have been with her since the beginning—are around 30. She has five or six trusted lieutenants who will run things when she's having the baby.

At one point, she gets up from the sofa and goes to the bathroom to throw up. She has morning sickness. I ask her if she's seen a doctor.

"Not yet," she says.

I tell Honey that I'd like to go on a delivery with one of her runners, but she demurs. She says she'll have to ask the others.



I MUST HAVE PASSED SOME SORT OF TEST,

because Honey invites me to the Green Angels' weekly planning meeting, which takes place every Wednesday in an apartment on the Lower East Side. She has, in fact, changed the meetings to Thursdays for my benefit, since I teach on Wednesdays.

The drug den is in a third-floor apartment in a building a block away from a police precinct. This is where the product is distributed to the runners and the dispatchers handle orders, though it's not yet clear whether I'll be able to see them in action. The meeting takes place at 10 A.M., and they don't start taking orders until noon.

In the apartment, I find Honey, a dozen girls, and two guys. They greet me enthusiastically. Honey introduces me as someone





who's writing a book about their lives. She tells the crew they are free to talk to me about anything.

The apartment has a bedroom in which the supplies are kept, a bathroom, and a living room with an open kitchen. It's centrally located for a business that serves both Brooklyn and Manhattan, and the neighbors don't mind all the traffic—most of the other units are Airbnb rentals. Every six months, Honey changes to a new location.

The girls look like my students: thin, dressed in carefully ripped jeans and T-shirts, long sundresses with sneakers, or denim cutoff shorts with the white pockets exposed. They are middle- or uppermiddle-class, well-spoken, well-traveled. They are aspiring writers, musicians, artists.

The boys have been working for Honey for only a week and a half. They complain that when they make their deliveries, the customers are sometimes irritated, expecting pretty young girls at their doors. The girls crack up and suggest names for them: "mangels" or "gayngels."

One of the runners shows me the merchandise, which she'll assemble into a black box used for photo rolls. There is a huge variety of marijuana, varying by strength, flavor, and purpose. Little plastic packets holding an eighth of an ounce are \$50 each. There are also caramel lollipops for \$30, bottles of tincture for \$80, and vapes for \$140.

Honey used to assemble the vape pens herself and would have to test each one to make sure it worked. "By the end of the day, I was like, 'What's my name again?'"

The Angels have a baker who makes 200 caramels for them a week. She brings out a bag of lollipops and offers me one. "Too early in the morning," I say. Everyone else takes one, and the whole room is licking away at the lollies.

One of the Angels tells a story about her landlord, who mistakenly took a package of edibles meant for her, thinking his daughter had sent him chocolates. He left the box open at a nearby laundromat. Kids started eating the chocolates and reports started coming in to doctors: "My kid's been staring at the wall for hours."

Honey gives me a tincture to put in my bathwater. "Write it down," she says, and one of the Angels marks the bottle off the inventory. I look at the label: a pair of wings, green angels, and "Ingr: vegetable glycerine, THC."

Later in the meeting, Honey gives an orientation speech to some of the new girls: "Never get in somebody's car. No meeting in bars—you have to be in their apartment. No meeting in parties. No handoffs on the street. A cop might be checking you out. Dress professionally and in character. No marijuana anything on your shirt. No cute little shorts." She points to one girl who's wearing a dress that leaves most of her breasts exposed. "This is too low." The girl, flustered, pulls up her dress over her chest. "We're selling weed, going to men's apartments. Boobs out for customers—no."

Honey points out girls who dress particularly well. They will get sent to VIPs. "We like to be the fantasy: cool professional women who have



The best thing about the job:

"WHEN YOU WALK IN THAT DOOR, SOMEONE IS SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU."

the best inventory and know about pot. The character we're going for isn't that of a pot dealer. It's the student, the professional, the regular girl. Play the part—cool, calm, and collected. If a cop in the subway asks to see what's in your makeup bag, just be cool, calm, and collected."

At the customer's apartment, if a guy answers the door in his boxers, they are to tell him, "Put some clothes on, and I'll come back."

"You'll get hit on left and right," Honey tells the girls. But she warns them: "No dating the customers." Never give the customer your real name or number. Follow your intuition. If you're feeling unsafe, go into a bodega. "You're working for an illegal business," Honey reminds them. "It's only a little illegal, but don't tell your friends."

Honey returns to the subject of what to do if stopped by the police. A runner's main weapon is her smile, her ability to talk to the cops: "Say, 'I love the NYPD! You guys are the best,'" Honey says, fluttering her eyelashes and making a heart sign with her hands. "The number one thing cops look for is lack of eye contact."

Honey urges all the runners to memorize her phone number, promising, "If you get in trouble, we'll get you out in two hours."

She fields a question: "And if they ask you to open the box?" "Sav you don't have the code."

One of the Angels suggests using a tote bag instead of a backpack to carry the box. She generally uses a WNYC tote bag, which is given out to donors to the public-radio station. The other day, an old lady gave her a high five after seeing her tote. "I thought, If you only knew what I have in this bag," she says.

Honey tells the girls to get a work phone from MetroPCS, which costs \$100. When buying it, they should pay in cash and have a name in mind to put down on the form, in case the police check. "I like to use the names of girls who were my enemies growing up," Honey says.

At the end of the meeting, I ask the girls for their names and phone numbers and they cheerfully oblige, writing them in my notebook. But then Honey calls out, "Give him your burner numbers. Don't give him your real names." An Angel comes up and takes my notebook and rips off the sheet with the numbers. They write again, with a new set of names; I'm using fake names in this story as well.

Honey brings out a bag of joints and passes it around, and everyone smokes up; the room is enveloped in a haze. Honey takes several deep puffs and reminds us that only female marijuana plants have smokable buds. "You're smoking the feminine magic," she says.

The two boys leave the meeting, and the girls immediately start bitching about them. "Why are we hiring dudes?" one asks. "They come in here with all that testosterone. We're girls—we speak in low, soft tones; we all have our periods together. And then in come these dick-swinging dudes..."

One of the runners recalls that on the previous Saturday, one of the boys had bragged to her, "I made \$500. I made more than you." "The girls would never do that," she says. "No one ever asks me how much I make." The general consensus is that the dudes should go. "We work on an emotional-intuitive level."

As I leave, Honey feeds my number into one of the dispatchers' phones as "Suketu writer." She adds a note that I am to be allowed to come to dispatch anytime I want.



THE NEXT WEEK, I WALK OVER TO THE DRUG

den again. I press C1, which has a black mark next to it made with a Magic Marker: one long and two short presses of the button. The door buzzes in response. Upstairs, I meet Charley, one of the five dispatchers on duty. She has been in the drug den since 11:30 a.m., and she'll stay until midnight—a double shift. She shows me how the system works.

The Green Angels average around 150 orders a day, which is about a fourth of what the busiest services handle. When a customer texts, it goes to one of the cell phones on the table in the living room. There's a hierarchy: The phones with the pink covers are the lowest; they contain the numbers of the flakes, cheapskates, or people who live in Bed-Stuy. The purple phones contain the good, solid customers. Blue is for the VIPs. There are over a thousand customers on Honey's master list.

To place an order, a customer is supposed to text "Can we hang out?" and a runner is sent to his apartment. No calling, no other codes or requests. Delivery is guaranteed within an hour and a half. If the customer isn't home, he gets a strike. Three strikes and he's 86'd. If he yells at the runner, he's 86'd immediately.

The Angels work only by referral. The customers should refer people they really know and trust, not strangers, and no one they've met in a bar. If you refer someone who becomes a problem, Charley says, you lose your membership.

Charley is from Rhode Island. When she was in her senior year, her parents got divorced and stopped paying for her college but didn't tell her. When she graduated, she had an immense amount of debt. She lived on \$20 a day, trying to make it as a music publicist, and would walk four miles over the bridge to Manhattan and back every day because she couldn't afford the subway. Her friends fed her.

"When I started working for Honey, it was the first time I wasn't worried about debt," Charley says. Now she makes between \$1,000 and \$1,300 a week.

A text comes in asking for Charley by name. That's a no-no. You're not allowed to request a specific Angel. Another runner texts saying a customer is late and she's been kept waiting. In such cases, Charley says, "We nicely scold them."

Throughout the day, the texts ebb and flow. Lunchtime is busy, and then the afternoon is slack. Then it gets really busy between 5:30 and 8:30, as people come home from work. On the weekends, it's busy between noon and 6 p.m. Bad weather is good for business; on a beautiful day, someone is not going to sit around at home waiting for a weed delivery.



A few weeks after my session with Charley, I watch an Angel named Marie as she handles dispatch. Marie was among the five original Angels. At the beginning, there was only one runner a day, working from noon to midnight. They didn't have the fancy stuff like edibles. But "our shit was really good, so people continued to call us."

Marie grew up outside New York. She wanted to be a veterinarian and enrolled at NYU, where she didn't have to pay tuition because her father worked there. But one semester of organic chemistry "freaked me out," and she switched to art history. Now she's saving up money for grad school upstate, which she'll begin in the fall.

Marie's parents think she works as a freelance writer. They met Honey at their daughter's birthday party. "They thought she was such a nice girl," Marie says. Then she reflects on her subterfuge. "Do I have to wait until I'm 45 to tell my parents?"

As Marie talks to me, she enters the figures coming in from the runners in a school notebook. "Sometimes I wonder if this job has made me compulsively check my phone," she says, compulsively checking her phone.

After college, Marie waited tables for ten years. Most recently, she worked at a fancy restaurant on the Upper East Side, "a soul-sucking job." There were customers who came to the restaurant five nights a week for dinner and demanded the same table. There were old people who would ask, "Can I have

the Brussels sprouts that were on the menu in the autumn of 2010?"

Another woman would bring in instant mashed potatoes in a Tupperware container and ask Marie to warm them up, to go with her steak. "Those people are not worth it," Marie says with feeling. "I've never felt more treated like a servant in my entire life."

One of the things she likes most about her current job: "When you walk in that door, someone is so happy to see you." She remembers a couple who started as customers when she was a runner, who seemed truly sad when she told them it was her last day making deliveries. "When it's hot and you go to their apartment and they offer you a glass of water and a granola bar, that's what makes this job so fucking special. We are a community," Marie says. Angels are there for their clients, no matter the occasion: "I just broke up with my girlfriend, I need a blunt, please come over" or "I want to celebrate!"

Marie pauses the conversation to deal with a mini crisis: A customer has moved, and the runner doesn't know his new address. Then Marie gets a text from a new number. She shows it to me, saying she won't respond to an unknown number. She advises the sender, "Please have whoever recommended you send me a text."

It's a nice thing to offer your Angel a glass of water when she comes in.

Mormon hugs only!
One-armed, reach-around side hugs.



The customers are, by and large, the gentry of the city. "We're like sommeliers, helping people choose," Marie says. "'If you want something chill, try this.'" She recalls a woman in her 40s who lives by the U.N., buying for an evening's consumption for her and her husband after putting their baby to sleep.

She stares in horror at a text: "I got two sativas and an indica if you want one." It's obviously misdirected, meant for some lucky friend of the texter. "That's a strike. What a dumb-ass!"

She calls a customer. "Can you open the door, please? I've been waiting ten minutes. Next time, can you be a little closer to the phone?" Then, after she hangs up, "That's a strike, absolutely."



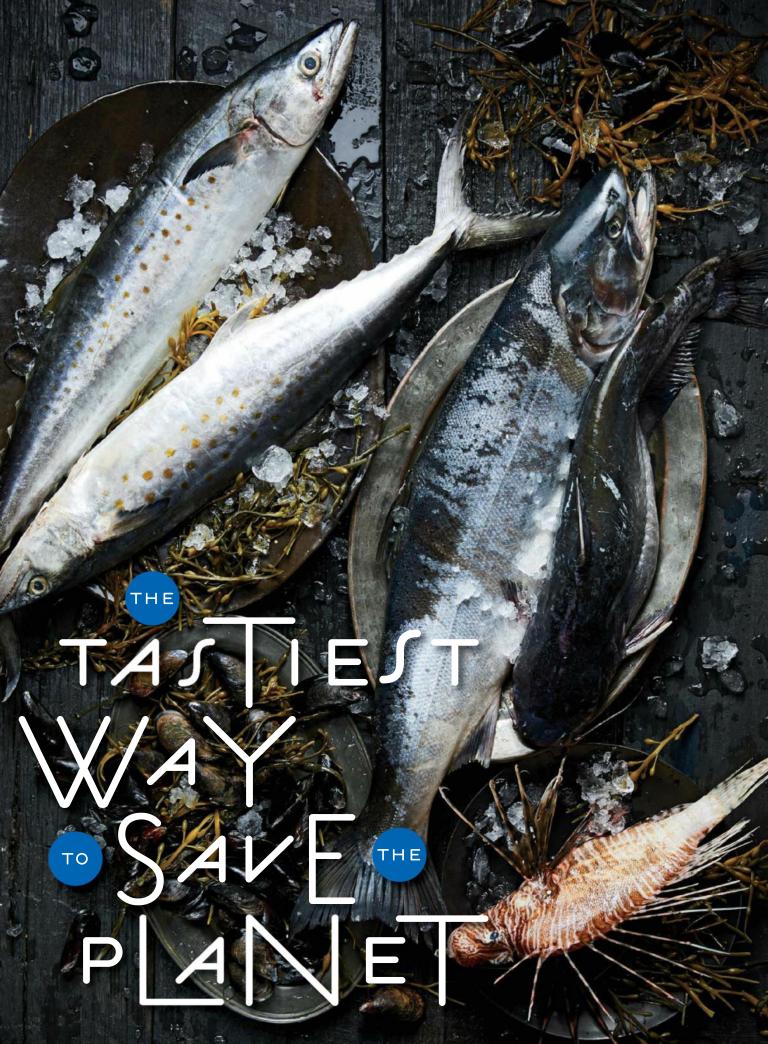
FINALLY, HONEY SAYS I CAN GO OUT ON

deliveries with the runners. I meet Mylie at the drug den at noon. She is from Jamaica, 33 years old, pudgy, pleasant, well educated. She likes that many of the customers need marijuana for medical issues, like cancer or MS or arthritis. One customer, who's had a portion of his tongue removed, needs pain relief around the clock. He buys the tincture, the vapes, caramels. The Angels will often throw in a freebie for such customers. It makes for "good karmic energy," says Mylie.

It's a beautiful Friday in spring. Our first stop is in Tribeca. A young man arrives at the front door just as we do. "We're here for John," Mylie says.

'That's my dad," the young man says.

We take the elevator up; it opens directly onto a large loft. A man in his 60s greets us and leads us into the *(continued on page 166)*





ITHOUT QUESTION, fish is the most nutritious animal we can eat, and by far the most varied in flavor and texture. But once you know that humankind has decimated the wild population, you don't have to be a Greenpeace raft captain to feel conflicted about consuming it. Do we really want to be the generation so obsessed with gastronomic pleasure that we exterminate the Pacific? We can do better—not only for the future of our oceans but for the future of our appetites. There really are plenty of other fish in the sea: sustainable fish, regret-free fish, delicious and abundant fish that in some cases are such invasive species, it's actually virtuous to murder them. With just a few modest substitutions, you can do your part for the planet while still eating like a king.

BLUEFIN TUNA IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DEVIL. BUT...

MACKEREL IS HOLY

A majestic creature prized for its fatty texture and luscious flavor, bluefin is coveted like no other tuna. It's also in trouble like no other tuna: By some estimates its Pacific population has declined by more than 90 percent, and multiple environmental groups want it to be named an endangered species. Fortunately there's mackerel, tuna's smaller cousin. Mackerel, too, is dark-fleshed and fat-laden, and it's crave-worthy raw, poached, pickled, or broiled.

