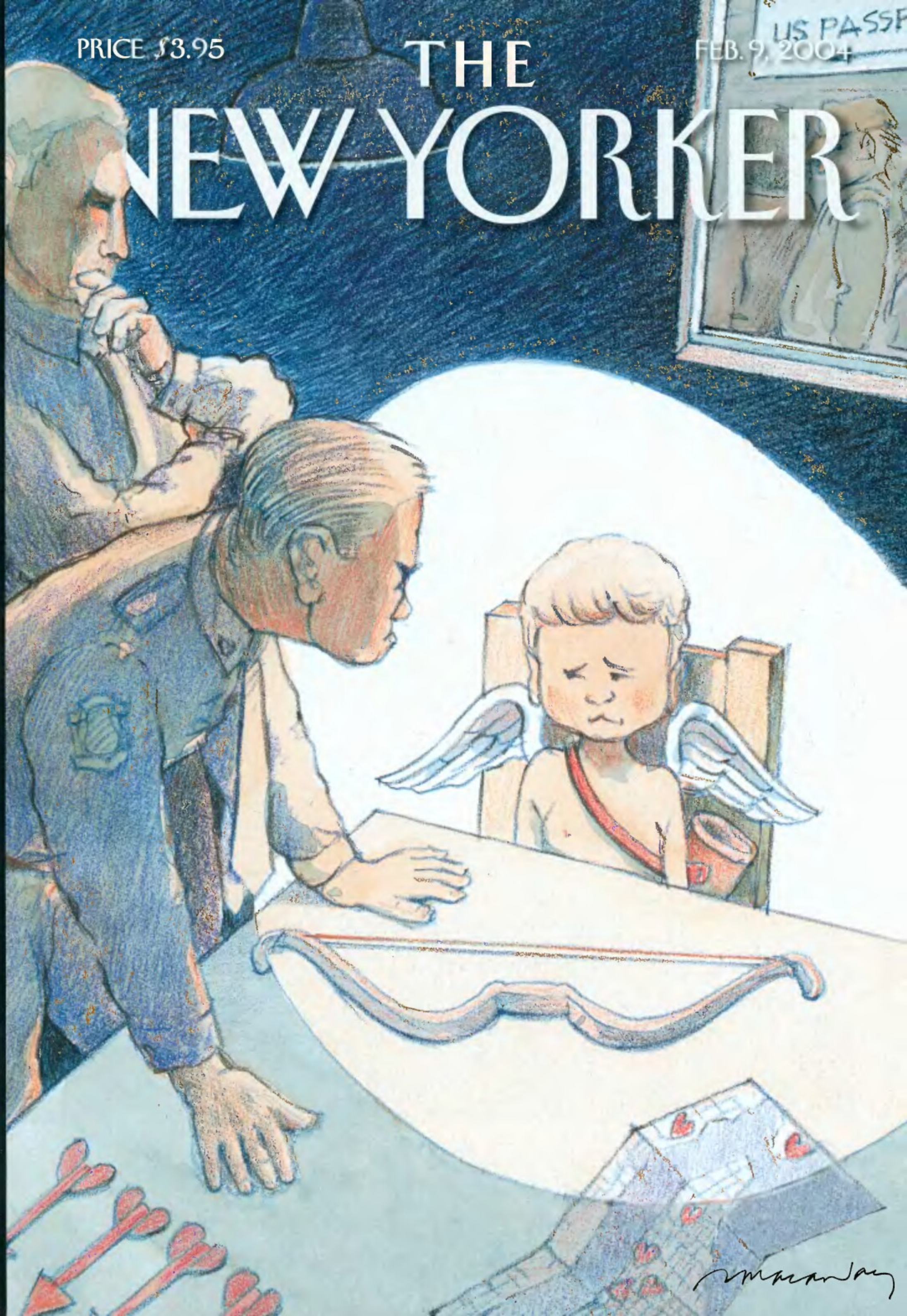
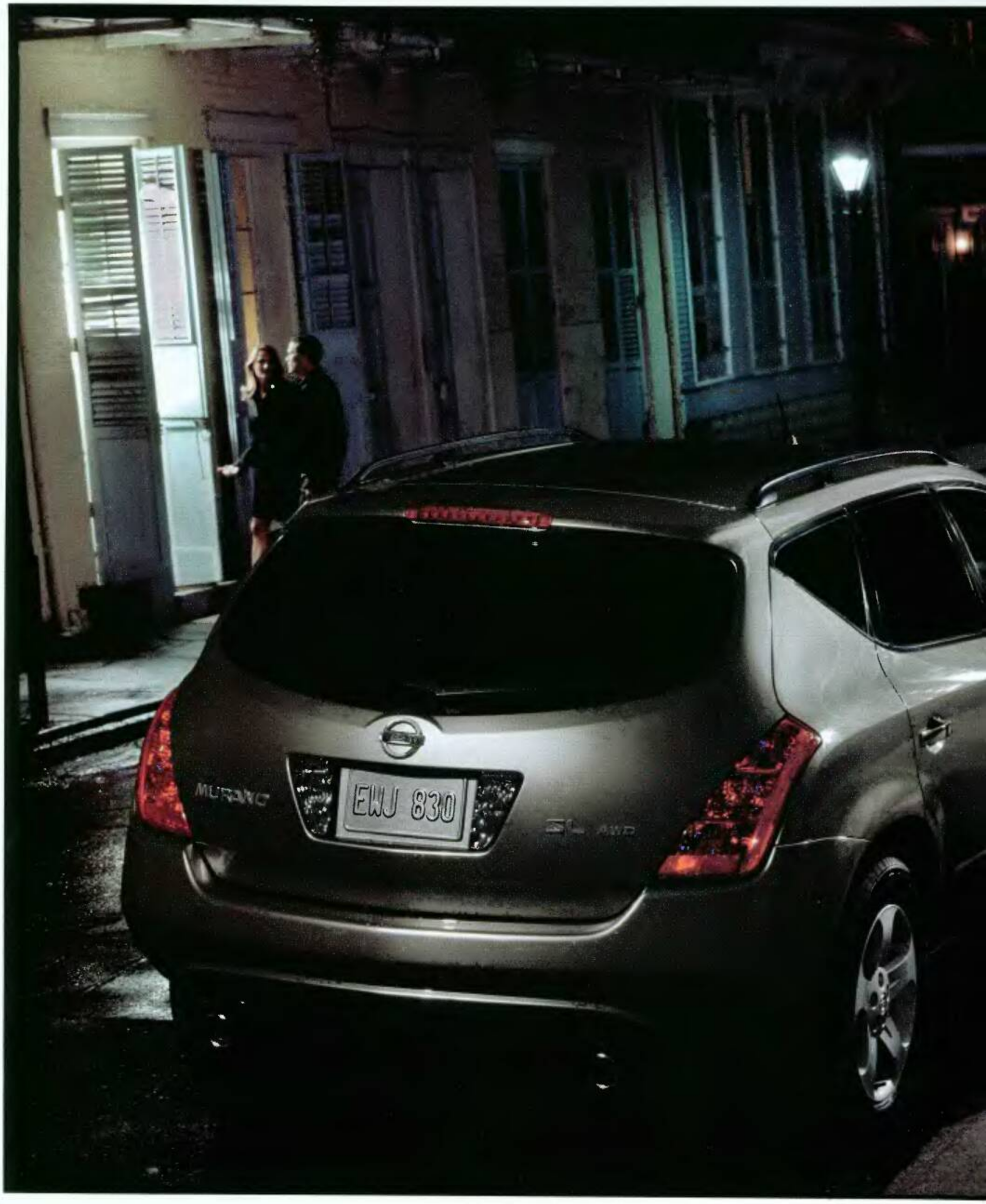
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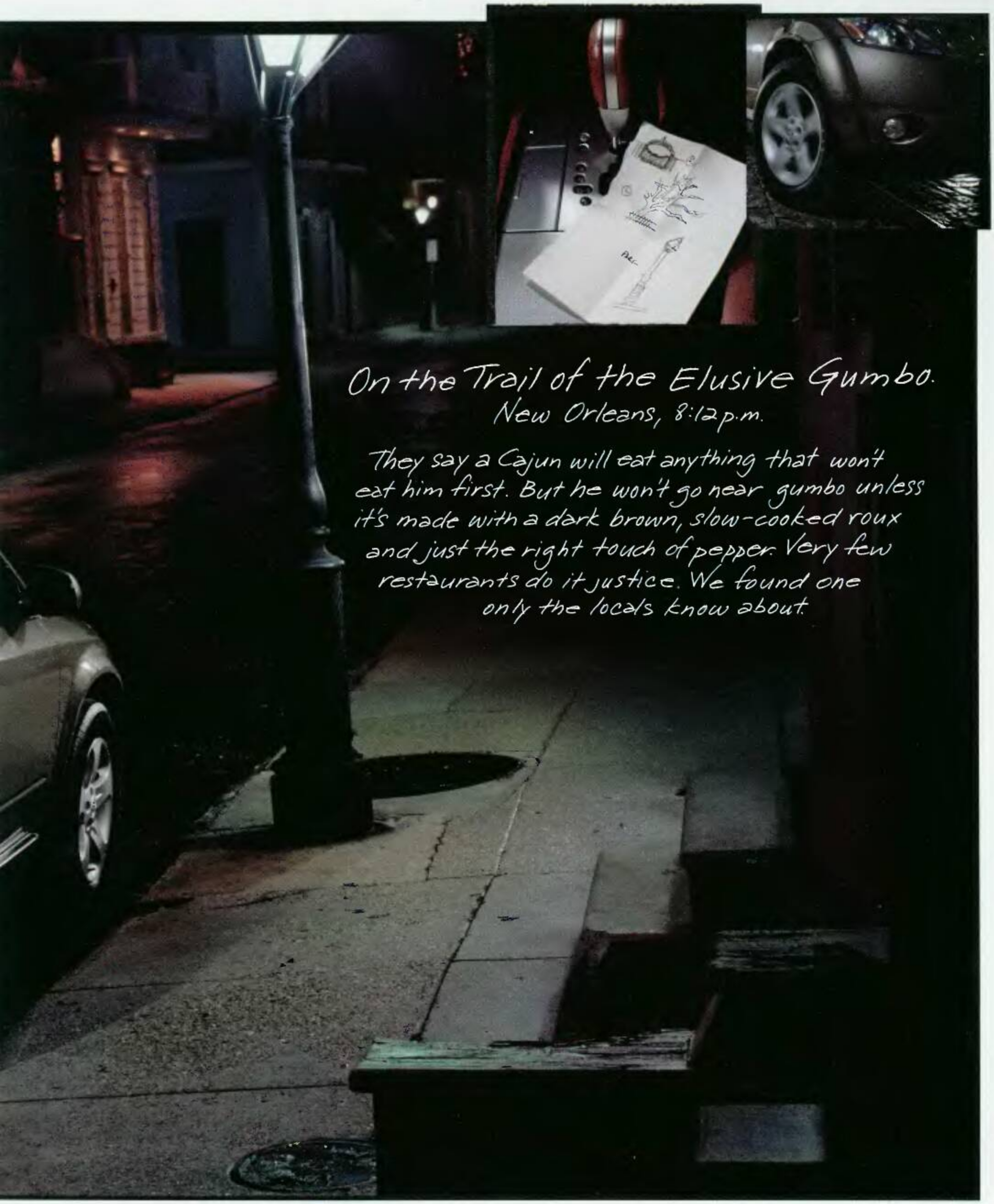
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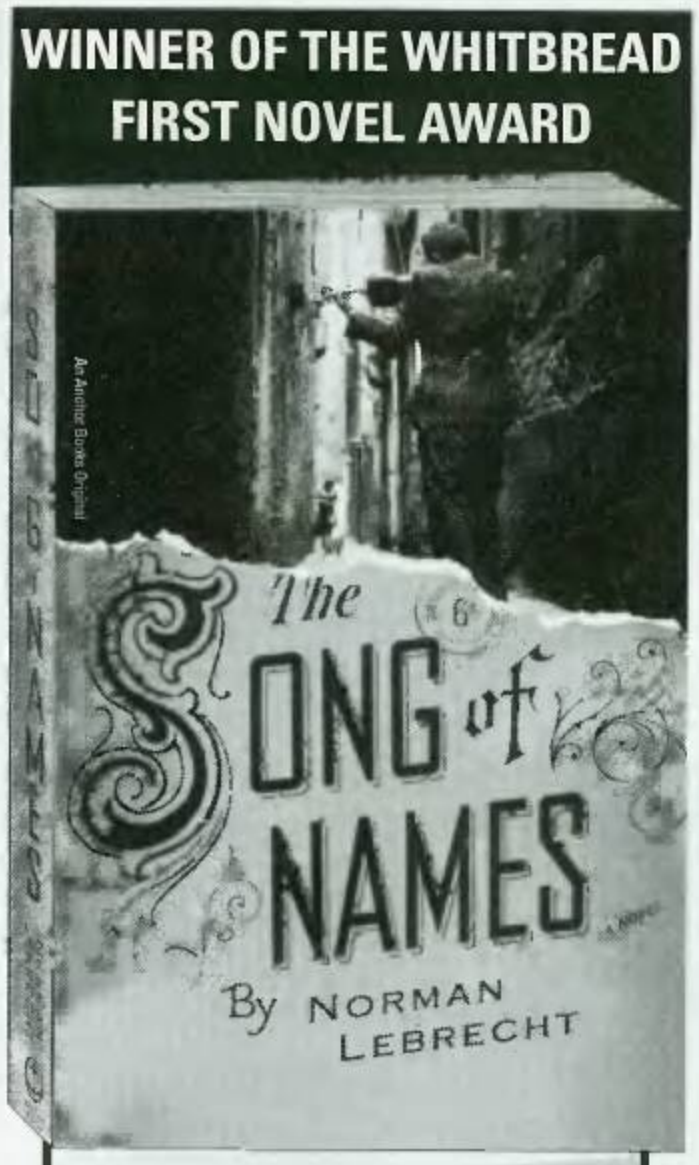

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# THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 9, 2004


6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

21 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
*W.M.D. fallout; Beatles rap.*

*Philip Gourevitch* 28 CAMPAIGN JOURNAL
The Shakeout
*The Democrats and John Kerry's rise.*

*Nancy Franklin* 34 SHOUTS & MURMURS
My Comeuppance

*Jeffrey Toobin* 36 ANNALS OF LAW
Inside the Wire
*The colonel who's defending the detainees.*

*Hilton Als* 42 PROFILES
The Islander
*Derek Walcott's Caribbean epic.*
*Photograph by Richard Avedon.*

*William Finnegan* 52 LETTER FROM LONDON
Underground Man
*He left New York to fight for the Tube.*

*Nicole Krauss* 64 FICTION
"The Last Words on Earth"

THE CRITICS

*David Denby* 74 THE CURRENT CINEMA
*Bertolucci's "The Dreamers."*
*Photograph by Richard Avedon.*

BOOKS

*Anthony Lane* 78 *Joe Eszterhas's "Hollywood Animal."*

81 Briefly Noted

*Peter Schjeldahl* 82 THE ART WORLD
*MOMA's "Here Is Elsewhere."*

*Paul Goldberger* 84 THE SKY LINE
*The turf war at Ground Zero.*

POEMS

*Michael Ryan* 32 "Outside"

*Constance Merritt* 71 "Counterpoint"

*Gerald Stern* 80 "Sylvia"


COVER *"Code Red," by David McCauley* THE BACK PAGE *by Marc Rosenthal*
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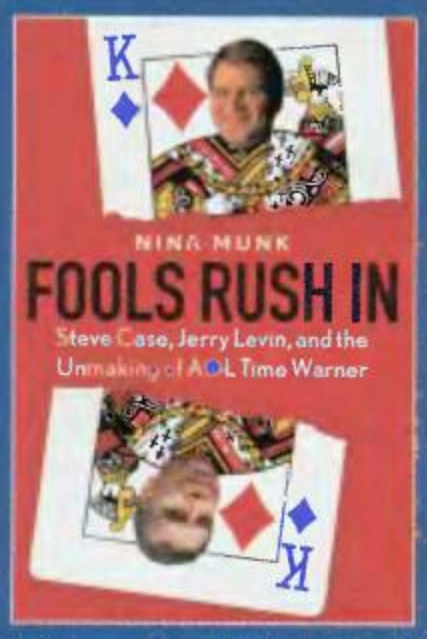

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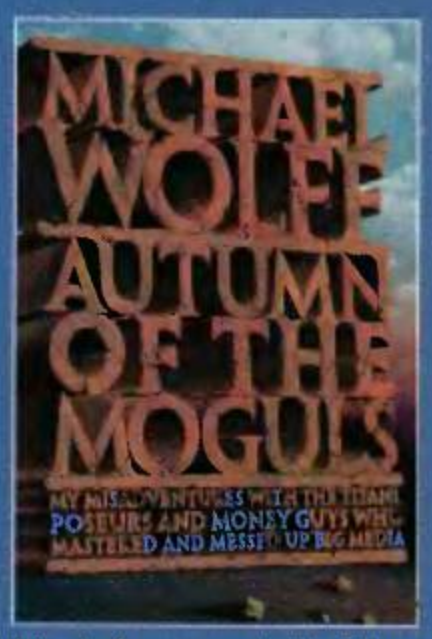
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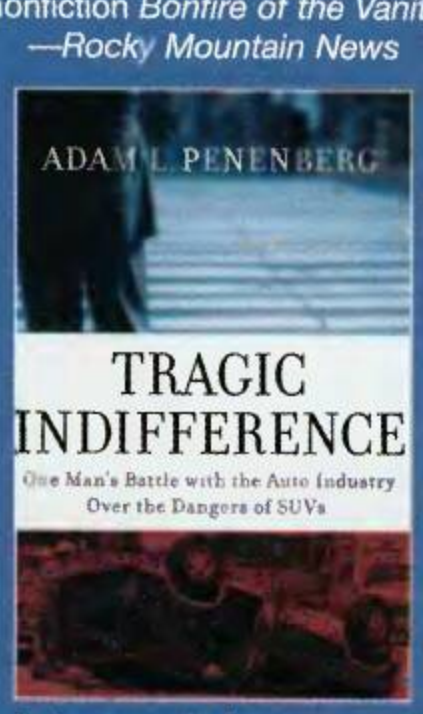
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# CONTRIBUTORS

Philip Gourevitch ("The Shakeout," p. 28) is covering the campaign for the magazine. He is the author of "A Cold Case" and "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda."

Jeffrey Toobin ("Inside the Wire," p. 36) is a staff writer and the senior legal analyst at CNN.

Hilton Als ("The Islander," p. 42), the author of "The Women," recently received the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism.

Nancy Franklin (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 34) writes the On Television column.

Rebecca Mead (The Talk of the Town, p. 23) has been a staff writer since 1997.

Constance Merritt (Poem, p. 71) is the author of "A Protocol for Touch," a collection of poems, which won the 1999 Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry.

William Finnegan ("Underground Man," p. 52) has been writing for the magazine since 1984. He has published four books, including "Cold New World."

Nicole Krauss (Fiction, p. 64) is the author of the novel "Man Walks Into a Room," which is out in paperback.

Michael Ryan (Poem, p. 32) has two books coming out in the spring, "New and Selected Poems" and "Baby B," a memoir.

Anthony Lane (Books, p. 78) is a film critic for the magazine and the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from *The New Yorker*," which is now available in paperback.

Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 84) is the magazine's architecture critic. His new book, "Up from Zero: Architecture, Politics, and the Rebuilding of New York," will be published in the fall. ♦




*"I'm slowly weaning myself off employment."*

# THE MAIL

## THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRESS

Ken Auletta, in his revealing article on the Bush Administration and the press ("Fortress Bush," January 19th), makes it clear that the White House assumes that its "disciplined" insularity is a winning strategy. But at what point will Bush's dogged adherence to the party line destroy his own credibility? I genuinely thought that Iraq must have weapons of mass destruction. I believed that Bush's unflinching resolve meant that he had information of which the public was ignorant and that he knew what he was doing. Now, with the failure to dig up hard evidence of W.M.D.s, I question the Administration's competence and its integrity. I'm not alone. Yet no one in the supposedly efficient White House press machine has really addressed these concerns; instead, we hear the same pithy, droning declarations about W.M.D. "related program activities." A little candor and humility would do the White House some good.

*Nicolas Leary*
*Woodside, N.Y.*

Auletta, referring to the Administration's infamous leak, to Robert Novak, that the wife of the former Ambassador Joseph Wilson was a C.I.A. operative, writes, "Although it is against the law for government officials to knowingly disclose the names of undercover agents, the press did not initially take much notice. Joseph Wilson, however, did." But it was only days after the leak appeared in Novak's column that David Corn wrote in *The Nation* that it might be evidence of a crime. (Wilson credits Corn with alerting him to that possibility.) Corn's article also appeared on the magazine's Web site; hundreds of thousands of readers learned about the story this way. Unfortunately, most Washington reporters were behind the curve and remained so for months, until it was disclosed that the C.I.A. had asked the Justice Department to investigate the matter.

*Katrina vanden Heuvel*
*Editor, The Nation*
*New York City*

No doubt, Bush has, as Auletta writes, assembled a seasoned staff to shield him from scrutiny by the press. But how much of his supposed immunity is due to his own actions, as opposed to the press's reluctance to criticize him? When it came to Iraq, the press was all too ready to seize on crowd-pleasing stories like the rescue of Jessica Lynch. We are in a mood of forgetfulness, with the press itself complicit in making us believe that the original purpose of the war was Saddam's camera-ready capture, and not a complicated issue like W.M.D.s. The public gets the short end of the deal.

*Mohammad Anwar Meah*
*Paramus, N.J.*

## AN UNFINISHED WAR

Roger Angell, in his Comment on the Robert McNamara documentary, "The Fog of War," writes, "Sixty-seven Japanese cities were firebombed by the B-29s in the spring of 1945 and three hundred and fifty thousand civilians burnt to death—and the war in effect won—well before Hiroshima" (January 19th). At the time, I was an officer on the U.S.S. Schley, on the radar ping line outside the harbor at Okinawa, with three other ships. All three were destroyed by kamikazes, as were the next three that joined us. The Army and the Marines on the beach were engaged in bloody battle. One night, two miles away from us, a hospital ship all lit up was hit by a kamikaze in the center of its red cross. I was sent back to the States to prepare for the invasion of Japan, which would have cost millions of lives. McNamara made many horrible mistakes when it came to Vietnam. If the Japanese had surrendered, however, there would have been no Hiroshima; but they did not.

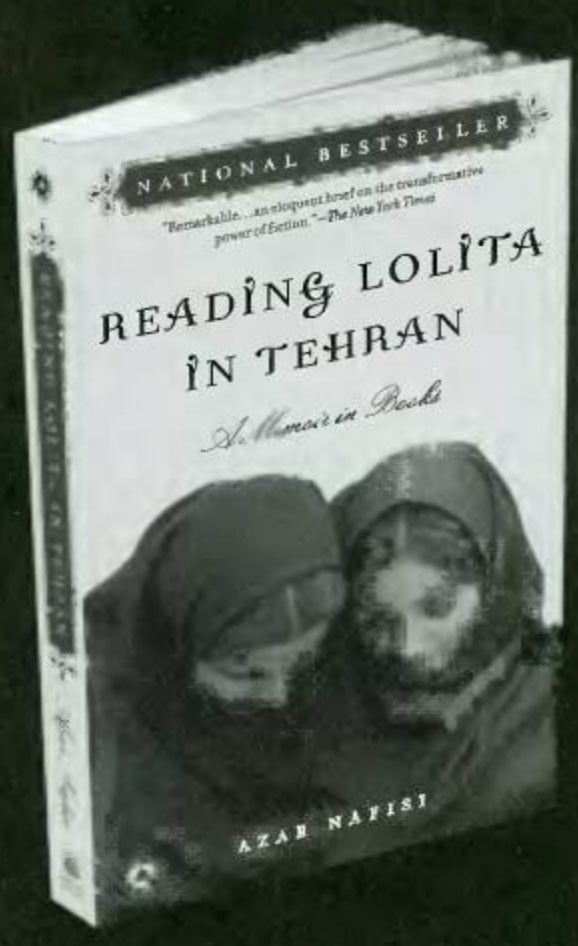
*Alan Robert Scott*
*Branford, Conn.*

•

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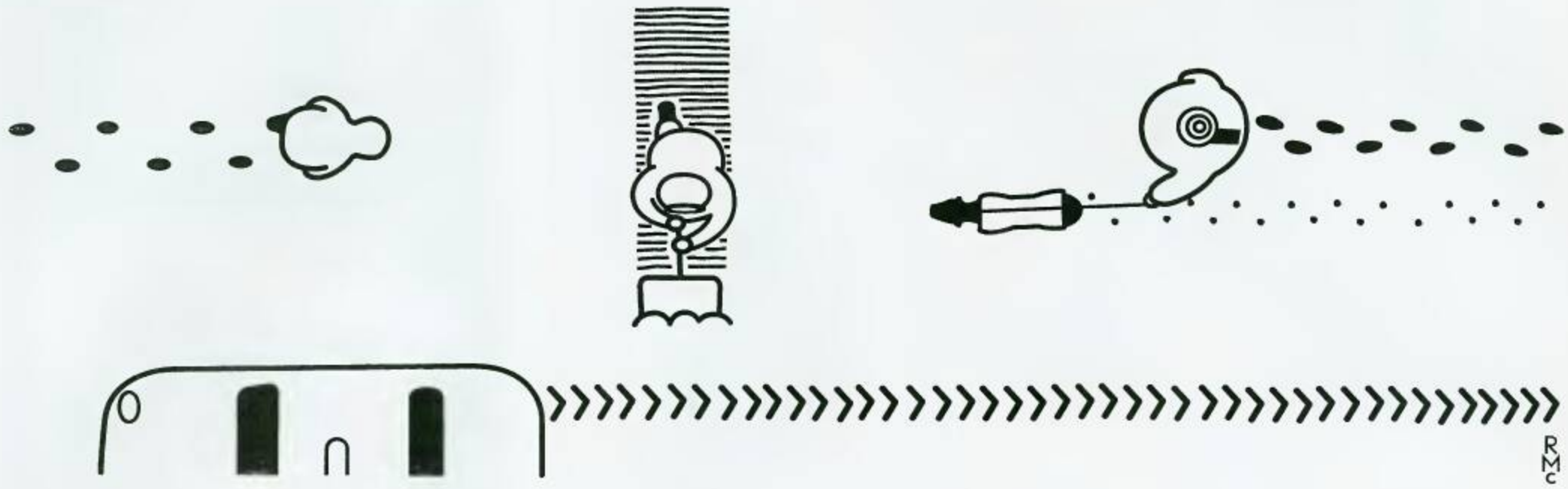
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THIS WEEK

## HANGING WITH MR. KOOPER

Al Kooper had done it all by 1969: co-written a hit song ("This Diamond Ring," recorded by Gary Lewis and the Playboys), played on a hit song (though he was a guitarist by trade, he provided the immortal organ part for Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone"), and been a member of two groundbreaking rock groups (the Blues Project and Blood, Sweat & Tears). In the next thirty-five years, Kooper discovered Lynyrd Skynyrd and produced their classic "Free Bird," wrote a memoir (the hilarious and sometimes caustic "Backstage Passes & Backstabbing Bastards"), and taught at the Berklee School of Music, in Boston, though his teaching career ended soon after it began, owing to an eye condition that has robbed him of most of his sight. This week, Kooper comes to town to celebrate his sixtieth birthday; he'll play a solo set, take the stage again with his band, the Rekooperators, and, ideally, do plenty of talking. (Joe's Pub, Feb. 5; see Night Life.)

## FROM RUSSIA, VIA MINNESOTA

The recent appointment of Osmo Vänskä to lead the world-class Minnesota Orchestra is a sign of the times: he's a meticulous and uncompromising interpreter whose collegial manner with his musicians is informed by years of experience as an orchestral player. His first New York concert with the ensemble is a roof-raising program of Russian works. (Carnegie Hall, Feb. 9; see Classical Music.)

## BACK TO BRAKHAGE

Stan Brakhage, who died last year, at age seventy, spent his long career combining experimental camera techniques with intimate autobiography. This week, Anthology Film Archives screens his feature-length work "A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea," in which he envisions the Vancouver Island childhood of his second wife, Marilyn, with an eye toward the ocean—which Brakhage, a Kansas native, did not see until his early twenties. (Starts Feb. 6; see Movies.)



*Al Kooper celebrates his sixtieth birthday with a performance at Joe's Pub.*



*Stan Brakhage's "A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea," at Anthology.*



LARA TOMLIN

*Osmo Vänskä brings the Minnesota Orchestra to Carnegie Hall.*

SOAMES FORSYTE HAS TWO PROBLEMS...
HIS ADULTEROUS WIFE AND HIS SHAMELESS DAUGHTER.



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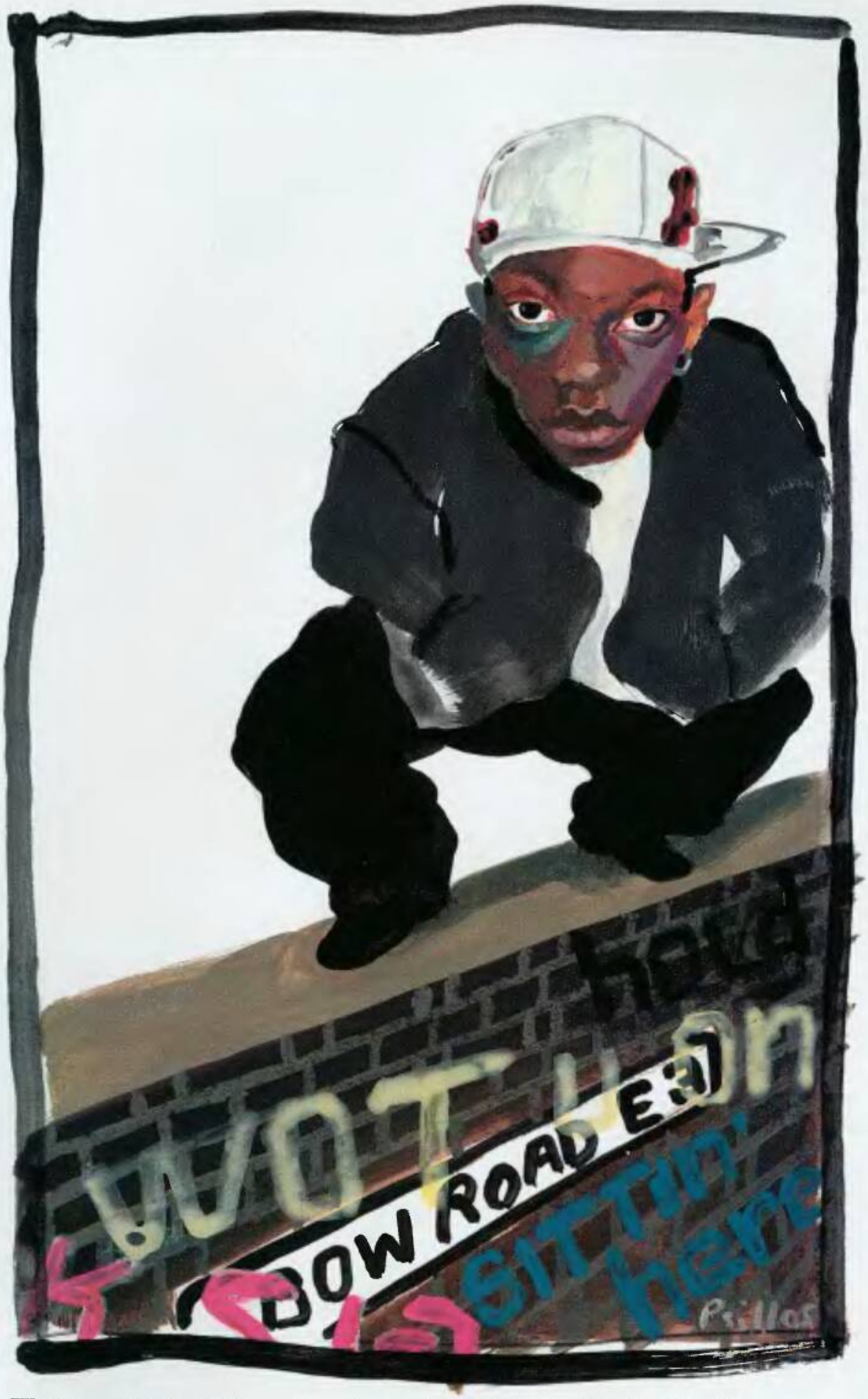
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*The London rapper Dizzee Rascal comes to Brooklyn (see Night Life—Concerts).*

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**AGAMEMNON**
Olympia Dukakis and her husband, Louis Zorich, play Clytemnestra and Agamemnon in the Aquila Theatre Company's production of Aeschylus' tragedy, in a new translation by Peter Meineck. Directed by Meineck and Robert Richmond. In previews. (John Jay, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. 212-239-6200.)

**DROWNING CROW**
Marion McClinton directs a Manhattan Theatre Club production of a new play by Regina Taylor ("Crowns") about the reunion of a family of African-American artists. Alfre Woodard leads the cast. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**
Alfred Molina is Tevye, Randy Graff is Golde, and Barbara Barrie is Yente in a new Broadway production of the musical, directed by David Leveaux. In previews. (Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.)

**THE LADIES**
Anne Washburn's play about the notorious First Ladies Elena Ceausescu, Imelda Marcos, Eva Perón, and Madame Mao was acclaimed in workshop performances last year. A production of the Civilians theatre company, in association with Dixon Place. Directed by Anne Kauffman. Previews begin Feb. 6. Opens Feb. 8 at 7. (Chashama, 111 W. 42nd St. 212-219-0736.)

**MAX MORATH: RAGTIME AND AGAIN**
The pianist, singer, and raconteur presents a musical history of ragtime. In previews. Directed by Robert Marks. Opens Feb. 8 at 8. (York Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 212-868-4444.)

**MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN**
Gwendolyn Mulamba ("The Blacks: A Clown Show") leads the cast in the Classical Theatre of Harlem's production of the Bertolt Brecht play. Directed by Christopher McElroen. Previews begin Feb. 4. Opens Feb. 6 at 8. (H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444.)

**THE ORWELL PROJECT**
Two productions based on books by George Orwell play in repertory at the Connelly Theatre: Peter Hall's musical adaptation of "Animal Farm," directed by David Travis, and Alan Lyddiard's multimedia version of "1984," directed by Ginevra Bull. Presented by Synapse Productions. In previews. "Animal Farm" opens Feb. 8 at 3; "1984" opens Feb. 8 at 8. (220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

**THE PARROT**
Six Obie winners—the writer and director Paul Zimet, the composer Ellen Maddow, the choreographer Karinne Keithley, the set designer Nic Ularu, the costume designer Kiki Smith, and the keyboardist "Blue" Gene Tyranny have created a new musical for adults and children, inspired by an Italian folktale. Presented by the Talking Band and the Flea Theatre. In previews. Opens Feb. 5 at 7. (The Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

**ROULETTE**
The filmmaker Paul Weitz ("American Pie," "About a Boy") is also a playwright. Anna Paquin, Larry Bryggman, Ana Gasteyer, and Shawn Hatosy star in his dark comedy about a suburban father eager to spice up his life. An Ensemble Studio Theatre production. Directed by Trip Cullman. In previews. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**SEA OF TRANQUILITY**
The Atlantic Theatre Company presents a new play by Howard Korder, about a Connecticut family who relocate to New Mexico and find it less relaxing than they had hoped. Directed by Neil Pepe. Previews begin Feb. 4. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE STENDHAL SYNDROME**
Primary Stages presents two short new plays by Terrence McNally: "Full Frontal Nudity," about tourists in Florence, and "Prelude and Liebestod," about an orchestra conductor in crisis. Richard Thomas and Isabella Rossellini—making her New York stage début—lead the cast. Directed by Leonard Foglia. In previews. (59E59 Theatre, 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**THEY WROTE THAT?**
The songwriters Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil (they wrote the Animals' hit "We've Gotta Get Out of This Place" and Dolly Parton's "Here You Come Again") star in a musical biography recapping their career in pop music. Directed by Richard Maltby, Jr., with sets by Neil Patel. One preview on Feb. 4. Opens Feb. 5 at 8. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

**VALHALLA**
New York Theatre Workshop presents a new play by Paul Rudnick that contrasts the lives and passions of the Wagner-loving Mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria and a precocious teen-ager in Texas in the nineteen-forties. Directed by Christopher Ashley. One preview on Feb. 4. Opens Feb. 5 at 7. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

**WINTERTIME**
Marsha Mason stars in a Second Stage production of a new romantic comedy by Charles L. Mee. Directed by David Schweizer. In previews. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

## OPENED RECENTLY

**AUNT DAN AND LEMON**
In the New Group's revival of Wallace Shawn's haunting and transcendent 1985 play, Lili Taylor

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

plays Leonora, or Lemon, a woman who cultivates the garden of her memory in flashbacks dominated by a loquacious family friend she calls Aunt Dan (Kristen Johnston). Aunt Dan argues for the human face of fascism and reveals her desire for Henry Kissinger—whom she regards as one of the most eligible bachelors in the world (the political context is the nineteen-seventies). Just as Aunt Dan yearns to be overwhelmed by force—a male force—Lemon secretly desires to be overwhelmed by Aunt Dan. Directed by Scott Elliott. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/5/04.) (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**DOÑA ROSITA THE SPINSTER**
In 1935, Federico García Lorca used the story of a mutable rose—which changed over the course of a single day from deep crimson to white to a withered husk—as the basis for the title character of this play: a woman who fades over the decades as she remains loyal to her absent fiancé. In Ernest Johns's production at the Cocteau Repertory, Amanda Jones is a delicate Doña Rosita. (Bouwerie Lane, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 212-677-0060.)

**EDEN**
The Irish Rep presents the New York première of a play by Eugene O'Brien about a wife who looks forward to a night out with her husband, not knowing he has plans with another woman. With Catherine Byrne and Ciarán O'Reilly. Directed by John Tillinger. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

**FIVE FLIGHTS**
Adam Bock's new comedy takes on the role of religion in society, the transformative power of love and faith, and the unexpected congruence of ice hockey and Russian ballet. By offering his thoughtful insights not in stage language but in everyday, slightly incoherent English, Bock makes his play both believable and comical. With fine acting (most notably by Joanna P. Adler) from a cast of six. Directed by Kent Nicholson. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444. Closes Feb. 22.)

**THE MYSTERIES**
Biblical tales (of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood, etc.) drawn from the writings of Dario Fo, Mikhail Bulgakov, Tony Harrison, and others are presented with maximum impact by the director Brian Kulick. After Cain slays Abel, a large eye rises to illuminate his crime; later, Christ's crucifixion among a number of drunken gamblers evokes Scorsese and Tarantino. Bill Buell leads the strong cast. (Classic Stage, 136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210. Closes Feb. 15.)

**SHIRTWAIST, A MUSICAL GHOST STORY**
A new musical explores the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire, in 1911. Written by Ellen K. Anderson, with music by Ryan Brown. Directed by Heather Ondersma. (Tenement Theatre, 97 Orchard St. 800-965-4827. Through Feb. 16.)

**SUITCASE; OR, THOSE THAT RESEMBLE FLIES FROM A DISTANCE**
Louisa Thompson's cunningly constructed set holds two study lofts that rise above the stage, each containing a procrastinating, self-pitying female grad student. As the two women chat with each other on the phone, their boyfriends sulk on the stage below, trying in vain to gain access to their apartments and to their hearts. Why they would want in is unclear. Melissa James Gibson's script is often witty, and Colleen Werthmann and Christina Kirk, as the grad students, are sharp comic presences, but the scenario is more frustrating than funny. Directed by Daniel Aukin. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 212-868-4444.)

**WONDERFUL TOWN**
The musical from 1953, about two spirited Ohio sisters' adventures in Greenwich Village, gets a buoyant, beautifully staged revival that gives us back a thrilling glimpse of the gaiety, wit, confidence, and craft of the American musical in its populist heyday. The show boasts a well-played, fizzy Leonard Bernstein score and a terrific set of Comden and Green lyrics that stop the show several times, with a special huzzah for "One Hundred Easy Ways (to Lose a Man)." The excellent cast is superbly directed and choreographed by Kathleen Marshall. (Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**AIDA**
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.
**AVENUE Q**
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE BOY FROM OZ**
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF**
Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**GOLDA'S BALCONY**
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**GOLF: THE MUSICAL**
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.
**HAIRSPRAY**
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.
**I AM MY OWN WIFE**
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**KING COWBOY RUFUS RULES THE UNIVERSE!**
St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-533-4650.
**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**
Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.
**MAMMA MIA!**
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.
**MERCURY: THE AFTERLIFE AND TIMES OF A ROCK GOD**
Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 212-352-3101.
**NEVER GONNA DANCE**
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE PRODUCERS**
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW**
Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**TABOO**
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes Feb. 8.)
**THE THING ABOUT MEN**
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.
**WICKED**
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.
**WOMEN ON FIRE**
Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200. (Closes Feb. 8.)

## DANCE

**NEW YORK CITY BALLET**
The fifth week of the company's Balanchine centenary celebration features the choreographer's 1967 "Jewels," the world's first full-evening non-story ballet, in three parts: "Emeralds," a mysterious, deluxe, enchanted-ballroom number set to Fauré; "Rubies," a jazzy, streetwise tribute to New York, with Stravinsky's "Capriccio" as its score; and "Diamonds," in the imperial Russian mode—the music is from Tchaikovsky's Polish symphony—complete with a heart-stopping pas de deux and, at the end, a very grand polonaise. Also on the schedule are the season's final two performances of Susan Stroman's "Double Feature," inspired by Balanchine's Hollywood and Broadway years, and an all-Balanchine triple bill including "Concerto Barocco," set to Bach's beloved double violin concerto. ♦ Feb. 4-5 at 8: "Double Feature." ♦ Feb. 6-7 at 8, Feb. 8 at 3, and Feb. 10 at 7:30: "Jewels." ♦ Feb. 7 at 2 (an all-Balanchine program): "Donizetti Variations," "Concerto Barocco," and "Scotch Symphony." Through Feb. 29. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

**BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY**
In the company's twentieth-anniversary season at BAM, Jones presents two programs: one a showcase of new work, including "Chaconne," a solo for Jones, and "Reading, Mercy, and the Artificial Nigger," a fine, impressionistic rendering of a Flannery O'Connor story; the other a mostly repertory collection. In the latter, Jones revisits not





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## TABLES FOR TWO



**SAN PIETRO**
18 E. 54th St. (212-753-9015)—A salad fork set slightly askew is all it takes for the maître d' to berate a waiter in staccato Italian. This kind of disciplining must turn on the big shots who come here; Leona Helmsley was spotted on a recent Friday night with seven dates and a fluffy white dog to match her floor-length fur. And, while the place is no secret—it's been written up in publications like *Forbes* and *Crain's*—it's a surprise to find such a fresh take on Southern Italian food in a drop-ceilinged room in midtown.

The owners of San Pietro (that's St. Peter the Fisherman, the subject of a ceramic-tile wall piece in the dining room) are four brothers from Italy's Amalfi coast. The fratelli Bruno—Antonio, Gerardo, Cosimo, and Giuseppe—have done a good job of making this decade-old lunch favorite feel as if it dated back to the seventies, or even earlier. The specials are recited in thick accents by young waiters who manage to look raffish in their white jackets. They go on in such detail that it's hard to believe that there's still a menu to contend with.

The chef, Antonio, gets a lot of his food from the family estate in Salerno. They make a light, mild olive oil from olives picked early and rebottled twice to remove impurities. It's used raw to marry flavors in complex dishes, so something like octopus with potatoes and stringbeans in pesto doesn't seem like a stunt. Almost all of the greens are shipped from Italy, making what should be a humble antipasto—fava beans with puntarelle (a type of bitter chicory)—both a luxury and a must. There are more than a dozen pastas and risottos, and, once you realize how deftly the Brunos combine ingredients, you'll want them all: the scialatielli (a short pasta, like fusilli left untwisted) made with arugula and basil and prepared with asparagus, clams, and sun-dried tomatoes; the monkfish ravioli with thyme; the cavatelli with shallots and pancetta.

It's hard to settle down to entrées after all that. The big meats, giant chops and racks and T-bones, can be blunt, but the fish dishes shine, especially the snapper on a mountain of mashed fennel and the John Dory in pesto sauce. After dinner a Plexiglas cart glides over like a miniature Popemobile, and the classics are all there, from panna cotta to tiramisu. (Open for lunch and dinner, Mondays through Saturdays. Entrées $20-$36.)

—*Owen Phillips*

only his controversial 1994 piece "Still/Here" (which Arlene Croce famously refused to review in this magazine) but his entire career. As his dancers stitch bits of repertory together, accompanied, variously, by DJ Spooky, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Kathleen Supové, and (performing live on Thursday) Cassandra Wilson and Vernon Reid, Jones narrates the proceedings, marking the passing years as if he were tearing pages off a wall calendar. The resulting meditation on memory probes deep but comes close to self-indulgence at times. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Feb. 3 and Feb. 5-7 at 7:30.)

**DOUG VARONE AND DANCERS**
As the score for his new work "Castles," Varone has chosen the waltzes Prokofiev wrote for "Cinderella" and "War and Peace," music with a lilting, surging current that the choreographer alternately fights and rides. Such give-and-take is the forte of Varone's intelligent dancers, whose ever-casual attitude only partially masks their defined technique and emotional specificity. In "Castles," they can look like kids playing a complex playground game, like dolls come to life, or like awkward and tender lovers. The two programs also include Varone's fervid "Rise" (1993) and the haunting folk epic "The Bottomland" (2002). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Feb. 3-6 at 8, Feb. 7 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 8 at 2 and 7:30.)

**A TRIBUTE TO TAP GIANTS**
The Young Hoofers, talented teen-agers from Brooklyn who have been tapping together for a decade, demonstrate their urban take on the footwork of Fred Astaire, Gregory Hines, Gene Kelly, Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, Ann Miller, and others in an evening hosted by the feisty old hand Harold Cromer—best known for his stint in the nineteen-forties as Stumpy, of the comedy duo Stump and Stumpy. The swinging Sidney Bechet Society Band provides the music, assisted by the powerful lungs of Carrie Smith. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**CONFIGURATION**
When the husband-and-wife team of Catherine Batcheller and Joseph Cipolla met, they were principal dancers with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Configuration, the Cape Cod-based chamber ballet troupe they founded five years ago, boasts a roster of similarly pedigreed performers. In its New York début, the group stays true to its goal of commissioning new work, presenting premières by the choreographers Thaddeus Davis, Harrison McEldowney, and Peter Quanz, along with Edwaard Liang's recent "Flight of Angels." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**DEBORAH HAY DANCE COMPANY**
Wally Cardona, Mark Lorimer, Chrysa Parkinson, and Ros Warby perform in "The Match," an evening-length quartet about perception and experience, based on choreography by the postmodern dance pioneer Deborah Hay. With lighting by Jennifer Tipton. (Danspace at St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Feb. 5-7 at 8:30 and Feb. 8 at 7:30.)

**DAVID PARKER AND THE BANG GROUP**
Dance Theatre Workshop presents three works by the irreverent, cerebral company: "Slapstuck," a duet with Velcro; "Enough," a quartet set to Rachmaninoff; and "Cracked," Parker's fractured retelling of the "Nutcracker." "Cracked" uses a classical and jazz score, ironic costumes (by Melanie Rozema), and an array of dance styles—tap, boogie, modern, and pointe work—as it deconstructs the difference between "art dance" and social dance. (219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Feb. 6-7 at 7.)

**DANCENOW/NYC**
Larry Keigwin and Keigwin Kabaret host a weekend of dance performances at Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre, featuring Monica Bill Barnes, Faye Driscoll, Amos Pinhasi Dance, ZviDance, Kara Tatelbaum, and others. For a complete schedule, see www.dancenownyc.org. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. Feb. 6-7 at 9:30.)

# NIGHT LIFE

## CONCERTS

**WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE**
The institute's "Masters of American Music" series brings in the pianist **Muhal Richard Abrams,** a living legend of the jazz avant-garde who is too infrequently heard from these days. His appearance here with a trio and a septet should not be missed. (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. Feb. 6 at 8.) The New York Flamenco Festival continues with the Spanish singer and guitarist **José Mercé.** (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Feb. 7 at 8.) (For more information about both shows, call 212-545-7536.)

**MIKE RAFFERTY & FRIENDS**
The folks behind the Irish music at the old Blarney Star bar now have a monthly series at Washington Square Church. Rafferty is a seventy-seven-year-old flutist and Uilleann-pipe player originally from County Galway. (135 W. 4th St. For more information, call 212-998-3950. Feb. 6 at 9.)

**DIZZEE RASCAL**
This nineteen-year-old English rapper's début record, "Boy in da Corner," took England's prestigious Mercury Prize last year and has since won over any number of U.S. critics. They've all fallen for a remarkably talented writer whose minimalist, garage-inflected style casts in high relief the hard edges of East London living. Rascal's show is being presented by the underground multimedia group Soundlab. (Volume, 99 N. 13th St., Brooklyn. Feb. 7 at 9:30. For tickets, visit www.ticketweb.com.)

