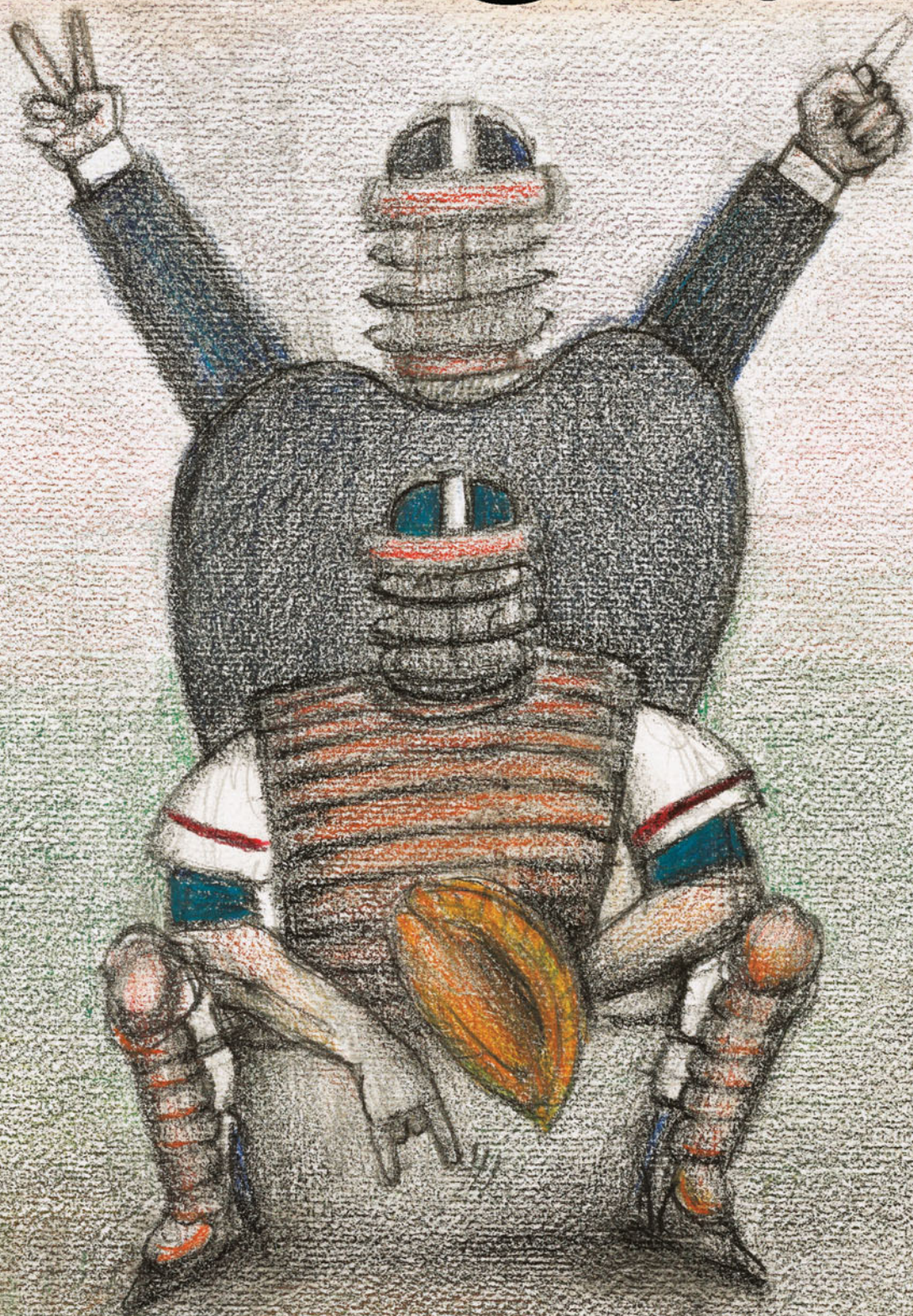


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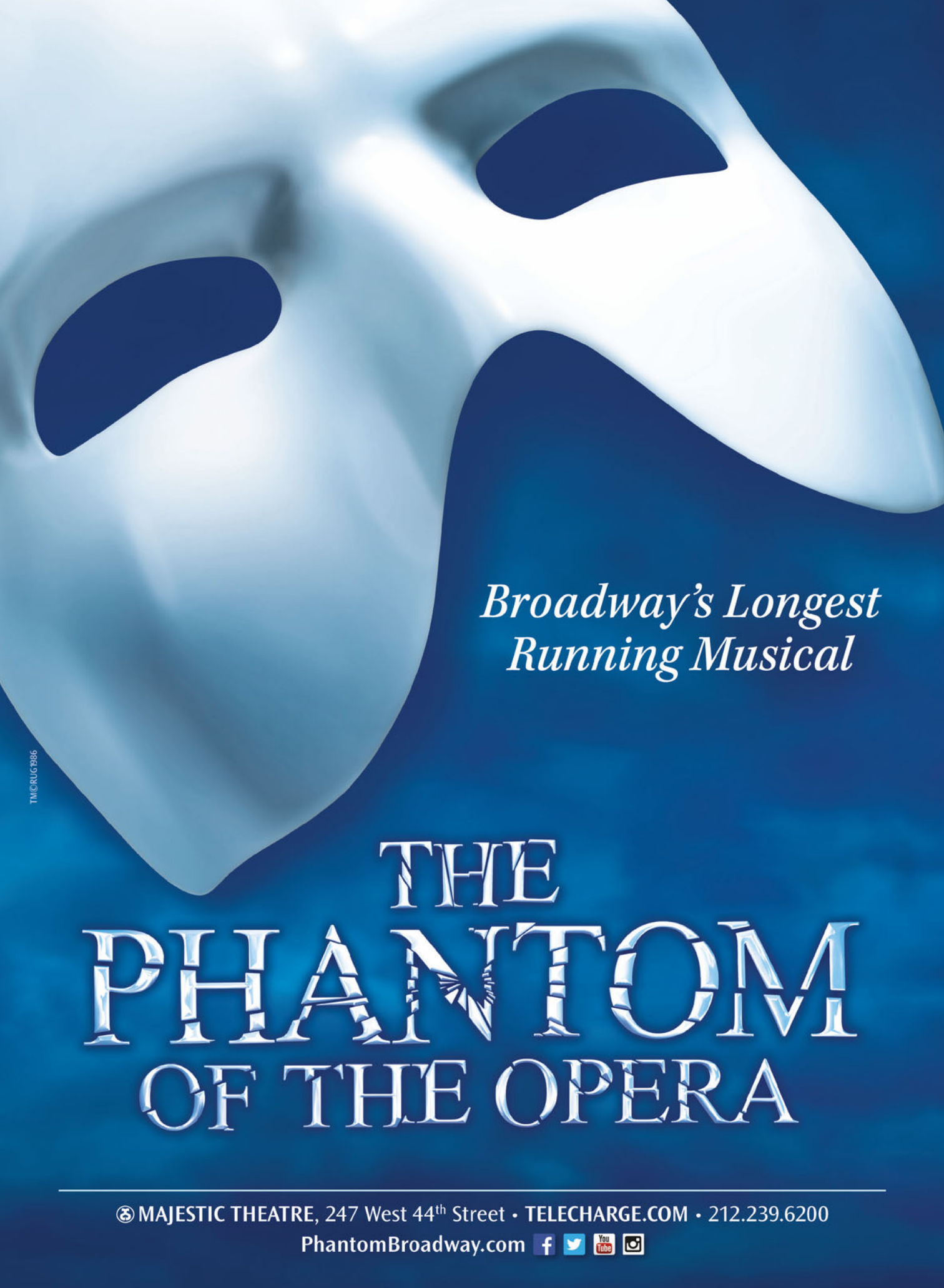
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CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN WRIGHT (**"THE ADVERSARY," P. 40**), a joint fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, has been covering Iran since 1973. She is the author of several books on the Middle East, including "Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World."

ALEXIS OKEOWO (**COMMENT, P. 21**) is a journalist based in Lagos, Nigeria.

JAMES SUROWIECKI (**THE FINANCIAL PAGE, P. 26**), the author of "The Wisdom of Crowds," writes about economics, business, and finance for the magazine.

DAVID OWEN (**"THE YIPS," P. 28**) has been contributing to the magazine since 1991. He is the author of several books, including "The Making of the Masters: Clifford Roberts, Augusta National, and Golf's Most Prestigious Tournament."

ADAM GOPNIK (**"WORD MAGIC," P. 36**), a staff writer, is the author of "The Table Comes First: Family, France, and the Meaning of Food."

NADYA LABI (**"ROGUE ELEMENT," P. 50**) is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *GQ*, and *Wired*.

CAROLYN GUINZIO (**POEM, P. 56**) co-founded and edits the online project Yew: A Journal of Innovative Writing & Images by Women. "Spoke & Dark" is her most recent book of poems.

ALEJANDRO ZAMBRA (**FICTION, P. 62**), a Chilean writer, has published several works of fiction in English, including "Ways of Going Home."

ELIZABETH KOLBERT (**BOOKS, P. 70**), a staff writer, is the author of "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History," which was published in February.

SAUL STEINBERG (**COVER**) contributed to the magazine for nearly six decades until his death, in 1999.

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THE MAIL

WHAT IS A DEGREE WORTH?

Adam Gopnik makes many pertinent observations in his essay on the relationship between college athletics and higher education (Comment, May 12th). Unfortunately, measuring higher education itself in terms of “market values” has now become the norm, in both public universities, which have to answer to state legislatures, and elite private universities and liberal-arts colleges. Administrators are increasingly appointed because of their ability and willingness to bring the values of the market to bear on their day-to-day decision-making. This results in an emphasis on job placement and starting salaries for recent graduates, and often in the elimination of foreign-language and other humanities departments, because they add no demonstrable “value” to students. What is most distressing is that many administrators appear to accept the self-evidence of market values. Instead of defending the humanities by arguing for the value of a well-educated citizenry, they defend them only by referring to data showing that, by the time college graduates with degrees in the humanities reach their mid-fifties, they can earn as much as or more than those who majored in pre-professional fields. If we are to escape judging college success in terms of market values and student earning potential, it will be up to educational leaders to make the case for values beyond those of the market.

*Alan D. Schrift
Grinnell, Iowa*

CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

While the appointment of a former partner at Goldman Sachs to lead the Nature Conservancy may seem controversial, as D. T. Max points out in his article on Mark Tercek, major environmental groups have been hiring investment bankers and others with Wall Street experience for at least twenty years (“Green Is Good,” May 12th). However, Max’s article raises a funda-

mental question about the influence that business leaders should have in defining the agenda of the environmental movement. Contrary to the position widely held on Wall Street, nature is the ultimate source of all economic value. Human medicines, biomedical research, and the production of food all depend on biodiversity. No commerce or culture is possible without clean air and water, fertile topsoil, a chemically stable atmosphere, and raw materials for food, energy, and medicine. The environmental movement recognizes that collaboration with financiers is often essential to advancing our work, but the important question for us is to what degree we should trust them to lead our movement.

*Allen Hershkowitz
Natural Resources Defense Council
New York City*

The essential quality that Tercek seems not to understand about environmentalists such as Michael Soule and E. O. Wilson is that they are not only conservationists but romantics. Perhaps this is due to thousands of hours spent in the field rather than in the boardroom, but biodiversity conservation truly is emotional for them. They would rather fall on their swords than ally themselves with some of the worst polluting corporations on the planet. Tercek would do well to steer the Nature Conservancy back onto its intended path: preserving land that furthers the mission of biodiversity conservation. On its current course, the organization is only eroding the integrity—and, more important, the mission—it has worked so hard to build over the past half-century.

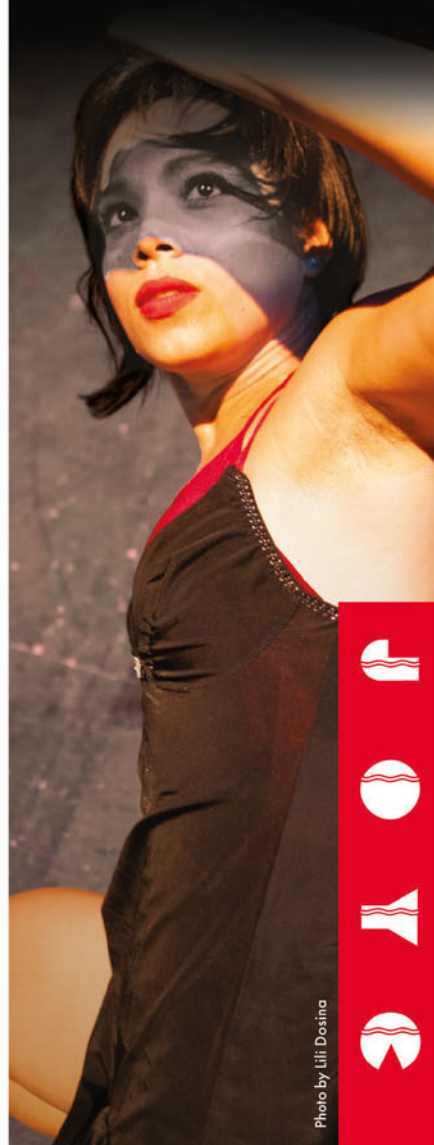
*John Meisel
Malvern, Pa.*

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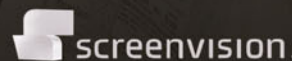
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GOING ON ABOUT TOWN

MAY 2014 WEDNESDAY 21ST THURSDAY 22ND FRIDAY 23RD SATURDAY 24TH SUNDAY 25TH MONDAY 26TH TUESDAY 27TH

IN **"THE QUEEN MOTHER** of Reality," the Polish artist Pawel Althamer pays tribute to Delois Blakely, who is known as the "queen mother" of Harlem. A former Roman Catholic nun, Blakely has been an advocate for women and children for decades. She was named an honorary mayor of Harlem by Rudy Giuliani and later became a hero to the Occupy movement. To do justice to this larger-than-life figure, Althamer and a team of collaborators built a fifty-foot-long statue from urban flotsam and jetsam—hats, scaffolding, headlights. The monument reclines like a Buddha and includes a walk-in belly outfitted with airplane seats and a photograph of Blakely for a face. The sculpture, which debuted at "Performa" last November, is now installed at Socrates Sculpture Park, in Long Island City, through Aug. 3.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAYMOND MEIER

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MUSEUMS SHORT LIST

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Charles James: Beyond Fashion." Through Aug. 10.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Alibis: Sigmar Polke, 1963-2010." Through Aug. 3.

MOMA PSI

"Maria Lassnig." Through May 25.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Italian Futurism, 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe." Through Sept. 1.

WHITNEY MUSEUM

"2014 Whitney Biennial." Through May 25.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Ai Weiwei: According to What?" Through Aug. 10.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"Pterosaurs: Flight in the Age of Dinosaurs." Through Jan. 4.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST

UPTOWN

Andrew Kuo

Half Gallery
Through June 2.

"Mark Rothko: The Watercolors

1941-1947""
Pace
Through June 21.

CHELSEA

Darren Bader

Kreps
Through June 21.

Kay Rosen

Sikkema Jenkins
Through June 28.

DOWNTOWN

Birdie Lusch

Schuss
Through June 29.

OF NOTE NEW MUSEUM

"CAMILLE HENROT: THE RESTLESS EARTH"

If a single art work could define this anxious decade, it might be Henrot's "Grosse Fatigue," a skyrocket of a video that netted the young French artist the Silver Lion at the last Venice Biennale. Now it arrives in New York, Henrot's current home: thirteen propulsive minutes of anthropological, zoological, and just plain weird images popping up on a computer screen, accompanied by a spoken rap suturing myriad myths of gods and men: "In the beginning, the universe was a black egg where heaven and earth were mixed together." Ethnographic portraits, bird carcasses archived at the Smithsonian, and Wikipedia entries for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder pile atop one another. Creation gives way to chaos. Henrot is a delightfully brainy artist, and this show also includes strong examples of her early work, including an ingenious film shot in Vanuatu and spliced in half and ikebana arrangements inspired by literary sources that translate her curiosity about cross-cultural exchange into the language of flowers. Spend time with them, lots. Then go back to "Grosse Fatigue," a masterpiece that fits entire galaxies on an iMac. Through June 29.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Joel Meyerowitz

The larger of the two series here revisits the photographer's 1968 MOMA show of black-and-white pictures, shot on his travels through Europe. Taken from a moving car, the views—of landscapes, buildings, and people along the road—are classic snapshots, sometimes generic, often marvellous. Meyerowitz knew he was going too fast for close observations, but his quick notes have a breezy, timeless charm. The newer work includes color still-lives of pitchers, vases, a dusty bowler hat, and other items from Cézanne's studio, as well as dimly lit arrangements of humble metal and ceramic objects in Meyerowitz's studio in Aix-en-Provence. Through May 31. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Jeff Bark

These big color photographs of a handsome young dude sunbathing in what looks like a neglected, trash-strewn back yard in L.A. were actually made in the artist's New York garage—an installation that is partially re-created in the gallery, complete with dead palms and live parakeets. If there's a narrative here, it's deliberately vague. Is the guy (seen counting cash and wearing nothing but a towel) a hustler, a dealer, or just a bored slacker? Bark is more interested in atmosphere than psychology, bathing his scenes in a sticky, golden light and relishing every pungent

detail, from the scorched grass to the dripping sweat. Through June 14. (Hasted Kraeutler, 537 W. 24th St. 212-627-0006.)

Ida Ekblad

Whether it's due to the art schools, the welfare state, or the oil money that funds it, Oslo is having a moment—and Ekblad, though not the city's brashest artist, is one of its best. Ten terrific new paintings mash up messy abstractions (the mid-century COBRA painters may come to mind), graffiti-like bubbles, gambolling circuits à la Brice Marden, and in a few cases an alien flashing the peace sign. Ekblad is a keen colorist, whether rhyming a trio of violets (royal purple and thistle squiggles overlaid on mulberry) or orchestrating unlikely clashes of pink and gold. Through May 31. (Greene Naftali, 508 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770.)

Dinh Q. Lê

The Vietnamese artist shows photographs, sculpture, and a four-channel video installation that intertwine appropriated pictures of war and peace, often quite literally. Lê's signature format is a wall hanging of woven strips of photographic images that jostle with one another in a multilayered, hallucinatory collage. Emerging, receding, and refusing to resolve, those images include Navy Seals at a funeral, the explosion of the World Trade Center, Cambodian prisoners, and Michelangelo's saints and sinners. Lê's vision of a world in turmoil is haunting and nightmarish, but he never fails to weave beauty into his work. Through May 24. (P.P.O.W, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-647-1044.)

"Ultrapassado"

On the heels of MOMA's excellent Lygia Clark retrospective, this novel group show brings together ten women artists—five Brazilian, five not—whose geometric abstractions dovetail with poetry, performance, and politics. (The tricky Portuguese title could be "exceeded," "trespassed," or even "outmoded," but the participle is masculine; who's outmoding whom?) Early woodcuts by Lygia Pape prefigure some crisp paintings by the overshadowed New York minimalist Rosemarie Castoro, while Gina Pane is here with a raked square of sand that only hints at her more punishing physical actions. The show's revelation is Lenora de Barros, who riffs on Brazilian historical abstraction with a bisected Ping-Pong paddle; the red and black faces are

both a parody of and a tribute to her foremothers. Through June 21. (Broadway 1602, at 1181 Broadway, at 28th St. 212-481-0362.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Anicka Yi

You could almost read the pair of front-loading washing machines this keen artist has embedded in the gallery's white walls as a sly minimalist intervention. Until you open the doors, that is. Wafting from the drums are surreal, hardly pleasant perfumes—the stench of fried food in one, something like a frog in the other—that wrench her art from formalist play into the realm of the senses. Other works here, including CDs dripping with honey and cardboard boxes containing snails and oxytocin, sustain the experimentation, though Yi should give up the insipid sculptures of iPhone chat bubbles; she's too smart for such art-fair fodder. Through June 8. (47 Canal, 47 Canal St. 646-415-7712.)

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

"Kara Walker: A Subtlety"

Ever since her spectacular New York debut, at the Drawing Center, in 1994, the now forty-four-year-old artist's work has been diaristic in tone. But the diary Walker keeps is not explicitly personal; it's a historical ledger filled with descriptions of the bodies and psyches that were bought and sold from the seventeenth century on, when slavery became the American way of life and its maiming shadows pressed down on black and white souls alike. Her radical new sculpture—some seventy-five and a half feet long and more than thirty-five feet tall—is white, a mammy-as-sphinx made out of bleached sugar, which is both a metaphor and a reality. Remember, sugar is brown in its raw state. The sphinx crouches in a position that's regal and yet totemic of subjugation—she is "beat down" but standing. Instead of refashioning the European idea of coloredness—think about what Brancusi and Giacometti did with African and Oceanic art—Walker has snatched colored femaleness from the margins. She's taken the black servant in Manet's "Olympia"—exhibited the same year black American slaves were emancipated—and plunked her down from the art-historical skies into Brooklyn, where she finally gets to show her regal head and body as an alternative to Manet's invention. Through July 6. (Creative Time at Domino Sugar Factory, S. 1st St. at Kent Ave., Williamsburg. 212-206-6674.)

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IN THE RUNNING

Who should win at this year's Tony Awards?

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH, any year, to view the Tony nominations as a barometer for the state of the art, but this season's crop seems particularly out of synch. Of the four nominees for Best Musical, only one has a wholly original score: **"A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder,"** Robert L. Freedman and Steven Lutvak's poison-laced pastiche of British operetta. Worthy new efforts, such as **"The Bridges of Madison County,"** were snubbed. On the play side, Will Eno's existential comedy **"The Realistic Joneses,"** with its koanlike probing of mortality, was shut out completely, leaving room for Terrence McNally's trite AIDS drama **"Mothers and Sons."** This is a bad sign for Broadway, which is already risk-averse.

Still, there is much to celebrate. James Lapine's adaptation of **"Act One,"** Moss Hart's beloved memoir about coming of age in the theatre, is a wistful and well-crafted ode to the alchemy of the stage. It should win for Best Play and Best Leading Actor (Tony Shalhoub, who plays the older Hart and George S. Kaufman), but on both counts it will have to contend with the crowd-pleasing Presidential diorama

"All the Way," with Bryan Cranston hamming it up as Lyndon B. Johnson. The featured-actor categories are filled with performers who outshine the main attraction, among them Nick Cordero, as the gangster turned dramaturge in **"Bullets Over Broadway,"** and Linda Emond, whose Fräulein Schneider ended up as the weary heart of **"Cabaret."** Both would be deserving winners.

Several Tony categories distinguish between original works and revivals, but it isn't so easy to separate the old and the new. Certainly, the movement-oriented director John Tiffany showed us something new about **"The Glass Menagerie"**—which has never received a Tony nomination until this year—just as Kenny Leon found notes of humor and female power in his revival of **"A Raisin in the Sun."** The "new" musicals **"After Midnight"** and **"Beautiful"** rehash Cotton Club jazz and the Carole King songbook, respectively, but the most novel score on Broadway belongs to a revival, **"Hedwig and the Angry Inch"** (with songs by Stephen Trask), which grew out of the nineties punk scene and still feels wildly unconventional.

That brings us to the two most exuberant performances this season, both delivered by men in drag. In **"Twelfth Night,"** Mark Rylance donned a ruff and a mourning dress and played Countess Olivia for all her passive-aggressive fury: who knew it was the funniest part in the play? Rylance (also nominated for **"Richard III"**) is the king and queen of Shakespearean playacting; if a third Tony tempts him back for more (he won for **"Boeing Boeing"** in 2008 and **"Jerusalem"** in 2011), all the better. Then there's Neil Patrick Harris, nominated for **"Hedwig and the Angry Inch,"** as an East German rock diva unencumbered by gender or sartorial restraint. His Hedwig may lack the numb resentment of John Cameron Mitchell's original, but there's no denying Harris's compulsive showmanship, in or out of a beehive. As a four-time Tony host, he combined song-and-dance schmalz with social-media sarcasm, at times seeming to carry the entire American vaudevillian tradition on his tuxedoed shoulders. For this year's ceremony, on June 8, he hands the reins to Hugh Jackman, presumably to free up time to win a Tony for himself. So he should.

—Michael Schulman

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

American Hero

Second Stage Uptown begins its new season with this dark comedy by Bess Wohl, about three workers at a sandwich chain. Leigh Silverman directs; the cast includes Ari Graynor and Jerry O'Connell. In previews. Opens May 22. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

And to the Republic

The Guerrilla Shakespeare Project presents a political thriller fashioned from a reconstruction of the Shakespeare plays "Julius Caesar," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus." Geordie Broadwater directs. Previews begin May 24. (Workshop Main Stage, 312 W. 36th St. 212-695-4173.)

The Essential Straight & Narrow

Lila Neugebauer directs this play, created by the Mad Ones, in which a group of rock musicians discover inner truths while staying in a motel in Pinos Altos, New Mexico, in the nineteen-seventies. Previews begin May 22. Opens May 24. (New Ohio Theatre, 154 Christopher St. 888-596-1027.)

Fly by Night: A New Musical

Playwrights Horizons presents the New York premiere of a musical by Kim Rosenstock, Will Connolly, and Michael Mitnick, set during the Northeast blackout of 1965, in which a sandwich-maker meets a pair of sisters. Carolyn Cantor directs. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

Hamlet

The Drilling Company brings its version of the Shakespeare tragedy—which first appeared in a parking lot on the Lower East Side in 2011—to Bryant Park. Hamilton Clancy directs the free production. In previews. Opens May 22. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-873-9050.)

The Sonic Life of a Giant Tortoise

The Play Company presents the English-language premiere of a play by Toshiki Okada, translated by Aya Ogawa, about the darkness that lurks beneath the lives of thirty-something Japanese professionals. Dan Rothenberg directs. Previews begin May 24. (JACK, 505½ Waverly Ave., Brooklyn. jackny.org.)

The Village Bike

MCC presents this play by Penelope Skinner, starring Greta Gerwig, Jason Butler Harker, and Scott Shepherd, about a pregnant woman who takes her desires into her own hands when she buys a used bike. Sam Gold directs. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-352-3101.)

When We Were Young and Unafraid

Cherry Jones, Zoe Kazan, Cherise Boothe, Patch Darragh, and Morgan

Saylor star in a new play by Sarah Treem, in which a woman running a women's shelter takes issue with the influence one of the residents has over her teen-age daughter. Pam MacKinnon directs the Manhattan Theatre Club production. In previews. (City Center Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

NOW PLAYING

The Few

Samuel D. Hunter sets his latest play in a decrepit trailer in rural Idaho just before Y2K. The R.V. serves as the main office (well, the only office) of "The Few," a newspaper for long-haul truckers. Its founder, Bryan (Michael Laurence), has returned after a four-year absence to discover that his girlfriend, QZ (Tasha Lawrence), has replaced his maudering essays with personal ads. She has also taken on a cub reporter (a yearning, excitable Gideon Glick) so eager he makes beavers seem truculent. Less a journalistic contretemps than a lonely-hearts letter in triplicate, the drama centers—as many of Hunter's do—on the dangers and difficulties of human connection. But this time Hunter, however empathetic, has trouble suiting his theme to the story. Despite no-nonsense direction from Davis McCallum and ardent, unfussy performances, the engine of the plot, with its synthetic deferrals and revelations, could use a tune-up. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 866-811-4111.)

A Loss of Roses

On the surface, Kenny (Ben Kahre) seems like a responsible twenty-one-year-old—he holds down a job at a local filling station (not an easy thing to do in the Midwest during the Depression) and gives his mother (Deborah Hedwall) half his paycheck for the rent and bills. But when his mother's fragile actress friend (Jean Lichty) loses her job and comes to live with them, Kenny's neurosis surfaces. Under the direction of Dan Wackerman, the acting in this Peccadillo production of William Inge's drama from 1959 is stellar. The characters all have a stock quality at first, but the performers—particularly Kahre and Hedwall—deftly reveal them to be eccentric, complex, and very dark. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 212-352-3101.)

The Lovesong of Alfred J. Hitchcock

The title of David Rudkin's intriguing piece, directed by Jack McNamara, is not idle wordplay. In its structure, cadences, and concerns, the play—which started out, in 1993, as a radio drama—is truly Prufrockian, a time-shifting dream of a man reviewing his life in all its prosaic surfaces and unfathomable depths. Martin Miller plays the legendary film director with tortured gusto—a

brilliant cinema craftsman adopting a placid demeanor that disguises a battle against the fears and humiliations that formed him. Miller is supported by Roberta Kerr, as both his mother, Emma, and his wife, Alma, and by Anthony Wise and Tom McHugh in a variety of roles. A few of the Freudian flights feel overworked, but Rudkin is very good at imagining the process of Hitchcock's thinking, revealing the filmmaker's uncanny understanding of human nature and laying out the nuts and bolts of cinematic technique that make suspense and terror palpable to an audience in a comfy movie house. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through May 25.)

An Octoroon

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's brilliant play starts out with a tame conversation between a depressed black playwright and his white therapist—both performed by the extraordinary actor Chris Myers—in which the therapist suggests that he write something based on one of his favorite writer's works to try to feel better. The result of that conversation is the madcap theatrical bomb that the playwright (and Jacobs-Jenkins, with the help of the inspired director Sarah Benson) drops on the audience. The play uses the plot of the Irish playwright Dion Boucicault's 1859 antebellum melodrama—about a white plantation owner (Myers) in love with a mixed-race woman (Amber Gray) who is soon to be sold to an evil overseer—only as the starting point for a bigger, wilder, more hilarious play about the tremendous, often tragic difficulties of identity, and life, for us all. With the extraordinary Jocelyn Bioh and Marsha Stephanie Blake, as nineteenth-century slaves who describe their experience using the language of fly girls, and an awe-inspiring set by Mimi Lien. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 212-352-3101.)

Under My Skin

After they're killed in an elevator crash, the handsome owner of a huge health-insurance company (Matt Walton) and a pretty temp (Kerry Butler) convince an angel in Heaven (Dierdre Friel) to give them another chance at life. The angel screws up, though, and when the businessman and the temp wake up back on earth, he's in her body, and she's in his. The scene in which the temp, in the businessman's body, ends up in bed with his gorgeous fiancée (Kate Loprest) is worth the price of admission to this pat but very funny comedy, written by Robert Sternin and Prudence Fraser, who co-wrote the TV shows "The Nanny" and "Who's the Boss?" Under the direction of Kirsten Sanderson, the actors seem confident and relaxed, and their timing couldn't be better. (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

ALSO NOTABLE

ACT ONE

Vivian Beaumont

AFTER MIDNIGHT

Brooks Atkinson

ALADDIN

New Amsterdam

ALL THE WAY

Neil Simon

ANNAPURNA

Acorn

BEAUTIFUL—THE CAROLE

KING MUSICAL

Stephen Sondheim

BULLETS OVER BROADWAY

St. James

CABARET

Studio 54

CASA VALENTINA

Samuel J. Friedman

THE CITY OF CONVERSATION

Mitzi E. Newhouse

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN

Cort

DUTCHMAN

National Black Theatre.

Through May 23.

EARLY SHAKER SPIRITUALS

Performing Garage

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER

Walter Kerr

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Belasco

HERE LIES LOVE

Public

IF/THEN

Richard Rodgers

IN THE PARK

Axis Theatre

JUST JIM DALE

Laura Pels

THE KILLER

Polonsky Shakespeare Center

KINKY BOOTS

Hirschfeld

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL

Circle in the Square

MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Shubert

LES MISÉRABLES

Imperial

MOTHERS AND SONS

Golden

OF MICE AND MEN

Longacre

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Ethel Barrymore

THE REALISTIC JONESES

Lyceum

ROCKY

Winter Garden

VIOLET

American Airlines Theatre

WICKED

Gershwin

ABOVE & BEYOND

Frankie Manning Centennial

Manning, the premier ambassador of the Lindy Hop, was born in Florida in 1914, and moved to Harlem when he was three. By the early thirties, he was a regular at the Savoy Ballroom, where he refined his ebullient style and went professional. He died in 2009, shortly before his ninety-fifth birthday, forever enamored of the Lindy, which he described as “a series of three-minute romances.” The “Frankie 100” festival includes dancing in Central Park, a parade in Harlem,

concerts, and many other celebrations. (May 22-26. frankie100.com.) There’s also “The Frankie Trifecta,” featuring big bands at the Edison Ballroom on May 23 and additional events. (frankietrifecta.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

The countdown to summer begins with a series of sales of American, Western, and Native American art. Sotheby’s holds three auctions on May 21, starting off with a selection of paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including several Norman Rockwells: the top lot, “After the Prom,” in which a young, freshly scrubbed couple sit at a humble coffee-shop counter, speaks of an almost unimaginably innocent America. Native American and Western art go under the gavel in the

afternoon, beginning with a session of eleven works made by artisans from the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, including a striking raven-shaped Tlingit headdress with eyes carved out of abalone shells. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) • Fancy silver objects will be sold off at Christie’s on May 21, including a

spectacular George V ship model by the British silversmith Omar Ramsden. On May 22, the house holds a sale of American art; it, too, includes several Rockwells, as well as an icy-blue seascape by Edward Hopper (“Coast Guard Boat I”). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

READINGS AND TALKS

Clive Owen

Following a screening of his new film, “Words and Pictures,” the actor discusses his work with Annette Insdorf, a professor of film at Columbia University. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. May 21 at 7:15.)

New York Botanical Garden

Eavan Boland reads poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose work is on display throughout “Groundbreakers,” the garden’s exhibition about women landscape designers of the twentieth century. (Bronx River Parkway at Fordham Rd., the Bronx. nybg.org. May 24 at 1.)

FOOD & DRINK



TABLES FOR TWO

NAVY

137 Sullivan St. (212-533-1137)

THE OWNERS OF THE TRIBECA bar Smith & Mills, Matt Abramcyk and Akiva Elstein, were so enamored of their design concept—wartime bunker, in the vein of Bauhaus and Constructivism—they expanded on it. Navy, their adorably tricked-out new restaurant (wartime deprivation, *si chic!*), sits on a quiet SoHo block in the former home of Jean-Claude, a beloved French bistro. When asked what inspired all those signal flags, the clever galley latrine, and the crisp blue-and-white ship-motif tiles, one dapper gentleman working the lunch hour replied, “It was inspired by World War II and the thirties and forties, obviously, but really it’s because it’s a seafood restaurant.”

Depending on what time it is, the vibe ranges from extremely pleasant, during the day (open French windows, Bien Cuit croissants, and tables of people who look like they’ve lived in SoHo

since before Chanel moved to Wooster Street), to cramped and contrived, at night (squint-inducing low light, Pitchfork-approved indie soundtrack, and diners who look like they can’t wait to find the *next* next hottest place, A.S.A.P.). Lunch is a lovely affair, with young, optimistic, unflappable waitresses. One weekday afternoon, almost every dish on the daily-changing menu came with an expertly cooked egg and/or toast, which was a little weird for a seafood place. But there were also a lot of raw greens—pea shoots, watercress, parsley—and their freshness livened everything up. Avocado toast was topped with pickled mustard seeds and radish and fennel slices, and whitefish salad, with a poached egg over a light crispy quinoa cake, had a satisfying zing. A thick skirt steak with creamy-crunchy potatoes (and eggs) showed a deft hand in the kitchen, which is run by Camille Becerra, whose Greenpoint restaurant Paloma was lost to a fire in 2008.

The presence of a church up the street dictates that Navy cannot serve hard liquor, and in the evening the proprietors try very hard to make do with cordial- and wine-based drinks, which lean toward the medicinal. “Sherry cocktails? This is never going to catch on,” one naysayer grumbled before switching to beer. The oysters and black-bass crudo were fine; the fried sweetbreads (with apple, jicama, and rémoulade) and mussel toast (with aioli on hearty thick-cut wheat sourdough) were better. The brined crispy-skinned tarragon chicken trumped the trout *en croûte*, which was embedded with tangy sorrel sauce—it was very pretty, but the *croûte* lacked crunch.

An odd lunchtime dessert—a charred grapefruit topped with heavy salt and fennel seed—had a whiff of creativity run amok. But a baked pear with granola and yogurt was just right, and, unlike at dinner, there wasn’t a waiter hovering nearby, eagerly awaiting the guests’ departure. As neighborhoods rapidly change, so do their services, and if SoHo didn’t know it needed a Second World War-naval-ship-themed seafood restaurant, who can blame it?

—Shauna Lyon

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DANCE

New York City Ballet

"Jewels," Balanchine's 1967 evening-length work—which contains, according to Arlene Croce, "every important article of faith to which this choreographer subscribed"—returns to the schedule this week for four performances. The triptych, inspired by the music of Fauré, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky, is an homage to the three countries with which Balanchine is most closely identified: France, America, and Russia. "Emeralds" is pure poetry, a sylvan idyll; "Rubies" is jazz, sport, and sex; "Diamonds" hints at the grandeur of ballets past. • May 21 at 7:30: "A Place for Us," "Todo Buenos Aires," and "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze.'" • May 22 at 7:30: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Everywhere We Go," and "The Four Temperaments." • May 23 at 8, May 24 at 2 and 8, and May 25 at 3: "Jewels." • May 27: "Concerto Barocco," "Other Dances," "Neverwhere," and "Who Cares?" (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600. Through June 8.)