BROILED MACKEREL (see photo on previous page)

Make small diagonal slashes on the skin side of a fillet, then sprinkle both sides with some salt. (This is an old Japanese technique that does wonders for texture and flavor.) While the broiler preheats and the fish sits, make a dipping sauce of ¹/₂ cup soy sauce, 1 tablespoon mirin or honey, 2 teaspoons grated ginger, and the juice of ¹/₂ lime. Broil until the fish is browned and just barely firm, less than five minutes. Serve with cooked short-grain rice and the dipping sauce, garnished with pickled ginger or cilantro and a couple of lime wedges.

Ayha Dilemmar

Okay, but can I at least eat canned tuna?

Sorry, Charlie, but canned tuna—unless it's the pricey sustainable brands like Wild Planet and Raincoast (whose albacore tuna is line-caught)—is best avoided. I stay away, especially, from the big three: Bumble Bee, Chicken of the Sea, and StarKist, all of which have been accused of both unsustainable fishing and unfair labor practices. On the bright side, canned salmon is usually all right. As are the fish that come in rectangular tins: sardines, anchovies, smoked oysters, cooked octopus, and so on.

EASY ON THE SHRIMP.

GO BIG ON MUSSELS

I know how great shrimp tastes, but an awful lot of it is farmed under repellent conditions, and much of that by actual slave labor. (In Southeast Asia, fishing-boat captains have been known to kidnap indigent men, forcing them to work for no pay and holding them in cages between shifts.) And the wild stocks of the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico are mostly trawled, a destructive method. Better to look for something else, and that something else is mussels. They're sustainably farmed. (If you're lucky you can buy wild, and those are even better.) They're also inexpensive, delicious, and incredibly easy to cook. One pound per person is adequate, though an extra pound among three or four people will get eaten.

OLD-FASHIONED MUSSEL BOIL

Wash mussels well, removing any beards if present. (You'll know what a beard is when you see it.) Steam about ten minutes in a covered pot with 2 crushed garlic cloves, 1 dried chile, and 1/2 cup dry white wine. While mussels are cooking, melt 1 stick (for four people) butter in a small saucepan and stir in lime juice, lime zest, and Sriracha or other hot sauce to taste. Garnish with coarsely chopped cilantro and serve with the dipping sauce.





EAT THIS FISH

BEFORE IT EATS EVERYTHING

You know the lionfish. You've seen it in aquariums. It's the one that looks like a swimming pincushion, covered in venomous spikes. It's also so invasive, and so detrimental to native species, that fisherymanagement people can't figure out how to contain itparts of Florida actually hold lionfish derbies, where divers compete to kill as many as they can. For fans of tropical white fish like grouper, this is an invitation to feast. Lionfish fillets tend to be small, but the meat is sturdy and mild, which allows it to stand up to blackening. Figure on four to six ounces (at least two fillets) per person.

BLACKENED LIONFISH

Crank your oven to its absolute max-550 degrees is not too hotwith a cast-iron pan in there from the beginning. Make a mixture of cayenne (1/2 teaspoon per 8 fillets), black pepper (at least a teaspoon), cumin (ditto), fresh thyme leaves (1 tablespoon), and pimentón (smoked paprika, at least a teaspoon). Rub that mixture onto both sides of the fish, then drizzle the fish with a few tablespoons of melted butter or warmed oil. When the pan is raging hot, add the fish to it. (Turn on every exhaust fan in the house.) Cook two minutes, then flip and cook two minutes more. Serve immediately. drizzled with a little more butter.

Livhy Dilemmar

What fish should I avoid at all costs?

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's famous Seafood Watch list is the most widely cited source for such things, but it can be confusing. The short answer: Don't eat bluefin tuna, Atlantic cod, shark, or orange roughy; avoid unagi and Japanese hamachi at sushi bars; steer clear of any seafood from China; and see the answers to the other questions in these pages. That still leaves a lot you can eat! And with these recipes, you'll honestly never miss the stuff you're giving up.



WHY FISH IS WORTH THE TROUBLE -

If you're already thinking that all this is too complicated and you'd rather just have a burger, hang on. From a nutritional perspective, almost everyone agrees fish is better for you than most meat: higher in beneficial fats and lower in trouble-making ones. Its "conversion ratio"—the amount of food it takes to produce edible protein—is far superior. It's easy and fast to cook. Some of it, at least, is wild, and you don't get more organic than that. Yes, there are issues with fish; there are issues with all food. But unless you're vegetarian, it should be a major—and majorly healthy—part of your diet.





THE FUTURE OF FISH AT YOUR DOOR -

By now you want—and I want you to want—sustainable fish caught by small—scale wild fishers, landed in U.S. ports. Good news:
What you want just arrived in the form of a company called Sea to Table. Founders Michael and Sean Dimin buy everything direct from fishers at 55 different American ports, then flash—freeze the fish and ship it to you, wherever you are in the Lower 48.

(Ves. Omaha.) From Pacific cod to Acadian redfish, every fish has a story, and it's all traceable—right down to the method of catch and the name of the captain. \$5.50 to \$11.50 per serving, sea2table.com

<mark>र्नौshy Dilemma</mark>s

So does that mean all farmed fish is okay?

Well, not exactly. Trout, striped bass, and tilapia are raised well in the States, and bivalves (oysters, clams, mussels, scallops) have been successfully and sustainably farmed for thousands of years. However, farmed American salmon is a mess; carnivorous salmon devour countless smaller fish for feed and threaten the environment in ways wild fish do not. In other $countries, a quaculture\ is\ even\ worse, overfeeding\ fish\ with\ antibiotics$ and contaminating waters (and the fish itself) with chemicals. Bottom line: Avoid farmed shrimp, salmon, hamachi, and eel.

U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

THE ONE AMERICAN FISH WE SHOULD ALL BE EATING

Catfish are ugly fuckers. Bottom-feeding, scum-sucking scavengers. But you're not making out with them. You're eating them. And they're among the best-tasting, most sustainable fish you can find white, flaky, and tender, farmed with clean and smart techniques. Pan-fry your catfish, figuring about four to six ounces per person. More if you're in Mississippi, where everyone already eats it and loves it.

FRIED CATFISH

Cut fillets into pieces no more than three inches across. Sprinkle the fish with salt and pepper, then dredge first in flour, then in beaten egg, and finally in breadcrumbs. When you're ready to cook, set a large skillet over medium heat and warm a combination

of butter and olive oil; it should be at least 1/8-inch deep. The fat is ready when a pinch of flour sizzles. Cook the fish for two to three minutes per side, until golden. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve immediately, with lemon wedges.

IS YOUR FISHMONGER ~~ LYING TO YOU? ~~

According to the conservation group Oceana, as much as a third of all fish sold at retail may be mislabeled. Here are five common culprits to watch out for, and to ask your fishmonger about, before forking over your cash.

THEY CALL IT...

IT MAY ACTUALLY BE ...

COD -----

ASIAN CATFISH.

which should be sold at a much lower price

RED SNAPPER ---- ROCKFISH, PERCH,

white bass, tilapia, or a $number\ of\ other\ (good\ but$ much less expensive) fish

ALBACORE

- ESCOLAR.

which makes some $people\,sick$

PACIFIC HALIBUT ----- ATLANTIC HALIBUT.

which is designated as a "species of concern"

Resource-intensive

KING SALMON ---

FARMED SALMON

Fishy Dilemmas

Am I evil for eating sushi?

 ${\it Unless you're \ eating \ sushi \ while \ simultaneously \ fracking \ for \ natural}$ gas and hiking up the price of prescription drugs, you're probably not evil. But between the rampant fish slaughter and the insane carbon footprint of shipping your dinner overseas from Japan, $sushiis\ an\ environmental\ calamity.\ The\ trick\ is\ to\ order\ fish\ that$ adhere to the Four S's: They're small, seasonal, silver, or shellfish. (But not that other S: shrimp.) These criteria are the hallmarks of sustainability, and they allow you to slake your craving without turning every sushi joint into a temple of atonement.

SKIPJACK NIGIRI

Japanese name: katsuo

A kind of tuna that's closely related to bonito, this is among the smallest, quickestbreeding, and most plentiful of its type. Super flavor.

SCALLOP SASHIMI

hotate

A truly premium shellfish, scallops can be wild or farmed. What you really want are day-boat, or diver, scallops.

HOW TO KILL IT AT THE SUSHI BAR

(WITHOUT KILLING IT FOR THE REST OF US)

▶ I asked Casson Trenor, who founded the world's first fully sustainable sushi restaurant (Tataki in San Francisco), to suggest a complete meal with integrity. For your new go-to menu, see below. Don't forget vegetable tempura, seaweed salad, and miso soup.



SPOT-PRAWN NIGIRI

amaebi (avoid plain old ebi. which is likely to be farmed or trawl-caught shrimp)

Served raw, spot prawns mostly hail from British Columbia, where there is a robust. well-managed population.



WHITE-TUNA SASHIMI shiromaguro

When you're desperate for a tuna fix, go with the honky. Fatty, supple albacore is your best bet.



Except for East Coast blue crab and imitation crab, almost all domestic crabs-Dungeness, stone, rock, king, snow, and more-are good choices. And nothing tastes better.

SALMON-ROE NIGIRI

Plump, tangerine-colored salmon eggs are wild, common, sustainable, and pleasantly poppy in your mouth.

ikura

sake

Velvety and savory, and beautiful to behold. Just make sure it's not farmed salmon, which would defeat the point.

from here to Osaka, it's perfection with ginger and soy.

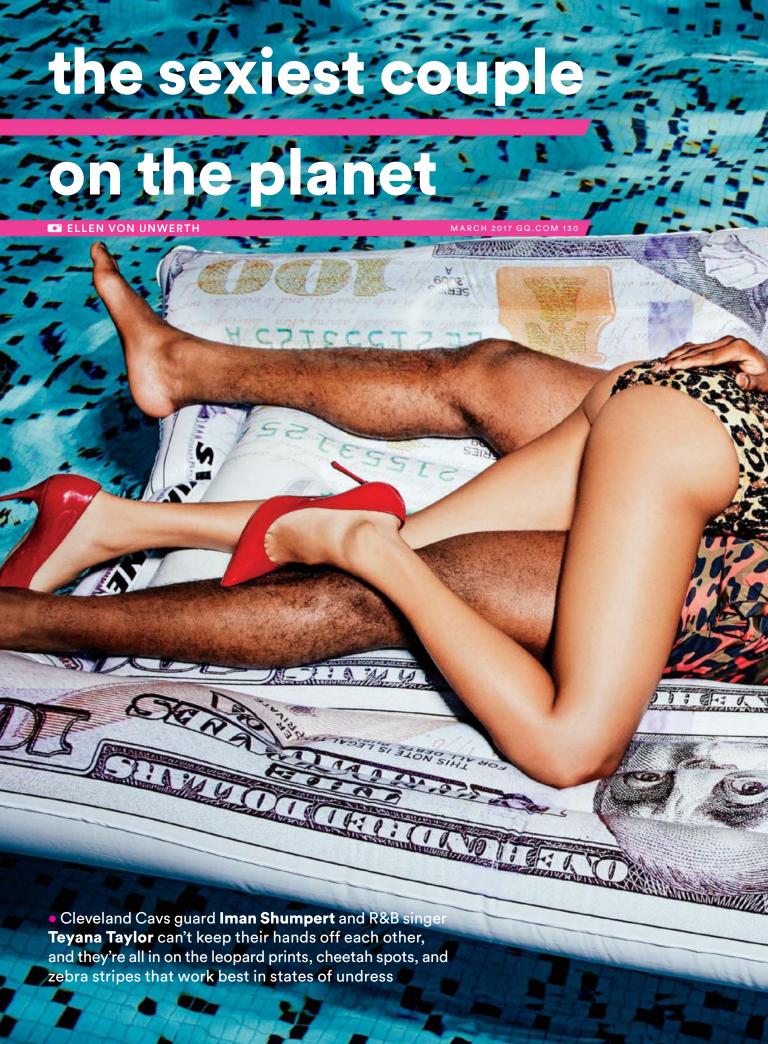




easily suede

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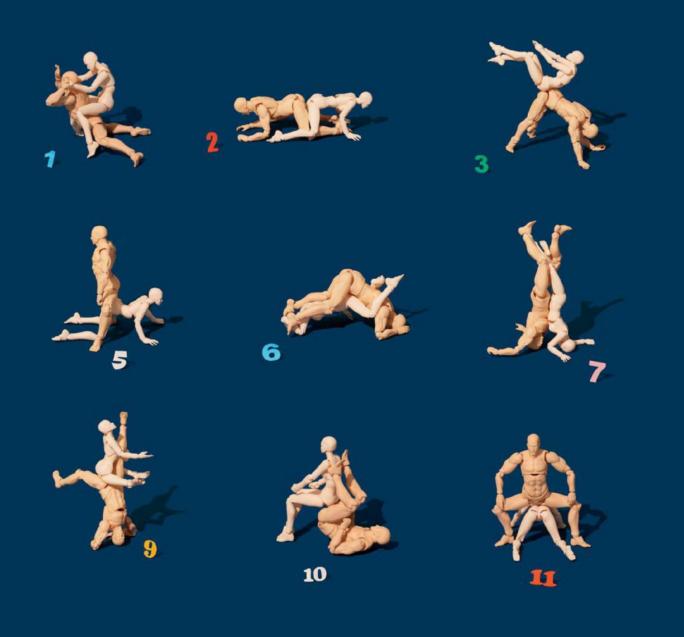


In the past 14 months, leyana laylor and Iman Shumpert have delivered (yes, delivered, in the bathroom) their daughter, Junie; appeared in the oiliest music video of all time (Kanye West's "Fade"); added rings to their jewelry collection (of both the NBA Championship and wedding variety—the latter in a secret ceremony next to their bathroom, "at the crime scene," as Teyana says); and spent many a night where you might imagine the sexiest couple alive to hang out: Chuck E. Cheese's.

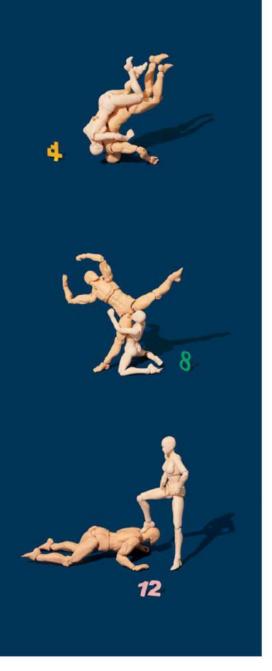
"When you're with the person you don't mind being with all day every day," Teyana says, "y'all could be in, like, West Bumblefuck"—or, you know, Cleveland, where they live—"and still have a great time."

Truth is, between her events schedule and his road trips, they do their best to squeeze in as much home time together as possible. "And we try to make sure the arguments we do have are only over the remote control," Iman says. Is home time as much, uh, "fun" as these photos make it seem? Well, that depends on Junie. "She's cool with the vibe. We sleep, she sleeps. We're up,

"She's cool with the vibe. We sleep, she sleeps. We're up, she's up. We move around, she moves around. Except when me and Iman be lovey-dovey," says Mom, "then she can be cockblockin'." Take note, young lovers: Alone time is precious. So do as these two do and take full advantage of your sexy animal prints while you still can.—CLAY SKIPPER



YOURE A Weary Woman's Advice on Overrated Bedroom Behavior OVER-DOING To the second
ONCE UPON A TIME—like 176,000 years ago—human sex consisted of a few grunts, a couple of thrusts, and a *wham bam thank you caveman*. Modern sex, on the other hand, is a cruise-ship buffet of options: Girl on Top! Reverse Twisted Pretzel! Tell Me I'm Pretty and Go Real Slow! And while we women are all for this brave new world of sexual variety, the reality is that some, maybe even most, acts of generosity in the bedroom are kinda overblown. Here are 15 moves that aren't worth the effort



Spooning

The Big Cuddle lobby is gonna come after me for this, but it needs to be said: Spooning is extremely uncomfortable. The big spoon must slip his or her lower arm under the body of the little spoon, bringing on hand numbness and spasms of shoulder pain. Then there's the heat. You've just finished a grueling two-minute workout, your bodies are furnaces, and now you want to smush your sweaty torsos together like a pair of spent sea lions? How about a quick kiss on the cheek and a hearty back scratch? Or just, you know, less spooning and more forking?