**"MONDAY NITES: NO MINIMUM"**
The percussive thunder and Monkish flavor of the pianist **Randy Weston's** work has found a home in the heart—and hands—of the pianist **Rodney Kendrick,** a sharp player who knows a good influence when he hears one. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**"JAZZ IN PROGRESS"**
A major trumpeter, **Tom Harrell,** and a promising singer, **Lizz Wright,** flesh out the tough young **Strickland Brothers Ensemble,** which is led by the saxophonist Marcus and the drummer E.J. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460. Feb. 9 at 8.)

## CLUBS

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Feb. 4: The erstwhile Mötley Crüe vocalist **Vince Neil.** Feb. 5-6: The Godfather of Soul, **James Brown.** Feb. 8: The James Taylor-with-fangs folk of **Loudon Wainwright III.** Feb. 9: The veteran Wu-Tang Clan rapper **Ol' Dirty Bastard.**

**BIG SIX**
97 Bowery, between Grand and Hester Sts. (212-219-9955)—This recently opened second-floor lounge in the heart of Chinatown feels more like Hong Kong than Beijing. The low-lit, sleek interior has red walls laced with Chinese symbols (which, according to the manager, suggest drinking and socializing), and it draws a stylish crowd of young Asians and African-Americans. When they're not dancing to the d.j.'s mix of house and hip-hop music, they can be found chatting on velvet half-moon banquettes or waiting by the restrooms, where there's a sizable fish tank filled with lively mollies.

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Feb. 6: A decade ago, back when flannel was in fashion, **Urge Overkill** opted for ironically stylish glitter suits. Their beefy, hook-laden power pop matched their sartorial flair, and, after their cover of Neil Diamond's "Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon" landed in Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction," the band seemed poised for megastardom. Instead, they splintered. Seven years later, they've reunited for a brief tour. Feb. 7: The Seattle quintet **Pretty Girls Make Graves** has charmed critics with its second album, "The New Romance," by capturing the spirit of vintage punk rock without sounding derivative or needlessly retro.

**FEZ**
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—Feb. 6-7: The **Loser's Lounge** toys with the Bond film scores of John Barry. Through Feb. 14. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

**GALAPAGOS**
70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-782-5188)—The young crooner and pianist **Julian Velard,** a native New Yorker whose musical education received a boost from the jazz saxophonist Yusef Lateef, has a band that includes a trumpeter, a violinist, and an acoustic bassist. But Velard's carefully crafted music falls squarely in the pop category. His repertoire includes an unnerving interpretation of "The Way You Make Me Feel" that hints at what the song might have been if Michael Jackson were an unsung barroom musician in New Orleans. Velard starts a weekly residency here on Feb. 4.

**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Feb. 5: **Al Kooper** (see This Week). Feb. 10: The flamboyant

Boston duo known as the **Dresden Dolls** perform what they call "Brechtian Punk Cabaret," a combination of Weimar-era German histrionics and gritty rock-and-roll ferocity.

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Feb. 8: A night of African hip-hop with **Shiffai** (from Senegal), **Dola** (from Tanzania), and **Chosan** (from Sierra Leone). Feb. 9-10: The guitarist **Chris Whitley.**

**LIVING ROOM**
154 Ludlow St. (212-533-7235)—Feb. 6: **Mindy Smith,** a fresh-faced young singer-songwriter, may have been born and raised on Long Island, but her voice comes straight out of the heartland. "Jolene," her contribution to last year's Dolly Parton tribute album, "Just Because I'm a Woman," earned accolades from Parton herself (she called it her favorite version of the song). In the great post-Norah Jones sweepstakes, the smart money is on Smith, whose début album, "One Moment More," was released last week on Vanguard Records.

**MERCURY LOUNGE**
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Feb. 5-6: Chicago's **OK Go** cranks out clever and exuberant guitar pop destined to move even the most jaded.

**TONIC**
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Feb. 5: The New York sextet **Melomane** crafts intricate pop songs with chamber-music flourishes. Feb. 8: **Hannah Marcus** is a local singer and composer who travels in a strange but inviting country of her own making. On her latest album, "Desert Farmers," she enlisted members of the Canadian collective Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Also performing is the multitalented singer **LD Beghtol,** of the chamber-pop band Flare and, occasionally, Magnetic Fields.

**dreas,** who possesses what a whole lot of cabaret singers would kill for: a fabulous voice. She also has style, theatrical flair, and charisma.

**LE JAZZ AU BAR**
41 E. 58th St. (212-308-9455)—The seemingly eternal West Side night club broadens its offerings with a new name and a jazz series. The inaugural performer is **Dee Dee Bridgewater,** whose 2002 album, "This Is New," revitalized the work of Kurt Weill, bringing rhythmic moxie and a warm spirit to everything from "Alabama Song" to "September Song." Bridgewater won a Tony for her work in "The Wiz," and she has everything going for her except superstardom. She's here Feb. 3-7.

**JAZZ GALLERY**
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Feb. 7: If you know the bassist **Reggie Workman** only from his sixties stints with Coltrane and Blakey, you don't really know him. This still-bruising player thinks big; his Ashanti Message band brings together music, dance, and theatre, and, to please the diehards, a touch of Coltrane.

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Feb. 5-8: The pianist **Lynne Arriale** is an underappreciated stylist who has an intimate rapport with her trio mates, the bassist **Jay Anderson** and the drummer **Steve Davis.**

**SWEET RHYTHM**
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Feb. 6-7: The **John Tropea** band. If the spiky guitar solo on Eumir Deodato's 1972 hit "Also Sprach Zarathustra (Theme from 2001)" has a place in your heart, thank Tropea, a ubiquitous studio presence during the "me" decade, who has been little heard from since then.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Feb. 8: On his new album, "Strange Liberation," the trumpeter **Dave Douglas** added the guitarist Bill Frisell to his hybrid electric/acoustic quintet. The bad news is that Frisell won't be making this gig, but you can expect sparks anyway. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.




*The Big Six lounge in Chinatown is a cosmopolitan taste of the Far East.*

ADRIAN TOMINE

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Feb. 4-7: The trio of the pianist **Paul Bley,** the bassist **Gary Peacock,** and the drummer **Paul Motian** may not play together on a regular basis, but you'd never know it from their uncanny musical telepathy.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Feb. 8: **Jeff (Tain) Watts** is a drummer who answers to an extroverted muse. He's played with both Wynton and Branford Marsalis, and continues to be the most in-demand percussionist of his generation. The saxophonist **Kenny Garrett** is his guest soloist.

**CARLYLE HOTEL**
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and, starting Feb. 3, **Christine An-**

# ART

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The name Chuck Close instantly conjures images of giant gridded portraits, tight and deadpan in Photo-Realist black-and-white in the seventies, with more recent versions dissolving in loose lozenges of color. **"Chuck Close Prints: Process and Collaboration"** shows that all the portraiture of self and others went along with constant experiments in the practice of printmaking. Etching, silk screen, linoleum and woodblock prints, and hand-constructed pulp-paper multiples are tracked through various proof states, and actual woodblocks, etched copper panels, and other studio paraphernalia also appear. The show is as much a primer in the printmaker's art as it is a retrospective of Close faces. Through April 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)**
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Kiki Smith: Prints, Books & Things"** shows off a compendium of the artist's favored images: eyes, breasts, birds, babies, cats, Little Red Riding Hood, and the starry sky. Although she's primarily a sculptor, this retrospective of works on paper and fabric makes it clear that her three-dimensional thinking is deeply influenced by the etchings, artist's books, and even Xeroxes collected here. The range of works is impressive, from Smith's first experiments with silk screen in the eighties to the beautiful "Blue Feet," a series of drypoints and etchings made last year, and they reveal a side of her that's quick, funny, luscious, and fragile. Through March 8. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Boccioni's Materia: A Futurist Masterpiece and the Avant-Garde in Milan and Paris."** Opens Feb. 6. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—The sparkling mid-career painting retrospective **"John Currin"** should be this season's major conversation piece. Topic: how have super-old-fashioned, alternately academic- and schlocky-looking figure paintings become the bee's knees in contemporary art? Currin's mostly imagined winsome nudes, pathetic males, society dames, gay couples, and, oh yes, women with breasts as big as the Ritz make everybody nervous in one way or another. They also display phenomenal degrees of skill and subtleties of expression. Once you start looking at Currin's stuff, it's all you can do to stop. Through Feb. 22. ♦ **"Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective of Drawings."** Through Feb. 15. ♦ **"Unrepentant Ego: The Self-Portraits of Lucas Samaras."** Through Feb. 8. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

## GALLERIES–UPTOWN

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**VINCENT DESIDERIO**
Desiderio wears his influences on his sleeve, or embeds them in his canvases. "Contemplative Distance," a triptych that depicts two mentally disabled men, nods to the character studies of Géricault. "Cockaigne" is a sublime mess of dirty dishes and a floor covered with hundreds of art-history books lying open—a name-that-painting game that includes van der Weyden, Manet, Ingres, Goya, and other monuments from Art History 101. "An Allegory of Painting" updates the artist-in-the-studio antics of Vermeer and Courbet, among others, with the painter holding a sick child in his lap: it reads as allegory (painting in progress) and autobiography (his own son suffers from the effects of a stroke). Through Feb. 7. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 212-541-4900.)

**PAULA HAYES**
The playfully titled "Forest" is really a room full of ferns, evergreens, palms, and succulents. The plants are potted in biomorphic silicone containers arranged around the room on blond wood pedestals; they look like Brancusi sculptures filled with dirt and sprouting a few leaves. Hayes also experiments with a mulch-type material made from recycled tires, which she's scattered at the base of one planter and used to create a design in the yard behind the gallery (more visible when the snow clears). Three psychedelic drawings of characters called Shoomu and Jill Poet feature human heads in profile sprouting up

from bulbous forms that recall both the silicone containers and the mushrooms you might find in a real forest. Through March 17. (Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212.)

**MARK ROTHKO**

These Rothkos put the reproductions in art-history books to shame. They all come from 1949, the year the Ab Ex master made his breakthrough. First he gives himself permission to banish representation. Next he covers his surfaces with patches of bold, shimmering color. Then in "Untitled 1949," on loan from the National Gallery, he breaks into five-part harmony with registers of yellow, purple, green, black, and orange. The paintings are reunited for the first time in half a century and arranged chronologically (taking into account some customary date-fudging by the artist) so that you can witness inspiration and discovery unfolding. Through Feb. 23. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 W. 57th St. 212-421-3292.)

## *Short List*

**JOSEPH BEUYS**

Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through Feb. 14.

**WILLIAM POPE.L**

The Project, 37 W. 57th St. 212-688-4673. Through Feb. 8.

**TREVOR WINKFIELD / JOE BRAINARD**

De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050. Through Feb. 7.

# GALLERIES–CHELSEA

**NAYLAND BLAKE**

Blake's signature form, the bunny suit, is problematic. First of all, there's the cutesiness factor, which is impossible to avoid, even when the subtext is dominance and submission, masquerade and self-display. This time, Blake's bunnies include a sixteen-foot stuffed specimen in white nylon and several kid-size versions sewn from old black concert T-shirts. The suits appear alongside a series of videos that show the artist's bearded face being slapped by hands from outside the frame or smeared with chocolate frosting. Through Feb. 21. (Matthew Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

**SANDRA CINTO**

The Brazilian artist Sandra Cinto constructs a chapel-like shanty in the gallery, made from tongue-and-groove panelling painted in sea-and-sky shades of turquoise and blue. The windows are set in a peekaboo fashion, creating a flickering effect with the light. There's a series of photographs mounted inside the fragile shelter. The self-consciously suggestive imagery, mostly naked light bulbs or isolated candle flames, dilutes rather than enhances Cinto's delicate and permeable house. Through Feb. 14. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

**FRANZ GERTSCH / CHRIS BURDEN**

A series of photographs that Gertsch took of Patti Smith, in Germany in 1977, show the rocker as a lanky, equine beauty in skin-tight red pants, communing with her stacked amps and guitars. Those photos are reproduced in colossal paintings by the artist, also from the seventies. His adoration appears sincere, but little is added that wasn't in the photos. Gertsch's gauzily distanced detail fares better in his enormous landscape woodcuts. In an adjacent room, the same combination of finicky precision and esteem plays out quite differently in Burden's austere models of famous bridges constructed from Erector and Meccano sets. Through Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.)

**PAUL ETIENNE LINCOLN**

Lincoln takes a high-tech, mad-scientist approach to his gizmo sculptures, which look like they could be gin-and-tonic machines or ritual accessories if the rituals required glass tubes attached to a tree, with the tubing twisted to spell out incantations. Each of the prints, multiples, books, CDs, photographs, and other ephemera in this collection has the same tone of tongue-in-cheek religiosity, but the sleek brushed-steel vitrines and the impeccable packaging present the alchemy in an atmosphere of expensive tastefulness. Through Feb. 21. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-367-7474.)

**MARLENE MC CARTY**

McCarty returns to a favorite if gruesome subject: children who kill their parents, and, more specifically, her namesake Marlene Olive, a Marin County, California, teen who murdered her mother in 1975. Wall texts describes the facts of the case, while six mural-size drawings in graphite and ballpoint pen offer fantasy visions of the family, cuddled in cozy groups. One eerie drawing shows Olive and her boyfriend, Chuck, lying in her father's lap (Chuck shot the father in a fit of panic after Marlene murdered her mother). McCarty is also a well-regarded graphic designer, and her expert use of a style reminiscent of seventies-era print ads contrasts nicely with her forays into the darker territories of teen-age sexuality, violence, and the family. Through Feb. 21. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)



*"Downtown, 1955," by Elliott Erwitt, at the Museum of the City of New York's group show "Magnum's New Yorkers."*

## *Short List*

**OLAF BREUNING**

Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100. Through Feb. 7.

**JENNIFER STEINKAMP**

Lehmann-Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923. Through Feb. 14.

# GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

**ROSEMARIE BECK**

Old Master order and Impressionist deconstruction collide in Beck's classically inspired canvases. "Eurydice Mourned" and "Phaedra" take classical subjects (the reclining female nude and lamen-

tations of Christ) and break them up with the dappled light of Monet and Renoir. "No Country for Old Men" updates Giorgione and Titian's bacchanals through Cézanne's broken brushwork. "Studio Window" looks out on the East Village, past a windowsill filled with still-life staples like a human skull and a bowl of apples. Even "Self-Portrait in Studio" rings a bell—ah, yes, Rembrandt's youthful self-portraits, with the artist looking out from a frizzy halo of hair with alert eyes, his face veiled in shadow. Through March 6. (New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. 212-673-6466.)

**"ADAPTATIONS"**

The show includes a variety of improvisational structures, including one Sim City-like electronic version of downtown Belgrade and an "entropy information kiosk" for New York, a plywood loft painted *Financial Times* pink, and an improvised aluminum igloo. Michael Rakowitz's "paraSITE" shelters—inflatable tents designed to be attached to exterior air ducts—look like practical housing solutions for a cold snap. One series of photographs of the shelters in use shows admiring passersby; another shows a disgruntled neighbor calling in the cops. Through Feb. 7. (Apex, 291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

## *Short List*

**MARION LESAGE**

Broome St. Gallery, 498 Broome St. 212-226-6085. Through Feb. 15.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**PHILIP KWAME APAGYA**

The first U.S. show for this Ghanaian photographer starts where other Africans, like Malick Sidibe and Sedou Keita, have trod before, but Apagya adds exuberant color to the mix. His subjects stand before painted backdrops—of offices, airport tarmacs, or living rooms decked with the latest electronics—and wave or give a thumbs-up to the camera. Apagya's photographs depict a vibrant urban place where women wash their children in private bathrooms and everyone has food in the refrigerator. Through Feb. 7. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 212-645-1701.)

**LEWIS WICKES HINE**

The quaintness of Hine's early-twentieth-century documentation of child labor—this show opens with images of young newsboys in tweed caps—becomes pathos pretty quickly, as the details of the kids' wretched toils become clear. Some of them shoot dice on the sidewalk; others stand barefoot and filthy, or stooped over worktables, or, as in the final photo here, one-armed, after a factory accident. Hine was a crusader, and his photographs are still powerful—remnants of a moment when the modern world was struggling to become moral, too. Through March 7. (Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. 718-222-4111.)

**GRACIELA ITURBIDE**

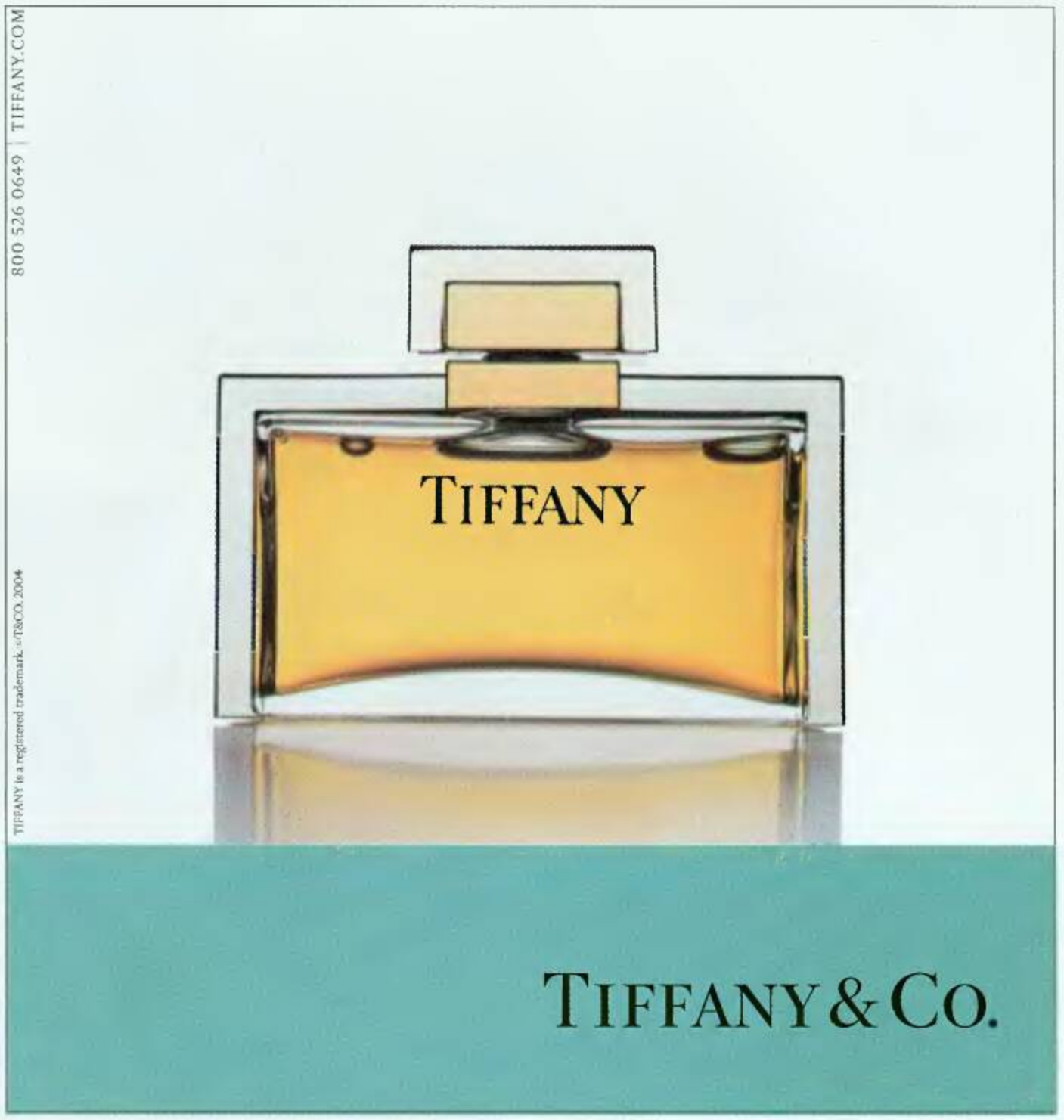
Iturbide, who learned about photographic surrealism from a master, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, is best known for her intimate pictures of people. This show collects fourteen photographs of birds, made in Louisiana, England, India, and Iturbide's native Mexico. The birds are both solitary, melancholy symbols and part of an unfathomable avian world. A bull rustles pigeons in a Mexican courtyard, a leather-skinned man is circled by vultures, a thick cloud of smaller birds darkens the sky around a cross. Through Feb. 7. (Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 212-366-4774.)

**RICHARD MISRACH**

After a decade spent photographing the depths of beauty in the landscape and the skies, Misrach has made a new series of deadpan and chilly studies of beaches and the sea. Lacking horizons or perspective, they are the opposite of Hiroshi Sugimoto's meditative photos of the same subject. The prints are large—the smallest are six by eight feet—and it is easy to be overwhelmed by their colors, and an eerie sense of voyeurism. Through Feb. 14. (Pace/MacGill, 534 W. 25th St. 212-759-7999.)

**JOEL STERNFELD**

There are two groups of pictures in this show: passersby caught on the street in 1976—in cars, hurry-




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ing, staring—and later landscapes, magisterial and ironic evocations of an unsettled America. The earlier pictures haven't been shown since an exhibit in 1980, and the landscapes have now been printed several times larger than before. Details that wouldn't have come to the fore in smaller prints—the curled toes of a stoned-looking kid sitting on a car hood, the legs twisted under the body of the "Exhausted Renegade Elephant"—make one look anew at these classic images. Through Feb. 7. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

*Short List*

**DIANE ARBUS**
Grey, 100 Washington Sq. E.
212-998-6782. Through March 27.
**LORETTA LUX**
Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370. Through March 6.
**"MAGNUM'S NEW YORKERS"**
Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. 212-534-1672. Opens Feb. 6.

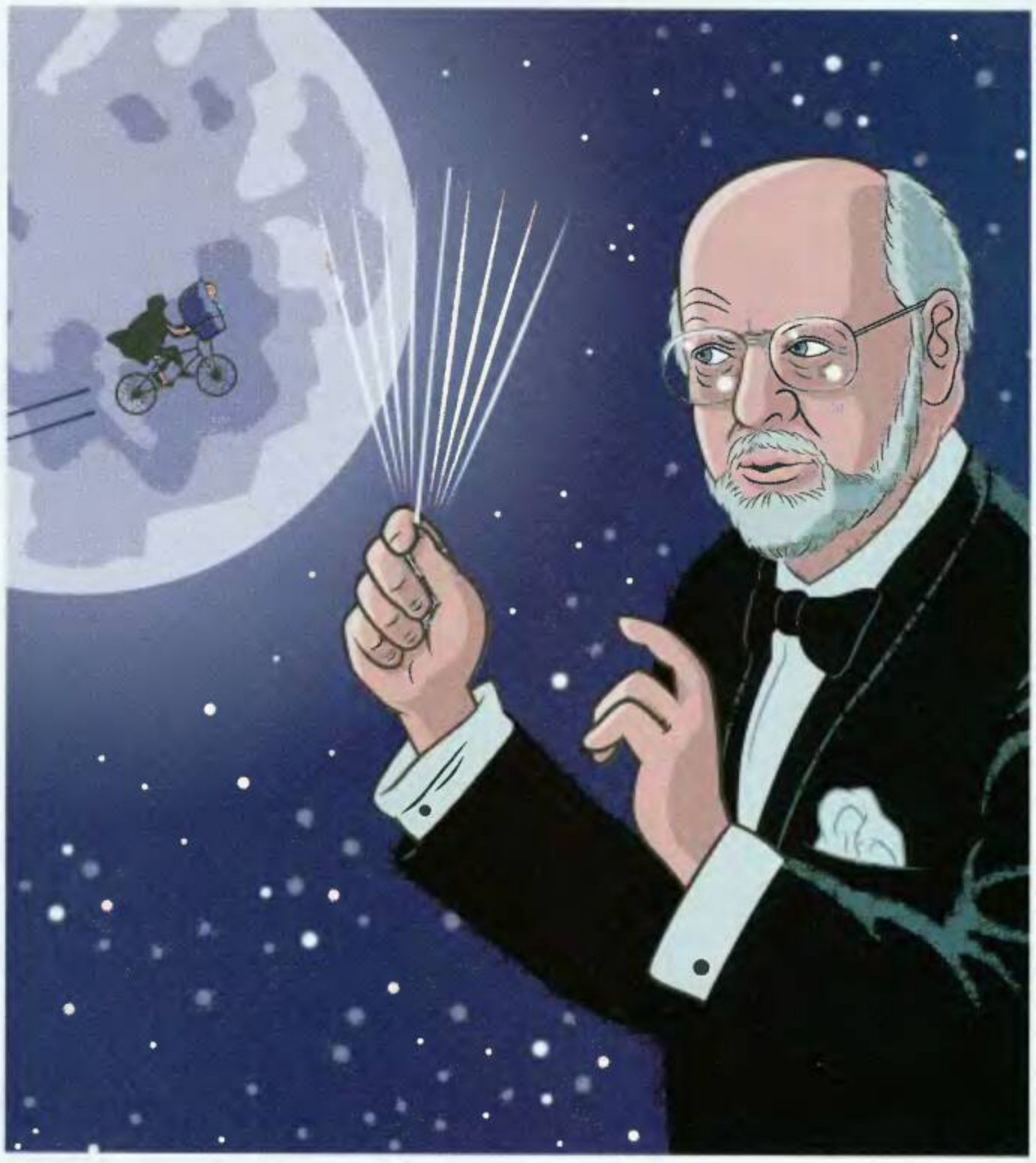
## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**SOTHEBY'S**
Feb. 10 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of "arcade" furniture and decorative art works. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)
**CHRISTIE'S**
Feb. 10 at 10 A.M.: As this auction of maritime arts makes clear, the British have long nurtured an aesthetic fascination with their empire. A nineteenth-century aquatint plate from a series entitled "The Naval Achievements of Great Britain" depicts Napoleon's crushing defeat at the battle of Trafalgar as a panorama of unabashed imperial force. Meanwhile, in a majestic oil painting by Montague Dawson (the highlight of the sale), English clippers loom over a junk in an old Chinese port. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)
**DOYLE**
Feb. 10 at 1: Every artistic genre has its language and conceptual framework. Consider dog art: "breed portraits," in which the artist strives to capture the precise characteristics of the Chihuahua or the pit bull, or "sporting paintings," which aim to illustrate the pointing abilities of the setter or the proud triumph of the hound. These and other canine art forms (antique dog collars, decorative pins, bookends) will be on sale at the "Dogs in Art" auction, scheduled each year to coincide with the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show (Feb. 9-10). Doyle has also planned a champagne brunch during the show (Feb. 8 from 10 to noon), to which polite dogs are cordially invited. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)
**SWANN**
Feb. 5 at 10:30 A.M.: Vintage posters from the worlds of travel, entertainment, and winter sports. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)
**NEW YORK ARMORY ANTIQUES SHOW**
The latest Wendy production offers a plethora of furniture, jewelry, rugs, and decorative art works from around the globe. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. 212-472-1180. Feb. 4-8.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

### OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**
**"Rigoletto,"** with Andrea Rost, Frank Lopardo, and Juan Pons; Marco Armiliato conducts. (Feb. 4 at 8 and Feb. 7 at 1:30.) ♦ Maria Guleghina takes the title role in a revival of **"Tosca,"** which also features Franco Farina and Samuel Ramey; John Fiore. (Feb. 5 and Feb. 9 at 8.) ♦ **"Boris Godunov"** should be a tidal wave of an opera, but the Met's revival of August Everding's semi-grand production is a delta of disconnected streams, some sweet, others stale. You can enjoy the richly idiomatic singing of such Russian stars as Irina Mishura, Vladimir Ognovenko, Sergei Leiferkus, and Vladimir Matorin (making a welcome début in the basso role of Pimen) and ignore the enervated sounds coming from the orchestra, conducted by Semyon Bychkov. At the center of it all is James Morris, whose growly tone and deliberate stage presence make his portrayal of Boris all the more poignant. (Mzia Nioradze and Yuri Nechaev replace Mishura and Leiferkus in the week's first performance.) (Feb. 6 and Feb. 10 at 7:30.) ♦ Plácido Domingo, busy on the podium of late, returns to the Met stage to sing Ghermann (one of his signature roles) in Tchaikovsky's **"The Queen of Spades."** The distinguished cast includes Katarina Dalayman, Elena Zaremba, Felicity Palmer, Nikolai Putilin, and Vladimir Chernov; Vladimir Jurowski conducts. (Feb. 7 at 8:15.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)



*John Williams conducts his film music with the Philharmonic on February 10.*

MICHAEL WELDON

**LES ARTS FLORISSANTS**
The rigorous artifice of William Christie's approach to pre-Romantic music is ideal for such French Baroque masterpieces as Charpentier's **"Les Arts Florissants,"** the chamber opera from which he took the name for his famously disciplined ensemble, longtime guests at Lincoln Center. He conducts it as half of a Charpentier double bill (filled out by **"La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers"**), semi-staged by Vincent Boussard, which commemorates the three-hundredth anniversary of the composer's death. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Feb. 5 and Feb. 7 at 8.)
**GOTHAM CHAMBER OPERA**
After a year away, Neal Goren's Henry Street Chamber Opera—which won wide acclaim as the most stylish of the city's small-scale companies—returns with a new name but with the same passion for the kind of unusual repertory that the big groups ignore. Its latest production is the American première of **"The Black Widow"** (1935), by the melodically gifted Swiss composer Heinrich Sutermeister, a protégé of Orff who, like his teacher, became a favored composer in wartime Germany. The mezzo-soprano Beth Clayton sings the lead; Goren conducts. (Harry de Jur Playhouse, 466 Grand St. 212-279-4200. Feb. 6 and Feb. 10 at 8. Through Feb. 14.)

### ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**
Lorin Maazel conducts Haydn's oratorio "The Creation," the ultimate masterpiece of a composer whose genius never clouded his piety. The soprano Barbara Bonney, the tenor Bruce Ford (a début), the bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff, and the New York Choral Artists sing the piece, in German. (Feb. 5 at 7:30 and Feb. 6-7 at 8.) ♦ John Williams's effervescent jazz-based score to Steven Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can" is among the treats on the composer-conductor's début concert with the Philharmonic, which will also include excerpts from his music for "JFK," "E.T.," "Schindler's List" (with Glenn Dicterow, the orchestra's concertmaster, in a solo role), and the Harry Potter films. (Feb. 10 at 7:30.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)
**COLLEGIATE CHORALE**
Robert Bass's versatile group is featured in extended excerpts from three rarely performed works by Kurt Weill—"Lost in the Stars," "Marie Galante," and "Happy End"—which the actor-director Roger Rees has crafted into a semi-staged, two-act evening of musical theatre. Joining him as vocal soloist is another Broadway star, Bebe Neuwirth; the Orchestra of St. Luke's backs them up. (Alice Tully Hall. 917-322-2140. Feb. 4 at 8.)
**ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**
The conductorless virtuoso band offers a program embracing folk culture, with vigorous, dance-

inspired works by Kodály ("Dances of Galanta") and Dvořák bookending selections by Bruch (the Violin Concerto No. 1, with Sarah Chang) and the Japanese-American composer Paul Chihara ("An Afternoon on the Perfume River"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-896-1704. Feb. 7 at 8.)

**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: "JEWS AND VIENNA, CITY OF MUSIC"**
The professorial Leon Botstein turns his microscope on Old Vienna, a society whose ambivalent stance toward Jewish musical genius enriched its culture but forecast its doom. The encyclopedic program begins with Psalm settings by the composer-cantor Salomon Sulzer, continues with pieces by Schreker, Goldmark, and Anton Rubinstein ("Ivan the Terrible," one of his finest works), and concludes with Zemlinsky's sumptuous and affecting "Lyric Symphony" (with the soprano Elizabeth Byrne and the baritone John Hancock). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5030. Feb. 8 at 3.)

**MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA**
Osmo Vänskä, the new music director, makes his first New York appearance with the ensemble in a program of Stravinsky, Shostakovich (the Violin Concerto No. 1, with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg), and Prokofiev (a generous selection of dances from "Romeo and Juliet"). (See This Week.) (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 9 at 8.)

## RECITALS

**AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM**
As part of the Forum's continuing commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of Hugo Wolf's death, Thomas Bagwell accompanies four young American singers (including Thomas Meglioranza and Keith Phares) in a program of songs on texts by Goethe and Eichendorff. (11 E. 52nd St. To reserve free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300, ext. 222. Feb. 4 at 8.)

**ARTEK**
Gwendolyn Toth's little band of authentic-performance players offers a lunchtime recital of music by August Kühnel and C. P. E. Bach. (St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st St. Feb. 5 at 1:15. No tickets required.)

**BARGEMUSIC**
Mark Kaplan plays Bach's complete music for solo violin. Feb. 5 and Feb. 7 at 7:30: The Sonatas No. 1 in G Minor and No. 3 in C Major and the Partita No. 1 in B Minor. ♦ Feb. 6 at 7:30 and Feb. 8 at 4: The Partitas No. 3 in E Major and No. 2 in D Minor, along with the Sonata No. 2 in A Minor. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

**"ACCOLADES": SHAI WOSNER**
Wosner, a young Israeli pianist hailed by such luminaries as Ax and Barenboim, plays a recital that includes Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Feb. 5 at 8.)

**LOCRIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS**
The intrepid group, dedicated to playing only pieces that are less than a decade old, performs a memorial concert of works by the prolific Lou Harrison (1917-2003), whose music remained lively and sensuous right to the end. (Christ Chapel, Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave. Feb. 5 at 8. No tickets required.)

**YSAŸE QUARTET**
A connoisseur program of Beethoven (the String Quartet in F Minor, "Serioso"), Ravel, and the fin-de-siècle iconoclast Albéric Magnard (the Quartet in E Minor), performed by the noted young Parisian foursome. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 6 at 7:30.)

**PINCHAS ZUKERMAN AND MARC NEIKRUG**
The violinist and pianist, longtime recital partners, conclude a program of Mozart, Schumann, Neikrug, and Takemitsu with Franck's Sonata in A Major. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**MILLER THEATRE**
Feb. 6 at 8: Olga Neuwirth, the young Austrian modernist who recently won notoriety and acclaim for her opera based on David Lynch's film "Lost Highway," receives her first American retrospective concert courtesy of New York's Ensemble Sospeso, which will perform a program that features two American premières (including "Torsion," with the guest bassoonist Pascal Gallois). ♦ Feb. 7 at 8: Gallois, a new-music powerhouse in his native France, teams up with the violist Danielle Farina for a program featuring music by Carter, Kurtág, and Berio (the formidable "Sequenza XII," which the composer wrote for him). (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799.)

**FREDERICA VON STADE**
The beloved mezzo-soprano, accompanied by Martin Katz, sings songs by Debussy, Schumann ("Frauenliebe und Leben"), Argento, and Rorem at the Temple of Dendur. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**MUSIC FROM JAPAN FESTIVAL**
Feb. 7 at 8: Ichiro Nodaira, a distinguished composer who (like Takemitsu) has been influenced by French culture, is honored with a concert of four première works, performed by such artists as the flutist Carol Wincenc and the cellist Fred Sherry. ♦ Feb. 8 at 2: Oki, a folk musician who specializes in the *tonkori*, a stringed instrument from Sakhalin Island, joins the music-and-dance ensemble Ma Rewrew for an afternoon of music of the Ainu, an indigenous people of Japan. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330.)

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: "MENDELSSOHN CELEBRATION"**
The Society calls in some big guns—the violinists Gil Shaham and Adele Anthony and the cellist Ralph Kirshbaum, all making their débuts—to celebrate the genius of the most refined of the Romantic composers. Their program ranges across the composer's career to include such works as the Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 66, and the Octet for Strings, Op. 20. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Feb. 8 at 5 and Feb. 10 at 7:30.)

**STÉPHANE DEGOUT**
The young French baritone, a recent winner in Plácido Domingo's "Operalia" competition, makes his American recital début with songs by Debussy, Duparc, Ravel ("Histoires Naturelles"), Brahms, Schumann, and Strauss. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Feb. 9 at 7:30.)

**CONCERTANTE**
The vibrant young string ensemble, regulars at Merkin Concert Hall, perform a program combining music by Frank Bridge and Tina Davidson (a première) with Schumann's Piano Quintet. (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Feb. 10 at 8.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**READINGS**
Feb. 4 at 6:30: John Ashbery offers selections of his verse. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-229-5488.) ♦ Feb. 4 at 7:30: Faulkner Fox reads from her account of motherhood, "Dispatches from a Not-So-Perfect Life; or, How I Learned to Love the House, the Man, the Child." (Community Bookstore, 143 Seventh Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Feb. 9 at 8: The Shakespearean actors Philip Bosco, Rosemary Harris, and Brian Murray gather for a dramatic reading that explores the Bard's work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.) ♦ Feb. 10 at 7:30: The Poetry Society of America celebrates Jane Mayhall with readings from her new book, "Sleeping Late on Judgment Day." The poets Deborah Garrison, Ned O'Gorman, and Molly Peacock, the novelist Allan Gurganus, the composer Ned Rorem, and the artists Mary Frank and Jerry Thompson will be on hand. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. For reservations, which are suggested, call 212-254-9628.)

**TALKS**
Feb. 9 at 8: The playwrights Terrence McNally, A. R. Gurney, and Julia Jordan discuss their work with the drama critic Roma Torre. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. For more information, call 212-415-5500.) ♦ Feb. 10 at 6: The biographer Thomas Kunkel presents a talk titled "Harold Ross: The Square Peg at the Round Table." (Small Press Center, 20 W. 44th St. For more information, call 212-840-1840.)


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## MOVIES
## OPENING

**BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS**
A sequel to the comedy about a neighborhood barbershop on the South Side of Chicago. The cast includes Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer, Sean Patrick Thomas, Eve, and Queen Latifah. Directed by Kevin Rodney Sullivan. Opening Feb. 6.

**BLIND SHAFT**
Li Yang wrote and directed this thriller set in contemporary China, about two grifters who extort the owners of an illegal mine. In Mandarin. Opening Feb. 4. (Film Forum.)

**CATCH THAT KID**
Kristen Stewart plays a young girl who convinces two friends to rob a bank in order to help pay for her father's surgery, in an action movie directed by Bart Freundlich. Also with Jennifer Beals and Sam Robards. Opening Feb. 6.

**A CHILD'S GARDEN AND THE SERIOUS SEA**
A theatrical release of Stan Brakhage's 1991 film, in which he imagines his wife's childhood by visiting Victoria, British Columbia, her home town. Opening Feb. 6. (Anthology Film Archives.)

**THE DREAMERS**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Feb. 6.

**HIDING AND SEEKING**
Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky directed this documentary, in which Daum takes his two adult Orthodox Jewish sons on a trip to Poland to confront their preconception that Poles are anti-Semitic. Opening Feb. 6. (Quad Cinema.)

**MIRACLE**
A sports drama about the U.S. hockey team's improbable gold-medal win at the 1980 Olympics. Kurt Russell plays the coach Herb Brooks. Directed by Gavin O'Connor. Opening Feb. 6.

**OSAMA**
The début film of Siddiq Barmak, shot entirely in Afghanistan, about a young girl who pretends to be a boy to provide for her family during the rule of the Taliban. In Dari. Opening Feb. 6. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**THE RETURN**
A drama set in contemporary Russia about two brothers coping with the reappearance of their father after a twelve-year absence. Directed by Andrei Zvyagintsev. In Russian. Opening Feb. 6.

## FILM NOTES

**AILEEN: LIFE AND DEATH OF A SERIAL KILLER**
Unhappy people in documentaries often come off as affectless, distant, and without focus. Aileen Wuornos, the Florida prostitute and murderer who was executed in 2002, is just the opposite. In Nick Broomfield's film, much of it shot just weeks before the execution, Wuornos is overfocussed: her eyes pop out of her head, and, even though she's shackled to a chair, every part of her body is wired and moving. She pulls down her mouth and tosses her hair, assaulting the camera with her sledgehammer ego, her suffering, her brutality, and her belief in her own honesty. You can't dismiss her as a psychotic—she may, in fact, be clinically insane—because she also has patches of lucidity and power, and she's unnerving as hell. Broomfield caught Wuornos in high redemption mode: "I cannot go into that chamber as a liar," she says. "I have to clear my conscience and leave my spirit in the name of Jesus Christ." Broomfield wonders: is she coming clean, or is she suffering from death-row fatigue—the desire to get it over with?—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/26/04.) (Sunshine Cinema.)

**ALONG CAME POLLY**
Even by the standards of romantic comedy, the pairing of Ben Stiller and Jennifer Aniston feels like the product of an artificial intelligence. Stiller, employing his paranoid persona, plays a risk analyzer who sees E. coli in a bowl of bar nuts. Aniston, in a cautious performance, is a catering employee with commitment problems; we know she's a free spirit because she wears knit hats. Yet, despite the absence of chemistry, the two stars occasionally connect for a good gag, and the writer-director John Hamburg sets up some very funny moments, especially for the naturally squeamish. Hank Azaria, last seen as the editor Michael Kelly in "Shattered Glass," is unrecognizable as a nudist French scuba instructor, and Philip Seymour Hoffman does a hilarious bit as a basketball spaz.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS**
Like "Potemkin," this film, originally released in 1965, is an epic in the form of a "created documentary"; it's a reconstruction of the events of 1954 to 1957 in the guerrilla war waged by the National Liberation Front against the French authorities, with the oppressed, angry masses as the hero. The enemy of the Algerian N.L.F.—the hyper-intelligent French colonel played by Jean Martin—isn't really a character; he represents the cool, inhuman manipulative power of imperialism versus the animal heat of the multitudes rushing toward us as they rise against their oppressors. The director, Gillo Pontecorvo, and his co-writer, Franco Solinas, are almost too clever in their use of this device of the colonel—yet it works, and brilliantly. The revolutionaries forming their pyramid of cells don't need to express revolutionary consciousness, because the French colonel is given such a full counter-revolutionary consciousness that he says it all for them. He even expresses the knowledge that history is on the side of the oppressed colonial peoples, who will win; he himself is merely part of a holding action, preserving imperialism a little longer but bound to fail. The movie has a firebrand's fervor; it carries you with it, and doesn't give you time to think. In French and Arabic.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum.)

**THE BIG BOUNCE**
Owen Wilson develops a nice, easy rhythm as a raffish minor criminal hanging out in Hawaii in this genial botch, based on an Elmore Leonard novel. It's one of those everyone-screws-everyone stories (an allegory for Hollywood, perhaps?), but with a peculiar island ambience—people leave their doors unlocked, and strangers walk in, steal things, make love, and walk out. The incoherent plot is punctuated by giant waves crested with surfers. Morgan Freeman, Gary Sinise, Willie Nelson, and Harry Dean Stanton can be seen hanging around the edges, rotting in the sun and drinking. With Sara Foster, who gives a slatternly performance as a slattern. Directed by George Armitage, who became ill during the production and was unable to pull the damn thing together.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Cinema 3, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**BIG FISH**
The title is apt enough; this movie is long, wet, and wriggling, and, after a while, you may want to hold your nose. It tells the story of Edward Bloom, played in his youth by Ewan McGregor and in the final act of his life by Albert Finney. That life is a picaresque, crammed with exaggeration and casual magic—a witch with a glass eye that shows forthcoming deaths, say, or a pair of spangled night-club singers who are also Siamese twins. This is easy stuff for somebody of the director Tim Burton's gifts, and you seldom feel that the new picture tests him or turns him on in the way



*Opening February 6, "The Return," a family drama set in Russia.*

ANDREA VENTURA

that "Beetlejuice" or "Edward Scissorhands" did. The result is his most emotionally reactionary work to date. With Billy Crudup as Bloom's poor stooge of a son, Danny DeVito as a circus ringmaster, Matthew McGrory as a moping giant, and Jessica Lange and Alison Lohman, both badly underused, as the older and younger versions of the hero's only love.—*Anthony Lane* (12/15/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**COLD MOUNTAIN**

A heroic attempt to capture, in all its tangled bitterness, the backwash of war—the lawless, scrappy life that takes shape behind the lines in an atmosphere of uneasy freedom. Inman (Jude Law), a young Confederate soldier, badly wounded and spiritually depleted, deserts his company and tries to make his way back to his home town in North Carolina and to a young woman, Ada (Nicole Kidman), he knew briefly and fell in love with. Along the way, he has a series of grotesque, terrifying adventures. Ada, meanwhile, aided by an arrogant interloper (Renée Zellweger) with a strong back, learns to run the farm that her late father left to her. The coming together of the two lovers has a satisfying kind of inevitability, like the halves of a drawbridge falling into place. Anthony Minghella adapted Charles Frazier's acclaimed 1997 novel, and directed in a style both high flown and filthy with the mire and blood of war. The extraordinary cast includes Donald Sutherland, Eileen Atkins, Brendan Gleeson, Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Giovanni Ribisi.—*D.D.* (12/22 & 29/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

**THE COOLER**

This tough and sentimental genre film feels like a B movie from 1956 with a dirty mouth. Bernie Lootz (William H. Macy) has such terrible luck that a Vegas casino owner named Shelly (Alec Baldwin) uses him as a "cooler": no sooner does Bernie join a crap game than anyone with a hot hand immediately begins to lose. But then Bernie falls in love with a young cocktail waitress, Natalie (Maria Bello), and his magic suddenly shifts: now everyone around him wins, which is big trouble for Bernie. The writer-director Wayne Kramer keeps the color scheme of this Runyonesque fable harsh and bright—the night tones of Vegas, seen from its underside. The movie is set in sordid casinos and the kind of green-walled motel room in which fornication takes place in the adjoining room at a colossal volume. The crud and the petty desperation of "The Cooler" are immensely enjoyable as atmosphere, and the actors attack their roles with relish.—*D.D.* (1/12/04) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

**CRIMSON GOLD**

Jafar Panahi, the Iranian director who made "The White Balloon" and "The Circle," addresses a subject that has, until now, received scandalously little attention: the life of a pizza deliveryman. Hussein (Hussein Emadeddin) is as doughy a figure as his profession would suggest; he waddles through Tehran, or glides with unhurried dignity on his scooter. What he observes on his rounds could have amounted to a mere ragbag of details—a Westernized playboy with a swimming pool in his apartment, cops staking out a loud party—yet it comes across as the portrait of a city both humming with human traffic and quietly besieged by the state. The hero's own story has the luckless tinge that we associate with Turgenev or Maupassant: the pinch of frustration, plus the wrong move that lunges into calamity. In Farsi.—*A.L.* (1/19/04) (Quad Cinema.)

**GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING**

A slow, attentive movie about a painter and his model demands the kind of patience that moviegoers may feel reluctant to supply. But Peter Webber's reworking of Tracy Chevalier's novel is worth staying with: it casts a heavy spell as it unfolds the tale of Griet (Scarlett Johansson), a maid


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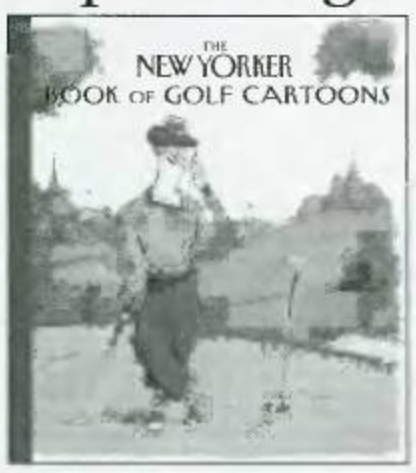
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newly arrived in the house of Johannes Vermeer (Colin Firth). The year is 1665, and the period reconstruction, for those who are aroused by such things, is—apart from a few modern lines of dialogue—formidably detailed. The danger with such beautifying efforts is that cinema will turn into a branch of taxidermy, and what keeps Webber's movie alive is the tenseness of the setup (will this girl stay in the artist's household, and, if so, will she become his lover or his muse?), and, above all, the presence of Johansson. She is often wordless and close to plain onscreen, but wait for the ardor with which she can summon a closeup and bloom under its gaze; this is her film, not Vermeer's, all the way.—*A.L.* (12/15/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

**HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG**

Ben Kingsley, now sixty, is in great shape. As an Iranian military officer exiled to California, he's the only entertainment in this noble pool of despair. His character, Colonel Massoud Amir Behrani, works on a road crew and as a clerk in a convenience store, but he changes into a perfectly tailored gray suit after each job and returns home in his old Mercedes. He buys a house on the coast that belonged to a messed-up young woman, Kathy (Jennifer Connelly), who lost the place due to a bureaucratic mixup during a depressive stupor. The two go at each other like figures in a classic tragedy—each has his sense of rightness and entitlement—but one can't suppress such philistine sentiments as "If the colonel weren't such a stiff and if Kathy were only a little smarter, the entire mess could have been avoided." The director, Vadim Perelman, was born in Russia and is a man in exile himself. He produces scenes of great intensity, but he doesn't capture the colloquial ease and humor of American life.—*D.D.* (1/12/04) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

**IN AMERICA**

The tale of an Irish family that travels to New York in search of a better life, or, at any rate, a life. Johnny (Paddy Considine), his wife, Sarah (Samantha Morton), and their daughters, Christy (Sarah Bolger) and Ariel (Emma Bolger), settle near Hell's Kitchen and wrestle, as you would expect, with outlandish local customs such as air-conditioners and Halloween. Despite the title, the director, Jim Sheridan, is gripped less by the country in which his characters find themselves than by their own hope and anguish: there was a third child, a boy, who died before they came to the States. The movie has a busy intensity but lacks the rooted confidence of Sheridan's Irish work, as seen in "My Left Foot" and "In the Name of the Father." What ties it down, if anything, is the performance of Sarah Bolger—ten years old when the picture was made, but the sanest and saddest person on the block.—*A.L.* (12/1/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

**MONSTER**

To play Aileen Wuornos, the real-life prostitute and serial killer who was executed in 2002, Charlize Theron put on thirty pounds and endured an hour and a half of attention each shooting day from the makeup artist Toni G. What's remarkable about the film is not just Theron's transformation into a half-mad, beaten-up prostitute, but the disciplined performance that she gives. The actress twitches and shrugs as if her tendons were directed by will alone. She's telling the world to kiss off, yet, inevitably, she's reduced to sticking out her thumb on the highway in search of a paying customer. When a scuzzy client abuses her, she snaps, empties a revolver into his chest, and lets out a war whoop of triumph. The moment is truly frightening. Theron's ferocity pushes the material over the top, but her tenderness—the flashes of gentleness and vulnerability—retrieves it from tabloid exploitation and camp horror. With Christina Ricci as the petulant lower-middle-class girl who becomes Wuornos's lover. Written and directed by Patty Jenkins and shot in that bedraggled kingdom of chaos Central Florida.—*D.D.* (1/26/04) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)




*Cedric the Entertainer and Ice Cube in "Barbershop 2."*

**THE TENANT**

Filmed in Paris with a French and American cast, the third of Roman Polanski's evil-apartment movies (following "Repulsion" and "Rosemary's Baby") is creepy, funny, and perilously misshapen. Polanski hit it about right when he wrote in his autobiography that the insanity of the antihero, a gentle immigrant bank clerk (played, sympathetically, by Polanski himself), "doesn't build gradually enough. His hallucinations are too startling and unexpected." The movie has its moments, though, both as a comic nightmare about the horrors of renting and as a Kafkaesque farce about a personality too weak for urban living. With Isabelle Adjani, Shelley Winters, Melvyn Douglas, and Jo Van Fleet. Originally released in 1976.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; Feb. 6-10.)