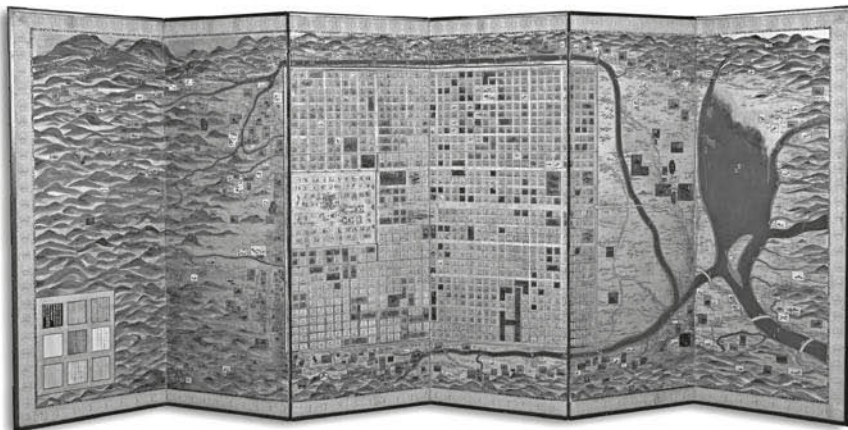
American Ballet Theatre

Lavish three-act ballets dominate the spring season, but the current week offers the first of two mixed bills. This one contains Balanchine's "Theme and Variations" and "Duo Concertant," as well as "Gaité Parisienne," an exuberant suite of dances by Léonide Massine. The latter, last seen in 1999, is a romp set in a Parisian Belle Époque boîte. The characters include a bumbling tourist, a sensitive glove seller, a baron, dancing waiters, and, of course, cancan girls. Everyone but the tourist goes home happy. Massine's non-stop choreography is well served by Offenbach's boisterous score and Christian Lacroix's voluminous costumes. One of the more intriguing pairings scheduled for "Theme and Variations" brings together the regal Gillian Murphy with Andrew Veyette, one of N.Y.C.B.'s most appealing male stars. See abt.org for casts. • May 20 and May 22 at 7:30 and May 21 at 2 and 7:30: "Theme and Variations," "Duo Concertant," and "Gaité Parisienne." • May 23, May 26, and May 27 at 7:30 and May 24 at 2 and 8: "La Bayadère." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 5.)

National Tap Dance Day

A quarter century ago, tap dancers convinced Congress to put Bill (Bojangles) Robinson's birthday on the nation's official calendar. Each subsequent May, New York has seen a "Tap Extravaganza" overstuffed with award presentations and performances, often brilliant. Though the event has withered recently, the organizers have rallied to produce an anniversary show featuring the nonagenarian spitfire Mable Lee. This year, the American Tap Dance Foundation also presents "Tap Attack," its own free outdoor celebration, mixing students and open jams with such pros as Kazu Kumagai, Michela Marino Lerman, and Jason Samuels Smith. ("Tap Extravaganza": Norman Thomas High School, 111 E. 33rd St. May 24 at 7. "Tap Attack": Pier 45, Hudson River at Christopher St. May 25 at 1. 646-230-9564.)

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MOVIES



OPENING

THE ANGRIST MAN IN BROOKLYN

A comic drama, about a man (Robin Williams) who learns that he has only ninety minutes to live. Directed by Phil Alden Robinson; co-starring Mila Kunis and Melissa Leo. Opening May 23. (In limited release.)

BLENDED

Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore star in this romantic comedy, as acquaintances whose children bring them together. Directed by Frank Coraci. Opening May 23. (In wide release.)

COLD IN JULY

In this drama, a homeowner (Michael C. Hall) kills a burglar and is hunted by the dead man's father (Sam Shepard). Directed by Jim Mickle. Opening May 23. (In limited release.)

THE DANCE OF REALITY

An autobiographical drama, directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky, about his boyhood in Chile in the nineteen-thirties. In Spanish. Opening May 23. (In limited release.)

STAND CLEAR OF THE CLOSING DOORS

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening May 23. (In limited release.)

TRACKS

A drama, about a woman who travels alone through the West Australian desert. Directed by John Curran; starring Mia Wasikowska and Adam Driver. Opening May 23. (In limited release.)

X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

An action sequel, based on the comic-book series, in which Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) must travel through time to save the world. Directed by Bryan Singer. Opening May 21. (In wide release.)

REVIVALS AND FESTIVALS

Titles in bold are reviewed.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

"Jerry Lewis: The Completed Retrospective." May 23 and May 25 at 7 and May 24 at 9: "Which Way to the Front?" (1970). • May 23 at 9, May 24 at 7, and May 25 at 5: "**Hardly Working.**" • May 24 at 5 and May 25 at 9: "One More Time" (1970).

NOW PLAYING

An Autumn Afternoon

The fatal bargain of old age has rarely been observed as sharply as in Yasujiro Ozu's last film, from 1962. It's centered on Hirayama, a Tokyo businessman and widower whose grown daughter, Michiko, keeps house for him. Their settled routine is jolted by his plainspoken friend, Kawai, who urges him to find her a suitable husband and spare her a life as an old maid. Hirayama's growing acceptance of his solitude is challenged by the late-life happiness of another friend, Horie, a sly fox who is married to a much younger woman. His serenity is also troubled by a chance encounter with a former wartime shipmate whose sentimental reminiscences spark jingoistic bombast and earnest regret. With the bright colors of new urban landscapes (built up in the wake of wartime destruction) and the brazen clash of calmly assertive compositions, Ozu captures the ordinary desolation at the natural heart of things—and contemplates his own place on the edge of the precipice. In Japanese.—*Richard Brody* (Museum of Modern Art; May 26.)

Belle

This rousing historical fantasia, which is loosely based on a true story, uses Jane Austen's novels as a template. In the late eighteenth century, two beautiful half cousins, Elizabeth Murray (Sarah Gadon) and Dido Elizabeth Belle (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), live together as loving friends under the protection of their uncle, Lord Mansfield (Tom Wilkinson), the Chief Justice of England. Dido, who is the daughter of a British sea captain and his African slave mistress, becomes an heiress. In different circumstances, this elegant young woman might have been someone else's property, but she's now capable of conferring property of her own on cash-poor aristocratic suitors. Not much is known about the historical Dido, and the British filmmakers—the director, Amma Asante, and the screenwriter, Misan Sagay—concoct a liberationist fiction in which Dido becomes conscious of herself as a black woman after listening to the fiery anti-slavery rhetoric of a parson's son (Sam Reid), who falls in love with her. Dido goes on to influence the British abolitionist movement. Factually, the movie is probably a fraud, but it's crisply entertaining, and Mbatha-Raw, born in Oxford and acting since she was a child, delivers her increasingly confident lines with tremulous emotion

and, finally, radiant authority.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 5/19/14.) (In limited release.)

Beware of a Holy Whore

This is how the cinema looked, in 1971, to the twenty-six-year-old director Rainer Fassbinder, who already had ten feature films under his belt. The cast and crew of a politicized costume drama are holed up in a Spanish villa while awaiting their star, their equipment, and their money; meanwhile, they drink joylessly and engage in provocative sexual escapades, subtly Machiavellian manipulations, and cruel displays of power that threaten the film with emotional sabotage. The director, Jeff (Lou Castel), betrayed by his financiers and obliged to complete a doomed production, plays these games as recklessly as do his employees. He risks alienating his star, Eddie Constantine (playing himself), with his allusive script and its violent action. The increasing dissolution of the shoot is captured in the kaleidoscopic fragmentation of Fassbinder's own story, which shatters the filmmaking process into a whirl of dispersed moments of latent or blatant conflict—which is the stuff that Jeff's film is made of. Co-starring Fassbinder himself, as an assistant whose practical wives don't spare him his own breakdown.—*R.B.* (Film Society of Lincoln Center; May 24 and May 26.)

Chef

A drooling comedy, written and directed by Jon Favreau. He also takes the leading role, as a Los Angeles chef named Carl Casper, who, to judge by his generous build, and by the sound he makes when tasting a slice of barbecued pork, rates the wolfing of serious chow even higher than the making of it. After being charred by a critic and unwisely fighting back, he loses his job, flies to Miami, takes possession of a food truck, and spends the rest of the movie driving westward with his son (Enjay Anthony) and dishing out high-cholesterol favorites to adoring crowds. The film is itself a curious sandwich, with the bland high spirits of the second half all but smothering the needy laments of the first, and the visual etiquette of the kitchen is much as expected—closeups of chopping and sizzling, invariably backed by a lively tune. There is also a nagging emphasis on social media, which we could do without. To be fair, though, Favreau's honest determination to tempt us, and to have us reach out for his Cubanos, pays off in the end. He is aided by a gang of dramatic sous-chefs, some of them ludicrously overqualified for the task: Scarlett Johansson, Dustin Hoffman, Bobby Cannavale, John Leguizamo, Sofia Vergara, and an amuse-gueule of Robert Downey, Jr.—*Anthony Lane* (5/12/14) (In wide release.)

A Geisha

The first shot of Kenji Mizoguchi's 1953 melodrama—a young woman with an American-style dress and coiffure beside a woman in traditional geisha garb—sets up the cultural clash and the bitter irony at the heart of the story. Eiko (Ayako Wakao), a sixteen-year-old girl whose mother is dead and whose father is disabled, signs herself over to Miyoharu (Michiyo Kogure), an experienced geisha, for initiation. Eventually, Eiko is trotted out to teahouses where prospective clients gather; these men range from fetishists to rapists to corrupt businessmen who barter women for lucrative contracts. Filming in a rage, Mizoguchi trades his usual fluid tracking shots for distorting angles and harsh cuts, as in a harrowing sequence, of Miyoharu undressing, that thrusts the viewer into the position of a sexual predator. A sardonic riff on the difference between postwar and prewar ideas is matched by an angry discussion on the gap between constitutionally guaranteed rights and brutal realities. What starts as a conflict between tradition and progress morphs into a vision of a sham modernity that rests on the rot of unquestioned injustices. In Japanese.—*R.B.* (Museum of the Moving Image; May 23.)

God's Pocket

Depressive, ill-shaped, but not boring. The actor John Slattery directed this adaptation (which he wrote with Alex Metcalf) of an early Pete Dexter novel, about the proud but screwed-up inhabitants of a poor white neighborhood in South Philadelphia. Philip Seymour Hoffman plays a thieving meat supplier who has to arrange the funeral of his loathsome stepson after the boy is killed at a construction site. Preceded into rooms by his gut, Hoffman gives a scowling, subdued performance as a man whose every act becomes futile; his despairing work is not easy to watch, but it's still moving as a view of the great actor near the end. Slattery goes for lower-depths naturalism, including extensive scenes in a neighborhood bar, and then tries, without sufficient brio, to transform the misery into black comedy.—*D.D.* (In limited release.)

Hardly Working

From the self-pitying title to the self-aggrandizing conclusion, Jerry Lewis's deceptively bland family comedy, from 1980, careens through a wild gamut of emotions. He plays Bo Hooper, an esteemed circus clown who is forced to move in with his sister (Susan Oliver) and hostile brother-in-law (Roger C. Carmel) when the big top goes bankrupt. Losing a series of new jobs (including bartender and gas-station attendant) through riotous clumsiness, he gets a last-ditch job in the post office, where his new boss (Harold J. Stone), a nerve-wracking blend of bonhomie and menace,

turns out to be the father of his new girlfriend (Deanna Lund). In his short-pants uniform, Bo is reduced to permanent childhood, and the mere presence of quasi-paternal authority reduces him to blithering idiocy and social calamity. The story of a comic who can't help blowing sky high in the family spotlight—and whose desires shiver with taboos—seems wrenched from a dark place in Lewis's soul. The movie's desperately amiable tone plays like a chastised boy's terrified plea for love; the oblivious cruelty that emerges nonetheless (as in Lewis's embarrassing parody of a Japanese chef) makes it all the sadder.—*R.B.* (Anthology Film Archives; May 23-25.)

Ida

Brief, spare, and shot in black-and-white, Pawel Pawlikowski's film takes place in his native Poland. The young heroine, Anna (Agata Trzebuchowska), on the brink of taking her vows as a nun, goes to visit her sole surviving relative, an aunt called Wanda (Agata Kulesza)—a lawyer for the Communist state, and one of the most memorable characters in recent cinema, not least because she herself is plagued by memories that she struggles to fend off. She also has a secret to impart: Anna is Jewish, originally named Ida, and was orphaned as a child. The movie is stirred to action by this news, as the two women, forging the most unlikely of friendships, drive across the moon-gray landscapes of eastern Poland in a quest to find out what happened to Ida's parents. Although freedom is grabbed here and there (in swigs from a bottle of vodka, or in a snatch of Coltrane, played in a crummy hotel), the sense of a country caged by its own tribulations, past and present, is overwhelming. And yet, remarkably, the film is never a grind, thanks to the steely force of the performances, and to the way in which Pawlikowski keeps us on our mettle, holding things back and obliging us, as it were, to tell half the story to ourselves. In Polish.—*A.L.* (5/12/14) (In limited release.)

The Immigrant

James Gray's dramatization of an obscure corner of America's immigration story is a revelation of lost time. Ewa Cybulska (Marion Cotillard), arriving from Poland, in 1921, falls into the hands of one Bruno Weiss (Joaquin Phoenix), a Lower East Side entrepreneur who puts on tawdry burlesque shows and pimps out the women performers on the side. Alternating between politeness and menace, and adding an odd kind of strangled adoration, he forces Ewa into prostitution. The physical look of the movie is astonishing. The great cinematographer Dariusz Khondji shoots Bruno's apartment, the streets, the theatre, the women in a bathhouse or Central Park with a subdued color palette. The undernourished tones

suggest the desperate yearning for status that remains always out of reach. The heart of the movie is Bruno's tormented pursuit of Ewa's love. Phoenix, who has a gift for playing confounded men, caught between aggression and chagrin, gives perhaps the largest performance of his career; the beautiful Cotillard is less interesting, hampered by Gray's conception of Ewa as a superior victim, a woman who sleeps with men for money but remains spiritually immaculate. With Jeremy Renner as a magician—a lightweight charmer who tries to attract Ewa. The late Ric Menello worked with Gray on the screenplay.—*D.D.* (5/19/14) (In limited release.)

Maine-Ocean Express

Jacques Rozier's delicately unhinged 1986 road comedy requires patience, which is itself the subject of the film. The antic trouble begins with the first shot, when Dejanira (Rosa-Maria Gomes), a Brazilian samba dancer in Paris who doesn't speak French, rushes to catch the eponymous train and gets into the wrong car. Hassled by a pair of madcap conductors (Luis Rego and Bernard Menez), she's helped by a lawyer (Lydia Feld) who's heading to Nantes to see a client, a raucous sailor (the eruptive Yves Afonso). Somehow the five of them end up together at the coast, joined by Dejanira's New York impresario (Pedro Armendáriz, Jr.). En route—and there is plenty of route—the shaggy-dog heroes confront violence, love, and rapid reversals of fortune. Staging complex set pieces in daring, exquisite long takes of a tightrope virtuosity, Rozier builds to an amazing sudden decrescendo, a half-hour-long return to order that is one of the most stirring adventures in banal sublimity ever committed to film. In French and Portuguese.—*R.B.* (French Institute Alliance Française; May 27.)

Neighbors

Mac (Seth Rogen) and his wife, Kelly (Rose Byrne), live on a quiet street. They have a baby so implausibly cute that it may be a special effect. This idyll is interrupted by the arrival of a college fraternity, Delta Psi, which moves in next door; the leader of the pack is Teddy (Zac Efron), whose body, according to Mac, looks as if it were designed by gay men in a laboratory. Nicholas Stoller's movie, written by Andrew J. Cohen and Brendan O'Brien, aims for a culture crunch: the settled, half-jealous bourgeoisie versus an unembarrassed jamboree of ids. It's a promising setup, but it gets frittered away—partly by narrative laziness (the involvement of other neighbors is dismissed out of hand) but mainly by a flaccid belief in the power of the gross-out. You can feel the desperation as the film tries to hawk its puerile wares: Make your own dildos, guys! Laugh at the very

existence of breast-feeding! Only toward the end, as adulthood looms, does the story regain its poise, as in a touching scene between Rogen and Efron outside an Abercrombie & Fitch store (guess who works there). Much credit, also, to Byrne, who manages to keep her comic gifts intact, even if her dignity is left in a heap on the floor.—*A.L.* (In wide release.)

Palo Alto

This drama, about teen-agers in a prosperous suburb who struggle with sex, love, and identity, breaks no new ground. Emma Roberts stars as April, a high-school student of sixteen, whose gym teacher and soccer coach (James Franco), a divorced father, seduces her. The boys in her circle—Teddy (Jack Kilmer), a sensitive artist, and his best friend, Fred (Nat Wolff), an impulsive musician—provide little comfort, and the girls on her team are self-centered and remote. April is beset by a world of caricatured adults—a clueless mother, a loopy intellectual stepfather (Val Kilmer), and teachers who are nonentities. The druggy and drunken parties, games of truth or dare, casual sex, and violent amusements are recklessness-by-number; the catalogue of petty derelictions and frustrated yearnings is anchored by no inner world, framed by no context, and there's nothing distinctive in the twenty-six-year-old Gia Coppola's direction.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

Stand Clear of the Closing Doors

In this compassionate work of New York neorealism, the director Sam Fleischner imaginatively and sensitively conveys the inner world of an autistic twelve-year-old boy, Ricky (Jesus Sanchez-Velez), who leaves school and, rather than heading back to his Rockaway Beach home, gets lost in the subway system. His mother, Mariana (Andrea Suarez Paz), who works as a housekeeper, delays going to the police because she and her husband (Tenoch Huerta) are undocumented immigrants. Ricky's older sister, Carla (Azul Zorrilla), a high-school student, is absorbed in her own adolescence and is little help—and then, Hurricane Sandy strikes. Fleischner empathetically but unsparingly depicts the fears, indignities, and degradations that Ricky endures in his largely subterranean wanderings, and movingly captures his fixations on ancillary details and incantatory phrases. Unfortunately, the director's view of the wider world is thin, skewed, and sentimentalized; the family's conflicts are schematic, and their dealings with authorities in Ricky's school and elsewhere have no complexity or amplitude. Ultimately, Fleischner's virtuous intentions, his sidelong hints at political questions, are undercut by their maudlin tone; the panorama veers to caricature. In Spanish and English.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

BAM CINÉMA TEK

"Punk Rock Girls." May 21 at 7 and 9:30: "Times Square" (1980, Allan Moyle). • May 22 at 7 and 9:15: "Out of the Blue" (1981, Dennis Hopper).

FILM FORUM

In revival. May 23-26 at 12:45, 3, 5:15, 7:30, and 9:50 and May 27 at 1, 4, and 8:30: "Accident" (1967, Joseph Losey).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

The films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. May 21 at 5 and 9: "Katzelmacher" (1969). • May 22 at 2:45 and 7: "Bremen Freedom" (1972). • May 22 at 4:45 and 9: "Nora Helmer" (1974). • May 23 at 4 and May 25 at 2:30: "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" (1972). • May 24 at 4:30 and 9: "Whity" (1971). • May 24 at 6:30 and May 26 at 8:20: "Beware of a Holy Whore." • May 25 at 5 and May 26 at 1:30: "World on a Wire" (1973). • May 26 at 5:30: "Effi Briest" (1974).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

In revival. May 27 at 4 and 7:30: "Maine-Ocean Express." The 4 P.M. screening will be introduced by Richard Brody, of this magazine; the 7:30 screening will be introduced by the filmmaker Alex Ross Perry.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"An Auteurist History of Film." May 21-23 at 1:30: "McCabe and Mrs. Miller" (1971, Robert Altman). • "An Auteurist History of Film Reprise, Part 2." May 21 at 4: "Two Daughters" (1961, Satyajit Ray). • May 22 at 4:30: "A Woman Is a Woman" (1961, Jean-Luc Godard). • May 23 at 4:30: "Shadows" (1960, John Cassavetes). • May 23 at 8: "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960, François Truffaut). • May 24 at 2: "L'Avventura" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni). • May 26 at 8: "An Autumn Afternoon."

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

The films of Kenji Mizoguchi. May 23 at 7: "A Geisha." • May 24 at 2: "The Famous Sword Bijomaru" (1945). • May 24 at 4: "Portrait of Madame Yuki" (1950). • May 24 at 7: "Osaka Elegy" (1936). • May 25 at 2: "The 47 Ronin," Parts 1 and 2 (1941).

CLASSICAL MUSIC



Julia Wolfe's "Anthracite Fields," featuring the Trinity Choir and the Bang on a Can All-Stars, is a highlight of the upcoming "NY Phil Biennial."

BIG DEAL

A first-time festival from the Philharmonic offers new music from around the world.

THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC will soon launch its inaugural "NY Phil Biennial" (May 28-June 7), a glorious, eleven-day festival of new music from around the world. Alan Gilbert's keen interest in contemporary sounds has been a historic aspect of his term as music director: you have to go back to the days of Pierre Boulez and Leonard Bernstein to find a similar level of enthusiasm.

For whatever reason, Gilbert's administration has always placed an intense emphasis on music by foreign composers. The programs in the orchestra's new-music chamber series, "Contact!," have shown a decided devotion to the current gods of high European modernism, such as Boulez and Magnus Lindberg, who was the orchestra's composer-in-residence from 2009 to 2012. And in next season's "Contact!" series, the vast majority of works are by non-U.S. composers. American music has hardly been ignored, but sometimes it seems as if the conductor initially marketed as "A Maestro for New York" were more interested in what's happening in Paris or Helsinki than on the Lower East Side.

The Biennial, fortunately, is pleasantly balanced, with works from both sides of the Atlantic. European musicians, who still have a fondness for their ancient composer-apprentice tradition, will be the focus of several concerts. "Beyond Recall," a program at MOMA conducted by Matthias Pintscher (May 29 and May 31), is a collection of pieces by such composers as Olga Neuwirth and Bruno Mantovani, each inspired by a work of contemporary public art located in the city of Salzburg. In "Circles of Influence," two concerts at the Rose Theatre, the Phil hands the baton to

the brilliant young Spanish conductor Pablo Heras-Casado, who leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's in programs devoted not only to music by Boulez (May 31) and the English master George Benjamin (June 1) but also to those composers who surrounded them or inherited their innovations.

The predominantly American events have a more rambunctious quality. Gilbert and the full Philharmonic will give the world premiere of the Symphony No. 4 by its current composer-in-residence, Christopher Rouse, at Avery Fisher Hall (June 5 and June 7). But music by young composers, in that program and in another concert conducted by Pintscher (June 6), won't be revealed until June 3, when the Philharmonic, in collaboration with the American Composers Orchestra's "EarShot" initiative, will give a private reading of six fresh pieces. You can't get more cutting edge than that.

If any program defines a new American tradition, it's the one featuring New York premieres by Julia Wolfe and Steven Mackey (May 30-31), two composers who have been as deeply influenced by rock and folk music as they have by Beethoven or Josquin. The Bang on a Can All-Stars and the Trinity Choir will gather to give the New York premiere of Wolfe's "Anthracite Fields," a flinty, big-boned, and appealing work, complete with video, that honors the generations of miners who toiled in the Pennsylvania coalfields; then the Philharmonic, Synergy Vocals, the actor and vocalist Rinde Eckert, and the Catch Electric Guitar Quartet will perform Mackey's "Dreamhouse," a post-9/11 meditation that's almost Whitmanesque in its brashly heterogeneous congress of sounds.

—Russell Platt

OPERA

Amore Opera: "Madama Butterfly"

This shoestring company puts on small-scale productions (with a chamber orchestra) that are short on grandeur but sometimes big on charm, continuing the tradition of the legendary Amato Opera. Puccini's opera is sung in Italian, with English surtitles; Douglas Martin conducts. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 866-811-4111. May 21-24 at 7:30 and May 25 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic

Vladimir Jurowski has been one of Europe's most talked-about young conductors for more than a decade now, with engagements from such distinguished organizations as the Metropolitan Opera. Finally, he makes his Philharmonic debut in an all-Slavic program that features Szymanowski's luxuriantly late-Romantic Violin Concerto No. 1 (with the engaging Janine Jansen) and selections from Prokofiev's "Cinderella," long a ballet staple but a relative rarity in the concert hall. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. May 21-22 at 7:30, May 23 at 2, and May 24 at 8.) • Alan Gilbert continues the Philharmonic's laudable tradition of twenty-three years, a free Memorial Day concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The repertoire is appropriately noble, and affirmative: Nielson's "Helios" Overture and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E Minor. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 26 at 8. Tickets are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning at 6.)

New Amsterdam Singers: "Full Fathom Five"

Clara Longstreth's excellent avocational choir ends its season with a tribute to the Bard, singing celebrated works by Vaughan Williams ("Three Shakespeare Songs"), Berlioz, and Frank Martin as well as a selection of more recent compositions. (St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. nasingers.org. May 22 at 8.)

RECITALS

Park Avenue Armory: István Várdai

The Armory's Board of Officers Room, recently restored to a state of spare yet sumptuous elegance, is becoming a locus for important chamber-music concerts. Next up is a recital by the acclaimed young Hungarian cellist, who takes on three of the mountains of the literature: Bach's Suites for Unaccompanied Cello Nos. 1, 5, and 6. (Park Ave. at 66th St. armoryonpark.org. May 21-22 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Paul Watkins, the new cellist of the Emerson String Quartet, is not the

only admired musician in the family: his brother, Huw Watkins, is an esteemed young composer and pianist. He joins Paul (and other musicians) in the U.S. premiere of "Blue Shadows Fall," part of a concert that also includes contemporary scores by George Benjamin, Helen Grime, Oliver Knussen, and Schnittke (the String Trio). (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5788. May 22 at 7:30.)

"Musical Ecologies"

This series, curated by the composer Dan Joseph, is held every second Thursday of the month at the Old Stone House, a lovingly reconstructed Dutch farmhouse from 1699 that was the site of an important Revolutionary War battle. The violinist Shem Guibory, joined by the percussionist Rex Benincasa, uses his concert to range over works from four centuries—from Bach and Ysaÿe to Grazyna Bacewicz and Douglas Cuomo—and ponder their connections. The recital begins with a discussion with the audience; a reception follows. (Washington Park, Fifth Ave. at 3rd St., Brooklyn. May 22 at 8. To reserve tickets, for which a donation is suggested, call 718-768-3195.)

Bargemusic

The floating chamber-music series shows its range this weekend. May 23 at 7: Rob Schwimmer, a longtime New York fixture who excels not only at the piano but also at the theremin (the evocative electronic instrument familiar from postwar science-fiction films) and a new electronic-microtonal instrument, the continuum, invites listeners to his "Wild World," a concert that will feature original compositions, arrangements of classic scores, and other surprises. • May 24 at 7 and May 25 at 4: Tradition returns with the St. Petersburg Piano Quartet, an ensemble that brings the impressive young pianist Ilya Yakushev together with players from the well-known St. Petersburg String Quartet. Their program is non-Russian: piano quartets by Mozart, Schumann, and Brahms (No. 1 in G Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. bargemusic.org.)

Issue Project Room: Tectonics Festival New York

In addition to his duties as music director of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Ilan Volkov has spearheaded this innovative Reykjavik festival, which takes "radical" classical music as its center, not its fringe. While the New York edition of the festival embraces such iconoclastic composers as Jessika Kenney, Harley Gaber (represented by his minimalist monument "The Winds Rise in the North"), and Scelsi, the music of Alvin Lucier is the linchpin of the series, with the first program highlighting his work "Criss Cross" and the third offering three more pieces (with the

composer sitting in). Other featured performers include the pianist Jenny Lin and the baritone Jeffrey Gavett. (22 Boerum Pl., Brooklyn. issueprojectroom.org. May 23 and May 25 at 7 and May 24 at 8.)

Yefim Bronfman and Musicians from the New York Philharmonic

The commanding pianist is so intrepid in his work for contemporary music that it's (almost) possible to forget that he remains one of the most exciting proponents of the standard repertoire. This concert, rescheduled from its intended date in March, brings Bronfman together with the orchestra's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow, the clarinetist Mark Nuccio, the violinist Lisa Kim, the violist Rebecca Young, and the cellist Maria Kitsopoulos in music by Schubert, Bartók ("Contrasts"), and Brahms (the Piano Quintet in F Minor). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. May 23 at 8.)

"The Glass House Project"

Late in the Second World War, the Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz quietly established more than seventy safe houses for Jews around the city of Budapest, where the Nazis and their allies were rounding up thousands of victims with horrifying speed. This concert at the Museum for Jewish Heritage, organized by the Balassi Institute, brings musicians from New York (including the trumpeter Frank London) and Budapest together for a rich program of remembrance that features arrangements and transcriptions of songs sourced by ethnomusicologists such as Bartók and music preserved by the Roma community. (36 Battery Pl. May 27 at 7. For information about free tickets, see culturehungary.org.)

(Le) Poisson Rouge: David Greilsammer

This young maverick pianist should find an appreciative audience at the downtown music bar, where "art and alcohol" stylishly mix. His program is a sequence of miniature, crystalline sonatas for solo keyboard by two of the great iconoclasts of their respective eras: the Baroque master Scarlatti and the modernist provocateur John Cage. (158 Bleecker St. lprnyc.com. May 27 at 7:30.)

OF NOTE TANNERY POND CONCERTS

The summer season creeps in quietly, but with distinction, at the arts photographer and pianist Christian Steiner's tony little series upstate, which is held in a renovated (and acoustically satisfying) Shaker tannery barn. Extraordinary young artists are the norm here: the first concert features the Dover Quartet, barely out of Curtis but already top prize-winners at the Banff and Fischhoff competitions. With the superb pianist Alon Goldstein, they offer a program of music by Haydn, Barber (the String Quartet, Op. 11), and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet). (Darrow School, New Lebanon, N.Y. tannerypondconcerts.org. May 24 at 6.)



GOINGS ON, ONLINE

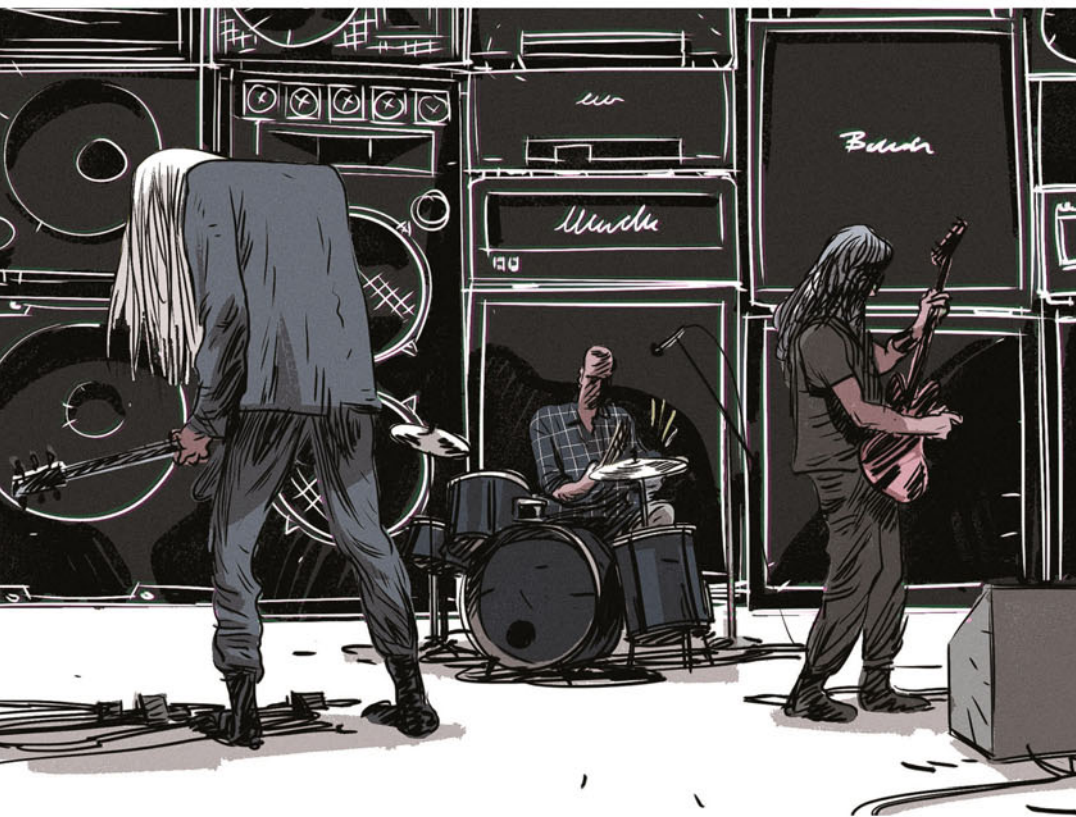
For more dance events, including the DanceAfrica festival, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, visit nyr.kr/dance.



DVD OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Monte Hellman's "Two-Lane Blacktop," from 1971, in our digital edition.

NIGHT LIFE



Oren Ambarchi and Stephen O'Malley frame the music of Keiji Haino, the man they refer to as "the maestro."

THE MASTER'S HAND

Nazoranai unites several generations of improvisation and noise.

IN 1991, a twenty-two-year-old Australian free-jazz drummer named Oren Ambarchi made his yearly pilgrimage to New York, looking for records and a chance to see live acts unlikely to make the trip to his home city of Melbourne. At the Knitting Factory, then on East Houston Street, he saw Keiji Haino, a forty-nine-year-old Japanese musician who had long black hair with bangs. In skinny wraparound shades popular with English mods in the sixties, Haino made high-pitched noises with his mouth while playing a Gibson SG electric guitar. The unified effect, over the course of ninety minutes, was more like the sound of a wounded velociraptor or a metal rigging collapsing than anything as pedestrian as chords. Ambarchi decided, right there, to pick up the guitar.

Over the next twenty years, Ambarchi released more than thirty albums as a guitarist. In 2011, he had a chance to

close the circle. A friend of his, a musician from Seattle named Stephen O'Malley, suggested they invite Haino to play as a trio in Amsterdam, with Ambarchi on drums, O'Malley on bass, and Haino on guitar. Although they all knew each other, they had never played together. A year later, the group played in Berlin, this time under a name Haino had chosen, Nazoranai. As O'Malley described it to me, Nazoranai relates to traditional Japanese calligraphy, meaning "not to follow the exact movement of the teacher or the master, to not follow the line, but to develop some sort of individuality." This is reflected in the band's working methods: beyond basic logistical discussions, there are no rehearsals.

Nazoranai is so thrilling because its improvisations don't simply average out the work the three members have already done. Ambarchi's own releases play with the more meditative zones of dissonance

and improvisation, while O'Malley's work tends to the more extreme edges of volume and pitch, often shaking rooms with detuned strings that reach into the silt below most other sounds. Haino, alone or in collaboration, moves through peaks of rebarbative guitar sounds, which are followed by equal amounts of silence and unexpectedly quiet vocal invocations. On Nazoranai's first self-titled album, and the forthcoming "II," there is a range of motion and sound. Restricted to bass and drums, O'Malley and Ambarchi do a remarkable job of framing the man they refer to as "the maestro." There are passages of dark and glossy depths, near-silent, on both albums, in addition to fearsome swells that are at once violently noisy and oddly natural. Live shows, though, are where the band finds its voice, again and again, summoning as much logic as madness. Nazoranai plays the Knitting Factory, now in Brooklyn, on May 21.

—Sasha Frere-Jones

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

Rickie Lee Jones

The granddaughter of the vaudevillians Frank (Peg Leg) and Myrtle Lee Jones, Rickie Lee was born in Chicago, grew up in Arizona, and eventually found her way to Southern California. She released her first album in 1979, and caused an immediate sensation with her womanly subject matter delivered in a distinctive little-girl voice and original compositions that took singer-songwriter pop in a cool, jazzy direction. Her most recent album is "The Devil You Know," featuring interpretations of songs by the Stones, the Band, Donovan, Tim Hardin, Neil Young, and others. She is currently at work on a crowd-funded album of new material. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. May 23.)

MØ

The twenty-five-year-old Danish electro-pop artist Karen Marie Ørsted, who goes by MØ, started her career with a focus on her twin passions for punk rock and crunk rap, and one of her main missions seemed to be to swear as much as possible. She still gives off a vibe of not giving a damn, but she is now more interested in crafting danceable pop songs layered with sensual synths and dirty thoughts. Her much anticipated debut album, "No Mythologies to Follow," came out this spring. (May 22, at Glasslands, 289 Kent Ave., between S. 1st and S. 2nd Sts., Brooklyn. theglasslands.com; May 23, at the Music Hall of Williamsburg, 66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn. 718-486-5400.)

Phosphorescent

This is the stage name of Matthew Houck, an Alabama native now resettled in Brooklyn. Last year, he released "Muchacho," one of the most heartbreaking and accomplished albums of 2013. The collection traces its genesis to a personal crisis Houck had a couple of years back when he returned to New York after months of touring, only to confront eviction, burnout, and the end of a relationship. In desperation, he bought a spur-of-the-moment plane ticket to the closest non-American airport he could find. He wound up in Tulum, Mexico, where he discovered new inspiration to craft the songs on the album. The record's standout, "Song for Zula," is an aching breakup song that evokes U2, but with a lyrical depth and vocal guilelessness that often elude the Irish arena-rockers. (Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. bowerypresents.com. May 27.)

Pujol

The tireless Nashville singer-songwriter Daniel Pujol started this garage band a few years ago while completing a master's in global affairs at the University of Denver. He plans to pursue a doctorate, but in the meantime he's putting his energy into his self-styled "Southern-fried country punk." He has a wiry, nasal voice, and his live shows are refreshingly raucous affairs. He's in town with a set of shows, playing songs from his new album, "Kludge," which gets its name from a computer-science term for a quick and clumsy solution to a problem. (May 23, at Death by Audio, 49 S. 2nd St., Brooklyn; May 24, at the Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. pujoldotcom.com.)

Trans Am

Coming from the suburbs of Washington, D.C., in the early nineties, this group started out by playing punk, but they quickly plugged in keyboards and became one of the key instrumental bands of the post-rock era. They have always had a deep sense of humor in their musical explorations, adding vocals, becoming political (as they did on their 2004 album, "Liberation"), and embracing international inspirations (which informed the recording of "Sex Change," from 2007). Sometimes proggy, sometimes poppy, rarely predictable, Trans Am has just released its tenth studio album, "Volume X," along with an echo-laden alternative version of one of the new tracks, "I'll Never." (Knitting Factory, 361 Metropolitan Ave., Brooklyn. 347-529-6696. May 23.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Benny Golson

While Sonny Rollins deserves much credit, a very good case can be made that Golson, who is eighty-five years old, is the finest tenor saxophonist from the golden age of the nineteen-fifties and sixties who is still actively performing. A notable composer (of the hard-bop standards "I Remember Clifford," "Stablemates," and "Whisper Not," among other songs), Golson has a gorgeous tone, unimpeachable harmonic ingenuity, an inspired melodic gift, and unflagging stamina. (Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St. 212-475-8592. May 23-25.)