Erotic Eating

So you saw 9½ Weeks waaay too young. Please don't take it out on us. And unless it's the middle of August, keep ice out of it, too.

69

Sixty-nining is so ruthlessly efficient it should be called *Neunundsechzig*, as it is in Germany. It takes something wonderful and adds nothing but physical labor and the risk of suffocation. Are you really that pressed for time? Unless you're a teenager crammed into the back of a Honda Civic, there's no reason for Lego-stacking a sexual delicacy. JUST TAKE TURNS. Call it 6...[30-minute window]...9-ing. Or, you know, oral sex.

70

Mathematically, it's 69 plus one digit. There's a chance there's a finger involved somewhere. There's also a chance I just made this up. But now that it's out in the world, I proclaim it overrated.

Saying Thank You Afterward

Thrilled that you have good manners, but this makes me feel like a cafeteria lady who just gave you a pudding cup. Find other ways to demonstrate your politeness. Thank you!

Lights-On Sex

I know, I know: We should all be super body-confident and proudly showcase our nubs 'n' nibs under the harshest lights—but contrary to popular belief, preferring dim doesn't necessarily mean you're shy about what you've got going on. Maybe you're like me and just don't want to see what your partner has going on—like, say, weird thigh pimples and upper-arm keratosis. It's called keeping a marriage alive.

Sex on the Beach

Of course it sounds lovely. But in practice, you wind up with a sand-chafed behind and a scarred child who wandered too far from his towel. Plus, you have to watch out for two types of crabs.

Reverse Cowgirl

To be fair, I know a number of women who swear by this position. But the vantage-point disparity troubles me. The man gets to look at a shapely posterior bopping up and down in all its full-moon glory, while the lady gets to look at a pile of dirty clothes and a graveyard of half-drunk bottles of Snapple.

Amateur Back Massage

The intention is plenty sweet, but unless you are a trained massage therapist (in which case, don't mix business with pleasure!), your feeble finger presses usually just feel like a 7-year-old is playing "Chopsticks" on my back. And as you should know, piano-playing 7-year-olds are not a turn-on.

Titty Boffing

I agree with babies and grizzly men at truck stops: Boobies are fun. Nature's bouncy balls! The googly eyes of the torso! By all means, touch them, squeeze them, and paw at them to your heart's content during sexy time. Just don't use Mr. Winky to go at her chest like you're giving some sort of lifesaving CPR. Believe me—she's not dead, she's bored.

Cunnilingus

I kid—cunnilingus is perfect. Practice it daily.

Anything from Pages 7 to 87 of the Kama Sutra

Most women are not Cirque du Soleillevel flexible, and most men can't even touch their toes. You can enjoy sex without contorting your bodies into the shape of a DNA double helix.

Threesome

You know when you're walking down the sidewalk with two friends and a dad pushing a stroller approaches from the other direction, forcing you to step behind your pals to make room? That's what three-ways are like. At some point, someone gets excluded and is left to awkwardly bat a boob or straighten up the throw pillows. I once slipped out of the bedroom mid-threesome to get a bowl of Kix because I was like, "Eh, these two are doing fine without me." You know what threesomes are good for, though? Showing off that you once had a threesome, like I just did.

All "Sex Moves" Invented by
14-Year-Old Boys on Urban
Dictionary, Including the Land
Shark, the Dirty Sanchez, and
Anything Else That Sounds Like a
Villain from a 1930s Comic Book
No one's actually done any of these.

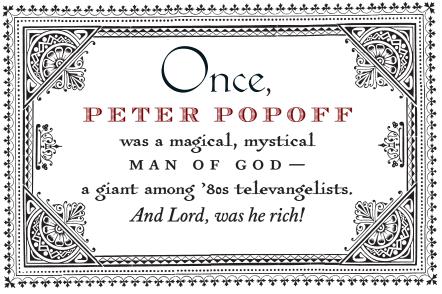
Grabbing Her by the P*ssy

You'd think this wouldn't have a place on a jokey list of overrated sex moves, because it's not so much a move as it is a form of sexual assault. But the barely sentient colostomy bag that America just elected president seems to think groping women is a handsier version of "May I buy you a drink?" So let me state, on behalf of all receptacles for male sexual gratification (formerly known as "women"): This is not okay, asshole.

SIOBHAN ROSEN is the pseudonym this author uses so she doesn't end up on the "People I Am Gonna Get SO Much Revenge On" list you just know that POTUS keeps by his bed.







enormous fraud who was
RUINED IN SCANDAL.
Ah, but here in America,
time ABSOLVES all that.
And if a fellow is clever enough,
he can remake his kingdom
and amass quite a fortune.
For the Lord worketh
in mysterious ways



HE CAME TO ME WHEN I LEAST EXPECTED.

I was in a hotel bed, enrobed in terry cloth, my teeth brushed, my hand aloft holding the remote. This was a year ago, and the soft glow of cable TV was the room's only light. I was flitting between channels when I happened upon BET. There I saw an old white man preaching to an audience of elderly black people. And as I wondered what on earth this pasty alter kocker was doing on black TV, it came to me: I had seen this man before.

It had been years, and he had changed some: a few more wrinkles, a little hitch in his gait, the hair a bit more aggressively black. But it was him. Peter Popoff was back. And he was as mesmerizing as ever.

Sitting on a stage, in an upholstered chair, Popoff implored his television audience to call an 800 number so that he could send them a secret "faith tool" that God had recently given him as he was "praying about the four red moons of this year of Jubilee." If that wasn't incentive enough, there was more reason to reach for the phone. On the screen, below Popoff, flashed the message "Call now for your free miracle spring water."

As if to answer the very question that occurred to me what does one do with miracle spring water?—Popoff explained that good times were ahead, very good times. "I can see God leading people into new homes, new automobiles!... God gives supernatural debt cancellation!... And I'd like to send you the miracle spring water."

The show cut to video of Popoff working a room of sick, elderly African-Americans. "Is that your cane?" he asked an old woman. "I believe God has given you a divine chiropractic treatment! Amen! Hallelujah! Amen in Jesus's name! You can walk now without the cane. Take a few steps and make the Devil mad!"

The woman stood up, with his help, started shaking her hands, and then, as the organ and drum picked up the

reter popoff in the 1980s 🖈

tempo, started shaking her hands faster. She never took very many steps, but she vibrated with energy. Popoff yanked her cane away and tossed it up onstage. The scene dissolved to a woman sharing a bit of testimony with Popoff and the crowd. "I took your

holy water and put it in my son's shoes," she said. "I put it in his bed, I put it on his pillow, and my son joined the church and he got saved and he's still in church—and then I got \$3,800 and new furniture."

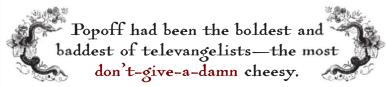
Such blessings! The prevailing sentiment in the room was Thanks be to God—but also Thanks be to Peter Popoff. He was hugging people, punching the air with them. Everyone had a story: Addictions had disappeared. Appliances had been delivered. All proof of the miracle water's efficacy. And getting off crutches, that was big, too—this is why people needed Popoff's healing touch. "You know where that pain went?" Popoff cried after one healing. "I'll tell you where that pain went. It went back to the pits of hell!"

Staring at the TV, I was transfixed. This was vintage stuff—a sort of resurrection, if you will. Like so many televangelists, Popoff had his heyday in the 1980s, back when preaching on TV was big business—and plenty mainstream. The flamboyant, seemingly pious preachers who solicited cash for enormous, if dubious, ministries were household names. But one by one, they fell to disgrace: Jim Bakker paid off a woman who'd accused him of rape; Jimmy Swaggart was caught with a prostitute at a roadside motel. But none were humiliated quite as publicly as Popoff.

Popoff had been the best at what he did—the boldest and baddest, the most don't-give-a-damn cheesy. He dared you to doubt him, which helped insulate him from charges that he was a fraud. With a promise to heal the sick, Popoff convened huge crowds, where he relied on a shtick that involved calling out the name and ailment of someone in the audience he had never met, as if God had just vouchsafed him the information. "I'm looking for an Ada Mae, and I know that she has kidney problems! Where are you, Ada Mae?"—that sort of thing. (Steve Martin borrowed this bit of Popoff's routine for his 1992 flick Leap of Faith, and Chevy Chase had fun at Popoff's expense in Fletch Lives.)

But a key component of his act eventually spelled his downfall. In 1986, a team of freelance debunkers, including the magician James Randi, took a radio scanner to a Popoff revival, where they overheard Popoff's wife, Liz, feeding him names and illnesses. Apparently, plants in the audience would chat people up or get them to jot down details, then feed their information to Liz, who passed it on to her husband through an earpiece. Listening through the gizmo in his ear, Popoff would call out to the crowd as if he possessed the omniscience of the Lord.

Randi's tape of the ruse made its way to The Tonight Show, where Johnny Carson—who harbored great disdain for charlatans—exposed Popoff 's technique. The Tonight Show exposé made national news, and in 1987 the Peter Popoff Evangelistic Association filed for bankruptcy. He seemed done for.



Yet here he was, all these years later, peddling miracle water and his own healing touch to an audience of African-Americans who seemed not to have gotten the memo that he was a mountebank. It appeared to me that Popoff was exploiting more than just American forgetfulness. He was tapping into something far more powerful: our desire to get something for nothing.

Right alongside our Puritan work ethic and entrepreneurial drive runs our instinctive love for the lottery. And in modern Christianity, this yearning for the jackpot has given rise to what's known as the prosperity gospel—the magical thinking that if we give a few bucks, close our eyes, and pray real hard, riches and blessings will be ours. It's the tradition of Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, and all the other TV preachers who rose up to take the place of the vanquished buffoons from the 1980s.

He may have once been branded a charlatan, but Popoff could probably see that we never stopped making space in our hearts for a guy like him-a guy who knows what we want to believe. In fact, maybe he realized that today, more than ever, we are primed for what he has to sell. After all, in an age when a TV tycoon can win the White House, vowing to build walls and move markets with sheer chutzpah, there's opportunity for a clever fellow who knows that people running on pure faith fall easily in love with big promises.

What I didn't yet know was the full extent of what the old preacher had gotten himself up to. I wasn't aware yet of the ski vacations or his affinity for tennis





or how much he adored his Bentley. I didn't know how it was all funded through a tax-exempt ministry that reaches its flock via live events and a blizzard of mailings, expertly crafted to separate poor people from their money. I had no idea that peddling miracles was, these days, as lucrative as ever.





hen I got home, I began devouring episodes of the new Popoff show. I signed up for his mailing list. Almost immediately the letters began to come. The envelopes also included the miracle water or one of various worthless, made-in-China gewgaws: "revelation

stones"; red strings that resemble the Kabbalah bracelets Madonna used to wear; and "baruch wallets," flimsy silver lamé pouches with a slit at the top, in which I was encouraged to insert money to mail back to Popoff. And, of course, everything came with requests for more money: "REMEMBER YOU MUST SOW THE LARGEST BILL YOU HAVE OR THE LARGEST CHECK YOU CAN WRITE."

I only grew more curious. Why, I wondered, were so many people willing to trust a "prophet" of God who needed an earpiece, and why would they trust his advice on prosperity even after his own financial house had collapsed? I called and sent e-mails to Popoff's organization, People United for Christ, but nobody got back to me. I decided that I'd settle for a glimpse of one of his public crusades, maybe see some people get healed, but I discovered that they weren't advertised. I heard from a veteran Popoff-watcher that the best way to get to one of his shows was to give money—then, if he was planning an event near where you lived, he'd send you a ticket. So I asked friends in ten locales spread across the country to give \$10 to Popoff, then sit back and wait for tickets.

I fed my curiosity in the meantime with the broad outline of Popoff's story. I knew he'd been born in 1946 in Germany, where his father, an ethnic Bulgarian, was an evangelical pastor. The family had fled the Communists in 1950, eventually settling in Montclair, California. Popoff was homeschooled after the eighth grade, so he could travel and preach with his father. After graduating from college, Popoff married his wife, Liz, and they embarked on an itinerant life, preaching the Pentecostal gospel across the country. They moved into radio, then television.

In his extracurricular life, Popoff came to see himself, in those Cold War years, as a kind of Christian 007, sneaking Bibles into Communist lands. A photograph in his

BACK FROM THE DEAD

IT'S THE '80s ALL OVER AGAIN



JIMMY SWAGGART The brashest of the old TV preachers, he was caught with a prostitute. He shed tears in contrition, then was busted with another. Today he's got his own new 24-hour network.



JIM BAKKER Hosted 'The PTL Club'and also gave hush money to a woman who claimed he raped her. Later, he did time for fraud. Now he has a TV show out of Branson, Missouri.



RICHARD ROBERTS Preached on TV with his dad, Oral. Ran Oral Roberts University until a lawsuit claimed he misused funds. Today he hosts the little-watched 'The Place for Miracles.'

📌 POPOFF (SEATED) IN PRAYER WITH TWO OF HIS CHILDREN AT THE OFFICES OF THEIR MINISTRY

1980 memoir, Behind Curtains of Darkness a New Fire Is Blazing, shows Popoff in front of a boat, hair flowing like a Bee Gee's, two Bibles fanned in his left hand. The caption reads: "Peter prepares to drop Bibles into the Black Sea off Istanbul, Turkey. Wrapped in Styrofoam for buoyancy and waterproofing, the Bibles eventually washed up on Communist shores."

The book makes the claim that Peter was "smuggling thousands of Bibles" into China, and that in Eastern Europe, people would walk 150 miles to hear him preach. Border guards who could have had him arrested let him pass because "they were hungry to know about God." In 1982 the AP reported on Popoff's use of helium balloons to deliver Bibles and gospel pamphlets from Finland into the Soviet Union.

Religious enthusiasm, as with boy bands, reality TV, and other aspects of pop culture, cycles in and out. After the bankruptcy, Popoff, like some of his fellow Pentecostal preachers, receded somewhat from view. Before long, however, he'd rebranded his ministry as People United for Christ, and he'd reconsidered his audience—this time focusing on African-Americans. "His message hasn't changed," The Washington Post noted in 1998, "but the audience he is aiming for has."

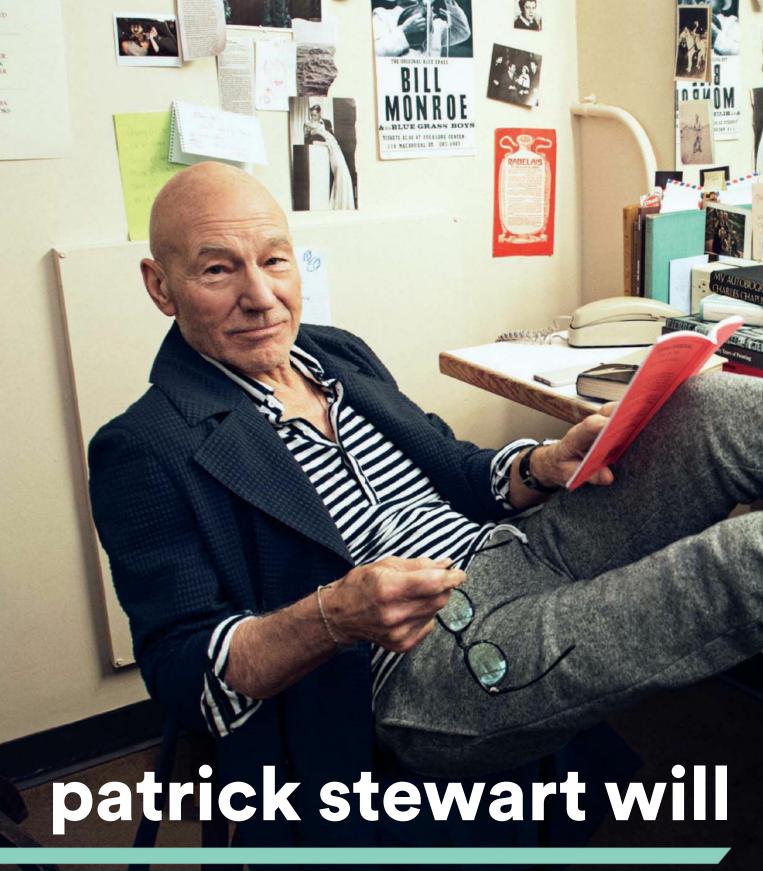
The pivot has allowed Popoff to slip from the shadow of his old scandal and, in the years since, quietly rebuild his empire. According to publicly available IRS forms, by 2003, Popoff's new organization was netting over \$9 million a year and Popoff was paying himself and his wife a combined salary of more than half a million dollars a year; their son, daughter, and son-in-law were each netting over a hundred grand. Three years later, revenues for Popoff's ministry were just over \$35 million. And according to a document related to his purchase of a Bentley in January 2009, Peter listed his monthly income at \$100,000. The couple's 7,300-square-foot house, purchased for \$4.5 million in 2007, sits in a gated community in Bradbury, California, and is owned by his church. As a parsonage,

The actual ministry, though, has been something of a mystery. On paper, Popoff's new outfit hadn't technically been a church—that's because it never had a physical house of worship—but instead functioned as a religious nonprofit. But in 2006, it reorganized and aligned itself with a small ministry called Word for the World, which operated out of a tiny storefront church in Farmers Branch, Texas. The apparent oddity of the merger was raised with Popoff in a 2011 deposition when he was asked why an international TV ministry based in California might merge with a minuscule church outside of Dallas. "Our board of directors," Popoff said, "felt it was in the best interests." Popoff didn't mention another possible benefit: With this new status, his ministry would no longer be required to disclose its annual income or its salaries to the IRS.