**TOUCHING THE VOID**

Kevin Macdonald's new film is a dismaying documentary account of what happened on the side of a mountain in 1985. Two young British climbers, Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, ascended the west face of Siula Grande, in the Peruvian Andes, and then began their descent. Simpson slipped and injured his leg, then fell again, this time off the brink of a ridge. He was hanging from the end of a rope; at the other end, sliding fast, was Yates, who cut the rope to save himself. You come out of the movie arguing hotly—as Macdonald wants you to do—about the rights and wrongs of that dire moment, and musing on the fact that Simpson survived his ordeal. The two men tell their story with a sang-froid verging on the comical, intercut with a dramatic reconstruction of the climb itself. The cinematography, all vertiginous horror and beauty, is by Mike Eley; it leaves us with a mad inkling of what drives a mountaineer, as well as a determination to stay, at all costs, on the level.—*A.L.* (1/19/04) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

**THE TRILOGY**

Three films by the Belgian director Lucas Belvaux, which form a linked chain. All are set in the same place, Grenoble, each features a similar roster of characters, and, somewhere within every picture, the same story is being told. But that is not a recipe for monotony; the hero of one film will fade into semi-obscurity in the next, and vice-versa, as if we were losing touch or making fresh contact with an old friend. Then, there are the transformations of tone: the first movie ("On the Run") is hard and swift, the second ("An Amazing Couple") sunny and farcical, and the third ("After Life") a gruelling tale of drug addiction and the limits of marital love. By rights, the whole enterprise should smack of a clever trick, yet you take your leave of the trilogy—which is best viewed in one fell swoop—with a kind of exhausted regret, half-wanting to know what other permutations could be found for these difficult lives. In French.—*A.L.* (2/2/04) (Angelika Film Center.)

**THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE**

A boy is given a bicycle. He grows up to compete, under the tutelage of his ferocious grandmother, in the Tour de France, only to be kidnapped and smuggled overseas. The old lady, with a panting hound in tow, tracks and retrieves the unfortunate cyclist, aided by three crones who feast on a casserole of murdered frogs. Such is the gritty, fantastic plot of Sylvain Chomet's animated film, which could only have emerged from a culture in which the worship of comic books approaches the status of an organized religion. Indeed, there is much to revere in Chomet's swollen caricatures and vertiginous angles, although agnostics may be tempted to point out that a little elastic surrealism goes a long way, and that to learn the exact details of somebody else's dreams—which is what this movie feels like—can be at once haunting and tiresome. In French, just about, though most of it is noise, and no subtitles are required.—*A.L.* (12/1/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

**WAG THE DOG**

Barry Levinson's uproarious 1997 lampoon injected a catchphrase into the national political dialogue. Set two weeks before a Presidential election, it's a sure-fingered riff on the obfuscating art of American image management. The spin doctor Connie Brean (Robert De Niro) partners with the Hollywood producer Stanley Moss (Dustin Hoffman) to concoct a straight-to-video war with Albania. They want to deflect public attention from the charge that their candidate, the President, improperly touched an adolescent girl. De Niro's understated knowingness surrounds everyone around him like an existential blob. And Hoffman takes an unsympathetic character and imbues him with a tunnel vision and an egotism that are equally touching and appalling. The writer David Mamet (who shares script credit with Hilary Henkin) contributes ticklishly precise colloquial dialogue. With the help of a gung-ho supporting cast (Anne Heche, Denis Leary, Andrea Martin, Willie Nelson), the filmmakers take viewers so far inside a Beltway-to-Bel-Air media mind-set that it's hard not to get caught up in the team spirit—even if this team

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

may leave actual corpses in its wake. With electric cameos from Woody Harrelson as the fake war's designated hero and Kirsten Dunst as its trumped-up symbolic victim.—*M.S.* (Thalia Theatre; Feb. 7.)

**WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON**
Kate Bosworth is supposed to be a shy, naïve West Virginia girl who meets and charms the movie star of her dreams (Josh Duhamel), but from the start she looks better and more starlike than anyone else in the movie. She and the rest of the young cast work together nicely, but the film is underwritten and anodyne, with what seems like every scene ending in a pop song, the camera soaring over the bucolic landscape.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Theatre.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**THE COMPANY**
BAM Rose Cinemas, Paris, and Union Square.

**THE FOG OF WAR**
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

**LOST IN TRANSLATION** (9/15/03)
Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Quad Cinema, and 64th and 2nd.

**MY ARCHITECT**
Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

**MYSTIC RIVER** (12/22 & 29/03)
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.

**TEACHER'S PET**
Empire 25, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Village East Cinemas.

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

*Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.*

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St.
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at Broadway.
**Battery Park 16,** West St. at Vesey St.
**Beekman,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.
**Cinema Classics,** 332 E. 11th St. (212-677-6309).
**Cinemas 1, 2, and 3,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
**East 86th Street Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**Empire 25,** on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**42nd Street E Walk,** 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
**Kips Bay Theatre,** Second Ave. at 32nd St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
**Lincoln Square,** Broadway at 68th St.
**Metro Twin,** Broadway at 99th St.
**New York Twin,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**19th Street East 6,** Broadway at 19th St.
**Orpheum VII,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**Sunshine Cinema,** 139-143 E. Houston St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**34th Street Theatre,** 312 W. 34th St.
**Union Square,** Broadway at 13th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Greek-cinema showcase. Feb. 6 at 7:30: "Golden Apples of the Hesperides" (1997, Sofia Papachristou; in Greek). ♦ Through Feb. 8: "Great Performances," introduced by New York film critics. Feb. 7 at 2: "Beauty #2" (1965, Andy Warhol) and "Meet Marlon Brando" (1965, Albert and David Maysles). ♦ Feb. 7 at 4: "Cabaret" (1972, Bob Fosse). ♦ Feb. 8 at 1: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Feb. 8 at 4: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese). ♦ Repertory nights. Feb. 7-8 at 6:30: "Drunken Angel" (1948, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

**ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Two American premières. Feb. 4-5 at 7 and 9:30: "Meanwhile a Butterfly Flies" (2002, Julius Ziz) and "My Country Is Cinema: Scenes from the Life of Jonas Mekas" (2000, Brigitte Cornand). ♦ Return engagement. Feb. 5-6 at 7 and 9:30 and Feb. 7-8 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Millennium Mambo" (2001, Hou Hsiao-Hsien; in Mandarin). ♦ Essential cinema. Feb. 7 at 6: "Songs 1-14" (1964-65, Stan Brakhage). ♦ Feb. 8 at 5:45: "Songs 15-22" (1965-1966, Brakhage).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Feb. 4-5 at 2, 3:40, 5:20, 7, and 8:40: "L'Âge d'Or" (1930, Luis Buñuel; in French) and "Un Chien Andalou" (1929, Buñuel). ♦ Feb. 6-10 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Tenant" (†).

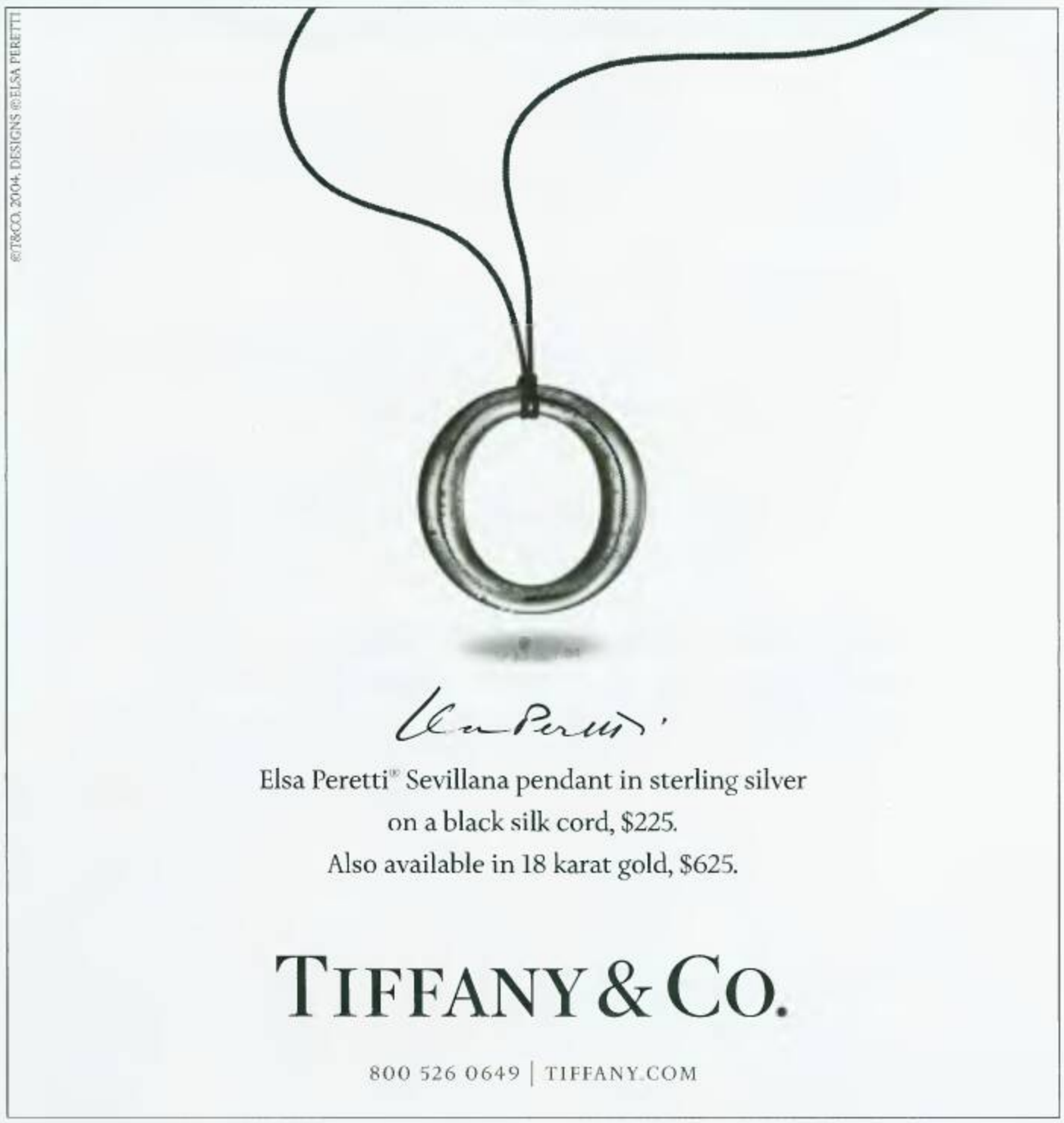
**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through March 30: A tribute to the French studio Pathé. Feb. 10 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Fun in Barracks" (1932, Maurice Tourneur; in French).

**GRAMERCY THEATRE**
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through Feb. 27: "The Hidden God: Film and Faith." Feb. 5 at 2: "Simon of the Desert" (1965, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish). ♦ Feb. 5 at 3: "Magnolia" (1999, Paul Thomas Anderson). ♦ Feb. 9 at 6: "Rite of Spring" (1963, Manoel de Oliveira; in Portuguese). ♦ Starting Feb. 5: "Im Kwon-Taek: Master Korean Filmmaker." All films are in Korean. Feb. 5 at 6:30: "Festival" (1996). ♦ Feb. 5 at 8:45: "Ticket" (1986). ♦ Feb. 6 at 6:30 and Feb. 8 at 1: "Sopyonje" (1993). ♦ Feb. 6 at 8:45 and Feb. 7 at 1: "Come, Come, Come Upward" (1989). ♦ Feb. 7 at 3:30: "Chihwaseon" (2002). ♦ Feb. 7 at 6: "The Surrogate Woman" (1987). ♦ Feb. 8 at 3:30: "Chunhyang" (2000). ♦ Feb. 8 at 6:30: "The Tae Baek Mountains" (1994). ♦ Special screening. Feb. 7 at 8:30: "These Are Not My Images" (2000, Irit Batsry).

**SUNSHINE CINEMA**
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Feb. 6-7: "Superfly" (1972, Gordon Parks, Jr.).

**THALIA THEATRE**
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through Feb. 14: "The Hilarious History of the World." Feb. 7 at 7: "Bulworth" (1998, Warren Beatty). ♦ Feb. 7 at 9: "Wag the Dog" (†). ♦ Feb. 8 at 2: "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming" (1966, Norman Jewison). ♦ Feb. 8 at 4:15: "One, Two, Three" (1961, Billy Wilder). ♦ Feb. 8 at 7: "The Three Ages" (1923, Buster Keaton and Edward F. Cline). ♦ Feb. 8 at 8:30: "The History of the World: Part I" (1981, Mel Brooks).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Feb. 12: "History Lessons: The Films of Jerzy Kawalerowicz." All films are in Polish. Feb. 4 at 4:15 and 8:15 and Feb. 8 at 1: "The Real End of the Great War" (1957). ♦ Feb. 5 at 2 and Feb. 7 at 7:30: "Under the Phrygian Star" (1954; Spanish subtitles, with simultaneous English translation). ♦ Feb. 5 at 4:30 and Feb. 8 at 5: "Night Train" (1959). ♦ Feb. 7 at 4 and Feb. 10 at 2: "Quo Vadis" (2002). ♦ Feb. 8 at 3: "Shadow" (1956).


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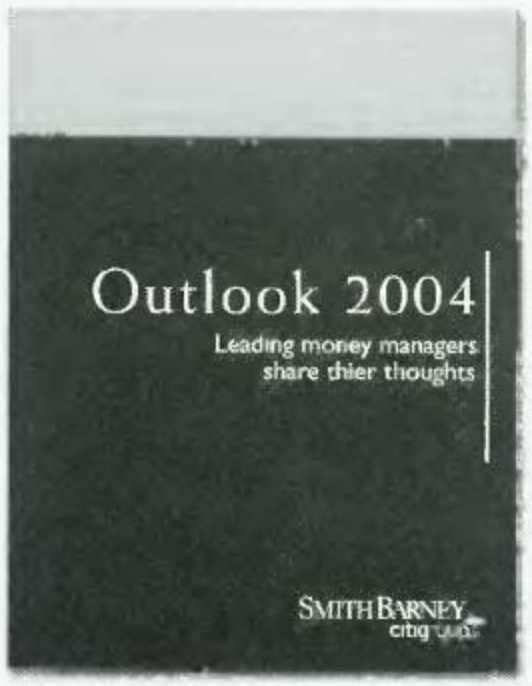
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# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
### BLAME GAME



"We were almost all wrong, and I certainly include myself here." Thus David A. Kay, the Central Intelligence Agency's former chief weapons inspector in Iraq, publicly confirmed what had become increasingly obvious: the assertions that Saddam Hussein possessed arsenals of weapons of mass destruction posing an international threat were false. Kay, who has spent much of the last nine months in Baghdad heading the Iraq Survey Group, told Reuters, "I think there were stockpiles at the end of the first Gulf War. . . . A combination of U.N. inspectors and unilateral Iraqi action got rid of them." As for Iraq's nuclear program, which the American and British governments claimed could, under certain circumstances, produce a crude atomic bomb within a year, Kay said, "It really wasn't dormant, because there were a few little things going on, but it had not resumed in anything meaningful."

Kay's findings are all the more striking because he did not, and does not, oppose the war. We have often fought wars "on the right side for the wrong reason," he said last week. He coupled his mea culpa with a call for an independent investigation into the errors made by the intelligence agencies. Such an inquiry is certainly necessary. Last summer, the White House released a declassified version of a National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq that represented the consensus of the intelligence community. Originally presented to the White House in October, 2002, it stated: "Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons as well as missiles with ranges in excess of UN restrictions"; "Baghdad has begun renewed production of mustard, sarin, GF (cyclosarin), and VX"; and "Baghdad has established a large-scale, redundant, and concealed BW agent"—biological weapons—"production capability."

American intelligence experts were not alone in their assessments. Analysts in the British, French, and German intelligence agencies believed that Saddam had at least some chemical and biological munitions. David Kelly, the late British weapons scientist, shared this view. During the nineteen-nineties, when he worked as a U.N. weapons inspector, he played a key role in forcing the Iraqi government to admit the existence of its biological-weapons program. After Kelly and his colleagues left Iraq, in 1998, he never doubted that Saddam was trying to hide something.

But what? It's a long leap from the fact that most experts believed Iraq had some unconventional weapons to the claim, which some defenders of George Bush and Tony Blair are adopting as a fallback position, that it was faulty intelligence, not faulty policy, which led us to our current predicament in Iraq. (Bill O'Reilly, of the Fox News Channel, has called on the President to admit that the C.I.A. sold him a bill of goods and to fire the agency's director, George Tenet, who, in case you've forgotten—O'Reilly hasn't—was a Democratic appointee.)



*David A. Kay*

Kelly, who consulted for MI6, the British equivalent of the C.I.A., and for the British Defence Intelligence Staff, was in a position to observe what was really happening inside the intelligence agencies. In May of last year, he talked to Andrew Gilligan, a BBC journalist, who put together a piece claiming that Downing Street had "sexed up" an intelligence dossier that it published in September of 2002, by stating that Iraq's military was prepared to launch W.M.D.s within forty-five minutes of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

an order to use them. The Ministry of Defence publicly identified Kelly as the source of Gilligan's story, and, a week later, he committed suicide, thereby sparking a controversy that threatened Blair's political survival. But last week, in a move that surprised even Blair loyalists, Lord Hutton, a senior judge, concluded a public inquiry into the case with a report that cleared the Government of any wrongdoing. (The report prompted the resignation of the BBC's top two executives.) Lord Hutton, however, did not claim that the intelligence in the dossier was accurate; he simply said that, at the time, Downing Street had no reason to question its authenticity.

This raises the fundamental question that any broader inquiry ought to focus on: what was the relationship between the intelligence agencies and the policymakers who ultimately decided to invade Iraq? In Britain, some intelligence analysts tried to tone down the contents of the Downing Street dossier. In a reporter's taped interview that was played during the Hutton inquiry, David Kelly explained that these analysts were less worried about Iraq's current capabilities, which they believed to be modest, than about the threat that Saddam's regime might someday represent. "But that, unfortunately, wasn't expressed strongly in the dossier, because that takes away the case for war, to a certain extent," Kelly said.

At least some American intelligence analysts appear to have shared their British colleagues' opinion that Iraq represented a significant but manageable threat, and that the U.N.'s economic sanctions were curtailing Saddam's weapons programs. It is therefore imperative to learn precisely how the National Intelligence Estimate was put together and why it reached such alarmist conclusions. David Kay told a Senate committee that he doesn't know any C.I.A. analysts who felt compelled to slant their assessments in the run-up to the war. However, as Seymour M. Hersh has reported in this magazine, senior members of the Bush Administration did press the intelligence agencies to provide evidence supporting the President's claim that Iraq represented a grave danger. Other journalists have made similar charges.

We know that Vice-President Dick Cheney, who continues to insist that some W.M.D.s might be found, visited the C.I.A. several times before the war for face-to-face meetings with Iraq analysts, and that senior Pentagon officials were running their own intelligence operation, the Office of Special Plans. Until a full account is provided, the suspicion will remain that in Washington, as in London, the handling of intelligence had more to do with persuading the public to support a war that had already been decided on than with calmly assessing threats. Whatever finally emerges, the C.I.A. should not be used as a scapegoat. Intelligence, by its very nature, is usually uncertain and often wrong. It should always be treated with skepticism and caution, two attributes that were, and are, conspicuously missing from the Bush White House.

*—John Cassidy*

## YOU DON'T *SAY* DEPT.

## CHEW ON



The truly great scientific discoveries—gravity, laughing gas, Velcro—always seem to happen by accident. Take the case of Dr. Kenneth Allen, whose latest findings indicate that we should perhaps overturn one of the most sacred laws of primary education: the prohibition on chewing gum in the classroom. Allen, a professor at N.Y.U.'s College of Dentistry, is an unlikely champion of Bazooka and Double Bubble, and yet he has recently shown, if inadvertently, that a pack-a-day chewing habit may help account for the difference between the honor roll and summer school.

Allen's claim to fame goes as follows: Like any conscientious teacher, he was interested in finding new and better ways of helping his students learn. Last year, he decided to see whether or not CD-ROMs could be as effective as traditional lectures in teaching dental anatomy. He devised a simple study involving two student groups. It was not exactly what you would call groundbreaking stuff. Then came his apple-falling-from-the-tree moment.

"I was looking at a way of funding the study," Allen explained last week, "and a colleague of mine came up to me and said that Wrigley's wanted to do a study about learning with chewing gum. And I thought, Dentistry—this is a great place to do it." Dentists, it turns out, are not nearly as opposed to gum—or, at least, to sugarless gum—as schoolteachers are. "I don't think dental schools have an official stance on chewing gum," Allen said. "Some people actually feel that chewing gum can stimulate your saliva, which can help keep the teeth clean."

The history of chewing gum is rich in lore but short on hard science. Does swallowed gum really remain in your stomach for seven years? Is it true, as Lyndon Johnson once said, that Gerald Ford couldn't chew gum and walk at the same time? Allen reviewed the literature, such as it was, and found most of it to be insufficiently rigorous. Some die-hard bubble blowers hold that chewing is helpful for maintaining mental focus. ("Why do baseball players chew gum?" Allen wondered. "Are they concentrating more?") Other enthusiasts argue that continual jaw motion is apt to increase one's heart rate ever so slightly, thus sending more oxygen to the brain. "Past research has shown an increase in hemoglobin in human brain tissue after mastication," Allen observed (he was referring to a paper in the *Journal of the Stomatological Society*), "but findings suggesting a direct correlation between chewing gum and increased learning have been anecdotal."

So Allen added a twist to his CD-ROM experiment: half of the students in each group would be asked to chew gum while studying, and half, like typical grade-school students, would be forbidden to chew gum. He called his proposal "The Affect of an Interactive CD and the Use of Chewing Gum on Learning Dental Anatomy." Sure enough, Wrigley agreed to provide the gum (sugarless, by request) and to cover other auxiliary expenses. Allen rounded up volunteer students and, after three days of instruction (in person and via CD, gummed and gumless), tested them on the material. To his surprise, the gum chewers scored, on average, a B-minus on the written component while the abstainers managed only a C-plus. (The CD-ROM learners, incidentally, scored very slightly higher than the lecture audience.)

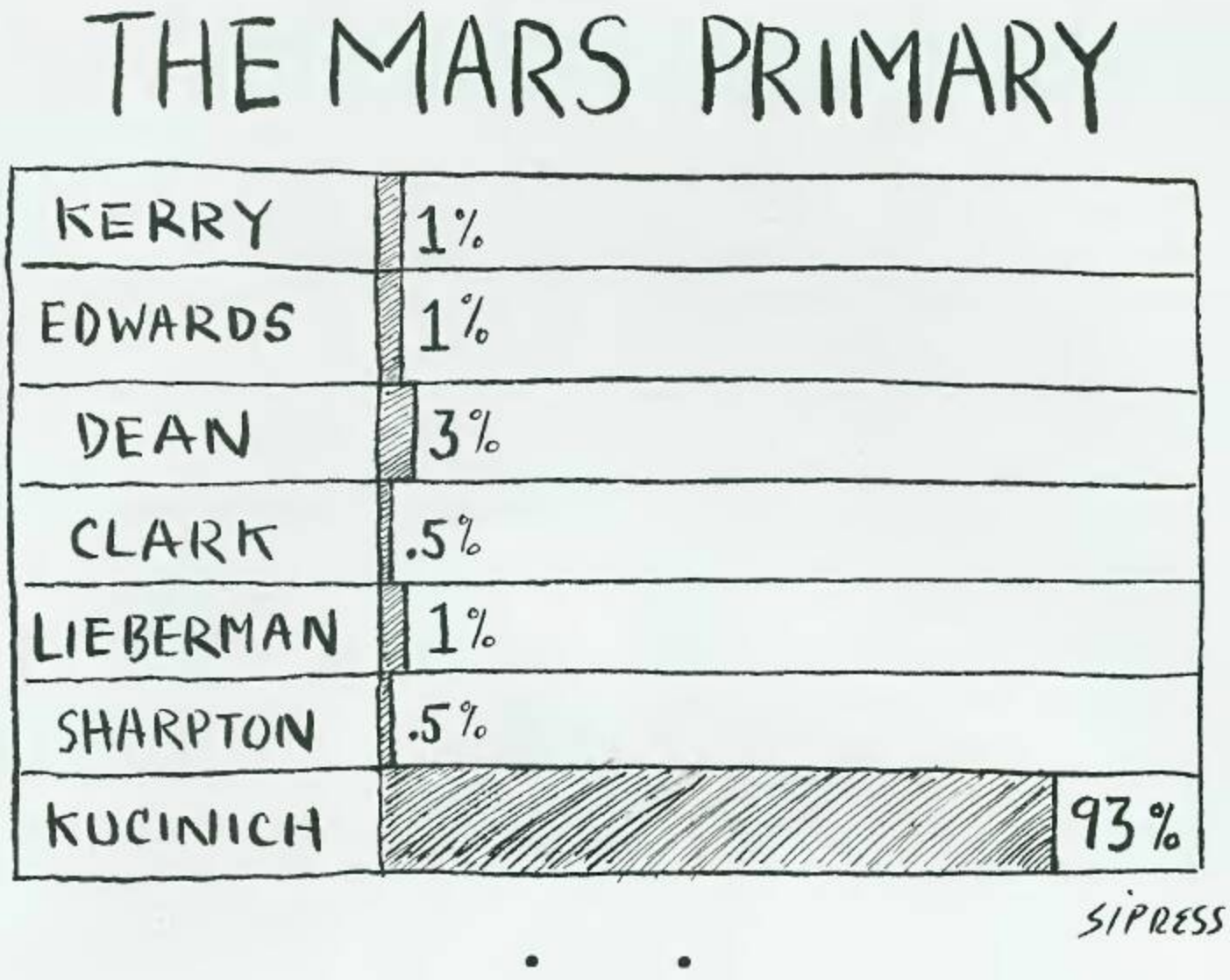
Allen can't say whether this news will

have any impact on the way we view gum chewing. "I think we're not gum chewers because it's been considered to be socially unacceptable," he said. The results, in any event, await validation. Fifty-six students took part in the pilot study, and, as Allen said, "We really need a sample size of about two hundred to determine it beyond a reasonable doubt." He has applied to Wrigley for follow-up funding, and will present his paper this March at the annual meeting of the American Association for Dental Research, in Hawaii.

Clearly, some questions remain. If mastication is the vital element, might chewing tobacco, or fingernails, have a similar positive effect? How does the Wrigley treatment compare with other supposed brain boosters, like sage, fish oils, and ginseng? And, principally, why is it, again, that chewing gum is so often taboo—both in school and elsewhere? (John Edwards, for instance, was criticized for looking un-Presidential when he was spotted, several months ago at a televised event, with an offending wad in his mouth.)

There are the messiness and hygiene factors, of course, as anyone who has ever stepped on moist Bubblicious or groped the underside of a public desk can attest. These, presumably, explain the famous criminalization of gum possession in Singapore. But some of the aversion to public gum consumption probably stems from an unconscious association with the kinds of people—ballplayers, Erin Brockovich, reformed smokers, "Joe Millionaire" contestants—who tend, or so it seems, to chew most vigorously. It needn't be so. With help from Dr. Allen—who, by the way, is not a gum chewer—our jaws shall be set free.

*—Ben McGrath*




## WORKS IN PROGRESS

### TONY STEW



The Jewish Museum—what an excellent place to see a play! First of all, a basement café (with a Zagat recommendation, no less) serving kosher Turkey Peking wrap sandwiches and gravlax on pumpernickel. Next, plenty of bathrooms on multiple floors, and an elevator to reach them. A motorized coat check, so you don't have to squeeze your outerwear as well as yourself into your seat. Best of all, a museum store to browse in while you're waiting for the auditorium to open because you've arrived nice and early, and where you can pick up anything from a new Haggadah to a box of Jewish fortune cookies (sample fortune: "Eat! Eat! You need strength to worry!") and a baseball printed with the word "Mensch."

And—the other night, at least—Tony Kushner! The Jewish Museum celebrates its centennial this year, and as a highlight of the festivities it presented an all-star reading of "It's an Undoing World or Why Should It Be Easy When It Can Be Hard?" This is a work in progress—or, as a character in the play has it, "a work in egress, a work in regress"—that centers on the character of Sarah, a cantankerous, possibly fabulist grandmother who bears more than a family resemblance to Kushner's own grandmother Sarah Deutscher, who died, in 1988, at the Hebrew Home for the Aged, in the Bronx (the "Hot Hell," she punningly calls it in the play). Sarah, who was played on this occasion by Kathleen Chalfant, is quizzed, berated, and ultimately mourned by her Solemn Grandchild, played by Wendy Wasserstein, and her three daughters—Marian Seldes, Swoosie Kurtz, and Maria Tucci—all of whom have breast cancer and wear vivid jewel-colored scarves over their heads. (Kushner's mother and one of his aunts died of breast cancer; his remaining maternal aunt survived it.)

In the course of the play, which the actresses performed while sitting in a row of chairs onstage—great boots, Swoosie—Sarah goes over the salient events of her life, any or all of which may or may not have happened. She remembers meeting Emma Lazarus, even though Lazarus died before she was born; recalls another impossible encounter, with Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, who makes an imposing, if fleeting, appearance, courtesy of Marian Seldes; and describes walking every day through the Polish snow to shul to say Kaddish for her father. "Did she get this from watching 'Yentl'?" says the Middle Daughter, who is played by Kurtz. "She never read Bashevis Singer, she never read nothing. Ma, did you get this from the movies?" The play also incorporated music composed by Alicia Svigals, a founder of the Klezmatics; a dance interlude; a rendition of Irving Berlin's interpretation of "The New Colossus"; and a singing, talking teapot. It was, as Kushner's partner, Mark Harris, described it afterward, "a Tony stew."

The audience—which included a significant number of ladies who looked as if they could have been Kushner's grandmother, or at least as if they might

have gone to see "Yentl" with Kushner's grandmother—was delighted with the show, laughing in all the right places (at the line "How can a person be always unhappy? A person can be unhappy a lot, but *always* unhappy?") and falling silent at the appropriate moments, such as when the comedy gives way to a lyrical disquisition on BRCA1, the breast-cancer-susceptibility gene. Also in the audience were several members of Kushner's family, who testified to the accuracy of the portrayal of Sarah Deutscher. "She really was like that—the vagueness and the confusion and them all screaming at her," Lesley Kushner, Tony's sister, said. Lisa Deutscher, a granddaughter, explained the genesis of the title: "One of her daughters called her and said, 'Ma, how are you doing?' And she said, 'Doing? I'm undoing.'"

Kushner, who is undergoing a bout of enhanced celebrity—what with the HBO production of "Angels in America," a début musical, and an appearance last May with Mark Harris in the first gay "Vows" column in the *Times*—said that



*Tony Kushner*

there are no plans to mount a full production of the play, and that it remains a piece he pulls out of the drawer when he needs a little something to throw on for a benefit. Kushner, who is notorious for making revisions to his work up to the last moment, had just that morning presented Alice Playten, who played the teapot, with a new song to learn. "The play is eleven years old, but this is only its third day of rehearsal and script development—each day taking four years, as some days do," he told the audience. "By the time the museum is ready for its bicentennial, the play might be completed."

*—Rebecca Mead*

## TRACKS

## THE MOUSE THAT REMIXED



The d.j. and producer Danger Mouse was born Brian Burton, in White Plains, twenty-six years ago; attended college in the indie-rock hotbed of Athens, Georgia; and then moved to London, where he became part of the underground hip-hop scene. Last year, he teamed up with Jemini, a rapper from Brooklyn, to record the album "Ghetto Pop Life," which was considered one of the most innovative releases of 2003. But, for his follow-up, Burton decided to work with more prominent artists—much more prominent, though also unwitting. Last December, he made an unauthorized remix of "The Black Album," the most recent (and reportedly the final) record by the rap superstar Jay-Z. This is a common hip-hop practice: up-and-coming producers take the vocals from a hot record and reattach them to new backing tracks. Burton's remix sprang from a simple pun: he decided to lay the vocals from "The Black Album" over a musical bed created entirely with samples from the Beatles' "White Album." The result, as any finger-painting kindergartner might guess, was "The Grey Album."

"I had gotten the Jay-Z vocal tracks and wasn't going to do anything with them," he said the other day. "A week or so after that, I was at home in Los Angeles, listening to the Beatles and cleaning up my room. Then it hit me: Oh shit, 'White Album,' 'Black Album' . . . I can probably do this."

Burton spent the next two and a half weeks in his room. "Those were fifteen-hour days, easily," he said. "I played 'The White Album' through four times, listening for anything that I thought I might be able to use, and then I started pulling tiny bits off the album. I was keeping track of the time, because I knew this was a strange kind of experiment, and at one point I saw that I had logged more than two hundred hours."

Part of the challenge of "The Grey Album" lay in matching the tempos of Jay-Z's raps with instrumental passages from the Beatles. "It would have been easy just to slap the vocals over music of the same tempo," Burton said. "But I wanted to match the feel of the tracks, too." "The Black Album" opens with a wistful autobiographical track called "December 4th," which features short speeches by Jay-Z's mother; Burton, in his version, used the Beatles' delicate, contemplative "Mother Nature's Son." And Jay-Z's "99 Problems," a hard-rock track produced by Rick Rubin, was reupholstered with the central riff from "Helter Skelter." Other Beatles songs have been chopped into pieces so small that they cannot readily be identified: here a bit of "Julia," there a snatch of "Long, Long, Long."

Burton finished "The Grey Album" just before Christmas, sent a few copies to friends, and flew East to spend the holidays with his family. By the time he got back, word of the project was everywhere, and he was receiving a steady stream of phone calls and e-mail messages. "There's a level of hysteria surrounding the album," said Jeff Antebi, the head of Waxploitation, a hip-hop label and management company that represents Danger Mouse. "More people say they have heard it than can possibly have heard it."

"After hip-hop fans hear it, they're like, 'I gotta get this "White Album," ' " Burton said. But enthusiasm for "The Grey Album," fuelled by online file-sharing services and amateur CD copies, will likely have to remain underground. None of the samples have been legally cleared, and Burton doesn't think that the album will ever be commercially released. "Hell, no," he said. "That's one of the things I struggled with. I told myself, 'Never will this come out. . . . Must still do . . . must still do.' "

He went on, "I'm just worried whether Jay-Z will like it, or whether Paul and Ringo will like it. If they say that they hate it, and that I messed up their music, I think I'll put my tail between my legs and go."

*—Ben Greenman*

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## THE FINANCIAL PAGE
# OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

Two summers ago, Conrad Black, who was the chairman and C.E.O. of the newspaper giant Hollinger International, sent an e-mail to two of his fellow-executives complaining about the company's critics. Hollinger's stock price had been falling for two years, and shareholders had been grumbling that Black and his colleagues were more interested in lining their own pockets than in looking after the company's interests. Black found their whinging tiresome. Hollinger, he wrote, had gone public only to make "cheap use of other people's capital." In other words, the shareholders should remember their role, which was to hand over their money and keep their mouths shut. "They are a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites and ingrates," Black wrote.

Black's disdain reflected an assumption that his power was secure. When, in 1994, Hollinger went public, Black retained voting control, and so he never worried much about outside investors, behaving more like a feudal lord than like the C.E.O. of a publicly traded enterprise. He and his partners took home millions—on top of their salaries—in "management fees" and stuck private jets, personal chauffeurs, and household staff on Hollinger's tab. The company even put up twelve million dollars for a collection of F.D.R. memorabilia—when Black happened to be working on a biography of F.D.R.

In the end, the ingrates got their revenge. In recent months, Black has been deposed as chairman and C.E.O., called on the carpet by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and sued by Hollinger, which is looking to reclaim those management fees. Suddenly, Black has become an unwelcome intruder in the affairs of a company that he started.

Black succumbed to what might be called Hammer's syndrome: the failure of people who have taken a private company public to understand that the company is no longer entirely theirs. The condition owes its name to its most notorious exemplar, Armand Hammer, the founder of Occidental Petroleum. Its chief symptom is an acute inability to abide by the rules that come into play when you use other people's money—most obviously the fact that the cash a company earns does not belong to the biggest shareholder. Hammer, for instance, used Occidental's assets to buy a $5.8-million Leonardo da Vinci notebook (which Hammer renamed after himself), finance an art museum (named after himself), and fund the second volume of his autobiography. And he kept collecting a million-dollar salary long after he stopped doing any real work (and even after he died). More recently, the Rigas family, which founded a cable company called Adelphia Communications, used corporate money to build a



golf course, fund an independent film, and buy an N.H.L. franchise. And in the late nineties Charles Wang, the founder of Computer Associates, used accounting shenanigans to justify bonuses worth more than a billion dollars for himself and two of his executives. (They ended up giving most of it back after their shareholders revolted.)

This isn't just garden-variety greed, of the sort that's all too common among C.E.O.s these days. It's more a sense of droit du seigneur. Black didn't hide it, either. "I'm not prepared to reënact the French Revolutionary renunciation of the rights of nobility," he wrote to a Hollinger colleague. And, to the last, he seemed perplexed that anyone would object to questionable payments or over-the-top perks, forgetting that, once he'd taken Hollinger public, he was required to act in the interests of all the shareholders. At a private company, Black's self-dealing wouldn't have been a big deal. At a public one, it got him fired.

If you own a company, there are two ways to raise money: debt (borrow it from banks or bondholders) and equity (sell shares in your company to outsiders). Traditionally, equity has been seen as more forgiving. If you don't make debt payments, you can go bankrupt. If you disappoint your shareholders, your stock price just goes down. But equity can sometimes be harder on owners than debt, because it imposes restrictions and responsibilities that didn't exist before. Bondholders don't care how you run your company as long as you make your interest payments. Shareholders do care, and, if you're going to make yourself rich, they want you to make them rich, too.

Everyone assumes that Black did very well for himself at Hollinger, but taking Hollinger public was not the strategic masterstroke he imagined it would be. The stock price today is about where it was a decade ago. Over the years, Black sold a good portion of his stake, but never at a premium. Nor did he put that "cheap capital" to good use. Hollinger's business is much weaker than it was ten years ago, and the company has spent the past few years dumping assets and paring back.

Like most victims of Hammer's syndrome, Black was doubly deluded. He thought that he could take his company public and retain absolute control, and that going public would magically create money from nothing. In the long run, though, a company is only as valuable as the cash it generates, and whether it's public or private can't change that. Some people—Ronald Perelman, for example—have a genius for spinning piles of cash for themselves out of other people's money. Black, despite his contempt for the sansculottes, is not one of them. A decade ago, he was running a good business that guaranteed him the public attention he craved. Today, he has lost the business and attracted public attention of a less savory kind. And now it's Bastille Day.

*—James Surowiecki*

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CAMPAIGN JOURNAL

# THE SHAKEOUT

*Reversals of fortune in a high-stakes race.*

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

John Kerry's long, angular face has something of the abstraction of a tribal mask. The features are at once stark and exaggerated, and, with the exception of his mouth, none of the parts appear to move. The eyes are astonishingly small and, because they are also deep-set and heavily hooded, it is hard to find a direct line of sight into them. You have to draw very near Kerry to discover that his face is animated by a range of intense feeling. Of course, now that he is leading the race for the Democratic Presidential nomination, it won't be as easy to get near him as it was in Iowa and New Hampshire, where he wooed voters one by one, with a patience that bordered on the stoical. And, even at close range, there is an aura of distance about him, which the deep, oratorical pitch of his voice reinforces. Even in a tête-a-tête, the rumbling formality of his diction can make him sound as if he were giving a speech. Occasionally, on the stump, during a sustained eruption of applause from his audience, a smile full of lightness and joy will break his grave composure. But his default look is unyieldingly earnest—an expression that suggests a man "seized," as a commission of inquiry might say, by matters of consequence.

Kerry, a high-toned Brahmin, is the stiffest candidate in a generally humorless Democratic-primary field. Yet his campaign rallies consistently muster a fuller and more complex emotional charge than those of his rivals. Kerry achieves the unlikely mix of coolness and passion by packing the rostrum with surrogates—friends, family members, former comrades in arms, and political pals—to whom he surrenders a good deal of his own speaking time. Kerry's rivals all have access to one or two nerve endings in their stump repertoire: Howard Dean does righteous outrage; Wesley Clark does patriotism; Richard Gephardt did working-class solidarity; John Edwards, the Party's spellbinding, stem-winding new superstar speech-maker, does the sting of injustice coupled with exuberant optimism so well you can taste the opportunity in the air. But a Kerry rally is something of a variety show: a raucous Teddy Kennedy whips up the crowd, and cracks wise about being the in-law of an Austrian bodybuilder turned Republican governor of California; Kerry's stepson, Chris Heinz, may do his Arnold impersonation, or he may express surprise at how the family has been drawn more closely together by the stresses of the campaign; Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, and daughters, Alexandra and Vanessa, chat easily about his presence in their lives, intimating his affectionate nature by displaying their own; and Vietnam veterans tell of their time under Kerry's command, and his continuing support long after the shooting stopped.

The high point of the Kerry road show came in Iowa, two days before the caucuses, when a man named Jim Rassmann flew into Des Moines from his home in Oregon and identified himself as a Special Forces veteran who had been blown off a swift boat under Kerry's command in Vietnam during "a hellacious firefight." He had survived only because Kerry, who was himself wounded, turned back under fire and pulled him out of the water. The two men had not seen each other since that brief encounter in the war, but Rassmann, a registered Republican, had suddenly decided that his savior was a good thing for the country and volunteered for his campaign. Rassmann appeared in Des Moines just before the caucuses, and at a rally there, he told the story of his rescue. Then Kerry reclaimed the mike and said, "There isn't a person in this room who wouldn't have gone back under those conditions to get a fellow-American." There were a thousand people in the room, but Kerry's words made one wonder about the other candidates, and about President Bush.

Even after his upset victory in Iowa

over the longtime front-runner, Howard Dean, Kerry refused to portray himself as the new man to beat. "I feel like a guy who's been on the catch-up road for a while and who's coming from behind," he told me on his campaign bus, the Real Deal Express, shortly after dusk on the eve of the New Hampshire primary. But the next night New Hampshire, too, was his. The results in these first two contests upended expectations and dramatically transformed the Democratic race. Just three weeks earlier, before any votes had been cast, Dean's lead had appeared virtually unassailable, and Kerry's candidacy seemed moribund. It is impossible to say if this abrupt shakeout was more a function of Kerry's success in winning the confidence of voters or of Dean's failure to retain it. Democrats say that what they are seeking above all this year is a candidate who can beat Bush, and while Dean, campaigning as an antiwar, anti-establishment, outsider maverick, tapped the leaderless Party's hot anger, the stolid war hero Kerry, with twenty years of experience in the foreign and domestic policy debates of the Senate, better fit the cold calculus of electability. A popular lapel button describes the scenario for many voters in Iowa and New Hampshire: "Dated Dean—Married Kerry."

Howard Dean spent much of the week between his humiliating defeat in the Iowa caucuses and his crushing rejection in New Hampshire attempting to act mild-mannered and chastened. He told *USA Today* that he had decided to go back to being himself, which made one wonder when he'd stopped and who he'd been in the meantime—on caucus night in Iowa, for instance, when he stalked the stage of the Val Air ballroom in West Des Moines, in shirt sleeves, assuring a howling throng of about a thousand followers, "We will not give up. . . .We will not quit, now or ever. We want our country back for ordinary Americans," then belting out the names of all the states he vowed to conquer on his way to the White House and letting loose his now canonical scream. He looked berserk, and sounded worse—like a man being stabbed. The incessant cycles of audio and video replay that ensued created the impression that Dean had lost Iowa because he screamed, when it was the other way around: he screamed because he lost. And what one really felt inside the Val Air ballroom that night was that the candidate and his followers—who whooped right along with him—were in shock and had not really registered the ferocity of the blow they had received.

The speed and extremity of Dean's reversal of fortune is attributable chiefly to self-inflicted wounds. At the peak of his popularity, in December and early January, Dean made a series of missteps and intemperate or impolitic statements that required retraction or clarification and repelled voters seeking the sort of plain-spoken, steady, and reliable man he professed to be. The relentless press scrutiny that comes with front-runner status also proved withering. By mid-January, with the Iowa caucuses a few days off, Joe Trippi, who was then Dean's campaign manager, complained that reporters and rival campaigns had set a tone of "Here's the attack, what's the response, here's the attack, what's the response," and, he said, "our message got lost." In fact, when it came to attack politics in Iowa, Dean gave every bit



*Senator John Kerry in Manchester, New Hampshire, on January 27, 2004, after he won the Democratic primary.*

KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

as good as he got. After all, the premise of his crusading campaign was to taunt "Washington insiders" like Kerry—and also Congressman Gephardt and Senator Edwards—as spineless, and co-opted by association with "special interests." Yet, even as Dean hammered away at this theme, he solicited establishment grandees (members of Congress, labor leaders, and figureheads such as Jimmy Carter and Al Gore) to stand beside him and smile while he scolded Washington and its fat cats.

Dean likes to call his grass-roots support base a movement to change American politics, and he clearly considers it to be something bigger and grander than a mere Presidential campaign. (His ambition, in this respect, is apparently boundless: in New Hampshire, two days before the primary, I saw him address a gathering sponsored by Women for Dean where, instead of concluding his remarks as he normally does, by saying, "We want our country back," he said, "The most important thing is the human soul and we want that back.") His following, forged largely in cyberspace through online communities, had the quality of a political Internet bubble: insular and sustained by collective belief rather than by any objective external reality.

For all his invocation of Harry Truman's blunt pragmatism, Dean—with his plump Rotarian looks, and his oddly impish Dennis the Menace smile—presented himself on the stump in distinctly messianic tones. To hear the Dean team tell it, he was the only American in public life who had the guts to disagree with George Bush, the only one who criticized the war, the only one with a national health-care plan, the only one who talked about the need to cleanse Washington of the corrupting influence of special interests. "This campaign is about power," he said, and claimed that a vote for him was a vote for "the people," to whom he proposed to return that power. Lifting a line from Ralph Nader's playbook from 2000, he said, "The way to beat George Bush is to reach out to the fifty per cent of Americans who quit voting because they can't tell the parties apart." Dean let stand the notion that the two parties are the same, labelling his rivals with Washington on their résumés "Bush Lite."

Joe Trippi, who was responsible for many of the most successful tactical and fund-raising innovations of the Dean campaign, as well as for many of Dean's best lines, said to me, "George Bush's view is either you're with us or you're against us. The other Democrats have said, 'O.K., let's meet partway and work with you.' We're saying, 'No, you don't get it. They say if you're not with us you're against us. They don't give you a choice. So we say, O.K., let's make this really clear: we're against you.' " Yet, in their zeal to run a revolutionary "movement to take back America" by animating the disenfranchised Democratic base rather than playing to swing voters in the center, Dean and his followers adopted the same with-us-or-against-us posture that they found so objectionable in Republicans.