Billy Mintz

All too many drummers pound and roar, but a rare few can make their instruments purr and sing. Mintz, who has found a niche navigating between avant-garde channels and more conventional ones, is a careful yet adventurous stylist who recalls the late Paul Motian in his sensitivity and musicality. He leads a quartet with such similarly attentive players

as the pianist **Roberta Piket** (who is also his wife), the tenor saxophonist **John Gross**, and the bassist **Putter Smith**. (Barbès, 376 9th St., at Sixth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn. 347-422-0248. May 21.)

"JLCO Hosts: Christian McBride & Kurt Rosenwinkel"

The bassist McBride and the guitarist Rosenwinkel have long been established as instrumental giants of their generation (particularly McBride, who was a teen-age prodigy). Both are also prolific and skilled composers, and the two, who have known each other since high school, in Philadelphia, each present original large-scale compositions, supported by the **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis**. (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-258-9800. May 23-24.)

Randy Weston

The Brooklyn-born pianist and composer combines the rhythmic diversity of the African diaspora and the lyrical smarts of New York bebop. After seven decades of playing, Weston can still produce an inimitable ring from his instrument that declares his affection for personal heroes like Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk. He's at the Jazz Standard celebrating his eighty-eighth birthday with his African Rhythms Quintet, which includes the tenor saxophonist **Billy Harper**, with whom Weston recorded a recent program of duets, "The Roots of the Blues." (Jazz Standard, 111 E. 27th St. 212-576-2232. May 22-25.)

OF NOTE

MOBB DEEP

Next year is the twentieth anniversary of the release of "The Infamous," the album that established this duo as kingpins of the East Coast renaissance of hardcore hip-hop. The Queens natives Kejuan Muchita (a.k.a. Havoc) and Albert Johnson (a.k.a. Prodigy) have put a recent public fallout behind them and returned with "The Infamous Mobb Deep." The multi-disk set features a digitally remastered cut of the 1995 masterpiece, previously unreleased material, and brand new tracks that show them at the top of their gritty game, with no shortage of punishing imagery and blood-boiling beats. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl. 800-745-3000. May 24.)

SARA SERPA & ANDRÉ MATOS / EMILIE WEIBEL'S OMOO

Serpa, a singer and keyboardist whose subtle style has drawn considerable attention in the past few years, and Matos, a texturally attuned guitarist, are Portuguese expatriates who share composing duties and keep it spare on their enchanting new recording, "Primavera." The pair, who are married, celebrate its release at the Greenwich House with guest players to flesh out the arrangements, including the pianist Guillermo Klein and the saxophonist Greg Osby. With the Swiss-born vocalist, composer, and solo performer Weibel, who traffics in minimalist, looped, and high-concept fare. She is marking the release of her first album, "oMoO," which takes its inspiration from Herman Melville's 1847 novel of tropical adventure. (46 Barrow St. 212-242-4770. May 22.)



FRONT ROW

Richard Brody discusses rare films by Jerry Lewis, playing at Anthology Film Archives.

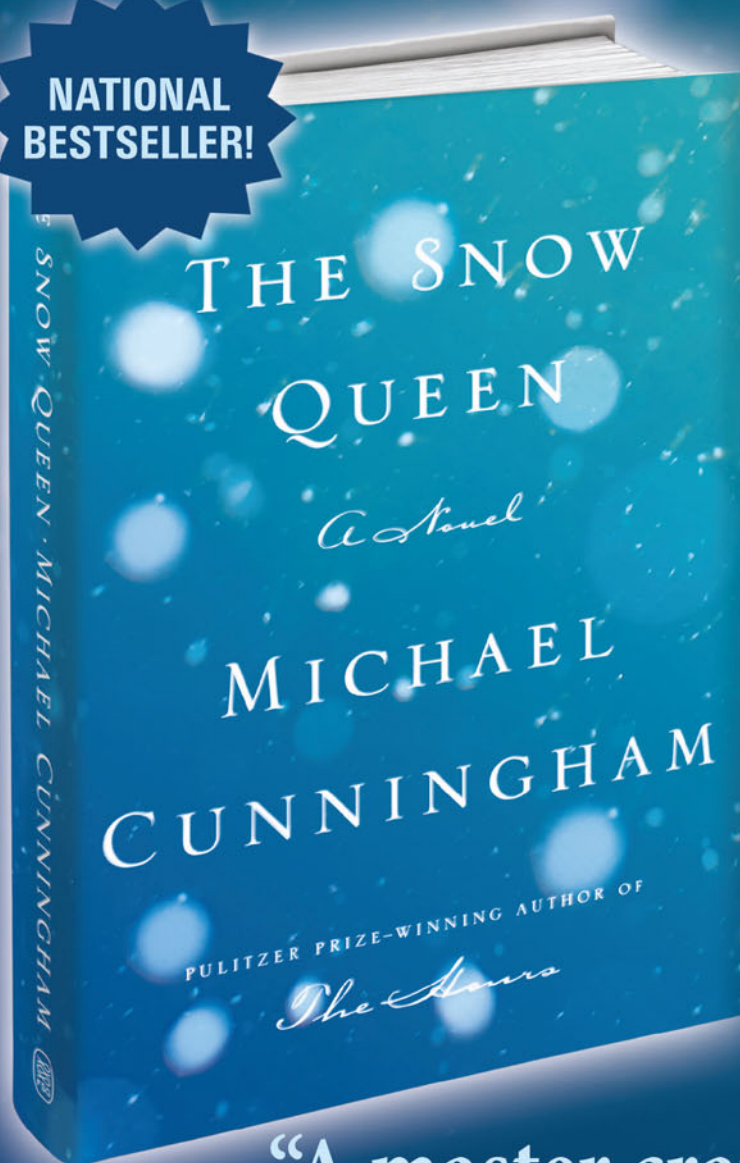


GOINGS ON, ONLINE

See our Web site for Night Life listings, including the "Hot Rod Lincoln" guitarist Bill Kirchen's show at Joe's Pub. Plus, in Above & Beyond, more about the Frankie Manning Centennial.

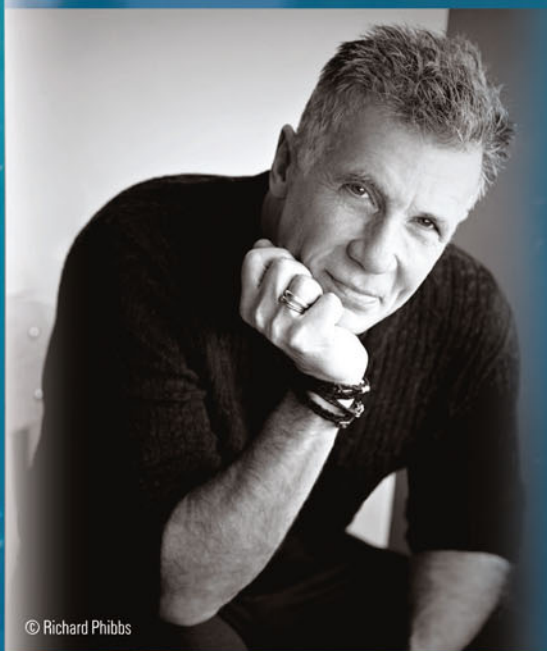
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—Maria Russo, *The New York Times Book Review*



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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT MISSING

Yakubu Kabu, a Nigerian civil servant and the father of one of the more than three hundred girls abducted from a school in the village of Chibok, was struck by the fact that the first real news of his daughter came from the Boko Haram terrorists who had taken her, and not from the government. To many, it was emblematic of the general mishandling of the case. Last week, after a month of conflicting reports from President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the governor of the north-eastern state of Borno, where Chibok is situated, arranged for some of the parents to watch a video released by Boko Haram, to see if they could identify their daughters. It had been broadcast on national television, but both electricity and Internet access are in short supply in Chibok. They had already heard, though, that Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, claimed in the video to have "liberated" the Christian girls by converting them to Islam. The parents rode in buses for the eighty-mile journey to Maiduguri, the state capital, with staff members from the school, some girls who had escaped the kidnappers, and armed vigilantes serving as guards.

Shekau had taken responsibility for the attack in an earlier video, but the second was more chilling. In it, more than a hundred girls, draped in hijabs, huddle in a clearing of scrubland and recite verses from the Koran. One nervously says they are being fed and are unharmed. When Kabu recognized his fifteen-year-old daughter among them, he wept. "I don't know whether she's healthy, or she's not healthy, whether she's well, or she's not well," Kabu, who is a Christian, said. "I cannot tell anything." Seventy-seven of the girls in the video have been identified. The whereabouts of all the girls are unknown.

The government has shown a notable lack of resolve throughout the four years that it has battled Boko Haram, and the fate of the Chibok girls has become a symbol of Nigeria's weaknesses and divisions. Jonathan, a Christian from the pre-

dominately Christian south, has largely treated the insurgency as the responsibility of Muslim leaders in the north, which has lagged far behind in education and economic development. Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, successfully exploited that situation when, more than a decade ago, he began speaking out against government corruption and calling for a fundamentalist Islamic state. Yusuf was killed, in police custody, in 2009; Shekau succeeded him, and the group declared open war. Since then, thousands of people have died in Boko Haram attacks and government reprisals.

The local media gave the group its name, which means "Western education is forbidden," based on Yusuf's often expressed anger that the members of Nigeria's political class attended Western universities. Schools remain a prime target: the group has routinely kidnapped and forcibly recruited some students, and has killed others. In February, fifty-nine died in an attack on a high school, many of them burned to death. But the influence of Western education was not the sole motivation for the Chibok abductions. In the video, Shekau demands a deal: imprisoned Boko Haram militants in exchange for the girls. He has asked for similar trades before, but it seems clear now that he wants to

use Boko Haram's increased notoriety to show that it can force the government to accede to its demands. The government indicated last week that it would not.

A year ago, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the north-east, in order to launch a counter-insurgency offensive. Despite a national-security budget of nearly six billion dollars, the campaign has been mostly ineffectual and mistargeted. People in the region have told journalists and human-rights organizations of soldiers who fail to show up, or flee during attacks, or aid the insurgents. Femi Adefila, who was until recently a special assistant to the Minister of Defense, said in an interview last week that "there are elements in the military



who were arrested,” but that the military does not collaborate with terrorists, and he dismissed press reports that a lack of ammunition and equipment, long tours of duty, low pay, and insufficient food rations had led to defections, citing instead religious and ethnic loyalties. “There will always be saboteurs in every situation,” he added. A few days later, soldiers in Maiduguri revolted and fired shots at a general’s car, after several of their comrades were killed in an ambush near Chibok. The men died, they said, because the insurgents were better armed.

Meanwhile, President Jonathan and his wife, Patience, have been criticized for insensitivity toward the missing girls. The President has complained that the parents have not provided enough information to the authorities, but he has yet to visit Chibok. His wife declared that she would march with #Bring-Back-Our-Girls, a grass-roots protest movement that has won international support from, among others, Michelle Obama and Malala Yousafzai, but one of the protest’s leaders told the A.P. that Patience Jonathan had her detained, along with another organizer, and that she expressed doubt that the kidnappings had occurred. Patience Jonathan’s spokesman denied this, but she summoned officials from Borno to the Presidential villa

and told them that they were to blame for the abductions, because they had allowed the girls into the school to take their exams. Asabe Kwambura, the school’s principal, said in an interview that Borno’s education commissioner asked for more police protection at the school but was informed that, under the state of emergency, the state government no longer controlled security personnel. “The truth is the truth,” Kwambura added. Yakubu Kabu’s daughter is her grandniece.

The government has at last agreed to accept outside assistance in finding the girls. Last week, American surveillance aircraft began making flights over the region, and intelligence teams from the United Kingdom, France, and Israel arrived, along with U.S. military and law-enforcement experts. President Jonathan was due in Paris for a summit with leaders from neighboring African nations to discuss strategies for handling the insurgency. In Chibok, parents felt rage alongside their grief. Kabu described his daughter as a hardworking girl, who loves to cook and to read novels, and wants to be an accountant. “The government of Nigeria is not serious,” he said. “Had it been their children, they would have gone to get these girls.”

—Alexis Okeowo

INK TIMES TALK



Max Frankel, the former executive editor of the *Times*, once said of his old boss’s son, the future publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., “He’ll never make the same mistake three times.” Depending on who’s counting, that may or may not spell good news for Dean Baquet, the paper’s new executive editor, whom Sulzberger appointed last week, making Baquet the first African-American to hold the position. Baquet takes over from Jill Abramson, the first woman ever to hold the position—and the second chief editor whom Sulzberger can now be said to regret installing. In firing Abramson, on Wednesday, less than three years into her tenure, Sulzberger alluded to “an issue with management in the newsroom.” Sulzberger also appointed Howell Raines, in 2001, only to force him to resign less than two years later, amid scandal, in the wake of Jayson Blair’s fabrications.

The news of Abramson’s firing was so unexpected in the newsroom that a few employees at the paper, upon being summoned to an urgent staff-

wide meeting with Sulzberger, worried that someone on the masthead had died. When Abramson was not present at the meeting, the morbid thought even seemed briefly plausible. “We’re not Wall Street,” one veteran employee marvelled later, meaning that the *Times* is not in the habit of escorting newly terminated employees out the door like insider traders—computers confiscated, e-mail accounts frozen—without a proper sendoff. “That’s so not our culture.”

Abramson, it turned out, had been offered the chance to resign and declined, choosing instead to wage a public-relations battle against the paper, whose emblematic “E” she has inked, in Gothic script, on her back. To some, this made her a cautionary tale against tattoos, if nothing else. To others, she was a feminist martyr—pushed out for being “pushy,” a gendered critique. This view, given Internet momentum by Abramson’s daughter, who posted to Instagram a rallying picture of the deposed editor in boxing gloves (“Mom’s badass new hobby. #girls #pushy”) that ended up on page 1 of the *Post*, was more widely held outside the paper than within, where Baquet has long been more popular. (“Dean was probably the first New York *Times* editor ever to hug me,” a staffer said.) But even nonpartisans were horrified by the so-called optics of the fallout, as the week wore on, given the paper’s long-stand-

ing tolerance of difficult male executives. Of the way the firing was handled, one employee said, “The main complaint is: why did this have to be done in such a blunt way?” Another, a prominent reporter, proposed a multiple-choice question: “Tough and abrasive?” (a) Abe Rosenthal (1977–86), (b) Howell Raines (2001–03), (c) Max Frankel (1986–94), (d) Jill Abramson (2011–14), (e) all of the above. “Business is basically good, and the journalism is good, but the culture is bad,” the reporter continued. “But that describes a hundred and fifty years of the paper’s history. It’s always been sociopaths and lunatics running the



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place. Why step to Jill? People are genuinely upset about that.”

The morning after the firing, Danielle Mattoon, the culture editor, sent out word that she planned to “raise the yellow umbrella”—a reference to an old beer canopy obtained years ago from a wurst operation by some music writers and editors. Ordinarily a Friday-evening tradition, meant to signal the pouring of single malt, the umbrella was raised on Thursday evening, and about forty people convened to compare notes.

Stunned staff members continued to huddle and parse the issues—gender, race, likability. Some highlights of the conversation: “The notion that Jill was widely unpopular is exaggerated, but she didn’t make many people love her, either.” “Dean is an operator. Like a duck that looks smooth on the water and is swimming underneath.” “I think the job turns you into a fascist.” “It got so dark so quickly, with her amazing refusal to go away quietly. She’s become a cult hero.” “Jill couldn’t have been replaced by a white male. It’s the clashing of these two historic lives that makes it possible.”

As it happens, “Improving the Culture” was to be the subject of several talks at the paper’s annual “offsite,” a leadership summit for business and editorial executives, which had been scheduled for Thursday and Friday. As a cost-savings measure, the offsite has lately been held onsite, on the fifteenth floor, above the company cafeteria, but the agenda this year called for a brief escape in the form of a Thursday-night dinner, downtown, with the HBO chief executive, Richard Plepler, as guest speaker. Under the circumstances, Sulzberger abruptly cancelled the summit and disinvited Plepler, but then decided to keep the dinner reservation, as a kind of “Welcome, Dean” affair. So, at 6:30 P.M., approximately thirty *Times*-women and -men assembled in the basement of Lafayette, a French restaurant. (“The nonromance starts at the door,” Pete Wells, the paper’s chief food critic, wrote last year, of Lafayette. “One night when a private party had taken over the basement, Lafayette let large, unfunny security men with earpieces stop diners on the sidewalk for questioning.”)

Once everyone had been seated,

Sulzberger took the floor. “We’ve been through an eclipse,” he said, brandishing a glass. He then urged his employees to focus not on the moon but, rather, on the sun, by which he meant Baquet. A toast was raised “to Dean, our fearless leader,” as one attendee recalled, adding, “But not in a fascist way!” Three senior editors—two men and a woman—got up and told stories about Baquet, including his habit of stealing people’s BlackBerrys and using them to send prank messages. The atmosphere, in which some had detected an air of queasy skepticism, gave way to a sense of calm, and even hopefulness. “There was definitely no gloating,” the guest said. “No ‘the witch is dead.’ Nothing like that.”

—Ben McGrath

FOREFATHERS HOT RIGHT NOW



Like Asian cuisines, our Founding Fathers rotate in and out of fashion every few years. Sometimes we’re in a George Washington year, sometimes everyone’s talking about James Madison. Lately, Alexander Hamilton is having a moment. He comes up in Timothy Geithner’s new memoir (President Obama gives Geithner a ten-dollar-bill engraving plate, with the inscription “Hamilton would be proud!”). And Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of “In the Heights,” is workshopping a new hip-hop musical, inspired by the life of the first Secretary of the Treasury, called “Hamilton.”

A few years ago, as Tea Party hysteria raged, theatregoers lined up to see “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson,” the musical inspired by the populist seventh President. Hamilton is a less exuberant figure—he’s the money guy, who designed the federal government and envisioned an America buoyed by stock exchanges and banks. Could his ascendancy suggest that the Tea Party phase of conservative politics is giving way to what some in the blogosphere have been calling “the revenge of the G.O.P. establishment”?

One evening last week, an amateur

historian decided to stop by Cipriani Forty-second Street (a repurposed bank), where the conservative think tank the Manhattan Institute was holding its annual Alexander Hamilton Award Dinner, honoring Jeb Bush and Paul Ryan. If Hamilton represents the urban, Wall Street-friendly brand of conservatism, Cipriani was Hamilton country. “He was my favorite Founding Father!” the former mayoral candidate Joe Lhota exclaimed. “He founded the New York *Post*! Where would we be without the New York *Post*?” He talked for a while about Hamilton’s contributions to New York City’s water system, but then he had to dash off to the bar: “Getting vodka.”

Rob Astorino, the Westchester County executive running for governor against Andrew Cuomo, said that for him Hamilton represented the idea that “money’s not unlimited.” He railed against government spending in New York State—“We have the highest taxes in America! The most debt, the biggest ballooning budget!”—and added that “Alexander Hamilton would be aghast.” But, he admitted, “I don’t know if I’ll end up having a gun duel with Andrew Cuomo,” as Hamilton did with Aaron Burr.

The former police commissioner Ray Kelly is a fan. “I have his medal!” he boasted. “I have the Alexander Hamilton Medal given by the Secretary of the Treasury.” The supermarket magnate John Catsimatidis, posing for pictures with fans, was diplomatically noncommittal. He said, “Well, he’s among my favorite Founding Fathers,” before breaking off to exchange backslaps with one of the evening’s honorees, Jeb Bush.

Finally, the crowd made its way to the tables, for dinner and de Blasio-bashing by a range of figures in the old and new conservative establishment. Rudolph Giuliani made jokes: “I never got applauded like that before de Blasio became the mayor!” And Paul Ryan drew on Hamilton’s humble upbringing—he was born in the West Indies, and was orphaned as a child (“You know, when you think about it, isn’t that story basically a version of the American ideal?”)—to describe how “poor communities” can lift each other up by “embracing the attributes of friendship, accountability, and love.”

But the crowd really went wild for Jeb Bush, who spoke about the importance

of economic growth, warned about the bad effects of the “social promotion” of schoolchildren with poor reading skills, and posed questions such as “Wouldn’t it be nice to have a space program again?”

The speech caused a hedge-fund investor named Ram Lee to swoon. “Almost Reaganesque!” he exclaimed, when it was over. “With Bill Clinton’s wonkiness.” He said he hadn’t been optimistic about the odds of Bush’s getting the Republican nomination in a post-Tea Party world. “I just figured a guy with the name Bush has no chance. But if he’s that good? Maybe he does.”

Could Jeb Bush be the conservative candidate for our Hamiltonian era? The antitax lobbyist Grover Norquist didn’t think so. At the bar after dinner, he circled back to Hamilton’s modest roots. “Jeb Bush is the guy who comes from almost a European, monarchist, aristocratic system of government,” he said. “I mean, his dad was President, his brother was President—‘Why don’t I get to be President?’ It’s sort of the way they pick kings in Sweden.” He went on, “Paul Ryan is somebody who comes up from the grass roots, from nowhere. So that makes Paul Ryan more like Hamilton.” And Bush? “I guess he’d be one of John Adams’s grandchildren.”

Norquist said he’s a Hamilton admirer (despite the Founding Father’s “protectionist” tendencies), but, he noted, the affection goes only so far. “We are still going to move Ronald Reagan onto the ten-dollar bill and bump Hamilton up to the fifty,” he said, referring to his work with the Ronald Reagan Legacy Project. Hamilton is great, he said. “But we need to put Reagan on a bill. And you can’t move Jefferson, Lincoln, or Washington.”

—Lizzie Widdicombe

ACCESSORIES DEPT. THE OLD SOFT SHOE



Last Thursday, Bali Barret, the “women’s universe” artistic director for Hermès, sat beneath stained-glass windows at the Gallim Dance company, at the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew,

in Brooklyn. She had arrived from Paris the day before. Beside her was Gallim’s choreographer, Andrea Miller, whose work usually focusses on “social and political issues: pack mentality, crowd behavior.” (She recently won a Guggenheim.) Around them, dancers warmed up, surrounded by dozens of Hermès handbags and shoes; muscular men in suits at the doors resembled ushers. “This is a church, so we’re praying while dancing,” Barret said.

The dancers were rehearsing for All About Women, a fashion show, party, and feat of Surréalisme, a year in the making, that Barret created for Hermès lovers from around the world. The event—to be held this Tuesday in a huge two-story space in the former J. P. Morgan building on Wall Street—will feature, among other amazements, a swimwear room, with a diving board; an equestrian room, with hay bales; pompom boys; a fortune-teller who will read silk scarves; sketch artists; an all-white perfume room, with nymphs, paper flowers, white food, and clear drinks (“It’s about eating flowers and everything white. It’s about eating perfume,” Barret said); and live “animations”—dances—on themes of swimwear, shoes, and handbags. “The party is very much like a theatre—grand style, just for fun,” Barret said.

Barret wore a blue chambray jumpsuit—“It’s a worker, I’m working, being in the dust all day”—black Hermès loafers, and a shibori-dyed indigo Hermès scarf. Before the rehearsal, she explained her concepts for the four shoe dances: the Lampshade, in which a woman in heels dances under a hanging lampshade (“A bit of humor. It’s very Duchamp”); the Shoe Addict (“The girl who wants shoes and shoes and shoes and more shoes—it’s a reality”); the Equestrian (“She has no horse. She has a pommel horse. Her phantasm is doing this on a horse”); and the Staircase (“A story about rhythm. Everything is very speed—and walking up and down and up and down”).

The Equestrian was first. A tall dancer in a black leotard and riding boots danced on and around a pommel horse, waving a red crop. She danced over to a pair of black Brides de Gala boots, with the famous Hermès print, and put them on. The dancer did footwork that resembled drill exercises, a serious look in her eyes.

Barret smiled. “She looks crazy. She

looks like she has a little problem,” she said approvingly.

The Lampshade was jazzy. A dancer in crocodile pumps stood under a hanging paper shade the size of a kick drum, her head obscured, and danced, a tappy, Charlestony thing. “She’s alive and happy!” Barret said. The dancer discovered more shoes—Hermès-red suède peep toes—and went slinking over to them. Miller said, “I was telling her to point with the shoes: Where would you like to go? How would you like to dance with these shoes?”

Then, gravity: the Shoe Addict. In front of the stage, a dancer sprawled upside down in a chair, surrounded by orange Hermès boxes and a semicircle of footwear. She kicked her heels, looking around, wild-eyed. “So she’s the addict,” Barret said. “She’s really sick.”

The dancer stood and danced toward some fuzzy black shoes. “Leather and mink, so soft,” Barret said. The dancer eyed blue velvet pumps and danced, holding a box. She picked up a second box and stroked it. A third, a fourth. She piled a fifth on top, staggering. Barret laughed. The dancer discovered a long box on the floor, writhed around, and opened it, revealing extra-tall boots. She put one on, and made a face like bliss.

“It’s like orgasm, the thigh boot, no?” Barret said.

It was time for the bag rehearsal. “For most people, Hermès bags are Kelly and Birkin,” Barret said. “The reality is that there are many other bags.” Eight women in Hermès scarves, white jumpsuits, and black velvet-and-leather pumps took the stage, holding green and blue leather bags. They looked like retro stewardesses, or fashionable astronauts.

The women danced, kicking their legs, jumping, waving the bags in the air. A woman with bobbed hair and red lipstick danced gaily with a clutch. “It’s very Nouvelle Vague,” Barret said. Their bags: Constance, “a very famous seventies bag”; the Berline, “new, inspired by a car seat”; the Halezan, “a new bag no one’s ever seen,” with clever adjustable straps.

Miller leaned toward Barret. “What we have in mind is that they have a secret—and it’s in her purse,” she said. “Like a perfect little cupcake or something.” The dancers blew kisses at the audience.

—Sarah Larson

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

REAL ESTATE GOES GLOBAL

The most expensive housing market in North America is not where you'd think. It's not New York City or Orange County, California, but Vancouver, British Columbia. Now, Vancouver is a beautiful city—a thriving deep-water port, a popular site for TV and movie shoots. By all accounts, it is a wonderful place to live. But nothing about its economy explains why—in a city where the median income is only around seventy grand—single-family houses now sell for close to a million dollars apiece and ordinary condos go for five or six hundred thousand dollars. “If you look at per-capita incomes, we look like Reno or Nashville,” Andy Yan, an urban planner at the Vancouver-based firm Bing Thom Architects, told me. “But our housing prices easily compete with San Francisco’s.”

When price-to-income or price-to-rent ratios get out of whack, it's often a sign of a housing bubble. But the story in Vancouver is more interesting. Almost by chance, the city has found itself at the heart of one of the biggest trends of the past two decades—the rise of a truly global market in real estate.

We're all familiar with the stories of Russian oligarchs buying up mansions in London, but this is a much broader phenomenon. A torrent of capital from wealthy people in emerging markets—from China, above all, but also from Latin America, Russia, and the Middle East—has flowed into the real-estate markets of big cities in other countries, driving up prices and causing a luxury-construction boom. A recent report by Sotheby's International Realty Canada examined more than twelve hundred luxury-home sales in Vancouver in the first half of 2013 and found that foreign buyers accounted for nearly half of sales. In Miami, a huge influx of money from Latin America has enabled the city's housing market to recover from the bursting of the housing bubble, and has set off a condo-construction spree. Australia has become a prime market for Chinese investors, who Credit Suisse estimates will buy forty-four billion dollars' worth of real estate there in the next seven years.

What's so special about the places that attract all this foreign money? The economists Joseph Gyourko, Christopher Mayer, and Todd Sinai have developed a theory about what they call “superstar cities.” Looking at data from 1950 to 2000, they found a small number of cities where housing prices rose steeply, and concluded that high earners tended to cluster together over time, with the result that rich cities tend to get richer.

Vancouver isn't an obvious superstar. It's not home to a major

industry—as New York and London are to finance, or San Francisco to tech—and it doesn't have the cultural cachet of Paris or Milan. Instead, Vancouver's appeal consists of comfort and security, making it what Andy Yan calls a “hedge city.” “What hedge cities offer is social and political stability, and, in the case of Vancouver, it also offers long-term protection against climate change,” he said. “There are now rich people around the world who are looking for places where they can park some of their cash and feel safe about it.” A recent paper by two Oxford economists bears this out, showing a tight correlation between London house prices and turmoil in southern and Eastern Europe. The real-estate boom in Miami has been magnified by political unrest in Venezuela. And Vancouver, which has a large Chinese population, easy access to the Pacific Rim, and nice weather, has become a magnet for Chinese investors looking for insurance against uncertainty. A Conference Board of Canada report found that Vancouver's real-estate market is tightly connected to what happens in the Chinese economy.

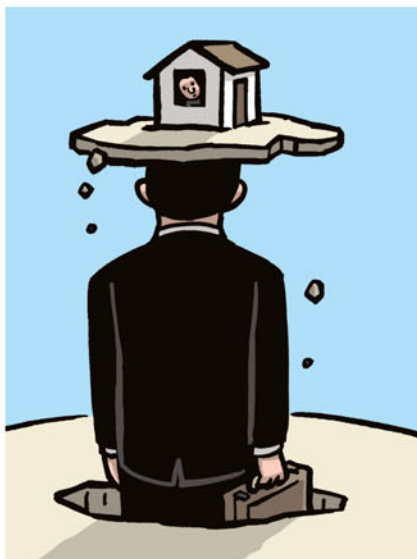
The globalization of real estate upends some of our basic assumptions about housing prices. We expect them to reflect local fundamentals—above all, how much people earn. In a truly global market, that may not be the case. If there are enough rich people in China who want property in Vancouver, prices can float out of reach of the people who actually live and work there. So just because prices look out of whack doesn't necessarily mean there's a bubble. Instead, wealthy foreigners are rationally overpaying, in order to protect themselves against risk at home. And the possibility of losing a little money if prices subside won't deter them. Yan says, “If the choice is between losing ten to twenty per cent in Vancouver versus potentially losing a hundred

per cent in Beijing or Tehran, then people are still going to be buying in Vancouver.”

The challenge for Vancouver and cities like it is that foreign investment isn't an unalloyed good. It's great for existing homeowners, who see the value of their homes rise, and for the city's tax revenues. But it also makes owning a home impossible for much of the city's population. And the tendency of foreign buyers not to inhabit investment properties raises the spectre of what Yan has called “zombie neighborhoods.” A recent study he did found that a quarter of the condos in a luxury neighborhood called Coal Harbour were vacant on census day.

One option would be to severely restrict foreign ownership, but that's politically difficult, and not great for a city's economy. It might make more sense if the Vancouvers of the world simply charged foreign buyers a premium for the privilege of owning there. “We're one of the places where people seem to want to park their cash, and there aren't that many of those places,” Yan says. “So let's raise the parking fees.” As for the rest of us, we'd better get used to being tenants.

—James Surowiecki



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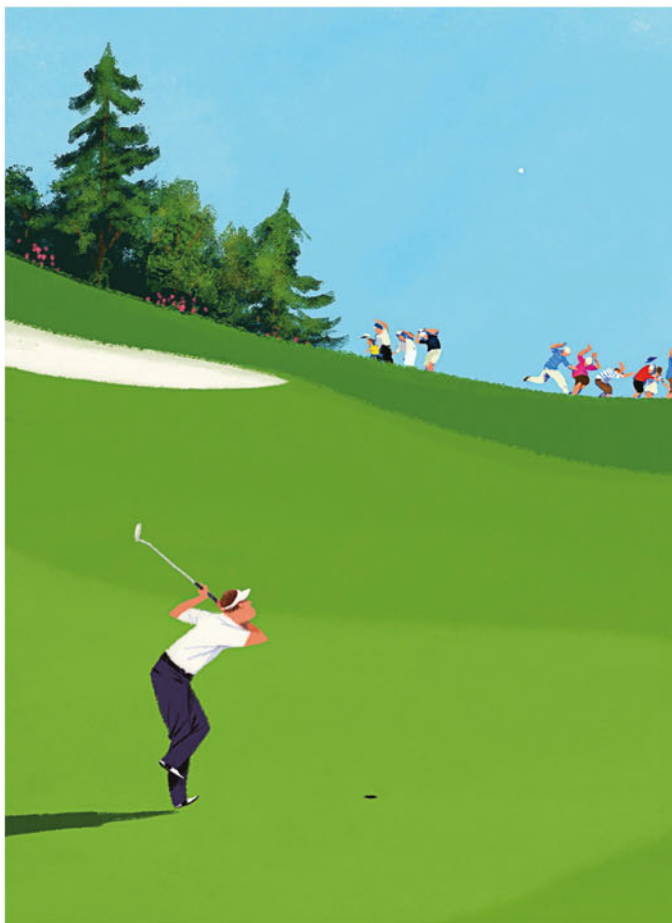
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THE YIPS

What's behind the condition that every golfer dreads?

BY DAVID OWEN



Six or seven years ago, I played a round of golf in a foursome that included Hank Haney, who at the time was Tiger Woods's coach. Haney's golf swing was exceedingly strange. On the first tee, after he lined up his shot, he drew his driver back high in the air while turning to look at the clubhead, took a baseball-like practice swing well above the ball—then, immediately, took the club all the way back again and swung. The last part looked pretty normal, but if I hadn't known who Haney was I wouldn't have guessed that his occupation was teaching golf.

Haney is tall and trim. He was an all-conference player at the University of

Tulsa, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, but a few years after graduation he began having serious difficulty controlling his tee shots, which travelled unpredictable distances and were sometimes more than a hundred yards off-line. The problem became so severe, he told me, that between 1985 and 2002 he played fewer than ten rounds, even as he was building a national reputation as an instructor. "One morning, I went out alone with a carry bag and one of those eighteen-packs of cheap balls," he wrote later. "I lost every one of them by the time I made the turn." He studied videotapes of his swing, frame by frame, in the hope of discovering some

fundamental flaw, and when no one was watching he hit hundreds of range balls, trying to straighten himself out. But the harder he worked the worse his problem became.

Haney was suffering from a much dreaded golf malady, which consists of an involuntary disruptive movement of the hands, wrists, or forearms. In the great majority of cases, it affects putting or chipping, both of which involve relatively small, relatively slow strokes, but, as in Haney's case, it can infect full swings, too. Versions of it have been known over the years by many names, among them "freezing," "the waggles," "the staggers," "the jerks," "whiskey fingers," and "the yips." That last term is the one that's used almost universally today. It was coined around the middle of the last century by the Scottish golfer Tommy Armour, a sufferer, who defined it as "a brain spasm that impairs the short game." Bill Mehlhorn—a contemporary of Armour's and a leading tour player in the nineteen-twenties—once had a short putt in a tournament in Florida, but he jabbed the ball so far past the hole that a competitor standing in the fringe on the far side of the green had to jump out of the way. Harry Vardon, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, and Tom Watson all developed the yips late in their careers. Johnny Miller, who was a tour superstar in the mid-nineteen-seventies and early eighties, developed such severe yips that watching him play was painful; a rebroadcast of a 1997 match between him and Jack Nicklaus included relatively few of his (many) putts, presumably because the producers had mercifully edited them out.

Golfers aren't the only yippers. Cricket bowlers suffer a similar disability, which they also call the yips. In darts, the problem is "dartitis"; in snooker, "cueitis"; in archery, "target panic"; in gun shooting, "flinching"; in baseball pitching, "the creature," "the monster," and "Steve Blass disease" (after the Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher, who, in 1973, developed what turned out to be a career-ending inability to find the strike zone). In 1999, Chuck Knoblauch, the Yankees' second baseman, began flubbing routine plays to first base, and in one game threw a ball so far off target that it hit the mother of the ESPN sportscaster Keith Olbermann, in the stands.

The yips are often conflated with choking, but research suggests neurological causes.

Knoblauch finished his career in left field, and what until that time had usually been called Steve Sax syndrome—after the Dodgers' second baseman, who had the same problem for several years in the nineteen-eighties—became widely known as Knoblauch disease.

Even bad cases of the yips don't always end sports careers—at least, not immediately. Miller won the 1976 British Open, at Royal Birkdale, even though he was afraid that, if he looked at his ball or at the head of his putter while making a stroke, he wouldn't be able to putt at all, and so he placed a dab of red fingernail polish on the grip, below the position of his right thumb, and looked at that instead. Later, he sometimes putted with his eyes closed, or while looking at the hole instead of the ball. The German tour pro Bernhard Langer was able to control his yips by using his right hand to brace the shaft of his putter against his left forearm—and, when the problem returned, by switching to putters with longer shafts and anchoring them against his chest.

Hank Haney arrived at the peculiar swing I saw after deciding he needed to develop a technique that, while it might not be mechanically optimal, made him physically less able to hit the ball in the wrong direction. To reduce the mobility of his hands and wrists, he adopted an unconventional grip, holding the club mostly in his palms, rather than in his fingers. He had noticed that, on the few occasions when he couldn't avoid demonstrating a shot with his driver, he was able to do so successfully if he looked at his audience, not the ball, while he swung—a feat that impressed his students but for him was an act of desperation. “That was something I discovered by trial and error,” he told me. “Focussing my eyes and my attention on something different—anything to not anticipate the hit, anything to not anticipate the moment of contact with the ball.” In his new swing, he glanced at the ball only briefly, at the very beginning of his routine; during the actual swing, he kept his eyes on the brim of his cap.

Athletes and sports fans have generally assumed that yipping and its variants are forms of performance anxiety, or choking. It's true that nervous athletes often play poorly, and that yipping is most evident when the stakes are high,

and that even serious sufferers are sometimes able to perform in practice or while playing alone. Yet many yippers are veterans of competition at the highest levels, who never showed a tendency to buckle under stress; many others are casual players who have trouble even when the pressure is low. Yipping also is usually extremely task-specific. Haney never stopped being a good putter. Knoblauch didn't have a problem throwing from the outfield. Archers who can no longer hit a bull's-eye often have no trouble shooting at bare bales of straw. If the yips and other sports-related movement problems are solely a matter of anxiety, why do they affect only certain motions? And how can a change of target, technique, or equipment sometimes make them go away?