A few months ago, I flew to Texas and tried to visit Word for the World on a Sunday morning, hoping to catch a rousing Pentecostal service. I was surprised when the address for the church I had found online took me to a storefront in an industrial park. The parking lot was deserted, and the building was locked. There was no church sign outside—and certainly no sign of a church inside. Squinting through a window, past venetian blinds, I glimpsed a carpeted foyer, and beyond that, an empty room. This didn't look like a house of worship; it looked like a mailing address. Later, Popoff's people (continued on page 164)







look great forever





Getting a tour of Park Slope from Patrick Stewart—

not the part of Brooklyn that's cool or cheap or where Biggie grew up, but the part that's re-inventing itself as a suburban paradise in million-dollar .02-acre increments—is a lot like getting a tour of Manhattan from Buddy, the wide-eyed, irrepressibly cheerful Will Ferrell character from Elf. Everything is a sensation. Nothing is not stupendous. The Gowanus Canal is not merely a canalit is "one of the most severely polluted stretches of water in the United States." The artwork on the grimy subway walls is "marvelous." A snake he spots on the ground is "not a real snake, is it?!" (It's a toy.) Crossing the street, any street, is not just a means of moving from Point A to Point B but also, in Patrick Stewart's eyes, a gamble with death. (He has a phobia.) And, like Buddy, who parades through the city in a green adult-size elf's frock, 76-year-old Patrick Stewart-alias: Professor X; alias: Macbeth; alias: Captain Picard, starship Enterprise—is impossible to miss. The tour is Stewart's idea. Yorkshireborn, he's proud of his chosen American home (he purchased a duplex in the neighborhood five years ago) and looks forward to revealing its many wonders and historical curiosities. The first stop on the tour is...his pharmacy, which is probably not so different from your pharmacy, except that his shines with the aureate radiance of Patrick Stewart's approval.

"There are pharmacies much nearer to where I live," he declares, "but I would not go anywhere else except this."

"This" is a narrow mom-and-pop shop, not a national chain, not even a local chain, filled with a hodgepodge of knickknacks and condoms and lip balms and lotions and, unfortunately, *not* Patrick Stewart's prescription, which isn't yet available for pickup.

Stewart's name comes rushing forth at him from the back of the establishment-"Patrick!" "'Ey, Patrick!" "Hiya, Patrick!"-in a thick New Yawk deluge. If everyone were welcomed into stores this way, the entire economy would collapse because the only currency would be smiles. Stewart greets every employee by name, like Jimmy Stewart at the end of It's a Wonderful Life when he triumphantly returns to his home after failing to commit suicide. It doesn't matter that his medications are not ready; he is happy simply to be here in this fantastic regular drugstore with the people he loves. The pharmacist tells Stewart that he is looking well. Stewart shakes his head wistfully.

"That is my curse, John." He projects his velvet voice up behind the elevated cashregister counter, as if to the rafters above a Broadway stage. "Like Cassandra, who could foresee the future, but her curse was nobody believed her: I always look well, so I never get sympathy."

The drugstore employees beam at him. "See you later!" calls Stewart.

For our next point of interest, Patrick Stewart and I follow the slope of Park Slope as it gradually descends toward the canal. It is a brisk day, and he walks briskly, bundled compactly in a black zip-up hoodie, leather jacket, leather gloves, and a pair of leather boots he bought in Reno. He likes the boots because he feels that their heels cause him to tip forward, which he corrects by standing even more ramrod straight. (Imagine an exactly vertical line. Now imagine a line that defies physics to become even straighter than that. That's Patrick Stewart.) He loves Reno because it's where his wife's family lives.

"I go there whenever I can," he says. Patrick Stewart, one of the most respected Shakespearean actors of all time, goes to Reno *whenever he can*.

Stewart stops on the sidewalk and gestures grandly toward the horizon, where the concrete Smith-Ninth Streets subway station rises out of the Brooklyn sprawl. "What we are looking at there"—he pauses for effect—"is the highest point on the New York subway system."

The first thought that pops into my head is that the majority of the New York subway system operates underground, so in order to be taller than that, a structure need only be higher than something that is underground.

"Now, what about that?" prompts Patrick Stewart, smiling mischievously, daring me not to be amazed. "That will attract people, won't it?"

"Maybe don't charge for this tour?" I advise gently.

"Hahaha!" laughs Patrick Stewart. "It's actually great! Because if you walk to the end of the 4th Avenue platform, you can see the Statue of Liberty."

 $\square \triangle \bigcirc$

Now Patrick Stewart and I are looking for a mass grave.

It's not a fresh mass grave. In fact, it was dug so long ago that historians and Patrick Stewart have at best a sketchy hunch about where it is. Anyone who might have been able to tell us has been dead for at least 200 years.

"The Maryland 400 were fighting for the United States in the Revolutionary War," he says, sounding like a narrator the History Channel could not afford. "It was not the United States yet, of course-and they fought in a defensive action here on the slope of Brooklyn, 400 of them against 2,000 British soldiers. It was a kind of sacrificial strategy. The 400 held off the British advance long enough and even counterattacked, which enabled Washington and the rest of the Revolutionary Army to get across the East River and into Manhattan, where they were safe. Ten of the American soldiers walked away from that battle. Over 200 were buried here." (text continued on page 152)







"Here" is a trash-strewn parking lot next to an American Legion outpost. A mural depicting the soldiers has been largely covered by graffiti. Now I feel bad for telling Patrick Stewart he shouldn't charge for his tour. He's actually teaching me a lot. (Also unusual for a British knight: He made a personal request to New York City mayor Bill de Blasio to have a new memorial put up to honor the American patriots who may be buried here. He reports de Blasio told him: "I'm on it.") "Anyway," he says, continuing down the slope, "I've told you the story, and all it is is a concreted-over car park, but underneath the concrete is the mass grave. It's worth making, I think, a bit of a fuss of."

Stewart himself comes from a family of soldiers. His brother Geoffrey was a member of the Royal Air Force in World War II, and Stewart remembers him pointing out a Nazi V2 rocket overhead one night as he carried young Patrick into the relative safety of an aunt's cellar. His father, a veteran of the British army, also enlisted in that war, despite being well over the maximum draft age. Stewart did not know his father for the first five years of his life. The man who returned home was a volatile alcoholic, frequently physically abusive to Stewart's mother. As an adult, Stewart has long campaigned against domestic violence, explaining that he does it "for my mother, [because] back then I could not help her."

It wasn't until recently that he learned that post-traumatic stress disorder was a likely root of his father's behavior.

"My father got really bad press from me," says Stewart, "because I would talk about him and try to analyze why he was so angry." After a specialist told him that the elder Stewart demonstrated "classic symptoms of severe PTSD," for which he never received treatment, Stewart saw his father's conduct in a new light. Following years of campaigning for the protection of women, he also became an advocate for veterans' mental-health treatment.

"I do that work for my family," he says.
"So I can speak for both of my parents
when neither of them were ever given the
opportunity to say, 'I need help.'"

Stewart seems to derive comfort from order. He waits for the light to change and crosses at the corner. He has a raptor's sense of direction. There is never a beat of awkward silence on our tour, because he is so curiously well prepared for it, leading the way from site to site (the aforementioned Superfund canal; a newish Whole Foods store) as if hitting his marks on a stage. At one point, he even produces handwritten notes from his pocket and reads aloud about the Carroll Street Bridge: "Built in 1889, it is a retractile bridge. There are only four of them in the whole United States."



"What's a retractile bridge?" I ask.
"This is," he says, striding on ahead of me.

This March, Stewart will climb back into his wheelchair to reprise his role as the telepathic mutant Professor X in *Logan*, opposite Hugh Jackman as Wolverine. Stewart is cagey when it comes to revealing details about the film; all he'll really say is that he and Hugh Jackman are in it.

"It's different, very different. It's not the usual *X-Men* movie. We are somewhat older than we were in the last one. Oh yes, we are."

Early clips of the film revealed a type of violence more intimate than in the previous movies, in which several of the world's most blow-up-able cities were exploded by a variety of *(continued on page 166)*

Sir Pat's Style Commandment Ⅲ: Move to Center Stage

"The unkind would possibly call it exhibitionism, but I don't care about that. Because if you look distinctive and maybe a little bit standing out, that's not a bad thing. To me it says, 'Here is somebody who is pleased with the way they look. Proud of it. And enjoys, perhaps, being noticed.'

coat \$1,280 MP Massimo Piombo

shirt \$165 **Gitman Vintage**

tie \$119 **Thomas Mason**

pants \$198 Todd Snyder

White Label shoes \$395 Allen Edmonds

socks Gold Toe

watch

glasses (on counter) **Persol**



A GQ SPECIAL REPORT

> *by* Nathaniel Penn



Buried Alive: Stories from Inside Solitary Confinement



MARCH 2017 GQ.COM 155

DOMING: SCOTT MCMAHAN AT KATE RYAN INC.

I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers.... I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body.

Charles Dickens, on visiting prisoners in solitary confinement at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, 1842

Any imposition of solitary confinement beyond 15 days constitutes torture.

Juan E. Méndez, United Nations special rapporteur, August 5, 2011

DAWN

Brian Nelson (over 23 years in solitary¹): I don't know if you can even grasp what it's like just to be in this gray box.

Javier Panuco (over 5 years in solitary): Sometimes I can still smell it: the same soap everybody used, the smell of mildew, the smell of the algae that we had on our concrete vard.

Jacob Barrett (over 20 years in solitary): It smells like the toilet of a men's locker room at a run-down YMCA. It's people farting, burping, and sweating, smearing shit on their walls and windows, flooding toilets full of piss and shit.

Shawn Smith (15 years in solitary): I've had these cell walls make me see delusions. I've tried to kill myself a few times. I've smeared my own blood on my cell walls and ceiling. I would cut myself just to see my own blood.

Danny Johnson (24 years in solitary): The worst thing that's ever happened to me in solitary confinement happens every day. It's when I wake up.

Steven Czifra (8 years in solitary): That's what people don't understand when you try to explain. I'm there for eight years, and in that eight years, they have eight years of experiences. I have one day of experiences. Every day is the same.

I. AN AMERICAN GULAG

THERE ARE TWO KINDS of solitary confinement in the United States. One starves a prisoner's senses. The other overwhelms them.

In a Supermax—a high-tech dungeon specifically designed to warehouse men in isolation—a prisoner has virtually no contact with other human beings. Locked behind a slab of steel into a cell smaller than a parking space, he touches only cement. He hears only the incessant hum of a dim fluorescent light that never goes off. If he's fortunate, he'll have a window.



Above and below: Cells at the Pelican Bay SHU (Secure Housing Unit) in California



Alternatively, in seg—an isolation cell in a max-security prison—he hears the screams and rants of other convicts echoing through the tier, morning and night. Sometimes he is so cold that he wears both his jacket and his shoes to bed, or so hot he wraps his body in wet rags. Doors slam, walkie-talkies crackle, keys jingle. If he ever gets out of prison, these sounds will trigger him for the rest of his life.

Solitary confinement, the practice of isolating a human being in a cell for 22 to 24 hours a day, has become a punishment of first resort in America. It is the prison of

the prison system. Though it was created to reduce violence, solitary increases it. Though it is meant to be a deterrent, solitary promotes recidivism. Though some authorities still believe the medieval fiction that it fosters personal redemption through habits of meditation and penitence, solitary irreparably harms the human psyche. Researchers believe it damages the body and brain as well, but they can't test this hypothesis, because what we do to prisoners every day—house them in prolonged isolation—is illegal to do to laboratory animals. It is against the law to treat rats the way we treat people in solitary.

A convict can be banished to solitary at a correctional officer's whim, for nearly any reason: assault, gambling, mouthing off, failing to clean his cell, singing, filing grievances, even (incredibly) attempting suicide. He can also be sent there for activism or holding unpopular views—essentially, as a political prisoner.

Solitary has become an American gulag—"the place they dump the trash they most want to be forgotten," as one convict put it to me. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of prisoners in solitary on any given day is approximately 90,000. No national database exists to track who they are, how long they've been held there, or why. Compared with free citizens, they are at least five times as likely to be mentally ill. A City of New York study suggests they are nearly three times as likely as prisoners in the general population to be black and nearly twice as likely to be Latino.

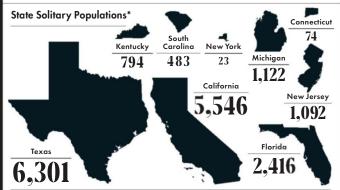
During President Obama's two terms in office, there was a tentative awakening to the barbarity of the practice, and modest reform began to take hold at the state level. President Trump, however, campaigned on a harshly punitive criminal-justice platform, and since his victory, he has surrounded himself with Reagan-era proponents of mass incarceration, including an attorney general-designate, Jeff Sessions, who peddles the alarmist conservative lie—crime is skyrocketing!—that has led nearly every

- 1. Andre Scott, 1 month in solitary
- 2. Reginald Dwayne Betts, 1 year
- 3. Ojore Lutalo, 22 years
- 4. Danny Murillo, 7 years
- 5. Ray Luc Levasseur, 13 years →→

Because records are often inaccessible or nonexistent, some prisoners can't provide an exact accounting of the duration of their time in solitary.



Isolation NationBy the Numbers



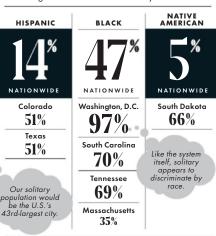
*Figures represent number of prisoners known to be in solitary at press time.

U.S. Solitary
Population Compared
with U.S. Cities



*Figure represents total annual U.S. solitary population, defined as the number of prisoners who have spent any time in solitary during the year. Racial Makeup

Percentage of male inmates in solitary who are:



 ${\bf Sources:} \ {\bf Yale} \ {\bf Law} \ {\bf School/Liman} \ {\bf Program}, 2014; \ {\bf Solitary} \ {\bf Watch}, 2015$

state in the country to build a Supermax. (In fact, violent crime declined by 39 percent between 1980 and 2014.) It's hard to foresee this administration spending much time worrying about more humane prisons.

For this article, *GQ* interviewed 48 current and former prisoners, ² as well as corrections officials, lawyers, researchers, and activists. Some of these prisoners committed heinous crimes; many did not. Their offenses range from murder to burglary to carjacking to extortion to drug possession or distribution. "I did deserve to go to prison," one man told me, "but I didn't deserve to be tortured." This is what one day, every day, of their lives is like.