Ultimately, it was not the tone so much as the substance of Dean's message that turned off his erstwhile supporters. The steep decline of his popularity in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary corresponded to the rise of "electability" as a chief consideration in determining Democrats' choice of a candidate. Dean's desire to reinstate all the taxes Bush has cut, including those on the middle class, might make sense, but as a campaign plank it is probably suicidal. (The other major Democratic contenders seek to repeal only the tax breaks that the Bush Administration has bestowed on those who make more than two hundred thousand dollars a



*"Your mom cooks the chicken, but your dad makes it dance."*

year.) Dean's vaunted antiwar message also failed to mobilize voters. Though he harangued Kerry, Edwards, and Gephardt for supporting the congressional resolution in October, 2002, that authorized Bush to go to war against Saddam Hussein, his claim that they "voted for the war" was effectively neutralized by their powerful critiques of the Administration's unilateral invasion of Iraq. Democrats who wondered how Dean's inexperienced and at times incoherent approach to foreign policy might play if he were the Party's nominee could not help noticing that Republican Party bosses and pundits considered him easily defeatable. The editors of *The National Review* ran Dean's face on the cover of the magazine with the headline "Please Nominate This Man."

Democrats who never took to Dean celebrated his defeat as a liberation from doom. But many who dreaded the prospect of Dean as the Presidential nominee also acknowledged that he had liberated the Party and given it spine after the protracted period of cowed complacency following September 11, 2001. "Before Dean did his thing, the Party, the press—everyone—had this idea that it was impossible to confront Bush without looking unpatriotic," James Rubin, a former Assistant Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration, who is now General Clark's senior foreign-policy adviser, said to me. "I give the guy full credit for restoring political opposition—well, that is, restoring normal politics—in America." And a veteran Democratic strategist who worked closely with Kerry for a time said, "I think what Dean has done is tapped into a notion of an opposition party. But no candidate yet has really created an opposition identity to stand up ideologically to the Republican Party. You haven't seen anyone out there announcing their New Deal, their New Frontier."

What Democrats who speak this way are grappling with is the fact that their party lacks cohesion, discipline, and direction. Its identity is entirely dependent on its leader, and, ever since Gore conceded the election to Bush in 2000, that means it has been a party up for grabs. As the Party chairman, Terry McAuliffe, told CNN on the morning of the Iowa caucuses, "Whoever the nominee of the Democratic Party is," that person "will become the messenger . . . and that will become the message as we head forth."

John Kerry said much the same thing. "We don't really have an opposition party in this country except during the brief period, every four years, between the nomination and the election," he told me. Richard Holbrooke, who represented the Clinton Administration at the United Nations, agrees: "The primaries provide an opportunity for opposition parties to get their act together." This is especially significant when a single party controls the White House and both houses of Congress, as the Republicans do now. The Democrats, without any means to set the agenda, are not so much in opposition as in exile. So, while policy differences do matter in a primary, Kerry said, "I think people are really measuring who has shown leadership, whose vision is consistent with the fights he's picked in a lifetime, and whose vision connects to his life and to their gut." An aide to one of Kerry's rivals put it more bluntly: "The way people elect Presidents is very different from how they elect other officeholders. If it was smarts or experience people are looking for, Gore would've won in a landslide. But with Presidents they vote a feeling. They don't give a crap whether they like their senators. But they care whether they like their Presidents. They're going to watch him on television for four years and have feelings about him every time, and they vote for someone they like and want to keep liking."



The power of personality over the fate of the Party is precisely what makes some Democrats nervous about Kerry, whose sepulchral demeanor and patrician locutions proved such an obstacle to connecting with voters until the prospect of a Dean candidacy started losing its lustre. He is plainly tougher than Gore, more sure of himself, less wooden. But outside of V.F.W. lodges he is hard-pressed to pass himself off as a man of the people, particularly in the South, a region whose support—or lack of it—has long been decisive for Democratic Presidential hopefuls. "On that level, Kerry's the same as Dean, a typical Democratic implosion device: Northeast liberals, they'll just get slaughtered," a former Clinton Administration adviser fretted. He believes that the Party's hope lies with Wesley Clark or John Edwards, the two Southerners in the race. (An Edwards volunteer from Tennessee told me that Clark, Arkansas roots notwithstanding, wouldn't play well in the South. "We haven't had good luck with generals as President," the Tennessean said. When I remarked that in the past century that could mean only Eisenhower, he said, "Yeah, but we remember Ulysses S. Grant. Traditions in the South kind of die hard.")

Like Dean, Clark is an insurgent candidate—and, unlike Dean, he is a true outsider to both the Party, which he joined only last year, and domestic politics. When Clark declared his candidacy, last fall, he had no political experience at all. Nevertheless, he was running on his résumé as the former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. Clark had star power, and the fund-raising advantages that accompany it, but although he developed into a compelling campaign orator, when it came to spelling out his policies he was often erratic, and not infrequently seemed simply to be winging his positions as he went along. He is running as an international-affairs man, but the strongest parts of his stump speech are his riffs on faith, in which he accuses Bush of failing to practice the religion he preaches and denounces as a form of apostasy the Republican Party's exploitation of God-talk.

Clark came on the scene when Kerry appeared to be a lost cause and Dean was in his ascendancy. He presented himself as a fierce critic of the Iraq war, with the patriotic and military credentials that Dean lacks. Having entered the race late, he skipped Iowa to make his name in New Hampshire, where he assumed that he would be running as an alternative to Dean, and he was thrown off kilter when Kerry emerged as the front-runner. In the days after the New

Hampshire primary, as the nomination race moved south and west, several members of Clark's staff said that they did not expect the campaign to last much longer.

Then again, one of John Edwards's advisers had told me in early January that Edwards would not survive Iowa. But, a week before the caucuses, he won the endorsement of the Des Moines *Register*, a newspaper that for several crucial weeks every four years becomes among the most influential publications on earth. All at once, after languishing near the bottom of the polls for months on end, Edwards was the candidate to reconsider in Iowa, and, as his crowds swelled from dozens to scores and then hundreds, the word went out that he was the best Democratic stump speaker anyone could remember—"better even than Clinton," James Carville declared.

Edwards's boyish ease, his smooth good looks, and his astonishing verbal agility create an aura of sunny youth that is not entirely accurate. He is, after all, a successful trial lawyer, and he is anything but happy-go-lucky. All that polished charm is in the service of a message of political reform and social justice. "We have so much work to do in this country," he begins his standard speech, and, having thus enlisted the audience as his partner, he describes an America divided by economic and racial inequality and lays out a program to fix it: education reform, a national healthcare program, economic policies to spur job growth. These are the issues all the other Democrats speak about, but Edwards seems to be talking about the lives of the people gathered around him, not just about policy. He never tires of reminding people that he is the son of a millworker, and although he went around in a suit and tie in Iowa and New Hampshire, he seemed to be at home everywhere. At town-hall meetings, Dean delivered his responses to the TV cameras; Edwards never broke eye contact with the person who had addressed him.

During a ten-minute meet-and-greet at Willy Woodburn's diner, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on the morning of caucus day, which was also Martin Luther King Day, Edwards hopped onto a chair, and, after speaking about the wages of segregation in the South during his boyhood, he shifted to "another issue that we don't talk about enough these days—the issue of thirty-five million Americans who are living in poverty." Edwards speaks of poverty, and the public silence that surrounds it, at every opportunity. "I know that most of these folks don't vote," he said, "but we should talk about Americans living in poverty because it is wrong. . . . In a country of our wealth it is wrong for children to go to bed hungry, for children not to have the clothes to keep them warm. It is wrong in a country of our wealth to have folks who are working full time every day, trying to provide for their families, working for minimum wage, and living in poverty. This is not the country that we want to live in." Then he said, "It's time for me and you to lift up this country again, to make the American people believe again in what is possible." He invoked the examples of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, who had come to office in times of great divisions. "I don't believe I can change this country alone," he said. "But I believe that you and I can do it together."

A few minutes later, aboard his campaign bus, Edwards told me that the issues Iowans cared most about were jobs, health care, and the American predicament in Iraq. He hadn't mentioned any of these things to the crowd at Willy Woodburn's. "I think the way for the Democratic Party to be strong and to reach out to people who feel disenfranchised, and also to bring others into the Party, is to spend more time talking about what's right and what is wrong," he said. "I started doing this awhile back just because I felt the need to do it, and there's been an enormous response to it."

Edwards has held public office for only five years, and his relative lack of experience in foreign policy—despite a seat on the Senate Intelligence Committee—is often seen as his biggest handicap in the first Presidential race since September 11th. But he speaks of Iraq with as much fluency and confidence as the other candidates, advocating a Kosovo-like model, with the U.N. overseeing the civilian authority, and NATO providing security along the borders with Saudi Arabia and Iran, so that American forces "can concentrate on the Sunni triangle where most of the violence has occurred." Without naming any of his rivals, Edwards repudiates the isolationist sentiment that is widespread among antiwar Democrats. "I think it's a mistake for America not, first of all, to be out there addressing the threat of terrorism, the threat of the spread of weap-

## OUTSIDE

The dead thing mashed into the street
the crows are squabbling over isn't
her, nor are their raucous squawks
the quiet cawing from her throat
those final hours she couldn't speak.
But the racket irks him.
It seems a cruel intrusion into grief
so mute it will never be expressed
no matter how loud or long the wailing
he might do. Nor could there be a word
that won't debase it, no matter
how kind or who it comes from.
She knew how much he loved her.
That must be his consolation
when he must talk to buy necessities.
Every place will be a place without her.
What people will see when they see him
pushing a shopping cart or fetching mail
is just a neatly dressed polite old man.

—*Michael Ryan*

ons of mass destruction, and addressing democracy," he said. "I think America should lead. When we don't lead, there's a huge vacuum in the world. I don't agree with the way this President leads, but I think it is important for us to lead."

Edwards doesn't apologize for supporting the Iraq war resolution. Like Kerry, he understands that vote to be an essential credential for mounting an effective challenge to Bush's handling of Iraq. It allows the candidate to say: I voted to give you the authority a Commander-in-Chief needs, because that was the right and responsible thing to do in order to confront a dictator who was flouting international law, but you squandered my trust by failing to honor your own responsibility, and by rushing to war without provocation, on the basis of misleading evidence, without the support of our allies, without a proper plan for the aftermath, at a great expense of American lives, treasure, and international reputation, and now you must answer for that.

"I'm prepared to fight in the toughest way possible against George Bush," Edwards said. "I think you must be tough and make the case and hold him accountable for what he has done across multiple fronts, because he is out of touch with what's going on with the American people. But you also have to have a specific alternative about where the country needs to go. Without the second part, you're just running against him." No wonder the Bush-Cheney campaign, which has announced a strategy of depicting Democrats as carping pessimists and naysayers, is reported to be unhappy with the prospect of Edwards winding up on the ticket, even as another candidate's running mate. Some of the loudest applause for his stump speech always comes when he says, "My campaign is not based on the politics of cynicism. My campaign is based on the politics of hope."

To judge by the State of the Union address this year, President Bush must have been very nearly as surprised as Dean was by Kerry's win and Edwards's strong second-place showing in Iowa. The speech, which the White House had scheduled for the night after the caucuses, was conceived as the opening salvo of Bush's reëlection campaign, and it read almost like a point-by-point dismissal of the Dean stump speech. (The Republican National Committee swiftly redirected its attention to Kerry's legislative record, and, upon finding that he has a higher approval rating than Ted Kennedy from the liberal organization Americans for Democratic Action, the R.N.C. chairman, Ed Gillespie, quipped, "Who would have guessed it? Ted Kennedy is the conservative senator from Massachusetts.")

But if the voters of Iowa and New Hampshire are any indication of the broader national mood, the President's premature focus on Dean as his challenger may be part of a greater strategic miscalculation. While the Bush-Cheney camp wants the "war on terror" and issues of national and international security to dominate the agenda and determine the outcome of November's election, one of the clear messages of the nominating contests is that many Democratic voters are still upset with the President Bush they remember from September 10, 2001. John Kerry lists the chief concern of the voters he's met in the same order that John Edwards does, with domestic economic, social, and health issues foremost. "To get to those issues, we have to have a nominee who can address the security issue, meet the test, and get past it," Kerry said to me. "And then you can get to the critical issues regarding the quality of life, and that's where I think the election will be decided."

Of course, Kerry was talking about the Presidential election. If a Democrat does win the White House in November, he may not be able to do everything he's now telling voters he means to do. After all, a Democratic strategist said to me over drinks recently, "There are five—five!—Democratic seats in the Senate up for grabs in the South. We could lose four. I think we will. And the Republicans could have a majority for thirty to forty years. Do you understand what's at stake? George Bush with no concern about reëlection, a filibuster-proof Senate, a G.O.P. able to raise a billion dollars a year, packed courts, government shrunk to whatever level they like, gerrymandered districts." A colleague of the strategist, who was a bit soberer, agreed. "This has the potential to be one of those periods in the country's history when a single party dominates for a very long time—unless we nominate the right guy." ♦



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

# MY COMEUPPANCE

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

Last summer, while she was still at Us, Ms. Fuller received a phone call from an intermediary acting for Mr. Pecker. To avoid detection, Mr. Pecker and Ms. Fuller met on weekends at a diner in Elmsford, N.Y., a blue-collar town midway between their homes. After only a couple of meetings they reached an agreement last summer for Ms. Fuller to be editorial director of American Media's titles. . . .

Editors rarely jump between the fiercely rivalrous Hearst and Conde Nast Publications Inc., but Ms. Fuller did when Conde Nast approached her to edit Glamour. Afraid to be spotted together in public, Ms. Fuller and Conde Nast Editorial Director James Truman met in a seedy tavern in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen district.

—*The Wall Street Journal.*

It didn't bother me all that much when my parents decided to dump me; it was the way they did it. They had an intermediary, my third cousin, call me (actually, he faxed me, which is sort of obnoxious, since he knows I'm afraid that people will find out I still *use* a fax machine) and tell me they wanted to meet with me—not in public, at one of the upper-middle-class, twenty-eight-dollar-entrée restaurants in Manhattan where we usually met but in the janitor's closet at my old suburban high school, directly downstairs from the alcove where the C students, whose low-to-middle-income families lived in small houses on busy roads near the school, hung out. Or, at least, that's where they used to hang out when I was in school. I graduated twenty years ago, and I wondered who hung out there now as I got off the train and stepped onto the platform, where several poor people holding stained, crumpled off-peak tickets, which were probably stolen, were waiting to board. The train had arrived a little late, because of some track work being done by men whose ancestors were from Italy—not from the north of Italy but from the less affluent south. So we needn't say any more about them. This isn't about them anyway. I was going to have to hurry to meet my parents on time, but the hazmat suit I was wearing to avoid being spotted made walking difficult; it did, however, hide the sable coat I had been given by the Employee Assistance Program at my last job, which was a yellowish-white-collar job. (No-iron blouses just don't stay white-white after a couple of dozen washings.) On the days when the only clean thing in my closet was a blouse that



had once gone through the wash with a red T-shirt, I used to say that I had a pink-collar job. I always thought that was so funny. Luckily, I found a cab near the station, and I pretended to listen to the Ukrainian driver as he droned on about what a great country this is, and how you could keep jumping between jobs without ever actually landing on one if you had the right athletic shoes—the good, expensive kind with a lot of bounce, made in the Philippines, an iffy country midway between Grosse Pointe and Windsor Castle. He was probably still at it even after he dropped me off, four miles from the school. (I was afraid that someone would see us together and think we were an item.) Actually, I'm not sure he was Ukrainian—he may have been Nigerian.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

When I walked past the alcove to the stairwell that led to the basement, I sensed that the future repairmen of my day had given way to a different group, which, unsettlingly, I could not characterize economically but included what I guess were Asian mathematical geniuses, striving African-Americans, and entrepreneurial Native Americans—I assume they were Native Americans, because I thought I heard cards being shuffled and roulette wheels spinning. I probably would have had a better idea of who they were if I hadn't taped over the eyeholes of my hazmat suit to avoid detection by any of my old teachers, who seethed with class resentment, though they kept it as quiet as the sound of their medium-priced crêpe-soled shoes hitting the maroon linoleum floors—floors that screamed "public school" in a shrill, vulgar tone of voice, like a waitress in a diner—or by any of the school secretaries, who tried to mask their sadness and rage over having attended mediocre community colleges in borderline neighborhoods by wearing loud floral polyester prints they bought on sale and by drinking too much. The really sad thing, though, was that the vodka they drank was some brand you've never even heard of, and if you think I'm kidding then you don't know me very well.

Going down the stairs, I lost my balance and tripped a little, but I managed to grab hold of the railing, which was probably the same seasick-immigrant green it was twenty years ago, when the school handyman last painted it—he was from Elmsford and didn't know anything about color, and what went with what. Reaching the bottom, I felt my way to the janitor's closet, where my parents were waiting for me.

I wasn't used to being in such close quarters with my parents. When I was growing up, they generally kept to the more upscale part of the house, while I preferred the seedier rooms, where I could do whatever I wanted, knowing that several years might go by before my parents would think to look for me there. But here we were, and they wasted no time telling me what was on their minds.

"We want to buy out your contract," my mother said. She had once been pretty, but all the years of failing to jump between jobs had taken their toll, and now she looked worn out, as if she had just finished a fiercely rivalrous potato-sack race in Hell's Kitchen.

I was shocked but not surprised. Or maybe I was surprised but not shocked. I can't remember. I had come out here half expecting a promotion, since I had always been the best daughter I knew how to be: I had put 3-in-One oil in my sister's shampoo the morning of her wedding; I had worked hard to create bad blood between my maternal grandparents and my paternal ones; I had told my twin younger brothers that our parents had called one of them "worthless" but I wouldn't tell them which one; and I once spent a whole weekend calling all nine of my cousins every half hour and asking them, "Do you have Hearst in a can?," and then hanging up. I had groomed myself to be the family's editorial director, and it had come to nothing. Just like that, in one meeting, I was out of the family.

By now, it was four in the afternoon—right around the time that some blue-collar workers finish their shift and head for the nearest seedy tavern and other blue-collar workers are just getting ready to go to work, either in beat-up old cars or in showily new ones that they can't really afford—and I had to get back to the city. As I pushed people into the street on my way to the train station, I reflected on the day's events, and I began to see why my parents had chosen the janitor's closet as the place to end our relationship. Not being spotted by anyone we knew enabled all of us to go on from there with our heads held high, or, if not exactly high, midway between low and high. When fiercely rivalrous publications call to ask about what happened, my parents say I left to pursue other options; I say I just got understandably restless after thirty-eight years with the same family. Anyway, I'm doing O.K. The settlement I got from my parents was enough to pay for my tuition at intermediary school, and I hope to get my intermediary's license in a few years and start making phone calls for other people, and eventually, if all goes well, jump between jobs. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen. I have no complaints, and in many ways I'm right where I want to be—happily living in an apartment I'm ashamed of in a town midway between the town I wish I lived in and the town where I wish I had a summer house. As I said, I'm doing O.K. ♦


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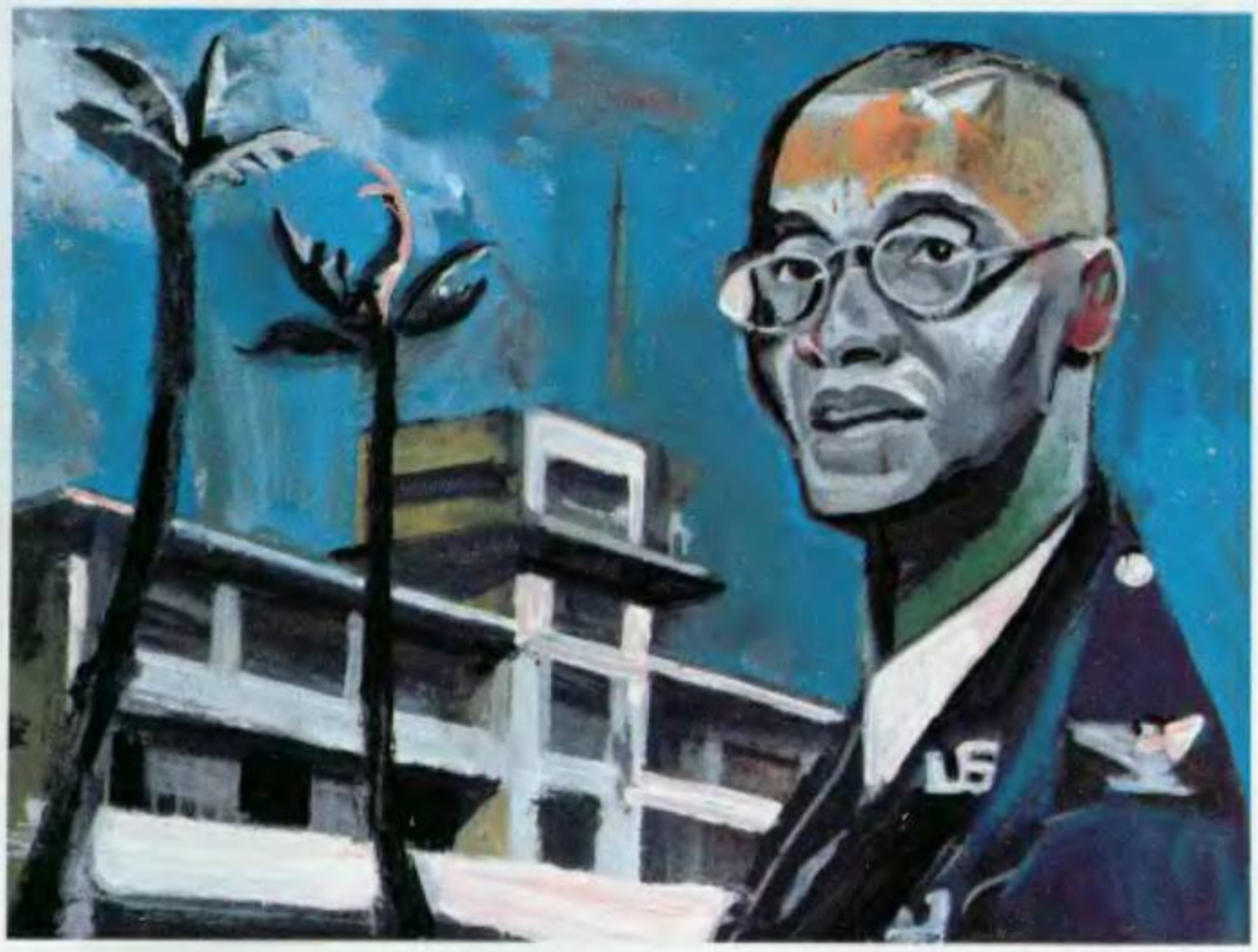
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ANNALS OF LAW

# INSIDE THE WIRE

*Can an Air Force colonel help the detainees at Guantánamo?*

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN



*When offered the job, Will Gunn wondered, "Is someone trying to torpedo my career?"*

Will Gunn was on a training mission to Buenos Aires when he learned that he might be chosen as the lead defense counsel in the trials by military tribunal of the detainees at Guantánamo Bay. The military has placed approximately six hundred and fifty suspected war criminals, captured in connection with the war in Afghanistan, in custody at the American naval base in Cuba—the interrogation and detention center now officially known as Joint Task Force Guantánamo. Their ranks, and thus Gunn's potential clients, could include Osama bin Laden, if he is ever captured. "My first reaction was, Is somebody trying to torpedo my career?" Gunn, a colonel in the Air Force, recalled recently. "It occurred to me that there would be people who would not be able to understand how I could represent individuals who are characterized as enemies of the United States."

Gunn, a career military lawyer, is forty-five years old and African-American. At six feet seven, he is used to viewing things from a distance, and he made a thorough evaluation of the opportunity that had been presented to him. "For me, a critical component of how I make decisions is I try to weigh the costs from a rational and intellectual standpoint, and I also pray about it," he said. Many friends advised him against taking the job, and his pastor was noncommittal. "We really don't know what God is trying to do," the pastor told Gunn.

The son of a high-school teacher and a social worker from Fort Lauderdale—and a graduate of the Air Force Academy and of Harvard Law School—Gunn has made steady progress through the military hierarchy; many of his colleagues thought the tribunal job would not help if he wanted to be promoted to general. Still, Gunn said, "I felt I could do the job well. I believe that the greatest risk to the country is that these trials could be conducted in such a way where the world's perception is that they are illegitimate proceedings. What I would bring to the table, I believe, is that I could divorce myself from concern about career advancement, and I could focus on doing my utmost to see that the process was in fact legitimate by pursuing a zealous defense." So when the general counsel to the Department of Defense offered Gunn the job, in January of 2003, he accepted. He now supervises a staff of six lawyers, from behind a set of unmarked doors in an anonymous office building close to the Pentagon.

More than two years after the September 11th attacks, the Bush Administration's approach to the legal aspects of its war on terrorism resembles its diplomatic and military strategy: aggressive, unilateral, and unapologetic. Gunn and his staff therefore find themselves in an awkward position, risking criticism for assisting some of the least popular clients in the West and for participating in a game rigged against those clients. Because the tribunals are likely to begin soon, Gunn's role has taken on new urgency. The Department of Defense has almost finished establishing the procedures for the tribunals, and the Bush Administration has designated six of the Guantánamo detainees as the probable first defendants. In the spring, the United States Supreme Court will hear arguments on a separate request by several prisoners, represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights and a private law firm, that they be allowed to challenge, in the American courts, their continued incarceration. But the absence of legal proceedings, as much as the cases themselves, may illustrate more about the Administration's war on terror—and about the place of the rule of law in this new kind of war.

Paradoxes abound in Guantánamo Bay. It's in Cuba, but almost no one speaks Spanish. It's a focus of international attention, but the hardest thing for many of the Americans who work there is the boredom. Some of these peculiarities can be traced to the origins of the American presence there in the Spanish-American War. After American and Cuban forces evicted the Spanish from the island in 1898, United States forces remained on forty-five square miles along the southern coast, an idyllic patch of Caribbean coastline

ANDREA VENTURA

where four-foot-long iguanas may startle unwary pedestrians.

The American presence became official with a treaty signed by the two nations in 1903. "The most important part of the agreement was that it became a perpetual lease," Les McCoy, the Navy captain in charge of the base, told me when I visited Guantánamo in December. "Unless we abandon the base, it will remain a U.S. base unless we both agree that Cuba should get it back." The annual rent is now four thousand and eighty-five dollars. The American government offers payment to the Cuban government every year, but during the four decades that Fidel Castro has ruled Cuba his government has not accepted it.

From its earliest days as a coaling station for warships, the base at Guantánamo Bay had little military importance, but during the Cold War it was a tense outpost. American and Cuban troops never fought, but the seventeen-mile fence between the two forces was lined by the biggest minefield in the world. (During the nineteen-nineties, the Americans removed their mines; the Cuban mines remain.) In the nineteen-sixties, the Navy built a desalination plant rather than rely on Cuban water, and many of the roads on the base still have small compartments designed to hold explosives, which were to be set off to slow the possible advance of Cuban troops. But the explosives have been gone for years, and Captain McCoy meets with his Cuban counterpart once a month, with the aim of heading off any misunderstandings. When I climbed one of the watchtowers along the border, the marine on duty let me look through his field glasses at the Cuban troops stationed a few hundred yards away. "We have staring contests," he told me with a grin. As McCoy said, "We don't guard the border so much as survey it."

The war in Afghanistan created an unprecedented level of activity at Guantánamo Bay and gave it international notoriety. In January, 2002, the military began moving prisoners there from Afghanistan, and all the armed services, not just the Navy, were asked to run Joint Task Force Guantánamo. In a gesture to promote interservice coöperation, members of the task force call each other not soldiers, sailors, or marines but, rather, "troopers." The Administration labelled the prisoners "unlawful combatants" rather than prisoners of war, and thus denied them the protections of the Geneva convention—a decision that provoked wide international disapproval. Among the rights granted by the Geneva convention is the right to an individual hearing to determine the status of each prisoner. (The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights has accused the Administration of using the term "unlawful combatant" in order to "avoid well-established standards of U.S. and international law." The Administration's view, expressed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, is that the detainees are "committed terrorists" and therefore not entitled to P.O.W. status.)

At first, the detainees were housed in a facility that had held a stream of Cuban and Haitian refugees in the early nineties. That structure, which had been hastily built, was little more than a series of interlocking chain-link fences surrounded by barbed wire; it was known as Camp X-Ray. It was replaced in April of 2002 by the much larger and more secure Camp Delta, a sprawling complex at the remote western edge of the base, which comprises two dozen buildings, six guard towers, several interrogation trailers, and a hospital, all wrapped in six layers of barbed wire.

The construction of Camp Delta was a huge undertaking; it has already cost at least seventy million dollars. About two hundred journalists, delegations from fifty foreign governments, and many American elected officials have toured the base in the past eighteen months. Most detainees "inside the wire" are housed in seven-by-eight-foot cells built in blocks of forty-eight; the cellblocks, made of steel mesh, are open to the elements, though a roof keeps out the rain.

Nearly all the inmates are Muslim. The call to prayer sounds over loudspeakers five times a day, and in each cell a spray-painted arrow points toward Mecca. Food in the prison is prepared according to halal dietary requirements. Commander Louis Louk, Jr., a podiatrist and reservist who is the officer in charge of the detention hospital, notes that most of the detainees have gained weight. "They get fat very quickly," he


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said. "Two other big complaints are constipation and sports injuries—sprained ankles and toes, from volleyball and soccer." Most of the prisoners spend as much as twenty-three hours a day in their cells, with an hour for exercise. Apart from this daily recreation and one shower a week, they leave their cells only for interrogation. By the standards of American maximum-security prisons, the conditions at Camp Delta are harsh but not unusual. Delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross have visited the detainees. That organization, in keeping with its practice, has refused to comment publicly on conditions at the base, preferring to negotiate directly with American officials.

On a day-to-day basis, Camp Delta is run by Colonel Jerry Cannon, an Army reservist who is otherwise the sheriff of Kalkaska County, in rural Michigan. As he led my tour group of six journalists though an empty cellblock, he pointed to one of the cells and chuckled. "Heck, in my jail back home, there would be two people in there," he said. (Actually, according to officials at Cannon's jail, their cells for two are about forty-five per cent larger than those at Camp Delta.) There is no execution chamber at Guantánamo, although under tribunal rules the death penalty may be imposed for certain offenses.

Criticism of the American operation at Guantánamo has focussed less on the conditions of incarceration than on its indefinite length. The military has disclosed the number of prisoners, and the fact that they included three teen-agers, who were kept in a small house known as Camp Iguana. (Last week, the Pentagon announced that the three juveniles had been released, after more than a year on the base.) The military has also disclosed that the inmates are citizens of forty-four countries. (A sign in the Camp Delta hospital indicated that patients there speak Arabic, Pashto, Urdu, Uighur, Russian, and Farsi.) But, with two exceptions, authorities have not disclosed the prisoners' names, and they have not said when, if ever, the detainees will be released or prosecuted. Twenty-one inmates have attempted suicide, some more than once. None of the suicide attempts were successful, though one prisoner who tried to hang himself was in a coma for three months and remains hospitalized.

There have been no suicide attempts in the past six months, but the International Committee of the Red Cross said last fall that the detainees were suffering "a worrying deterioration" in mental health because Washington had ignored their appeals for legal rights. Camp Delta has increased psychological evaluations of the prisoners, and about fifteen per cent are receiving medication and counselling; guards are supposed to look at each prisoner at least twice a minute. In the past year, about eighty new prisoners have arrived at Camp Delta, and about the same number have been sent home, most of them to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and a few to Saudi Arabia. American officials have not given reasons for either the releases or the arrivals. (Human Rights Watch has said that as many as several dozen detainees are farmers and other civilians.)

Recently, a shingled two-story office building that sits on a bluff overlooking the bay has been renovated and painted yellow. Its new official name is the Yellow Office Building, but it's an open secret that the renovation included a new courtroom on the ground floor—the site of the pending military tribunals, also known as "commissions"—so most people now call it the commissions building. Will Gunn and his staff have already visited it, and paced the floor where they will defend their clients.

A military tribunal is a streamlined legal proceeding that amounts to something less than a criminal trial or a court-martial. Throughout American history, the armed forces have generally employed some kind of tribunal to dispense rough justice in time of war to non-citizens on foreign soil. After the Second World War, the American military government in Germany conducted hundreds of such proceedings. Starting in late 2001, the Bush Administration set out its rules for tribunals, and they basically conform to the Second World War model: military lawyers and judges, flexible rules of evidence, and no right of appeal to the federal court system.

Gunn takes a cautious approach to his role. "I think the process is legitimate now," Gunn told me. "I do not necessarily say, 'Wow, yeah, I love each and every one of these rules, and this is exactly the way that I would have drafted them.' "

Gunn's subordinates display fewer inhibitions. Charlie Swift, a lieutenant commander in the Navy, decided to be a lawyer when, as a navigator on a frigate in Indonesia, he helped four sailors who had been sent to a local jail after being arrested for marijuana possession. "As I was standing on the bridge, I said, 'I like doing that better,' " Swift recalled. He went to law school when he was in his early thirties, and now, at forty-two, he represents Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a Yemeni national being held at Guantánamo. A Marine lawyer on Gunn's staff, Michael Mori, represents David Hicks, an Australian prisoner. Despite diplomatic pressure from around the world, these are the only two detainees who have been identified by the government or provided with lawyers.

"I certainly think these tribunals have the potential to be a rigged game," Swift told me. For example, the trials will be conducted before panels of three to seven officers, but all major legal rulings may be appealed only to the Pentagon, not to the federal courts, as courts-martial can be. "That's like, when there is a controversial call in football, turning it over to the home coach and asking if it's right," Swift says. Even more controversial are the rules about monitoring attorney-client conversations. "They say they can monitor my conversations with my clients, to prevent future terrorism," Swift says. "But I don't think I'm a risk to spread that information. I don't think my loyalty to the United States is under any question." The stated justification for allowing monitoring of attorney-client conversations is to allow the military to gather intelligence. "So, if they haven't gotten someone to talk, they can give him a lawyer and see if he talks to him," Swift says. "That turns the attorney into an agent of the government. You are using the legal system improperly. You are using the incentive to tell the truth to a lawyer against him. I find that disturbing."

Pentagon lawyers assert that the tribunals will adequately protect a defendant's rights. "We have built in a great many procedural safeguards—proof beyond a reasonable doubt, presumption of innocence, military attorney free of charge or private defense counsel at no expense to the government, no adverse inference from remaining silent, the ability to call witnesses," Major John Smith, a Pentagon attorney, says. "We don't fight a war the same way we conduct a police investigation. We are geared toward accepting evidence from the battlefield. It's not more or less fair—it's just different. We recognize the unique battlefield requirements. You are not getting search warrants. There are no Miranda warnings." As for monitoring attorney-client conversations, Smith says that those recordings will be used only for intelligence-gathering, not in prosecuting the detainees.



Even with these modest protections of defendants' rights, no one on Gunn's team displays much optimism about any of the tribunals ending with triumphant walks by lawyer and client into the Caribbean sunset. "The mantra that you will hear from me is that our first obligation is to insure full and fair trials," Gunn says. "I feel it's my obligation to hold the government to that." Michael Mori puts the point more bluntly. "It's a noble thing to stand up for someone who might have no one else in the world to stand up for him," he says. "Marines love underdogs. I'm a marine."

The boldest step taken so far by Gunn's team involves the case before the United States Supreme Court. In the past two years, human-rights groups and others have filed several lawsuits attempting to force the government to justify the indefinite term of the incarcerations. The government has fought these lawsuits furiously, arguing that the detainees have no right to bring cases in United States courtrooms, and that to give them such a right would undermine the President's authority and risk the lives of American troops. As Solicitor General Theodore B. Olson put it in his brief to the Supreme Court, "This litigation challenges the President's military detentions while American soldiers and their allies are still engaged in armed conflict against an unprincipled, unconventional, and savage foe."

In the Supreme Court case, that foe has an unusual ally: the military lawyers who work for Will Gunn. The lawyers, in an extraordinary brief filed on January 14th, directly contradicted the Bush Administration's position, arguing that "the struggle against terrorism is potentially never-ending. The Constitution cannot countenance an open-ended Presidential power, with no civilian review whatsoever, to try anyone the President deems subject to a military tribunal, whose rules and judges have been selected by the prosecuting authority itself." The case actually turns on a fairly narrow question of international law—and it involves one of the most peculiar precedents in Supreme Court history.

That case emerged from the period after the end of the Second World War, when American forces arrested German nationals who were continuing their fight in, of all places, China. In a military tribunal, twenty-one Germans were convicted of continuing hostilities against the United States after their government had surrendered. The German nationals sued in United States federal court to challenge their incarceration. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled six to three that the prisoners had no right to sue, because they were not American citizens and were not situated "within any territory over which the United States is sovereign."

" 'Sovereignty' is an amorphous term, but it's clear what the Court was worried about," Kal Raustiala, a professor of international law at U.C.L.A.'s law school, says. "If you capture people on a foreign battlefield during a war, it would be crazy to let them file lawsuits in an American court. But it's clear that if they are inside the U.S. they can file lawsuits to challenge their detention. The harder questions are about territories that we control but that are not actually part of America. So the Court makes the test: If we have sovereignty over the place, then we let people sue."

The question now before the Supreme Court is whether the United States exercises sovereignty over its naval base at Guantánamo Bay. If it does, the detainees have a right to sue; if not, they don't. The Bush Administration's argument is that, because of the century-old treaty with Cuba, Castro, not Bush, is the true sovereign of the base. As the Solicitor General put it in

his brief, "The military base at Guantánamo is not, and is not remotely like, an American territory."

The most persuasive refutation of the Administration's position may be Guantánamo itself. "This place is more like America than America," Captain McCoy, the commander of the naval base, told me as we sat in his office, which overlooks the bay. "It has been described as Mayberry R.F.D. with bad neighbors. There is little or no crime. It's like the fifties around here." The base, with a population of about five thousand, does resemble a small town. There is an outdoor movie theatre, a nine-hole golf course, and a McDonald's—the only one in Cuba. The speed limit is twenty-five m.p.h. on all roads, and there are no traffic lights. Military charters arrive from Florida about twice a week, and a few small airlines run flights to the base airstrip from Jamaica and other spots in the Caribbean. No one is allowed to fly in without approval from the military.

Of course, the reason that the military sends detainees to Guantánamo is its absolute security. Armed sentries in camouflage patrol the perimeter at all times. In the mess hall adjacent to Camp Delta, where the most popular treat seems to be Ben & Jerry's Peace Pops, Captain Gregg Langevin, a reservist from Sturbridge, Massachusetts, told me, "We have different teams to handle break-ins and break-outs, not that there have been any of them. There are electronic sensors and infrared sensors. It all seems like massive overkill. There doesn't seem to be the slightest chance of escape. The whole mission here is to keep from getting bored. One of my guys found a six-foot boa constrictor in his Humvee."

There are about twenty-two hundred military personnel at the base, and a little more than half of them are reservists or National Guardsmen. The rest of the population consists of contractors—people who cook the meals and collect the trash—and they are, for the most part, Jamaicans and Filipinos. Until the early sixties, as many as thirty-five hundred Cubans came to work every day at the base; today, just five elderly Cubans commute across the border. If Castro is sovereign on Guantánamo, it is only in the narrowest technical sense.

A practical understanding of the term "sovereign" suggests that the detainees have at least a reasonable chance of winning their case in the Supreme Court. However, such a victory would mean only that the government would have to present evidence to justify the incarceration of the detainees who filed suit; no one seems to think that any American court would dare order the military to release anyone. From a legal standpoint, and from the appearance of the base itself, it is clear that the prisoners—and the prison—at Guantánamo Bay will be there for a long time.

Even though the base now has its own courthouse, tribunals are far from the top priority of Joint Task Force Guantánamo. Geoffrey D. Miller, a two-star Army general, who is the task force's over-all commander, made this clear. A fifty-five-year old former artillery officer, Miller has directed his troopers to greet one another with the words "honor bound," a reference to the task-force slogan, "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom." He told me, "The joint task force's mission is to detain enemy combatants and develop intelligence to win the global war on terror. We are not about law enforcement, or rehabilitation, or punishment. We are here for intelligence." The interrogations of the detainees, which take place in windowless trailers set up beside the cellblocks, are carried out in great secrecy; journalists are not allowed to look inside the trailers or speak to prisoners.

"We are after three kinds of intelligence—strategic, operational, and tactical," General Miller said. "Tactical is perishable and decays quickly—what kind of weapon, who was in his little group. That is the start for interrogation, and that's mostly done over in Afghanistan, as soon as they are caught. Operational-level intelligence is how are terrorist cells formed. How are they recruited? How do they maintain themselves? How are they linked inside the country? Strategic is how money moves, how is it financed."

The interrogations themselves generally unfold in one of two ways. "In about eighty per cent of the cases, it's really almost conversation," the General said. "They become coöperative. Many of them have recognized that what they participated in was wrong. We show the enormous positive change that has gone on in Af-




*"He's a working dog, but I don't know what he does."*

ghanistan—roads being built. We have a lot of pictures that we bring in. We do incentives-based interrogation. We found that is by far the best way."

As for the uncoöperative prisoners—the remaining fifteen to twenty per cent—Miller says that teams of two to five questioners interrogate them for up to sixteen hours a day. "Sometimes it's quite aggressive, but we don't use physically forceful methods, no stress positions, and we don't do sleep deprivation, which we define as more than sixteen hours a day," Miller says. "Incentives-based interrogation" for recalcitrant prisoners can include granting or withholding such religious items as prayer oil, beads, and rugs.

The biggest incentive offered to the prisoners is getting transferred to Camp Four, where there are far fewer restrictions on the detainees' movements than in the rest of Camp Delta. The hundred and sixty prisoners at Camp Four sleep in dormitory-style bunks rather than in cells, and are free to circulate within the camp for most of the day. As Jerry Cannon, the supervisor of Camp Delta, puts it, "If you don't give it up in the booth, you can stay right where you are." When I walked through Camp Four, I saw about a dozen prisoners eating apples at picnic tables. Several prisoners have learned English, and they chatted easily with the M.P.s. The guards don't want the prisoners to know their names, so they place tape over their nameplates.

The crucial question, of course, is whether the interrogations at Camp Delta have produced valuable information—and whether continuing interrogations of the same prisoners, some of whom have been there for two years, can yield useful intelligence. Miller says that the base has produced "information of enormous value," but there is no way to confirm this claim. "I cannot give you examples," he said. "This joint task force is like an iceberg. Ninety per cent is below the water. But we provide actionable intelligence for current action in Afghanistan." (Osama bin Laden's two top captured aides are being held elsewhere. There are no prisoners from Iraq in Guantánamo. The Iraqis are being treated as prisoners of war and for the most part are still being held in Iraq.) In his discussions of the work of the joint task force, Miller mentions military tribunals only in passing. "Should we be asked to do a military commission, we will be able to do it," he said. "Within about thirty days, we could put all that together." But with so few of the detainees declared eligible, the tribunals may not have much significance.

Still, Colonel Gunn and his colleagues speak earnestly of the value of a legal defense, even in wartime. Gunn has been studying John Adams's defense of British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre, in 1770. In two trials that year, Adams won acquittals for seven of nine Redcoats charged in the death of five Americans. As David McCullough recounts in his biography of Adams, the second President later recalled his role in the case as "one of the most gallant, generous, manly and disinterested actions of my whole life, and one of the best pieces of service I ever rendered my country." Gunn says of the Adams precedent, "His business suffered for a while, but he said it was actually one of the most important pieces of work that he ever did, because he believed that, based on the evidence, if those folk had been convicted and sentenced to die, that would have been a great tragedy, and that would have been harmful to the cause of liberty. I look at that, and I am encouraged by that."

Although the fighting in Afghanistan seems to be winding down, operations at Guantánamo Bay are not. Construction is now under way on Camp Five, which will be an interrogation center to replace the trailers. Gunn's team may have clients for the indefinite future. "I think we will be here until we win the global war on terror, however long it takes," General Miller said. "Salt water is tough on anything you build out here, but these are durable buildings. They are good for ten years, maybe a little longer." ♦

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*From the the Freehold (N.J.) Independent.*

A marquis was added to the front lawn of the Hazlet Township library, part of the Monmouth County Library system, and a drop box was placed in the parking lot.

"We've never had a marquis," said Rich Kohler, president of the township's Library Commission. "It's a nice addition because people can be advised of upcoming events while driving by the library (on Middle Road)."

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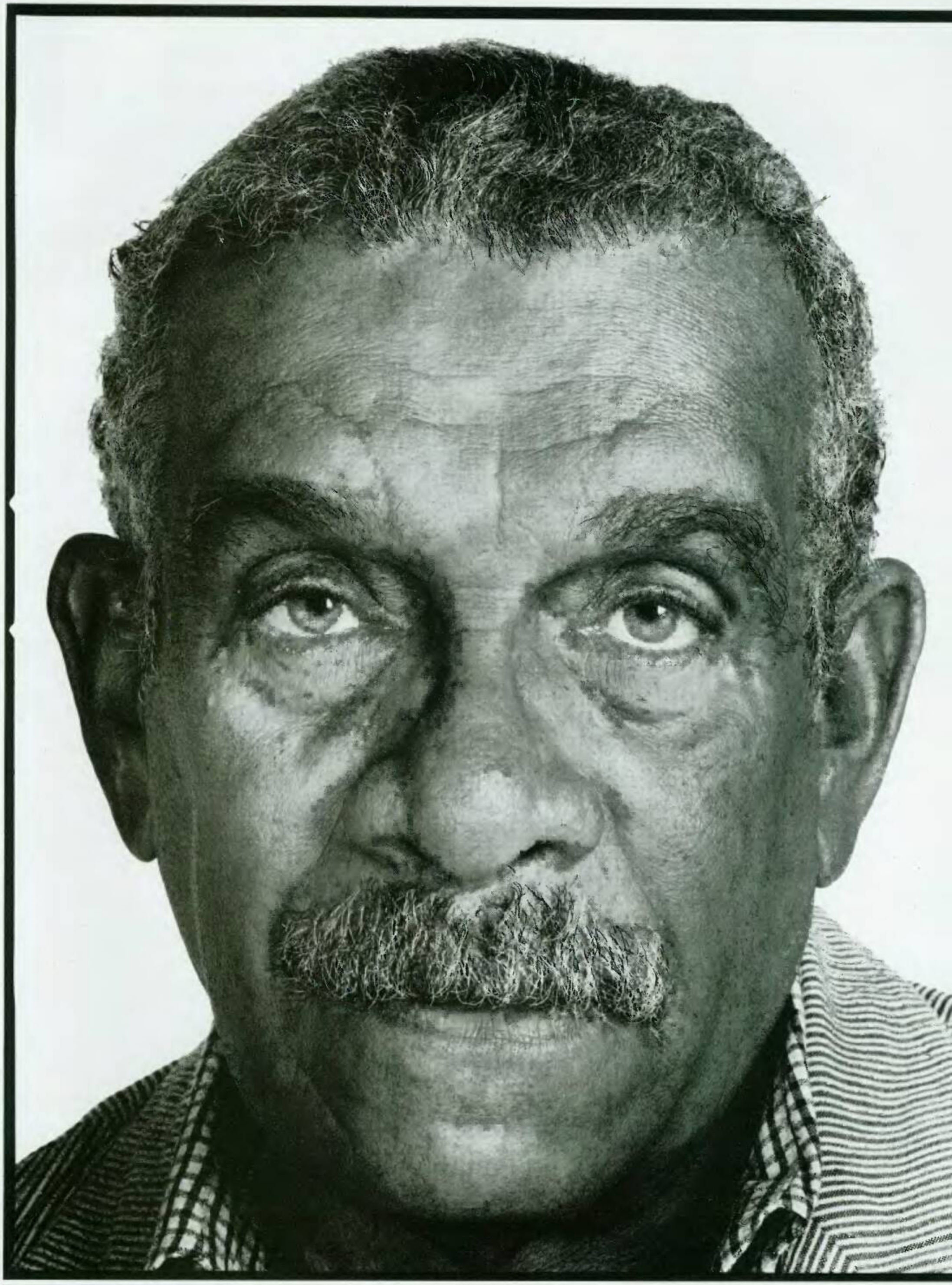
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# THE ISLANDER

*Derek Walcott is writing a poetry of the Caribbean.*

BY HILTON ALS

We had just finished lunch. Derek Walcott got up from his canvas chair and stretched. He said to his longtime companion, "Sigrid, I am going for a swim." We were on a beach in Castries, the capital of the island of St. Lucia, in the Lesser Antilles, where Walcott was born, in 1930, and where he still lives. It was Bastille Day, a French holiday celebrated in St. Lucia, too. Two boys on horseback, very thin and very black and shoeless, rode along the stretch of ground behind us. Their necks swivelled as they picked up speed, urging their horses to gallop, looking for more and more open space to explore.

Sigrid said, "Oh, all right, Dodo. I'll join you soon."