Debbie Crews is the sports-psychology consultant for the women's golf team at Arizona State University and the chair of the World Scientific Congress of Golf. Her laboratory, in Tempe, Arizona, is carpeted with artificial turf and has two golf holes cut in the floor. I met her there, and we sat at a card table near the door. When, at one point, I began to move my chair to a different position, she stopped me, to prevent the chair's feet from making dents in her lab's putting surface. Also in the room were a computer, a tangle of cables, a stationary bicycle, a wooden balance board, a full-length mirror, a large black plastic net for hitting range balls into, and two golf bags filled with clubs and training gadgets, including a broom. Crews has long white-blond hair and the lean build of a runner. She co-founded the women's golf team at the University of Wisconsin when she was an undergraduate there, in the early nineteen-seventies, and later she earned a master's in exercise physiology and a Ph.D. in psychophysiology.

In 1996, producers from the television news program “Dateline NBC” asked her to conduct a small study for a program they were planning, on choking in golf. The subject was of topical interest, because Greg Norman had collapsed catastrophically in the final round of that year's Masters—an implosion so complete that almost all subsequent golf implosions have been measured against it. In Crews's study, ten subjects were

hooked up to heart monitors and electroencephalographs, and then asked to make multiple attempts at a five-foot putt under increasing amounts of psychological stress, much of which was created by telling them that their performance would be shown on national television. “We doubled their heart rates in that study,” Crews told me. “We had players whose legs shook for forty putts straight. But half of them put the ball in the hole, and half of them just fell apart.” Her conclusion was that the difference between the chokers and the non-chokers was not the level of anxiety they felt, as measured by their heart rate, but how successful they were at remaining focussed on the task, as measured by the patterns of electrical activity in their brain.

The study was narrow, and it wasn't utterly serious, since it was commissioned by a television network, but it attracted the attention of Aynsley M. Smith, a sports psychologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, who was interested in the yips and how they differed, or didn't differ, from choking. She and Crews, along with several other researchers, eventually conducted a study, funded by Mayo, in which they used a variety of devices to measure movements in the hands and wrists of affected and unaffected golfers, along with various vital signs. In a paper, Smith proposed a definition of the yips as a “continuum,” with choking at one end and a category of neurological disorders called focal dystonias at the other. The defining symptoms of focal dystonias are involuntary movements that affect specific actions made by specific parts of the body. Smith referred to the dystonia end of her continuum as Type I and the choking end as Type II. Among the participating researchers in the study was Charles H. Adler, who is a professor of neurology at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale. Adler's specialty is disorders that involve abnormal body movements, including Parkinson's disease. He and Crews led two additional yips studies, both in Arizona, and they used a variety of measuring instruments, among them an electromyograph, an electrocardiograph, an electroencephalograph, and a wireless motion-capture device called a CyberGlove II. Both studies showed that yipping was

characterized by the “co-contraction” of groups of arm muscles that don’t ordinarily operate at the same time: one group that extends the wrist and one that flexes it. In the yips, those muscles make what Aynsley Smith called a “double pull,” resulting in a jerk.

Crews told me that she and Adler don’t use the word “choking” anymore. “It isn’t correct,” she said. “Choking and yips are not the same thing.” She said that anxiety can exacerbate the yips—just as it exacerbates the tremors in Parkinson’s disease—but it’s not the cause, since the yips are usually present whether the yipper is nervous or not, and even when the yipper can’t feel them. “In one of the studies we did,” she said, “we had people try seventy-five putts—from three feet, six feet, and eight feet—and some of them would do that and then walk away and say, ‘I’m sorry I didn’t yip for you today.’ And we had just watched their hand turn on every putt, and we could see it on the EMG. They had no idea, because they don’t feel it until it gets big. But it was still there.”

Crews and Adler believe that most cases of the yips probably have a psychological basis of some kind, but that in some percentage the ultimate cause will turn out to be neurological. They are now planning a new Mayo study, in collaboration with a German sports psychologist named Christian Marquardt. Among other things, the new study will

collect “outcome data” about the behavior of the putter and the ball, using a device called the SAM PuttLab, which Marquardt’s company developed and sells, as a teaching aid, to golf instructors and tour pros. A PuttLab is about the size of a heart defibrillator. It connects to a computer, which uses proprietary software to analyze signals produced by ultrasound transmitters attached to the putter shaft. The software generates minutely precise graphs and numerical reports on as many as twenty-eight putting parameters, including the angle and the rotation of the clubface throughout the stroke, and the exact point on the clubface where the putter makes contact with the ball.

One of Adler’s hopes for the new study is that it will help to define the division between psychological and neurological causes. “The biggest problem is that there’s no diagnostic test,” he told me. “It’s all pattern recognition. So the hypothesis, with this new study, is that we’ll see a specific pattern for a specific golfer. We’re also going to be testing a couple of different interventions, to see if, with intervention, those patterns change.”

Golfers are careless with the word “yips,” and use it in annoyance for all kinds of lousy putts. But anyone who plays regularly knows players who are clearly tormented by something dark

and deep. It’s telling that when Tommy Armour named the yips he located the spasm not in his hands but in his brain, and that when Johnny Miller described his problem to Guy Yocom, of *Golf Digest*, he said, “I have a wire corroded in my head.” One of the world’s leading experts on corroded head wires is Stanley Fahn, who is a longtime professor of neurology at Columbia University, the scientific director of the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation, and the founder of Columbia’s Dystonia Clinical Research Center. He’s also the co-author of a standard textbook on movement disorders. I visited him in his office, at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, not long ago, and he told me that he remembered watching Chuck Knoblauch on TV. “All of a sudden, his throwing to first base went off with an error,” he said. “He had developed a focal dystonia. I tried to tell him and the Yankees, but they didn’t understand.” Fahn said that Sam Snead and other famously yippy golfers had the same problem. “It’s beyond their control,” he said. “It’s not psychogenic; it’s an organic disease of the brain. But we still don’t understand why, because at autopsies we don’t see anything. It’s some kind of a physiological-biochemical problem that we don’t understand.”

The first focal dystonia to be identified, though not by that term, was probably the condition known today as mogigraphia, or writer’s cramp. (In the nineteenth century, it was also often called scrivener’s palsy—or steel-pen palsy, because the change from quill pens was thought to have caused it or made it worse.) In the late eighteenth-hundreds, William Gowers, an English physician and one of the founders of modern neurology, wrote about it extensively. Steven Frucht, who is a professor of neurology and the director of the movement-disorders division at Mount Sinai Hospital, told me that Gowers’s observations still hold up, more than a century later. “He predicted and described everything we now take for granted,” Frucht said. “He even went so far as to posit that there was a central etiology for writer’s cramp—that it was coming from the brain, from an aberration in the connection of the centers responsible for organizing the motor program for writing.”



“Oh, she just wants attention or needs help.”

Gowers related writer's cramp to other activity-related movement disorders, including similar ones suffered by telegraph operators, seamstresses, knitters, masons, sailors, painters, enamellers, cigarette makers, and musicians. "He said they're all connected," Frucht continued. "They're not separate disorders, and they're all central, and they're real."

Frucht's office is in Mount Sinai's Robert and John M. Bendheim Parkinson and Movement Disorders Center, at Ninety-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue. Standing against a wall near his desk is a large electronic keyboard, which affected pianists play during examinations. (Most other patients—including a surprising number of bagpipers—are able to bring their own instruments.) Only about five per cent of Frucht's patients are musicians, but they have become a subspecialty. He himself was a fellow in violin at Tanglewood, and he still plays both the violin and the piano. He became interested in impaired musicians after reading an article about them in the *Times*, and during his second year of medical school, at Harvard, he spent one day a week shadowing a neurologist in Boston who had been mentioned in the article. One of Frucht's first dystonia patients was Glen Estrin, a member of Frank Sinatra's band. Estrin's instrument was the French horn, and his particular disability is known as embouchure dystonia, which involves various combinations of the lips, the tongue, and the jaw, and has an insidious tendency to spread to other oral activities, including speaking and eating. In 1999, the two of them founded an organization called Musicians with Dystonia.

Gowers sometimes referred to writer's cramp as "writer's neurosis." At that time, "neurosis" was merely a standard term for disorders whose origin was neurological rather than, say, muscular. But then Freud and Jung used "neurosis" in a different way, and, by doing so, Frucht told me, they probably helped to initiate a "lost half century" in the medical understanding of many movement disorders. Beginning with the rise of psychoanalysis and continuing into the nineteen-seventies, he said, dystonias, including writer's cramp, were most often treated as forms of mental illness. In

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I. Loyola, S. Brandt and C. Trenary in *Gaîté Parisienne*. Photo by Fabrizio Ferri. *La Bayadère*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor. No refunds or exchanges. Casts, prices and programs are subject to change.

1973, I. S. Cooper, who was the director of the department of neurologic surgery at St. Barnabas Hospital, in the Bronx, published a heartbreaking account of several severely dystonic patients of his. All of them had a condition that had caused their entire bodies, beginning in childhood, to become progressively twisted, and racked by painful, uncontrollable spasms. The illness they suffered from was first written about in 1911, by the pioneering German neurologist Hermann Oppenheim, who coined the word “dystonia” to describe the condition. Oppenheim correctly identified the disease as neurological—the ultimate cause is now known to be a single defective gene—but his findings were forgotten or ignored under the influence of Freudian thinking about the subconscious, and Cooper’s patients had all been treated for years as psychiatric cases. The parents of one young girl were told that her contortions were a consequence of “conversion hysteria,” traceable to a boy in her neighborhood who had once enjoyed pulling down girls’ pants, or to a bath she had taken with her brother, or, possibly, to her parents’ prudish thinking about sex. She spent several months in a psychiatric hospital (where her parents were allowed to visit her for an hour a week), and for a month she was confined in a tiny room and told that all she had to do to leave was to walk out. Her parents eventually took her to Cooper, who achieved significant relief of her symptoms with an experimental operation in which he used a cryogenic probe to create lesions deep in her brain.

In terms of the modern understanding of musician’s cramp, the index patient is probably the concert pianist Leon Fleisher, who began losing control of the fourth and fifth fingers of his right hand in 1964, when he was in his mid-thirties. “The gods know where to hit you, when they want to hit you,” he said in a documentary about his ordeal, “Two Hands,” which was nominated for an Oscar in 2007. He switched to playing pieces for the left hand only, and became a conductor and a teacher. He received all the now predictable

misdiagnoses and tried every conceivable remedy, including, in 1981, surgery for carpal-tunnel syndrome—which at first seemed like a breakthrough but turned out to be only somewhat helpful. His condition wasn’t identified as dystonia until years later. In the early nineteen-nineties, Fleisher’s doctors began using tiny amounts of an experimental drug, botulinum toxin—now better known by one of its trade names, Botox—to slightly weaken the muscles that controlled the affected fingers. After extensive physical therapy (which he needed because years of cramping had caused muscular scarring and soft-tissue fibrosis), Fleisher was able to resume playing with both hands.

Botulinum injections are not a cure, since they have no effect on the underlying pathology, whatever it is. And they’re more difficult to use in cases where the affected muscles are small and hard to isolate, as in the mouths of French-horn players. They aren’t necessarily an ideal solution for golfers, either, since weakening the muscles used in putting could make other shots harder to perform.

Early in 2003, Hank Haney attended a teaching conference in Munich. There he met Christian Marquardt, the sports psychologist who is working with Adler and Crews on the upcoming Mayo study, and Marius Filmalter, a golf professional based in Germany. Marquardt and Filmalter had been studying the yips for several years, and not long after the conference Filmalter moved to Texas and joined the staff of Haney’s golf school. In the years since then, Marquardt, Filmalter, and Haney, in collaboration with various colleagues, have studied the putting strokes of thousands of golfers, at all levels, in both the United States and Germany, and have drawn a number of conclusions about yipping: with a vanishingly small number of exceptions, even golfers with severe yips can make unaffected strokes if no ball is present; yipping often runs in families, suggesting a possible genetic component; the twitches or spasms that characterize the yips occur either at the exact mo-

ment of impact or a fraction of a second before it; and somewhere between a quarter and half of golfers are affected. Haney and Filmalter now divide the yips into two types: one involving direction, in which the clubhead twists or shakes, and one involving acceleration, in which the clubhead jerks forward with excessive force. They have also found that full-swing yips are suffered mainly by players whose natural shot starts out to the right and curves to the left, if they’re right-handed, or vice versa, if they’re left-handed—a ball flight that is known as a “draw” or a “hook,” and which is far more common among good players than among poor ones. (It’s the opposite of a “slice.”)

Several years ago, Marquardt began doing something counterintuitive: looking for the yips in people who had never played golf. “In our last study, we took twenty volunteers who didn’t even know how to grip a putter,” he told me recently. “We put them on a putting green, and told them, O.K., this is a hole, this is a putter—now hold the putter with both hands and hit the ball so it goes in the hole.” Marquardt analyzed their strokes with a PuttLab machine. “Very surprisingly, when we looked at the data, we saw that twenty per cent of them had severe yips,” he said. That’s smaller than the percentage among golfers, but it’s not a lot smaller. The obvious question for Marquardt and his colleagues was whether the PuttLab had merely detected something like the mechanical incompetence of novices. But when he turned his subjects around—the right-handed ones putting like left-handers, and vice versa—their yips disappeared.

Among experienced golfers, too, the yips usually affect just the dominant hand, and some players with putting yips are able to control them by switching. Steven Frucht told me that the focal dystonias of musicians tend to be one-sided as well, but that the favored side is different with different instruments. “Among the keyboard players,” he said, “it’s three-quarters involving the right hand, and among the string players it’s three-quarters to four-fifths involving the left hand, and among guitar players it’s mostly the right hand.” In each case, he said, the hand most likely to be



affected is the one with the more complex motor task.

No one knows why the percentage of affected golfers is so high. It may be that golf, by its nature, creates an unusual degree of dissension between the hands and the brain, and that putting poses an especially exasperating challenge, whether psychologically or neurologically. A feature that golf shares with other sports in which yip-like problems are well known—archery, darts, rifle shooting, snooker, basketball free-throwing—is that every action begins from a dead stop, with ample opportunity between actions for counterproductive cerebration. Marquardt told me that in tennis yipping is possible only with serves and with shots like the return of a high lob, because, unlike other shots, both leave lots of time for thinking. He added, “While you are in the game, you will normally not have a chance to develop the yips, because you just need to react.”

During my visit to Debbie Crews’s putting lab, I mentioned that I had been following an online chat board for snooker players, and had read about a cueitis case in which the sufferer had been helped by a friend who noticed that his eyes, as he prepared to shoot, were moving back and forth between the tip of his cue and the cue ball. The friend told him to fix his eyes on the target ball for the whole stroke, and when he did that his cueitis disappeared. Crews said, “The first thing I do with yips people is have them close their eyes and putt or chip and see if it goes away.” Thinking about that snooker player, and about Johnny Miller’s red dot and Hank Haney’s hat brim, made me wonder about blind golfers—who are able to play because a caddie-like assistant lines up every shot. Could vision be a complicating factor in the yips? One theory about some dystonias is that they involve, at least in part, a kind of sensory breakdown in the brain. I spoke with Ron Plath, who was inducted into the U.S. Blind Golf Association’s Hall of Fame in 2012, and asked him whether he had ever known of a blind golfer with the yips. He said that he hadn’t and, later, called me back to say that he’d asked several other blind golfers, in this country and in Europe, and nobody he’d talked to could think of anyone.

Of course, he hadn’t studied the question scientifically, and, besides, people who can’t see may not be the best people to ask about what anyone else does on a golf course. But when I mentioned my conversation to Crews she said she had once tested a blind woman who was an extraordinarily good putter. “She took up golf after she became blind,” Crews said. “She came to my lab and putted a couple of three-footers and a couple of five-footers, and then she jumped back to twelve feet—and putted unbelievably well. If a caddie lines her up right, she makes amazing putts.” In tournaments, Crews said, she took an average of just 1.52 putts per green, a record that’s better than that of any player on the P.G.A. Tour. Crews hooked her up to an EEG, and while she was putting, Crews said, her brain was “quiet and balanced,” except in the visual cortex, which was full of activity. “She told me that, when she putts, she sees a line down there,” Crews continued. “The line is white and it’s about twelve inches long, and the ball

is on it. She makes that line with her brain, and then she just moves her putter back and forth on it.”

The tour player Mark O’Meara has worked with Hank Haney for many years. On several occasions, O’Meara told Haney that he believed he was developing the yips. Haney was skeptical, because O’Meara had always been a good putter, but O’Meara insisted that he could feel what he described as a “hit” in his stroke, and he said it was getting worse. When Haney met Marquardt and Filmalter in Munich in 2003, he described O’Meara’s problem to them, and they gave him something to try. Back at home, Haney told O’Meara to grip his putter normally with his left hand, but to flatten his right hand and place just the tips of the fingers, lightly, on top of the handle, immediately below the left hand, so that all four fingers were pointing toward the target. (His thumb opposed them from the other side of the handle.) “Mark was reluctant to change, because of how funny it looked,” Haney told me,



“Let me answer your question about farm subsidies by saying a few words about Benghazi.”

"but he tried it in the tour's Father/Son Challenge, and after the first day he told me he hadn't yipped a putt." O'Meara still uses that grip. He calls it "the saw," because to him the tips of his fingers, when resting on his putter, look like saw teeth. Golfers at all levels (including several of my friends) now use the same grip, or variations of it, under various names, including "the claw" and "the paintbrush."

Leon Fleisher's fingers, before treatment, were curled all the time, but that's not always true with musician's cramp. Affected pianists can often "play" if they do it on a tabletop, rather than on a keyboard—or if they wear rubber gloves, or if the keys they press don't make sounds, or if they alter the degree to which they curve or extend their fingers—and guitarists and violinists can sometimes flawlessly manipulate instruments that have no strings. Some woodwind players who "double"—who play, say, clarinet and saxophone—suffer embouchure dystonia with only one of their instruments, and some pianists with musician's cramp have no trouble playing the organ. People with writer's cramp are usually able to type, draw, knit, and perform other dexterous actions; some have trouble with their writing only when forming a specific letter, and some don't cramp at all if they place their other hand on top of the one holding the pen, or if they place their writing hand on top of the hand of someone else holding the pen. Some people with vocal dystonia can speak normally if they place a toothpick in their mouth. Stanley Fahn told me that he once consulted with a well-known professional golfer whose head would turn involuntarily whenever he tried to swing a golf club. "He found that he could swing if his caddie held the end of the handle of his putter against his cheek," Fahn said. People who suffer from cervical dystonia can sometimes make it go away by touching their chin—or by imagining that they're touching their chin.

Such techniques are known as sensory tricks, or *gestes antagonistes*. Steven Frucht said that, in the past, their effectiveness was often viewed as evidence that dystonias were psychogenic, but that nowadays it's viewed as the opposite, and also as a potential window on causation. One theory about dystonia is that it involves the failure of a neurolog-

ical mechanism called "surround inhibition," which is how your brain enables you to, for example, wiggle your middle finger without also wiggling your index and ring fingers (or, at least, without wiggling them very much). Sensory tricks may restore the brain's ability to suppress the firing of neurons that aren't supposed to be involved in whatever the sufferer is trying to do—in essence, creating a neurological detour around the problem. But, if that's what they do, no one knows how they do it—or why they often stop working, as eventually happened with the golfer who could swing when his caddie was poking him in the cheek.

Debbie Crews told me, "Golfers have to always stay one step ahead. In a tour player I work with, the yip has travelled from the right hand to the left hand and back to the right hand. So my goal is to give golfers five to seven things to walk away with. Treat it like a shoulder injury: do everything you can to make it better, don't do things that would encourage it, and if it comes back take care of it and go play." A strategy that's sometimes effective in chipping, she said, is to become "bi-manual," by separating the hands, even slightly, on the club shaft; one that often helps with putting is to shift one's "focus of attention" from the moment of impact to a later point in the stroke, so that the player stops thinking of the ball as the destination. (A strategy that has worked for some yipping golfers, using a longer putter and anchoring the butt of its handle against the chest or the stomach, is going to become illegal in 2016, according to a decision made last year by the game's two main rule-making organizations.)

Marquardt is working on a number of new work-arounds for yipping golfers. Most of them involve what he calls "changing the context" of the putt, in the hope of neutralizing situations and sensations that act as triggers. "A very simple thing we do is to work with balls that are not able to roll," he said. "It might look like a ball, but when you hit it with a putter it doesn't move. And now we train you on that ball, so that you will become able to ignore that it is a ball." A ball that isn't a ball can't miss the hole. Similarly, a putter that doesn't feel like a putter may not jerk. "Sometimes we put a kind of foam rubber on

the putter blade," he said. "It masks the impact, and all of a sudden a high percentage of yippers are able to putt." Debbie Crews often does something similar, by having golfers with the yips putt in her lab while wearing ski gloves. "They usually putt so much better that it's amazing, because they can't manipulate," she told me. I tried the gloves, and putted worse—which I'm interpreting as a good sign.

No one understands for certain what causes any form of the yips, and no one yet has identified physical loci in the brain for focal dystonias. But that doesn't mean that the origins of such disorders will always be elusive. Stanley Fahn told me, "Even with Parkinson's it took a hundred years before people looking at autopsies found where the actual cell loss was."

Hank Haney told me recently that his golf swing today is more conventional-looking than it was when we played together. "I've made incredible progress, but if I get too conventional it's hard for me to stay a hundred-per-cent yip-free," he said. "When I get in tight situations, I definitely go back to things like gripping the club more in the palms of my hands, and letting my eyes wander more."

He went on, "Every time people see somebody's hand shake when he putts, they think he must be nervous. And maybe he is—but everybody's nervous. So am I just more nervous?" He said he thought that the yips were actually more like stuttering. Most stutterers are unaffected when they sing or whisper, or when they speak without being able to hear their voice—just as pianists with focal dystonia can often play on Steven Frucht's desk. "Sure, stutterers get nervous when they have to speak, and that makes their problem worse," Haney said. "But the nervousness didn't cause the problem; it didn't come before. They had a stutter, and then they became self-conscious about it, and then everything got worse." ♦

From the Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Inter Lake.

The study involves fitting female grizzly bears with radio or satellite tracking collars, and monitoring those bears for births and morality.

Presumably on behalf of jealous male bears.

WHAT WE KNOW

BY NATHANIEL STEIN

Here is what we know so far:

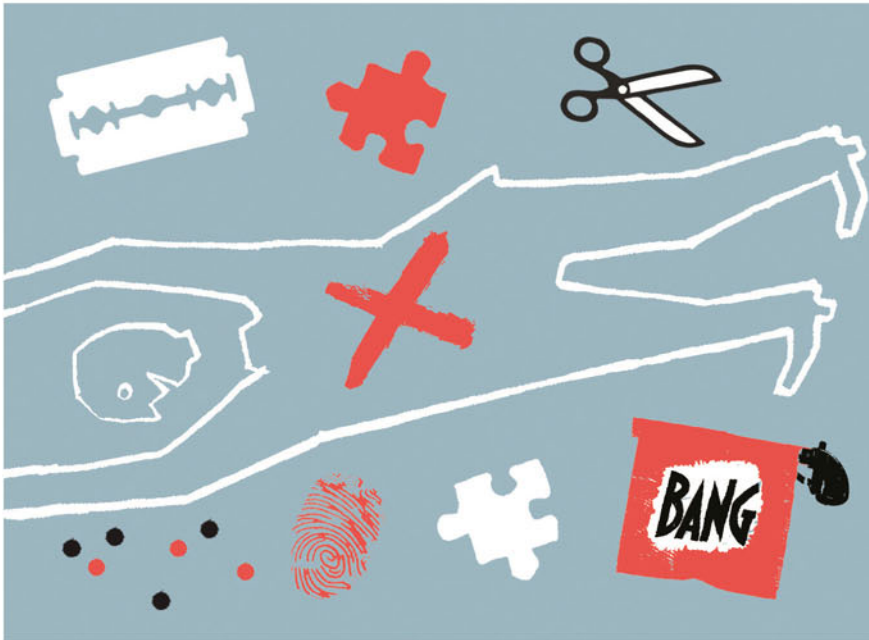
—The victim, Mr. Hollis, was found by a servant in the library at the stroke of midnight, with his limbs splayed, his clothes torn to shreds, and his hair matted with dried blood.

—Sometime later, after cleaning himself up, he was murdered.

—The body was noticed by Mrs.

—Dr. Morgan examined the body, and found nothing out of the ordinary other than a single gunshot wound to the back of the neck, and the fact that the rest of the body was pulverized.

—Dr. Morgan could not definitively determine the cause of death, though he was able to rule out natural causes, and whooping cough.



Devereaux, who was all the more shocked and confounded since the discovery came near the end of a round of hide-and-seek and just before a round of Corpse Hunt.

—The guests have convened in the study, and have agreed that no one will leave until the authorities arrive, and that Mr. Burlinson is owed an apology now that they realize where the stench was coming from.

—The head servant, Huntley, insists that no one could have gained admittance to the house without his being aware—leading to the unsettling conclusion that the murderer is among the guests, the servants, and the sixty-three strangers with guns whom he saw enter and leave.

—It seems possible that, in the moments before his death, Mr. Hollis attempted to send some kind of message—one destined never to be received, alas, as he was unable to affix postage.

—There is no obvious reason that anyone in the house should have wished harm to Mr. Hollis, other than the fact that he stole four hundred thousand dollars from each of them.

—Mr. Higgins, suspiciously, is the only guest who refused at the beginning of the evening to sign the agreement expressly forbidding murders.

—In retrospect, everyone recalls hearing a single gunshot three hours earlier, but no one gave it much thought because they all assumed that it was sim-

ply Mrs. Tedlock committing suicide.

—The front parlor, the billiard room, the library, the family dining quarters, and the master bedroom all contain enormous amounts of blood.

—Mr. Perkins uncovered a floor plan of the house and, to assist with the investigation, marked it as follows: “X,” where Mr. Hollis was found; “Y,” at all eleven points of entry; and “Z,” on the sites of the hundred most recent murders.

—A set of suspicious footprints was found, but they were explained when Mr. Tedlock confessed that he’d accidentally stepped in a tub of orange paint.

—With the unanimous consent of the guests, Mr. Devereaux has been dispatched to interview each member of the kitchen staff, with the object of appointing one of them snack-getter.

—The maid claims that she overheard the victim’s wife, Mrs. Hollis, remark that “next weekend would run more smoothly” should her husband be “unable to attend,” an allegation that Mrs. Hollis disputes. However, a few guests recall that at around six Mrs. Hollis gave a PowerPoint presentation on killing her husband.

—Several guests recall that at the beginning of the evening, as Mr. Hollis made the rounds, he kept remarking, “If anyone kills me tonight, the culprit will be Mr. Quinn. Remember that, people!” However, everyone agrees that Mr. Hollis was an idiot.

—Every room in the house has been combed for clues, except, for obvious reasons, the corpse pit.

—By a tremendous stroke of luck, the murder weapon was found by Mr. Williamson, who, incredibly, had a hunch about Mrs. Wilson’s undergarment drawer.

—Nothing of interest turned up in the library (where the victim was found), other than a cryptic note that read, in its entirety, “You’ll never find me,” with the words “From Jim” crossed out many, many times.

—The guests have taken a blind vote and determined that a majority of them believe that Mr. Devereaux will not return, keeping all the snacks for himself.

—Mr. Cavendish has repeatedly confessed to the murder. ♦

WORD MAGIC

How much really gets lost in translation?

BY ADAM GOPNIK



Once, in a restaurant in Italy with my family, I occasioned enormous merriment, as a nineteenth-century humorist would have put it, by confusing two Italian words. I thought I had, very suavely, ordered for dessert *fragoline*—those lovely little wild strawberries. Instead, I seem to have asked for *fagiolini*—green beans. The waiter ceremoniously brought me a plate of green beans with my coffee, along with the flan and the gelato for the kids. The significant insight the mistake provided—arriving mere microseconds after the laughter of those kids, who for some reason still bring up the occasion, often—was about the arbitrary nature of language: the single “r” rolled right makes one a master of the trattoria, an “r” unrolled the family fool. Although speaking feels as natural as breathing, the truth is that the words we

use are strange, abstract symbols, at least as remote from their objects as Egyptian hieroglyphs are from theirs, and as quietly treacherous as Egyptian tombs.

Although berries and beans may be separated by a subtle sound within a language, the larger space between like words in different languages is just as hazardous. Two words that seem to indicate the same state may mean the opposite. In English, the spiritual guy is pious, while the one called *spirituel* in French is witty; a liberal in France is on the right, in America to the left. And what of cultural inflections that seem to separate meanings otherwise identical? When we have *savoir-faire* in French, don’t we actually have something different from “know-how” in English, even though the two compounds combine pretty much the same elements?

These questions, about the hidden traps of words and phrases, are the subject of what may be the weirdest book the twenty-first century has so far produced: “Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon,” a thirteen-hundred-page volume, originally edited in French by the French philologist Barbara Cassin but now published, by Princeton University Press, in a much altered English edition, overseen by the comp-lit luminaries Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood. How weird is it? Let us count the ways. It is in part an anti-English protest, taking arms against the imperializing spread of our era’s, well, lingua franca—which has now been offered in English, so that everyone can understand it. The book’s presupposition is that there are significant, namable, untranslatable differences between tongues, so that, say, “history” in English, *histoire* in French, and *Geschichte* in German have very different boundaries that we need to grasp if we are to understand the texts in which the words occur. The editors, propelled by this belief, also believe it to be wrong. In each entry of the Dictionary, the differences are tracked, explained, and made perfectly clear in English, which rather undermines the premise that these terms are untranslatable, except in the dim sense that it sometimes takes a few words in one language to indicate a concept that is more succinctly embodied in one word in another.

Histoire in French means both “history” and “story,” in a way that “history” in English doesn’t quite, so that the relation between history and story may be more elegantly available in French. But no one has trouble in English with the notion that histories are narratives we make up as much as chronicles we discern. Indeed, in the preface, the editors cheerfully announce that any strong form of the belief to which their book may seem to be a monument is certainly false: “Some pretty good equivalencies are always available. . . . If there were a perfect equivalence from language to language, the result would not be translation; it would be a replica. . . . The constant recourse to the metaphor of loss in translation is finally too easy.” So their Dictionary is a self-exploding book, like one of those kinetic works of art that Jean Tinguely used to make, where the point

of the work is to watch it self-destruct in the museum garden.

Yet Tinguely was a considerable and entertaining artist, and this is a considerable and entertaining book, full of odd words beautifully, at times owlishly, annotated. Though most of its instances are in English, French, German, and Italian, the editors still have time for a discourse on the nuances of the Romanian *dor*, a word whose approximate meaning is “longing” but that is “a lyrical expression of the feeling of finitude, between folk metaphysics and philosophical reflection, and self-consciously Romanian.” Derived from *dolus*, a vernacular-Latin noun meaning “suffering,” *dor* indicates, according to the classicist Anca Vasiliu, something more particular and estranged than melancholy, less sentimental and self-indulgent than *Weltschmerz*—and, it occurs to a reader, strikes the central emotional tone of both the French-Romanian aphorist Emil Cioran and the Romanian-American artist Saul Steinberg. They are masters of *dor*.

Not far away, there is a fascinating entry on the relationship between the Freudian concept of *Trieb* and the English “drive,” the word often used to translate it. The thought is that “instinct” might much more closely match Freud’s original meaning, and that using “drive” so relentlessly has made American Freudianism a far more driven practice than the original. Rather nicely, in a book devoted to words, *logos*, translated in the King James Version of the Gospel of John simply as “the word,” turns out to be the most all-purpose of items. Twenty-three alternate meanings for it are listed in English alone—it is, the editors say, a model of “polysemy,” packing multiple meanings into a single sign, and managing to suggest both words themselves and the wider shores of wisdom that words articulate. Meanwhile, many fine pages are devoted to the fine shades separating “piety” from “pity,” provoking in a reader the thought that where the Christian desire was to discriminate one from the other—moral duty from moral impulse—modern humanism is essentially an attempt to return the words to a single meaning.

Some words have surprisingly specific authors. “Spleen” extends, like a suspension bridge, between the twin piers of Shakespeare and Baudelaire: Shake-

speare took it out of ancient medicine and gave it life as an expression meaning masculine overcharge (“Quickened with youthful spleen and warlike rage”); three centuries later, Baudelaire gave the word a second life, adding to the original meaning an overlay of beetle-browed irritation. *Sprezzatura* is “a word that is untranslatable par excellence,” with not even a close translation outside Italian, but then it is not exactly in Italian. The term is, the editors explain, a self-conscious invention by the sixteenth-century writer Baldassare Castiglione, to label his own idiosyncratic concept of a gentleman’s seeming indifference to polish; he made it up as much as Lewis Carroll made up mome raths.

Significant patterns of meaning do emerge from the mists. Some words alter because of the stray contingencies of time, others because of the specificities of political history. To take those two introductory instances: although one could try to draw significance from the fact that *spirituel* means not “spiritual” but “witty,” the truth is that it’s just an etymological accident. The same meaning lingers in our word “spirited.” (When Shakespeare has Brutus say that Antony has a “quick spirit,” he means that he’s very bright, not very good.) The French are as unlikely as we are to think that a witty man is a spiritual one, and if there’s a moment’s confusion it gets clarified by tone and touch.

On the other hand, though the word “liberal” in French does not mean what “liberal” means in English—a French liberal admires Margaret Thatcher, is a critic of the welfare state, and supports the free market whenever possible—the difference is historical in another sense. France took a statist turn very early, so speaking up for liberty meant speaking against the state. In America, given the centrality of the struggle for civil rights, speaking up for liberty has often meant speaking up for the state. A liberal in France does stand for most of the same things as a liberal in America or in England; he just seems farther to the right, because the situation in France is, for historical reasons, skewed so much farther left.

Of all these words, one and one alone seems truly to stump the editors, and that is the German word *Dasein*, made famous in Heidegger’s “Being and Time,”

and usually left by bewildered translators in the original German, and meaning—well, what it means bewilders even the Continental editors. Calling it a “paradigm of the untranslatable,” they struggle over six double-columned pages to explain, anxiously, what it might mean: roughly, “life,” but with an overtone of anxiousness (“the very being of the being that we are, essentially or inessentially, not in the sense of an identity, but in proportion to a being that we have ‘to be’”), the whole leading to the sneaking suspicion that *Dasein* is untranslatable because it has no particular meaning in the original language, either. A truly untranslatable word, it seems, may be the sign of an unsustainable concept.

A spectre haunts this book, however. It is the spectre of Benjamin Lee Whorf and the theory of linguistic relativism to which he gave his name. Whorf was an amateur American linguist in the first half of the twentieth century who became obsessed with the idea that the system of tenses in the Hopi language gave the Hopi a different view of present, past, and future. (His understanding of Hopi grammar turns out to have been rudimentary.) Whorfianism came to refer to a larger idea derived from this notion—the idea that our language forces us to see the world a certain way, and that different languages impose different world views on their speakers. It’s a powerful idea in the pop imagination. It sounds right when you say it.

Yet “Whorfian” relativism, at least in its strong forms, is one of those ideas that disappear under any kind of scrutiny. After all, if we were truly prisoners of our language, we shouldn’t be able to use it to see its limits clearly, or to enumerate the concepts that it can’t conceive. The ghost of Whorf haunts every page of the “Dictionary of Untranslatables”—only to be exorcised by the authors, only to return. For instance, in a long section on the use of the English suffix “-ing,” we are told that our possession of such a form means that we have instant access to an idea of change-in-motion. The title of E. P. Thompson’s classic “The Making of the English Working Class” is cited as an example of how English lends itself to stories of historical change as action. In French, Thompson’s book would be called “The Formation of the English

Working Class,” and if this is a big difference it’s hard to hear.

In recent years, there’s been some empirical support for mild versions of the Whorfian idea. Given more color names—“aqua,” “teal,” and “periwinkle,” in addition to “blue”—we do seem to respond to more colors, or at least to group the colors we’re shown more finely. In other words, having many words for shades of blue helps you tag the memory more easily and retrieve it faster, though it doesn’t mean that you really see more shades than the next guy. (Common sense tells us this already about, say, wine tasting: when we’re given new terms—there’s tar, tobacco, and rosewater here—we’re more likely to say, “Oh, yeah, I smelled that!” than “Oh, now I smell something new.”) The names help us sort the steady perception into manageable bits. Similar studies have helped rehabilitate Whorf, at least a little.

In response to this revival of pop Whorfianism, the linguist John H. McWhorter has written a short, sour, brilliant little book, “The Language Hoax” (Oxford), which attempts once again to explain to a general audience why the idea of linguistic relativism is empty. Patiently dissecting a bad idea, McWhorter explains that even the most robust Whorfian effects, like those in color sorting, involve, at most, microsecond differences in doing tasks—less time than it takes for kids to start laughing at the wrong word in a trattoria. It is no more surprising that a tribe whose language doesn’t have numbers can’t do math, he says, than that a “tribe without cars doesn’t drive.” McWhorter also puts his finger on a core problem: “A difference in thought must be of a certain magnitude before it qualifies realistically as a distinct ‘worldview.’” Even if it were true that the participle in English made us a mite more likely to think “actively,” differences in ideology and belief overwhelm and obliterate those lexical tints. Buddhists and Stoics have no trouble at all making their fatalism felt in English.

McWhorter makes all the right arguments, and he makes them clearly. And yet some version of the case persists, as imperishable as a zombie. What’s the allure of linguistic relativism? There may be solace in imagining ourselves prisoners of

circumstances beyond our control—of language or horoscopes, of God or Capital—and so relieved of responsibility for what we do next. It may also be that linguistic relativism gives a kind of cheap knowingness that we all enjoy: you’re a prisoner of your tongue, but I’m the one who can show that you’re imprisoned. In truth, language seems less like a series of cells in which we are imprisoned than like a set of tools that help us escape: some of the files are rusty; some will open any door; and most you have to jiggle around in the lock. But, sooner or later, most words work.