6:00 A.M.

Glenn Turner (24 years in solitary): My breakfast consists of a kid's meal. Two half bowls of cereal, a juice or milk, and a package of sugar.

Clint Terrell (4 years in solitary): Most of the time you were starving. From the time I finished one meal, I'd be looking forward to the next. As soon as it came, I would just devour it. It would be gone in two seconds.

Caminante Azul³ (over 15 years in solitary): You have only so much time to eat. Sometimes they mess with you: They pass the food out, and they turn right around and pick up the trays.

7:30 A.M.

Panuco: Every time you think they're going to open the door, you run to it.

Dennis Hope (22 years in solitary): My palms and feet get moist. I start to pace. I truly know how a dog feels when they are waiting for you to take them outside.

George Hernandez (over 10 years in solitary): They handcuff you through your food port.

Gerard Schultz (18 years in solitary):
We must open our mouths to show our gums and under our tongues and lips. We have to lift our testicles. If you are uncircumcised, you are told to pull your foreskin back.

Hope: Some inmates are required to wear paper masks, too.

Daniela Medina⁴ (4 months in solitary): You feel like Silence of the Lambs.

Danny Murillo (7 years in solitary): They used to call the yard "the Dark Ages."

Federico Flores (16 years in solitary): Our vision is only a little square on the top of the wall. You hope a plane flies over.

Cesar Francisco Villa (15 years in solitary): Our time is spent pacing the length of the yard, which is approximately 26 feet.

Victoria Brown (5 years in solitary): You're supposed to get an hour a day, but that never happens. If there's a raindrop, it's canceled.

Johnson: That's the end of my out-of-cell movement for the day.

8:45 A.M.

Terrell: I read *Julius Caesar, Romeo* and *Juliet, Hamlet.* I read the *Iliad,* parts of Dante's *Inferno,* parts of the *Aeneid.* You've got to read the same page 50 times to understand it, but you got nothing to do but read.

Chris Medina-Kirchner (6 months in solitary): In my program, they would only give us access to treatment books. *Chicken Soup for the Soul*—that was a popular one.

Nelson: I used to be able to recite what was on a tube of Colgate toothpaste off the top of my head.

Barrett: In Florida, people will pay just to look at a stinking bargain-books catalog.

Robert Saleem Holbrook (10 years in solitary): I pity the person who is in solitary who cannot read. ⁵ There is no other real stimulation.

Ryan Rising (4 years in solitary): You have to work out. If you ain't working out, then your anger is going to boil up. We'd roll up our mats and hang them from the light and punch them like a punching bag.

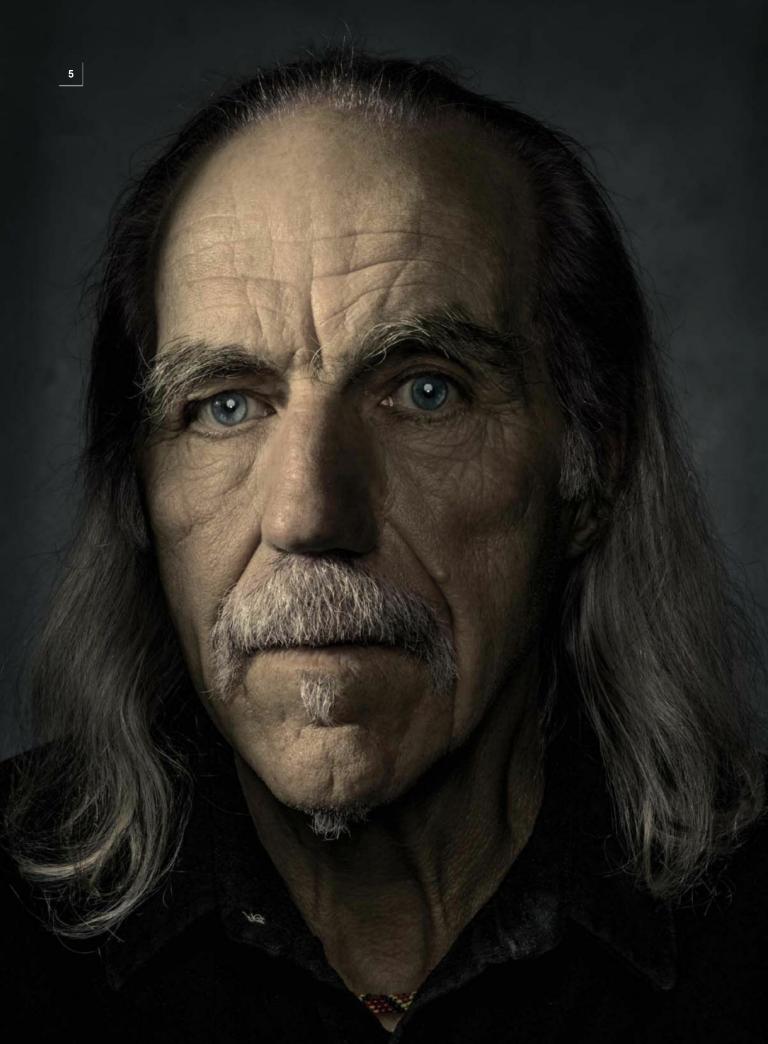
Schultz: Prisoners without TVs or radios ⁶ act out more—mutilate themselves, try to commit suicide.

Ray Luc Levasseur (13 years in solitary): The idea is TV acts as a pacifier. You could have a flooding toilet and be hollering three days to get them to fix it. But that TV goes out? The guards'll come right in with another one.

II. A SOCIAL DEATH

FROM ISOLATION'S EARLIEST USE in this country, we've known what it does to the minds of human beings. The first all-solitary-confinement prison in the U.S., in Auburn, New York, was shut down in 1822, after only 18 months of operation, when the governor visited and *(continued on page 160)*

- $2. \ This collective portrait of life in solitary doesn't represent the conditions or policies of any single institution.$
- 3. Caminante Azul and Victoria Brown, both recently paroled, requested pseudonyms because they fear reprisals by correctional officials.
- 4. Women make up less than 1 percent of the population in solitary, and the ACLU points out they are uniquely vulnerable there—because, for example, the scrutiny re-traumatizes the 60 percent of them who are sexual-abuse survivors or because of a greater risk of staff sexual misconduct.
- 5. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 14 percent of all prisoners are illiterate.
- 6. In a 2014 survey conducted by Yale Law School's Liman Program, 80 percent of responding state and federal jurisdictions said they allowed radios; 57 percent permitted TVs.



SOLITARY CONFINEMENT



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 158

saw that every one of its 26 prisoners had become psychotic. Solitary didn't come back into widespread use until the 1970s, when officials deployed it to suppress a growing prisoners'-rights movement. In 1987, at the dawn of the age of mass incarceration, Arizona officials created the first Supermax. The impact on human beings was scarcely any different than it had been in 1822.

A body of literature going back decades documents the psychic anguish of isolation—severe depression, rage, panic attacks, PTSD, paranoia, hallucinations, self-mutilation. The suicide rate in solitary is five to ten times higher than it is in the general prison population. In studies, only a few groups have ever reported feeling as crushed by loneliness as these prisoners do—among them terminally ill cancer patients and people in rural communities who are suffering from AIDS.

A prisoner held in solitary confinement often feels he has ceased to exist to his loved ones, whose lives have gone on without him. Craig Haney of UC Santa Cruz, a pioneer in the field, calls this "social death": "The prisoner," he explains, "grieves for the person he used to be."

Nelson: Within the first week, I started talking to myself. I would think I was seeing stuff out of the corner of my eye. The hallucinations—it's not something a lot of us talk about, but all of us had them real bad. You hear voices on the stair or coming through the yent.

Federico Flores: You start thinking, *I've got to keep myself focused.*

Turner: My obsessive thoughts are primarily about cleanliness and poison. I know they have prisoner informants and listening devices directed toward me. They will try to poison me by some means or another. I doubt that it will be by food. It'll most likely be from something being put in or onto my sheets, pillowcase, toilet seat, door, etc.

Jose Flores (11 years in solitary): You get a lot of OCD in the SHU. I've got blisters from wringing out towels and laundry. But I mean, that's normal.

Ojore Lutalo (22 years in solitary): First, the prisoner starts neglecting their personal hygiene. He'll withdraw. You'll start seeing a distant look in their eyes: They're going through the changes. You try to talk to the prisoner, encourage him to come outside. Stop talking to a psychologist, because they're trying to get you on psychotropic drugs. And once they got you on the drugs,

you do the smack-mouth [makes rapid lip-smacking noise]. Your hands lock up. You do the shuffle. You develop a potbelly. And you're gone.

Holbrook: To witness this is like being in a troop line marching across a parched desert and seeing a man collapse out of the line from thirst. The line keeps on moving because it has to in order to survive.

Panuco: There's this stigma about seeking help, so none of us ever did it. There's this macho culture, so if someone sees that you're depressed, you're a potential informant. A friend had some psychological problems. He refused medication because he didn't want nobody to think that he was weak. One day, he just snapped. He wouldn't come out. He wouldn't eat. He just rubbed feces all over the cell and on himself. I never heard from him after that.

Lutalo: The feces thing—that's a common practice. Some mentally ill prisoners would defecate in the shower. Some would put their feces on the dinner tray and pass it back.

Gregory Koger (over 7 years in solitary): They used to give you these little pens called security pens, a tiny ink cartridge in this clear plastic tube. You could connect those tubes together to make a hose. I've heard of guys who made a long-ass hose to the guy that's in the cell next to him and shot him down with piss and shit. They would do it to COs [correctional officers], too.

Todd Ashker (28 years in solitary): Staff were only giving us half of the rations we were supposed to get,* so we filled milk cartons with shit and flung it all over every time we'd come out for showers. After about two weeks, they began giving us our full issue.

Nelson: The rule was nobody could be there with a [previously diagnosed] mental illness. What happens when you develop a mental illness while you're there? There was a guy who was there because he'd smoked marijuana while he was on probation; he cut off part of one of his testicles, and he also cut off some of his fingers. Another guy stood on top of the cement bunk and dove headfirst into the toilet, over and over, until he crushed his skull in.

Turner: I once stood at my cell door attempting to engage a young kid in conversation, only to witness him slit his own throat in the middle of answering a question.

William Casiano (18 months in solitary): An older man cut his wrists. He filled a Styrofoam cup with blood and flung it on the glass of the door and all over his room, then lay down and died. I watched all of this through the crack on the side of my cell door.

Hope: If you lose your mind, then they discredit your account of things. If you maintain your sanity, they say that's proof that solitary doesn't drive men crazy.

Turner: What methods do I use to maintain my self-possession and dignity? I can't say that I have. I simply have remained alive.

10:45 a.m.

Hope: Lunch usually is some form of "pot meal" that has noodles in it. The vegetables are canned and often have insects—grasshoppers, crickets—or their body parts inside. The servings are so small you're lucky to get five bites.

Casiano: When we get beans, we are liable to get rocks or pebbles with them. We get watered-down tea or juice, which the other day we were advised not to drink because roaches were found in the juice cooler.*

Barrett: I've been put on half rations, where I only get half the food.* I've been put on Nutraloaf—a foul food loaf of I don't know what the fuck.⁷

Holbrook: After lunch, depending on my mood, I either continue reading or lie on my bed and stare at the ceiling for an hour or so.

Reginald Dwayne Betts (1 year in solitary): I spent a lot of time obsessing over a future that I could neither predict nor imagine but at least I hoped I prepared myself for. Sometimes it was just really basic things: Can I do 100 pushups in a day? Can I do 200? Solitary was managing the tedium, it was managing minutiae, and it was finding a way to get lost in that.

1:00 p.m.

Casiano: We write "kites," or notes.

Terrell: We would spin the elastic out of the waistbands of our boxers. You would tie that line to a piece of soap or a peanut-butter packet and slide it out your door, and then your neighbor throws his line out the door, and the two lines get tangled up together, and he pulls it into his cell. I'd bang on the floor or the wall to let them know that I got it. You can pass coffee like that, notes, soups, weapons, whatever.

Carlos "MR. BIGMANN" Grier (5 years in solitary): I could talk through the ventilation system to [another prisoner] whose cell was under mine. We'd have to stand on top of the sinks.

Levasseur: If you take the water out of the toilet and holler into it, it acts as a megaphone, and the prisoner in the next cell can hear you through the other toilet a little bit.

Leon Benson (11 years in solitary): The oppressive environment causes many solitary prisoners to have verbal diarrhea. As if making noise will somehow drown out their loneliness and fear, the way a superstitious person would whistle passing a graveyard.

Koger: Say you and me are in a cell next to each other. And for whatever reason I don't like you. So I will spend 24 hours straight banging on

7. Nutraloaf is so disgusting it has actually been banned in three states. The recipe in the Florida system, where Barrett was housed: Combine carrots, spinach, dried beans, vegetable oil, tomato paste, water, dry grits, and dry oatmeal. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes at 325 degrees.

^{*}A spokesperson for the prison facility in question denies this allegation.

your wall. You try to talk to someone down the gallery, and I'll do what's called "shutting it down"—make so much noise it's impossible for that person to talk to someone else.

Holbrook: The noise in solitary is the contained energy of men literally buried alive.

• • •

2:00 p.m.

Holbrook: If you want to wash your hair, you have to have the shampoo in your hair when the guards arrive at your door.

Dolores Canales (16 months in solitary): You have no control of the temperature of the water. When it was too hot, it was like torture.

Medina-Kirchner: We got five-minute showers,* freezing cold. People would get stuck with soap in their face and eyes.

Ty Evans (3 years in solitary): I've had to shower while handcuffed. To wash my hair, I'd scrape the cuffs on my scalp.

III. Captives and Captors

NO ONE INVOLVED with mass incarceration escapes being dehumanized by it. That includes COs, who experience high rates of depression, domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicide. A third of them suffer from PTSD. "Going into hell for decades at a time will wear you out," says Lance Lowry, president of AFSCME Local 3807, a CO union in Huntsville, Texas. There is reason to believe that these effects may be even more pronounced in COs assigned to isolation units.

Human Rights Watch has written that correctional officers "know they can get away with excessive, unnecessary, or even purely malicious violence." Indeed, during the reporting of this piece, *GQ* heard numerous claims of predatory behavior by guards in isolation units, including beatings, rapes, torture, and even a kind of human cockfighting in which the doors of rival prisoners are "accidentally" popped open.

Frankie Guzman (13 months in solitary): If you were being a little jerk, the guards would handcuff you behind your back, tilt you forward, and let you go. They would call it "tipping." People would often break their nose, cheekbones, crush their face, lose some teeth. They were communicating to us: This is what happens to people who misbehave.

Czifra: You weren't allowed to talk to anybody after lights-out. The guard would open your door in the morning—at that point, you wouldn't know if you'd been caught or not. Then he would shoot you in the face with mace. He'd close the door, let you sizzle for an hour, then come back and take you to the shower, and you'd be grateful and everybody would be happy. I was 16. My first stretch in solitary was supposed to be four months, but my program was reset hundreds of times, because it would happen every week. That was how I did four years.

Thomas Bartlett Whitaker (10 years in solitary): It gets even worse when you have the temerity to file a Section 1983 [asserting a

violation of your constitutional rights]. All of a sudden, your mail starts to disappear. You start catching infractions that aren't even physically possible. You get moved to sections filled with psych patients who bang on their walls all night, smear their feces, and breed clouds of gnats that descend upon you like a plague out of Egypt. If you're dumb enough to wonder why you have such an unfortunate new address, they'll just smile at you and remark that maybe you ought to write to someone about it.