Walcott walked away. He is bantam weight, with light-blue-gray eyes and honey-colored skin. A black frigate bird—what patois-speaking St. Lucians call a *scisour de la mer*—cut through the turquoise sky. Sigrid and I looked on as Walcott made his way down to the Caribbean Sea, getting smaller and smaller against the big, watching water.

As Walcott disappeared beneath the surface, Sigrid said, "You know, when he won the Nobel"—for literature, in 1992—"I was worried about our relationship. There were many women around. Speaking generally, West Indian men like to hop from flower to flower." Sigrid laughed. She is sixty years old, German-born, with lemon-colored hair and a burnished face. They met in Pittsburgh, where Sigrid ran an art gallery, in 1986, when Walcott gave a reading at the Carnegie Museum. She offered him a ride home from the reading, and later he invited her to Cleveland to see one of his plays. They have been together since. "I was married once before," she said. "One hopes for . . . an upgrade. And, of course, Derek has been married before. When we got together, and it became clear we would stay together, Derek said, 'I certainly hope this is it.'"

"Sigrid! Look!" Squatting, half out of the water, Walcott hoisted a glistening black boy on his shoulders. The boy's wide, white grin was as unbridled as Walcott's joyful shout.

"Oh, look at Dodo!" Sigrid said. "You know, he paid for that boy to have swimming lessons once he saw that the boy couldn't swim well but wanted to learn. Derek will do that, and never speak of it. So generous."

Walcott, the most ardent chronicler of the island's history and landscape and people, sometimes acts as a patron, a kind of John the Baptist of St. Lucia. ("I would be a preacher, / I would write great hymns," he wrote in the 1973 autobiographical book-length poem "Another Life.") He has lived in the West Indies for most of his creative life, writing, painting, and teaching, not only in St. Lucia but in Jamaica, St. Thomas, Barbados, Grenada, and Trinidad. In nine volumes of poetry, and in numerous essays, speeches, and plays, he has documented life in a place most Americans think of in terms of sunblock and steel drums, and their own fantasies about slimming walks along the beach, limbo lessons, and rum drinks dressed with flowers. Walcott's work revels in the history, the mores, and the differences of a people generally misunderstood, if they are thought about at all.

In formal, somewhat extravagant verse, Walcott captures the island's beauty: "the rounded / Breasts of the milky bay, palms, flocks, the green and dead / Leaves, the sun's brass coin on my cheek, /. . . This island is heaven." His vision can be unromantic, too, and the impulse to idealize is checked by a sharp irony. "Subject of poetasters, the Paradisal Isles!" he once remarked in a review of an anthology of West Indian writing. His St. Lucia—with its dusty frangipani trees, its mixed-race people speaking several languages, and its junked British- and American-made jeeps—is a place of both poverty and abundance. In "Sainte Lucie," a poem from the 1976 collection "Sea Grapes," Walcott writes:

> Laborie, Choiseul, Vieuxfort, Dennery,
> from these sun-bleached villages
> where the church bell caves in the sides
> of one grey-scurfed shack that is shuttered
> with warped boards, with rust,
> with crabs crawling under the house-
> shadow
> where the children played house;
> a net rotting among cans, the sea-net
> of sunlight trolling the shallows
> catching nothing all afternoon.

Working in an English verse tradition and writing about everyday life in the Caribbean, Walcott knows himself to be an anomaly. "I have to live, socially, in an almost unfinished society," he told me once. "Among the almost great, among the almost true, among the almost honest. That allows me to describe the anguish." His goal, he said, is to "finish" his incomplete culture.

We were meant to have lunch the next day. Sigrid picked me up in a white jeep at my hotel in Castries, in the northwest part of the island. She wanted to give me a tour of Castries and the coast, stopping off in a restaurant in the fishing village of Soufrière. "Soufrière is down the coast, all the way west," she said. "We could have taken a boat around the island, but then you would not have seen as much of St. Lucia. Today you'll see—well, you'll see so much! When we were on the beach yes-

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

*Walcott now lives in St. Lucia, where he was born. His goal, he says, is to "finish" his incomplete culture.*

terday, did you happen to notice Martinique? On a clear day—"

"On a clear day you can see Martinique," Walcott said. He was sitting in the back seat and laughed dryly when he interrupted Sigrid's good-natured spiel. He sounded impatient with her tendency to treat the landscape like a sitting room: here are our needlepoint pillows, here is our mountain.

"Sigrid loves saying that to everyone who comes down here," he said. "Darling," he said, leaning forward a bit in his seat and speaking over her shoulder. "You must curb your natural ebullience today. It's a long drive." His sharp tone was a reminder that the trip to Soufrière was disrupting his work routine. He usually rises shortly after dawn and writes and paints for three or four hours.

We passed the harbor in Castries. A ship carrying passengers from St. Lucia's neighbors in the Windward Islands—St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Grenada—was about to dock. A shed at the near end of the dock cast a shadow in the early-morning sunshine. It made the black people standing around the dock appear blacker.

"Sigrid, I want to go to that bread shop on the way. I've been dreaming of it," Walcott said.

"Oh, Dodo! Bread! You can't! Our diet!"

"That bread," Walcott said, musing. "They fry it up with cod."

"Or with peppers and a kind of cherry." Sigrid sighed. The jeep bumped and surged ahead over the narrow cobblestone streets of downtown Castries. From the front and side windows, shoppers, schoolchildren, and a number of stray dogs and idlers could be seen converging at bus stops and in front of the yellow, red, and blue buildings on Brazil Street. The buildings had been erected in the nineteenth century, and done up in the old colonial style. They had managed to survive—as little of the original architecture downtown had—the great fires of 1927 and 1948.

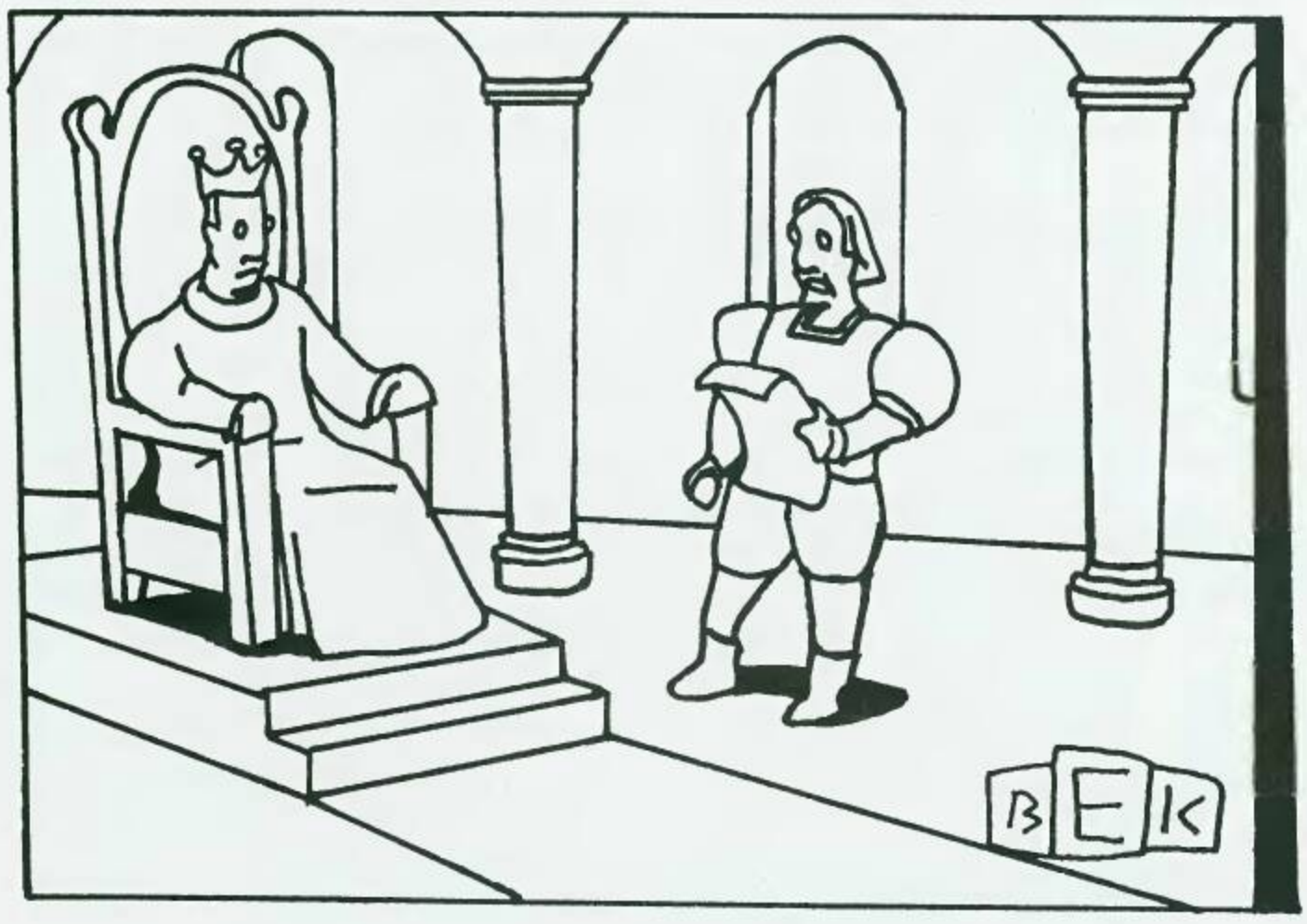
St. Lucia, fourteen miles across and twenty-seven miles long, has always been building and rebuilding itself. The hilly, volcanic island was first populated by the Arawak Indians, who were conquered and, according to rumor, ritually eaten by the Carib Indians. In 1650, the French arrived, and, in 1664, the British. For the next hundred and fifty years, the two powers struggled for possession of the money-making colony (the French had established sugarcane plantations and imported slaves from West Africa to cultivate them). The island changed hands fourteen times, until the British claimed it decisively, in 1814. St. Lucia gained its full independence from Britain in 1979, while still remaining part of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, colonialism persists, in the form of a strong class system based, in part, on race. Brown is better than black, and almost white is, if not better than brown, a bit more interesting, *raffiné*. The lighter one's skin, the closer one's ties to Britain, Europe, "real" civilization. Language is another legacy of colonial rule. Most people on the island speak a French patois; English is for the well-educated élite.

We parked in the shadow of the gloomy Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception—Catholicism is an artifact of French rule—and Sigrid and I walked across the street to Derek Walcott Square, renamed in 1993. The square is dominated by an enormous saman tree. The sun burned hard on the handsome bronze head that had been rendered in Walcott's likeness, with a wide mouth and nose. There was another sculpture in the square—a bust of St. Lucia's 1979 Nobel Prize winner, the economist Sir W. Arthur Lewis—but Walcott was the centerpiece. Several passersby, spotting Walcott in the car—he had refused to get out—approached him diffidently but familiarly. He was their poet, their voice, their pride. "Provincialism loves the pseudo-epic," he has written, somewhat wryly. Still, it is not easy to find a shop on the island that carries his books.

Sigrid handed me her camera. "Take a picture of me with Dodo!" she said, standing next to the bust of Walcott. She did not seem to notice the people who paused to stare at her. In St. Lucia, whiteness, it seems, is still an event, a form of tourism for the native. We walked away from the poet's bust, and Sigrid tipped the young man who kept up the square.

As we drove down the smooth West Coast Highway toward Soufrière, Walcott said, "When I was a boy, going to Soufrière was like going to the country. I was a city boy; Castries was the city." He chuckled. "It's amazing how they've built this road up. You know, it used to take days to get to Soufrière—"

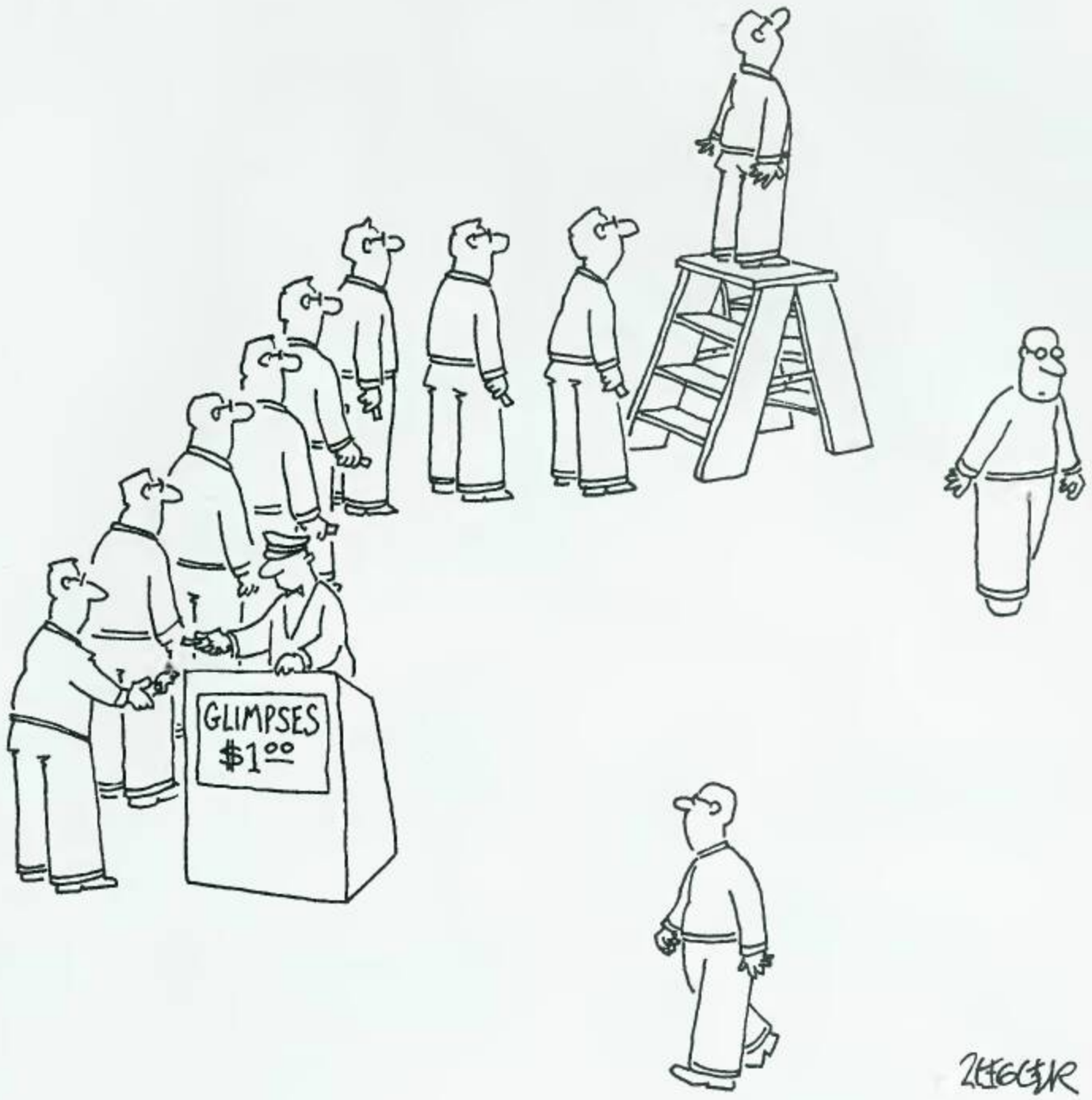
"Probably not days," Sigrid said firmly, directing the jeep up through the winding roads. In the fifteen years that they have been together, Sigrid has become responsible for much of Walcott's business. Walcott is in constant demand as a reader and lecturer. Every summer, he teaches a master class in poetry at the University of Milan, and every fall he teaches poetry and playwriting at Boston University. Sigrid keeps the itinerary and makes the hotel reservations. She




*"You've got a power beheading at 8 A.M."*

also manages their homes—they have an apartment in New York in addition to their house in St. Lucia—while pursuing an interest in photography. She has taken many photographs of Walcott over the years. She has photographs of Walcott with the writers that matter to him most, such as his close friends Seamus Heaney, Arthur Miller, and the late Joseph Brodsky. There are photographs, too, of Walcott with his children: Peter, a forty-one-year-old painter, who lives in St. Lucia, from Walcott's first marriage, to Faye Moyston; Elizabeth and Anna, who live in Trinidad, from his second marriage, to Margaret Maillard. (There was a third marriage, to Norline Metivier, which ended in 1993, after a separation of several years.)

We got farther away from the city, and the vegetation grew thicker. The air grew thicker, too. Rain fell abundantly and then stopped suddenly. Steam rose from the rusted corrugated tin roofs that were sheltering groups of loitering teen-agers. All around there was an overwhelming green. Walcott said that the writer and editor Leon Wieseltier had once visited him in St. Lucia. "Looking around at all this"—the palm trees, the banana plantations, the mounds of red-brown earth, the Caribbean Sea at the foot of the mountains—"he said, 'Oh, I see, you're a minimalist!' " Walcott laughed. He has a smoker's laugh, abrupt and phlegmy, though he gave up cigarettes, and alcohol, more than a decade ago.




After what seemed like many hours, we passed the tiny town of Anse la Raye and reached the shack where Walcott wanted to stop. The ride had been awkward, full of long silences. When Walcott spoke, he was brusque but never exactly rude: he has a British penchant for distancing through politeness, and for teasing as a means of expressing hurt, anger, and resentment. There is something unforgiving in his person that is reflected in the poems. Heaney writes that what he loves about Walcott's poems is "the writerly fearlessness . . . the readiness to lift the baton and tune the big orchestra—and there's always just that hint of a possibility that if things get out of hand the baton could turn into a nightstick." When I asked Walcott about the use of free verse in poetry, he was disdainful. "What's free about it?" he said. "As if the self is enough to make a poem. What makes a poem is the discipline inherent in making a poem. Trying to fit feelings in the requisite number of syllables and lines, disciplining one's feelings." In an earlier conversation, he had told me, "The concept of song has gone out of contemporary poetry for the time being, and has been out of contemporary poetry for a long while. And all those attributes, like rhyme, complexity, or rigidity of meter, have gone. If music goes out of language, then you are in bad trouble."

As we stepped out of the air-conditioned jeep and onto the black, rain-slicked road, the humidity hit us like something solid. The shack, dark and low-ceilinged, had two rooms, one with a big cauldron where cassava bread was prepared. After Sigrid ordered for us, I followed Walcott into the second room, which was partially open to a tremendous, unexpected drop: we were on the edge of a deep canyon, jagged green mountain peaks all around. When our food arrived, we ate in silence. Birds screeched. I could hear the insect world feeding on itself.

We finished, and I walked out of the shed and stood facing the road. Just then, I saw three men, shirtless, walking up the road carrying machetes—workers, probably, on one of the many banana plantations we had passed on the way out. One of the men was the color of a light rum, with dirty-blond dreadlocks and golden eyes. He was like an apparition from the great Walcott poem "The Schooner *Flight*," from 1979, which is narrated by the seafaring Shabine:

> I had no nation now but the imagination.
> After the white man, the niggers didn't
> want me
> when the power swing to their side.




*"While you were incarcerated."*

• •

The first chain my hands and apologize,
"History";
the next said I wasn't black enough for
their pride. . . .
I met History once, but he ain't recognize
me,
a parchment Creole, with warts
like an old sea bottle, crawling like a
crab
through the holes of shadow cast by the
net
of a grille balcony; cream linen, cream
hat.
I confront him and shout, "Sir is
Shabine!
They say I'se your grandson. You
remember Grandma,
your black cook, at all?" The bitch
hawk and spat.
A spit like that worth any number
of words.
But that's all them bastards have left
us: words.

Like Shabine's, Walcott's blood is mixed. As Bruce King recounts in his 2000 biography "Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life," Walcott's paternal grandfather, Charles, was a white Englishman whose family immigrated to Barbados. Charles went to St. Lucia in the late eighteen-hundreds to acquire a plantation near Choiseul, on the southwest coast of the island. There he met Christiana Wardrope, a brown woman with whom he had five children; one of them was Warwick, Derek's father. Although Charles eventually married Christiana, he stayed on the plantation while she lived in Castries with their children.

As a young man, Warwick worked as a copyist at the Education Office. (Subsequently, he worked for St. Lucia's Attorney General and Acting Chief Justice.) At night and on weekends, Warwick painted, read Shakespeare and Dickens, and gathered around him like-minded friends, who put on amateur theatricals. One of the members of this group, which Warwick christened the Star Literary Club, was Alix Maarlin, the daughter of Johannes van Romondt, a white estate owner on St. Maarten, and Caroline Maarlin, a brown woman. Alix had moved to St. Lucia as a young girl, apparently to finish her schooling. Her guardian, a Dutch trader, was part of a small clan who helped establish the Methodist presence on St. Lucia. Alix, too, practiced Methodism, which was practically a cult on the Catholic-dominated island.

So these orphans of miscegenation met and married and created a small society of their own, in a two-story house with Gothic gables on the east side of Castries, which is now occupied by a printer. Their first child, Pamela, was born on August 14, 1928; sixteen months later, Derek and Roderick, twins, were born. Warwick Walcott died of an ear infection at the age of thirty-four, when the twins were a year old.

"I don't remember the death or anything like that, but I always felt his presence because of the paintings that he did," Walcott recalled in an interview with *The Paris Review* in 1985. "I remember once coming across a backcloth of a very ordinary kind of moonlight scene that he had painted for some number that was going to be done by a group of people who did concerts and recitations and stuff like that. So that was always there. Now, that didn't make me a morose, morbid child. Rather, in a sense, it gave me a kind of impetus and a strong sense of continuity. I felt that what had been cut off in him somehow was an extension that I was continuing."

At St. Mary's College, a high school in Castries, Walcott studied Latin, reading the classical historians. He read Shakespeare and the major English poets, and began writing poems of his own. Alix, who never remarried, taught at the Methodist school and took in "fine" sewing to supplement her income. From her meagre earnings, she gave Walcott the money he needed to privately publish his "25 Poems," in a small edition in St. Lucia, when he was eighteen.

Early on, Walcott claimed St. Lucia as his subject. In a poem from 1948, he wrote of "The uncouth features of this, my prone island" and considered the lot of a people "Found only / In tourist booklets, behind ardent binoculars; / Found in the blue reflection of eyes / That have known cities and think us happy." He was attentive to form, and deliberate in his self-restraint: "My life . . . must not be made public / Until I have learnt to suffer / In accurate iambics." Influenced by the formal dexterity of Thomas Hardy and the narrative sweep of George Meredith—and impressed by the compression of Hemingway's short stories—Walcott forged a style that was taut yet stately, commanding and yet intimate in its local detail. He perverted the tenets of his colonial education, replacing Europe with the Caribbean as the center of the world.

As an adolescent, Walcott took an informal seminar at the home of Harold

Simmons, a painter who had been a friend of his father's. Walcott relished the instruction, and the conversation he found there. He became close to the muralist Dunston St. Omer, who studied with Simmons as well. In "Another Life," he wrote of their joint ambition:

> But drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,
> disciples of that astigmatic saint,
> that we would never leave the island
> until we had put down, in paint, in words,
> as palmists learn the network of a hand,
> all of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,
> every neglected, self-pitying inlet
> muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
> from which old soldier crabs slipped surrendering to slush,
> each ochre track seeking some hilltop and
> losing itself in an unfinished phrase.

Walcott, who paints portraits of his friends and storyboards for his plays, often supplies the cover art for his books: a cracked coconut for "The Collected Poems," a dark-leaved sea-almond tree for "Midsummer," mountains, sky, and trees for "The Bounty." ("Tiepolo's Hound," his book-length narrative poem about Camille Pissarro, who was born on St. Thomas, was published with twenty-six of Walcott's watercolors and oils.) His ideas about painting are as strong as his ideas about poetry. He has no time for Abstract Expressionism, let alone Pop art. When I asked him about his art, he said, "Representing the thing you see with fidelity, isn't that the lesson?"

Despite Walcott's apparent brilliance, he did not go abroad to school. "I didn't pass the scholarship exam for Oxford, because of poor mathematics," he said. "In any case, I was so happy to be at home, where one could paint year-round, outdoors." He worked as an assistant master at his alma mater, St. Mary's College, teaching Roman and British history, and worked on his writing.

At nineteen, he and Roderick—who went on to become a director and a playwright himself—staged the first play in "The Haitian Trilogy," a drama about the Haitian revolution, which Walcott would work on for the next forty years. Alix sewed the costumes, and the emerging novelist George Lamming narrated. "I had enormous energy then," Walcott said. With his friend Maurice Mason, he co-founded, in 1950, the St. Lucia Arts Guild, whose aim was to promote the arts indigenous to St. Lucians in St. Lucia. The same year, he received a scholarship to attend the University College of West Indies, in Mona, Jamaica. He graduated in 1954, with a bachelor-of-arts degree. Soon he married Faye and had Peter. The family lived in Jamaica for several more years, and then, after the dissolution of the marriage, Walcott moved to Trinidad.

In Trinidad, his interest in theatre intensified. He founded the Little Carib Theatre Workshop (later the Trinidad Theatre Workshop), and wrote numerous plays. In 1971, Walcott's "Dream on Monkey Mountain" won an Obie for Most Distinguished Foreign Play Off-Broadway, but generally the reviews of his plays have been mixed. "I've had an astonishing number of failures in the theatre," he told me. "I have to have the arrogance that I perhaps have to believe that the outgrowth of verse—theatre—matters." (His most public failure was the 1998 Broadway musical "The Capeman," which folded after eight weeks, and is thought to have lost eleven million dollars. Walcott wrote the book and co-wrote the lyrics with Paul Simon.)

In his 1975 essay "On Choosing Port of Spain," Walcott spoke of being "broken" and "adrift" when he arrived in Trinidad, but he was clearly inspired by the island's heterogeneity. He embraced the cosmopolitan aura of Port of Spain and its "beautiful and various" population, delighting in the mixture of "Portuguese, Jew, Chinese, and Levantine."

V. S. Naipaul, another winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, once said dismissively that the artists on his native Trinidad were nothing more than "bongo islanders," but Walcott found the artistic life quite nurturing and rich. Besides writing poetry and plays, directing, and painting, he wrote book, theatre, and film reviews, and profiles for the Trinidad *Guardian*. He told me that he had wanted to improve the quality of the writing in the paper, to make it as important as any of the British literary newspapers. All along, Walcott had been selling poems to the BBC's "Caribbean Voice" program. "On the BBC, they paid you a guinea a minute, so I wrote a long series of sonnets," he told me, laughing. He yearned for a larger audience and wanted to publish overseas, but didn't




*"I would embrace the aging process if I could lift my arms."*

want to live abroad like some of his contemporaries, among them George Lamming and the novelist Samuel Selvon. In an interview with the West Indian novelist Caryl Phillips, in 1992, Walcott recalled seeing a book by a Caribbean writer for the first time:

> It was mildly astonishing holding [it] and thinking, "My God, this is a book." It's common now to have books published by people all over the Commonwealth, but then Commonwealth writing was just coming out. The other thing that diffused any strong pull towards London was that I wanted to paint. I wanted to paint the West Indian landscape. I couldn't do that abroad. Other things got strengthened later, the fact that I was writing about a place that had never been written about before, to any extent. Sharing in the creation of something is very exhilarating.

In 1961, Alan Ross, the editor of *London Magazine*, was passing through Trinidad and happened to read some of Walcott's poems. He took them back to London, where they were published the following year by Jonathan Cape, under the title "In a Green Night." Robert Lowell read the book, and, as Elizabeth Hardwick, his wife at the time, told me, "Cal loved the poems—their fidelity to a landscape not our own." In 1962, on their way to Brazil to visit Elizabeth Bishop, the Lowells stopped to see Walcott in Trinidad. "We were meant to stay one week, and stayed two," Hardwick recalled.

In 1964, on Lowell's recommendation, Walcott's "Selected Poems" was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, which has been his American publisher ever since. He was thirty-four years old. In the "Selected Poems," Walcott began to work toward an epic vision that would merge the African and European halves of his identity. In "Origins," he summoned Hector, Achilles, Aeneas, and Ulysses, and figured himself as baby Moses in Egypt. He places himself "Between the Greek and African pantheon, / Lost animist" and his sibyl "gibbers with the cries / Of the Guinean odyssey."

Walcott's poems demanded that the Continent take notice of its colonial legacy. In a sonnet sequence called "Tales of the Islands," his diction swerves between dialect—"Poopa, da' was a fête! I mean it had / Free rum free whisky and some fellars beating / Pan from one of them band in Trinidad"—and the Queen's English: "The marl white road, the Dorée rushing cool / Through gorges of green cedars, like the sound / Of infant voices from the Mission School." Writing about "Selected Poems" in the *New York Review of Books*, Robert Mazzocco praised Walcott's "orotund, mellifluously spun lines." He went on, "His world is almost a continual surge of scenic delights and/or degradations, all of which he uses for dramatic effect, sometimes in the symbolist mode, sometimes as a sort of pictorial choreography, and sometimes as a violently-charged reverie, or as a declamation. . . . Not many attempt things like this any more, not many Walcott's age anyway." Robert Graves described Walcott's skill with similar force, writing that he "handles English with a closer understanding of its inner magic than most (if not any) of his English-born contemporaries."

With greater exposure came the complications of the literary life. In an essay on Lowell, who was subject to periods of instability, Walcott recalls visiting him in New York. "I admired, with casualness, a pale orange-and-brown-figured tie he wore. He took it off and gave it to me. I did not fawn on Lowell the poet. I did not collect bits of his clothing like his valet. Yet he once made a terrible accusation as if I were. 'You use people,' he told me. It was a night when he was 'going off.' . . . The insult went deep. Did he think that I had cultivated his friendship to advance my career? I was not an American poet. I did not think in those terms. For there to be a career there has to be a tradition, and my new literature had none."

But with each book Walcott's reputation was established more firmly in the canon of contemporary poetry in English. He became, according to a review in *Poetry*, "one of a dozen or so poets writing in English who deserve constant and informed attention."




*"As part of new security measures, Doris has locked me out of the house."*

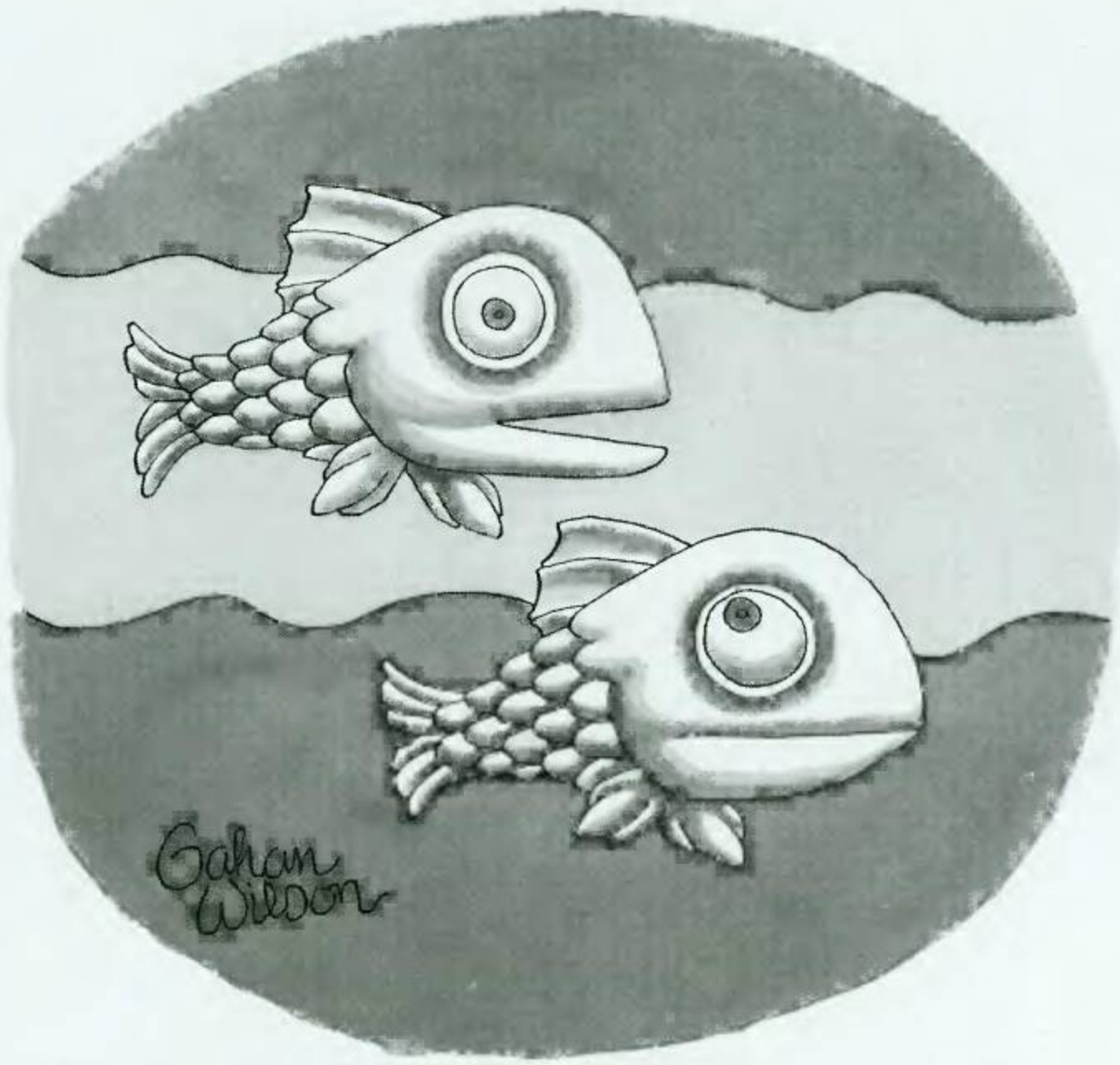
Walcott calls himself a "mongrel," a "neither proud nor ashamed bastard," a "hybrid." Robert Pinsky, a former poet laureate and a colleague of Walcott's at Boston University, wrote to me, "Derek is notably aware of the clichés and defies them not by an ideological or aesthetic agenda but by being himself: by embodying, for instance, his own cosmopolitan, eclectic blending of cultures. . . . Derek contradicts the 'exoticist' and the touristic ways of perceiving his homeland—and perhaps he defies academic theories of the Post-Colonial as well. He encourages his readers to see St. Lucia and the Caribbean as crossroads of many strands—as all cultures are: in this case, African threads and European threads, as well as Asian ones."

Walcott considers himself a writer of the diaspora, and the poets he most identifies with—and whose friendship has sustained him—are also émigrés. One of

them was Joseph Brodsky, whom he met in 1977, at Robert Lowell's funeral. By that point, Walcott had begun teaching periodically in American universities, and in 1982 he was hired as a visiting professor at Harvard. Brodsky was a frequent guest, and, when Seamus Heaney arrived to teach, the three formed a triumvirate of future Nobel Prize winners living in self-imposed exile. "Derek's apartment in Brookline turned into a kind of time machine," Heaney wrote to me. "It was like being back in your first clique as a young poet"—Heaney was in his forties, and had published five books—"with all your original greed for the goods and the gossip of poetry instantly refreshed. Poems being quoted and poets being praised or faulted, extravagantly; anecdotes exchanged; jokes told; but underneath all the banter and hilarity there was a prospector's appetite in each of us for the next poem we ourselves might write. We were high on each other's company and that kept the critical standard-setter alive and well in each of us."

Among his students, Walcott developed a reputation as an electrifying, difficult teacher, a person known for his strong judgments and occasionally off-color remarks. After his one semester at Harvard, a female student in his poetry workshop accused him of harassment, saying that earlier in the semester Walcott had propositioned her. She felt that she'd been given a lower grade than she deserved, and said that it was because she'd rebuffed Walcott's advance. In the small literary community of Cambridge and Boston, the accusation sparked a furor. It was a heated topic at literary gatherings for the next few weeks, and threatened in some cases to rupture relations between friends who fell out on opposite sides. Walcott's many supporters cited the long delay between the incident and the complaint as evidence that the student hadn't genuinely felt harassed. In any case, the contretemps at Harvard didn't affect Walcott's appointment at Boston University, where he has been teaching since.

The poet Elizabeth Alexander, who was Walcott's student at B.U., remembers being amazed by his poetry. "Literary and oral traditions come together seamlessly in his work and in the work of his contemporaries," she wrote to me. "There's the fusion of what Walcott called 'a sound colonial education' with an astonishingly rich oral tradition—it blows open what the poetry of the black and brown world can be." Another former student, who was in Walcott's class at B.U. in the early eighties, spoke of the intellectual intensity that characterized Walcott's teaching. "He had an unconcealed disdain for the deracinated, one-dimensional 'workshop'-type poem that was fairly prevalent then," he said. "He couldn't take them seriously. He once said to the class, 'The problem is that you Americans think poetry is democratic, that anyone can write it. It's not—it's aristocratic.'"




*"Just once I would like to laugh or to frown."*

• •

In "The Fortunate Traveller," which came out in 1981, Walcott began to address the geographic dislocation of the itinerant scholar and the strain of trying to find inspiration in a new landscape. "Old New England" is a surging homage to Lowell: "Black clippers, tarred with whales' blood, fold their sails / entering New Bedford, New London, New Haven." But the book's mood is mostly gusty and bleak: "Here, in Manhattan, I lead a tight life / and a cold one, my soles stiffen with ice / even through woollen socks. . . . I am thinking of an exile farther than any country. / And, in this heart of darkness, I cannot believe / they are now talking over palings by the doddering / banana fences, or that seas can be warm."

The exile was always only temporary. After the teaching and readings and cocktail parties held in his honor up North were over, Walcott always returned home, to that cracked place the Caribbean.

Walcott's masterpiece is an epic poem in seven books, "Omeros" (1990), which reimagines, in long-lined tercets, the archetypal ancient-Greek text—Homer's "Odyssey"—with black bodies and black voices. The poem is the perfect marriage of Walcott's classicism and his nativism, and a hymn to the seductiveness of the ancient world: "When would the sails drop from my eyes, when would I not hear the Trojan Way / in two fishermen cursing?" he asks. Set in St. Lucia, it tells of a poet living among imagined characters from




history—not Helen of Troy but Helen of St. Lucia, a beautiful waitress. He describes sitting in a tourist restaurant, watching a waiter ferry gin-and-lime drinks to sunbathers on the beach, when both he and the waiter see a "mirage":

> . . . now the mirage
>
> dissolved to a woman with a madras
> head-tie,
> but the head proud, although it was
> looking for work.
> I felt like standing in homage to a
> beauty
>
> that left, like a ship, widening eyes in
> its wake.
> "Who the hell is that?" a tourist near
> my table
> asked a waitress. The waitress said,
> "She? She too proud!"
>
> As the carved lids of the unimaginable
> ebony mask unwrapped from its
> cotton-wool cloud,
> the waitress sneered, "Helen." And all
> the rest followed.

With "Omeros"—whose drama revolves around the narrator's love for Helen and his competition with her other suitors—Walcott draws parallels between the relative "primitivism" of his characters' lives and the epic primitivism of characters in Homer. The poem gives anecdote and gossip—the "letters" of the Caribbean—the permanence of art.

Using classicism on such a scale, Walcott legitimatized the themes of his previous books: his culture had existed all along, made up of everything the larger world had dumped there, including language. Reviewing the poem in the *Times Book Review,* Mary Lefkowitz noted, "References to the ancient past, brief and insubstantial as they may seem, form the foundation of Mr. Walcott's poem. They endow his new characters and situations with heroism; they suggest that their experiences, particular as they are to specific places and present times, are also timeless and universal."

The epic is natural to Walcott. "I come from a place that likes grandeur," he has said. "It likes large gesture; it is not inhibited by flourish; it is a society of physical performance; it is a society of style." St. Lucia is also a place that, having had relatively little written about it, lives, still, in a vague sphere where time does not seem to exist, and where dates have little resonance. What resonates are individual stories, the image of the island's various straight-backed Helens walking to market, seemingly impervious to the ever-changing weather, or to history.

We drove, and Walcott pointed out the handmade signs dotting the hamlets we passed through. Many of the signs, advertising drink in English and French ("Boissons Coca-Cola!"), had perfectly rendered black faces—some with red lips—floating around the calligraphy.

Walcott said, "Look at the beauty of that. And then you think of someone like Vidia"—Naipaul—"saying that there is no culture down here. That we are primitive. That we make nothing. Crap! Well, there it is. Take a look."

We had reached Soufrière. Little wooden shacks, broken and brown, led to the town square. We stopped near a filling station and got out. On one of the cobblestone streets rambling down to the waterfront and the blue sea beyond were a number of policemen, dressed in stiff, immaculate black suits and black hats. The policemen were as black as their suits. Sigrid, fluttering in white linens, went to find out why the men had congregated. She came back. "There's been a funeral!" she said. A local dignitary had died. Death did not seem like a possibility just then, under the blue-and-white sky. There were fruit sellers sitting in front of buildings that had been designed in the French colonial style, and Walcott went up to one of them. He reached for a fruit that he remembered from his childhood. It was a *pomme arac*, red and specked and shaped like a guava.

Walcott said, "When we were boys, we used to throw stones to catch this fruit from the tree." He rubbed it tenderly.

"Don't touch that," the fruit seller said. She was black and old and fierce. Walcott blushed.

"Then why is the damn thing out there?" he asked sharply.

"To buy."

"Then I buy," he said, and reprimanded her in patois for scolding him.

Walcott bit into the *pomme arac.* "We have to wash it first, Dodo!" Sigrid said. Walcott turned away from the fruit seller and looked at the sea, and the woman turned away from him. Dropping his pit on the ground, Walcott said, "I'm hungry." He seemed put off by the bad moment, vulnerable and therefore cross and silent.

We got back into the car. Sigrid said, "Let's go to the Dasheene restaurant. We can see the Pitons"—twin volcanic peaks thrusting out of the bay. We drove up one hill and then another. We reached the Ladera resort, where the restaurant was. Years before, the hotel

had been part of a plantation. Now it was a grand retreat for those who could afford it. Many of the bungalows were made of dark wood and stood in the shade of thick vines with elephant-eared leaves. We walked up a long, steep staircase that led to the open-air restaurant. Sigrid posed Walcott and me for photographs against the Pitons and the sky.

We sat down. On the menu there was a dish called "Derek Walcott Acra"—a salt fish cake with Creole sauce served with sweet-potato fries.

"Hello, Mr. Walcott," the waitress said, approaching. She was young and pretty and thin, and was dressed in a skimpy piece of madras cloth. She reminded me of Walcott's Helen. Walcott turned away from her, mock dismissive.

"I'm not speaking to you, you know," he said.

"Oh! Mr. Walcott! Why?" She seemed legitimately concerned.

"Dodo!" Sigrid said, chuckling, toying with her camera.

"You're rude to me, you know," Walcott said to the young girl, who did not laugh. "You deserve lash! You want lash!"

Walcott pulled the girl over his knee and began to spank her. The girl squealed. Now she was laughing. Her fear had turned to relief.

Walcott let the girl up. "Now you're rude no more, huh?"

"Oh, Dodo!" Sigrid said, laughing, before turning her attention to what she and Walcott could and should not eat, given their diet.

Walcott's house is actually three houses resting on a bluff above the sea. There's the main house, where he and Sigrid eat and sleep; his studio; and another little house, for guests. At the center of the structures is a white lap pool. The interior of the main house is dark, and the rooms are like cabins on a ship. There are couches and bookcases. Walcott's studio has a loft with a bed. On the lower level, where he works, some of his paintings are stacked on the floor or tucked into big wooden flat files. His manual typewriter, an Olivetti, faces the sea. Sigrid told me, "When Derek won the prize, he said, 'Quick, find a house!' He never really owned much of anything before."

When I arrived, Sigrid was on her way to do some errands. There was a great deal of back-and-forth about where we should have dinner later. "Darling, we will never have dinner if you exhaust me with conversation," Walcott said, calmly. Sigrid laughed. She kissed him and went off.

Walcott and I walked to a little grove off the side of the main house. We sat at a table in the shade. The sea crashed against the rocks below us. Walcott began to speak of his marginal existence.

"I feel even in the presence of contemporary American poets, and good ones, and English poets, a sense of isolation. I'm not physically one of them. And I don't think I want to be one of them. This is a very important thing. You go to one of those parties, you come in and there's a collective glance in your direction and you say, 'Oh, there is the old nigger thing, they don't want me here.' But that's not it. It's the instant of veiled acceptance that you recognize. Because you are a little bit of a phenomenon. You are treated as a phenomenon, as if you have a miraculous or freakish kind of intelligence that has slipped into the context of English poetry, or American poetry. It isn't like you want to join the club. It's the reality of the English you speak." Walcott laughed. He relishes living in a place that doesn't carry his books, a place where successive generations may know who he is but not what he has done to help the world see them. With obvious amusement, he told me about one recent day when he was painting in Gros Islet, a town near Castries. "These boys came up to me, asking questions," he said. "I ignored them. One boy wanted to touch my paints. I told him to go away. They said that what I was painting didn't look like the thing they saw. One boy came up to me and said, 'You artist?'" ♦






LETTER FROM LONDON

# UNDERGROUND MAN

*Can the former C.I.A. agent who saved New York's subway get the Tube back on track?*

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

A couple of years ago, not long after moving from New York to London, Robert Kiley found himself being toasted by a British diplomat, who said, "You are the most important American to come to Britain since Dwight Eisenhower." This *salut* may have been excessive: Kiley was London's new transport commissioner; he was not preparing to win a war. Still, great things were expected of him. Londoners were alarmed and depressed by the state of the Underground, their city's subway system, which, after more than fifty years of underinvestment, had fallen into severe decline. The Tube had become crowded, dirty, dangerous, unreliable—while remaining, perhaps even more than New York's subway, crucial to the life of the city. Kiley, as it happened, was the chairman of New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority from 1983 to 1990—the turnaround years for the subway. Before that, he ran, and dramatically improved, Boston's venerable mass-transit system. And so he had been hired to save the Tube.

Kiley, who is sixty-eight, does have a quietly commanding presence, but, in his dark suits and tortoiseshell glasses, he blends easily into the rows of executives bent over their briefing papers on the Heathrow-Kennedy shuttle. At first, he was even able to ride the Tube without being recognized. There he was struck by the stoicism of his fellow-passengers, who silently endured long delays in airless cars. At Victoria Station, which is forced

MICHAEL WITTE



to close at rush hour nearly every day because of overcrowding, Kiley once found himself caught in a frightening crush. He saw Underground workers form a human chain to hold back a tide of commuters trying to reach the platform. "I'd never seen anything like that anywhere," he told a reporter later. Kiley escaped into a control booth, where the dispatchers worked in full view of the public, and where he thought, We'd be dead by now if we were in Times Square. Here, he said, "there was no complaining. Other than the shuffling of feet, there wasn't much noise."

Simon Jenkins, a former editor of the *Times* of London, and an influential columnist, is not above complaining. "For millions of working Londoners, the Tube is their only experience of Third World squalor," he has written. "They may not visit London's prisons, mental hospitals, or sweatshops. They may not frequent the ghettos of Hoxton or the tenements of Walworth. They live in tidy homes, work in neat offices, and eat in clean restaurants. But they use the Tube. It is the nastiest thing they do."

Londoners have told me that, if an appointment is important, one must allow forty-five minutes more than a trip should take. Mechanical breakdowns are chronic, and not only on trains. The Tube runs much deeper than the New York subway, and passengers routinely find long lists of stations to avoid because of "escalator problems." One Saturday last year, I found myself carrying a stroller and baby up what felt like a thousand steps. In truth, though, trains and stations are not, as a rule, squalid; some stations are, in fact, splendid. There is graffiti, but it's not oppressive. Kiley has often said that the London Underground is in much better shape than the New York subway was when he took it over.

But London's system is much older than New York's—it opened in 1863, the world's first urban underground train—and it has both its great age and its basic structures to overcome. The deepest lines are fearsomely narrow, with clearances as small as six inches, which precludes air-conditioning in the trains—there would be nowhere for the heat produced by air-conditioners to escape. Its predominantly single-track construction means that lines must be closed for routine maintenance,

*Robert Kiley (left) and Ken Livingstone, London's mayor, battled Tony Blair and Gordon Brown over the Tube's future.*

which is why the Tube does not run past 1 A.M. (New York's twenty-four-hour service relies on extensive double-tracking.) The Tube needs new lines and, more immediately, it needs to run more trains on the lines it has. Deferred maintenance has led to a plague of broken signals, and aging tracks and trains. Derailments are frequent. The last major disaster on the Underground, a fire that started beneath an escalator at King's Cross, killing thirty-one people, was in 1987. But the system is now extremely vulnerable, and everyone knows it.

Kiley's first challenge was not the Tube's dilapidation. It was, rather, political, for a strange and bitter feud had developed around the Underground—a governmental gridlock that threatened Kiley's control of the system he had been hired to fix. Back in 1997, when Tony Blair's Labour Government came to power, it promised to improve the Underground with a "new public-private partnership," or P.P.P. Following a New Labour belief (shared with the Conservatives) that the private sector can build and run almost anything more efficiently than the public sector can, the Blair Government had sharply expanded a Tory program under which contracts to build and maintain schools, hospitals, and prisons were awarded to private companies. These projects had the great short-term political advantage of not showing up in the Treasury's books as public spending. Although Blair had campaigned against a Tory proposal to fully privatize the Tube, he wanted to get as much of the Underground's enormous expense as he possibly could off the government's books.