Curiously, McWhorter only briefly dismisses the author who continues to give linguistic relativism its greatest cachet among literate people: George Orwell, whose essay “Politics and the English Language” (1946) made the claim that the debasement of thought cannot be separated from the debasement of language. Criticizing Orwell is as offensive to most humanists as criticizing Aquinas is to Catholics, but the essay gives mere obfuscation a cognitive power it never had. Orwell rightly detested double-talk, cheap euphemism, and deliberate obscurity—the language of “strategic hamlets” and “enhanced interrogation,” and all the other phrases that are used to muddy up meaning. But euphemism is a moral problem, not a cognitive one. When Dick Cheney calls torture “enhanced interrogation,” it doesn’t make us understand torture in a different way; it’s just a means for those



who know they’re doing something wrong to find a phrase that doesn’t immediately acknowledge the wrongdoing. If the strong form of linguistic relativism were true, then not having the correct phrase or being forced to use a weird one would change our perception of what’s taking place. There’s no evidence that this happens. Whatever name Cheney’s men gave torture, they knew what it was. A grotesque euphemism is offensive exactly because we

recognize perfectly well the mismatch between the word and its referent. It’s an instrument of evasion, like a speeding getaway car, not an instrument of unconsciousness, like a blackjack.

If lucid writing is the sign of a moral state, it’s the moral state of hard work, keener effort, acquired craft—a desire to communicate rather than intimidate, to have fun with a fellow-mind rather than bully a disciple. Sane and shapely sentences are good because they’re sane and shapely. There’s no guarantee that they’ll contain the truth: lots of sane and shapely sentence makers have had silly ideas. But, like sane and shapely people and homes, they are nice to have around to look at.

Although the differences between languages are minute, and can’t be elevated to either a prison house or a world view, it is in language’s minutiae that the small gestures of art live. In the 1939 French film noir “Le Jour Se Lève,” for instance, there’s a moment when the concierge, pressed by the police about a piece of furniture in the killer’s apartment, tells them that it’s “*une armoire comme toutes les armoires*”—“An armoire like all armoires.” The English subtitle has him saying, “It’s just a regular armoire.” This is the sense of it, but there is something universalized and pseudo-systematic in the French form that is part of the flavor of French life. The concierge is making a categorical point about furniture.

Back in the social sciences, there are studies to support our sense of such differences—not in cognitive view but in cultural flavor. Bilingual people, for instance, seem to narrate stories very differently in their two languages. Russian émigrés to America seem to use more collectivist nouns when they’re speaking Russian, more individualistic ones in English; bilingual French-English speakers tend to tell the same stories with an emphasis on “achievement” in English, and on “aggression toward peers” in French. (The English story is “I done it!”; the French version is “And the bastards tried to stop me.”) This seems little different from the truth that the rituals and habits of playing hockey (cursing, stoical indifference, then handshaking) are different from those of playing soccer (whining, faking injuries, etc.). Obviously, immigrants have sociolinguistic habits

AGAINST HOME

Wind shuttles leaves across a parking lot,
each one a different weight, each weight
absorbed into the rustling like surfers
overwhelmed by waves. Father, my maple.
Mother, honey locust. I am nothing
but what your lives have made me.

—Matt Sumpter

among themselves that are different from the social habits acquired by speaking their new language. We don't speak French or Italian if we don't know the way to speak French and Italian.

We are not captives of our tongues, but we are citizens of our languages. And citizenship is a broad concept that includes behavior and rituals. We approach the secret life of another language more intimately on first approach than after we have married into it. Learning a new language is like learning a new city: you see things you'll never notice, or need, once you go to live there and are habituated by routine. There's even a very real sense in which it is easier to "think" in a foreign language if you don't quite speak it than if you do. The gender properties of French, for instance—tables are feminine, candlesticks masculine—leap out as you learn the language. They can seem to eroticize the world. But they quickly recede, and become neutralized as standard features. (Just as English speakers don't really notice the encoded oddities of English; for instance, that we don't have a future tense and plans have to be conjugated as acts of will—"I'll be going later.") Anyone whose grandparents reverted to Yiddish in moments of exasperation will recall how this dual linguistic citizenship works; your grandfather did not say "What a gonif!" because there were no curse words in English.

The rubber meets the road—or *la gomma tocca la strada*, as we Italian speakers say—when it comes to translations of important poetry and literature generally. No matter how well we have immunized ourselves against empty Whorfianism, when the German sighs and tells us that the Rilke we know in English is nothing like the real Rilke, we tend to credit it, if only because we know that the Keats the

German speaker knows can really be nothing like Keats. ("*Schönheit ist Wahrheit, Wahrheit Schönheit*" is the German for "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," but there is nothing beautiful about it: just a look tells us that the balance of the monosyllable against the disyllable, what we might call the echt *sprezzatura* of the original, isn't there.)

Near-contemporary translations of great texts often seem to capture them best, whatever their small errancies. New York Review Books has just put out a new edition of John Florio's translation of essays by Montaigne. Florio, a friend of Shakespeare's, can sometimes be compacted and muddled—there have been many more "faithful" translations since—but the rendering rings right. The background assumptions are so confidently registered that the foreground turns can be pictured in the proper light, too. The rhythm in Florio's Montaigne is pleasingly Shakespearean in its play between the forthright and the fancy, a play easily lost by mere homogenized lucidity: "I cannot settle my object. It goeth so unquietly and staggering, with a natural drunkenness. I take it in this plight, as it is at the instant I amuse myself about it. I describe not the essence but the passage."

Similarly, though C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Proust's first translator into English, apologized to Proust for his "imperfect" French, and though it's often said that Scott Moncrieff is self-consciously poetic where Proust is not, his contemporary translation of Proust remains much the best ever achieved, exactly because the aesthete's point of view was so deeply in his blood and bones. He is self-consciously poetic in part because English aestheticism, made under the moon of Wilde, was always damper, more elaborately, self-consciously poetic than the

drier French equivalent. He missed the idiomatic equivalences sometimes. (When Swann, in the last sentence of "Swann in Love," confesses, with shattering banality, that Odette, the woman he has sacrificed so much for, had never really been his type, Scott Moncrieff has the awkward literalism "not my style.") Yet though he gets small things wrong, the murmuring rhythm and violet color of the book have never quite been matched by the more accurate later renditions. He finds the right English sound to match the French one.

In a fine 2011 study of translation, "Is That a Fish in Your Ear?," David Bellos points out that, despite the endless insistence that the real thing is always lost in translation, we readily translate everything, and all the time. "Think of a great poet, and you've almost certainly thought of a translator, too," he writes. For all the supposed incommensurability of languages, we guide poems from one to another every day. Even if one accepts that these are only partial victories, is there another kind? Perhaps the truth is that poetry isn't as exclusively "poetic" as we often like to pretend, just as the "poetic" part of philosophy is bigger than philosophers sometimes want to think. (When we read Hume, the patient humor is inseparable from the moral point, that skepticism has no need to be hysterical.) Poetry contains as much wisdom as it does word magic: Szymborska in English may be nothing like Szymborska in Polish, but we read her for the good counsel as much as for the choices among words.

Citizens of our languages, we act as citizens do, participating, reforming, accepting the rituals and celebrating their alteration, occasionally even voting for new rules and rulers. No words are entirely untranslatable; none are entirely transparent. A pragmatic view of how words work is the only view of them that accounts for our persistent tiny triumphs and sudden comic errors. Sometimes they obscure; sometimes they're plain; often they fail us. When the wild strawberries are in season, you hope you find the words to get them on your plate. When the beans come, you eat the beans. ♦

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A conversation with Adam Gopnik.

THE ADVERSARY

Is Iran's nuclear negotiator, Javad Zarif, for real?

BY ROBIN WRIGHT

On September 4th of last year, shortly after Javad Zarif was named Iran's foreign minister, a new Twitter account with the handle @JZarif posted its first tweet:

Hope to be able to #interact & stay in touch.

Several hours later, a second tweet appeared:

Happy Rosh Hashanah.

The tweets drew widespread attention, and some skepticism. Iran's new President, Hassan Rouhani, had taken office a month earlier, but his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had challenged Israel's right to exist, urged Jews to return to the countries they came from, and questioned the occurrence of the Holocaust. Moreover, most social media had long been cut off in the Islamic Republic. Among the skeptical responses was one from @sfpelosi:

Thanks. The New Year would be even sweeter if you would end Iran's Holocaust denial, sir.

@sfpelosi is Christine Pelosi, Nancy Pelosi's daughter and a former chief of staff for Representative John Tierney, of Massachusetts. She is now a Democratic Party activist in San Francisco. She is Catholic, but her husband is Jewish and her daughter attends a Jewish preschool. "I came across his tweet and thought, Was it real?" she told me. "I thought Iran didn't have social media. Then I thought, What the heck, it's Twitter! Let's see if this is real or a P.R. stunt by one of his consultants or friends outside Iran."

Within an hour, @JZarif responded:

@sfpelosi Iran never denied it. The man who was perceived to be denying it is now gone. Happy New Year.

The tweeter was indeed Zarif. (The Foreign Ministry is exempted from the country's social-media censorship.) By

e-mail, I asked Zarif if he knew that his interlocutor was the daughter of a prominent American politician. "Yes, ma'am," he wrote back.

The exchange foreshadowed the most ambitious diplomatic opening since Iran's revolution. Three weeks later, on September 26th, Zarif met with Secretary of State John Kerry at the United Nations to discuss resuming negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. The next day, President Rouhani, who was in New York to attend the General Assembly, took a telephone call from President Obama. It lasted fifteen minutes, and was the first conversation between Iranian and American leaders since the Shah's ouster, in 1979.

Since then, there have been monthly diplomatic talks, at various levels, in Geneva and Vienna. Zarif, who prepped Rouhani for the Obama call, is now the broker between his volatile government and the world's six mightiest powers—Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States. The goal is a comprehensive deal to insure that Tehran does not seek or obtain a nuclear weapon. An interim, six-month agreement was reached in November and went into effect in January. Iran agreed to gradually suspend or convert controversial aspects of its nuclear program. In exchange, Tehran is receiving, also in phases, relief from economic sanctions amounting to between six and seven billion dollars. More than half is Iran's own oil income, trapped in foreign banks. Iran and the six powers began drafting terms last week. The deadline for a final agreement is July 20th. The talks could be extended, but all sides want—and need—to make the date.

Zarif and Kerry have now met four times, and call each other John and Javad. "That's one of the first things you Americans do," Zarif told me. "Had I not been in the U.S. for such a long time, I would have been astonished for the Secretary of

MAGNUM

Joseph Biden once described Zarif as "a tough



advocate, but he's also pragmatic, not dogmatic." He lived in the United States for twenty years, and is distrusted by Iran's hard-liners.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX MAJOLI

State of the adversary to start calling me by my first name.” They have each other’s phone number and e-mail address and have used them. Their staffs are in touch more often.

Yet, even at this stage, Pelosi’s question lingers over the process: Is it real? And can it prevent Iran from eventually getting a bomb?

Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a block-long building of beige brick, was erected in the nineteen-thirties, by Iran’s last dynasty. Its cavernous reception hall is majestic; the walls are mirrored mosaics. A dazzling chandelier, with several tiers of little bulbs bouncing light off the mirrors, hangs from a domed ceiling. Zarif’s office is wood-paneled and plain, unadorned with personal mementos. We sat on brocade furniture clustered at one end of the room.

Zarif is an affable man, with a disarmingly unrevolutionary grin, a quick wit, and the steely tenacity of a debater. He has snowy white hair and, since taking office, has grown his signature goatee into a short beard—a response to hard-liners who thought that his politics, as well as his clean-shaven cheeks, were too Western. The nuclear diplomacy has made Zarif both popular and vulnerable. On the Persian New Year, in March, two public-opinion polls named him newsmaker of the year; Rouhani trailed far behind. Yet Tehran’s squabbling politicians, whom Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini once compared to scorpions, dissect every utterance. Critics in parliament have already urged his impeachment. Earlier this month, Zarif survived a challenge by seventy-five members of parliament, who wanted to censure him for publicly denouncing hard-line positions and asserting that the Holocaust was a “horrible tragedy.” Hard-liners also held a “We’re Worried” conference at the former American Embassy, to warn against concessions. The conference was billed as “the great gathering of critics of a weak deal.” A woman in a black chador carried a placard stating, “Our nuclear rights are not for sale.”

For many Iranians, a nuclear deal is about a lot more than nukes. It would remove the threat of regime change, by securing the Islamic government as the legitimate representative of the Iranian people. But it might also open Iran to the

outside world in ways that affect the internal balance of power.

“I’m still waiting for the real battle to be fought in Tehran,” a leading Western diplomat told me. “My best guess is that it will be fought after the nuclear deal.”

Zarif straddles Iranian and American culture to a greater extent than any senior official since the revolution. He greeted me at the door, but did not shake my hand, according to Muslim custom. He did not wear a tie, choosing a small standup collar, following revolutionary custom. Yet he speaks English with an American accent and with American idioms, the legacy of twenty years in San Francisco, New York, and Denver. He has two children—a daughter who is an interior decorator, a son who is a marketing consultant—and both were born in the United States.

He may be the only person in the world who can telephone both Senator Dianne Feinstein and the Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. Feinstein met Zarif in 2006, and carried a proposal by him to the Bush Administration. (The Bush people never responded, she said.) She kept in touch and met Zarif again in New York in September.

“He doesn’t play games,” she told me. “He doesn’t produce incendiary sentences. He is thoughtful. He is real. He wants to help his people and lead them in a different direction. That’s important to me in my measurement of a person.”

As Iran’s Ambassador to the United Nations from 2002 until 2007, Zarif met with Vice-President Joseph Biden and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel during their Senate days. In 2007, the Bush Administration allowed a rare exemption from the twenty-five-mile travel limit on Iranian diplomats in New York, so that he could give farewell speeches in Washington and pay a courtesy call on Capitol Hill. “Zarif is a tough advocate, but he’s also pragmatic, not dogmatic,” Biden told me then. “He can play an important role in helping to resolve our significant differences with Iran peacefully.” At a luncheon hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations, Martin Indyk, the former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, told Zarif, “We’re going to miss you.”

Yet in January Zarif met Nasrallah in Lebanon, and laid a wreath of showy white flowers at the grave of Imad Mughniyeh, the Hezbollah military

commander. Mughniyeh was linked to the 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed two hundred and forty-one peacekeepers. Zarif then travelled to Damascus, for talks with Syria’s President, Bashar al-Assad, now in the fourth year of a war against his own people.

“In order to practice dialogue, you need to be able to set aside your assumptions and try to listen more than you want to talk,” Zarif told me. “It’s not always politically correct to be able to do that, but it can give you a better sense of the reality. I have benefitted from the knowledge and the information that all these people have been able to provide to me. I have disagreements with some and more agreements with others. But that doesn’t mean I cannot listen to those I disagree with.”

Some American critics don’t buy it. “There are worse Islamic revolutionaries out there, but, make no mistake, he’s an Islamic revolutionary,” Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former C.I.A. officer and now a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told me. “He understands the Islamic revolution as being incompatible with the United States. Only in the Byzantine world of revolutionary politics do the differences between Zarif and what some call hard-liners gain importance.”

The son of an affluent merchant who wanted him to be an engineer, Zarif grew up without television or newspapers. The family was conservative and devout, but his father did not support the revolution. Shiites have historically been so-called quietists—passive politically and opposed to the clergy’s involvement in politics. The return to the ideal Islamic state, they believed, should wait for the reappearance of the Mahdi, the Muslim messiah. So the revolution was as distressing for some of the faithful as it was for the Shah’s supporters, and left deep fissures within the Zarif family. When I noted that dinner-table discussions must have been interesting, Zarif replied, “Out of respect to my father, I usually listened.”

At seventeen, Zarif left Tehran to attend a prep school in San Francisco, before enrolling at San Francisco State University. During the fourteen months of the revolution, Iranian students at California colleges clustered around the

Muslim Students Association in Berkeley. So many of them rushed home to enlist in the new Islamic Republic that they were known as the Berkeley mafia. Zarif stayed behind, to continue his studies, and became the Berkeley group's representative to Iran's San Francisco consulate, assigned to insure that it did not deviate from the new political creed. When he started graduate school, in New York, at Columbia, the revolution's Ambassador to the United Nations hired him.

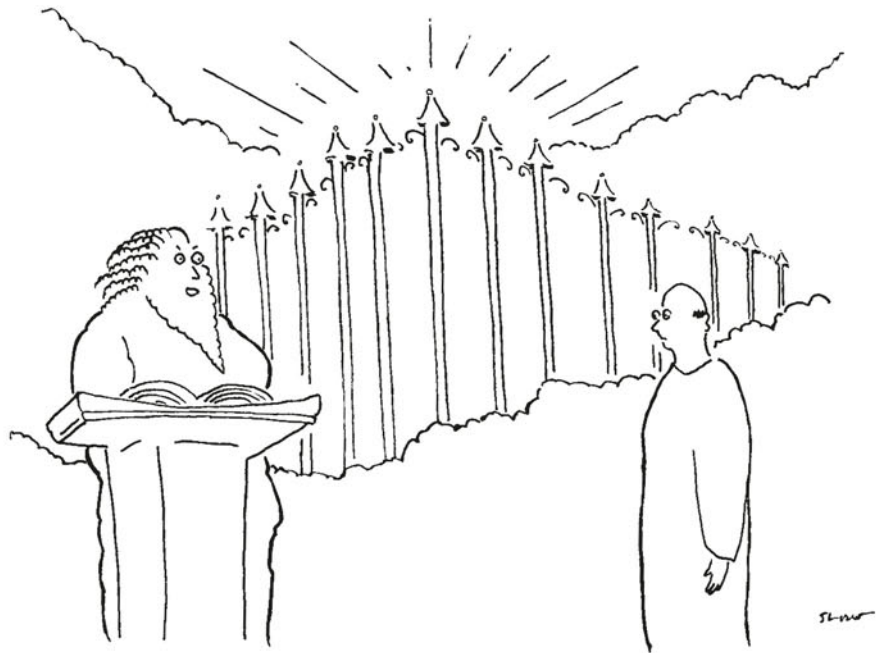
"At the time, anybody who prayed and knew English was a rare commodity," Zarif recalled. As the mission purged monarchists, he did everything from visa work to writing letters to the Secretary-General about the Iran-Iraq War. "Nobody else in the mission either knew how to do it or was trusted to do it," he said.

After a year at Columbia, Zarif left to earn his doctorate at the University of Denver's School of International Studies, where he had some of the same professors who had taught Condoleezza Rice. "One of my professors once told me, 'In Denver, we produce liberals like Javad Zarif, not conservatives like Condi Rice,'" Zarif said, smiling.

"Condi and Javad had many common traits," Ved Nanda, who taught both and was on Zarif's dissertation committee, recalled. "They were both good in the classroom. At that time, I would not have thought of her as Secretary of State, though I would have told you that she would go places. But him—I thought he'd play an important part in his country's life."

Zarif's dissertation, written during the Iran-Iraq War, was about using force in violation of international law. Its themes echoed Iranian-American relations, before and after the revolution. "No political, military or economic justification can be advanced to explain with legal validity a unilateral resort to force in the absence of prior armed attack," he wrote. Intervention to restore law and order in foreign lands "can find no legal grounds in universally accepted norms of law."

Nanda particularly remembered Zarif's bitterness about American support for Saddam Hussein, who had invaded Iran in 1980. As U.S. officials later admitted, the Reagan Administration provided satellite intelligence to Baghdad about Iranian troop movements which



"Sure, you're in, but it's not really heavenly until you upgrade to premium Heaven."

was used for some of Iraq's chemical-weapons attacks. The C.I.A. once estimated that Iran suffered at least fifty thousand casualties, including thousands of deaths—the largest loss of life from toxic nerve and mustard gases since the First World War.

Since leaving Denver, in 1988, Zarif has been at the center of Iran's diplomatic pivots. Jan Eliasson, a Swede who is now the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, led negotiations to end the Iran-Iraq War. Zarif was the youngest diplomat in the Iranian delegation, Eliasson recalled, but he worked the hardest to talk to the Iraqis, even between sessions. The former U.N. hostage negotiator Giandomenico Picco, an Italian, detailed, in his memoir, Zarif's "invaluable" role, between 1989 and 1991, in freeing Western hostages held by Iran's allies in Lebanon. One had been held for almost seven years. Picco called his work with Zarif over a period of some two decades the closest professional relationship of his career. "The proof is the hundred and twenty-three lives that we brought back to their families and homes," Picco told me. "He's a craftsman."

In testimony before Congress, James Dobbins, currently the State Department's Special Representative for Af-

ghanistan and Pakistan, credited Zarif with help on Afghanistan. At the 2001 International Conference, in Bonn, the Afghan opposition balked over terms for a new government. At two in the morning, after pressure from American, Russian, German, Indian, and U.N. diplomats proved futile, Zarif took the Afghan representative aside and whispered for a few moments in his ear. It worked. "Zarif had achieved the final breakthrough without which the Karzai government might never have been formed," Dobbins said.

In 2002, Zarif became Iran's U.N. envoy. The next year, he wrote the final draft of a master statement—nicknamed "the grand bargain"—that sought to resolve all outstanding issues with the U.S. Like earlier attempts, it never took off. After hard-liners gained control under Ahmadinejad, Zarif was squeezed out of the foreign service, in 2007. "I don't think that the West interpreted our openings and accommodations the way they should have," he told me then. "Since it was misinterpreted, the reaction was disappointing, and in fact only heightened tension and increased mistrust." He said that he would return home from the U.N. seen as "a stupid idealist who has not achieved anything in his diplomatic

He retired from government service at the age of forty-seven. Afterward, he taught, played with architectural plans—a hobby of his—and kept a low profile during six months of protests following the disputed 2009 Presidential elections. The uprising was quashed, but simmering discontent produced Rouhani's stunning election, last year. The political tide had turned. Three of the six Presidential candidates asked Zarif to be their foreign minister, and a popular news Web site has since posited him as a future Presidential candidate. "Not a chance! Don't even say that," he replied, when I asked about his prospects. "I'm not a politician!"

In early October, a front-page story in Tehran's most hard-line paper, *Kayhan*, reported that Zarif had told a parliamentary committee that the phone call between Obama and Rouhani was inappropriate. The Foreign Ministry denied it, and Zarif complained on his Facebook page that the fabricated story, and political tensions, had caused him physical injury.

A week later, after acupuncture, he flew to the first round of the nuclear negotiations on an airplane bed. Iranian media posted pictures of him under a blanket, with a laptop on his chest. He was rolled into the talks in a wheelchair. His entrance broke the ice. An American official who briefed reporters recalled, "Everyone had a back story for him, books they thought he should read, things he might try, because we all have suffered."

George W. Bush promised that Iran would not go nuclear. Both sides were clumsy, repeatedly missing diplomatic opportunities. Meanwhile, Tehran made a big leap in technology. It jumped from fewer than two hundred centrifuges—spinning tubes that enrich uranium by separating its isotopes at supersonic speed—to around five thousand by the time Bush left office.

Enriched uranium can fuel energy for domestic uses or for weaponry. A nuclear bomb requires roughly twenty-five kilograms—fifty-five pounds—of uranium that is highly enriched, to ninety-per-cent purity. Using all its centrifuges and all the uranium enriched so far, Iran, if it wished, could produce the fuel for a bomb in about two months, Robert Einhorn, a former member of the U.S. negotiating team, told me. Other steps are required, including fitting the fuel into a warhead and developing a delivery system. But the so-called “breakout time”—the time it takes for a country to produce enough enriched uranium for a bomb—is key.

Only fifteen countries currently enrich uranium. Only nine have the bomb. Five are now at the negotiating table trying to persuade Iran, through Zarif, not to make one of its own.

Zarif has not actually been to any of Iran's facilities. "I haven't had the chance," he told me. "And I don't think I need to."

It would be nice, in terms of national pride, to be able to look at them, and to visit them. But I wouldn't understand much, because I'm not a nuclear physicist. I'm a negotiator."

The Islamic Republic has always claimed that its nuclear program is intended only for energy and medical research. The U.S. has long acknowledged Tehran's need for both. In the mid-seventies, before the revolution, the Ford Administration approved the Shah's plan to buy more than twenty nuclear power plants. The decision was supported by Dick Cheney, Ford's chief of staff, and his Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld. The calculation was that the deal would be good for American business. It would deepen strategic relations, and it would help Iran provide energy for a modernizing economy, while extending the life of its oil reserves for export to Western industrialized nations. "I don't think the issue of proliferation came up," Ford's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, recalled, in 2005, to the *Washington Post*.

A 1978 State Department memo noted, "We have been encouraged by Iran's efforts to broaden and diversify its non-oil energy base."

Iran needs nuclear energy now far more than it did under the Shah. After the revolution, the ruling clerics called on women to breed an Islamic generation. Within a decade, the population increased by more than fifty per cent. The Government of God soon realized its earthly limits, however. It could not feed, house, educate, or employ the growing numbers, so it initiated a family-planning program; most birth control, including vasectomies, was subsidized. More than thirty thousand women were recruited to go door to door promoting a two-child policy. Clerics preached family planning on United Nations World Population Day; some even escorted anxious males to vasectomy clinics. Engaged couples were required to go through a surprisingly graphic family-planning course. By 2002, births were down to two children per family.

The birth boom triggered an oil-consumption surge that went up an average of ten per cent a year during the revolution's first three decades—until 2010, according to an Iranian Web site. Within ten years, Iran could become a net importer of oil,

with devastating economic consequences. Before the introduction of sanctions, petroleum sales had accounted for sixty per cent of fiscal revenues. "If the trend continues," the Web site acknowledged, "the situation could turn catastrophic."

Oil consumption also presented an existential problem. Six of Iran's major cities are chronically polluted. Tehran closes down periodically because of thick brown smog. Billboards flash pollution levels. On the worst days, children, the infirm, and the elderly are warned to stay indoors; some people resort to wearing surgical face masks. The government reports that approximately eighty thousand Iranians die every year—more than two hundred a day—from diseases linked to dirty air.

So Iran needs clean nuclear energy. Still, almost four decades after its deal for more than twenty nuclear power plants, the country has only one, at Bushehr, on its southern Persian Gulf coast. It was started by the Germans before the revolution; the Russians took it over in the mid-nineties, and, after many technical glitches, it joined the national grid in 2012.

But the Bushehr plant only adds to Iran's credibility problem, because none of the centrifuges at Natanz or Fordo are used for it. Russia provides all the enriched uranium—and takes away all the spent fuel. What's more, Tehran is at least a generation away from building its own nuclear power plants. And, as the country has developed all these fuel capabilities, the question for the outside world remains: Why, if not to make fuel for a bomb?

Zarif says that Iran has no intention of producing either weapons or weapons-grade fissile material. "We do not consider that to be in our interests, or within our security doctrine," he says. The country's one research reactor, supplied by the United States in 1967, is used to produce medical isotopes. In 1968, Iran signed the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; it claims the use of nuclear energy as its right.

The government also says it needs its own reactors and fuel so that it won't be held hostage to the politics of suppliers. "If you look at it from the perspective of any other country that has access to all sorts of available fuel in the international

market, available medical isotopes in the international market, then you'll find it very difficult to even justify this from a financial perspective," Zarif said. "It's much cheaper to buy most of this stuff on the open market than to produce it. We understand that. But that becomes irrelevant when you do not have access to open markets." Iran is believed to have spent a hundred billion dollars so far to develop independent nuclear technology.

Iran's ultimate argument is religion. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has renounced the bomb at least four times since 2003. "We consider developing nuclear weapons as unlawful," he told nuclear scientists in 2012.

"We consider using such weapons a big sin. We also believe that keeping such weapons is futile and dangerous, and we will never go after them. . . . We want to prove to the world that nuclear weapons do not bring about power."

Despite Iran's growing capabilities, the Worldwide Threat Assessment report, which reflects consensus among America's sixteen intelligence agencies, concluded earlier this year that Iran's rulers had not resolved whether to build a bomb. "We do not know if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons," James R. Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, said.

Last fall, President Obama predicted that Iran was still "a year or more away" from having all the pieces and skills needed for the final product. That estimate has not changed.

At a farewell party shortly before leaving the U.N., in 2007, Zarif was given a copy of Henry Kissinger's book "Diplomacy," a gift arranged by a mutual friend. During Zarif's five years in New York, he and Kissinger had met, talked, and dined together. "He was intelligent, courteous, disciplined, interesting to talk to," Kissinger recalled of one dinner. "I conducted the conversation to educate myself, so I did not try to persuade him of any particular approach, except my basic theme was that, on the basis of national interests, there is no conflict between Iran and the United States. Everything beyond that is ideological."

Kissinger wrote in Zarif's copy of his



book, “To a respected adversary.” The inscription came up at his confirmation hearing, as a retort to criticism of his American ties: “Is it bad if an experienced eighty-year-old diplomat calls a forty-something-year-old child of this revolution a ‘worthy adversary’?”

Any nuclear deal—to defer the Iranian decision to actually make a bomb, to alter the timetable of a breakout, and to insure that the terms stick—will depend as much on Iran’s strategic calculus as on its technical cooperation. Iran now has the requisite scientific knowledge. That knowledge can’t be bombed. A deal that limits centrifuges, cuts back enrichment, converts facilities, curtails research, and increases inspections can go only so far in preventing Iran from eventually developing a weapon. Tehran will ultimately have to decide, Kissinger has noted, whether the Islamic Republic is a country or a cause.

I asked Zarif if he had become a realist, in the Kissinger vein. “Far from it!” he said. “I have very serious theoretical problems with realism.” He went on to acknowledge, however, that his thinking had evolved. “All governments are rational beings—that’s the first premise of realist theory, and I don’t disagree with that,” he told me. “Of course, that doesn’t mean that all government actors, all government officials, are rational beings. . . . But I believe we have gone through a learning process in Iran. We have been exposed to realities, and I’ve learned to adapt to those realities. But it doesn’t mean we have moved away from our principles.”

He went on, “Let’s put it in Kissinger’s terms. More and more people see Iran’s interests are best served if we can find a way that Iran as a cause and Iran as a nation-state will be complementary, rather than in conflict, so that we won’t have to choose.”

Zarif made Iran’s case in the May/June issue of *Foreign Affairs*:

Iran has no interest in nuclear weapons and is convinced that such weapons would not enhance its security. Iran does not have the means to engage in nuclear deterrence—directly or through proxies—against its adversaries. Furthermore, the Iranian government believes that even a perception that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons is detrimental to the country’s security and to its regional role, since attempts by Iran to gain strategic superiority in the Persian Gulf would inevitably provoke responses that would diminish Iran’s conventional military advantage.

Iran might appear to be negotiating from strength. Its armed forces number

half a million, although a good bit of their equipment dates back to the Shah. Tehran has also built a network of surrogates, through the Revolutionary Guards’ elite Quds Force, which has been linked to operations on five continents. Tehran has armed, aided, and abetted some of the region’s most notorious militias (as well as a used-car salesman from Corpus Christi, Texas, who was convicted, last year, of a bizarre plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in Washington). After 2001, the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq also bolstered Iran’s position, by ousting two rival regimes on its eastern and western borders. In 2004, Jordan’s King Abdullah fretted about a new Shiite “crescent” radiating from Tehran through Baghdad and Damascus to Beirut.

Yet the most striking impression Iran gives today is its sense of strategic loneliness. The vulnerability is partly a holdover from the Iran-Iraq War, the bloodiest Middle East conflict in modern times and still an obsession more than a quarter century after it ended. Billboards are devoted to portraits of the war dead. Disabled veterans are still dying from exposure to mustard gas. Other veterans are among Iran’s most hard-line politicians.

Iran has a minority mentality, too. Most Iranians are Shiites, a fraction of the Islamic world. Most are ethnic minorities distinct from their neighbors. Iranians have historically viewed themselves as exceptional in the region. In the early sixteenth century, the Safavid dynasty converted the country, en masse, from Sunni to Shiite Islam, in order to keep Persians distinct from the neighboring Ottomans. It was a political, not a religious, decision. Iran’s modern revolution has made it an ideological exception as well. Iran is the world’s only constitutional theocracy, and the only place in Islam’s fourteen centuries where clerics have ruled a state. For the past thirty-five years, Iranians have also felt exceptional—and exempt from international norms—because of the country’s claim to sacredness.

This sentiment is ingrained in Iran’s current policies. “Iran is not in any sort of routine groupings,” Zarif said. “It’s not an Arab country. It’s not part of the Indian subcontinent. So it’s in a neighborhood where it has some unique characteris-

tics. We are a country which embraced Islam, learned Arabic, but didn’t change its language or its culture. . . . That’s what keeps us unique.”

As a result, Iran’s relationships are largely tactical—enemies of enemies are friends, despite differences. Syria, the region’s most secular state, is at the top of that list. Apart from Lebanon’s Shiites, a relationship dating to Persia’s Shiite conversion, Iran’s ties with many regional players shift with time and circumstances.

“Iran is a lonely country and a lone country,” Abbas Maleki, the deputy director of the Center for Strategic Research, a think tank led by Rouhani before he became President, told me. “We have no strategic alliances.”

President Obama has spent more time thinking about Iran than about any other foreign-policy issue. In both 2008 and 2012, Obama campaigned on attempting diplomacy with Tehran. He has written to its Supreme Leader and to its President. And, last year, he authorized a secret channel, in Oman, that seeded the current public talks. “It’s as big a priority as we have in our foreign policy,” his deputy national-security adviser, Ben Rhodes, told me.

Iran has been the bane of all six American Presidents since the revolution. But Obama believes that dealing with Tehran is a historic opportunity and a necessity. “A nuclear deal does so many things at once,” Rhodes explained, in his windowless office, in the West Wing of the White House. “It would likely assure that this is the first Administration since the Cold War that didn’t see a new nuclear-weapons state emerge. It would be the most significant non-proliferation event in many years. It would prevent a military conflict. And it could potentially open the door to a different type of relationship between the United States and Iran that, in our view, could be very healthy for the region.”

Obama believes that, for the first time since the revolution, Washington and Tehran are both willing to try—at the same time. Iran is feeling the pressure of economic sanctions, imposed in four U.N. resolutions since 2006, and more harshly by the United States and the European Union since 2012. Its oil sales have plummeted by sixty per cent in the past three years; so has the value of its currency. Separate banking restrictions have

AT ANY ART FAIR YOU CAN'T GO WRONG
WITH A TALL, SKINNY RED-LADDER INSTALLATION
AND A TALL, SKINNY WOMAN IN A YELLOW
SKIRT LOOKING AT THE LADDER.
ALL IN ALL, A PLEASANT MOMENT
AT FRIEZE.



cut many Iranian financial institutions—and a lot of domestic commerce—off from global trade. Tehran can't get access to more than a hundred billion dollars of its oil revenues, which are stranded abroad.

Ahmadinejad's gross mismanagement of the economy exacerbated the crisis. Billions were poured into housing projects that proved unlivable. Two hundred thousand units ended up without water, gas, or access to a sewage system. The government ordered loans to be granted at interest rates below inflation. Cash payouts designed to compensate the poor for increasing fuel and food prices backfired; subsidies were doled out to almost everyone, and the government ended up paying out more than it gained from higher prices. The Western diplomat called it "voodoo economics." During Ahmadinejad's last year in office, inflation exceeded forty per cent, and his government was charged by the country's judiciary with the worst corruption since the revolution. The Islamic Republic is now widely perceived to have failed the *mostazafin*, the oppressed and disinherited in whose name the revolution was carried out. "When a system implodes from inside, no bomb can save it," Amir Mohebbian, a conservative Tehran columnist, told me.

Anger and alienation created diplomatic opportunity. "We have an actual mandate for Rouhani to govern in a different way and to conduct foreign policy in a different way," Rhodes said. "There is a constituency that now has some degree of power in the Iranian system, that really wants to climb out of this isolation, and is willing to do things that they didn't previously do." He added, "We believe that it is real. . . . We are willing to take the risks to get a deal."

But he also said, "We don't know how far this can go—both on the nuclear issue and on the broader relationship. . . . They've got to decide whether we're the Great Satan or whether we are their ticket into the community of nations."

If a nuclear deal is the centerpiece of Obama's strategy, just as important, long-term, Rhodes said, is the mere act of diplomacy—learning how to talk to Iran again. "There's nothing inherent in Iran that suggests that they need to be seen as part of the Axis of Evil," he said, referring to George W. Bush's lumping Iran with Iraq and North Korea, in 2002. "There are attributes to the Iranian peo-

ple that suggest that they could have a better relationship with us, that there is a sophistication to the Iranian people that is more evident in Rouhani and Zarif than in some of the other—well, than Ahmadinejad, to put it one way."

Most of the nuclear talks, except for the opening and closing plenaries, are held at Vienna's Palais Coburg, nicknamed the Spargelburg, or Castle of Asparagus, for its leggy neoclassical columns. The delegations meet in a gilded ballroom; they sit around three sides of a square. Baroness Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign-policy chief, sits at the top. The lead negotiators from the six major powers sit on one side, the Iranian delegation on the other.

The six major powers are nominally equal partners, but the Americans have more sway, since they introduced and effectively control most of the sanctions. So the pivotal exchanges are bilateral meetings between the Americans and the Iranians in hallways or staff suites.

"It is professional. It is respectful. It is quite substantive," said Wendy Sherman, the State Department's Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, who is the lead American negotiator. "I believe the intent is there."

The six major powers dine together, with wine. The Iranians hold themselves apart, taking meals, without wine, in the room next door. Yet a familiarity has evolved since the first Zarif-Kerry meeting, last fall. Sherman was pleasantly surprised when an Iranian envoy con-



gratulated her on becoming a first-time grandparent. She now knows about impending weddings in families of the Iranian mediators. In March, Zarif brought his wife, Maryam, and introduced her to Sherman and Ashton.