Brown: There was this girl that the guard was going to send to the hole, and she was fragile. We were like, "Why are you picking on her? You know she ain't wrapped right." He was like, "Somebody's got to do something for me." So I let this guy touch me, because I didn't want him to send somebody else to seg. I used to tell myself that it wasn't rape because I said, *I will.*

In 2013, the SHU at California's Pelican Bay State Prison was the site of the signal event in the history of solitary-confinement activism: a hunger strike, organized by men communicating through drainpipes in the yard, that spread across the state to include 30,000 prisoners. The resulting publicity sparked a federal lawsuit, Ashker v. California, which the state settled in 2015 by agreeing to end both indefinite solitary and solitary based on gang association. California had used solitary more than any other state in America, in part because of gang-related violence. Today, more than two-thirds of solitary prisoners at Pelican Bay have been returned to the general population. But in the zero-sum equation of corrections, the prisoners' gain has been the COs' loss. Guards must now contend with frequent court audits of prison conditions, increased workloads, and staffing shortages. They warn that removing gang members from solitary confinement is a grave mistake.

Officer Justin Cooper (correctional officer at Pelican Bay for 23 years): These people have power and influence. It might be as simple as hanging his rain jacket on the pull-up bar—that's the signal for his entire gang to attack every person on that yard.

Sergeant Drew Powell⁸ (correctional officer at Pelican Bay for 18 years): One long-term inmate has an uncanny ability to make weapons out of almost anything. He accessed his plumbing chase and got hold of the steel hose clamps. He used that as a cutter to score the mild steel in his cell and make a stout weapon. Now he's going to the general population—a Disneyland of way more things than a SHU inmate can get his hands on.

Cooper: If these people were able to get my earlobe off me by biting me, they'd wear that as a badge. People with hep C brew cups of feces and throw it into your face. These people have been known to remove one cord at a time out of their elastic boxers, so that we don't notice it during the cell search, to make a bow. They are constantly assessing you by asking you questions that they already know the answer to, to feel you out, to check your ego, see if you'll admit that you don't know, see if you care enough that you will find out.

They're trying to figure out your strengths and weaknesses. Maybe they're even listening to see if you have money problems.

Powell: Some officers feel the inmates are getting everything. I'm trying to keep up morale, but we're seeing safety be diminished. There's the nervous laughter: "When are they going to just close this place down?" And if they do, where do we all go?

• • •

4:00 p.m.

Barrett: On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I get a PB&J sandwich for dinner. That's better than the regular dinner, which is highly processed food, rotten veggies, and a red juice we call "red death." It will stain cement.

Koger: You get all your meals in a nine-hour period. Then you don't eat again for like 15 hours. You can't buy commissary in seg.

Brown: In the general population, mice will get in your noodles or cookies [from commissary]. You'll bitch about it. But in seg, we would just watch them: They'd get in the room, realize there's no food there, and just back out.

• • •

4:30 p.m.

Joseph Dole (10 years in solitary): Mail was really stressful. You never knew what bad news would arrive—another denial, more confiscation notices, a letter saying a family member had died, which took a month to reach you. I would get panic attacks when a parcel I knew should have arrived wasn't given to me. ¹⁰

Rising: You start feeling abandoned. You start feeling, ain't nobody know what's going on with me. If you don't stay on your routine, you'd get real aggressive. Because you ain't getting your mail.

Hope: Once mail is passed out, it signifies the end of the day. There's little else to look forward to.

• • •

7:00 p.m.

Panuco: Solitary didn't reduce your sexual urges. I think I masturbated more in prison than I did as a teenager.

Lutalo: Some people get addicted. The women in the magazines, they get names: "She's talking to me tonight."

Turner: You rerun every conversation you've ever had and dwell upon every major or minor slight sent your way, real or imagined.

Schultz: I have thoughts of my enemies and violent encounters with them. Sometimes I catch myself moving my hands. It's embarrassing to admit. I don't know how to stop it.

8. This officer requested a pseudonym for his and his family's protection.

9. Lance Lowry, the union president, told GQ a colleague had to be life-flighted after being struck by a metal-tipped paper spear fired from an improvised bow.

10. One prisoner, Ricardo Noble, wrote to ask if GQ had a policy against receiving mail in $9\frac{1}{2}$ -by- $12\frac{1}{2}$ -inch envelopes; his long handwritten letter to the magazine had been returned without explanation.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CONTINUED

Guzman: I couldn't make sense of what was happening to me, and I had no power over it. I thought about it constantly: *I am nothing*.

11:00 p.m.

Andre Scott (1 month in solitary): If they want to, the officers will keep your lights on through the night.* Guys used to break the light just so they could sleep. You'd get punished for that.

Panuco: We would put toothpaste on the light and block it out.

Holbrook: How did one go to sleep? You became accustomed to the noise or you requested psychotropic medication.

IV. "I Plan Some Payback"

WHEN RICK RAEMISCH, executive director of the Colorado Department of Corrections, opened their cell doors, 200 men in solitary refused to leave. They had to be coaxed out using commissary treats and therapy dogs. This is the first paradox of solitary reform: Prisoners become maladapted to their isolation. They feel safest in their cells. And in a way, they are: Most assaults happen in general population.

Raemisch got his job because his predecessor, Tom Clements, was murdered on his doorstep by a white supremacist recently paroled after seven years in solitary. Clements's killer had blamed his deteriorating mental state on his time in isolation. As a result of the pioneering step-down program Raemisch installed, the state holds only 160 men in isolation, down from 1,500 in 2011. Violence has dramatically declined. It is Raemisch's mantra that 95 percent of all prisoners will live among us again: "How do you want them to come back?"

Colorado is one of a handful of states that do not release men from isolation directly into society. This is what happened with Tom Clements's killer, and it's the second paradox of solitary confinement: We label a prisoner too dangerous even for a max-security prison, we cage and manacle him, and then, months or years later, we dump him onto a bus. "If I was the bus driver," Raemisch says, "I'd stand up and scream at the top of my lungs, 'Run!'"

Evans: I'll be released just shy of 75 years old. I don't plan to "re-adjust." I plan some payback. What else is there?

Panuco: I went from absolute solitary confinement to complete freedom. When the parole officer picked me up, I really had nowhere to go. He brought me to a homeless shelter. He goes, "Go inside there, and if you don't like it, I'll get you a hotel voucher." I went in and saw that I didn't want to be there. When I went back outside, we made eye contact, then he burned rubber and left me there. All I could do was laugh.

Rising: They just opened the door one day, gave me \$200, and sent me to the Greyhound station. I get off the bus, you look to the right, and there's a bunch of homeless kids. You look to the left, there's all the drugs in the world that you could ask for.

Azul: Three times I was released directly from the SHU. It felt like going to a jungle. Snakes, lions, tigers, you name it. All this movement. It's too fast.

Koger: Three-dimensional stuff was shocking—driving down a street while the trees are moving at one speed and the houses behind them are moving at another speed.

Nelson: My family took me out to a Hooters. I ate a spicy piece of chicken and I couldn't breathe because of the heat and the spices. We never got anything hot in solitary, anything cold. They had to spray some baby formula on my throat.

Azul: The hardest thing is being around people, man. I was at the point where I would piss in a container because I don't like to go out of my room. I heard too much noise out there.

Nelson: My girlfriend yelled at me a couple months ago. I'm cleaning the house, and I'm dunking the mop in the toilet. In prison, the cleanest spot in your cell is your toilet. You scrub the toilet all day and night, because that's where you wash your sheets, your clothes.

Koger: There was one period I couldn't even get in the bathtub because I had this vision of me bleeding and dying in a fucking bathtub.

Levasseur: I have violent flashbacks. Rage is a major thing, even with people I'm close to. The first year I was out, I was in a store aisle, and all of a sudden I'm looking at a severed head where a cereal box should be. It was somebody I saw undergo one of the most brutal beatings I've ever seen.

Rising: You grow a hatred toward people in general that are outside of your group. I'm very aggressive out here still. I'm very alert. I look everyone in the eyes to size them up. Whenever I enter a room, I look for a way out.

Czifra: It took my partner five years before she could touch me on almost any part of my body that wasn't painful. It was agony. I couldn't be touched. If somebody goosed me, I would punch them in their fucking face. I'm getting a lot better, going to massages and just bearing through. I can tolerate being touched by my kids, but I haven't always.

Koger: I'll see a couple walking down the street being a couple and that makes me feel like shit, because I can't even talk to women.

Rising: I do struggle to fall in love with women. I don't put myself out there. My heart is still rock solid and hard.

Czifra: I anticipate that at some point, the rug is going to be pulled out from underneath me—everybody's going to leave, everything's temporary. The thing about going to prison and to solitary is they're pulling the rug out. There's no buildup. One day you're among the living, and the next you're not.

NATHANIEL PENN is a GQ correspondent.

TOM HIDDLESTON



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 112

memoir by Ur-tracker hero Tom Brown Jr.; trained with a former Navy SEAL even though this is like the 70th time he's played a soldier; and researched a jungle-warfare school in Malaya where actual British SAS soldiers are believed to have trained in the 1960s.

We're at a pub he likes in Hampstead Heath called The Bull & Last—evening, day two—eating steak and broccoli. He does an impression of David Attenborough's voice-over for *Planet Earth II*, which we'd watch a bit of after dinner, only Hiddleston's narration is about him eating a bite of my meal ("...the male must dine on his companion's steak...").

Where would we be without experts, is his point. How would we learn? And so one of the things Tom Hiddleston is determined to fix about the world right now is what he calls our "strange public distrust of experts." In his Twitter feed, which consists solely of enthusiastic re-tweets of film promotion and causes he loves, one tweet stands out: a Guardian article about the rise of fake news and how David Cameron's name turned to pudding when the Daily Mail published an account of him sticking his dick into a dead pig's head as an initiation rite. And guess where that all came from? An unconfirmed rumor and an anonymous source! But it doesn't matter, Hiddleston points out: That story is now part of the David Cameron story. Which would be one thing if we knew for sure it was true, he says, but we don't. Which is why it's time for "a movement in critical thinking, to really resist this dilution of truth and holding people to account for twisting it or distorting it.'

(As if to underscore this: A few days after I returned to the States, a friend sent me a link to a *Daily Mail* article containing nine pictures of Hiddleston and a "mystery brunette"—me—hugging, laughing, and bidding each other farewell. For the record, I was laughing about his Attenborough impression; I was hugging him because we were saying good-bye after two days and because: Tom Hiddleston!)

So yes, fake news is a thing, and now is the time to talk about it. This is the first time he's talked about any of this, he says—about politics, news, anything beyond the scope of his roles. He used to politely beg off. But he sees that's no longer an option. We can't afford complacency anymore. Look what's happened in the past year to the world's most powerful democracies.

Which is why he's decided to step into the fray himself, consequences be damned. "If you're under attack," he says, looking me square in the eye, his voice raw, "if your values are under attack, if you're being shamed, if you're being humiliated, the animal response is to hide in the bush. It's to be less, to make

yourself smaller, to diminish in size and volume. And the lesson of 2016 is we have to love more, we have to risk more, we have to be braver, we have to be more outspoken."

It wasn't until much later that night, after we'd parted, that I realized we had started talking about Taylor Swift long before we started talking about Taylor Swift.

IT IS TEMPTING TO SAY that the union of Hiddleswift was cooked up in a panicked publicist's office: That professional breakup lyricist Taylor Swift-who knew this very magazine was about to publish a story suggesting that maybe she hadn't been so honest about whether she knew she'd be a lyric in Kanye's "Famous," that maybe there was even a videotape to prove it-urgently needed a professional, tactical, romantical distraction. That maybe a British actor who was trying to break through to an American audience sensed an opportunity to become something more here. Maybe those two urgent impulses led to them sitting on the rocks, having a perfect kissing moment, while a person with a camera stood not so far away and took pictures.

But—but—it is also equally possible that it was real. I mean, this happens, right? Beautiful people fall in love, don't they? And these two made a kind of sense: They were similarly earnest and pale and high-rise and shiny. He had that James Dean daydream look in his eyes; she got his heart racing in her skintight jeans. Can we leave room for the notion that they fell in love?

"I only know the woman I met. She's incredible." But, man, all those cameras.

"A relationship in the limelight takes work. And it's not just the limelight.

It's everything else."

It lasted three months. They ate dinner in restaurants; they traveled to England to meet his family, and to Australia, where he'd be shooting *Thor: Ragnarok*. But soon after that Australia trip, that was it, and we were left with only unconfirmed tertiary sources saying that Taylor did. not. like. how public he was with his affection, like, say, confirming their relationship to *The Hollywood Reporter* and generally walking around with a smile on his face like a man in love.

"Taylor is an amazing woman," reads the prepared statement Tom Hiddleston has memorized and is now giving me at The Bull & Last, where his voice has gone low. "She's generous and kind and lovely, and we had the best time." But I didn't ask that, I say. I asked something else. So I wait, and he says, "Of course it was real."

I ask if he wants to say anything about Australia, about the Fourth of July party at which he donned that fateful tank top, about the rumors that she thought he was too eager. Does he want to say anything about any of it?

And here he puts down his fork, a bite of my steak still on it. He looks off into the middle distance, and here is what he says: "The truth is, it was the Fourth of July and a public holiday and we were playing a game and I slipped and hurt my back. And I wanted to protect the graze from the sun and said, 'Does anyone have a T-shirt?' And one of her friends said, 'I've got this.'" The friend pulled out the I \P T.s. tank top that Taylor's friends are contractually obligated to own. "And we all laughed about it. It was a joke."

So that's his statement on the entire relationship: an explanation of the tank top. "It was a joke," he repeats. "Among friends."

I can vouch for this depiction of Tom Hiddleston. He is definitely, without a doubt, someone who would put on an I ♥ T.S. tank top, both to protect a scratch from sun damage and to make his new friends laugh while th—wait, sorry, he's still talking:

"I have to be so psychologically strong about not letting other people's interpretations about my life affect my life. A relationship exists between two people. We will always know what it was. The narratives that are out there altogether have been extrapolated from pictures that were taken without consent or permission, with no context. Nobody had the context for that story. And I'm still trying to work out a way of having a personal life and protecting it, but also without hiding. So the hardest thing is that that was a joke among friends on the Fourth of July."

He still isn't looking at me. The last piece of my steak is now poised on his fork in mid-air. He is so sad, and I can't take it anymore, so I put my hand on his and I say, "Tom, Tom, it's okay. You don't have to talk about the tank top anymore. I got it. I understand. I'll tell the world." But he can't stop talking about it. He literally cannot stop talking about it.

"I don't know," he says. "I just, I was surprised. I was just surprised that it got so much attention. The tank top became an emblem of this *thing*." It's hard to tell me this, he says. He wants to trust me. He wants to trust that the world won't use this to embarrass him again, but he doesn't know. He just knows it will follow him until he talks about it.

And anyway, none of this has anything to do with the person he fell in love with. "I only know the woman I met. She's incredible." But, man, all those cameras. "A relationship in the limelight... A relationship always takes work. A relationship in the limelight takes work. And it's not just the limelight. It's everything else." He wanted a regular relationship. So did she, he says she said. "So we decided to go out for dinner, we decided to travel."

After the breakup, he moved to Australia for *Thor: Ragnarok*, and each morning he'd wake up at five and go running, and the cameras would be there. "I'm getting up so I can do this job well. I'm getting up to go for my run so I can play Loki as well as I can." Everywhere he went, whether it was checking e-mail on a park bench or looking at a menu, if he furrowed his brow it meant he was miserable and that would incite a new tabloid story about how hard he was taking all of this. It was a tough time, a public tough time. Chris Hemsworth gave him some good guidance; Hugh Laurie checked in. His family worried.

So you can think whatever you want about Tom Hiddleston, you can swift-boat Hiddleswift all you want. But he is as bewildered by the whole thing as you and I are.

He looks at me finally and he says, "I'm not going to live my life in hiding."

THE NEXT MORNING. I wake up at five to pack for my flight back to New York, and I see an e-mail from Tom, sent the night before, asking if he could come to my hotel to talk to me about something. I tell him yes. He lives 20 minutes away; 15 minutes later he knocks

He explains that he wants to be honest with me, that it would be hypocritical of him to talk about honesty in the world and then not be with me. I have to understand, he says, that a relationship is between two people, that it doesn't belong to him alone. But like David Cameron now knows, it is neither practical nor wise to let rumors hang in the air. He wants me to know that he has no regrets, he says, "because you have to fight for love. You can't live in fear of what people might say. You know, you have to be true to yourself."

on my door.