At the same time, the Blair Government had overseen, as part of its historic commitment to "devolution," the resurrection of independent municipal government in London. The city had not been allowed to govern itself since 1986, when Margaret Thatcher, in an astonishing fit of pique, abolished the Greater London Council. The G.L.C. was at that time led by Ken Livingstone, a flamboyant apostle of working-class leftism known as Red Ken, who used the council to bait Thatcher mercilessly—hanging a huge banner on his headquarters, across from Westminster, advertising the number of jobless Londoners; inviting Sinn Féin to his office in the midst of an I.R.A. bombing campaign. Livingstone was the primary reason that Thatcher got rid of the city's government.

The new London government's most striking feature was that, for the first time in the city's two-thousand-year history, a mayor would be directly elected. Livingstone, who had spent the previous decade and a half in the wilderness as a Labour backbencher, announced that he would run. But Blair and his New Labour allies detested Livingstone, who represented everything they were trying to distance the Party from. They ran a nondescript candidate instead. Livingstone ended up campaigning as an independent—a rare maneuver in Britain's party-dominated politics—and was expelled from the Labour Party. When the election was held, in May of 2000, Livingstone thrashed the Labour candidate into third place, behind even his Conservative rival.

One of the main responsibilities to be transferred to the new city government was local transportation, including the Tube. But, with Livingstone as mayor, the Blair Government refused to hand over the Underground. The reason given was that the final terms of the P.P.P. had not been settled. In fact, the draft contracts had transmogrified into a half-built embarrassment. More than six hundred million dollars of public money had been spent solely on consultants and drawing up the contracts, which already ran to nearly three thousand pages. Livingstone, who had no legal authority to compel the handover of the Underground, sought to break the deadlock by making what even his deputy mayor, a Labourite, called "a brilliant decision." He hired Bob Kiley.

Livingstone presented the hiring as a simple matter. To find a transport commissioner, he had "carried out a search for the best in the world." But Kiley was not, at least on paper, really Livingstone's type. His work in mass transit in New York and Boston had brought him into frequent conflict with labor unions. The *Daily Telegraph* played up this irony with the headline "RED KEN HIRES UNION BASHER TO RUN TUBE." What was more, Kiley's résumé included nearly a decade of service in the Central Intelligence Agency. In "Down the Tube: The Battle for London's Underground," by Christian Wolmar,




*"And you're telling me this because?"*

Kiley recalled his job interview: "Ken started by saying he never thought he would be trying to recruit someone who worked for the C.I.A., and I said I never thought I would be talking to an unreconstructed Trotskyite."

I asked Kiley if he minded becoming a target in a British political free-for-all. He said that he didn't. "It's not as if I have this pristine view of myself. If I get caught in the crosshairs, maybe that's not a bad thing. This *should* be a big issue." Of course, Kiley was more than just a bystander in this struggle. To save the Tube, he would somehow have to get it away from the Blair Government. And he would need to do so quickly, before the contracts turning most of the system over to private companies could be signed.

When Kiley first took the job, in January of 2001, he told me, he received some advice from Ken Livingstone. "He said, 'The best way to think about Britain is to think East Germany at the height of the Cold War, with a required election every four or five years that is more or less democratic.' I kind of laughed." But, after a year of bureaucratic battles, he said to Livingstone, as they came out of a meeting with representatives of the Treasury, "You were wrong about this East German model. North Korea is a better example."



*"Everything tastes so divinely artisanal."*

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Kiley's office, on a top floor of Windsor House, on Victoria Street, in S.W.1, is vast and commands a view of Westminster, Big Ben, and the London Eye. Kiley, as transport commissioner, is head of a new body, called Transport for London; besides the Tube, it has responsibility for the city's buses, ferries, light-rail system, and much of its road network. He is well paid—his salary, before performance bonuses, is a quarter of a million pounds a year, and his town house, in a city where housing is expensive, comes free. (Livingstone justified this outlay by arguing that if Kiley "turns round London's transport . . . it will be remarkably cheap at the price.") From his office, Kiley can see London laid out before him. It is not an orderly city, geographically speaking. It does not have a grid, like Manhattan, or hubs and spokes, like Paris and Washington, or a defining lakefront, like Chicago. It sprawls. The critic Jonathan Meades calls it "a horse-drawn Los Angeles." But, seen from high above, London resolves itself into a certain recognizable shape. It comes, that is, about as close as it can to resembling Harry Beck's famous 1933 map of the Underground, which is still in use. That map is, of course, an abstraction, a pleasingly simple rearrangement of reality—of what is actually an ancient system of spectacularly gnarled and irregular tunnels and stations piercing the earth beneath the city at haphazard angles for a million different, largely forgotten reasons. Kiley sees all that, but I found, as we talked in his office, that he also sees something more: the system as a physical, technical, financial whole. And he was feeling angry, and profoundly responsible for it all.

Kiley grew up in Minneapolis, where his father was an executive with F. W. Woolworth, and he has been engaged in some form of political combat more or less continually since his undergraduate days, at Notre Dame, in the late fifties. It was in 1959, when he was president of the National Student Association, that he was first approached by the C.I.A. The N.S.A. was then the largest college-student group in the country: it had big, passionate annual congresses, left-liberal politics—and covert financial backing from the C.I.A. Only some N.S.A. officers were, as the saying went, "made witting" about its relationship with the agency, and only after they had signed a confidentiality oath that stipulated severe legal penalties if they divulged any information about the agency or its relationships. "If you tell anyone, you are dead meat" was Kiley's summary of the message he got.

Kiley always felt—and still feels—that he was on the right side, trying to do something worthwhile. "Bob and the others believed that the C.I.A. was a noble enterprise," Robert Walters, whom Kiley recruited into the N.S.A., and who later helped found Students for a Democratic Society, said. "That was not some excuse. There was an archenemy who wanted to conquer us." Walters still remembers a phrase that Kiley used—"beyond ideology"—to extol the importance of making anti-totalitarian alliances across the political spectrum. Kiley's politics were "Kennedy liberal, not wild and crazy but left of center," Walters recalled. "He was as skilled, bright, talented, and personable as anybody I've ever met."

Kiley went to graduate school at Har-




vard, studying international relations, but then dropped out to join the agency full time. He specialized in the covert funding of foreign youth and student groups, and he rose quickly through the ranks. By the time he was thirty, he had visited eighty-seven countries, often masquerading as an official of the United States Agency for International Development. His cover was blown, however, in 1967, after an article in *Ramparts* exposed the C.I.A.'s connection to the N.S.A. He was given a job in Langley as executive assistant to Richard Helms, the agency's director. After two years in that post, although he could hardly have been on a faster career track, Kiley left the C.I.A. He is legally proscribed from saying much about his time at the agency. But he has said that the war in Vietnam had some bearing on his decision to leave, along with an abiding discomfort with the culture of secrecy. To me, he also emphasized that he was newly married, with one baby and another on the way.

Kiley took a job at a new private organization, the Police Foundation, in Washington, D.C., and began working on police reform in cities around the country. His work caught the eye of Kevin White, Boston's mayor, who in 1972 made Kiley a deputy mayor. When Michael Dukakis was elected governor of Massachusetts, he asked Kiley to help him fill several positions, including that of Boston transit chief. Kiley's choices all fell through, and Dukakis finally ordered Kiley to take the post himself. It was an unusual, high-profile line of work for an ex-C.I.A. officer, but Kiley turned out to have a gift for it. The dilapidated "T" was transformed under his leadership.

Kiley's personal life, however, had taken a nearly annihilating turn. In 1974, his wife, Patricia, and their two young children were all killed in a car accident. Kiley still remembers each word of the phone call that brought him the news. The personable, serious, decisive young man with the brilliant career took some time off from work, and then came back—more serious, more decisive, and more thoughtful than ever.

In 1983, when the M.T.A.'s top job became vacant, Governor Mario Cuomo called Kiley. New York City's subway system was in chaos, rife with crime, derailments, delays, broken doors, track fires, and graffiti. Police officers protecting Kiley's predecessor, Richard Ravitch, had twice been attacked by armed men. Ridership had declined to less than a billion in 1982—the lowest number since 1917. Kiley fired the small army of consultants that had attached itself to the agency, reorganized the supervisory ranks—making a large number of enemies—and announced a zero-tolerance policy toward fare beaters and graffiti. At the time, Kiley has said, "the system was completely covered with graffiti—six thousand two hundred cars, four hundred and eighty stations, the depots, the shops. It was a kind of leprosy." To widespread surprise, Kiley and his subway chief, David Gunn, who had been with him in Boston, wiped out the graffiti within four years. Along the way, Kiley got into public fights with, among others, Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Governor Cuomo, and most of the forty-plus labor unions representing workers at the M.T.A. Still, on the subway, train and track and signal maintenance improved; cars and stations were notably cleaner; crime and derailments and track fires decreased dramatically; and ridership increased, as New York's middle class slowly returned to the trains.

After seven years, Kiley left the M.T.A. He spent the nineties working first as a private businessman and then as the president of the New York City Partnership, a nonprofit business association. Although Kiley was named by President Clinton to the Amtrak board of directors in 1993, his career in public transportation seemed to be largely over. He was happily settled in New York with his second wife, Rona, and their two sons. Then came the call from London. And the challenge, Kiley later said, was irresistible: Boston, New York, and London had three of the oldest subway systems in the world. "This would be a three-fer."

When he arrived in London, Kiley told me, he was "a little agnostic" about the proposals for the Tube put forth by Blair and his colleagues. He read the contracts and talked with their main architects. No one was surprised, however, when Kiley, a few months later, announced that he found the plan "fundamentally and fatally flawed."

The basic mistake, in Kiley's view, was that the Government had decided to di-

vide the Underground into four parts: three batches of Tube lines, each to be leased for thirty years to a private infrastructure company, or "infraco," and a much reduced public entity that would continue to operate the trains. The infracos would maintain and upgrade the stations, tracks, signals, and rolling stock. Kiley argued that this "Balkanization" of the Underground would be both inefficient and unsafe. Susan Kramer, a former corporate banker who is on the board of Transport for London, called it "tearing up a railroad to fit a financial scheme."

As for the contracts themselves, Kiley gently described them as "systems analysis run amok." They were, in the jargon of consultancy, "output-driven" or "performance-based," which meant that, in order to determine payments to the infracos, the contracts had to anticipate an almost infinite number of possible "outcomes," as well as devise formulas to measure everything from "station ambience" to "lost customer hours." But the task of turning this theory into actual contracts had proved Sisyphean, producing "by far the most complex contractual arrangements ever attempted to be applied to an urban mass-transport system," Kiley said. A train ticket thrown on a car floor, for instance, would be treated as litter, and would be charged against the books of the company maintaining that line as an ambience infraction. But the same ticket, torn in half, would be treated under a different formula. It would, Kiley said, be "a lawyer's field day."

He also found that in the writing and rewriting of the contracts many of the Government's original objectives had been lost, including any significant transfer of financial risk for cost overruns to the private sector, and any hope of running the Tube without state subsidies. The official estimate of those subsidies had risen, since 1998, from zero to more than a billion dollars a year, and was likely to keep rising. "No real asset analysis was done before they started down this road," Kiley said. "My dilemma, from the beginning, was having gotten here after this process was almost two years along."

Kiley proposed an alternative. The Underground would remain intact, and under public management. The billions of dollars needed for new investment would be raised by public bonds. Since the state could borrow at significantly lower interest rates than the private sector could, in the long run this would be a far cheaper, less risky way to finance Tube improvements. Private firms would be invited to bid on construction and maintenance jobs (this is a common practice on every transit system, including New York's), and many of the same firms vying for the immense infraco contracts would very likely end up doing the work—but on shorter, more conventional contracts that would be enforceable. The difficulty, Kiley argued, was not with the concept of public-private partnerships. "The problem is with *this* P.P.P. in *this* Underground system as reflected in *these*" as yet unsigned contracts.

Kiley took his case to the public, to Parliament, and to the Blair Government. The British press, in an uncharacteristic display of unanimity, cheered him on. Kiley quickly ascended to the most coveted seat in London politics, the one next to Sir David Frost on "Breakfast with Frost," a must-watch TV show for the chattering classes. His manner was, for an English audience, an appealing combination—easy, forceful, immensely knowledgeable, and yet self-deprecating. The British tabloids started referring to him as a "can-do Yank." News crews camped out in front of the town house in Belgravia where he and Rona, an executive for a nonprofit organization, were living. One morning, Kiley told me, he caught a reporter creeping along the front hall *inside* the house.

John Prescott, Blair's deputy prime minister, who was in charge of the Government's contract negotiations, made it known that he wasn't going to be pushed around by "that guy from America." But London's Labour M.P.s were in a delicate position; their constituents, the Tube's actual users, were firmly opposed to any privatization of the Tube. And when Kiley met with the M.P.s "he was a wow," one of them told Christian Wolmar. "He just said, 'I have no political axe to grind,



but here's my record, and I can give you private-sector procurement, delivery, the money, and so on,' and the meeting just roared with approval. We came out thinking, We have seen the future and it is called Bob Kiley."

With Kiley working Parliament and the high-end press, and Livingstone working the popular press, the Government's room for maneuver narrowed steadily. In February of 2001, Prescott announced that Kiley would "take the lead" in designing a new plan for the Tube which would achieve Kiley's goal: "unified management of the Underground." "KILEY VICTORY ON TUBE PLAN," the *Evening Standard* declared.

This pronouncement was premature. For one thing, despite the headlines, Kiley still didn't have control of the Tube—Blair's central government did.

David Gunn was the first casualty on Kiley's team. Kiley had brought him to London to work on the Tube, and, as bad as the system's physical condition was, Gunn liked what he found when he talked to the Underground's operating employees. They were serious, capable railroad people, if grievously undersupported—the kind of workers who, according to legend, if they needed to repair a valve that was no longer being made, might pillage a museum's display of antique equipment for the part they needed. Gunn was less impressed by the senior bureaucrats with whom he and Kiley were negotiating over the contracts. "They were pretty condescending," he said. "And some were real arrogant." One day, Gunn blew up. "I was straight off an overnight plane, unshaved, still in jeans, and this young woman from the Treasury starts lecturing me about how you buy subway cars. I said, 'Who the hell are you to tell me? Have you ever bought a subway car?' " Another representative from the Government side—"a lord, or whatever," Gunn recalled—tried to make peace, saying, "You New Yorkers are certainly outspoken." Gunn said, "I'm from Canada, and I didn't come over here to be lectured." Within a month, Gunn had left for Nova Scotia. (Today, he runs Amtrak.)

The young woman from the Treasury was Shriti Vadera, a former merchant banker whose expertise was in Third World debt. Kiley, too, found her frustrating. In their meetings, he would present his critiques of the contracts only

to have Vadera pronounce, "I'm very sorry, but that is not the Treasury's view." Kiley did not blow up, but he started saying things like "How can I engage with the Treasury? You haven't addressed any of my points." And, eventually, to Vadera, "Who's your boss?"

Her boss was—and is—Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is widely seen as the No. 2 in British government. The Chancellor's official residence is at 11 Downing Street. He collects ninety-six per cent of all British taxes, and he very largely decides how public money is spent. Simon Jenkins says of the Chancellor, "He's the only person who can challenge the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister can't move him. And Gordon Brown? Absolutely immovable." Ken Livingstone, marvelling at the power of the Treasury to block initiatives, told me, "When Churchill became Prime Minister during the war, his first decision was to exclude the Chancellor of the Exchequer from the War Cabinet." He did this, according to Livingstone, "on the ground that, if he didn't, Hitler would win."

Brown, who is the son of a minister, was the wunderkind of Scottish Labour politics in the nineteen-seventies. At age thirty-two, he was elected to Parliament, where he shared an office with another young comer, Tony Blair. Brown is, by all accounts, the more brilliant of the two, and it was a surprise to many people that Blair landed at the top of the ticket in the elections that brought Labour to power. (It is widely assumed that the two men have an agreement that, at some point, Brown will become Prime Minister.) In personal style and public manner, they could scarcely be more different. Where Blair is glib, confiding, and eager, Brown is dour, bearish, and prone to scowl. Socially, as a recent book on Labour politicians puts it, "Brown has consistently entertained the party faithful and trade unionists at No. 11, in contrast to the pop stars and millionaires invited to No. 10."

Politically, however, Brown and Blair are on the same side: New Labour. When Brown, who has a doctorate in history, took over the Treasury, in 1997, he brought with him an obsession with getting expenses off his books. In many areas, Brown's fiscal rectitude has paid off. Britain more or less dodged the recession that hit the United States and much of the world economy starting in 2000. But Brown's prudence has also made him reluctant to relinquish control of any aspect of public capital spending. Hence his refusal to allow the Tube to be handed over to the new London government before most of its costs could be transferred to the private sector. Never mind that, in Kiley's view, the contracts would end up costing the government far more than would aggressive, unified public management.

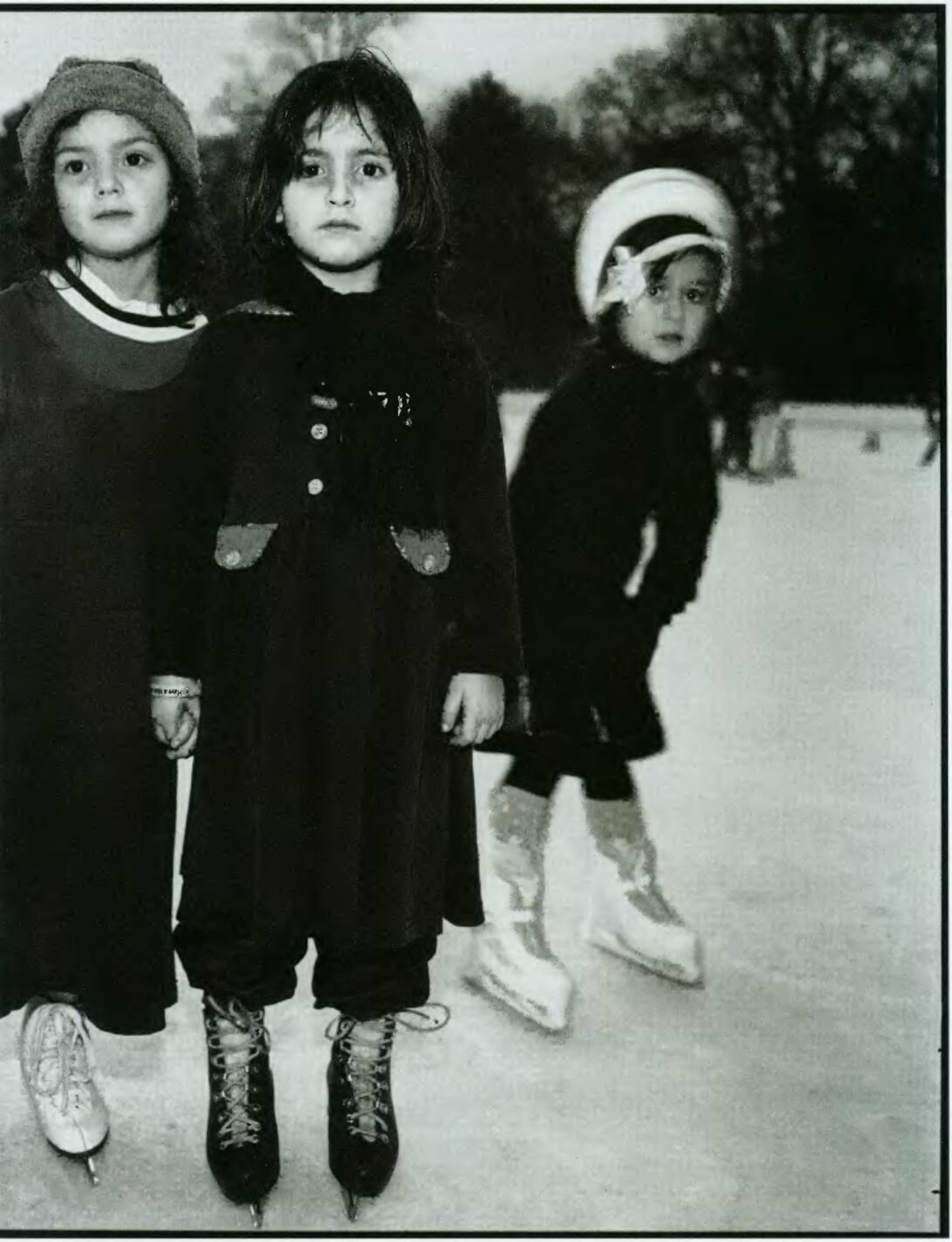
Brown was clearly the man Kiley needed to talk to. Kiley knew that he could make his case, and he believed that Brown, who has often expressed admiration for American ingenuity—he even spends his summer vacations on Cape Cod—would get it. Kiley, who has a house on Martha's Vineyard, asked to see him. Brown did not reply. Kiley asked again. Brown did not reply. Kiley, exasperated, went public with his desire to speak to the Chancellor. Brown did not respond. Kiley, flabbergasted, began to ask, publicly, whether Brown even existed. He called him the Wizard of Oz on "Breakfast with Frost." No response from Brown.

There were various theories about Brown's refusal to see Kiley—or even acknowledge him. Some people related it to Brown's widely credited hatred of Ken Livingstone. Others attributed it, at least in part, to a Scotsman's closet hostility toward London. Most people, however, seemed to see Brown's stubborn public silence in terms of the Treasury's great power and self-regard. The Chancellor of the Exchequer almost never meets with a local government functionary. When the Treasury sends someone to a meeting with another government department, it tends to send a representative of a lower rank than that of the person being met, simply to underline the Treasury's institutional superiority. An élite brain trust at Treasury made policy, and the department expected implementers like Kiley to carry that policy out, without discussion or complaint. In that sense, Brown's silence was a class thing—as so many things in Britain are—and not personal.

Kiley knew that Gordon Brown was an unusual politician—one who, for instance, rarely spoke to the press. "He's a very scarce commodity," Kiley told me. "And it may be that he keeps a kind of value to his political coin that other politicians don't, because they wear out their welcome. Coming out when this



ICE CAPADES *Rachelli and Chanala Schiffe*



*ix and four, and Rikki Siebzener, five, at the Prospect Park Skate School, at Wollman Rink in Brooklyn. Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.*

new American know-it-all arrives on the scene and challenges him? It wasn't even a hard choice to make."

Not everyone in the Treasury remained so impervious. After the press learned of Shriti Vadera's role in the negotiations, the papers lit into her for blocking Kiley. As she left one meeting, Kiley recalled, a pack of reporters waiting outside hounded her so relentlessly that she retreated indoors. Kiley found her in tears.

In the spring of 2001, as a general election loomed in June, Tony Blair was aware that the squabble over the Tube was hurting his party, particularly in London. On Easter Monday, he invited Kiley to Chequers, the Prime Minister's country estate. In the study, they went over some of the contracts. Blair, a lawyer by training, could easily see how disadvantageous the contracts were to the government. He asked Kiley to negotiate for the central government with the consortia that had bid on the contracts, hammering out a version that Kiley could live with. In other words, he wanted Kiley to work for him.

Kiley told me that he felt obliged to try, if only because the Prime Minister had asked him to. And so, while remaining transport commissioner of London, he became chairman of London Regional Transport.

Blair's hiring of Kiley was a bombshell, and was widely seen as a direct rebuff to Gordon Brown. But the immediate effect of Blair's action was to remove the controversy from the news. Kiley disappeared into lengthy negotiating sessions. Labour's fear that Ken Livingstone, angry about the Tube, might campaign against its local candidates in London was allayed. Labour went on to win the June elections in a landslide.

Shortly after the election, Blair fired Kiley.

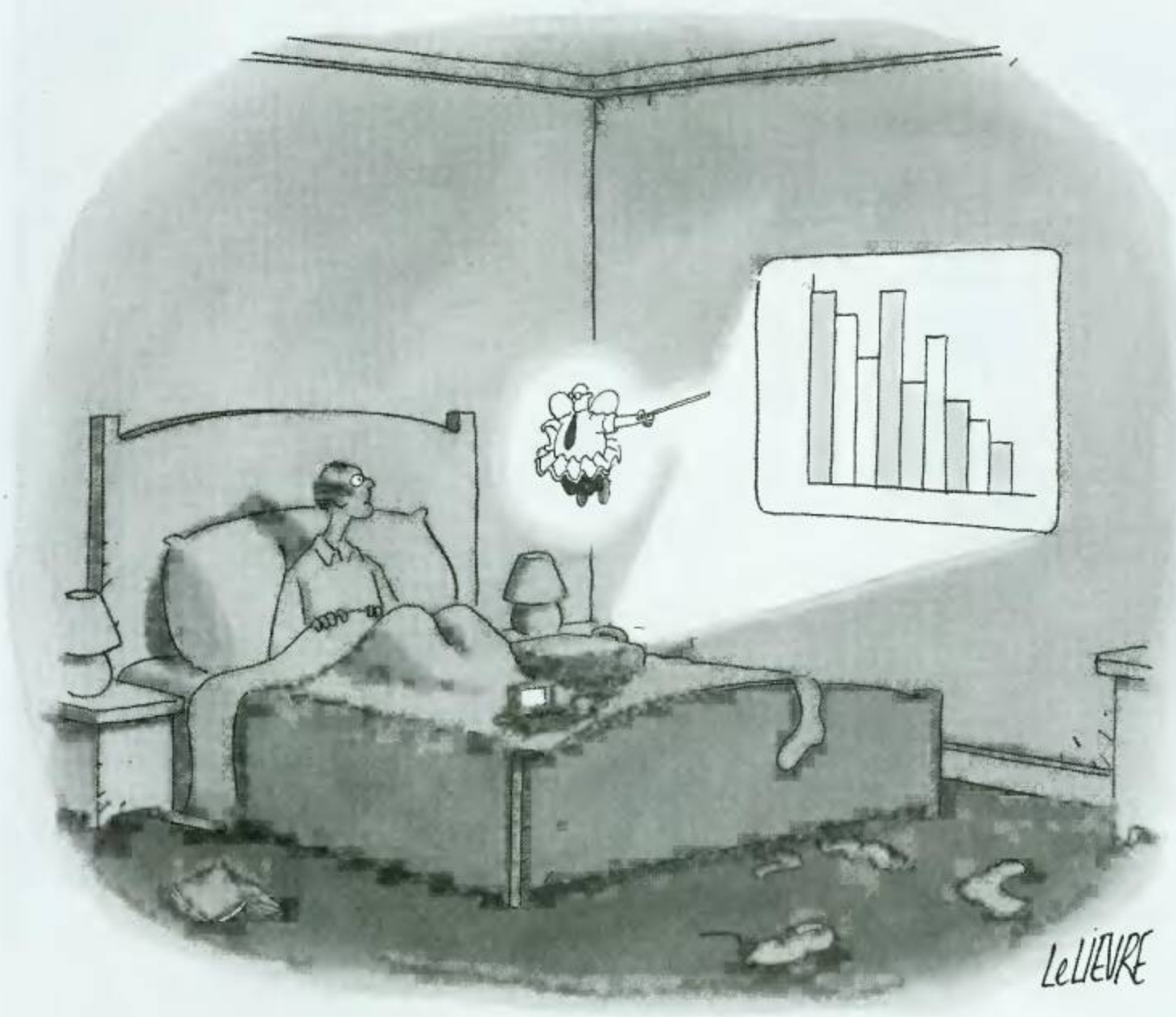
"Heroic cynicism," Tony Travers, a specialist in urban affairs at the London School of Economics, told me, not unadmiringly. "Breathtaking."

"Heartbreaking," Simon Jenkins said. "To invite him to Chequers. To appoint him to that job. To let yourself be photographed with him. To let it be known that you had faced down Gordon Brown and gone with Bob Kiley. And then to sack him straight after the election. I told Bob, 'Anything you can do in American politics we can do worse.' "

Blair had not only fired Kiley; his Government had immediately obtained a gag order from the courts to prevent him from releasing two publicly financed consultants' reports on the safety implications and financial outlook of the P.P.P. contracts.

Kiley did not take the dismissal quietly. He was still London's transport commissioner, and he and Livingstone filed a lawsuit to have the gag lifted. He went on television to accuse the Government of throwing a "smoke screen" around the contracts. Hundreds of supporters, some carrying signs reading "London Loves Kiley," turned up outside the Royal Courts of Justice in late July when the suit was heard. Kiley won permission to release the consultants' reports, and polls showed that he and Livingstone had the support of almost ninety per cent of London. They seemed to be running out of options, though.

The companies competing for the Tube contracts included some of Britain's most powerful corporations. Still, what Kiley and Livingstone were confronting was not, evidently, corporate self-dealing or the influence of campaign contributors (Labour still gets much of its funding from unions) but far stronger forces: the institutional weight of the Treasury and New Labour's ideological infatuation with markets and big business. Simon Jenkins told me, "The script was that anybody in Kiley's position was incompetent. So when Bob came along—the acceptable face of public Tube management, this charismatic leader who can actually *do* it—they were unable to see it. It didn't fit their model."




*The Night Before the Big Meeting Frank Receives a Visit from the PowerPoint Fairy.*

Meanwhile, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Treasury-driven model of rail management had fundamental problems: Britain's once-great national rail system was coming apart. British Rail, which the Tories had privatized in the mid-nineties, had been broken up into more than a hundred separate pieces and

sold off. Since then, dozens of different companies—train operators, train owners, maintenance companies, rail-freight firms, as well as a large, publicly traded corporation called Railtrack, which owned all the infrastructure—had worked together to turn Britain's rail system into perhaps the worst in Europe. There had been several major accidents, including one at Ladbroke Grove, in West London, in October of 1999, that killed thirty-one people; another, in October of 2000, near Hatfield, north of London, that killed four people; and a third, at Potters Bar, in Hertfordshire, in May of 2002, that killed seven and injured seventy. By any measure, the "safety culture," as it is called, of British Rail, which was among the world's strongest, had been destroyed.

Only two of Railtrack's fourteen board members at the time of the Hatfield crash had railroad experience. Gerald Corbett, the company's chief executive, was interviewed two days later on the BBC, and said, "The railway was ripped apart at privatization and the structure that was put in place was a structure designed, if we are honest, to maximize the proceeds to the Treasury." A month later, he was sacked and replaced by a man whose background was in the hotel industry. Railtrack's finances went into a death spiral. The Blair Government was finally forced to seize control of the company in late 2001. A quarter of a million shareholders were left holding the bag, their investments decimated. Then, in October of 2003, the Government abruptly terminated all of the rail system's major maintenance contracts. At least two of the recent fatal train wrecks have been attributed to faulty maintenance, and Whitehall has apparently concluded that the job is simply too important to leave to private contractors.

The failure of national rail privatization could hardly go unremarked by anyone debating the plan for the Tube. And yet the Blair Government denied that there was any lesson to be learned. The railways were a "full," or Tory, privatization; Blair's plan was a "third way" partnership. The term "privatization" does, it is true, cover a great number of arrangements. And the recent rise of the public-private partnership (like privatization, an international trend) can clearly be attributed to the limits and disappointments common to wholesale privatizations. By not entirely abandoning ownership, the state may retain its role in safeguarding the public interest while reaping the benefits of competition. These benefits are largely erased, however, if the service being provided constitutes a natural monopoly—water, electricity, the subway—and particularly if contracts are allowed to run for decades. This was, of course, the plan for the Tube.

Still, the Government forged ahead. By late 2002, some of the first contracts were finally being signed. Two of the three batches of Tube lines (the Bakerloo, Central, Victoria, and Waterloo & City lines; and the District, Circle, Metropolitan, East London, and Hammersmith & City lines) were awarded to a consortium called Metronet. The third (the Jubilee, Northern, and Piccadilly lines) went to a consortium called Tube Lines, one of whose principals is the American multinational Bechtel. When I asked Kiley about Bechtel, a bête noire of privatization opponents, he surprised me. "They're a solid company," he said. "They're a tough group. They're not going to be pushed around. But they're very professional. I've worked with Bechtel before. You worry about the companies that are a little less mature." Kiley, in fact, had grave doubts about several of the other companies involved, including one that was in deep financial trouble and two that had been implicated in fatal crashes on the national rail system.

"They'll destroy the Underground," David Gunn said flatly. "Just like they destroyed British Rail, which was a great organization. They contracted everything out, lost the basic human capital that you need to run these organizations. They didn't even have an engineering department left. That's how you get a Hatfield."

I went to hear Livingstone and Kiley speak at a meeting of the London Assembly, part of the city's new government, in its gleaming headquarters, on the south bank of the Thames. The two men make an odd, and oddly formidable, political couple. Livingstone is the cheeky brawler, a popular hero, a Londoner to his fingertips, always ready with a quotable quip—he called the civil servants who were negotiating the P.P.P. "ghastly dullards"—while Kiley is the cool American, intent on his job, unfazed by the spotlight, the consummate grownup.

The two men shared the podium for much of the meeting, while a couple of dozen assembly members peppered them with questions. The Mayor has a large, round head, a nasal voice, and a more or less perpetual half smile that serves to temper his sarcasm. Looking business-



*"I hope I still look that good when I'm her age."*

like in a dark suit, striped shirt, and gold necktie, he sparred amiably with the other politicians, landing jabs that drew laughs from the gallery. (After Kiley left, he said, "I noticed Bob slipping out the other door so that he would not have to confront the people out front protesting the pretty crap wages that bus drivers are still being paid.")

Kiley played the straight man. In a gray shirt and a gray tie, he answered questions about the transportation budget, reeling off numbers without notes, his manner serious but relaxed. The sense of public showmanship and one-upmanship that pervaded Livingstone's exchanges with the assembly was absent with Kiley. This was a manager, not a politician, except that he stood with Livingstone, and by doing so visibly strengthened the Mayor's position.




Livingstone and Kiley have become good friends. "The chemistry works," Kiley said simply. "Which is nice. You know, the Government's always accusing Ken of being duplicitous, but I find him eminently trustworthy and reliable. When he makes a commitment, he sticks with it."

Kiley has a distinctly different social profile from Livingstone's. Tony Travers, of the L.S.E., told me that Kiley and his wife "have fit into London society in the most extraordinary way," adding, "No establishment party could be perfect without them. Bob is clearly more than a transport operator. He has views on cities. He is a foreigner. He is not judged as a Brit would be." Rona Kiley helped found a program, Teach First, modelled on Teach for America, that recruits new graduates from top British universities to teach for two years in inner-city secondary schools. Teach First has been a roaring success; it has even gained the blessing of Tony Blair. Bob Kiley says that Rona's relations with Whitehall are much better than his, and it's true. She is also well connected in the upper reaches of the London business establishment. "I think the world of Ken Livingstone, but a lot of the people I know here hate him," Rona told me. "I can't see why."

Many people think that Kiley had no idea what he was getting into when he took this job. He was hired by a mayor who, although he had been directly elected, had almost no power to raise revenue. Kiley did, however, understand the traditional centralism of British government. He can talk eloquently about what he calls "the necessary democratic tension" between London and Westminster—the historically uneasy relationship between the capital city and the national government. Still, one has to wonder when he realized how weak Ken Livingstone's position really is.

Livingstone himself likes to feign denial. "I'm in a uniquely good position," he told me, "because I spent fourteen years as a backbench member of Parliament, which is such a low form of life that even the limited powers of the mayor's office seem like positively halcyon days." But he added, "When I met the mayor of Moscow and he was recounting his range of tax powers and his ability to initiate things, I described the situation in London and he said, 'Well, that's worse than under Stalin.' He was quite shocked."

Livingstone and Kiley scored one major victory, despite the odds, in 2003. London's road traffic is nightmarish, inching along in a semipermanent gridlock through much of the week, particularly in the city center, where streets originally built just wide enough for two carts to pass offer no chance of new lanes being added. Livingstone wanted to require vehicles operating in Central London to pay a fee. London isn't entered, like Manhattan, by bridges or tunnels, so the mechanics of the scheme were unwieldy—cameras mounted at key intersections would film license plates, and computers would send bills to car owners who hadn't paid their fee (by phone, on the Internet, or at designated shops or gas stations). Fines for nonpayment would escalate rapidly.

Every conceivable objection was raised. Those who lived on the edges of the congestion zone, as it was called, would be paying constantly. The working class couldn't afford it. (The working class takes the Tube, Livingstone retorted, or the bus. He himself has never had a driver's license, and refuses an official car and driver; he takes the Tube to work.) Children would be unable to get to school, because their parents would be unable to afford the "school run" into the zone. The computers would fine the wrong people. An epidemic of license-plate stealing was inevitable. One Tory politician predicted civil disobedience.

In February, as the clamor peaked, the congestion charge was introduced. Kiley and his staff worked through the night to solve problems as they appeared. On the whole, things went remarkably smoothly. Traffic improved immediately. By late 2003, Livingstone was talking about doubling the size of the congestion zone.

In January of last year, a crowded Tube train crashed between St. Paul's and Chancery Lane. Three cars derailed, and thirty-two people were injured. The train bounced off the tunnel walls, tearing off doors and shattering windows. Eight hundred passengers had to clamber through broken glass, twisted metal, and thick smoke. The streets around Chancery Lane filled with soot-faced people in shock, vomiting in the gutters. I happened to be in the neighborhood when the crash occurred. The public anger was palpable, and it grew in the days that followed, when the Central Line, which carries half a million passengers a day, was closed indefinitely, and some of the story behind the crash emerged. It seemed that the train's driver had reported hearing strange noises, and a safety inspector had boarded the train, but got off six stops before the derailment. The Central Line was under "shadow running"—a program to prepare for the transfer of maintenance from London Underground to the infracos—and the train drivers' union claimed that its workers were already under pressure not to take trains out of service. This was exactly the sort of arrangement that had caused Ken Livingstone to declare, "They will be arguing about the contracts as they haul the bodies out of the Underground."

I went to see Kiley a few days after the Chancery Lane accident. He was at home, recovering from bronchitis. We sat in his living room. He wore jeans and a sweatshirt and heavy brogues. He was hoarse but seemed vigorous. I noticed, on a bookshelf behind him, a biography of Disraeli (next to a four-volume history of Boston). Despite his frustration with the British system of government, he talked about the awe he felt when he entered the House of Commons, to which he had often been summoned—how its long, rich history of democratic debate seemed to suffuse the building it-

self. "You can be the most cynical person in the world, but you can't walk in there and not be affected," he said.

Kiley's popularity has ebbed from its dizzying, Ike-like high-water mark. In some ways, though, it has also solidified. Susan Kramer, the former banker on the board of Transport for London, who was the Liberal Democrats' candidate for mayor in 2000, told me, "I think Bob's seen as incredibly pro-London. He's not waiting for a title or for some future appointment." Steve Norris, who was the Tory candidate for mayor in 2000—and will be again in 2004—takes a less benign view of Kiley. "I sold my Kiley shares a long time ago," he told me. "He really was the sort of ultimate A-list smash. But the problem is that he's been utterly, utterly useless." Norris has a free-wheeling political style that allowed him to survive a scandal, several years back, in which he was alleged to have had five mistresses while married. But he has yet to gain much traction from his campaign promises to send Kiley back where he came from: Ken Livingstone remains an odds-on favorite for reëlection.

With the Blair Government still dead set on the P.P.P., and only one major set of contracts still to be signed, some of Kiley and Livingstone's supporters were inclined to be apocalyptic. They talked about how Kiley and Livingstone would be handed a "poisoned chalice" if they accepted a partially privatized Tube. "The Treasury just got this massively wrong," Simon Jenkins had told me. "It was like mistaking summer for winter. It's the Treasury's version of the Dardanelles campaign—a total fiasco, already costing untold millions of pounds and not even begun. It's probably the biggest central-government fiasco of modern times."

Kiley, in his living room, was more measured. "This is a multibillion-pound roll of the dice, the outcome of which won't be known for five to ten years," he said. "I've never been around a contract that doesn't change. Both parties realize there are reasons to change a contract—you just go ahead and do it."

Rona Kiley came to the door. There was a call from Bob's office; they said it was an emergency. He went out to take it. I looked around the room, which was not particularly large but was sunny, beautifully furnished, with a fireplace, and vases full of fresh lilies and orchids. The house was quiet—the Kileys' sons were both back in the States. I was reminded of something I had heard from two different local transport historians. Bob Kiley, they said, bore an uncanny resemblance to Albert Stanley, later Lord Ashfield, who ran London's Underground system for most of the first half of the twentieth century—the Golden Age of the Tube. One of the historians, Stephen Glaister, of Imperial College, got out pictures of the two men and held them side by side for me to examine. Actually, their resemblance was more than physical, for Lord Ashfield was an American, too. He had lived in Detroit, where he ran the street railways, and he had succeeded in integrating London's chaotic mass-transit system, most of which was still in private hands, into a single, smoothly functioning public network.

Kiley returned from his phone call. It seemed that a deal with the Government for the transfer of the Tube to Transport for London was imminent. This was not the first time a deal had seemed close to completion. But Kiley was clearly hopeful.

And finally, this past July, responsibility for the Underground was handed over to London. There was very little fanfare. Everyone, including the press and the public, seemed exhausted. Tony Blair was already occupied with trying to shore up his leadership in the face of national disillusionment over his handling of the Iraq war. A columnist at the *Observer* suggested that perhaps it was now time for Gordon Brown to unbend and meet Bob Kiley. There was no response from Brown.

Kiley went to work on fixing the Tube. "The chalice is definitely poisoned," he recently conceded. "The question is whether you can detoxify the contents." He meant a serious renegotiation of the P.P.P. contracts, which he sees as increasingly likely. The Treasury, having recognized the calamitous course it set the Tube on, has, he said, "backed away from the P.P.P. as if they'd never seen it before. It's 'P.P.P.? What's that? Is that like the Q.Q.Q.?' " Kiley laughed. Now the Treasury is even coming around to Kiley's idea of public-bond financing for improvements on the Tube. Last month, Ken Livingstone, cruising toward reëlection in June, was abruptly readmitted to the Labour Party, with Tony Blair publicly admitting that he had been wrong about his old antagonist.

"I think we can come to a good ending," Kiley told me. "This is not over." ♦



*"We try to think of the mold as green space."*

FICTION

# THE LAST WORDS ON EARTH

BY NICOLE KRAUSS



When they write my obituary. Tomorrow. Or the next day. It will say, "Leo Gursky is survived by an apartment full of shit." I'm surprised I haven't been buried alive. I have to struggle to keep a path clear between bed and toilet, toilet and kitchen table, table and front door. If I want to get from the toilet to the front door, I have to go by way of the kitchen table. I like to imagine the bed as home plate, the toilet as first, the kitchen table as second, the front door as third: should the doorbell ring while I am lying in bed, I have to round the toilet and the kitchen table in order to arrive at the door. If it happens to be Bruno, I let him in without a word and then jog back to bed, the roar of the invisible crowd ringing in my ears.

I often wonder who will be the last person to see me alive. If I had to bet, I'd bet on the delivery boy from the Chinese takeout. I order in four nights out of seven. Whenever he comes, I make a big production of finding my wallet. He stands at the door holding the greasy bag while I wonder if this is the night I'll finish off my spring roll, climb into bed, and have a heart attack in my sleep.

I try to make a point of being seen. Often when I'm out I'll buy a juice, even if I'm not thirsty. If the store is crowded, I'll sometimes go so far as to drop my change all over the floor, the nickels and dimes skidding in every direction. I'll go into the Athlete's Foot and say, "What do you have in sneakers?" The clerk will look me over like the poor schmuck that I am and direct me to the one pair of Rockports they carry, something in spanking white. "Nah," I'll say, "I have those already," and then I'll make my way over to the Reeboks and pick out something that doesn't even resemble a shoe, a waterproof bootie, maybe, and ask for it in size 9. The kid will look again, more carefully. "Size 9," I'll repeat, holding his gaze while I clutch the webbed shoe. He'll shake his head and go to the back for them, and by the time he returns I'm peeling off my socks. I'll roll my pant legs up and look down at those decrepit things my feet, and an awkward minute will pass until it becomes clear that I'm waiting for him to slip the booties onto them. I never actually buy. All I want is not to die on a day when I went unseen.

A few months ago, I saw an ad in the paper. It said, "NEEDED: NUDE MODEL FOR DRAWING CLASS. $15 AN HOUR." It seemed too good to be true. To have so much looked at. By so many. I called the number. A woman told me to come the following Tuesday. I tried to describe myself, but she wasn't interested. "Anything will do," she said.

The days passed slowly. I told Bruno about it, but he misunderstood. He thought I was signing up for a drawing class in order to see nude girls. He didn't want to be corrected. "Their breasts?" he asked. "They show their boobs?" I shrugged. "And down there?"

After Mrs. Freid on the fourth floor died and it took three days for anyone to find her, Bruno and I got into the habit of checking on each other. We'd make little excuses—"I ran out of toilet paper," I'd say when Bruno opened his door. A day would pass. There would be a knock on my door. "I lost my *TV Guide*," he'd explain, and I'd go and find him mine, even though I knew his was right where it always was, on his couch. Once, he came down on a Sunday afternoon. "I need a cup of flour," he said. It was clumsy, but I couldn't help myself. "You don't know how to cook," I said. There was a moment of silence. Bruno looked me in the eye. "What do you know," he said. "I'm baking a cake."

When I came to America, I knew hardly anyone, only a second cousin who was a locksmith, so I worked for him. If he'd been a shoemaker, I would have been a shoemaker; if he had shovelled shit, I, too, would have shovelled. But he was a locksmith, he taught me the trade, and that's what I became. We had a little business together, and then one year he got TB. They had to cut his liver out, and he got a 106 temperature and died, so I took it over. I went on sending his wife half the profits, even after she married a doctor and moved to Bayside. I stayed in the business for more than fifty years. It's not what I would have imagined for myself. And yet. The truth is I came to like it. I helped in those who were locked out; others I helped keep out what shouldn't be let in, so that they could sleep without nightmares.

Then one day I was looking out the window. Maybe I was contemplating the sky. Put even a fool in front of the window and you'll get a Spinoza; in the end life makes window-watchers of us all. The afternoon went by; little grains of darkness sifted down. I reached for the chain on the bulb and suddenly it was as if an elephant had stepped on my heart. I fell to my knees. I thought, I didn't live forever. A minute passed. Another minute. Another. I clawed at the floor, pulling myself along toward the phone.

Twenty-five per cent of my heart muscle died. It took time to recover, and I never went back to work. I stared out the window. I watched fall turn into winter, winter into spring. I dragged myself upstairs to sit with Bruno.

Bruno and I were friends when we were boys. When I came to America, I thought he was dead, and then one day I was walking down East Broadway and I heard his voice. I turned around. He was standing in front of the grocer's asking the price of some fruit. I thought, You're hearing things, you're such a dreamer, what is the likelihood—your boyhood friend? I stood frozen on the sidewalk. He's in the ground, I told myself. It's fifty years later, here you are in the United States of America, there's McDonald's, get a grip. I waited just to make sure. I wouldn't have recognized his face. But the way he walked was unmistakable—skipping along like a bird. He was about to pass me. I put my arm out and grabbed his sleeve. "Bruno," I said. He stopped and turned. At first he seemed scared and then confused. "Bruno," I said. He looked at me; his eyes filled with tears. He touched his hand to my cheek; with the other he held a bag of plums. "Bruno."

A couple of years later, his wife died. Living in their apartment without her was too much for him, so when an apartment opened up on the floor above me he moved in. We often sit together at my kitchen table. A whole afternoon can go by without our saying a word. If we do talk, we never speak in Yiddish. The words of our childhood became strangers to us long ago—we couldn't use them in the same way, and so we chose not to use them at all. Life demanded a new language.

When I was a boy, I liked to write. I wrote three books before I was twenty-one. The first was about S., the village in Poland where I lived. I drew a map of it for the frontispiece, labelling each house and shop: here was Kipnis the butcher, and here Pinsky the tailor, and here lived Fishl Shapiro, who was either a

FILIP PAGOWSKI

great tzaddik or an idiot, no one could decide, and here the village square and the field where we played, and here where the forest began, and here stood the tree from which Beyla Asch had hanged herself, and here and here. And yet. When I gave it to the only person in S. whose opinion I cared about, she just shrugged and said maybe it would be better if I made things up. So I wrote a second book, and I filled it with men who grew wings, and trees with their roots growing into the sky, and people who forgot their own names, and people who couldn't forget anything. When it was finished, I ran all the way to her house. I leaned against a wall and watched her face as she read it. It got dark outside, but she kept reading. Hours went by. I slid to the floor. When she finished, she looked up. At first she didn't speak. Then she said that perhaps I shouldn't make up *everything*, because that made it hard to believe anything.



Another person might have given up. I started again. This time I didn't write about real things and I didn't write about imaginary things. I wrote about the only thing I knew. I made a book of my love for her. I wrote and I wrote. The pages piled up. I was saying everything for the first time. Even after the only person whose opinion I cared about had left on a boat for America, I continued to fill pages with her name.