"Anytime one can understand that the person sitting across from you—besides being, perhaps, at times an adversary and at times a negotiator—is also a person is useful," Sherman told me. "So we do call each other by our first names. We do know

about each other's families." In between the monthly sessions, she said, they are often in contact by e-mail or telephone. "What happens now, which is useful, is when there is a concern it gets raised up pretty quickly, doesn't have to wait for the next round," she said. "We try to resolve it."

The gaps are still huge. No progress was made in talks last week, all sides conceded. On Friday, the State Department's deputy spokesperson, Marie Harf, told me, from Vienna, "It's a tough moment, but we knew there would be tough moments." Among many things, Iran has demanded the right to enrich uranium, with at least fifty thousand centrifuges, and it wants the sanctions lifted. The United States, among its many demands, wants to limit enrichment and to convert or close Iran's nuclear sites, with intrusive inspections that will extend for years, even decades. Sherman compared finding creative compromises to solving a Rubik's Cube. "This is not all linear—this is about a package," she explained. "There are two objectives for this negotiation. One, that Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon. And, two, that the international community has the assurance it needs that any nuclear program Iran has is exclusively peaceful. There are many paths to that." She added, "But no deal is better than a bad deal."

Skeptics aren't convinced. "It's a game," Gerecht, the former intelligence officer, said. "American officials are being sucker-punched by Mr. Zarif."

The toughest critics are in Congress, which may have the final word if a deal requires revoking sanctions legislation. "In my view, the Iranians are negotiating in bad faith, as we have seen them do in the past," Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee, told the Senate in February. "Iran's strategy, consistent with their past approaches that have brought them to a nuclear threshold state, is to use these negotiations to mothball its nuclear infrastructure program just long enough to undo the international sanctions regime." Menendez co-sponsored a bill, with Republican Mark Kirk, of Illinois, that would introduce new sanctions in the midst of diplomacy to increase pressure on Iran. It ultimately had fifty-nine co-sponsors.

To persuade critics, Obama will have to insure that the breakout time for Iran to produce sufficient nuclear material for a

single bomb is pushed back from two months to a year or more, Gary Samore, who served as the White House Coördinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction during Obama's first term, said. Samore is now the president of United Against Nuclear Iran. The United States has to build in enough time to detect, and respond, should Tehran secretly weaponize its knowledge. Even then, he added, Iran could covertly build a new facility.

The politics of engagement are even more suspect, Samore said. He pointed out that Iran's new President was the country's national-security adviser for sixteen years, when Iran made the greatest progress in its nuclear program. "Rouhani—like Iran's political élite—has bought into and pursued the creation of a nuclear option for twenty-five years. He's not a ban-the-bomb kind of guy," Samore said. "If you look at the history of Iran, betting on the reformers is not a good bet. Historically, they have not done well."

In any case, Ayatollah Khamenei has the last word. Iran also has a deep state among intelligence and security forces that have steadily amassed political and economic power in the past quarter century, partly as payback for fighting the gruesome war with Iraq. Hard-liners do not want a deal, for fear of losing their political edge and, in turn, their economic perks, said Hamidreza Jalaeipour, whose six independent newspapers were shut down by the hard-line judiciary. "If this nuclear deal is made, there will be no place for those hard-liners," he told me. "They know a deal will bring moderates to power." Khamenei is also wary of any agreement involving the United States, for fear that it will trigger perestroika-like openings that ultimately unravel the Islamic Republic. The 2009 uprising was a close call.

I asked Zarif what role Khamenei is playing in Iran's internal debate over nuclear diplomacy. "We give him as honest an opinion and as honest a description of what's happening as possible," he told me. "Sometimes he believes it is not necessary for him to intervene in every detail. And sometimes he has shown that he is prepared to spend a lot of time on very small details."

"It's interesting if you look at the way the Supreme Leader operates," he continued. "He tries to reflect what he sees as the consensus emerging within the political élite, as well as within the general



"Quarterly indictments exceeded Wall Street expectations."

society. Not the noise. He can differentiate. I mean, if he was going to be moved by the noise, I would have been dead a long time ago!"

The nuclear negotiations have already benefitted Iran. Since the interim deal, in November, Zarif has hosted delegations from Greece, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Britain, Ireland, Mexico, Austria, Poland, Singapore, and other countries. In November, France delayed the interim deal with new language at the eleventh hour, surprising the five other major powers and Iran. But France was also the first Western country to send a delegation, in February, of more than a hundred businesspeople—from energy, automobile, telecommunications, and engineering companies—to discuss future investment. Lady Ashton visited Tehran in March to talk about improving relations with the European Union. Other visits are booked.

None of these countries can legally do deals until sanctions are eased, and without jeopardizing business with the United States. But, as the Western diplomat told me, "Iran is one of the last gold mines on earth. Everyone wants to get back in here."

Zarif is leaning as far out on a ledge as possible without falling, the diplomat explained. "Zarif faces serious limits. He is too brilliant for the system. He's dealing with foreigners in English. The hard-liners spent their youth at the war front; Zarif never went to the front. He was studying in the United States. So he's someone who

will never be trusted one hundred per cent, even if he does have the ear of the Supreme Leader. Which I think he does."

I asked Zarif what a nuclear deal might mean for the two countries in which he has divided his life. "The United States—as President Obama very rightly said—has tried all other options which were on the table or off the table," he answered. "And the only option that's left is to try to reach an understanding, which was probably the most sensible option to begin with. But there is a saying—that we diplomats always choose the right approach after we have tried all the wrong ones." The new diplomacy, he said, is now "the only game in town. And I think, if we play it right, it will change the course of Iran's relations with the West."

The nuclear diplomacy has "broken the ice," he said. "We have broken the vicious cycle of trying to hurt one another, which was the case for the past ten years." But he also said that he did not see a future in which the two countries would again be "buddies," pillars of each other's policy. Iran is more likely to develop relations with Europe on issues of mutual concern. "In the longer perspective," he said, he foresaw "probably managed differences with the United States, and the possibility for greater understanding."

He stopped himself. "I gotta be careful," he said. "I want to take one step at a time. I don't want to predict a future that, in and of itself, becomes an impediment to achieving it." ♦

ROGUE ELEMENT

How an anti-government militia grew on a U.S. Army base.

BY NADYA LABI

In June of 2011, Isaac Aguigui and his wife, Deirdre, learned that they were going to have a boy. Aguigui, then twenty years old and a private in the Army, spoke excitedly with friends about becoming a parent. Deirdre, twenty-three and a sergeant, sent her father a text announcing, "It's a boy," repeating the final word eight times to punctuate her glee. They picked out a name, Calvin James, and when Deirdre adopted an orange tabby they named it Hobbes, evoking the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes."

The two had met in 2009, as cadet candidates at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for West Point, at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Deirdre tutored Aguigui in math; he was gregarious and handsome, with black hair and angular features. "She was elated she'd found the right guy," her father, Alma Wetzker, said. When Wetzker met Aguigui, he was charmed. "I sensed a kindred spirit who thought a lot like me," he said. The relationship wasn't against the school's rules, but it was contrary to its spirit of discipline: barracks are gender-segregated, and cadets must be single. After Aguigui's roommate accused him of sleeping with Deirdre in his bed, they quarrelled, and Aguigui was kicked out. Rather than give up on military life, he enlisted in the Army. Deirdre, who had enlisted a few years earlier, dropped out of school to marry him.

Aguigui went to basic training, and then to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, for advanced instruction in military intelligence; Deirdre deployed to Iraq. When she returned, in December of 2010, the couple moved into a two-bedroom apartment on base at Fort Stewart, Georgia. Distance had frayed their relationship, and proximity didn't seem to help much, either. Still, their prospects had improved by the summer of 2011. Deirdre had been promoted to sergeant, four ranks

above her husband. And Calvin, conceived during a period of reconciliation, seemed to signal happier times. Deirdre turned their second bedroom into a nursery, buying a mahogany crib and a high chair. On July 4th, the couple went to a concert by the Zac Brown Band, a country group, and Deirdre called her husband's childhood friend Matthew Asimakoupoulos. "She was telling me how good she and Isaac were doing," he recalled. "They were getting back together. She sounded happy."

In July, when Deirdre was five months pregnant, she complained on Facebook of terrible heartburn. "I feel like I swallowed a fire ball," she wrote. A few days later, her parents got a phone call from Aguigui. "He said he went to lie down and Deirdre went to watch TV in the other room," Wetzker recalled. "When Isaac got up, Deirdre was unresponsive. He tried to wake her up and rushed her to the E.R. They worked on her for about an hour and tried to save the baby, but it didn't work." Aguigui told another soldier that doctors believed a blood clot had killed Deirdre; she had suffered an embolism in Iraq. But, in an audio diary that he kept, he made an entry three months later in which he blamed himself. "I'm feeling lonely, sad, confused, angry, frustrated, pissed at the world, pissed at myself," he said. "I keep thinking about the night she died and I get angry that I didn't know C.P.R. What kind of fucking soldier doesn't know C.P.R.?"

At Deirdre's funeral, Aguigui was withdrawn, avoiding her parents. "You could tell he was devastated," Asimakoupoulos said. "He didn't want to be around people. I think he was trying to cope with it in his head and get through it." But grief didn't prevent Aguigui from visiting the Army office in charge of death benefits two days after Deirdre's death. As the spouse of a soldier who died on active duty, he was entitled to

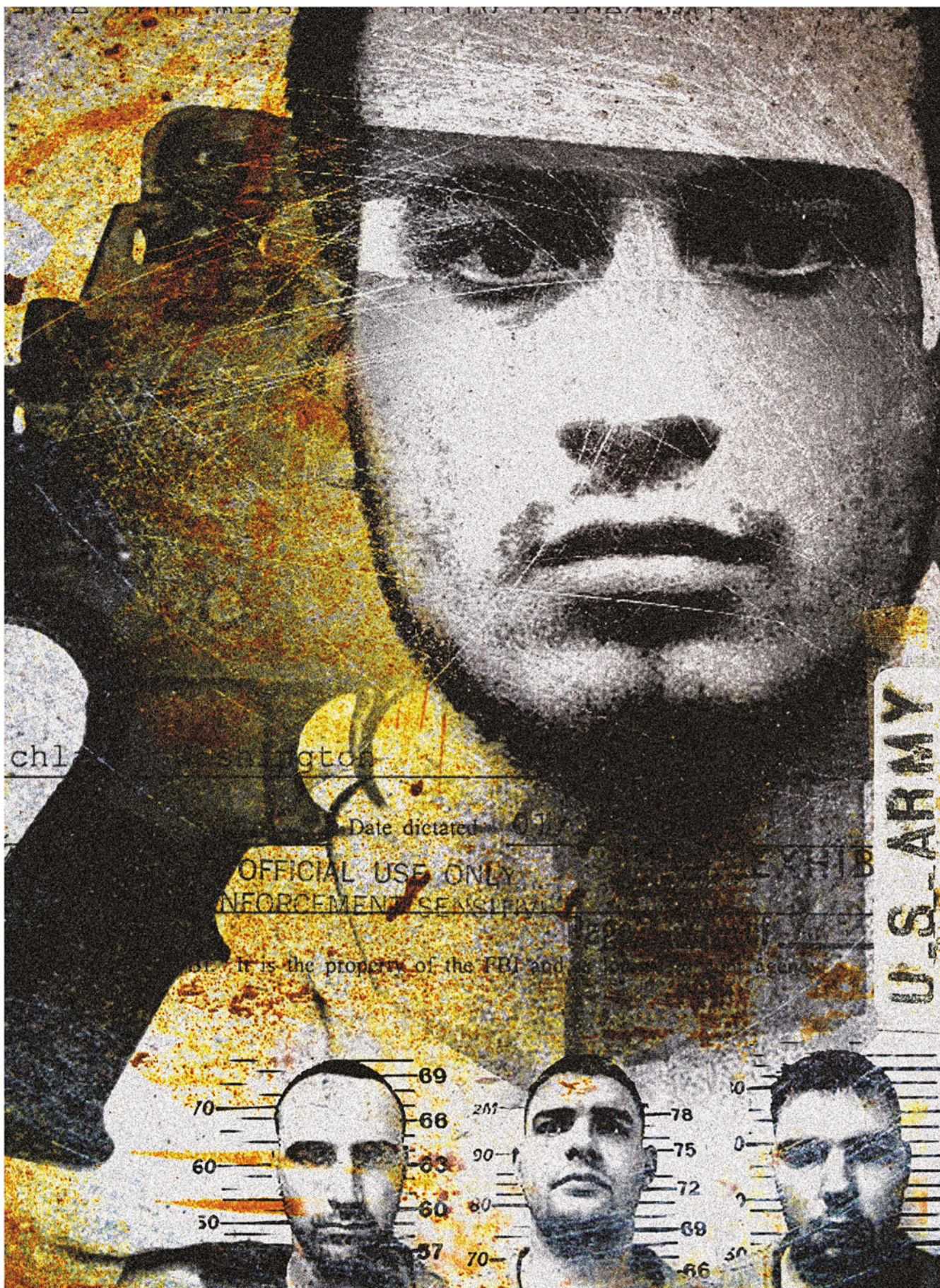
about half a million dollars. Within days, he got an initial payment of a hundred thousand.

Fort Stewart, in southeast Georgia, is the home of the 3rd Infantry Division, which led the invasion of Iraq, in 2003. It is the largest military installation in the East, more than three times the size of Atlanta. Separated from the neighboring town of Hinesville by security checkpoints, it combines suburban living and Army discipline; inside the gates are low-slung brick buildings that wouldn't be out of place in a strip mall, set off by grassy fields, a Burger King, a commissary store. Aguigui belonged to a squadron of five hundred soldiers, of whom about eighty were stationed at Fort Stewart—the rear guard for the soldiers who had deployed to Mosul, Iraq. On the base, new privates mingled with soldiers returning from difficult tours of duty.

After Deirdre's death, Aguigui was relegated to the barracks for single soldiers, known as a center for drinking and easy hookups. He threw a keg party and broke down in tears in the middle of it. He went to the Temptations strip club, across the border in South Carolina, and the higher-end Platinum Plus. He ended up dating two strippers, and, they later said, gave them thousands of dollars to help pay bills. At after-parties with the strippers, he smoked a synthetic marijuana called Spice; he snorted bath salts and cocaine and took Ecstasy. As Aguigui's friend and fellow-soldier Sergeant Michael Schaefer told me, from a jail in Columbia, where he was serving time for robbery, "He started going crazy."

Aguigui became close to Private Christopher Salmon, nicknamed Phish, who had been caught committing travel-voucher fraud in Iraq and was assigned extra duty as punishment. His wife, Heather, was pregnant, and she had recently been discharged from the Army for prescription-drug abuse. The two men sat together, smoking Spice and

STEPHEN MORTON/AP (TOP RIGHT), LONG COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/REUTERS (BOTTOM ROW)



Isaac Aguigui (top) recorded his aspirations. "I have guns. I have money," he said. "I'm the nicest murderer you'll ever meet."

talking about their deepening antipathy toward the military and the government. At first, Heather was skeptical of Aguigui; she had met him before Deirdre died, at a beer-pong party off post, and overheard him arranging to meet a girl at the barracks. But after Deirdre's death she felt sorry for him—and, she said, “he was my husband's best friend.” She suggested inviting him to dinner at their home, a white four-bedroom row house on the base. “He came to my house and never really left,” she said. “One night turned into a week, a week turned into a month.” He took over the couch, and then moved into his own room.

Shortly before Deirdre's death, Aguigui had accidentally fired a handgun as he tried to unload it, and he was given a demerit known as an Article 15. (The term refers to Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice; soldiers who violate it can have their rank reduced or be assigned punishment duties.) Aguigui, who already held the lowest possible rank, was restricted to the barracks for two weeks and got forty-five days of “corrective training tasks”: scraping gum off sidewalks and cleaning out dumpsters.

Angry that he had to serve the punishment just after his wife's death, Aguigui complained of the military's “ridicule and restrictions.” He claimed that the Army had killed his wife, by prescribing her drugs that had caused a fatal blood clot. As he and Salmon talked late into the night, Aguigui began to spin fantasies of striking back. On leave in September, he visited the High Mountain Hunting Supply shop, in central Washington, where Asimakoupoulos worked. He spent thirty-two thousand dollars on fourteen guns, including high-powered rifles, and other military hardware. At Fort Stewart, he began boasting about conducting “active shooter situations”—scenarios in which a killer attacks in a confined area to maximize casualties.

In a series of letters from prison, Aguigui described an early life that was constrained but idyllic. The son of an Army combat engineer from Guam, he grew up on Army bases across the country. When he was thirteen, his family—his parents, Edward and Annette, and his four siblings—moved to Cashmere, Washington, a quiet town surrounded by

apple and pear orchards. After Edward retired from the Army, he learned that two of Aguigui's cousins had been placed in foster care, and so the family adopted them. Edward landed a job in construction, and Annette homeschooled the children. Sundays were devoted to church.

“I guess you could call my upbringing ‘lovingly restricted,’” Aguigui wrote. Edward had worked as a drill sergeant, and he was firm with the children. They weren't allowed to date, or to play violent video games, and Aguigui didn't drink or use drugs. The siblings were close, but Aguigui, bright and outgoing, craved more interaction. He joined a swim team at a local high school—“I always did look at public school with a sense of longing,” he wrote—and another at the Y.M.C.A. He frequented a youth group at the Free Methodist Church in the nearby town of Wenatchee. “He was a role model,” his grandmother Gloria said. “He was a very good kid, very intelligent, very respected by his elders.”

Aguigui said that he felt “born to be a soldier.” At eleven, he got a Marlin .22 rifle, and he later went to shooting ranges with his grandfather, a Vietnam vet. When he was sixteen, he built a fort on wooden posts in the back yard, using scrap material from construction sites. With an old Russian rifle by his side, he camped there on a cot, burning charcoal in a pot during the winter. “I imagined myself a militiaman keeping watch over my family's house,” he told me. Guerrilla fighters fascinated him: “Something about a partisan's struggle against oppression always appealed to me.”

In his teens, he got involved in politics through the state's Republican Committee chairwoman, who helped him secure a spot as a page at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the summer of 2008. Although he acknowledged Barack Obama's ability as a speaker, he wrote that he disapproved of the President's “socialist policies” and objected to his campaign playing the “race card.” “This country is so focused on black vs. white that they forget how many other races there are out there,” he complained.

During his senior year, he fell in love with a girl, and his mother warned him, “If you can't abide by the rules of this house, then you need to find somewhere



“She's had so much work done that she's starting to look like her mother.”

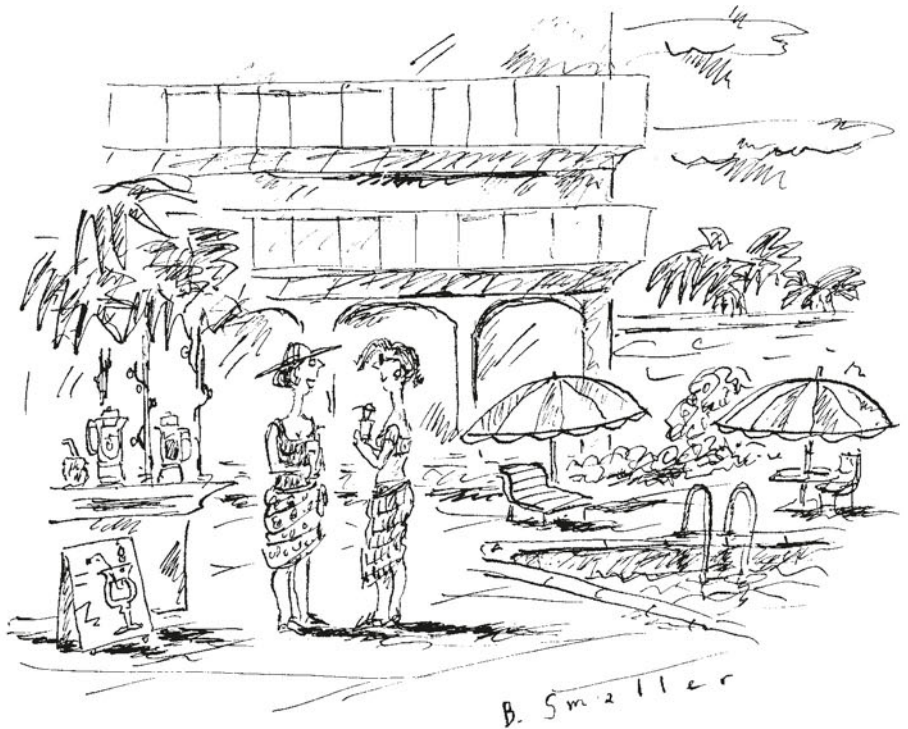
else to live." Aguigui impetuously packed up his belongings and crashed with his friend Matthew Asimakoupoulos. "He was very respectful around people, calling everybody 'sir' or 'ma'am,' and was great with my parents," Asimakoupoulos said. "He got up, made the bed, and made sure everything was fine so he didn't bother anyone." Then his mother called to tell him that a package had arrived from West Point: his acceptance to the prep school.

He met Deirdre Wetzker there a few months later. Like Aguigui, she was one of seven children. Growing up in a cerebral and socially awkward Mormon family in the Midwest, she struggled to fit in. "Deirdre was my most difficult child," her father said. "We didn't have a good relationship when she was growing up, because there are certain things a teenager shouldn't be doing. She always wanted people to like her, and that doesn't always work." To keep a close eye on Deirdre as she entered her teens, the Wetzkers homeschooled her. She refused to go to church, and her parents were distressed. Finally, the family agreed that it made sense for her to live with an uncle in Oregon.

After getting a G.E.D., she worked as a massage therapist in Salt Lake City, and decided to go into the military when she couldn't keep up with the bills. Proficient in French after years of study, she was sent to the Defense Language Institute, in Monterey, California. After a year and a half learning Arabic, she was encouraged to apply to the prep school.

In November of 2010, Aguigui arrived at Fort Stewart for his first assignment as a soldier. "You're going to be proud of me," he told his grandmother. "When I come home I'm going to get a property and we're going to raise pigs and chickens." Deirdre's experience of the military was less idealized. In Iraq, a mortar attack near her living quarters injured several people in her unit. Soon afterward, she developed the embolism, in her femur; put on medical leave, she joined her husband on the base.

Fort Stewart was a base for some of the most deployed units in the Iraq war—the last stop before flying overseas. "You go around Fort Stewart, you talk to any of the soldiers," Private First



"It's so nice being on vacation and having different things to complain about."

Class Alyssa Rangel, a friend of Deirdre's, said. "It's always 'We're ready for the call of duty.'" But that readiness came with a disregard for ordinary constraints. "I would hear about the parties from my son," Brett Roark, the father of Aguigui's fellow-soldier Michael Roark, said. "There's an atmosphere of 'Let's throw a party—it may be our last party.' I'd ask my son, 'How can you not be there on a Monday morning for muster?' He'd say, 'My sergeant's got it taken care of.'"

In the Army, Aguigui compensated for his early abstinence. "There would be these huge parties off post at one of the local hotels, where we would drink, party, and get away from the Army life style," Rangel said. "At times, with Isaac, it would be, like, 'Dude, slow down.'" At Fort Stewart, he began accruing drug and alcohol violations. Still, he impressed his mates as a promising soldier. "He never seemed to be in a bad mood," his friend Michael Schaefer said. "He would listen to people and talk to them. He's one of them types who get along with everybody." After passing a rigorous background test, he worked in military intel-

ligence, training to provide assessments of the enemy's capabilities.

After Deirdre's death, Aguigui began connecting with other disgruntled soldiers, targeting those who were in trouble or emotionally vulnerable. "I noticed that the vast majority of soldiers on extra duty have a deficiency of some sort," Aguigui told me. He befriended Roark, a nineteen-year-old private who was waiting eagerly to be called to Iraq. When the call didn't come, Roark complained to his father—"I want to go be a scout, and I'm stuck here washing dishes"—and began to collect demerits. He was disciplined for fighting and reckless driving, and at one point his handgun was confiscated. Aguigui treated Roark as his errand boy, giving him his debit card to pick up groceries, drugs, and guns.

As Aguigui built a network, he made friends with a soldier named Michael Burnett, who was helping to fix the squad's computers. Burnett was a striking presence: six feet six, handsome, and full of fiery ideas about overthrowing the government. "He gave off the impression of being everybody's big brother," Aguigui wrote. Burnett was going through a

difficult divorce, and was raising a one-year-old son. He and Aguigui began smoking together in the pit favored by soldiers of the rear guard, and after Burnett received an Article 15 for possessing an unregistered handgun the two spent more time together.

Burnett and Aguigui talked about cars and girls—"dude stuff"—and about politics. Aguigui invited Burnett to dinner several times, and he persisted when Burnett declined. Burnett pitied him for his loss, and shared his dislike of the Army, so in October of 2011 he came to a barbecue at the Salmons'. He began hanging out there on weekends and after work, and Heather obligingly babysat his young son. "Isaac is extremely smart and charismatic," Burnett said. "At first, you don't see the charisma. He doesn't show that until you're close to him. At one point in our relationship, it was like he was my little brother. But he was manipulating everyone, including myself."

Aguigui showed Burnett an article in a video-gaming magazine called *Game Informer*, which served as a kind of manifesto. The article, about a game called *Rainbow 6 Patriots*, began with the words "Americans are angry," in red letters. In the game, an elite counterterrorist unit, Team Rainbow, fights a coalition of domestic militias called the True Patriots. The game's creative director, David Sears, says in the article that the True Patriots' leader intends to become a martyr, believing that "people will look at him as the founding father of a new country in which people have embraced the civil liberties that are granted to them in the Constitution." The counterterror officers are presented as the game's heroes, but a number of scenes show an affinity with the militia's populist rage. In one, a real-estate investor watches TV as his wife ap-

proaches, wearing a silky robe. Abruptly, intruders fling the door open, shove his wife aside, and knock him out. He wakes up to one of the intruders wielding a knife. "Very nice place you've got here," he says, as a baby wails in the background. "You really did cash in on everyone else getting foreclosed, didn't you?" The investor is strapped into a vest lined with explosives and told that he has to detonate himself in Times Square.

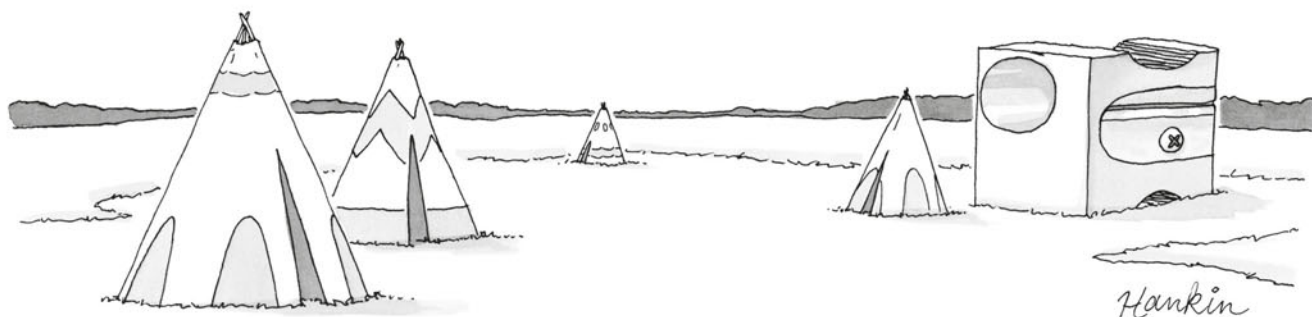
Burnett sympathized with the militia in the game. "We've been fighting a war for over ten years with no political gain," he told me in a recent interview from a prison in Savannah. "I have friends who went to Iraq and Afghanistan who have been killed or wounded by roadside bombs and terrorists blowing themselves up, and nothing has changed." He feared that the government might turn on its citizens, in which case "you need to be able to protect yourself." Aguigui told Burnett that he had tried to join a militia in Washington but was rejected—perhaps, Burnett suggested, because of his heritage as a Pacific Islander. Burnett gave Aguigui a maxim, inspired by a line of Thomas Jefferson's: "Any good government must be overthrown every ten years."

After extra duty one night, Aguigui remembers, Salmon told him that "the leader of the resistance in the game was identical to how he envisioned me." When Aguigui responded, "We could do this," Salmon told him, "I'll follow you to Hell, brother." Aguigui told me that this was when his network of disaffected soldiers started thinking of itself as a militia. "That was the moment it all began," he said. "We weren't out to change the government, we were out to destroy it." Aguigui named his group FEAR, which stood for Forever Enduring Always Ready.

"I believe most Americans share my beliefs; they're just afraid to show it," he explained. "The only way to overcome all fear is to become something everyone else fears." He referred to key members of the group, like Burnett and the Salmons, as the Family.

In October, Aguigui made a late-night entry in his audio journal, elaborating his vision for FEAR. The militia would have "no rank structure." It would be like "a bike club"—a community. "Can you imagine going to Costco and buying, like, ten dozen fucking everything, and coming back with trucks?" he said to Heather, who told me that she listened with half an ear as she did household chores. Aguigui added that his father had agreed to drill the militia on weekends, and that there would be an elite platoon called 666. "The militia is not allowed to know what the Triple Six does," he said. "Only that it is an honored platoon to be a part of."

With Salmon's help, Aguigui devised a scheme to buy ninety acres in Washington State and build a compound for the militia. Around the base, Aguigui spoke openly about his plans. According to one soldier interviewed by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, "The entire S-2 section"—the intelligence group in Aguigui's squadron—"had knowledge of Aguigui's plans and many were willing to be a part of it." For Aguigui, the thought of commanding an army inspired Biblical raptures. "We're the first and last word," he said. "The first word is my word, 'They're going to die.' My word is the order 'Go.'" The last word, like the trumpet of the Archangel Gabriel, he suggests, would be "the sounding of Phish's or one of his agents' rifles." Aguigui said that he was stoned, but he seemed high mostly on power. "I have a minuteman militia that's being built. I



have guns. I have money," he said. "I'm the fucking boss. You don't want to fuck with me. I'm nuts. I'm the nicest murderer you'll ever meet."

At his most devious, Aguigui would claim to be schizophrenic. After Deirdre's death, he told me, he spent weeks repeatedly watching the same three movies—"Sucker Punch," "V for Vendetta," and "Rampage"—until a voice emerged in his head. "I created Gray, the first voice, who taught me to play a game of alternate realities to occupy my dying mind," he wrote. Then another voice emerged, "the distillation of all of the anger, confusion, hurt, hatred, and betrayal that I felt." Aguigui said that Heather named the personality Loki, for the Norse god of mischief. He explained that Gray would act as the referee between Aguigui, the good, and Loki, the bad.

As Loki, Aguigui would buy guns and drugs, and check and recheck his bank statements. "He wouldn't make sense when he was Loki—he would talk crazy," Adam Dearman, a military policeman who joined the group, said. Burnett suggested that Loki was a kind of aspirational alter ego. "It's this person he wants to be on the outside that he knows he can't be," he said. "Loki shows no weakness." But it's unclear whether Aguigui really believed he was Loki. "He would try to say this character would come out and he would have no idea it happened," Heather said. "I think it was a mind game."

Among members of the Family, Aguigui bragged about killing someone who had stolen one of his shotguns, but he later said that it was a fiction, intended "to keep the Family in line." More often, he employed a softer, almost confessional leadership style. "He'd say, 'Do you think we could do *this*?' " Burnett said. "He'd say, 'I could never lead without you guys' help.'" Aguigui adopted different personas with different members. He made Roark his "do-boy," as one member said, protecting and taunting him in the manner of an older brother; they went running together and visited shooting ranges. He treated Phish as his closest companion, and he offered Burnett admiration and a tight social circle. With Heather, he talked frequently about Deirdre; he confided that he was bisex-

ual, asking her not to tell Phish, who would disapprove.

The group became a haven for troubled soldiers. Dearman had returned from Iraq suffering P.T.S.D. and suicidal thoughts; Aguigui got high with him and kept him company. "We all became really, really close," Dearman said. Members shared their fears in talk-therapy sessions, and Aguigui instituted a Head Check, during which they talked through disagreements. "If we were having an emotional problem, we'd sit down and talk about it," Dearman said. "That's what we were all there for. You have a problem, we'll fix it." Aguigui devised an emblem for FEAR, an overlapping alpha and omega that resembled an anarchy symbol, which he engraved on weapons and had tattooed on his right shoulder. In November, Burnett and Dearman got tattoos, too. "In the Army, if the person beside you is wearing the same unit patch, you know you can rely on that person," Dearman told me. "When we got the tattoo, it gave us a sense of unity."

Aguigui began to use the Rainbow 6 article to evaluate potential recruits, in an initiation process that he called Awakening. New members brought in practical knowledge. One of them was Sergeant Anthony Peden, a sniper, who practiced shooting with members of FEAR. Like others, he had returned from Iraq depressed—"You could tell he was emotionally not right," Burnett said—and was going through a bitter divorce. His truck had been repossessed, so he often stayed with Burnett to get around. Peden taught Aguigui to make bombs with PVC pipe, nails, and gunpowder. Burnett told investigators that he saw the two working on a bomb in a bedroom at the Salmons' house.

As Aguigui began using harder drugs, he became more aggressive. He came up with the idea of splitting FEAR into a white cell and a black cell, to mirror the divide between himself and Loki. The white cell would be responsible for "legit" operations, including medical teams to support the militia; the black cell would perform illegal activities, including assassination and theft. Burnett and the Salmons went to Mission Essential, in

nearby Hinesville, and spent sixteen thousand dollars on sixteen guns, including a Taurus revolver known as the Judge.

Aguigui's most audacious plans recalled the fantastical violence of Rainbow 6 Patriots. At one point, he considered bombing a popular fountain in Forsyth Park, in downtown Savannah. He talked about blowing up a dam in Washington and poisoning the state's apple crop, in order to sow economic unrest. The memory of Deirdre became a lodestar for the group. Aguigui imagined a congressional hearing into her death, and announced that he would kidnap his Army supervisor and force him to attend, wearing an explosive vest. His larger goal was to overthrow the U.S. government, and give the country back to the people on July 17, 2031, the twentieth anniversary of Deirdre's death.



Since Barack Obama was elected President, militia groups have proliferated in the United States. In 2010, Daryl Johnson, then a senior domestic-terror analyst at the Department of Homeland Security, found that the number had more than tripled in the past three years, from eighty-five to more than three hundred. The times are conducive to extremist anger: there is a black President, a sputtering economy, a disappearing white majority, and recurring talk of stricter gun laws. According to one expert, the militia movement, which was largely middle-aged in the nineteen-nineties, has recently attracted a surge of younger adherents through social-networking sites.

It can be difficult to distinguish between active militias and disgruntled citizens who happen to have guns; the D.H.S. definition specifies paramilitary training and anti-government beliefs. In practice, many of the groups are typified by resistance to taxes and to gun laws, and a conviction that individual rights are being encroached on. "The fundamental notion is that the rest of the world has already been taken over by the New World Order," Mark Pitcavage, the director of investigative research at the Anti-Defamation League, told me. "They believe our government is collaborating with this

evil tyrannical global entity and trying to strip us of our freedoms, starting with our arms.” A common fear is that the government will use a natural disaster as an excuse to declare martial law and round up militia members into concentration camps.

Many groups mimic the structure of the military, assigning ranks and arranging members in battalions and field forces. It’s unusual, however, for active-duty soldiers to belong. “A typical militia group is largely a group of wannabes,” Pitcavage said. There are exceptions: Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, was an infantry gunner in the Gulf War. In 2009, the D.H.S. suggested that soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan posed a risk. “Right-wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to exploit their skills and knowledge,” one study predicted, and warned of “the willingness of a small percentage of military personnel to join extremist groups,” because they are “disgruntled, disillusioned, or suffering from the psychological effects of war.”

Michael German, a former F.B.I. agent who infiltrated right-wing militias, told me that members have a penchant for talk over action. “These groups sit and brainstorm—‘Why don’t we do this? Why don’t we do that?’” German said. “It’s not about the act. It’s about the reaction they’re trying to provoke.” Johnson agrees that most militias are fundamentally defensive. “They’re hunkering down, waiting for things to happen and reacting,” he said. “They commit firearms and explosives violations. They’ll build an improvised device and test it.” Violence is most likely when suspicions overtake the group, and a first violent act tends to lead to others. “If any of these people get paranoid to the point where they start acting out on what they fear, you have a real problem, because you’ve got somebody who’s armed to the teeth,” Johnson says.

In February, 2010, the anti-tax advocate Andrew Joseph Stack flew a single-engine plane into an I.R.S. building in Austin, Texas, killing a manager and himself, and injuring thirteen others. “Well, Mr. Big Brother IRS man,” he wrote in a suicide note, “take my pound of flesh and sleep well.” In 2012, Schaeffer Cox, the twenty-eight-year-old leader of the Alaska Peacemakers Militia, was

convicted, along with another member, in a plot to kill or kidnap state troopers and a Fairbanks judge. A vocal proponent of the Second Amendment, Cox had won thirty-seven per cent of the vote in the Republican primary for the state legislature in 2008. This past November, twenty-three-year-old Paul Ciancia opened fire at Los Angeles International Airport, killing one Transportation Security Administration officer and wounding



five others. His duffelbag reportedly contained a one-page manifesto referring to himself as a patriot and stating his intention to kill “TSA and pigs” in order to “instill fear in their traitorous minds.” More often, though, violence occurs when extremists turn on their comrades, fearing that they have become government informants, or end up in shoot-outs with police at traffic stops. “The way you react to normal stimuli changes,” German said. “You get pulled over because

SWEDISH FISH

I ran over a shadow,
and the car went *bump*.
In the back, the kid
was worrying his sweet
tooth with the tip
of his tongue.
What he wanted
was to catch me
in a generous mood.
He saw all the signs:
“Vote Yes,” “Speed Table,”
“No Exit,” and he mumbled
with disgruntled syncopation,
as in *sazzifrazzin larws*
and *larws*, the dark
graphics standing
between us and the wildness
we shed to get through.
What he wanted
was to stay

your tags have expired and you’re thinking, This is it. They’re onto me. Your reaction is to fight to the death.”