But I understood all that, I tell him. I understood last night. It's six in the morning, Tom. I have a flight to catch. And he shakes his head, feeling foolish because maybe there was something he thought he could say that wasn't quite coming out the right way, and instead he says, "Yeah, okay, I just wanted to make sure."

I turn my tape recorder off and I stand up, but he doesn't. He shakes his head again, his hands clasped together, and he hangs his head. I sit back down and we talk some more because I finally understand that he isn't here as someone who needs to explain his side in a PR battle; he's here as someone who is still crushed by the end of a relationship.

So we sit and talk for a while. We talk about how relationships go sideways, how the ripples of a breakup can still pin you to a wall even months later. We talk about heartache. We talk about sadness and healing. We talk about what it's like to love and what happens when the object of that love withdraws but all your love is still there. We talk about how those things can really change a person. The world will chip away at your optimism, and you just have to fight back. You have to be someone who is still full of joy and full of love, who can still use a word like "obsessed" about porridge. You have to be bold and open. You have to be honest. You have to be like Tom Hanks. We all have to be more like Tom Hanks.

He carries my luggage downstairs for me and I get into a cab for the airport, and I think about sincerity and I think about snideness and I wonder why so many of us seem so much more comfortable with snideness. I think about one of the last things he said to me, which was about David Bowie, Had he mentioned how much he loves David Bowie? He loves David Bowie! On New Year's Eve, he listened to "Under Pressure" with his friends. 'Cause love's such an old-fashioned word, he recites. And love dares you to care for the people on the edge of the night. And love dares you to change our way of caring about ourselves. This is our last dance, this is our last dance, this is ourselves. You should've seen his face when he was saying these words. His eyes were closed, and it was like he was in a trance. It was the best face!

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would tell me that the church had recently moved and it was going by a new name now, too. Its new address was just down the road, I discovered, in a strip mall.

IF I WASN'T GOING TO see a service, I still wanted to visit Popoff's office. His organization, People United for Christ, keeps its headquarters in a suite of white buildings in an industrial section of Upton, California, an hour's drive inland from Los Angeles.

I had expected to be rebuffed. "When they see any media come by, it's a total lockdown on the facility," I had been told by Crystal Sanchez, age 33, who used to work at Popoff's headquarters. I had found Sanchez after reading *The Real Truth Behind People United for Christ*, the e-book detailing her time there that she self-published in 2013. "There are cameras surrounding both buildings. If news vans come by, the receptionist or security guy, whoever sees it first, she notified all the top people, letting them know the building is on lockdown."

Popoff's employees are on guard for more than just the media. Sometimes, Sanchez said, those taken in by Popoff's message would breach security. "This lady came in, and everyone said she was nuts," Sanchez told me. "She'd sold all her belongings. She had come to talk to Peter." Popoff didn't come out to meet her; nor did any of his employees.

Sanchez said that when she took the job as a "donation processor," she thought she might gain new skills while serving God, too. But she soon began to worry that she wasn't really working for a church. "I knew about televangelists," Sanchez said. "I knew there had been scams. But I had never heard about him before." Sanchez said that the buildings were essentially big processing centers for cash, checks, and valuables. On her second day on the job, opening envelopes, she counted about \$30,000 in donations-in a room filled with about 20 other women doing the same job. "When 'partners' wouldn't donate so much money, they would cut back on staff," Sanchez said. When times were good, they would ramp up.

The workload depended on what Popoff was saying on his paid television spots. "The real clincher," Sanchez said, "was when they started asking for all your gold, your trinkets, your heirlooms. And tubs and tubs of gold and stones came in. They would take the stones out, take the gold to be resold." Anything that wasn't valuable was shredded. "It was a shame how many shred bins were full to the rim with prayer requests awaiting to be destroyed and never seen again." Sanchez wrote.

Sanchez, who quit in early 2012, was one of two ex-employees who spoke with me. The other, somebody higher up, told me that the distribution of the "miracle spring water" was subcontracted to a packaging plant in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. So one day I took the Garden State Parkway to have a look at Unit Pack, a family-run firm that specializes in packaging those little samples of shampoo, pharmaceuticals, and the like. I met the very friendly father and two sons who owned the place, and they confirmed for me that they do business with Popoff, but they didn't say much more.

And then, on my way out, I got even closer to the truth. I was walking out toward my car when I saw a guy pulling down the metal door at a loading dock on the side of the building. He looked 30-ish and was wearing a Cowboys baseball cap and a greasy Unit Pack jumper. Two rings through his lower lip framed his broad smile. We started talking. He said he was the only guy in receiving—if it came to Unit Pack, it came to him. I asked about Popoff.

"What troubles you?"
Popoff asked. I held up
my broken finger.
He touched it and let
loose a loud stream
of glossolalia, speaking in
tongues, as Pentecostals do.
"Shabalalalalalalala!"

"Yeah, we do him," the man said. "We go through Poland Spring."

"The Popoff water is Poland Spring?" I asked.

"Yeah, they deliver it right here," he said. "Paul is the guy who does the deliveries. Once or twice a month he comes. For Peter Popoff, we do 35 gallon-size jugs at a time, once or twice a month. One time they came with 130 gallon-size jugs."

And then he said something mysterious, maybe even beautiful. I still can't decide. Popoff, he said, sends his own pre-blessed water, in a 16-ounce bottle, to add to all the jugs of Poland Spring. So that every little package of water contains a few molecules of holiness.

"I'm the one who pours the blessed water into the drums," said the man with the lip rings. "I measure it out and add it into the drums."

Was it possible, I wondered, that Popoff believes in his own powers, just a little? Did he fear God just enough to gesture toward authenticity, so that if he was ever questioned at the pearly gates about the millions of dollars of other people's gold and silver and Social Security money, he could say that in every New Jersey–packed packet of holy water there was a minuscule amount of blessing? I didn't know it then, but I would soon get to ask Popoff in person.

LATE LAST NOVEMBER, my nationwide dragnet for tickets to see Popoff snagged something. One of the friends I'd cajoled into

donating got a text message inviting her to an event in Washington, D.C. That's how I found myself, two days later, hustling into the Marriott Wardman Park for a 7 p.m. show. As it happens, I'd broken my left pinkie a month earlier, so my hand was in a splint. I looked like the real deal: a man in need of supernatural healing.

The conference room was packed with a thousand people, maybe two thousand. In this crowd, I was very white, very young, and very male. Some of the ladies had walkers or wheelchairs, some were healthy enough to dance in the aisles to the gospel music playing over loudspeakers. Hired men in suits passed out slips, telling us to jot down the ailments for which we needed intercession.

When Peter Popoff finally emerged, he gave a short sermon, but his heart wasn't in it. No matter: He knew that we weren't there for his preaching. He descended into the crowd, trailing an entourage of security men, his son, and a camera crew. People reached out to touch him, their hands seeming to plead, "Help me." He picked people out and asked what was wrong. Arthritis, they said. Or kidney problems, a bum ticker, thyroid. Every kind of sickness. He spent two or three minutes with each hopeful worshipper, leaning in to whisper, and then—what they'd come for, what they needed—touching them.

Popoff is of the same generation as Bruce Springsteen, and he clearly shares the Boss's compulsion to never let an audience down. He worked the aisles for two hours that night, back and forth, until finally he was in my section. Before I knew it, he was upon me. The lights of his camera crew were blinding, but here he was, choosing me.

"What troubles you?" he asked. I held up my broken finger. He touched it, and then he let loose a loud stream of glossolalia, speaking in tongues, as Pentecostals do. "Shabalalalalalalala!" he cried. I wiggled my pinkie—which I had been able to do, anyway—and he shouted, "You are healed!" and gave me a long, tight hug. It felt good, as hugs do.

And then came something I didn't expect: love from the crowd, people rubbing me on my back after I sat down, touching me, giving me high fives, saying, "Praise the Lord!" It felt so good that even if my pinkie had been causing excruciating pain, or even if I'd had a far worse condition, something that in my heart I'd known was incurable, I'm sure that, for the moment, I would not have noticed.

THE NIGHT THAT I was healed and hugged by Peter Popoff, I saw no sign that he was using an earpiece. If he had any plants in the audience, he didn't make good use of them. As he approached each of us, he asked what ailed us—he didn't pretend to know. And we in the audience were eager to believe in his powers. The earpiece, I realized, was always an unnecessary gimmick. Popoff is better than he knows.

I sensed the same ambivalence when I met Larry Skelton. He was introduced to Popoff when Popoff was only 15; Skelton was the organist in Popoff's father's road show, then in Popoff's, off and on, from 1965 to 1990. Skelton didn't return my calls, so one Sunday, I staked out his house in Mesquite, a hard-luck Dallas

exurb. At about half past noon, he and his wife pulled into the driveway, back from church, I figured. Skelton invited me in, with an air of resignation. His wife eyed me warily.

Skelton wanted to make it clear, before we talked about his friend Popoff, that faith healing was real. "I've seen people with a short leg that had, for a while, a six-inch buildup on one of their shoes," said Skelton, who's 80, ten years older than Popoff. "You could see, there was no fakery to it. All of a sudden, that leg began to grow out to the same size as the other."

I asked if Popoff was the real deal. He thought for a moment, then replied that, yes, Popoff was the real deal. But I'd noticed his hesitation, and he could tell that I'd noticed, so he explained.

"When you're praying for the sick, it's through the Holy Spirit, and there's some times that it works freely, and then there are other times when the Spirit's just not there," Skelton said. On the days when the Holy Spirit didn't show up freely, you had to help it along; after all, you still needed to pass the hat. "You're in that auditorium, and you had to pay for that sucker. In advance."

The day after I talked with Skelton, he called me and asked if I could include one last sentiment, and I said I would. This is what he said: "That mess he got into, that was 30 years ago. He went bankrupt, he lost everything he had, he had to start over. And ever since then, I know, I personally know, that he is by the book and careful. Auditors come in every year. He wants it that way, so there is no question about where the money goes. And that's the gospel truth."

IN DECEMBER, Popoff's daughter, Amy Cardiff, called me. She had first responded to my pestering a few months earlier, but I never expected that the Popoffs would consent to an interview. And yet, they did. On December 21, Peter Popoff welcomed me into his office, where we were joined by Amy and Nick, the two children who work in the ministry (another son, Alexander, is in the military). He didn't recognize me from the time he healed my finger in Washington (not that I expected he would). For an hour and a half, he answered my questions—about miracle spring water, James Randi, bankruptcy, his tennis game, the Holy Spirit.

Popoff wore a natty suit and a tie knotted to the strangulation point. He moves slowly, but not frailly—more like a muscular man managing his own physique. And the hair truly is something, shiny and monochrome like an action figure's. When I asked how I could have hair like his when I got older, he quoted Exodus: "'I am the Lord thy God that heals thee!' That's the promise that God gave to Israel. If you can take that by faith, you'll live a life of increase." And great hair.

Popoff talked about everything, without a trace of defensiveness. According to him, declaring bankruptcy was a mistake, the misguided suggestion of lawyers. In reality, he said, the exposé on *The Tonight Show* barely hurt his finances. The incoming monthly take "went down by a third for three months; the fourth month it stabilized, and the fifth month it started growing again," Popoff said. "By the end of that year, we were back to where we were." He said that they never went off the air, never stopped doing live shows.

He had an answer for everything, or almost everything. When I inquired about the college scholarships and Ukrainian orphanages that, according to their mailings, the ministry funded, he said he'd get back to me with the addresses of the orphanages (he never did) and the details about how much the scholarships were worth (ditto). They did not want to comment on Crystal Sanchez's allegations in her e-book.

But when I asked about the earpiece, Popoff was happy to talk. "We were taping television! And I venture to say anyone doing TV programs..." He trailed off, as if he were saying something so obvious it didn't bear finishing.

I mentioned his \$4.5 million house. "It's now worth 10 million!" he said. "So I made the ministry \$5 million!"

"It wasn't always like this," Amy interrupted to say. "When I was born, we traveled in a trailer"

Popoff seemed to be truly enjoying my company, but his children were uncomfortable. The family business is theirs to inherit, and both told me that they have "the gift" and could take over someday. Meanwhile, as chief administrative officer (Amy) and executive vice president (Nick), they prosper alongside him. They wouldn't tell me what they earn, but Nick enjoyed telling me about the Clydesdale horses he keeps.

"We are a prosperity ministry that preaches prosperity," Nick added. "We preach financial blessings. God has prospered us." The good life they lead is proof of their powers. If they weren't noticeably rich, what authority would they have to promise riches to others?

At this point, I had a sense of déjà vu, a flashback to other scandal-plagued gurus I'd interviewed, like the New Age teacher and ex-rabbi Marc Gafni, who had been accused of plagiarism, serial dishonesty, and sexual misconduct with a 13-year-old (his excuse was that she'd been 14), or the Zen master Eido Shimano, who'd been seducing and emotionally abusing his female students for decades. In each case, I was shocked that they'd agreed to be interviewed, until

Peter Popoff inhabits both hemispheres of our national brain, the Puritan and the magician. He believes in divine magic—but not at the expense of the work ethic.

I realized, as I sat with them, that they didn't think they had anything to hide. They're like Jack Nicholson's Colonel Jessup in *A Few Good Men*—they *want* to say it. They want to take the stand. Their lawyers and friends can tell them to shut up, but that makes them look guilty, and they don't feel guilty.

As I sat with the gregarious, affable Popoff, I understood: He believes he is helping people. If you accept, as Pentecostal Christians do, that God performs miracles, on the body, soul, and bank account, then his ministry offers a series of fair exchanges between him and his audience. They give money; he sends them trinkets. They make him rich, pray

with the trinkets, and maybe get rich, too. He touches them and they feel better.

And if they don't feel better? Well, there are no guarantees. "There's nothing magical about them," he said about the spring water, the baruch wallet, and all the stuff I'd gotten in the mail. "They are simply points of contact"—they help people focus their prayer. God decides what prayers to answer.

I took a bathroom break in Popoff's private lavatory, right off his office. The walls were covered with little inspirational notes. Next to the sink: "But I am trusting you, O Lord, saying, 'You are my God!' My future is in your hands.-Psalm 31:14-15." Below that, on a sticky note: "Whatever you touch will prosper and succeed. You will lend and not borrow" (that one's from Joel Osteen). Then, next to the toilet paper, an 81/2-by-11 printout listing the family's goals for 2015-Peter's, Liz's, Nick's, Amy's. Peter's list included more crusades, "Book some fun trips including Italy, Skiing, and Lake Tahoe," and, at number five, "Tax Exemption in Canada." It was an astonishing précis of the prosperity gospel. Get converts, get time on the slopes, get a tax exemption.

But here's the thing about Peter and Liz Popoff and their kids: They could have all their ski trips and Bentleys and Clydesdale horses without ever working another day in their lives. Yet here they are, hitting mildewy, ticky-tacky hotel ballrooms and convention centers in a dozen cities every year, as if the salvation of the world depended on it. This septuagenarian clocks the hours of a junior lawyer trying to make partner. Which complicates any theory that he is trying to get something for nothing. He's trying to get something, all right—millions of something, in fact—but not for nothing. He works hard for his money.

Peter Popoff is the all-American faith healer because he inhabits both hemispheres of our national brain, the Puritan and the magician. He believes in divine magic—to enrich you, to heal you, or just to entertain you—but not at the expense of the work ethic. He'll do the work, all right, and your part is just suspending disbelief and sending him a check to show that you mean it. He gets rich, you get hope.