Soon after she left, everything fell apart. Hitler invaded Poland. There were rumors of unfathomable things, and because we could not fathom them we failed to believe them—until we had no choice and it was too late. By the time I believed, I'd shed the only part of me that had ever thought I'd find words for even the smallest bit of life.

And yet. A couple of months after my heart attack, fifty-seven years after I'd given it up, I started to write again. I did it for myself alone; that was the difference. I knew it would be impossible to find the right words. And because I accepted that what I'd once believed possible was, in fact, impossible, and because I knew that I would never show a page of it to anyone, I wrote a sentence: *I fell in love when I was ten.*

It remained there, staring up from the otherwise blank page for days. The next week I added another. Soon there was a whole page. It made me happy. Like I said, I was doing it for myself.

Once, I said to Bruno, "Take a guess. How many pages do you think I have?" "No idea," Bruno said. "Write a number," I said, "and slip it across the table." He shrugged and took a pen out of his pocket. He thought for a minute or two, studying my face. "A ballpark guess," I said. He hunched over his napkin, scrawled a number, and turned it over. I wrote down the real number, 301, on my own napkin. We pushed the napkins across the table. I picked up Bruno's. For reasons I can't explain, he had written 200,000. He picked up my napkin and turned it over. His face fell.

Sometimes I open my book and read from it at random. There are passages I know by heart. *By heart*—this is not an expression I use lightly. My heart is weak and unreliable. I try to burden it as little as possible. If something is going to have an impact, I direct it elsewhere. My gut, for example, or my lungs. When I pass a mirror and catch a glimpse of myself, or I'm at the bus stop and some kids come up behind me and say, "Who smells shit?"—small daily humiliations that are par for the course—these I take, generally speaking, in my liver. The pancreas I reserve for being struck by all that's been lost. It's true that there's so much, and the organ is so small. But. You would be surprised how much it can take. When I wake up and my fingers are stiff, almost certainly I was dreaming of my childhood. All the times I have suddenly remembered that my parents are dead (even now it still surprises me to exist in the world while those who made me have ceased to exist): my knees. To everything a season; to every time I've woken only to make the mistake of believing for a moment that someone is sleeping beside me: a hemorrhoid. Loneliness: there is no organ that can take it all.

*Once upon a time there was a boy.* He lived in a village that no longer exists, in a house that no longer exists, on the edge of a field that no longer exists. Once upon a time there was a boy who lived in a house across the field from a girl who no longer exists. They made up a thousand games. They collected the world in small handfuls, and they were never unfair to each other, not once. When the sky grew dark, they parted with burrs in their clothes and leaves in their hair.

When they were ten, he asked her to marry him. When they were eleven, he kissed her for the first time. When they were thirteen, they got into a fight and for three terrible weeks they didn't talk. When they were fifteen, she showed him the scar on her left breast. Their love was a secret they told no one. He promised her he would never love another girl as long as he lived. "What if I die?" she asked. "Even then," he said. For her sixteenth birthday, he gave her a Polish-English dictionary and together they studied the words. "What's this?" he'd ask, tracing his index finger around her ankle, and she'd look it up. "And this?" he'd ask, kissing her elbow. " 'Elbow'! What kind of word is that?" And then he'd lick it, making her giggle. When they were seventeen, they made love for the first time, on a bed of straw in a shed. Later—when things had happened that they never could have imagined—she wrote him a letter that said, "When will you learn that there isn't a word for everything?"

Once upon a time there was a boy who loved a girl whose father was shrewd enough to scrounge together all the zlotys he had to send his daughter on a boat to America. At first she refused to go, but the boy also knew enough to insist, swearing on his life that he'd earn some money and find a way to follow her. He got a job as a janitor at a hospital and he saved as much as he could. But, in the summer of 1941, the *Einsatzkommandos* drove their armies farther east; on a bright, hot day in July, they entered S. At that hour, the boy happened to be lying on his back in the woods, thinking about the girl. You could say it was his love for her that saved him. In the years that followed, the boy became a man who became invisible. In this way, he escaped death.

Once upon a time the man who had become invisible arrived in America. He had spent four years hiding, mostly in trees but also in cellars and holes. Then the Russian tanks rolled in. For five months, he lived in a displaced-persons camp. He got word to his cousin, who was a locksmith in America. In his head, he practiced over and over the only words he

knew in English. *Knee. Elbow. Ear.* Finally, his papers came through. He took a train to a boat, and after a week of passage arrived in New York Harbor. Folded in his hand was the girl's address. That night, he lay awake on the floor of his cousin's room. The radiator clanged and hissed, but he was grateful for the warmth. In the morning, his cousin explained to him how to take the subway to Brooklyn. Only as his finger pressed her doorbell did it cross his mind that perhaps he should have called, so as not to give her a heart attack. She opened the door. She wore a blue scarf over her hair. He could hear the broadcast of a ballgame through the neighbor's wall.

Once upon a time the woman who had been a girl got on a boat to America and threw up all the way there, not because she was seasick but because she was pregnant. When she found out, she wrote to the boy. Every day, she waited for a letter from him, but none came. She got bigger and bigger. She tried to hide it so as not to lose her job at the dress factory. A few weeks before the baby was born, she got a letter from someone who told her what had happened to the town of S. She stopped going to work. She couldn't bring herself to get out of bed. After a week, the son of her boss came to see her. He brought her food to eat and put a bouquet of flowers in a vase by her bed. When he found out that she was pregnant, he called a midwife. A baby boy was born. One day, the girl sat up in bed and saw the son of her boss rocking the child in a shaft of sunlight. After a year, she agreed to marry him. Two years later, she had another child.

The man who had become invisible stood in her living room, listening to her story. He had changed so much in five years that now part of him wanted to laugh a hard, cold laugh. She gave him a small photograph of the boy, who was now five. Her hand was shaking. She said, "You didn't write. I thought you were dead." He looked at the photograph of the boy who, although the man didn't know it then, would grow up to look like him, go to college, fall in love, fall out of love, become a famous writer. "What's his name?" he asked. "I called him Isaac," she said. They stood for a long time in silence as he stared at the picture. At last he managed three words: "Come with me." The sound of children shouting rose from the street below. She squeezed her eyes shut. "Come with me," he said, holding out his hand. Tears rolled down her face. She shook her head. "I can't," she said. She looked down at the floor. "Please," she said. And so he did the hardest thing he'd ever done in his life: he picked up his hat and walked away.

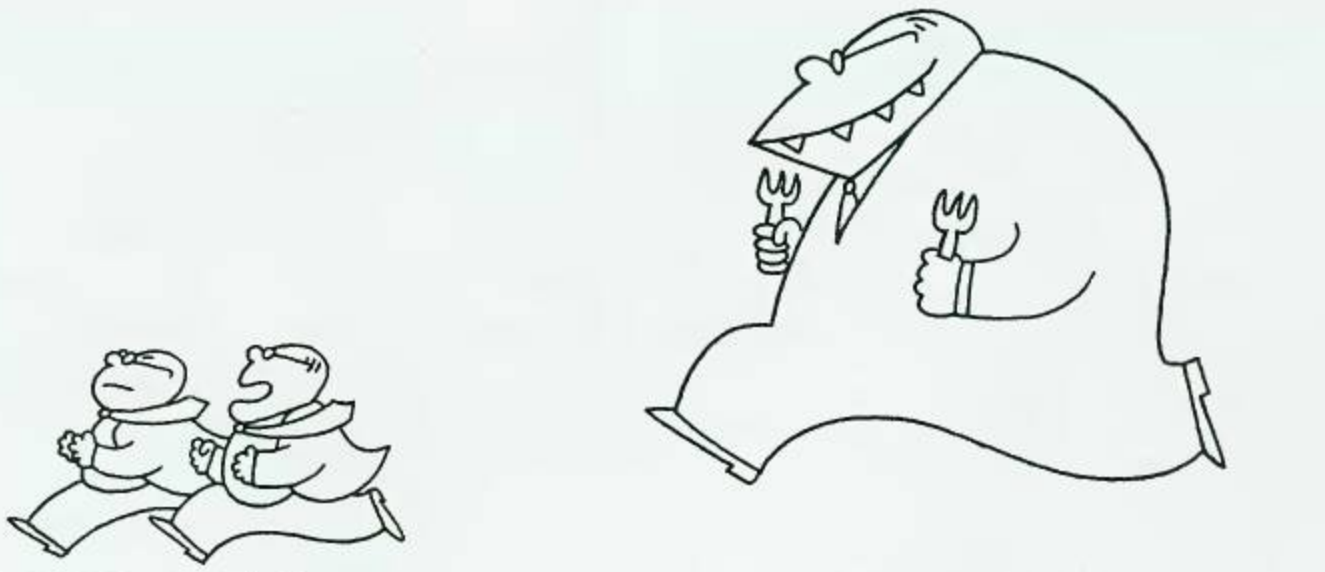
And if the man who had once promised that he'd never fall in love with another girl as long as he lived kept his promise, it wasn't because he was stubborn, or even loyal. It was because he couldn't help it. And, having already hidden for years, hiding his love for a son who didn't even know he existed didn't seem unthinkable. Not if it was what the only woman he would ever love needed him to do. After all, what does it mean for a man to hide one more thing when he has vanished completely?

The morning of the day I was scheduled to model for the art class, I woke in a state of excitement. When I'd waited as long as I could, I took a bus across town. It took me a while to find the right building. I passed it three times before I realized that it had to be the one. It was an old warehouse with some of the windows broken. The front door was rusted and propped open with a cardboard box. For a moment, I let myself imagine that I'd been lured there to be robbed and killed. I pictured my body on the floor in a pool of blood.

The sky had got dark, and it was starting to rain. I stood there, unable to go forward, unable to turn back. Finally, I heard laughter coming from inside. See, you're being ridiculous, I thought. I reached for the handle on the door and just then it swung open. A girl wearing a sweater that was too big for her came out. She pushed up her sleeves. Her arms were thin and pale. "Do you need help?" she asked. "I'm looking for a drawing class. There was an ad in the paper. Maybe I have the wrong place—" She gestured. "Upstairs. On the second floor, first room on the




*"I question your choice of locations."*



C. Barsotti

*"No, I didn't. I never said there should be no government regulation."*

• •

right. It doesn't start for another hour."

There was nothing more to say. There were steps and I went up them. My heart was pounding. What kind of fool was I, to think that they wouldn't turn away when I took off my shirt and dropped my pants and stood naked before them? To think that they would observe my varicose-veined legs, my hairy, sagging *knaidlach*, and what—start to sketch? And yet. I didn't turn back. I gripped the bannister and climbed the stairs. I could hear the rain on the skylight. A dirty light filtered through. At the top of the stairs there was a hallway. The room on the right was empty. There was a block covered with a length of black velvet, and a disorganized circle of folding chairs and easels. I went in and sat down to wait.

After half an hour, people started to wander in. A woman showed me where to undress, a corner where a makeshift curtain had been hung. I stood there and she pulled it around me. A minute passed, and then I removed my shoes. I lined them up neatly. I took off my socks and put them into the shoes. I unbuttoned my shirt and took that off; there was a hanger, so I hung it. I heard chairs scraping and then laughter. Suddenly I didn't care about being seen. I would have liked to grab my shoes and slip out of the room, down the stairs, and away from there. And yet. I unzipped my pants. Then it occurred to me: What, exactly, did "nude" mean? Did they really mean no underwear? I deliberated. I reached for the ad in the pocket of my pants. "NUDE MODEL," it said. Don't be an idiot, I told myself. These aren't amateurs. My underwear was down around my knees when the woman's footsteps returned. "Are you all right in there?" "Fine, fine. I'll be out in a moment." I looked down. There was a tiny smear. My bowels. They never cease to appall me. I stepped out of my underwear and crumpled it into a ball.

I stood without moving. I was starting to get cold. I thought, So this is how death takes you. Naked in an abandoned warehouse. Tomorrow Bruno would come downstairs and knock on my door and there would be no answer. Forgive me, Bruno. I would have liked to say goodbye. I'm sorry to have disappointed you with so few pages. Then I thought, My book. Who would find it? And then and there I realized that, even though I thought I'd been writing it for myself, the truth was that I wanted someone to read it.

I pulled back the curtain and stepped forward. Squinting in the light, I stood before them.

There were maybe twelve students, sitting in chairs holding their drawing pads. The girl in the big sweater was there. The woman who'd shown me where to undress pointed to the box draped in velvet. "Stand here. Strike a pose that feels comfortable." I didn't know which way to turn. Someone was going to have to face my rectal side no matter which way you cut it. I let my arms hang at my sides and focussed on a spot on the floor. They lifted their pencils.

Nothing happened. I felt the plush cloth under the soles of my feet, the hairs rising on my arms, my fingers like ten small weights pulling downward. I felt my body waking under twelve pairs of eyes. I lifted my head.

"Try to keep still," the woman said.

I stared at a crack in the concrete floor. I could hear their pencils moving across the pages. I wanted to smile. Already my body was starting to rebel, the knees beginning to shake and the back muscles straining, but I didn't care. If need be, I would have stood there all day. Fifteen, twenty minutes passed. Then the woman said, "Why don't we take a quick break and then we'll start again with a different pose."

I sat. I stood. I rotated. Pages turned. I cycled from feeling to numbness to feeling to numbness. My eyes watered with pain. I recited the aleph-bet twenty-three times. Somehow I got back into my clothes. I couldn't find my underwear and was too tired to look. I made it down the stairs, clutching the bannister. The woman came down after me. She said, "Wait, you forgot the fifteen dollars." I took it, and when I went to put it into my pocket I felt the ball of underwear there.

"Thank you." I meant that. I was exhausted. But happy.

I want to say somewhere: I've tried to be forgiving. And yet. There were times in my life, whole years, when anger got the better of me. Ugliness turned me inside out. There was a certain satisfaction in bitterness. I courted it. I scowled at the world. And the world scowled back. I slammed the door in people's faces. I farted where I wanted to fart. I accused cashiers of cheating me out of a penny while holding the penny in my hand. And then one day I realized that I was on my way to being the sort of schmuck who poisons pigeons. People crossed the street to avoid me. I was a human cancer. And to be honest: I wasn't really angry. Not anymore. I had left my anger somewhere long ago. Put it down on a park bench and walked away. And yet. It had been so long, I didn't know any other way of being. One day I woke up and said to myself, "It's not too late." The first days were strange. I had to practice smiling in front of the mirror. But. It came back to me. It was as if a weight had been lifted. I let go, and something let go of me. A couple of months later, I found Bruno.

When I got home from the art class, there was a note from Bruno on my door.

It said, "WARE ARE YOU?" I was too tired to climb the stairs to tell him. I fell into bed still wearing my clothes. It was past midnight when the telephone rang. Bruno, no doubt. I would have ignored it if I hadn't been afraid he'd call the police. Why couldn't he just tap on the radiator with his walking stick the way he usually did? (Three taps means "Are you alive?" Two means "Yes," one "No.") I threw off the sheets and stumbled across the floor, banging into a table leg. "O.K., O.K.," I said, picking up the receiver. "No need to wake the whole building." There was silence on the other end. I said, "Bruno?"

"Is this Leo Gursky?"

The man told me that he'd locked himself out of his house. He'd called information for the number of a locksmith. I said I was retired. The man seemed unable to believe his bad luck. He'd already called three other people, and no one had answered. "It's pouring out here," he said.

"Couldn't you stay somewhere else for the night? In the morning it'll be easy to find a locksmith. They're a dime a dozen."

"No," he said. "All right, I mean, if it's too much . . ." He paused, waiting for me to speak up. I didn't. "O.K., then." I could hear the disappointment in his voice. "Sorry to have disturbed you."

And yet. He didn't hang up and neither did I. I was filled with guilt. I thought, What do I need with sleep? There will be time. Tomorrow. Or the next day. Six feet under.

"O.K., O.K.," I said, even though I didn't want to say it. I'd have to dig up my tools. I might as well be looking for a needle in a haystack or a Jew in Poland.

He gave me an address all the way uptown. Only after I hung up did I remember that I could wait forever before a bus came at that hour. I had a card in the kitchen drawer for Goldstar Car Service, not that I'd ever called it. But. You never know. I ordered a car and started digging through the hall closet for my toolbox. I was still looking when the buzzer rang. When your pants are down around your ankles, that's when everyone arrives. "I'll be down in a minute," I shouted into the speaker, and when I turned around the toolbox was there, right under my nose. I grabbed my raincoat off the floor, smoothed down my hair in the mirror, and went out.

A black limousine idled in the street, rain falling in the headlights. Other than that, there were only a few empty cars parked along the curb. I was about to go back into the building, but the limousine driver rolled down the window and called my name. He wore a purple turban. I walked up to the window. "There must be a mistake," I said. "I ordered a car."

"O.K.," he said.

"But this is a limousine," I pointed out.

"O.K.," he repeated, motioning me in.

"I can't pay extra."

The turban bobbed. He said, "Get in before you get soaking."

I ducked inside. It was bigger than I'd imagined. The soft music coming from up front and the gentle rhythm of the windshield wipers barely reached me. The traffic lights bled into the puddles. There was a little jar of peppermints, and I filled my pockets. When the limousine came to a stop, the driver pointed to a town house. It was beautiful, with steps up to the door and leaves carved in stone. "Seventeen dollars," the driver said. I felt in my pocket for my wallet. No. Other pocket. My underwear, but no wallet. I must have left it at home in the rush. Then I remembered my fee from the art class. I dug past the peppermints and the underwear, and came up with it. "Sorry," I said. "How embarrassing. All I have on me is fifteen." I admit I was reluctant to part with those bills; hard-earned wasn't the word for them but something else, more bittersweet. But, after a brief pause, the turban bobbed and the money was accepted.

The man had been waiting under the cornice. Of course, he hadn't expected me in a limousine, and out I'd popped like Mr. Locksmith to the Stars. I was humiliated. I wanted to explain, "Believe me, I'd never mistake myself for anyone special." But it was pouring still, and I thought he needed me more than he needed any explanation of how I'd got there. It was a tricky lock. The man stood above me, holding my flashlight. The rain was running down the back of my neck. I felt how much depended on my unlocking that lock. I tried and failed. Tried and failed. And then, at last, my heart started to race. I turned the handle, and the door slipped open.



He showed me into the living room, where I waited while he went to call me a car and change into dry clothes. I tried to protest, saying I could take the bus or hail a taxi, but he wouldn't hear of it, what with the rain. The living room was filled with books. I'd never seen so many in one place that wasn't a library. I, too, like to read. Once a month, I go to the local branch. For myself, I pick a novel and, for Bruno, with his cataracts, a book on tape. At first Bruno was doubtful. "What am I supposed to do with this?" he said, looking at the box set of "Anna Karenina" as if I'd handed him an enema. And yet. A day or two later I was going about my business when a voice from above bellowed, "All happy families resemble one another," nearly giving me a conniption. After that, he listened to whatever I'd brought him at top volume and then returned it to me without comment. One afternoon, I came back from the library with "Ulysses." For a month straight he listened. He had a habit of pressing the stop button and rewinding when he hadn't fully grasped something. "Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that." Pause, rewind. "Ineluctable modality of the." Pause, rewind. "Ineluctable modality." Pause. "Ineluct." When the due date approached, he wanted it renewed. By then I'd had it with his stopping and starting, so I went to the Wiz and got him a Sony Sportsman, and now he schleps it around clipped to his belt. For all I know, he just likes the sound of an Irish accent.

I thought, Poor Bruno. He's probably called the morgue to find out if anyone has brought in an old man with an index card in his wallet that says, "MY NAME IS LEO GURSKY I HAVE NO FAMILY PLEASE CALL PINELAWN CEMETERY I HAVE A PLOT THERE IN THE JEWISH PART THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION." Or else he thinks I'm wandering in the rain with my head full of dreams. Once Bruno said that if I bought a pigeon, by the time I was halfway down the street it would become a dove; on the bus home, a parrot; and in my apartment, the moment before I took it out of the cage, a phoenix. "That's you," he said, brushing some crumbs that weren't there from the table. "No, it's not," I said. He

shrugged and looked out the window. "Who ever heard of a phoenix?" I said. "A peacock, maybe. But a phoenix—I don't think so." His face was turned away, but I thought I saw his mouth twitch in a smile.

Out of habit, I looked on the man's shelves to see if there was anything by my Isaac. Sure enough, there was. And not just one book but four. I pulled one out and turned it over to look at Isaac's photograph. We met once. He was giving a reading at the 92nd Street Y. I bought tickets four months in advance. Many times in my life I'd imagined our meeting. I as his father, he as my son. And yet. I knew that it could never happen that way. I'd accepted that the most I could hope for was a place in the audience. But during the reading something came over me. Afterward, I found myself standing in line, my hands shaking as I pressed into his the scrap of paper on which I'd written my name. He glanced at it and copied it into a book. I tried to say something, but there was no sound. He smiled and thanked me. And yet. I didn't budge. "Is there something else?" he asked. I flapped my hands. The woman behind me gave me an impatient look and pushed forward to greet him. What could he do? Like a fool, I flapped. He signed the woman's book. It was uncomfortable for everyone. The line had to move around me. Occasionally, he looked up at me, bewildered. Once, he smiled at me the way you smile at an idiot. But. My hands fought to tell him everything. At least as much as they could before a security guard grasped my elbow and escorted me to the door. It was winter. Fat white flakes fell under the street lamps. I waited for him to come out, but he never did. Maybe there was a back door, I don't know. I took the bus home. That night, before I went to sleep, I opened the book, which I'd placed on my bedside table. "To Leah Gersky," it said.

I was still holding the book when the man came up behind me. "You know it?" he asked. I dropped it, and it landed with a thud, my son's face staring up. I was suddenly tired, more tired than I'd been in years. I tried to explain. "I'm his father," I said. Or maybe I said, "He's my son." Whatever it was, I got the point across, because the man looked shocked, and then he looked surprised, and then he looked like he didn't believe me. Which was fine with me, because, after all, who did I think I was, showing up in a limousine, picking a lock, and then claiming to be the progenitor of a famous writer?

I leaned over, picked the book up, and put it back on the shelf. The man kept looking at me, but just then the car honked outside, which was lucky because I'd had enough of being looked at for one day. "Well," I said, making my way toward the front door, "I'd better be going." The man reached for his wallet, took out a hundred-dollar bill, and handed it to me. "His father?" he asked, unbelieving. I pocketed the money and handed him a complimentary peppermint. I stuffed my feet into my wet shoes. "Not really his father," I said. And because I didn't know what else to say, I said, "More like his uncle." This seemed to confuse him even more, but just in case I added, "Not exactly his uncle." He raised his eyebrows. I picked up my toolbox and stepped out into the rain. When I got to the car, he was still standing in the doorway, looking out. To prove that I was off my rocker, I gave him the Queen's wave.

It was three in the morning when I got home. But I couldn't sleep. I lay on my back, listening to the rain. Then I got out of bed and went to the kitchen. I keep my manuscript in a box in the oven. I took it out, set it on the kitchen table. I put the water on to boil. The rain was tapering off. A pigeon cooed on the windowsill. It puffed up its body, strutted back and forth, and took flight. Free as a bird, so to speak. I rolled a sheet of paper into my typewriter and, with two fingers, I picked out a title: "Words for Everything."

Before I could change my mind, I rolled it out, laid it on top of the stack of pages in the box, and closed the lid. I found some brown paper and wrapped it up. On the front I wrote Isaac's address, which I knew by heart.



Nothing happened. No wind to sweep everything away. No heart attack. No angel at the door. Outside, the sky lightened. I ate a Metamucil bar and gave myself a sponge bath. I dressed. I spat into my palm and tried to force my hair into submission. I sat with the brown paper package on my lap. At eight-forty-five, I put my raincoat on and tucked the package under my arm. Then I went out the door and into the morning.

I don't know what I expected, but I expected something. My fingers shook whenever I went to unlock the mailbox. I went Monday. Nothing. I went Tuesday and Wednesday. There was nothing on Thursday, either. Friday, as I sat dozing in my chair, the telephone rang. I was sure it was my son. But. It was only the teacher from the art class saying that she was looking for people for a project she was doing at a gallery, and she'd thought of me, because of my compelling presence. Naturally, I was flattered. At any other time, it would have been reason enough to splurge on spare ribs. And yet. "What kind of project?" I asked. She said that all I had to do was sit naked on a metal stool in the middle of the room, and then, if I felt like it, which she was hoping I would, dip my body into a vat of kosher cow's blood and roll on the large white sheets of paper provided.

I may be a fool but I'm not desperate. I thanked her very much for the offer, but said that I was going to have to turn it down since I was already scheduled to sit on my thumb and rotate in accordance with the movements of the earth around the sun. She was disappointed. But she seemed to understand. She said that if I wanted to see the drawings the class had done of me I could come to the show they were putting up in a month. I wrote down the date and hung up the phone.

I'd been in the apartment all day, so I decided to go out for a walk. I'm an old man. But I can still get around. It started to get dark, but I persevered. I didn't have any destination in mind. When I saw a Starbucks, I went in and bought a coffee, because I felt like a coffee, not because I wanted anyone to notice me. Normally I would have made a big production—"Give me a Grande Venti, I mean a Tall Grande, give me a Chai Super Venti Grande, or do I want a Short Frappe?"—and then, for punctuation, I would've had

## COUNTERPOINT

It was always dark then
silence deepened notes
rushed the room like water
nights listening reading
the life of Brahms as if
it were her own palm
scored with Braille and all
she might become through rage
of will was mirrored there
a dark page punched with holes.

—*Constance Merritt*

a small mishap at the milk station. Not this time. I poured the milk like a regular citizen of the world and sat down in an easy chair across from a man reading the newspaper. I wrapped my hands around the coffee. The warmth felt good. At the next table there was a girl with blue hair leaning over a notebook and chewing on a ballpoint, and at the table next to her was a little boy in a soccer uniform sitting with his mother, who told him, "The plural of 'elf' is 'elves.' " A wave of happiness came over me. I felt giddy to be part of it all. To be drinking a cup of coffee like a normal person. I wanted to shout out, "The plural of 'elf' is 'elves'! What a language! What a world!"

There was a pay phone by the rest room. I felt in my pocket for a quarter and dialled Bruno's number. It rang nine times. The girl with blue hair passed me on the way to the rest room. I smiled at her. Amazing! She smiled back. On the tenth ring he picked up.

"Bruno?"

"Yes?"

"Isn't it good to be alive?"

"No, thank you, I don't want to buy anything."

"I'm not trying to sell you anything! It's Leo. Listen. I was sitting here drinking a coffee and suddenly it hit me."

"Who hit you?"

"*Ach*, listen! It hit me how good it is to be alive. Alive! And I wanted to tell you. Do you understand what I'm saying? I'm saying life is a thing of beauty, Bruno. A thing of beauty and a joy forever."

There was a pause.

"Sure, whatever you say, Leo. Life is a beauty."

"And a joy forever," I said.

"All right," Bruno said. "And a joy."

I waited.

"Forever."

I was about to hang up when Bruno said, "Leo?"

"Yes?"

"Did you mean *human* life?"

I worked on my coffee for half an hour, making the most of it. The girl closed her notebook and got up to leave. The man neared the end of his newspaper. I read the headlines. I was a small part of something larger than myself. Yes, human life. Human! Life! Then the man turned the page and my heart stopped.

It was a picture of Isaac. I collect all his clippings, and I thought I'd seen every picture of him. I've studied them all a thousand times. And yet. This one was new to me. He was standing in front of a window, his chin down, head tilted slightly to the side. He might have been thinking. But his eyes were looking up, as if someone had called his name right before the shutter clicked. I wanted to call out to him. It was only a newspaper, but I wanted to holler it at the top of my lungs. "Isaac! Here I am! Can you hear me, my little Isaac?" I wanted him to turn his eyes to me just as he had to whoever had shaken him from his thoughts. But. He couldn't.

The headline said: "ISAAC MORITZ, NOVELIST, DEAD AT 60."

Hours passed. Finally a Starbucks employee with a ring in his eyebrow came up to me. "We're closing," he said. I looked around. It was true. Everyone was gone. A girl with painted nails was dragging a broom across the floor. I got up. Or. I tried to get up but my legs wanted nothing to do with me. The Starbucks employee looked at me as if I were a cockroach in the brownie mix. The paper cup I held was crushed to a damp pulp in my palm. I handed it to him and started to make my way across the floor. Then I remembered the newspaper. The employee had already thrown it into the trash bin he was rolling across the floor. I fished it out while he looked on.

I don't know how I got home. Bruno must have heard me unlock the door, because a minute later he came downstairs and knocked. I didn't answer. I was sitting in the dark in the chair by the window. He kept knocking. Finally, I heard him go back upstairs. An hour or more went by, and then I heard him on the stairs again. He slid a piece of paper under the door. It said, "LIFE IS BUTIFUL." I pushed it back out. He pushed it back in. I pushed it out, he pushed it in. Out, in, out, in. I stared at it. "LIFE IS BUTIFUL." I thought, Perhaps it is. Perhaps that is the word for life. I heard Bruno breathing on the other side of the door. I found a pencil. I scrawled, "AND A JOKE FOREVER." I pushed it back under the door. A pause while he read it. Then, satisfied, he made his way up the stairs.

It's possible I cried. What's the difference.

Then I picked up the newspaper, cut out the photograph of Isaac, and put it in my wallet, in the plastic part made for a photo. I opened and closed the Velcro a few times to look at his face. Then I noticed that, underneath where I had cut out the picture, the paper said, "A memorial service will be held tomorrow at 10 A.M. at Central Synagogue."

I took out the wrinkled schmatte I call a suit. I sat at the kitchen table and made a single rip in the collar. I would have liked to shred the whole thing. But. I restrained myself. Fishl the tzaddik who might have been an idiot once said, *A single rip is harder to bear than a hundred rips.* I bathed myself. I dressed, and brought the vodka down off the shelf. I took a drink, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand, repeating the gesture that had been made a hundred times by my father and his father and his father's father, eyes half closed as the sharpness

of alcohol replaced the sharpness of grief.

I woke up on the floor to the sound of pigeons ruffling their feathers on the windowsill. When I looked at the clock, it was already quarter past ten. I like to think that the world wasn't ready for me, but maybe the truth is that I wasn't ready for the world. I've always arrived too late for my life. I ran to the bus stop. I use "ran" as a shorthand for hobbled, did a little skip, scampered, stopped and panted, then hobbled again. Like so, I made my way. I caught the bus uptown. I use "caught" here equally metaphorically, because the bus was moving at a snail's pace and you can't catch something that lacks all momentum. We sat in traffic. "Doesn't this thing go any faster?" I said loudly. The woman next to me got up and moved to another seat.

By the time I got to the shul the service was already over, but the place was still crowded with people. A man in a yellow bow tie and a white suit, what was left of his hair lacquered across his scalp, said, "Of course we knew, but when it finally happened none of us were ready," to which a woman standing next to him replied, "Who can be ready?" I stood alone by a large potted plant. My palms were damp. I felt myself getting dizzy. Perhaps it had been a mistake to come.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Bernard, Isaac's half brother. A huge oaf, the spitting image of his father, may his memory be a blessing—yes, even his. He's been in the ground three years. I consider it a small victory that he kicked the bucket before me. And yet. When I remember, I light a yahrzeit candle for him. If not me, who? She died two years earlier. I saw her one more time, at the very end. There was a nurse at the hospital, a young girl, and I told her . . . not the truth but a story not unlike the truth. This nurse let me come in one night after hours, when there was no chance of my running into anyone. She was hooked to life support, tubes up her nose, one foot in the other world. She was tiny and wrinkled and deaf as a doorknob. And yet. I told her jokes. I was a regular Jackie Mason. I tried to keep things light. I said, "Would you believe, this thing here where your arm bends, this they call an elbow." Many things I did not say. Example. "I waited so long." Other example. "And were you happy? With that nebbish, that clod, that numbskull, that schlemiel you call a husband?" The truth was I'd given up waiting long before. The moment had passed; the door between the lives we could have led and the lives we came to call our own had shut.

"Are you all right? You're looking pale." It was the man in the yellow bow tie.

I tried to steady myself against the potted plant. "Fine, fine," I said.

"How did you know him?" he asked suspiciously.

"We were . . . related," I said.

"Family! So sorry, forgive me. I thought I'd met all the *mishpocheh!*" The way he pronounced it was "mishpoky." "Of course, I should have guessed." He looked me up and down, running a palm over his hair to make sure that it was securely positioned. "I was his editor," he said. "I thought you were one of the fans." He gestured toward the thinning crowd. "Which side, then?"

A wave of nausea came over me, and I tried to focus on the man's bow tie while the room around me swayed. "Both," I said.

"*Both*," he repeated, incredulous.

A moment later, I was standing face to face with Bernard. "Look what I rustled up," the man with the bow tie said. "Says he's *mishpoky*."

Bernard smiled politely as he eyed the rip in my collar. "Forgive me," he said. "I don't remember you. Have we met?"

I glanced at the sign marked "Exit." I opened my mouth. And yet.

"Did you know Isaac?" my son's brother persisted. The man in the bow tie was hanging on every word. I found it difficult to breathe.

Bernard waited. "Well," he said finally. "Thank you for coming. It's been moving to see how many people have come out. Isaac would have been pleased." He took my hand between his and shook it. He turned to go.

"S.," I said. I hadn't planned on it.

Bernard turned back. "Pardon?"

"I come from S.," I said.

"You come from S.?" he repeated.

I nodded.

Something broke on his face. "She used to tell us about it," he said.

"Who's she?" the man with the bow tie demanded.

"My mother. He comes from the same village as my mother," Bernard said. "So many stories. When we were kids. About the river where she swam."

I nodded. *The water was freezing. We would undress and jump off the footbridge screaming. Our hearts would stop. For a moment, we felt as if we were drowning. When we scrambled back onto the bank, gasping for air, our legs were heavy, pain shooting up the ankles. Your mother was tall and skinny, with small, pale breasts. I would fall asleep drying in the sun, and wake to the shock of ice-cold water on my back. And her laughter.*

"Her father's shoe shop," Bernard said. "She told us all about it. The bakery she used to pass on the way to school, with the smell of fresh bread."

*Except for the three weeks when we weren't speaking to each other, hardly a day passed that we didn't walk to school together. In the cold her wet hair would freeze into icicles. In the spring I used to pick a daisy and she would put it behind her ear.*

"The little pond she skated on in the winter. The wild blackberries behind her father's shed. The field where she used to play."

"Yes," I said. "The field."

Fifteen minutes later, I was sandwiched between Isaac's editor and a young woman in the back of a stretch limousine. You would think I was making a habit of it. We were going to Bernard's house for a small gathering of family and friends. Bernard lived somewhere on Long Island, in a house surrounded by trees. I'd never seen such beautiful trees, great canopies of shadow and light.

Inside the house, people stood around a table piled with bagels, lox, and whitefish and talked about Isaac. I knew I didn't belong there. I felt like a fool and an impostor. I stood by the window, making myself invisible. I hadn't thought it would be so painful. To hear people talk about the son I could only imagine as if he were as familiar to them as a garden potato was almost too much to bear. So I slipped away and wandered through the rooms of the house. I thought, My son walked on this carpet. I came to a guest bedroom. I thought, From time to time, he slept in this bed. This very bed! His head on *these* pillows. I lay down—I was tired, I couldn't help myself. The pillow sank under my cheek. And as he lay here, I thought, he looked

out this very window, at that very tree.

"You're such a dreamer," Bruno says, and maybe I am. Maybe I was also dreaming this. In a moment the doorbell would ring, I'd open my eyes, and Bruno would be standing there asking if I had a roll of toilet paper.

I must have fallen asleep, because the next thing I knew Bernard was standing above me.

"Sorry! I didn't realize anyone was in here. Are you sick?"

I sprang up. If the word "spring" can be used in reference to my movements at all, this was the moment. And that's when I saw it. It was on a shelf right behind his shoulder. In a silver picture frame.

Bernard turned. "Oh, that," he said, taking it down off the shelf. "This is my mother when she was a girl. Did you know her then?"

*Let's stand under a tree, she said. Why? Because it's nicer. Maybe you should sit on a chair, and I'll stand above you, like they always do with husbands and wives. That's stupid. Why? Because we're not married. Should we hold hands? We can't. Why not? Because people will know. Know what? About us. So what if they know? It's better when it's a secret. Why? So no one can take it from us.*

"I found it in her things after she died," Bernard said. "It's a beautiful photograph, isn't it? She didn't have much from over there. A couple of photos of her parents and her sisters, that's all. Of course, she had no idea she would never see them again, so she didn't bring much. But I never saw this one. Don't know who he is. Friend of hers, I guess. It was in an envelope with some papers in Yiddish."

*If I had a camera, I said, I'd take a picture of you every day. That way I'd remember how you looked every single day of your life. I look the same. No, you don't. You're changing all the time. Every day a tiny bit. If I could, I'd keep a record of it all. If you're so smart, how did I change today? You got a fraction of a millimeter taller, for one thing. Your hair grew a fraction of a millimeter longer. And your breasts grew a fraction of a— They did not! Yes, they did. What else, you big pig? You got a little happier and also a little sadder. How do you know? Think about it. Have you ever been happier than right now? I guess not. And have you ever been sadder than right now? No. It isn't like that for everyone. Some people just get happier and happier. And some people, like Beyla Asch, get sadder and sadder. What about you? Are you the happiest and saddest right now that you've ever been? Of course I am. Why? Because nothing makes me happier and nothing makes me sadder than you.*

We stood together looking at the photograph. Bernard patted my back. "I'd love to stay here reminiscing," he said, "but I really should go. All those people out there." He gestured. "Let me know if you need anything." He closed the door behind him, and then, God help me, I took the photograph and shoved it in my pants. Down the stairs I went, and out the door. In the driveway, I knocked on the window of one of the limousines. The driver roused himself from sleep.

"I'm ready to go back now," I said.

To my surprise, he got out, opened the door, and helped me in.

When I got home, I thought I'd been robbed. The furniture was overturned, and the floor was dusted with white powder. I grabbed the baseball bat I keep in the umbrella stand and followed the trail of footsteps to the kitchen. Every surface was covered with pots and pans and dirty bowls. It seemed that whoever had broken in to rob me had taken his time and made himself a meal. On the kitchen table, next to my typewriter, was a large cake, sunk in the middle. Standing, nonetheless. It was frosted with yellow icing, and across the top, in sloppy pink letters, it read "LOOK WHO BAKED A CAKE." On the other side of my typewriter was a note: "WAITED ALL DAY."

I couldn't help it, I smiled. I put the baseball bat away, picked up the pots and pans, took out the picture, breathed on the glass, rubbed it with my shirt, and set it down on my night table. It had been a long time since anyone had given me a gift. A feeling of happiness nudged my heart. That I could wake up each morning and warm my hands on a hot cup of tea. That I could watch the pigeons fly. That at the end of my life Bruno had not forgotten me. ♦



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# THE CRITICS

THE CURRENT CINEMA

# THEY LIKE TO WATCH

*Bertolucci's "The Dreamers."*

BY DAVID DENBY

The most interesting character in the new Bernardo Bertolucci movie, "The Dreamers," is a Paris flat—a worn but beautiful bohemian version of an *appartement grand bourgeois*, with olive walls, high-ceilinged corridors, many pictures and books, and, here and there, a secret corner. An American college student named Matthew (Michael Pitt) wanders into this preserve of Old Europe and almost never makes it out again. The year is 1968 and Matthew, who is blond and has blue eyes and a thickly sensual upper lip—a good-looking, unawakened boy—is in Paris soaking up as many movies as he can. Suddenly, an event from French history intrudes: the government fires Henri Langlois, the founder and director of the extraordinary Cinémathèque Française—the state-sponsored film archive—and changes the locks at its home, the Palais de Chaillot. Demonstrations erupt; major figures of the Old and New Wave make outraged speeches and sign petitions. At the entrance to the Palais, a dark young beauty in a red beret, a cigarette dangling from her lips, defiantly chains herself to the gates. But the chains, it turns out, are not locked. Isabelle (Eva Green) is only playing at protest. She's much more serious about flirtation, and she has a partner in crime, her twin brother, Théo (Louis Garrel), who has a mop of black hair and the severe brow and crooked smile of a debauched medieval priest. These two Parisian orchids are the spoiled children of the educated bourgeoisie—their mother is English, their father a well-known poet. Isabelle and Théo meet Matthew at the demonstration, take him to the apartment, which belongs to their parents, and, when the parents leave for the country, invite him to stay. Stumbling through the mysterious corridors on the first night, Matthew sees brother and sister lying together naked. What's going on? For him, the apartment is both a garden of the intellect and an erotic labyrinth. At the center of it, Matthew may find something—his own desire, perhaps.

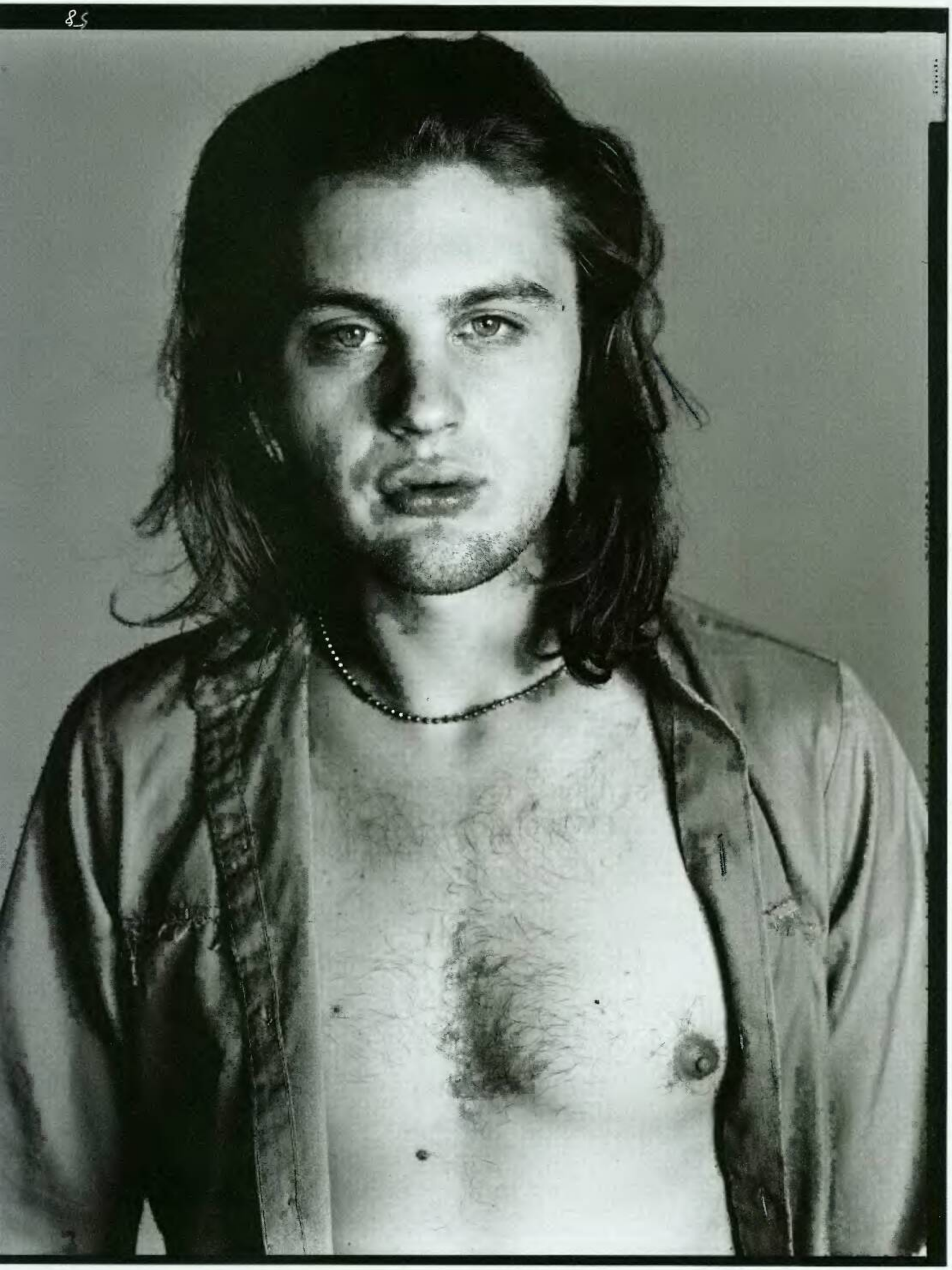
Bertolucci loves to create a hothouse. He has been doing it since 1963, when he directed "Before the Revolution" (loosely based on Stendhal's "The Charterhouse of Parma"), in which a young man has an affair with his aunt. In 1972, he made the greatest hothouse movie of all, "Last Tango in Paris," and then returned to the theme of incest in the 1979 "La Luna," starring Jill Clayburgh as an opera singer who falls into bed with her son. More recently, there was "Stealing Beauty" (1996), in which a bunch of tired Europeans gather in the Tuscan hills around a vacuously beautiful American girl (Liv Tyler); and "Besieged" (1998), with David Thewlis as a reclusive English pianist who lives in Rome and falls in love with his African housekeeper (Thandie Newton). Bertolucci's penchant for enclosed erotic situations leaves him wrestling with what seems to be a contradiction. The stage, with its limitations on mobility, would seem to be the right place for men and women caught in some existential hell or paradise. The movie camera, after all, can go anywhere, and in Bertolucci's "The Conformist" (1970) and "1900" (1976) it tracked across squares, streamed through rows of trees, winding and twisting, even turning in delirious circles. If ever a man conveyed the exhilaration of moving freely through the world, it was Bertolucci, a director who demanded beauty and grandeur without end. (A retrospective of his work will be shown from February 14th to March 7th at the American Museum of the Moving Image, in Astoria.) The sweeping movement was enhanced by warm, chic colors (violet and ochre and revolutionary red) and great washes of music—Verdi in full cry, or jazz drenched in romantic despair. Even when Bertolucci's movies were devoted to political issues, he used the ripest, most sensual palette and worked at the edge of anguish or happiness.

Why box himself in, then? Because erotic fixation by its very nature demands an enclosed space. Over and over, Bertolucci accommodated technique to obsession. In "Tango," despite the constrictions he imposed—Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider meet for sex in an empty apartment without exchanging names or stories—he kept much of the movie visually alive and pliant. Within the prison of small rooms, he created riots of feeling, and then, as the camera broke loose on the streets and in the tango dance hall, Brando's despair became a bitter assertion of freedom crossing into flagrancy. Bertolucci's romantic exuberance leads inevitably to excess, to perversity and decadence, which he views not morally, as criminal, but aesthetically, as the fiercest, most beautiful expression of desire.

In recent years, Bertolucci's responsiveness to beauty has remained strong, but his intellectual grasp of what he's doing has weakened. "The Dreamers,"

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

*Michael Pitt plays Matthew, a young American movie buff who goes to Paris in 1968.*






*"I'm sorry—I meant to say 'island paradise,' not 'soft target.'"*

based on a novel by the British writer Gilbert Adair, who revised his conception under Bertolucci's influence, is very pretty, but it's a work built around extravagant conceits rather than dramatic ideas. Film history, and the history of film appreciation, is the source of the conceits. When we first see Matthew, who narrates, he's watching Samuel Fuller's "Shock Corridor" at the Cinémathèque in a state of rapture. Fuller, the talented Hollywood brutalist of the fifties and sixties, was a Cinémathèque favorite. As curator, Henri Langlois combined high and low, showing Hollywood genre work alongside classic French cinema, and, when New Wave directors like Godard and Truffaut began working, the movies they made reflected Langlois's ecumenical taste; they picked up themes from American gangster pictures and treated them with intellectual and lyrical fervor. But Bertolucci isn't drawing on work like Fuller's—he's drawing on the fans' appreciation of that work. The energy of the movie is twice removed from its source.

"The Dreamers" is a movie about cinephilia as the center of life. What was implicit in Godard's work from the sixties—that his characters were part of a generation raised by movies—has now become explicit and thematic and even a little redundant. Matthew, Isabelle, and Théo argue endlessly about cinema and see themselves as characters playing roles. Caressing the walls as she vamps Matthew, Isabelle does an impression of Garbo's rapture in "Queen Christina," and Bertolucci cuts shots from "Christina" right into the scene. This is a neat effect, but what does it mean? Isabelle may want to be treated like a queen, but Bertolucci doesn't follow up on the idea. In imitation of the characters in Godard's "Bande à Part," the trio decides to make a wild dash through the Louvre, and Bertolucci matches shots from Godard's film, placing his scrambling characters in the same place within the frame as Godard's characters and cutting the two versions together. As film technique, this is stunning, but I'm not sure it amounts to much more than a flamboyant kind of piety directed at knowing viewers. At times, Bertolucci's nostalgia is almost too sad. He's longing for that moment when film, politics, and sex mutually reinforced one another as the preoccupations of youth, and set the stage for the large-scale student revolts of May, 1968. "The Dreamers," however, is so conscious of these connections that it seems less like a fresh creation than like an anxiously literal series of historical footnotes.