Mark Potok, a senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks incidents of domestic terror, said that the profile of militias has changed. “It’s not like it was forty years ago, when Klan plots were worked out in smoky rooms full of white men,” he told me. “The vast majority of domestic-terror plots come from lone wolves or very small cells, which make them vastly more difficult to uncover.” For the most part, law-enforcement agents stop militants before they commit violence. But it is difficult to tell militants who talk tough from those who will act, especially without violating constitutional rights. “Law enforcement needs to have probable cause before launching an investigation,” Johnson said. “But McVeigh didn’t commit crimes before he lashed out. He went from selling bumper stickers to bombing a federal building in less than two years.”

When Aguigui bought his cache of weapons in Washington, a relative reported the purchase to the local police. “She knew that Isaac’s wife had died, and was concerned,” Sergeant John Kruse, of the Wenatchee police, said. The police referred the matter to the F.B.I. in

in the shadow of the fish
crow, hooking
left where they let
down the guard-
rail, to crash
through the sage-
brush and angry
old trees that wait
to be thrown
into relief.
Oh, there are Great
rules I want
him to keep,
so I broke the little
red fish into halves
and sent them flying
into the back
when he opened his mouth
to speak.

—Carolyn Guinzio

Spokane and to the Army C.I.D. in Tacoma. The F.B.I. investigated the purchase—which was legal in a state that has avidly embraced the Second Amendment—and relayed misgivings to its counterparts in Georgia and at Fort Stewart. But the authorities appear to have decided that Aguigui belonged to the great majority of militants who do no harm, and so they looked away.

As a private, Aguigui earned a base salary of less than fifteen hundred dollars a month, but he gained a reputation for almost heedless generosity. “He handed me five thousand dollars to go buy my car, no questions asked, and large sums of money for drugs,” Dearman said. “He’d hand me a debit card and tell me to go shopping for my daughter’s Christmas presents.” In the summer of 2011, Heather began helping Aguigui to manage his money. By then, she said, he had barely two hundred thousand dollars remaining, and he continued to spend tens of thousands on guns, drugs, and strip clubs.

Aguigui, looking for income, recruited Dearman to commit crimes as part of FEAR’s black cell. He ingratiated himself with one of Dearman’s buddies, Sergeant Timothy Joiner, who began running errands for the group. In November, Joiner broke into a home in

Hinesville and stole firearms, which he turned over to Aguigui. A month later, when Dearman ended up in prison, Joiner and Dearman’s brother committed more thefts, grabbing televisions, a Kevlar vest, and anything else that could be pawned to raise bail money. They were arrested soon afterward.

At Fort Stewart, Aguigui operated with considerable license. Several FEAR members told investigators that he bribed his supervisor, Staff Sergeant Scott Zipp, to excuse him from work; Aguigui, who said that he paid a total of six thousand dollars, arranged for two payments to be videotaped, gathering evidence against the sergeant. (A C.I.D. file noted the allegations, but the Army’s public-affairs office said it found no record that Zipp had been charged with an offense; Fort Hood, Zipp’s current base, declined to make him available for comment.) Sergeant Joiner committed crimes for FEAR, and agreed not to report members’ drug use. And though the Army suspected Aguigui of crimes—including killing his wife—he was allowed to remain on base. At one point, Aguigui admitted to being involved with three other soldiers in a plan to kill local drug dealers. The Army investigated him for conspiracy to commit murder, but the investi-

gation produced no apparent results.

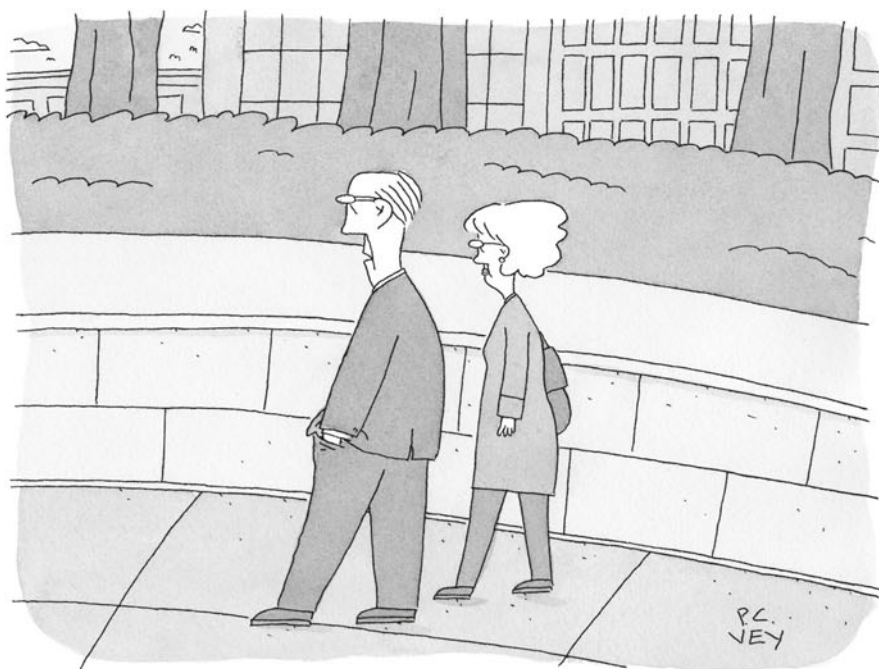
In less than two months, Aguigui bought as much as fifteen thousand dollars’ worth of cocaine, marijuana, and Ecstasy, with help from Jeffrey Roberts, a bouncer at a night club in Savannah. Aguigui invited Roberts to become his head of security. Initially, Roberts was impressed. “I thought, This kid’s got it together,” Roberts said. “A couple hundred thousand in his bank account. He’s got a good head on his shoulders.” Aguigui paid Roberts twenty-five hundred dollars to research starting a night club, and another twenty-five hundred after they shopped for uniforms together.

But, when Roberts saw the guns and the drugs at the Salmons’ house, he thought, “Wow, this isn’t my cup of tea,” he told me. Under pressure to provide more drugs, he sold the group sugar cubes, claiming that they were laced with LSD. The next time he visited, he was summoned upstairs. “A door gets closed,” Roberts said. “There’s Chris. I can tell he’s on something. His eyes are wide open and he’s got a baseball bat in his hand and the whole entire room is covered in plastic. He’s, like, ‘You’re trying to fuck the Family.’” Roberts talked his way out and never returned.

Suspicion spread inside FEAR, too. After Heather began auditing the group’s finances, militia members became convinced that Roark, who had unfettered access to Aguigui’s credit card, had stolen between ten thousand and thirty thousand dollars. Aguigui was furious. “The paranoia level in the group began to consume them,” Johnson said.

In late November, Burnett said, Aguigui told him that Roark and his girlfriend, Tiffany York, needed to be killed—Roark because he had stolen from FEAR, and York because Roark had told her everything. “He took steps to put a contract out for someone to do the murders, at five thousand dollars apiece,” Burnett said. “I stepped in and said it was a bad idea.” (Aguigui denied putting out a contract on York.) A few days later, as Loki, Aguigui tortured a stray calico that was perched on Deirdre’s old truck. Saying that the cat was his commanding officer, Aguigui stabbed it, thrust his hand down its throat to try to feel its beating heart, and eventually chopped its head off.

Despite these violent displays, Aguigui most often presented himself to the



"Those once-in-a-lifetime events are beginning to add up."

Family as a grieving husband. "They think I might have accidentally killed Calvin in the process of rolling her and doing C.P.R.," he said in his audio journal, as Heather listened. "That plagues my soul like a fucking demon every day. I don't mind killing people, but killing my own blood makes me want to vomit." Dearman recalled that Aguigui cried frequently about Deirdre. "He would tell me how much he missed her and how he wished he could have spent time with his kid with her," he said. Burnett said that Aguigui's apparent anguish was "how he hooked me."

But the Aguiguis' union was more troubled than Isaac let on. In the summer of 2010, with Deirdre in Iraq, he returned to bachelor life, partying and spending money extravagantly. Worried that Deirdre was having an affair in Iraq, he began dating Samantha Cox, a seventeen-year-old hostess at a restaurant outside the gates of his base. It wasn't his first act of infidelity, he conceded, but Cox was the first woman he "saw on a regular basis." Deirdre believed that he asked people to spy on her. "It spooked her that Isaac had this network of people watching her," Alma Wetzker said. "She couldn't spend any time or develop any relationships, even

in Iraq, without him finding out what she was doing."

The couple reunited at Fort Stewart near the end of the year, but their tensions worsened. For some time, Aguigui had pressed Deirdre to experiment with sexual bondage, and she had declined. Suddenly, after a soldier in her unit openly promoted the practice, she became willing. Aguigui took it as evidence of an affair. But, according to Deirdre's friend Alyssa Rangel, she was simply trying to be an accommodating wife: "Her thinking was 'Let's try it and see what happens.'" Deirdre was upset by Aguigui's jealousy, and dismayed by his drug use. "She didn't like it, period," Rangel said. "She thought it was irresponsible, especially with him being part of the M.I. field. That can make you lose your clearance so fast." Finally, she kicked him out of their apartment, and that spring, according to a C.I.D. agent, she asked for a military protective order. She also filed a report alleging that Aguigui was making her have sex with people and in ways she didn't want. But, once she learned that she was pregnant, she felt that she had to make the marriage work. In June, she allowed Aguigui to come home.

At the time, Aguigui was having

affairs with two women at Fort Stewart, according to Schaefer; he complained about Deirdre constantly, saying that the child wasn't his. (DNA tests later proved him wrong.) Once, after Aguigui argued with Deirdre, he told Schaefer, "I'm better off without her." When Schaefer said that they should get a divorce, Aguigui changed the subject. "I don't think he meant that he wanted to divorce her," Schaefer said. Two days before Deirdre's death, Aguigui took off with Schaefer for South Carolina. Deirdre was furious. According to the C.I.D., she sent him a text message: "Why do you keep doing this to me? . . . If you take a weekend away, then fucking tell me." Deirdre's father said that she called him that day in an emotional state. "She finally realized that she and her baby weren't safe staying with Isaac," he said. "She decided to leave."

Aguigui promised to start driving back, but instead went to a barbecue and played beer pong. As he finally made his way home, he stopped at a vitamin shop to buy a bottle of potassium iodide, which Deirdre was allergic to. When Deirdre died, Aguigui came under suspicion, but in the fall of 2011 a military examiner ruled that the cause of her death couldn't be determined. Though a quarter of the potassium iodide was no longer in the bottle, an autopsy dismissed iodide as the cause.

Burnett had always thought that Aguigui's grief was genuine, but he began to believe that Aguigui had killed Deirdre. The violence, actual and imagined, was getting out of hand. "When they started talking about the agricultural destruction in Washington, the things brought up were making me uncomfortable," Burnett said. He insisted that he drew the line at violence against civilians. "I'm a patriot. The government has failed the people. My goal was to take it out of the politicians' hands and give it back to Joe and Mary Citizen," he said. "I've never planned to do a terrorist act." He now regrets how readily he fell under Aguigui's influence. "I was extremely depressed," he said. "Isaac finds out your weakness and he feeds into it. Mine was I felt like my family had been taken away. He replaced it with the Salmons and all that." Dearman, who Burnett

says held the cat while Aguigui tortured it, was similarly uneasy about the progress of FEAR: "I wasn't expecting it to blow up to be what it ended up becoming."

At about 9 P.M. on December 5, 2011, Burnett told me, he got a call from Anthony Peden, who was at the Salmons' house. "I need you to come over now," he said. "It's an emergency." Worried that something had gone wrong with Heather's pregnancy, Burnett roused his son and drove there. "Are you O.K.?" he said when he saw Heather. "What's the emergency?" Heather told him that Roark, who a few days earlier had been discharged from the Army for repeated misconduct, had mistakenly left his cell phone at her house; on it, she found text messages saying that he was planning to return to his home town, near Seattle. York, his girlfriend, was also leaving, to stay with her father, in California. Burnett didn't understand what the problem was. "Who cares?" he said.

"Tonight's the night," Aguigui said. "We're going to kill Roark and his girlfriend."

The group had resolved to kill Roark a week or two earlier, Aguigui later testified. "It started off as a conversation about punishment," he said. Aguigui believed that Roark had stolen the money, and York had mentioned to Heather that he had rented a storage locker. Aguigui guessed that Roark was stealing weapons, which further inflamed him. Because Roark "couldn't be trusted to be silent about the operations of the group," Aguigui said, "it was decided by the group as a whole that he would need to be executed."

To lure Roark to the Salmons' house, Aguigui told me, he had instructed Burnett to invite him to go night shooting. When Roark arrived, it became evident that there was a hitch in the plan: he had brought York with him. To buy time, Aguigui told Roark and York to go pick up provisions; they drove to a store called Sunset Novelties and bought some herbal stimulants. After they left, Aguigui debated the girl's fate with his "four counsellors." Heather and Burnett argued that she should be spared. Peden said that she was "far too dangerous to be kept alive," and Salmon agreed. "It was

tied," Aguigui wrote. He cast the deciding vote to kill her.

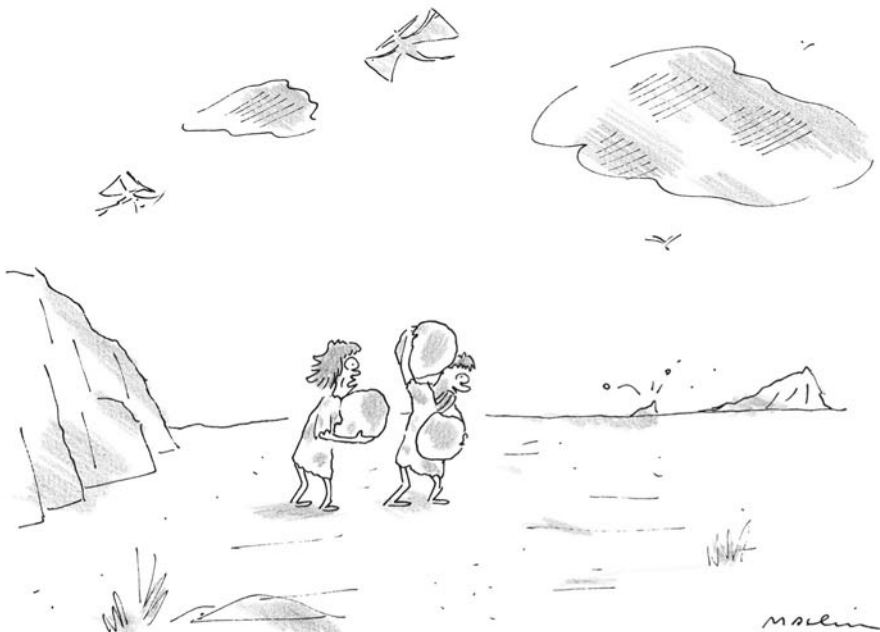
Burnett says that he walked into the kitchen to talk to Heather. "This is a terrible idea," he told her. "We need to convince him not to do it." She replied, "The decision is made." (Heather denied any involvement in the plans.) Burnett repeated his concerns to Phish, who ignored him. Brandishing a pistol, Aguigui threatened to kill Burnett's son if he didn't come along. "You don't have a choice," Burnett remembers him saying. Burnett was scared: "There are four people in the house capable of killing relatively easily." He agreed to go, leaving his sleeping son in Heather's care.

When Roark and York returned, the other members of FEAR—Aguigui, Peden, Salmon, and Burnett—got into Aguigui's Jeep. Aguigui left his cell phone behind, and, as they drove, he communicated with Roark by two-way radio. He wanted to leave the area—too close to home—so Roark suggested a place near Morgan Lake, outside Ludowici, a small town with only one traffic light. In the car, Aguigui ordered Burnett to shoot York. Aguigui wanted to test him, since "he seemed hesitant about the whole situation." Burnett refused, and the atmosphere grew tense. Peden intervened, saying, "I'll do it." Salmon, assigned to kill Roark, was less resistant.

"He seemed excited," Burnett said. "He was, like, 'I can't believe I'm going to do this,' but he was 'up' about it."

Near a large metal sculpture of a man in a top hat—the mascot of a defunct business—Roark turned onto a dirt road that headed to the lake. His voice came over the radio, "I know a place where we can go." Roark pulled over, and the others followed. It was quiet in the Jeep as Aguigui handed gloves to Peden and Salmon. Burnett noted Aguigui's manner—calm, almost nonchalant—and thought, How can I live through this night without getting murdered?

Everyone got out, and Peden walked to the passenger side of Roark's car. As York opened the door, Peden shot her in the head with the Judge pistol. He felt her pulse, and then shot her a second time. Salmon, pointing his pistol, ordered Roark to get out of the car and onto his knees. "I told him the only reason Tiffany had to be executed was because he had failed to follow instructions," Aguigui said. As Aguigui interrogated him, Roark revealed the location and the combination of the storage locker. He admitted he'd taken money, but said that it was spent. Peden handed Salmon the Judge, and Salmon pointed it at the back of Roark's head and shot. As they returned to the Jeep, Peden told Salmon to "double tap." Salmon



"The problem? The problem is that, for every rock I earn doing the same work as you, you earn two rocks."

walked back and fired a second shot into Roark's head.

Before getting back in the Jeep, Aguigui later said, they turned their sweatshirts inside out and removed their gloves. Inside, Peden asked for a cigarette, and Burnett silently handed him a Newport, taking another for himself. Aguigui and Salmon, he said, were full of energy. "How do you feel? Wow, you're part of the club," Aguigui told Salmon—the club of those who had killed. "I can't believe I did that," Salmon said. "It felt amazing."

At the Salmons', they stripped and put their clothing in a black garbage bag. They rehearsed alibis. Aguigui emphasized that they should stick together and not do anything out of the ordinary, so the next day they gathered for a barbecue at Peden's home, off base. Burnett, adopting his customary role, grilled steaks and chicken that Aguigui had bought, while Heather made salads in the kitchen. In the back yard, another FEAR member built a bonfire to burn the bag of clothing, which also contained the spent shells and a cell phone—most likely the one that Roark had left at the Salmons' house. Aguigui looked on peevishly as his favorite loafers—which, he wrote, he'd "foolishly worn" on the night of the murders—went up in flames.

The day after the killings, a local retiree named Tommy Howard went driving with a friend, a deacon at his church, through a wooded area near the Altamaha River where he'd caught a couple of dozen white perch the day before. He drove his old pickup slowly, with no destination in mind. At nearly seventy, he was happy just to ride around with his friend, retracing paths they'd known since childhood. After about ten miles, he turned onto a dirt road. There, he saw a dark-gray Nissan Altima, with the driver's door open. On the ground was a pair of black-framed eyeglasses.

Howard thought he'd stumbled upon a pair of teen-age lovers. "You see a car in the woods, you think hanky-panky," he said. As he drove closer, he saw the body of a young man on the ground, curled up on his right side, his feet near the rear tire. He stopped his truck. "I thought I saw a gun by his hand," he recalled. It turned out to be Roark's two-way radio. "Blood done run down his head and it done dried," Howard said. He dialed the police

department, and told his buddy not to touch anything.

The officer who responded found a teen-age girl in the passenger seat with gunshot wounds to her head. The driver had been shot in the head twice. As the police investigated the scene, the girl's cell phone kept ringing, listing the same contact, "Mom." The victims were quickly identified as Roark and York.

Officers from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation caught up with Aguigui the next day. He stuck to his story: on the day of the murders, he got off duty at 3 P.M., went straight to the Salmons', drank, and watched movies with Peden, Burnett, Heather, and her two kids; he hadn't spoken with Roark for a week. When Heather was interviewed, two hours later, she concurred, adding that she'd cooked a ham for dinner and that they had watched "Red" and a "kids' movie." According to the G.B.I.'s files, Heather assured the agent that "all of the individuals she had named as being at her house, were there throughout Monday night, stating that she was a light sleeper, and would have known if someone would have left." Salmon, Burnett, and Peden all told a similar story.

Still, the G.B.I. agents were growing suspicious. The group's members had sent disquieting texts, such as "Someone else is going to get it" and "Another one to take care of." The Army told the agents that it had investigated Aguigui for conspiracy to commit murder. And the A.T.F. advised them of the arsenal that the group had been collecting, rais-



ing concerns that it "was planning on doing something radical." In Roark's locker, agents found Tannerite explosive, a galvanized pipe with smokeless black powder and wires, and weapons engraved with the FEAR emblem.

A few days after the murders, Aguigui, worried that the police "were onto us," prepared to make a run for Washington State, packing a bag and setting it by the door. That night, he was drinking and playing cards when his phone rang:

it was his commanding officer. Aguigui ignored the call, but the commander kept trying for hours. When Aguigui finally answered, he was summoned to an "emergency formation" at 0900. He remembers Salmon telling him, "Man, I think they're going to arrest us." Aguigui brushed off his concerns.

At morning formation during the week, the soldiers sing "Dog Face Soldier," the 3rd Infantry Division's anthem: "I wouldn't give a bean to be a fancy-pants marine; I'd rather be a dog-face soldier like I am." That Saturday, they skipped the anthem, and the first sergeant asked several soldiers to help with a detail. Aguigui sensed something was wrong when he heard the names: Aguigui, Peden, Burnett, Salmon. He and Burnett were taken to a room and left alone. As he was checking to see whether the windows would open, he saw black S.U.V.s drive up. "Just stay calm," he told Burnett. Military police in body armor and ski masks rushed in, their weapons raised.

The Family rule is 'You don't talk, no matter what,' Aguigui told a G.B.I. agent in an early interview. But the camaraderie that the soldiers had built up—complaining about the Army, drinking, doing drugs, and shooting on the range—fell apart under pressure. In questioning, Peden broke first, telling a G.B.I. agent that he was scared that Aguigui would kill him or his son if he talked. Burnett quickly followed, seeming relieved to talk; he gave a detailed account of the murders, and revealed that the group had discussed taking over the ammo control point at Fort Stewart. Dearman also spoke to investigators, and said that when Aguigui "mentioned taking care of Mike and Tiffany" he had decided to go stay with his brother in northern Georgia. (Though Dearman was not involved in the murders, he agreed afterward to come back and dispose of Roark's car; on the way, he was arrested for shooting someone in an unrelated matter.) Only the Salmons stuck to the planned alibi.

"They're singing like birds over there and they're painting a pretty damn bad picture of you," the G.B.I. agent told Aguigui. "If you're not this evil mastermind," he added, "laughing and joking about it and threatening to kill their families if they said anything, by God, tell me."

"If that's what you want to hear," Aguigui replied coolly.

"They're crying on the freaking floor, blubbering," the agent continued. "I got tissues used up the yin-yang on them. If you're going to stand on the truth, tell me."

Minutes later, Aguigui, sobbing, gave his own account, which largely harmonized with Burnett's, except that it placed much of the blame on Peden, who, he said, pushed the group to tie up "loose ends."

"You have to understand there's things I don't even get about this," he said. He imagined Dr. Frankenstein's reaction when his monster killed its first victim. "'Dear Jesus, what have I created,'" Aguigui said. "And all he wants to do is go back to that moment before he even brought it to life."

"What's the monster he created?"

Aguigui answered, "I think it's me."



"So far, open-mike night has not caught on."

Despite grand rhetoric about the threat posed by an illegitimate government, domestic militias in the past two decades have achieved little but small, local acts. Often, they are consumed by their own ethos of suspicion and violence. In those cases—and in the case of FEAR—these spasms may prevent militants from causing greater damage.

That idea is little comfort to the families of Roark and York, who are suing the Army for failing to protect their children. "This gang was in the Army, running around," Roark's father, Brett, said. "The Army says they couldn't arrest Aguigui and the others because they hadn't broken any laws. But this guy killed his wife and unborn son. And they had information from the feds. There are tons of things the Army could have done." Fort Stewart's chief spokesman, Kevin Larson, said that he could not comment on active litigation.

Last July, Aguigui entered a military courtroom at Fort Stewart, his ankles hobbled by chains. He was there for an Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a preliminary hearing, to determine whether he should be charged with the murder of his wife. According to witnesses, on the day of her death Aguigui returned home from South Carolina, cooked dinner, and then had sex with

her. He told an investigator that she had asked to use hand and leg restraints, and that pain aroused her. Afterward, Aguigui claimed, he fell asleep and was awakened by a phone call. He went to the living room, found Deirdre lying on the couch with the television on, unresponsive, and called 911.

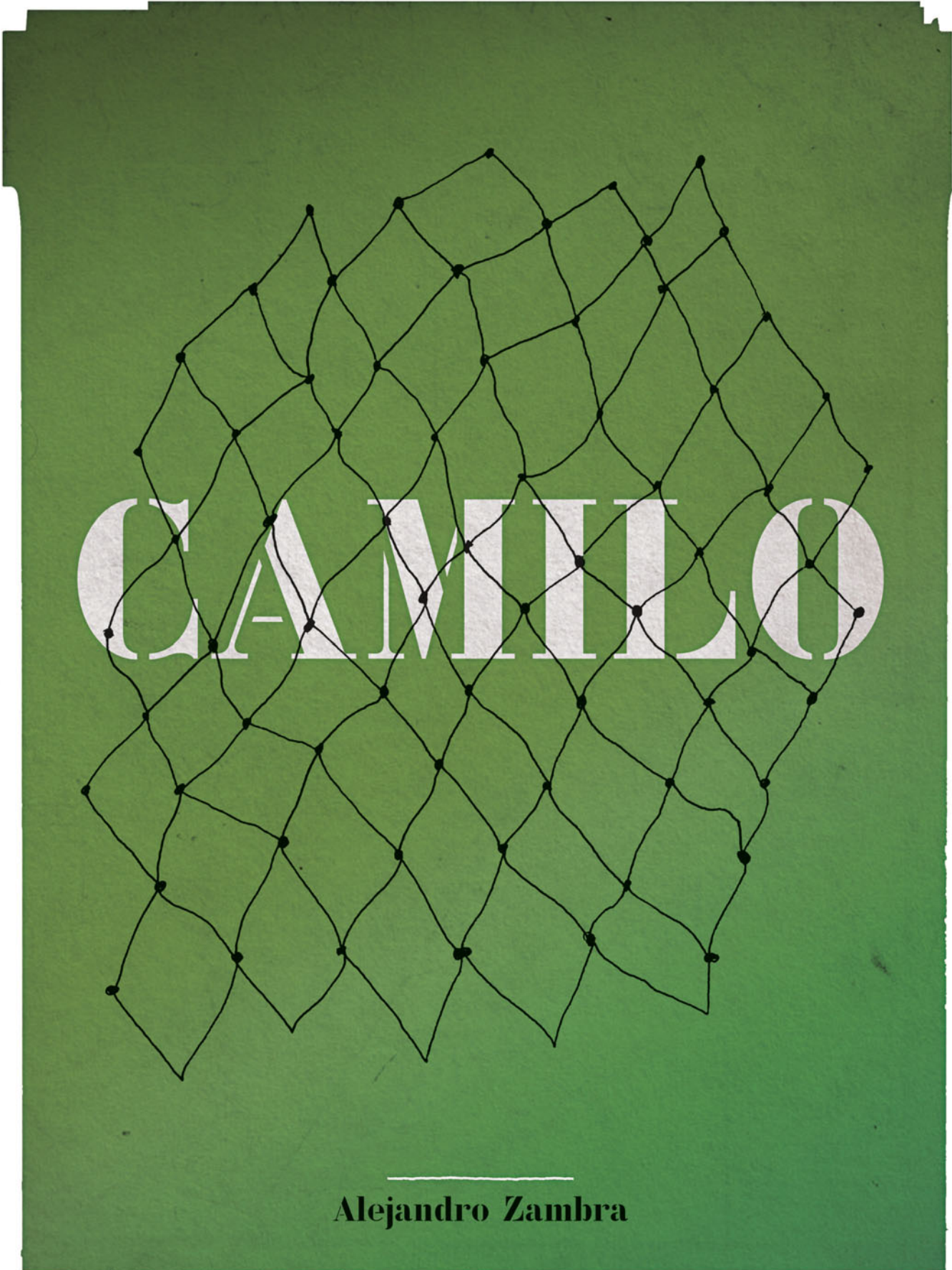
On the bed, the investigators found handcuffs, Kama Sutra cards detailing sexual positions, a book on the female orgasm, a sex toy without a battery, and lubricant. The C.I.D. special agent Justin Kapinus believed that the scene was staged. "It looked like the cards were deliberately laid there," he testified. "It seemed excessive."

The prosecution highlighted two texts sent the day of Deirdre's death. In one, Deirdre told Aguigui that she needed money back in her account; in the other, Aguigui texted his girlfriend Samantha Cox, "Baby, you want to know something sexy? I'm not working another day, baby. We'll have plenty of money. All I need is your body whenever I want it." A civilian medical examiner revisited the autopsy report and photographs, and determined that Deirdre had died of asphyxiation, most likely from a choke hold. In the past, Aguigui had told neighbors inquiring about loud noises coming from the apartment that he and Deirdre sometimes practiced Army "combatives," and a neighbor

testified that she heard similar sounds on the night of Deirdre's death. Aguigui was later formally charged with Deirdre's murder, and in March he was convicted by a military court.

Two weeks after his Article 32 hearing, Aguigui pleaded guilty to killing Roark and York. He described the murders in detail, expressing little remorse. The judge had asked that Peden and Salmon be present, so they could hear that Aguigui was willing to testify against them; they sat in the courtroom wearing orange jail uniforms and chains. "So he turned out to be a rat after all," an observer muttered. Aguigui was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

On the witness stand, Aguigui looked straight ahead, avoiding eye contact with Phish. But he'd sent his former Family member a letter in jail. "I miss you bro," he wrote. "This all sucks but we have got to keep it together. Yes, they've got us this time. But walls cannot contain a cause as strong as ours for long. One day we will all be free again together, and mark my words, my brother, we shall have our just revenge." He ended by asking Phish to pass a request to Heather. "See if she can send me a copy of The Article, I could use the motivation. I love you, man, keep your head up always. Remember, one day . . . WE WILL RISE." He signed off with the FEAR symbol and the words "Anarchy, always, —Loki." ♦



CAMILO

Alejandro Zambra

"I'm Camilo!" he shouted to me from the gate, opening his arms wide, as if we knew each other. "Your daddy's godson." It seemed terribly suspicious to me, like a caricature of danger, and I was nine then, already too big to fall for a trap like that. Those dark glasses, like a blind man's, on a cloudy day. And that jean jacket, covered in sewn-on patches with the names of rock bands. "My dad's not here," I told him, closing the door, and I didn't even give my father the message; I forgot.

But it turned out to be true: my father had been a close friend of Camilo's father, Big Camilo—they'd played soccer together on the Renca team. We had photographs of the baptism, the baby crying and the adults looking solemnly into the camera. All was well for several years—my father was an engaged godfather, and he took an interest in the child—but then he and Big Camilo had a fight, and later, some months after the coup, Big Camilo was imprisoned, and after he was released he went into exile. The plan was for his wife, July, to bring Little Camilo and meet up with him in Paris, but she didn't want to, and the marriage, in fact, ended. So Little Camilo grew up missing his father, waiting for him, saving up money to go and visit him. And one day, just after he turned eighteen, he decided that if he couldn't see his father he should at least find his godfather.

I learned all this over tea the first time Camilo came to have *onces* with us, or maybe I found it out gradually. I want to be clear here, and I'm getting confused. But I remember how moved my father was that afternoon when he saw how much his godson looked like his old friend. "You have the same face," he told him, which was not necessarily a compliment, because it was an unremarkable face, difficult to remember, and though Camilo used many products to style his stiff hair fashionably, it had a tendency to play dirty tricks on him.

Despite my initial distrust, Camilo soon became a benevolent and protective presence for me, luminous, a real older brother. When he set off for France to fulfill his lifelong dream, that's what I thought: that it

was my brother who was leaving. It was January of 1991; that I can say for certain.

I wasn't the only one who was fascinated by Camilo. My older sister was completely infatuated, and my younger sister, who could not usually keep her attention on anything for more than two seconds, would watch him intently when he came to visit, celebrating every one of his wisecracks. Not to mention my mom, with whom he joked around but also talked seriously, because during that time Camilo was—in his own words—full of religious tension, and although my mother was no saint, she was so astounded by the idea that a person could deny the existence of God that she'd sit and listen to him in awe.

As for my father, I think that, for him, Camilo became more of a companion or a friend than a godson; he even let Camilo address him with the informal "you." They would sit up late in the living room, talking about all kinds of things—except about the existence of God, because my father didn't allow such things to be questioned, or about soccer, because Camilo was the first man I met who didn't like soccer. He didn't even understand the rules. The only match he'd ever played took place in the San Miguel gym, when he was five years old: his knowledge of the game back then came from the goals he'd seen replayed on TV, so he spent the whole afternoon running every which way, cheering for goals that hadn't happened and happily waving to the crowd, utterly uninterested in the ball.

My own relationship with my father, however, was closely tied to soccer. We watched or listened to games, sometimes we went to the stadium together, and every Sunday, at noon, I went with him to a field in La Farfana, where he played goalie. He was really good—I remember him suspended in the air, grabbing hold of the ball with both hands and clutching it to his chest. Still, I always suspected that his teammates must hate him, because he was the kind of goalie who spends the whole game barking instructions, ordering around the defense and even the midfield players, all at the top of his lungs. "Pass it back, man, pass it back! Here! Pass it back, man, back!" How many times did I hear my father call that out in a tone of utmost alarm. When

he yelled at me—if he ever did—it was never as loud as those shrieks that his teammates bore in annoyance, or at least that's what I assumed, since trying to play with that nonstop commotion in the background can't have been pleasant. But he was respected, my father. And he was really good, I'll say it again. I would settle in behind the goal with my Bilz or my Chicolito, and sometimes he would glance at me quickly to be sure I was still there, and other times he would ask me, without turning around, what had happened, because that was my father's main problem as a goalie: it was why he'd never been able to go pro—his myopia was so severe that he could see only as far as the midfield. His reflexes, however, were extraordinary, as was his bravery, which he paid for with two fractures in his right hand and one in his left.

During halftime I liked to go and stand in the goalie's spot, and invariably I'd think about how immense the goal was. Over and over, I wondered how anyone could possibly block a penalty kick. My father blocked penalty kicks—of course he did. One out of every three or four: he never dived for them early; he always waited, and if the execution was anything less than perfect he blocked it.

I remember a trip to the country, when Camilo discovered that I blinked between street lights. I still do it, even when I'm driving; I can't help it. As soon as I get on the highway, I start blinking carefully, trying to hit the exact midpoint between the street lights. That day, we were crowded into the back seat of my parents' Chevette with my sisters, and Camilo noticed that I was tense, concentrating, and then he started to blink at the same time that I did, smiling at me. I got worried, because I didn't want to make any mistakes; I fervently believed that only if I blinked between the street lights would we all be kept safe.

My nervous habits don't bother me so much now, but when I was a kid they used to make me so anxious that even the simplest activities became unbearable. I guess I was partly or completely O.C.D. Like many children, I scrupulously avoided the cracks in the sidewalk. If I ever accidentally stepped on one I went into a state of unspeakable despair—and yet I knew, on some level, that it was all too ridiculous to talk about. I also had an



"The thing is, you have to really want to change."

obsession with balancing out the parts of my body: if one leg hurt, I'd hit the other one to make them even. Sometimes I'd move my right shoulder to the rhythm of my heartbeats, as if I had two hearts. I had some truly random routines, as well, like going nine times up and down the steep staircase that led from the pool to the park. This wasn't really so strange—it could have been a kind of game—but I managed to keep it from seeming like one by hiding it carefully: I'd stop at the bottom step, shake my head as if I'd forgotten something, and then turn around and retrace my steps.

If I mention all this it's only because Camilo always seemed willing to help me. That time in the Chevette, when he realized that I was nervous, he patted my hair and said something I don't remember, but I'm sure that it was warm, caring, and subtle. Sometime later, when I started telling him about my eccentricities, he told me that everyone was different, and maybe the strange things I did were normal, or maybe they weren't, but it didn't matter, because normal people stank.

I could fill many pages writing about Camilo's importance in my life. For now, I remember that it was Camilo who, after many long and sophisticated arguments, managed to get me permis-

sion to go to my first concert. (We saw *Aparato Raro* at the Don Orione school in Cerrillos.) He was also the first person to read my poems.

I'd written poems since I was little, which was, of course, a shameful secret. They weren't any good, but I thought they were, and when Camilo read them he did so respectfully, though he immediately explained that these days poems didn't rhyme. That was news to me. I'd never read a poem that didn't rhyme, and I'd always thought that poetry was something unchanging: ancient and immutable. But it was great to hear, since there were times when it cost me the world to find rhymes, and I knew I couldn't always fall back on the easy combinations.

I asked him what the difference was, then, between a poem and a story. We were stretched out by the pool—in full-on photosynthesis, as he would say. He looked at me with a pedagogical expression and told me that a poem was the exact opposite of a story. "Stories are boring. Poetry is madness, poetry is savage, poetry is a torrent of extreme emotions," he said, or something like that. It's difficult not to start inventing, not to let myself be carried along on the scent of memory. He definitely used the words "madness," "savage," and "emotions." "Torrent," maybe not. I think "extreme," yes.

Back at home, he picked up my notebook and started to write poems himself. It took him maybe half an hour to write ten or twelve long texts, and then he read them to me. I didn't understand a thing; I asked him if other people understood his poems. He told me that people might not understand them, but that wasn't the important thing. I asked him if he wanted to publish a book. He told me yes, he was sure he would, but that wasn't the important thing, either. I asked him what the important thing was. And he said this, or this was what I understood: "The important thing is to express your feelings, and not to be afraid to reveal yourself as a passionate, interesting man, maybe a bit fragile, someone who accepts his feminine side." That was definitely the first time I heard the expression "feminine side."