It's hard to escape the parallels with another baby boomer, a man born just two weeks before Popoff in the summer of '46, just before the United States entered its long, hopeful postwar expansion. Both men went into the family business, suffered reversals, went bankrupt, seemed destined to be TV-rerun laughingstocks. One became president, the other just became rich. Both seem to be running cons, but both have followers who either don't notice or don't care. Both men have produced nothing, except, for their followers, fervent certainty that they can produce anything. And say what you will about the trust people have in them- it hasn't come easy. "I've been working for 50 years," Popoff told me. "It's not something I snapped my fingers and it magically appeared. It's been a long and winding road!"

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PATRICK STEWART



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cartoonish means. Jackman reportedly took a pay cut for the film on the condition that it be allowed to hit screens with an R rating. (That R is probably more in the service of visceral fight scenes than explicit sexual content; trailers for the movie depict Jackman most often in the company of Stewart and an adorable child.)

As for whether this will be his final *X-Men* movie (it is expected to be Jackman's), Stewart is coy. "It would be very appropriate if it were. But I've already died once in the *X-Men* movies, and I came back. I was vaporized by Famke Janssen—Jean Grey—in the third."

Stewart and I pause the tour for lunch at a small Italian restaurant with old-school tin ceilings and new-school \$14 farro salads. He wants spaghetti but is anxious about being described eating it in print, because it is a saucy, slurpish mess. He relaxes when I tell him I'll have spaghetti, too.

Shortly after we sit, a pretty young woman approaches from behind Stewart's shoulder and kneels at our table.

"I'm so sorry," she begins in a rush. Stewart swivels his bald head to regard her. "Everybody says this to you. I—I really never do this, but I spent my younger years watching *Next Generation* with my parents, and just seeing you literally makes my heart... I'm shaking. I just wanted to say thank you. The show you guys created, literally, it bonded me and my parents."

"Thank you so much." Stewart looks in her eyes and extends his hand for a shake. "I love hearing that. Thank you."

She departs. He fumbles with his menu, a touch abashed at the effusive compliments.

"How much did you pay that woman?" I ask.
"Oh, was it so obvious?" He grins. "She's a local actress. Needed the money."

After lunch, he and I walk back to his apartment. I ask Stewart if he ever plans to retire, so he can enjoy the fruits of his labors.

He answers with the obsessive work ethic of a true New Yorker: "Without doing my job, I couldn't enjoy them."

His wife, Sunny, a singer, buzzes him up to the apartment. The two of them met just a few blocks from here in 2008, when she was working as a waitress at a popular local pizza place. (The marriage is Stewart's third; he has two grown children.) Sunny is in the kitchen chatting with a friend, who tells Stewart he looks well.

"That is my curse," begins Stewart. "I liken myself to Cassandra, who was given a great gift by the gods...."

"Oh, my God," says his wife with a laugh, rolling her eyes.

THE GREEN ANGELS



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TV room. Mylie notices the man looking at me and says, "He's an NYU professor."

He nods and says, "Show me the greenery." She lays out her wares, pulling out various bags from the case.

"Tell me the myths."

"Myths?"

He wants to know what each one is good for. Mylie suggests a strain called Candyland. "We're having a promotion today. With four bags, you get a free caramel." But the man's not into edibles. As he's considering what to buy, his wife walks in and smiles at us. The wife and son watch as the father purchases three bags and gives \$150 in cash to Mylie.

"So what, you're doing a sociological study at NYU?" the man asks.

I nod. It's as true an explanation as any.

"I just heard the *Freakonomics* guys talk about the drug business in Chicago," he says. We discuss the mainstreaming of pot. He asks if I've seen the show *High Maintenance*. The man is a famous painter, I discover later. The loft's walls are covered with his paintings, abstract pieces. He shakes our hands and lets us out.

We take the subway uptown. Mylie wonders what'll happen when pot gets legalized. She isn't sure that Honey will be able to handle the transition to selling pot in stores. "You're making it in the virtual world, and now you have to figure out how to monetize it in the brick-andmortar world," she says. I'd wager that people are still going to want home delivery of weed even if they can buy it in a store. It's a rare sort of commercial interaction, in which you must trust a relative stranger to enter your house. You're paying, sometimes, for a confidante in addition to the drugs. According to Marie, seven out of ten customers just want the pot. "The other three—they want to talk."

The second stop is a building on East 57th Street. Mylie walks by the doorman, checking her phone. He stops us and asks us whom we want to see. Mylie gives him the name.

A stunning blonde in her late 20s opens the door to a very clean apartment. She's dressed in an orange leotard and is notably fit. There are tulips on the windowsill. She's a new customer and is tentative as she picks up a bag from Mylie's inventory.

"Maybe I'll take two. How long will it last? Can I keep it in the fridge?" Her accent sounds German.

"Oh yes, you can keep it in the fridge. It'll last for...a long time. Just put it in another ziplock bag."

"Yeah, I don't want my food to smell of pot."
Mylie tries to interest her in the edibles. The
woman says she used to bake pot brownies.
"How strong is the caramel?"

"It's pretty strong. You can eat half. The normal dosage is one."

She buys four bags and gets a free caramel. On the coffee table is a book by a famous German newspaper editor.

"That's my father," the blonde says. She's a writer herself.

When we get downstairs, Mylie's phone rings. Honey is instructing her to introduce me as a friend. "The worst thing you can say is that he's an NYU professor." There is some tension, and Mylie falls quiet for the first time during the subway ride to our next stop. Her own opinion is that it's better to introduce me as a professor. "It gives us legitimacy," she says. But it's Honey's business. I am given a Green Angels name for when I go on runs: A.J.

The third stop is at an office building, at the headquarters of a well-known shoe designer. The customer asks me to wait in the reception area while he takes Mylie into a closet and buys his stuff.

The fourth stop is in a loft office in the Bowery. Two Doberman puppies rush out at us as soon as the elevator opens. Hip-hop is playing very loudly. A white hipster picks up one of the dogs. "What's happening here?" he asks, staring at me while the Doberman strains to jump out of his arms. Two other guys stand nearby. The dogs are barking up a frenzy. Mylie's been bitten before, and she's clearly uncomfortable. The trio ends up buying four bags.

It's been a good run for Mylie so far. She's made around \$150, and her run's not half over. "I have never made so much money in my life," she says in wonderment.

She says she feels empowered. In four months, she's saved \$6,000. She'd like to move to Florida in September, buy a car, start her own fashion line.

"Something my mother always told me was to be independent," she says. "There's nothing I can't do now."

SINCE I'VE STOPPED teaching for the semester, the weekly meetings have been changed back to Wednesdays. Honey says she's spoken to her lawyer about me: "The book is all yours, but the movie"—if there's a movie—"if it's \$10 million, I want a million dollars." She gestures to her swelling stomach. "For the baby, you know."

She tells me I'll have to change everyone's name, and I can't say too much about her wholesalers, "or they'll kill me." She's dealt with multiple death threats throughout her career. The wholesalers call her if she's late on payments and say, "I'll come to your parents' house and shoot them."

Honey gives it back to them. "I say, 'I'll call the feds and have you shipped back to China. I'm waiting for you. I'm gonna fucking blow your head up, and then I'll blow your mother's head up.'" People are scared of a crazy girl, she notes.

She and her boyfriend, Peter, have just driven back from Maryland, where they met a bag manufacturer and bought 30,000 smell-proof bags from him, at eight cents each. She told him she was a beef-jerky producer. He asked if she had some jerky for him. Peter didn't get it, and offered the bag manufacturer some nugs of weed. Honey motioned for him to shush.

Peter used to grow his own weed in California, but he got out of the business in 2005. Now he consults with other growers,

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in the states where it's legal and where it's not, sharing his expertise. He says the greatest threat to his industry is not the cartels or the cops; it's the "men in suits"—the drug companies. Monsanto, he claims, is actively researching a way to create the most potent weed. "It shouldn't be Monsanto, shouldn't be Marlboro selling a pack of pre-rolled joints," he tells me. "It's a plant, it's a weed. It's not dangerous. Big business is the dangerous part. Big corporations are going to juice it full of stuff, carcinogens." In California, the government is cracking down on the pot pioneers as the corporations move in. All the wholesalers he knows there are under investigation.

Honey makes a trip out to California every month and a half. She is nervous enough about letting me see the supply side of her operation that she invites and un-invites me to see her West Coast sources several times. When it becomes clear that I'll never get to accompany her to California, she agrees to at least fill in some of the details of what she does out there.

Right now she's paying more than \$3,000 per pound for good indoor-grown hydroponic weed. Selling it off an eighth of an ounce at a time, she can mark it up 100 percent. Honey's business is always on credit. She buys \$300,000 worth and pays it back when the weed sells. Sometimes it doesn't move, especially when the quality is poor. The pot she sees on her buying trips may not be what actually arrives. Other times, if it's coming over by truck, it could get cooked in the hot trailer on its way across the country; by the time she sees it, it's like hay. The growers will try their luck sending a shipment that's half bad "because they figure in New York, anything moves."

These days, most of Honey's weed comes via FedEx. If she ships the stuff herself, it costs her \$500 per pound; with FedEx, the cost comes to about \$200 per pound, even though she's more likely to lose a box or two that way. The FedEx employees steal more packages than the post-office workers. "A lot of them took the jobs because they know about it." If you go to a FedEx parking lot, she says, you'll notice that the drivers come to work in sports cars.

There are FedEx inspectors who try to intercept the drugs. They will send a control box to the address and then bust in to arrest the recipient. Honey has a device that she waves over and all around the FedEx box, which will emit a signal if it detects a tracking device or transponder.

Right now, in a good month she takes home about \$150,000. She spends \$15,000 on herself. "The rest goes into the bank," she says, but of course it doesn't. It goes into a pile of cash somewhere.

She sends her money out of state, to different stashes in different places: "As a drug dealer, you're only as good as your money pile." She's cautious talking about it; she has a

million dollars in cash right now, which she's reserved for her "rainy-day legal fees."

She talks about how dealers launder their money—sometimes almost literally. "You launder it when you're retired. You go to Atlanta and open ten laundromats and launder it." The West Coast dealers often go to Vegas to launder their money. "If you win, you can buy property." They can show the winnings on their tax returns.

I GO ON A FEW MORE RUNS, still posing as A.J., and then Honey invites me to her baby shower in McCarren Park, in Williamsburg. It's a pleasant Saturday afternoon. She has a book in which she wants us to write things to her child. She expects me to fill up a page, she says, since I'm a writer. "The new baby comes with bread in her arms. You will come with a whole bakery," I write.

Some of the Angels are there. They smoke from vapes, drink champagne. Honey lines up a few baby bottles on the grass and invites us to bowl with her, knocking them over with a rubber ball.

She tells me her good Mormon mother recently asked for weed for Honey's grandpa. Her mother and sister were visiting, and she took them to see *Good Morning America* in Manhattan. At 5 A.M. they were in line, and

Child Protective Services came, and of course, Honey got rid of the mountain of weed she'd been hiding in the baby's room.

her mother whispered, "Papa's not doing well." Then she mentioned Honey's great-uncle, who was prescribed marijuana for pain treatment at a hospital in Washington State.

Honey responded, "I might have something." With relief, her mother said, "That's what we wanted to ask you. Could you call someone?"

Peter interjects: "They asked her for this thing they've always shamed her for."

After the baby is born, I go to visit Peter and Honey at their place in Williamsburg. I wash my hands and pick up their daughter. A week and a half out of her mother's womb and into this world, she's a chilled-out baby. Honey, looking happier than I've ever seen her, tells me that the baby has been sleeping through the night, so far. When I ask Peter how he feels about being a new dad, he says only, "It's cool."

At the hospital, after the delivery—the baby girl was eight pounds six ounces—Honey heard

the nurses arguing outside her room. "It's only weed!" one said. They came in and took the baby away and put her in the NICU, where she was the biggest child in a room full of preemies. Child Protective Services told Honey that a doctor had reported her after they tested her urine; her THC levels were the highest they had come across in the hospital that year.

Eventually they decided to let Honey keep the baby, for now, as long as she went to parenting classes, got herself tested for drugs for two months, and agreed to be subject to random drug tests in the apartment after that. So far, CPS has come once, and of course, Honey got rid of the mountain of weed she'd been hiding in the baby's room. She hasn't been smoking at all and calculates the date she can start again—a month and a half away. "It's not so bad," she allows.

Honey would like to have four babies. "The greatest thing you can be as a Mormon is a mother," says Honey. Her parents want her to move back home. Honey shudders at the thought. In a Mormon-run hospital, she thinks, if she had failed a drug test, the baby would have been taken away from her permanently.

Now Honey is full of travel plans. Over Christmas, she and Peter and the baby will go to Maui for two weeks. In the summer, they will go to Croatia and Hungary, where Honey has friends from her modeling days. She'd also like to go to China and live there for five years. Whatever happens, one thing is sure: She's going to move out of New York soon, and whatever's left of the Angels will be sold off to others.

The business has been running fine without Honey; Charley and the other dispatchers have been keeping things going. The minimum now is \$200, and lots of people have been 86'd, including one man who showed up at the door completely naked. The baker found a candy factory that will let her work there after hours, so she can make 1,000 caramels in three hours. The cost of manufacture is \$4 each; Honey sells them in bulk to other dealers for \$12.

While I'm putting on my shoes, Honey says I should visit the Angels once in a while: "The girls miss you." As I'm leaving, the baby cries for the first time in the hour and a half I've been there. Honey checks her diaper and hands her over to Peter. He's the kind of dad who'll change diapers.

When the baby is changed, Peter hands her back to Honey, who holds her tenderly. "What are you gonna be when you grow up? Are you gonna be a drug dealer?" Honey coos to the baby. Then she laughs. "It's all gonna be legal by the time you grow up. You'll have to find something else to do."

SUKETU MEHTA is the author of 'Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found,' which was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize.

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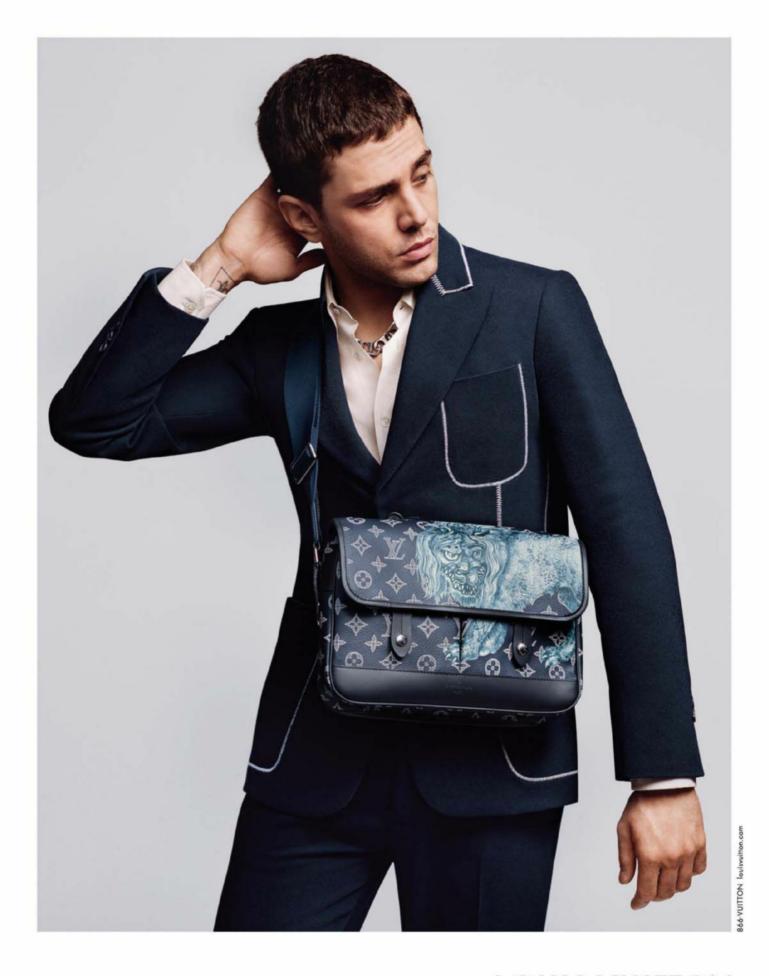
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