The trouble with a hothouse is that the air inside can get a little stale. At one point, Isabelle leans over a candle to kiss Matthew, and her hair, falling into the flame, ignites for a few seconds. Intimacy this close is dangerous, not to mention clammy. Isabelle, Théo, and Matthew, walking around naked, or nearly naked, live on top of one another. They pee while the others are in the bathroom, and Isabelle's menstrual blood is touched by both men. Incest, of course, is the real flame that's burning inside the apartment's green walls, and one knows that together Isabelle and Théo will pull Matthew into the mess. Given Bertolucci's obsessions, where else can the director go except into incest? Soon enough, the movie madness feeds into sexual gameplaying. Isabelle and Théo take turns acting out scenes from a movie and then demand a "forfeit" if the others can't identify the scene. The "forfeit" becomes a sexual act—Théo masturbating as the others watch, or Matthew making love to Isabelle while Théo glowers.

Bertolucci is trying hard to shock us with this stuff, but, for all the perversities and the abundant nudity, the movie has an air of inconsequence about it. What's still startling in "Last Tango" is Brando's rage and the emotional violence of the entire fable, not the few scenes of nakedness. When Eva Green takes off her clothes in "The Dreamers," one understands quickly enough why Bertolucci chose her, but she's not a very good naked actress. She's eager and glib—just a kid. They're all just kids, and, after a while, one begins to think sourly of Bertolucci as an aging ringmaster playing at pornography with actors barely out of their teens. They aren't making revolution in this hothouse, they're making a listless blue movie. There are long scenes that go nowhere: when the three take a bath together, I found myself turning away from the pretty bodies into aroused contemplation of my watch. This kind of shapelessness isn't directing, it's diddling—Bertolucci trying to be languorously experimental and hoping for scandal. Michael Pitt, however, manages to survive the director's irresolution. With his blue eyes and full head of golden hair, Pitt seems at first a new Leonardo DiCaprio, but he asserts his individuality, becomes stronger, and gives a decent performance. At the end, Bertolucci lets him leave the apartment and separate from its decadent tenants. Even this old sensualist, in a final assertion of sanity for which one is grateful, knows that a hothouse is no place for a growing American boy. ♦

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BOOKS

# BACK TO BASICS

*Joe Eszterhas's "Hollywood Animal."*

BY ANTHONY LANE

How does an artist reach the people? Here are two views of the same quandary, drawn from opposing ends of the twentieth century. You can solve the problem like this:

> Thus arose on behalf of my idea the lively interest of a possible suggestion and process of adumbration; the question of how best to convey that sense of the depths of the sinister without which my fable would so woefully limp. Portentous evil—how was I to save that, as an intention on the part of my demon-spirits, from the drop, the comparative vulgarity, inevitably attending, throughout the whole range of possible brief illustration, the offered example, the imputed vice, the cited act, the limited deplorable presentable instance?

Or like this:

> "It's gonna have blood and hair on the walls," Marty said. Frank looked blank, the creative assistants nodded.
>
> "It's gonna have a fuck-'em-if-they-can't-take-a-joke ending," Marty said.
>
> Frank looked blank, the creative assistants nodded.
>
> "It's gonna have great word of mouth on it," Marty said. "Fuck the critics, it'll be an audience picture."
>
> More blankness, more nods.
>
> Marty's litany went on: Nastier than *In Cold Blood*, lots of sex, scare-'em-pissless moments, forget *Witness for the Prosecution*, forget *Anatomy of a Murder*, forget that Perry Mason confess-at-the-end bullshit. We were gonna scare the living shit out of all those assholes out there.
>
> "What assholes?" I said.
>
> "The audience," Marty said.

One of these passages is by Joe Eszterhas, and the other is by Henry James; just to maintain the air of creeping suspense, I will refuse to reveal which is which. The works of art under discussion are "The Turn of the Screw" and "Jagged Edge," each of which strikes me as fairly unyielding in its will to terrorize. What, then, has happened in the eighty years or so between the two endeavors? In a word, film happened, and with it came a newfound devotion to what James, with lethal niceness, called "the drop." From the start, Hollywood got a rise out of the drop, and the "deplorable presentable instance"—a dagger in the dark, an ice pick under the bed—is now a prime source of strength, both visual and commercial. We assholes want our weekly platefuls of blood and hair, and Joe Eszterhas is one of the maître d's.

Eszterhas is a screenwriter by trade, although, as he makes clear in his shy and blushing memoir, "Hollywood Animal" (Knopf; $26.95), he is hardly one among many, or even first among equals. In fact, he is the only damn dog in the kennel. "Compare myself to other screenwriters? On what basis?" he writes. "I became a famous screenwriter making millions, scoring A-list pussy, picked as one of the most powerful people on Hollywood." Not in Hollywood, we may note, but on Hollywood, as if the place were crack, or heat, or fire. He sold his first screenplay, "F.I.S.T.," in 1974, and since then the Eszterhas style has bestrewn the world with gems: "Flashdance," "Jagged Edge," "Basic Instinct," "Sliver," "Showgirls," and "Jade." If that list makes you want to hide in the attic, you should hear some of his ideas that never came to fruition: a script entitled "Foreplay"; a remake of "The Red Shoes," based on the story of Mariah Carey and Tommy Mottola; and a film about Jesus Christ, to be developed with Paul Verhoeven. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Jozsef Eszterhas was born in Hungary in 1944. His father, István, was a writer, heavy and short, with a pronounced limp. ("My father had surgery eleven times on his hip without anesthetic.") Little Jozsi's mother, Mária, was a tavern keeper's daughter, "her dark hair highlighted by slanted, deeply brown Eurasian eyes." At moments like this, you realize why Eszterhas was fated to become a screenwriter. He is a helpless fabulist. Even when he tells the truth, it sounds made up. As American planes attack Nazi-held Hungary at the end of the war, two of their targets are, naturally, the Eszterhas home ("a direct hit"), and the Steir car that is being driven by Jozsi's father toward the Austrian border: "They machine-gunned us, but my father roared the Steir over a ditch and into the trees." One thing we know about dads: only in movies do they roar their automobiles. The rest of the time, they drive.

After a stay in refugee camps, first under the Germans ("nothing but pine needle soup"), and then under the Allies, the Eszterhases were shipped to America. They ended up in Cleveland, and so much of the autobiography is devoted to the rough joys of the city that the title "Hollywood Animal" comes to sound unjust, although I guess the marketing department at Knopf might have balked at a book called "Cleveland Human Being." Back in the camp, Jozsi's father had taught him his first scraps of English—"*Yez, zir, I lak Amerika very mooch*"—and, throughout the memoir, we get a spinning linguistic high from watching Hungarian slang collide with a new demotic, in a gabbling land. "*Horun! Horun!*" the kid cries, playing baseball with his dad. A twelve-year-old girl unveils her breasts to Jozsi, six years her junior, and asks for a favor in return: "She wanted to see my *pimpli*." For Christmas, he gets a *kovboy* suit and turns into *Hopalon Kesedi*. His father offers a slightly chilling lesson in the manners, and by implication the metaphysics, of the New World. It could only have come from the trembling mouth of the Old:

> "Everybody says '*Hov arr yu?*' " he said. "But they don't mean it . . .
>
> "What they want to hear is *fein. Hov arr yu? Fein.*
>
> "If you are dying, if you have nothing to eat, if your best friend has betrayed you, if you are about to kill yourself, and if they say *Hov arr yu. Fein fein fein.*"

"Hollywood Animal" is a curious beast. What Eszterhas has done, for more than seven hundred pages, is rearrange past and present and split his anecdotes in half. Thus on page 38 we are referred to "One Night Stand," for which Eszterhas was paid as little as four million dollars, and from whose credits he then loftily removed his name, because Mike Figgis had had the unforgivable gall to shoot a rewrite of his own devising. (And who was Mike Figgis? The director. And what are directors, in the Eszterhas scheme of things? Handmaidens with cloth ears, kneeling un-

gratefully before the writer's throne.) The next time we hear of this picture, we have reached page 561. There we are additionally told—and surely the two passages belonged together—that Eszterhas has earned his fattened fee not for a script but for an *outline*, which consumed no more than three to four hours of his life. There you go: a million bucks an hour.

If you think that such hectic page-hopping will keep you on your toes, just wait. The author has also decided to insert the story of his childhood, slice by slice, at regular intervals throughout the book. If you are searching, say, for the scene in which Jozsi loses his virginity, you could be forgiven for scouting the opening chapters; but no, there he is, in bed with Peggy Carney on page 457. ("We came at almost the same time," he recalls. Ah, simultaneous bliss on his début: another world first for the young Hungarian.) Interleaved with these memories is Eszterhas's account of his lurching rise through the movie industry, complete with a chapter called, unambiguously, "My Hollywood Mistress." (She listened with interest to his account of a one-night fling with Sharon Stone and commented, "Damn. We could've had *some* threesome!") We also get bursts of scandal and hearsay, two or three pages long, with titles like "Voice-over" and "Close-up," and, most bewildering of all, excerpts from the diary of Naomi, the author's second wife. These are reproduced in typescript, which makes them wearisome to read, although there is gold to be unearthed within. Like her husband, Naomi is notably generous with her bulletins on the home life of Robert Evans—a friend of theirs, the producer of "Chinatown," and by universal consent the leading swordsman of his generation. "Evans has a new girlfriend named April," Naomi writes, adding dryly, "She came into the office in her underwear."



*"Compare myself to other screenwriters?" he writes. "On what basis?"*

TOM BACHTELL

In short, if you are in the market for scabrous diversion, "Hollywood Animal" will deliver the goods, but you must expect to have your brain scrambled along the way. The author is so deeply infused with cinematic practice that the notion of writing a bookish book, as opposed to a book fizzing with cuts and closeups, is no longer in his interest, or even within his grasp. It may be that some brave young editor at Knopf took the liberty of suggesting a gentle rewrite; if so, whoever you are, it's safe to come out from under the desk now. The storm has passed, and the book is in the shops.

So, what do we learn? Something old, something new, a little borrowed, and a load of blue. We learn that Joe Eszterhas went to Cathedral Latin school in Cleveland, and that for a time he lived with Franciscan priests. We learn that he wrote for *Rolling Stone*, and that, when the call came, he was ready to cross the Styx to Hollywood. We learn that the screenplay for "F.I.S.T." brought him eighty thousand dollars, but that the novelization was worth an extra two hundred and forty thousand. We learn that he, Don Simpson, Jerry Bruckheimer, and Adrian Lyne travelled to Toronto to research the whole business of "exotic dances," while the four of them were putting together the pure-eighties package that would be "Flashdance." We do not learn whether the costs of this scholarly trip were written off against taxes. We learn of profound creative differences, thrashed out in ardent memos: "4. You suggest that we clarify the Porsche situation. . . ." We learn, at exorbitant length, about the collapse of the author's first marriage and the coming of his second. We learn that a plum role in an Eszterhas project was turned down not only by Bruce Willis but by Bruce Willis's body double. We learn that one of the producers of "Jagged Edge" demanded to attend the shooting of Glenn Close's lovemaking scene, despite the fact that, in his words, "I'm not gonna get any jollies looking at her fat ass." And then we learn about Michael Ovitz.

To be exact, we get a chapter entitled "I Coldcock Ovitz," and it is certainly the best reason to buy the book. In 1989, Eszterhas was being represented by C.A.A., Creative Artists Agency, which was run by Ovitz. Or, as we are taught to refer to him, "the Kingfish Himself, the Thousand-Pound Gorilla—*Michael! Ovitz!*" No question, the guy was a prince. As our author relates, with moistened eyes, "On a personal level, Michael had once offered to fly his acupuncturist to Marin when I badly injured a disc while vacationing in Santa Fe." Flaubert would be proud of that: a complete culture, trapped in a single sentence.

Anyway, one day Joe tells his friend Mike that he will no longer be requiring his services as an agent, not because he, Joe, is dissatisfied with what he, Mike, has done for him, but only because he, Joe, has another friend, Guy, who goes back farther than Mike, and who is going to I.C.M., and this guy, Guy, would like him, Joe, to leave Mike and come to play. Sim-

ple enough. Boys of seven do this every day and think nothing of it. Michael Ovitz, however, thought about it hard and said to Eszterhas, "You're not going anywhere. You're not leaving this agency. If you do, my foot soldiers who go up and down Wilshire Boulevard each day will blow your brains out." The war that ensued was attritional, instructive, and, best of all, shamelessly public, since Eszterhas, bless him, sees no reason that a sentiment which you and I might voice haltingly over the phone should not be copied, dispatched around town, and dropped into the hands of the L.A. *Times*. Eszterhas's letter to Ovitz, in response to what he still conceives of as blackmail, was a thunderous act of insurrection, colored with a nod to "The Elephant Man" ("I am not an asset; I am a human being!"), and rounded off with itches of early hip-hop: "So do whatever you want to do, Mike, and fuck you." Or, as Eszterhas senior used to say, "Fucky you."

The effect of the letter was perhaps the most helpful rehearsal for a "dirty bomb" that has yet been granted to the authorities of the greater Los Angeles area. There is much to gratify one's lower tastes in this book—I could cite the sequence in which a stoned Sharon Stone races down the street with a butcher's knife, by night, or the moment when the late Richard Marquand, a genial Welshman who directed "The Return of the Jedi," is found handcuffed naked in a hotel room—but the Ovitz farrago bites deep into one's apprehensions about the movie business, and does little to relieve the suspicion that God may be eying the San Andreas Fault and wondering whether, all things considered, there is a case for opening it wide. Don Simpson wrote to say, "Read your Ovitz letter. My pulse is at 200 beats a minute," although one seriously doubts whether the Simpson pulse ever dropped below 180. Somebody called at night, warning Joe to check the brakes on his car. There were not merely death threats but also fierce looks from Pat Kingsley, the publicity queen; in the mind of Hollywood, the two amount to the same thing. But Eszterhas held firm, listing the ten reasons that he wasn't afraid of Ovitz, starting with "He didn't grow up in refugee camps" and ending, magnificently, with "He took karate lessons from Steven Seagal."

Joe Eszterhas is *fein*. He quit C.A.A. and lived. Then he quit Hollywood, and his motives for doing so are unanswerable: "We didn't want our boys trick or treating at Kenny G. or Gary Busey's house." He is now a happy man, and not for a minute does one begrudge him this late-found peace. He has had much to struggle with. He got throat cancer, toughed it out, gave up booze, and denounced the smoking scenes that he had written into his earlier films. (I know that Sharon Stone lit up right after she crossed her legs in "Basic Instinct," Joe, but here's the thing: nobody was watching the cigarette.) In the wake of an operation, he said farewell to his mane of Hungarian hair. Eszterhas used to look like the star of that old Disney picture called "Digby, the Biggest Dog in the World"; now, to judge by the photograph on the back cover of "Hollywood Animal," he looks like a wrestler who skipped lunch. Worst of all, his elderly father, István, was pursued by the Office of Special Investigations and found to have written, during the Nazi occupation of Hungary, a book that was drenched in anti-Semitism. His son, knowing nothing about it, grew up to write an anguished film, "Music Box," in which an American woman learns, in the final reel, that her father was a wartime Nazi.

All of this is so heavy and acrid with irony that, were a less ebullient writer in charge, it could have sunk the whole book. But Eszterhas deals with it squarely and then moves on, so that within fifty pages we are deep into a discussion about Joe and Naomi's new house in Malibu, where Joe smokes weed in a tepee that was erected on the lawn by Woody Harrelson, a previous resident. These days, Eszterhas lives in Bainbridge Township, Ohio, from where he announces that, like President Bush, he believes in "prayer and exercise." He also drinks organic cranberry juice and eats "fresh cauliflower and broccoflower." Broccoflower? Yez, zir, he lak Amerika very mooch.

But is he far enough from Los Angeles? The big disappointment of this book is that Eszterhas, the most spirited of Hollywood players, also bears the deepest of Hollywood wounds. He may no longer inhabit "this deadly suckhole of a town," but his pride will not allow him to stand back and consider the things that he has wrought. The trouble with "Basic Instinct" and "Showgirls," one of which made four hundred million dollars while the other could barely cover its outlay on nipple rouge, is that both of them are more fun to read about, and joke about, than to watch. And the antics of the people who made them are funnier still. This was not always the case. I am as fond of David O. Selznick stories as the next moviegoer, but the myth of the man pales beside the lustrous tones of "Gone with the Wind," "Rebecca," and the rest of his legacy. These days, gossip and buildup are almost all that we possess, and, month by month, they far outblaze what we actually see onscreen. Thus, on the second page of "Hollywood Animal," Robert Evans sends Eszterhas a note, borne by a model wearing nothing but a mink coat. You don't want to know where she keeps the note, but what it says is that Bob loves the draft of Joe's new script. And the movie that results from it? "Sliver." I rest my case. ♦

## SYLVIA

Across a space peopled with stars I am
laughing while my sides ache for existence
it turns out is profound though the profound
because of time it turns out is an illusion
and all of this is infinitely improbable
given the space for which I gratefully lie
in three feet of snow making a shallow grave
I would have called an angel otherwise and
think of my own rapturous escape from
living only as dust and dirt, little sister.

—*Gerald Stern*

# BRIEFLY NOTED

The Last Crossing, *by Guy Vanderhaeghe (Atlantic Monthly; $24).* Centered on three English brothers who venture to the American West—one as a missionary, the two others in pursuit when he disappears—this saga encompasses a wide range of characters through alternating narrative voices. In a panorama of late-nineteenth-century Montana and western Canada, Vanderhaeghe details the lawlessness of the early frontier towns and the desperate ferocity of the dying indigenous tribes. He dwells with particular pathos on the children of white traders and Native American women, who are caught between two cultures. The prose can be overripe, particularly in the opening chapters, and moments of historical exposition are clumsily inserted. However, the sweep of the narrative gradually overcomes these missteps, and as the various searches for revenge or redemption get under way the writing achieves unforced grace and power.

Ask Me Anything, *by Francesca Delbanco (Norton; $23.95).* At the start of this engaging, screwball first novel, Rosalie Preston, a fledgling Manhattanite a few years out of Harvard, works as the advice columnist for *GirlTalk*, a teen magazine (her signoff is "Trust me. I've lived through it"). But in her off hours she's a member of the First Born Company, an earnest acting troupe that comprises all of her arty college friends. Delbanco catches perfectly that murky moment when perpetual adolescents, bound to each other at the hip, turn into grownups with more complicated loyalties—a process that is hastened somewhat when the heroine is bedded by a pal's urbane father—but she is sensible enough to wear her insights lightly. Rosalie's romantic misadventures form an ironic counterpoint to the advice chirpily imparted by her columns. Such sureness of touch turns a story that might have seemed hackneyed into a genuine pleasure.



A Secret Life, *by Benjamin Weiser (PublicAffairs; $27.50).* Books about espionage, fiction or not, can be cliché flypaper—encrusted with tired plot twists and morbid atmosphere. Exceptions, like John le Carré's novels and Thomas Powers's histories, are rare. But Weiser's tale of how a high-ranking Polish officer, Ryszard Kuklinski, betrayed the Communist leadership for almost a decade, starting in 1972, and fed the Americans thousands of pages of top-secret documents, including the plans for martial law, is in that elevated company. "A Secret Life" is thrilling not only in its chronicle of an honorable betrayal during the Cold War's endgame but also in its portrait of the strangely loving epistolary relationship between the spy and his American handlers. There are scenes here that are as tense as any in "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," and the access that Weiser gained—his sources include both Kuklinski and the Poles he fooled—is a feat of patient and intelligent reporting.

Hustling Is Not Stealing, *by John M. Chernoff (Chicago; $22.50).* While studying West African music in the early seventies, Chernoff befriended Hawa, a high-spirited, illiterate Ghanaian woman whose street-smarts and garrulousness inspired him to record a series of autobiographical interviews, which he has transcribed and edited. From the time she leaves an unhappy arranged marriage at the age of sixteen, her life unfolds as a picaresque series of exploits that illustrate her ability to live by her wits as an *ashawo*—a "semi-professional" prostitute—supported by the men she meets in the bars and discos of Accra and Lomé. A resourceful heroine and loyal (if capricious) friend, Hawa is also a connoisseur of local mores, and tartly observes the daily collision of this world with that of the European men among her boyfriends. Casually weaving urban folklore into her engaging tale, Hawa displays an eye for detail and a narrative exuberance that mark her as a gifted storyteller.


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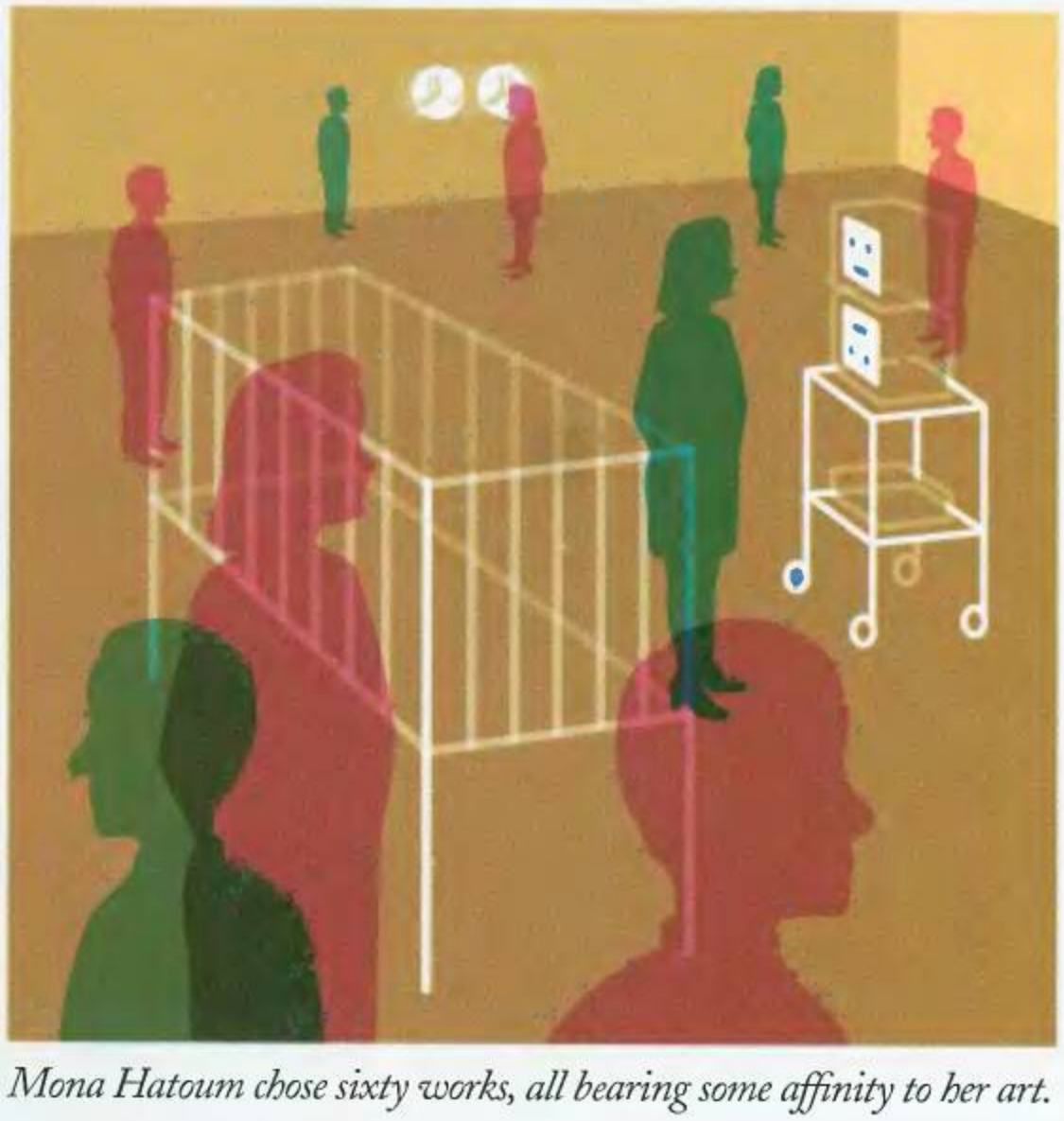
THE ART WORLD

# EXPRESS YOURSELF

*The artist as curator at MOMA.*

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

I've been thinking about "Here Is Elsewhere," a group show that just closed at the Museum of Modern Art, in Queens. It was selected from the museum's permanent collection by Mona Hatoum, a Lebanese-born (to Palestinian Christian refugees), London-based sculptor and installation-maker who has been ubiquitous in international exhibitions since the early nineteen-nineties. The show consisted of sixty works by twenty artists, most of them dating from the past fifteen years, and all bearing some affinity to Hatoum's own art. I was slow to gauge its importance, beyond agreeing with Roberta Smith, of the *Times*, that it affirmed the value of having artists curate shows from museum collections. Seeing art as artists see it—through a play of sensibility rather than a filter of ideas—cuts against the deadly pedagogy of much current curating, especially at institutions of contemporary art. Strikingly, "Here Is Elsewhere" featured the very kind of art that is most typically accompanied, in museum shows, by didactic, moral-pointing wall texts. Eschewing these, Hatoum submitted top-flight examples of such work to a fair aesthetic trial. The perhaps not fully intentional result was revelatory: it enabled a viewer to look at the era of politically rhetorical postmodernism as history.



*Mona Hatoum chose sixty works, all bearing some affinity to her art.*

Interviewed by the MOMA assistant curator Fereshteh Daftari for the show's brochure, Hatoum associated herself with a tradition, which blossomed in the nineteen-eighties, of "de-constructive theories, psychoanalysis and feminism, discourse around identity and the 'Other.' " These concerns became marching orders for a generation of artists, curators, and critics. Daftari, in an introduction, declared that Hatoum's choices "gravitate toward beauty that masks political pungency and familiar appearance that conceals a divergence from the 'norm'—be it gender, sexuality, culture, or race." This lets us know where we are, intellectually: on tendentious ground, where words wobble. (Beauty, an engulfing experience, can't mask anything; Daftari has it mixed up with glamour or prettiness.) Hatoum trotted out a do-gooder shibboleth: "The best art is that which complicates things for you by exposing impossible contradictions, which makes you question your assumptions about the world so that you walk away with more questions than answers." As if anyone goes to art for answers! But Hatoum's eye proved to be far more acute than her attitude.

The videos, installations, sculptures, photographs, prints, and paintings in "Here Is Elsewhere" told a story of gifted artists doing their best under a foreign occupation by political imperatives. There were brilliant things by the African-American painter Ellen Gallagher, the gay visual dramatist Robert Gober, the late Cuban-American installationist social critic Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and others, each flying the requisite flag of an "identity." The show was an aggressively drab-looking affair on the whole, but touched with formal and spiritual elegance. In one instance, Hatoum juxtaposed recent works by Gallagher—pale abstractions riddled with grotesque racial symbols, such as tiny "banjo eyes"—with works from the nineteen-fifties and sixties by Yayoi Kusama, a Japanese artist who for many years was a lightly regarded resident of New York and whose feverishly expressive patterning with dots and polyp shapes has lately won overdue recognition. The pairing pointed up a fugitive convention in abstract art, often by women, of loveliness laced with needling discontent. Transcendent humor put early "Film Stills," by Cindy Sherman, and satirical appreciations of the prestige of basketball in black culture, by David Hammons, outside the ambit of political reason.

The set of ideologies that bear the brand "postmodernist" agitated for marginal social constituencies, but did so from smack inside the cultural wheelhouse of universities and other institutions. This irony gave a tinny timbre to a movement that did considerable good as an overhaul of democratic manners and mores for a plural society. In the art world, converging factors produced the irresistible clout of a Zeitgeist: the staffing of institutions (notably, an international network of biennials and the like) with

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

grownup nineteen-sixties lefties, an academic passion for French and German strains of engaged intellectualism, and a generational recoil from the money-drunk saturnalia of the eighties art scene. Young artists, who must take the world as they find it, inevitably trimmed their ambitions to the prevailing winds. Conservatives, for their part, pretty much just frothed. Trying to assess aesthetic qualities of the period's art made one appear, to the left, as a crypto-reactionary and, to the right, as a sycophantic fellow-traveller. Hatoum's show hinted that it may now be safe again for art lovers to come out and play.

A fine work by Hatoum herself, "Silence" (1994), included in MOMA's current display from its collections, is a perfect emblem of nineties art. It is a full-sized baby's crib fashioned of scarily delicate clear glass tubing. I reckon that it may be taken to illustrate ideas about the vulnerability of childhood, or about an exile's memories of her own childhood; but these are extrinsic matters. In immediate, inescapable terms, "Silence" poeticizes the museum's responsibility as art's guardian. I get a vicarious chill, thinking of what must be involved in moving and conserving the thing. Merely looking at it feels perilous. Provocative dependency, I realize, was a keynote of "Here Is Elsewhere," in which gestures of fear, hurt, and anger were like a child's partly defiant, mostly anxious testing of unconditional parental love. That's what's left of the art's critical edge, as topical references fade. Viewing the show was like eavesdropping on a troubled romance.

A feminist video by Martha Rosler, in which she wields kitchen implements as weapons, and the posturing of the late David Wojnarowicz as a victim of society—he was an abused child who became a male hustler infected with AIDS—amounted to tantrums. (I fancy that they have now been sent to their rooms, in storage.) Comparatively sublime were Gonzalez-Torres's pile of wrapped candies and stack of propaganda (for gun control) posters, free for the taking; they evoked a charismatic scamp insouciantly dispensing family property to his chums. (You can't stay mad at him.) As a sign of changing times, the younger artists—such as the Mexican Gabriel Orozco, the British twins Jane and Louise Wilson, and the gay American Tom Kalin—came across as the least defensive, like young adults home for an only mildly bristly visit. Then, there was Bruce Nauman.

"I suppose Bruce Nauman is the odd one out in this collection of artists," Hatoum remarked to Daftari. The white male heterosexual master of many mediums—inexhaustibly inventive, philosophically profound, harsh—was represented by "Think" (1993): two stacked video monitors broadcasting a tape (upside down on the bottom screen) in which the artist's face bobs, at a steady rate, in and out of view of a camera that was pointed at a blank wall above his head. With each leap—sweat and labored breathing evince an extended ordeal—he shouts, "Think!" Hatoum observed that Nauman is "a significant artist." Indeed, the artistic tactics of half the works in "Here Is Elsewhere" would not be conceivable apart from his influence. Hatoum also deemed the piece a salutary injunction to viewers. She says, "With the Nauman video, I hear, 'Think for yourself!' " I hear something else: theatricalized frustration at the impossibility of thinking by willing oneself to do so. Nauman is a bard of mental predicaments: tautology, double bind, Beckettian futility.

"Think" struck me as a more trenchant, unfriendlier complement to the show than Hatoum imagined. The besetting weakness of politically motivated art is precisely its quotient of willed thought and feeling. One senses that a work's meaning has been nailed down—is effectively over with—before one's encounter with it begins. Hatoum spoke, in her interview, of her wish for "viewers to come up with their own interpretations." But the kind of work that she makes and favors keeps response on a short leash, assuming agreement and complicitous sympathy with the artist's point of view—which is not even his or her own, exactly, but a programmatic stance. Darkly comic, Nauman forbids sympathy, even with himself. Truth interests him. He demonstrates the autonomy of spirit which ideal democracy puts within the sufficiently determined reach of anyone. ♦


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THE SKY LINE

# SLINGS AND ARROWS

*The architectural machinations at Ground Zero can be treacherous.*

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

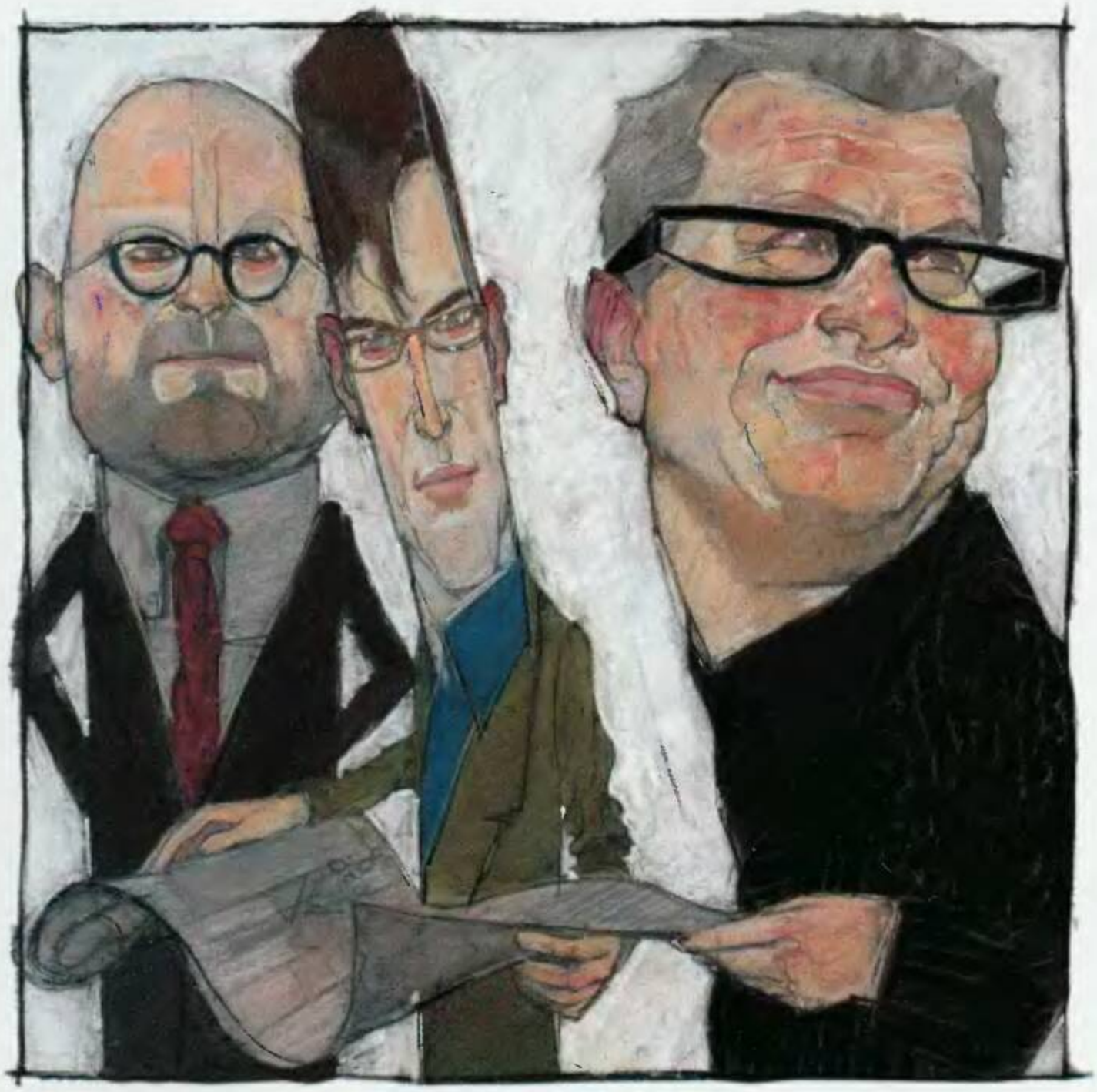
Every time a new design element for Ground Zero is announced, the presentation room overflows with public officials. Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg give speeches hailing the planning process as democracy in action and congratulate each other for making it all possible, and the architects describe their projects in a humble, low-key manner. Protocol is as precise as that of a state dinner, and everyone is excruciatingly polite. But it was a hard act to bring off at the press conference in mid-December where the design for Freedom Tower, which is intended to be the world's tallest skyscraper, was unveiled. David Childs, the architect who was in charge of the design, and Daniel Libeskind, who created the master plan for Ground Zero and was supposedly Childs's partner on the tower, were barely speaking to each other. They had fought bitterly during their collaboration, which was forced on them by Pataki. Neither man was fully happy with the result, and, while Libeskind endorsed the design as consistent with the principles of his plan, he mentioned Childs's name only once, in a pro-forma way.

Things were not quite what they seemed on January 14th, either, when the memorial designed by Michael Arad and Peter Walker was presented. After the political speeches, Arad, who is only thirty-four, spoke earnestly about his intentions, and Peter Walker, who is seventy-one and an eminent landscape architect, said a few words. Then Libeskind, as usual, talked about how well the memorial fit in with his master plan. In fact, of course, Michael Arad's design (Walker got involved only after Arad was selected as one of eight finalists, in November) did away with what had been considered the most fundamental aspect of Libeskind's original proposal, the sunken pit in which a memorial was to be placed. Libeskind had insisted that the entire foundation area of the twin towers be left open to a level of thirty feet below the sidewalk, and that a large portion of the surviving slurry wall of the old concrete structure be exposed. Arad ignored all this, although part of the slurry wall was exposed in the revised plan that he worked out with Walker.

Is Libeskind a masochist, or simply more of a politician than the politicians? Twice in the space of a month, he stood next to the Governor, the Mayor, and officials from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the Port Authority—his clients—as they made announcements that altered key portions of his master plan for Ground Zero. He could not get away with faking much good cheer at the unveiling of Freedom Tower, since the press had already reported that there was friction between him and Childs, but he radiated bonhomie at the memorial announcement. A little over a week later, at the unveiling of Santiago Calatrava's model for a spectacular new PATH terminal, he was positively ebullient, although Calatrava had all but usurped the role that Libeskind had hoped for as the shaper of iconic architecture at the site. He had also appropriated Libeskind's original Wedge of Light idea into the actual architecture of his building. (That could be considered a form of flattery, but it was probably more of a rescue operation, since Libeskind's Wedge of Light Plaza never seemed quite workable.)

Libeskind was horrified when the jury selected Michael Arad and Peter Walker's plan for the memorial. He told Kevin Rampe, the head of the L.M.D.C., that the jury had undermined two years of his work. He was not alone in thinking that a slight was intended. Some people believed that Arad had been selected as a finalist just so that the jury could assert its independence from the rest of the planning process. Arad not only raised most of Libeskind's sunken memorial site but eliminated the angular museum

building that Libeskind had proposed for the northern end of Ground Zero—the building that projected over a portion of the north tower's footprint. Arad suggested instead a long, narrow slab of a building that would run along the western edge of the site, and that would have walled off the memorial from West Street and the World Financial Center, in Battery Park City. Nevertheless, his submission was the sharpest and the least sentimental of the eight designs that got into the final segment of the competition. He proposed marking the footprints of the Twin Towers with sunken reflecting pools, and he left most of the ground level open as a stark plaza. Compared with many of the other designs, which employed shimmering lights, water, and gardens, Arad was tough. He used austerity to suggest emptiness and loss, and he avoided kitsch.



*Peter Walker, Michael Arad, and Daniel Libeskind had to agree on a memorial.*

N. ASCENCIOS

The memorial competition, which attracted 5,201 submissions, was conducted apart from the other planning for Ground Zero. It was organized by the L.M.D.C., which is a government agency, but the judging was done by a jury that consisted mainly of art and architecture experts and civic leaders who had been assured that they could operate without political interference. When Arad was named the winner, Daniel Libeskind was not the only person in a bind. Kevin Rampe couldn't reverse the independent jury, nor could he afford to alienate Libeskind, whose ideas for Ground Zero had been enthusiastically endorsed by Pataki, Rampe's boss. The solution to this dilemma was, like everything else at Ground Zero, a delicately stitched-together web of politics, policy, and disingenuous public statements. First, Rampe told Arad that his awkward slab building along West Street had to go, and Arad agreed that he would not have any say over the location or the design of cultural buildings at Ground Zero. Then Libeskind and the L.M.D.C.'s director of planning and design, Andrew Winters, were brought into the memorial planning process. Winters had been reviewing all of the finalists' designs, but he was not permitted to report his findings directly to the designers, because it would have been considered interference. Winters's comments were filtered through the jury, many of whose members didn't feel much obligation to the master plan. After the final selection was announced, on January 6th, Arad, Walker, and Libeskind were given a week to prepare something that they could all agree on, before the public unveiling.

Arad's relationship with Peter Walker turned out to be critical. Walker is an aesthetic minimalist, which is unusual among landscape designers, and it made him an ideal partner, not to say mentor, for Arad in the continuing evolution of the design. Walker was not a natural colleague for Libeskind—they had recently clashed over landscaping plans for a museum in Denver that Libeskind was designing, and Walker was replaced as the museum's landscape architect—but Libeskind went with Arad to Walker's office in Berkeley, with a sheaf of drawings for the master plan under his arm, and they spent a day trying to find some common ground. Only then, Libeskind said later, did he realize that Arad and Walker didn't understand that certain things in the master plan, like the location of train tracks, service areas, and so forth, were already fixed. "I said, 'Michael, you can't just change a ramp, because it affects so many things that are already set underground, like the concourses, the width of streets, the stations,' " Libeskind told me. "It became clear that they had talked to no one but the jury."

After his wall-like structure on West Street was removed from the scheme, Arad had tried to put the museum building on the southwest corner of the site, but Libeskind moved it back to the northeast corner, where it was in his master plan. He did, however, give up the idea of cantilevering the building over the footprint of the north tower. It was moved closer to the street, which was an improvement, since it reinforced the major intersection of Fulton and Greenwich Streets. Libeskind stopped insisting on a large pit for the site, and he agreed to endorse Arad's proposal to excavate only the footprints of the towers. He seems to have genuinely come to like Arad's scheme in its current version, especially with the subtle geometric pattern of deciduous trees that Peter Walker added to the plaza. And because the painful

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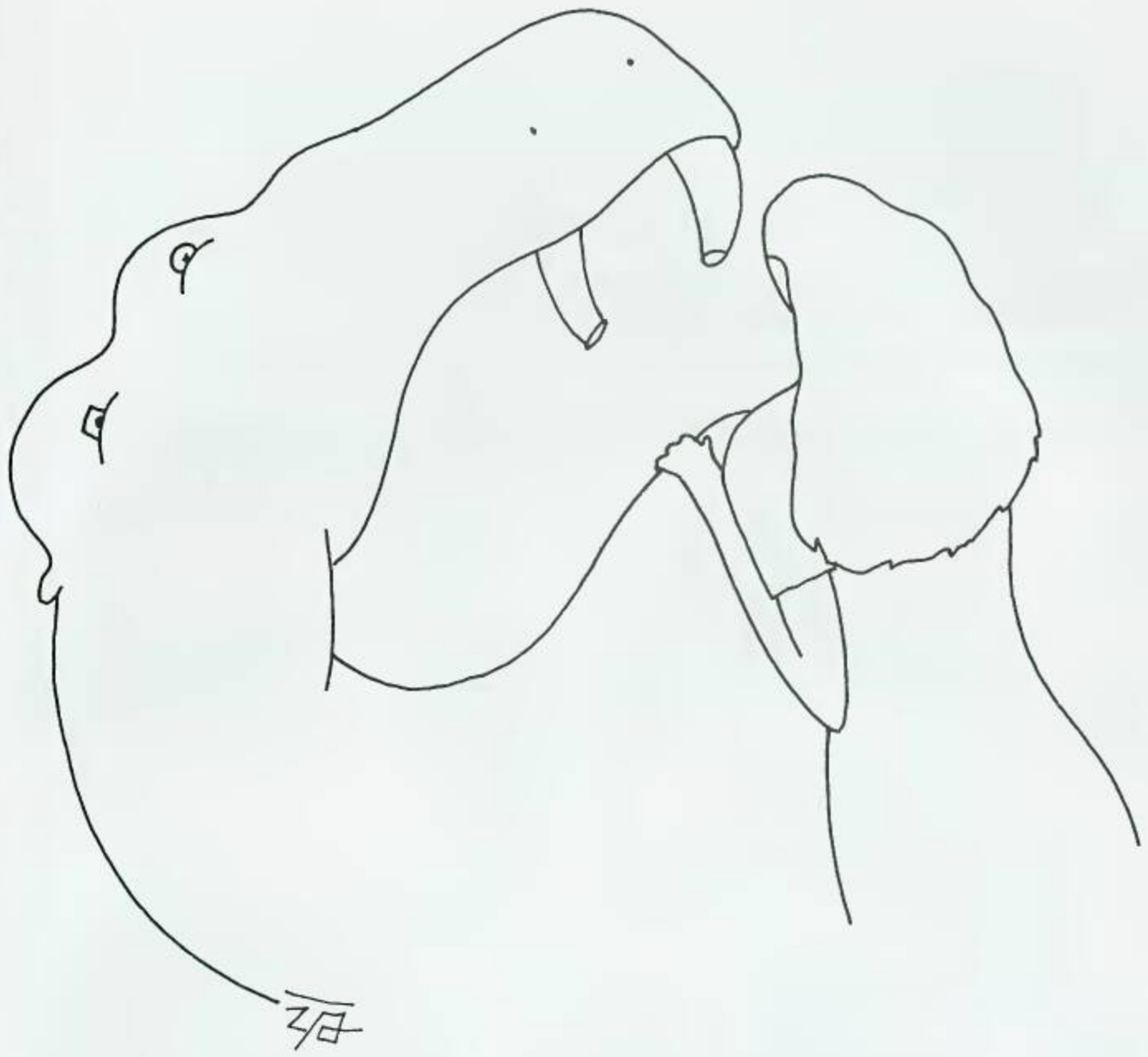
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battle over Freedom Tower ended in a draw—with more skirmishes surely to come—it was understandable that he wanted to appear diplomatic this time around. Being perceived as a team player might help Libeskind win the commission to design the museum building. So far, he has no building of his own at Ground Zero.

Libeskind must have also realized that although he had garnered public sympathy by taking a stand against Larry Silverstein, the developer who was building Freedom Tower, and by positioning himself as David against the architectural Goliath of Childs's firm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, it would be much harder to take on a gifted young architect and a jury that included Maya Lin, the designer of the most revered memorial of our time. Lin was known to have had great influence with her colleagues on the jury, and Arad's revised design bore a striking resemblance to a sketch she made for the New York *Times* in 2002.

None of the eight finalists for the memorial design included the twisted, burned shards of steel that remained from the original World Trade Center. Arad told the father of a woman who died on September 11th that he did not include the ruins because "I didn't want to design a drive-by memorial." He wanted every visitor to stop and descend into the memorial, and so he included an underground museum that will contain relics of the Trade Center. The problem is that an eighty-foot-tall section of steel will never fit in an underground museum, and that large piece is the single most powerful, haunting object that remains from the Trade Center. Its absence is a major shortcoming of Arad and Walker's design as it now stands.

Daniel Libeskind became famous in the late eighties, when he won the architectural competition for the Jewish Museum in Berlin. His design was a de-facto Holocaust memorial, which was what got built. The competition for the master plan for Ground Zero required a setting for a memorial, but Libeskind went further than that, and all but de-

signed the memorial himself. This powerful and effective element in his plan was widely admired, and it helped get his design selected, but it was destined to conflict with the memorial process sponsored separately by the L.M.D.C. After Libeskind decided to go along with Arad and Walker's design, he started describing his original master plan in terms that were somewhat different from the way he had described it before. He seemed to want to suggest that he hadn't made any concessions. The huge depressed area that he had proposed to go around the tower footprints, Libeskind said, was never intended as anything more than "a space that could be used and interpreted in any way the competitors chose to use it."

There is still no clear sense of how much the master plan means, or of how precisely its directives will be followed. Libeskind tends to talk about it as a set of general guidelines when he likes what other architects have in mind, and as a series of ironclad rules when he doesn't. It's true that when Libeskind was selected as the master planner, a year ago, he didn't earn the right to design the buildings that would go up at Ground Zero. But it's also true that all the architects who were commissioned to come up with site plans produced designs for actual buildings, just as Libeskind did, and that when Libeskind's plan was chosen the public was given the impression that it was getting not just a site plan for Ground Zero but a fairly complete vision for the sixteen acres. That is clearly not going to be the case.

The muddied lines of authority are most pronounced in the plans for Freedom Tower. Larry Silverstein, the developer, wants to be in charge, and so does the L.M.D.C., and so does the Governor, and so do the architects. The design at present has an awkward top that comes partly from David Childs's early schemes for a symmetrical crown, partly from Libeskind's designs for an asymmetrical spire, and partly from the engineer Guy Nordenson, who conceived the structural system of cables that surround a windmill farm. Nobody knows how well the windmills will work, but, then again, Larry Silverstein hasn't promised to pay for them, and a lot of people close to the project think that the whole top may disappear. If it does, there is not much left to make the building special, since Libeskind's original vision for the tower, a seventy-story office building of glass with a slanted top joined to a skeletal spire that would rise to 1,776 feet, is already gone. The design as it now stands bears scant resemblance either to Libeskind's compelling sketches or to Childs's original concept. It is an unnatural hybrid made up of the work of two architects, each of whom believed he had the right to design the building himself. ♦

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Volume LXXIX, No. 46, February 9, 2004. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for six combined issues: February 16 & 23, April 19 & 26, June 14 & 21, July 12 & 19, August 9 & 16, and December 20 & 27) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. David Carey, vice-president and publisher; Chris Mitchell, associate publisher; Peter W. Jurew, associate publisher, marketing; Ronda Carnegie, advertising director; William Li, advertising director; Marie Wolpert, advertising director; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; Bob Gruters, director of marketing and strategic planning; Theresa Gaffney, creative development director; Rosemary Stanton, advertising business director. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, C.O.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.F.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 1632, Station A, Windsor, ON N9A7C9.

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