Another day, not long after that, he asked me if I liked men or women. I was a bit alarmed, because there were guys I liked—Camilo himself, for example—but I was quite sure that I liked girls more, much more. "I like girls," I told him. "I like them a lot. I think they're hot as hell."

"O.K.," he said, very seriously, and then he added that if I liked guys it was O.K.—that happened sometimes, too.

I remember Camilo that afternoon, standing on the bow-shaped bridge in Providencia, smoking. I could tell it was not your usual cigarette, but I didn't know exactly what it was. "It's too strong for a kid," he said in apology when I asked for a drag, because by then I'd started smoking, once in a while. This must have been 1986 or early 1987; I was ten or eleven years old. I know because at that age I still didn't know my way around Providencia or downtown Santiago very well, and also because later that day we went to buy "True Stories," by the Talking Heads, which was still a new album then.

"We have to solve your problem," Camilo had told me that morning as we were walking to the bus stop. I asked him which problem, because I thought I had a lot, not just one. "Your shyness," he replied. "Women don't like shy men." And I really was shy back then; I'm talking about a genuine shyness, not the kind you see now, when so many things are blamed on shyness it's

almost a joke. If someone doesn't say hi, it's because he's shy; if a guy kills his wife, it's because of his shyness; if he cheats a whole town, if he runs for office, if he eats the last bit of Nutella from the jar without asking anyone—shy. No, I'm talking about something else: real stuttering insecurity.

"I'm going to help you," Camilo told me. "I'm going to give you a lesson, but don't worry, you won't have to do anything—just don't leave my side, no matter what I do." I nodded, feeling a bit dizzy. During the hour-long bus ride, he told me jokes, most of them ones he'd told me before, but this time he told them in a very loud voice, all but shouting. I thought the lesson was that I had to laugh equally loudly, which was very hard for me, but I tried. Then, as we were getting off the bus, he told me that that was not the lesson.

We went up onto the bridge and stopped halfway across. Camilo smoked in silence, while I looked down at the murky, rushing water of the river, which was higher than usual. I focussed on the current, until I was so concentrated that I had the feeling that the water was standing still and we were aboard a moving boat, although I'd never been on a boat in my life. I stayed like that for a long time, fifteen, maybe twenty minutes. "We're on a boat," I said to Camilo. I had trouble explaining; he didn't get it, but then suddenly he saw it, too, and he let out a cry of profound astonishment. We went on gazing at the current while he repeated, "Incredible, incredible, incredible."

Afterward, as we were walking toward Providencia, he told me emphatically, "I've always liked you a lot, I still like you a lot, but now I respect you, too." When we got to an intersection, maybe Providencia and Carlos Antúnez, he looked at me, made a subtle, sharp movement with his head that meant *now*, then threw himself to the ground, clutching his stomach, and started laughing extravagantly, scandalously. A circle of people gathered around us right away, and I did not want to be there, but I understood that this was the lesson. When he finally stopped laughing, there were five policemen there asking him for an



explanation. Camilo gave me a nod of approval—I had stayed beside him the whole time, and I had even laughed a little, too. I watched the cops' faces, impassive and severe, while Camilo rattled off a disjointed explanation in which he talked about me and my shyness, and how it was necessary to teach me this lesson so that I could, he told them, grow. He had disrupted the public order, we were living under a dictatorship, but Camilo managed to placate the policemen, and we walked away after making the strange promise never to laugh in a public place again.

"I'm really high," Camilo said to me, or maybe he said it to himself, a little concerned. We went into a store to buy the Talking Heads album. The place seemed different from any record store I'd been to—everything struck me as luxurious and exclusive. When the sales clerk handed us "True Stories," Camilo tried to translate for me the opening lyrics of "Love for Sale," though he didn't know any English. I took the album from him, examined its red-and-white cover, and then I gave him the same quick gesture he'd given me: *now*. He barely had time to acknowledge it with a panicked look before I took off with the record in my hands, and we went running, dodging pedestrians at full speed, for a long time, laughing like crazy.

That afternoon, when we got home, there was a match. I don't remember which one, but Colo-Colo was definitely playing, and Camilo stayed to watch it with us. My father asked him why. "I don't have a father," Camilo said. "You're my godfather, so you have to teach me something about soccer. Otherwise," he warned, winking at me, "I'll be a fairy."

It became routine for Camilo to watch the games with us, but I don't know if my dad enjoyed it. The questions Camilo asked were so simple and off-base that, before long, boredom overcame us.

On December 4, 1987, I committed a mortal sin. Los Prisioneros had just released "La Cultura de la Basura," their third album; I was dying to buy it, but I didn't have a single peso. I considered stealing again, but I didn't think I

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could do it—that time with the Talking Heads had been a spontaneous flash of inspiration. Then I had a better idea: since the annual telethon was happening that day, I asked my parents for money to help the handicapped children, and then I headed off to the store and bought the cassette.

I had a terrible time of it. I locked myself in my room to listen to the tape, and at first every song sounded, in one way or another, as if it were about my act of villainy. I decided that I had to go to confession, but I was afraid of the priest's reaction. "Confess to me," Camilo said, when I told him I felt guilty. "What do you need to go blabbing your business to a priest for? Also, I'll tell you straight off: masturbating is not a sin. I think even Jesus whacked off a few times thinking about Mary Magdalene."

I laughed so much I felt giddy. Never in my life had I heard such heresy. There was a picture of Jesus above the table in the living room, and from then on I could never look at it without thinking that that was what he looked like after ejaculating. Anyway, I had never thought that masturbation was a sin. When I told Camilo what I had done, he told me that the telethon met its goals through sponsorships alone, and that maybe I had needed that cassette, maybe I had done the

right thing. "I don't understand," I said.

"O.K.," he pronounced. "If you still feel guilty, pray that one prayer where you have to hit your chest."

Camilo still insisted that we teach him about soccer, and sometimes we practiced penalty kicks in the street. But my father would get fed up; he said that Camilo didn't concentrate, that his interest wasn't serious. Still, one weekend, the three of us went to the Santa Laura Stadium, to watch a double-header. First it was Universidad de Chile against Concepción. Camilo, to my father's and my annoyance, had decided to root for the U.—which had been his father's team—although of course he didn't even know the players' names. He liked the way that everyone in the stadium criticized and shouted at the players, but he was surprised to see that they got angry with the ref. He decided to come to his defense, and although at first people didn't take it well, it was truly funny to hear Camilo, every time the ref called a foul or carded a player, stand up and yell, "Very well done, sir! Excellent decision!"

Camilo kept cheering on the referee during the next match, which was between Colo-Colo and Naval, I think. I joined him for a while, even though watching Colo-Colo was to me a very

serious matter. I had grown up admiring Chino Hisis, Pillo Vera, Carlos Caszely, Horacio Simaldone, and of course Roberto Rojas—el Condor. I had hated some players too: Cristián Saavedra (I don't know why), and Mario Osbén, but only during the period when the coach inexplicably used to make him and Roberto Rojas alternate as starters. That infuriated me. One of the great joys of my childhood was going down to the fence to yell at the coach, and I'd really let him have it. At home, cursing was strictly forbidden, but at the stadium I had free rein.

None of those players were on the team anymore that day at the stadium with Camilo, but the one I missed the most was obviously Condor Rojas. All Chileans admired Rojas, but for me, because he was a goalie, it was also a round-about way of admiring my father. What's more, I knew the position perfectly, and I considered the goalie's job to be without a doubt the hardest. Sometimes I played goalie, too, trying to emulate Condor Rojas, or maybe my father (in all but the shouting). Still, when I joined the Cobresal Youth leagues, in Maipú, playing on the same field where Iván Zamorano began his career, I tried out as a midfielder and not a goalie. I was afraid, perhaps, that I wouldn't be good enough.

Why did Camilo spend so much time with us? Because we loved him, sure. And because he didn't like being at his own house. He fought with his mother about his religious beliefs and about the political situation. Before the 1988 referendum, Camilo went to all the demonstrations in favor of the "No" vote, and that led to severe arguments. He wanted "No" to win because he hated Pinochet, but also because he thought that if it did his father would come back to Chile. But Camilo's father didn't want to come back, or at least that's what Auntie July always told him—"Your father has another family now. He has another country. He doesn't even remember you." But Camilo's father still wrote to him, sent him money, and called him every once in a while.

Auntie July was tough. Even so, she treated us very well the one time we went over to her house. She gave us bread cake and banana milk while we played



"How's everything tonight? Can I start you off with a summons for parking on the sidewalk?"

Montezuma's Revenge with Camilo's half-brothers. It was strange to see Camilo there. He didn't seem to belong. I went into his room, and it was as if he didn't live there. He used to give my sisters and me posters and pictures to hang on our walls, but there was none of that in his own room: I was impressed by those white, empty walls, without even a nail to hang a photograph.

Oh, what did Camilo study? Administration or Management of Something, at the Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana, which was then called the Instituto Profesional de Santiago. But he didn't like to study. Once, he tried to give me math lessons, but it didn't work out, and, anyway, I didn't really need them. Nor do I know if he read much, though I feel like he did. Now I sometimes think, from this suspiciously stable place that is the present, that Camilo was immature. But no. He wasn't. Or he also had another side, an intuitive, generous, perceptive side.

He was there with us, in front of the TV, when Condor Rojas faked his injury in Brazil and the Chilean team walked off the field at the Maracanã Stadium. My father and I couldn't believe what we were seeing, and Camilo was distraught, too. "Fucking Brazilians!" I shouted, to see if I'd be scolded, but no one scolded me. My father sank into furious silence. Camilo immediately set off downtown, and he was part of the crowd that protested in front of the Brazilian Embassy. I wanted to go with him, but my parents wouldn't let me, and I had to swallow my rage.

One evening, while the subject was still being debated and Condor Rojas was still giving interviews in which he proclaimed his innocence, Camilo came over to eat with us and said that he no longer believed that Condor was innocent. By then the rumors were already circulating, but my father and I considered them defamatory. My father looked at Camilo with contempt, almost with hatred. "You don't have the right to an opinion. You don't know anything about soccer," he told him. "Do you really think that Condor would be stupid enough to do something like that?" When Rojas finally confessed, not long after that, we had to accept it. We apologized to Camilo then, but he said he didn't think it was at all important.

Even after Condor had admitted his guilt, for months I refused to believe it. But eventually we had to stop admiring Condor Rojas, and I also stopped going to my father's games. Soon after that my father broke his right hand for the second time, and the doctor told him that he should never play soccer again.

In mid-1990, something marvellous happened: after a decade of requesting a telephone line, we finally got one. We were given the number 5573317. The morning they came to install it, I was home alone with my mother. The first thing she did was call one of her girlfriends, and then she told me that I should call one of my friends, too, so I called Camilo. It was during a period when he had, without explanation, stopped coming to visit. He sounded happy, and I asked him to come see us. He appeared a few days later.

I was fourteen by then, and that day he told me he wanted to teach me how to talk to girls. I had already kissed a few girls, but my relations with them were not easy. Camilo said that he'd recently met a girl called Lorena, and they'd gone out on a date and had slept together. He explained how one should treat a woman in bed ("You have to take her clothes off slowly—you can't rush it"), and he offered to call Lorena, while I listened in from my mother's room. "That way you can learn how a guy seduces a woman," he said. He was not showing off—he really did want to teach me.

"Hi, Lorena, it's Camilo," he said, in a deep voice.

"Oh, how are you?" Her voice was sweet, sweet and a little hoarse.

"I'm good, but I need to see you."

She was quiet for five seconds, and then she pronounced a sentence that I will never forget. "Well, if it's already a necessity, we'll just end it here," she said, and hung up.

I went to the kitchen, put the kettle on, and made a cup of tea for Camilo. I think it was the first time I ever made tea for someone. I put a lot of sugar in it, which was what I understood you did when making tea for someone who was sad.

"Thanks," Camilo said, with a gesture of resignation. "But it doesn't matter. I'm

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"Mrs. Robinson, are you trying to get me to listen to your podcast?"

happy. Next summer something very important is going to happen."

"What?"

"Well, it won't be summer for me. It'll be winter."

It was a perfect clue, but I still didn't understand. How stupid.

"I'm going to France to see my father," he said, the excitement clear in his face.

Now I jump ahead many years; more precisely, twenty-two. It's October of 2012. I'm in Amsterdam, at a gathering of Chileans, most of them exiles, some of them the children of exiles, others students. And there is Big Camilo, Camilo, Sr. Someone introduces us and when he hears my last name I notice the interest in his eyes. "You look like your father," he tells me.

"And you look like Camilo," I answer. He asks me some vague questions. We talk about the protests, about the shameful official refusal to allow Chileans abroad to vote in elections. We talk about Piñera, and suddenly we are compatriots spelling out the incompetence of their President. And then: "How is Hernán?" he asks me.

"Good," I say, thinking that it's been a while since I've talked to my father. I feel a little bullied, I don't know why. I treat him coldly. Then I realize: Camilo suffered so much because of his father. I feel that, in some dark and absurd way, by talking to Big Camilo I am betraying my friend, my brother. At the same time, I want to talk to this man, to understand who he is. I suggest that we meet up the next day.

We agree to meet at a Mexican restaurant on Keizersgracht. It's a short walk from my hotel. I arrive almost two hours early so that I can watch the Barcelona game. Alexis is on the bench. For decades now, soccer has been an individual sport for us Chileans. After what happened with Condor Rojas, not only were we out of Italy in '90, we were also forbidden to participate in the South American qualifiers for the '94 World Cup U.S.A. There was nothing for us to do, for years, but focus on the local competition and on the individual triumphs and failures of our few countrymen who played outside Chile. We rooted for Real Madrid when Zamorano was there, and now we root for Barcelona, with Alexis, for as long as that lasts (if it lasts). We're used to this way of

watching: what do the goals that David Villa and Messi score matter to me? The only thing I care about is that they put Alexis in, and, even if he doesn't shine, may he at least not do anything dumb.

Big Camilo also arrives early. I think, I'm going to watch a match with Camilo's dad.

All I know about Big Camilo, about his exile, is what his son told me: that he was imprisoned in 1974, and that he had the good luck, so to speak, to get out of Chile in '75. He went to Paris, and soon he met an Argentine woman, with whom he had two children. He tells me that he has been in Holland for fifteen years, first in Utrecht, then in Rotterdam, and now in a small town close to Amsterdam. Before long, like a policeman who doesn't want to waste time, I speed up the investigation. I ask him why Camilo was so changed when he came back to Chile.

"I don't know why," he tells me. "He came to Paris to find me. He wanted us to go back to Chile together. He wasn't interested in moving here, though I asked him to. He told me he was Chilean. I proposed that he come to study. I talked about our plans to settle in Holland. He told me he didn't like studying, not in Santiago and not in Europe. It got more and more heated. He said horrible things to me. I said horrible things to him. And it became a competition, a competition of who could say the most horrible things. I ended up feeling that he had won. And he ended up feeling that I had won. All those years we'd been in contact, I'd thought about him, I'd sent him money—not much, but I'd sent it. Later, the first time I went back to Chile, we saw each other, we had lunch several times, but we always fought."

"That was in '92," I say.

"Yes," he replies.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, Alexis goes in; he's offside a couple of times, but he plays a small part in Xavi's 3-0 goal. Then Fàbregas scores, and then Messi again. Alexis misses an easy goal in the final minutes.

"What do you think of Alexis?" Big Camilo asks me.

"That he's not better than Messi," I say, and he smiles. I add that he was never much for scoring goals—in Chile he missed goals all the time—but that he was an exceptional winger. Suddenly I

have that thought again: I'm talking about soccer with Camilo's father, and I feel a kind of tremor. A very strange feeling. I talk about the 2006 Colo-Colo team. I talk about Claudio Borghi, about Mati Fernández, about Chupete Suazo, Kalule, Arturo Sanhueza. I talk about that terrible finals match against Pachuca, at the National Stadium. I feel awkward talking this way. Naïve.

He insists that I use the informal "you" with him. I tell him no. He asks me if my father and Camilo used the informal with each other. I say yes. "Use it with me, then."

I'd rather not. I try to answer politely, but the only thing that comes out is a weak, murmured "No."

I ask him what he and my father fought about. My dad had never wanted to tell me or Camilo when we asked him: he always changed the subject. And no one else knew. I always assumed it was something very serious.

"It was toward the end of the season," Big Camilo tells me. "We had it all sewn up, two-nil: I was playing center defense, there were only a few minutes left, and your dad was shouting like crazy: 'Pass it, pass it back, pass it, Camilo!' We'd been fighting about that for several games. He never let me make my own decisions. 'Pass it, pass it back!' In those days, the goalie was still allowed to pick the ball up with his hands when you passed it back to him."

"I remember," I tell him. "I'm not that young."

"You are very young," he tells me.

We order more beers.

He goes on, "He kept saying it over and over. 'Pass it back, Camilo, come on!' And I was fed up. Out of pure spite I put the ball in the corner and scored a goal on my own team—'There's your ball, motherfucker!' I told him. Some people laughed, others yelled at me, your father just looked at me with hate. And then the other team scored, and we tied. If I hadn't scored that own goal, we could have won the championship."

Just then my Dutch friend Luc arrives; he has some books to give me. I introduce him to Camilo. He sits with us for a few minutes, and in his extravagant Spanish he asks Camilo if he's an exile. "Not anymore," Camilo answers. "Or yes. I don't know anymore." Luc wants me to leave with him, but I feel like I should stay. I tell him we'll meet up later.

Big Camilo had told his son that he was never tortured, even though he was held prisoner for several months. "They beat the shit out of me," he says to me now. "But I don't want to talk about that. I'm alive. I got to leave, start over again." We both fall silent, thinking about Camilo. I think of the record shop, the song by the Talking Heads; maybe I hum it a little. "I was born in a house with the television always on / Guess I grew up too fast / And I forgot my name."

Now we are walking along Prinsengracht. It's cold. Without meaning to, I start to count the bicycles that are going by on the street at breakneck speed. Fifty, sixty, a hundred. The silence seems definitive. I sense that we're about to say goodbye. And, sure enough, just then he says, "Well, I'll be going now."

"Tell Hernán I'm sorry," he adds. I assure him that my father forgave him many years ago, that it's not important. We ask a boy to take our picture with my phone. As we pose, I think about how tomorrow I'm going to call my father, and we'll talk for a long time about Big Camilo, and we'll also remember, as we do sometimes, the horrendous night in early '94, when Auntie July called to tell us that Camilo had been hit by a car, and the wretched week when he almost pulled through it but didn't pull through.

I don't know why I ask Big Camilo how he learned of his son's death. "I found out eight days later," he says. "July knew how to contact me, but she didn't want to." We're standing, staring at the ground, on a corner by a lamp store. I've seen this several times in Amsterdam: shopwindows filled with lamps that are all turned on at night. I'm about to tell him this, to change the subject. Then he repeats, "Please tell Hernán I'm sorry about that goal."

"I'll tell him," I reply. When we say goodbye, he hugs me and starts to cry. I think that the story can't end like that, with Camilo, Sr., crying for his dead son, his son who was practically a stranger to him. But that's how it ends. ♦

*(Translated from the Spanish,
by Megan McDowell.)*

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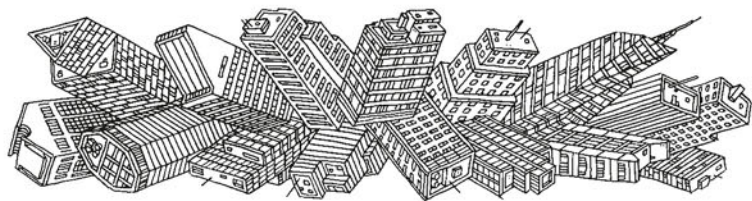
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How did we get so busy?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

In the winter of 1928, John Maynard Keynes composed a short essay that took the long view. It was titled “Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren,” and in it Keynes imagined what the world would look like a century hence. By 2028, he predicted, the “standard of life” in Europe and the United States would be so improved that no one would need to worry about making money. “Our grandchildren,” Keynes reckoned, would work about three hours a day, and even this reduced schedule would represent more labor than was actually necessary.

Keynes delivered an early version of “Economic Possibilities” as a lecture at a boys’ school in Hampshire. He was still at work revising and refining the essay when, in the fall of 1929, the stock market crashed. Some might have taken this as a bad sign; Keynes was undeterred. Though he quickly recognized the gravity of the situation—the crash, he wrote in early 1930, had produced a “slump which will take its place in history amongst the most acute ever experienced”—over the long run this would prove to be just a minor interruption in a much larger, more munificent trend. In the final version of “Economic Possibilities,” published in 1931, Keynes urged readers to look beyond this “temporary phase of maladjustment” and into the rosy beyond.

According to Keynes, the nineteenth century had unleashed such a torrent of technological innovation—“electricity, petrol, steel, rubber, cotton, the chemi-

cal industries, automatic machinery and the methods of mass production”—that further growth was inevitable. The size of the global economy, he forecast, would increase sevenfold in the following century, and this, in concert with ever greater “technical improvements,” would usher in the fifteen-hour week.

To Keynes, the coming age of abundance, while welcome, would pose a new and in some ways even bigger challenge. With so little need for labor, people would have to figure out what to do with themselves: “For the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won.” The example offered by the idle rich was, he observed, “very depressing”; most of them had “failed disastrously” to find satisfying pastimes. In particular, he pointed to the “wives of the well-to-do classes” in the United States and England, who, “deprived by their wealth” of traditional occupations, like cooking, were “quite unable to find anything more amusing” to do. As a greater and greater proportion of the population found themselves liberated from work, Keynes worried that society might suffer from a sort of generalized “nervous breakdown.” It was those who could appreciate “the art of life itself,” he wrote, who would “be able to enjoy the abundance when it comes.”

Four-fifths of the way through Keynes’s century, half of his vision has

been realized. Since “Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren” was published, the U.S. gross domestic product has grown, in real terms, by a factor of sixteen, and G.D.P. per capita by a factor of six. And what holds for the United States goes for the rest of the world, too: in the past eighty years, the global economy has grown at a similar rate.

But if we have become, in aggregate, as rich as Keynes imagined, this wealth has not translated into leisure. (When was the last time someone you know complained about having too little to do?) In terms of economic theory, this is puzzling. In terms of everyday life, it’s enough to, well, induce a nervous breakdown.

Brigid Schulte, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, is the latest author to tackle the question—very loosely speaking—of where Keynes went wrong. In “Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time” (Sarah Crichton Books), she explores why it is that twenty-first-century Americans feel so swamped.

Schulte begins “Overwhelmed” by trying to measure her own leisure, or lack thereof. She enlists the help of John Robinson, a sociologist at the University of Maryland who’s an expert on time use. Robinson instructs Schulte to keep a time diary and provides her with a handy Excel template. But Schulte finds that her time is too “unruly” to fit the template’s neat little rectangles, so instead she decides to record her days in little black notebooks. One afternoon, when she is eating lunch at her desk while waiting on hold with the pharmacy that supplies her son’s EpiPens and searching the Web to figure out how to obtain a death certificate for her brother-in-law, who has died in China, she calls Robinson to ask him how to classify this sort of activity. Robinson tells her just to keep filling in her diary and he will sort things out. When she presents him with her pile of little black notebooks, however, he balks. They’re impossible to read, much less analyze. “What’s this word?” he asks, pointing to an entry from 2 A.M. on September 16th.

“Panic,” Schulte tells him. “‘Wake in a panic.’”

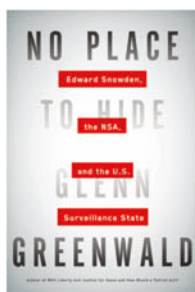
With the question of her own leisure left unresolved, Schulte decides to head to Paris for the annual meeting of the International Association for Time Use

ABOVE: VASCO MOURÃO

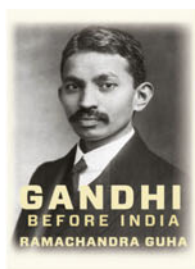


Once, we were warned about a future of overabundant leisure. Now we're busy complaining about being busier than ever.

BRIEFLY NOTED



NO PLACE TO HIDE, by Glenn Greenwald (*Metropolitan*). Early in this effective memoir of Edward Snowden's revelations about National Security Agency spying, Greenwald recalls meeting Snowden in a Hong Kong hotel conference room next to "a huge, green, plastic alligator." Greenwald found his youth "disorienting," having assumed that someone willing to risk his future must be near retirement. He veers between frustration with the deliberations at the *Guardian*, his journalistic home at the time, and acknowledgment of the "remarkable speed and boldness" with which it published, despite pressure from two governments. He never sets aside his doubts about the *Washington Post*, which also had a cache of papers, or about the journalists elsewhere who, he believes, were too close to government sources and tried to discredit him.



GANDHI BEFORE INDIA, by Ramachandra Guha (*Knopf*). Covering Gandhi's life from his birth, in 1869, to his mid-forties—with a focus on his time in South Africa—this study makes clear that sangfroid and uncanny self-assurance in the face of ugly opposition were evident from the beginning. Yet this is no hagiography: Guha notes Gandhi's early obliviousness toward South Africa's native population, and his thoughtless treatment of his wife. He never writes as though Gandhi's destiny were a foregone conclusion, pointing out, for example, that the string of chance encounters leading to his membership in the Vegetarian Society of London gave the young law student his first opportunities to develop many of the traits that fuelled his fame.



WONDERLAND, by Stacey D'Erasmus (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*). D'Erasmus's fourth novel charts the European comeback tour of Anna Brundage, a forty-four-year-old American indie rocker, who was briefly famous among "people who pride themselves on being smart" and then flamed out. Brundage funds a new album, her first in seven years, by selling a rare work by her father, a renowned sculptor. Her story reads like an unusually lucid travel journal. Short chapters juxtapose memories—a bohemian upbringing, a passionate love affair—with sharply drawn scenes from the tour. In Brundage, D'Erasmus has created a wry, questioning, sensual artist. Think of me, she says, as "a radio that is always on."



BICENTENNIAL, by Dan Chiasson (*Knopf*). This collection of poems blends punky exuberance with scholarly control. Images of adolescent overindulgence in pizza and pornography abound, but the book's laments for the dead are guided by the spirit of Auden at his most sombre. In "Inscription," Chiasson, whose work has appeared in this magazine, notes Auden's emotional reticence—his "surplus in chastity"—while seeing that calling attention to it ruins "its potential power." The poems run on the volatile fuel of the unsaid: roughly a third relate scenes from the life of Chiasson's absent father, a priest, but only once does an explicit reproach surface on the page: "What kind of game is this, your going away forever, / Sending word, years later, that you'd died?"

Research. ("There's great interest in trying to understand why time pressure is increasing," a sociologist from Oxford tells her. "This is *the* hot topic in time research right now.") She visits the Yale Stress Center, in New Haven; meets with overstressed mothers in Portland, Oregon; and sits in on a focus group in Fargo, North Dakota. "Life is stressful in Fargo," the organizer of the group says. Ostensibly in an effort to reduce her own stress, Schulte attends a trapeze academy and leaps off a platform twenty feet high. Along the way, she discusses various possible explanations for what she likes to call "the overwhelm," as if it were something outside of us, like the Arctic or the Amazon.

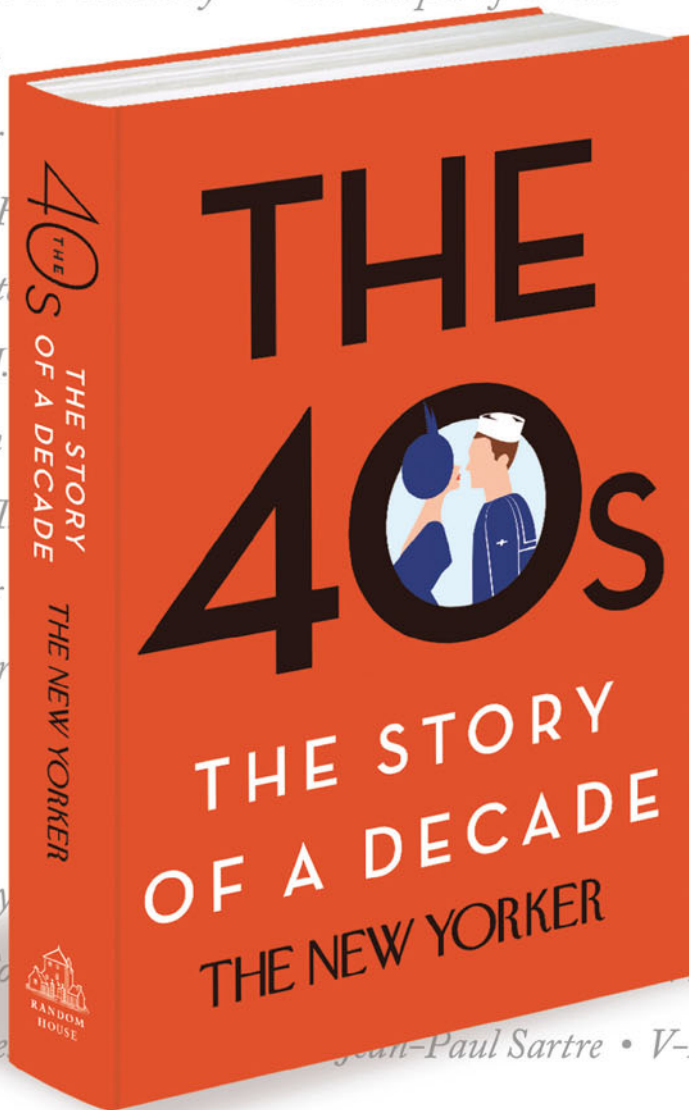
One theory she entertains early on is that busyness has acquired social status. The busier you are the more important you seem; thus, people compete to be—or, at least, to appear to be—harried. A researcher she consults at the University of North Dakota, Ann Burnett, has collected five decades' worth of holiday letters and found that they've come to dwell less and less on the blessings of the season and more and more on how jam-packed the previous year has been. Based on this archive, Burnett has concluded that keeping up with the Joneses now means trying to outschedule them. (In one recent letter, a mother boasts of schlepping her kids to so many activities that she drives "a hundred miles a day.") "There's a real 'busier than thou' attitude," Burnett says.

A second theory that Schulte considers is that "the overwhelm" is a function not so much of how many things Americans have to do but of how much time they spend thinking about how many things they have to do. A doctor who's running through the list of groceries she needs to pick up on the way home is not actually any busier than one who's concentrating on the task at hand, but she may feel more beleaguered. Conversely, a lawyer playing with his kids is technically at leisure, but if all the while he's checking his phone for texts from the office he may feel that he hasn't had any time off. Schulte terms this the "mental tape-loop phenomenon," and she argues that it's sapping our precious energies, so that we can't even "decide what to think about, worrying about home stuff at work and work stuff at home."

But neither of these explanations fully satisfies Schulte, and she keeps on

HISTORY IN REAL TIME AS TOLD BY THE NEW YORKER

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WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES FROM

Jill Lepore, George Packer, David Remnick, Zadie Smith, and many more.

searching. After a while, she fixes on the same culprit so many women before her have: men. Most American women today work; more than two-thirds of mothers with school-age kids are employed outside the home. Many now outearn their husbands; in dual-income couples, about a third of wives are better paid than their spouses. Even so, studies show, women do the lion's—or, better yet, the lioness's—share of the housework: between seventy and eighty per cent. If they have children, the bulk of the child care also falls to them. “Though men today certainly spend more time caring for their children and doing more chores,” Schulte writes, “it is still about half of what women routinely do.” Small wonder, she concludes, that women are more likely than men to report “chronic stress and the feeling that life is out of control.”

Schulte singles out for censure two men in particular. These are Pat Buchanan, who, as an adviser to Richard Nixon in the early nineteen-seventies, persuaded the President to veto a comprehensive child-care bill, and her own husband, who's referred to only as Tom (but who a quick Google search reveals is the NPR correspondent Tom Bowman). Tom doesn't even know where their kids' dentist's office is. He almost never takes them to the pediatrician. He is “*supposed* to do the grocery shopping” (the italics are not mine), but he refuses to take a list and often returns having forgotten such useful items as toilet paper. One Thanksgiving morning, when Schulte is preparing a multicourse dinner for eighteen, Tom grabs a six-pack of beer from the refrigerator and heads over to his friend Peter's house. This holiday fecklessness triggers a crisis, which Schulte claims is therapeutic and eventually leads to a more equitable distribution of household chores. As for why, deep in “the overwhelm,” she has chosen to cook an elaborate dinner for eighteen, she never really explains.

Eighty years after Keynes first composed “Economic Possibilities,” a pair of Italian economists, Lorenzo Pechi and Gustavo Piga, got to chatting about it. How could “a man of Keynes's intelligence,” they wondered, have been “so right in predicting a future of economic growth and improving living stan-

dards” and so wrong about the future of leisure? They decided to pose this question to colleagues in Europe and the United States. Perhaps some of those they asked were women; in any event, all those who responded were men. The result, “Revisiting Keynes” (2008), suggests that Nobel Prize-winning economists, too, are perplexed by “the overwhelm.”

Several contributors to the volume attribute Keynes's error to a misreading of human nature. Keynes assumed that



people work in order to earn enough to buy what they need. And so, he reasoned, as incomes rose, those needs could be fulfilled in ever fewer hours. Workers would knock off earlier and earlier, until eventually they'd be going home by lunchtime.

But that isn't what people are like. Instead of quitting early, they find new things to need. Many of the new things they've found weren't even around when Keynes was writing—laptops, microwaves, Xboxes, smartphones, smart watches, smart refrigerators, Prada totes, True Religion jeans, battery-powered meat thermometers, those gizmos you stick in the freezer and then into your beer to keep it cold as you drink it.

“Most types of material consumption are strongly habit-forming,” Gary Becker and Luis Rayo observe in their contribution to “Revisiting Keynes.” (Becker, who died earlier this month, spent his career at the University of Chicago; Rayo is now at the London School of Economics.) “After an initial period of excitement, the average consumer grows accustomed to what he has purchased and . . . rapidly aspires to own the next product in line,” they write. By Becker and Rayo's account, this insatiability is hardwired into us. Human beings evolved “so that they have reference points that adjust upwards as their circumstances improve.”

Joseph Stiglitz, of Columbia University, by contrast, takes a constructivist ap-

proach. People's choices, he argues, are molded by society and, over time, become self-reinforcing. We “learn how to consume by consuming,” he writes, and how to “enjoy leisure by enjoying leisure.”

In support of this position, Stiglitz cites the contrasting experiences of Europeans and Americans. In the nineteen-seventies, the British, the French, and the Germans—though notably not the Italians—put in just as many hours at work as Americans. But then, à la Keynes, the Europeans began trading income for leisure. The average employed American now works roughly a hundred and forty hours more per year than the average Englishman and three hundred hours more than the average Frenchman. (Current French law mandates that workers get thirty paid vacation days per year, British law twenty-eight; the corresponding figure in the U.S. is zero.) Stiglitz predicts that Europeans will further reduce their working hours and become even more skilled at taking time off, while Americans, having become such masterful consumers, will continue to work long hours and to buy more stuff. TVs, he notes, “can be put in every room and in both the front and the back of automobiles.”

A third group of economists challenges the Keynesian presumption that leisure is preferable to labor. Work may not set us free, but it lends meaning to our days, and without it we'd be lost. In the view of Edward Phelps, of Columbia University, a career provides “most, if not all, of the attainable self-realization in modern societies.” Richard Freeman, of Harvard, is, if possible, more emphatic. “Hard work is the only way forward,” he writes. “There is so much to learn and produce and improve that we should not spend more than a dribble of time living as if we were in Eden. Grandchildren, keep trucking.”

The average worker is, of course, an abstraction; what matters is not the mathematical mean but the experience of real individuals trying to make real livings while raising real kids. And these experiences are likely to be very different depending on whether the individual is employed, say, as a stock clerk at Walmart or as a manager at a hedge fund. Over the past twenty years, as real incomes for the top one per cent—especially the top tenth

of one per cent—have soared, they’ve basically stagnated for everyone else.

Could the widening income gap explain the Keynesian enigma? Intuitively, this would seem to make sense. The new wealth is so highly concentrated that only a very few people have the wherewithal to stop and smell the roses, which have been flown in at great expense from Ecuador.

But the facts, it turns out, are recalcitrant. As the income gap in the U.S. has widened, it’s actually lower-wage workers who have ended up with the most leisure. And it’s high earners who report feeling the most time pressure. This is true even for couples in which only one spouse works outside the home. Daniel Hamermesh, of the University of Texas at Austin, and Jungmin Lee, of Sogang University, in Seoul, are economists who have studied this phenomenon, and what Schulte calls “the overwhelm” they refer to, rather less sympathetically, as “yuppie kvetching.”

Why would yuppies work so much and then kvetch about it? Here, once again, there are several possibilities. One is that this is the defining condition of yuppiedom. In a “winner take all” economy, there’s a strong incentive to make sure you’re on the winning side, and one way to do this is to outstay your rivals at the office. Suggestively, what’s come to be known as the “long-hours premium”—the return that salaried employees effectively receive for each hour of work they put in beyond the usual forty—has more than doubled in the past thirty years.

High pay is highly rewarding, which presents another possible explanation. Suppose that a Walmart clerk and a hedge-fund manager both decide to take the afternoon off to attend their kids’ baseball game. For the clerk, a half-day’s forfeited pay could come to less than forty dollars. For the hedge-fund manager, an afternoon’s worth of lost trades may cost millions, which is a lot to give up to watch little Billy strike out looking. And what goes for the baseball diamond also applies to the school play, the anniversary dinner, even the annual family skiing trip to Vail; the disproportionately compensated have a disproportionate motive to keep on working.

Or perhaps the affluent feel time-pressed precisely because they are afflu-

ent. Back in 1970, a Swedish economist named Staffan B. Linder coined the phrase “the harried leisure class.” Linder argued that as people became wealthier they would inevitably feel more squeezed, because they would feel compelled to consume more and more goods per unit of free time. One way they’d accomplish this, he predicted, is through an increase in “simultaneous consumption.” Linder envisioned his harried protagonist “drinking Brazilian coffee” while “smoking a Dutch cigar, sipping a French cognac, reading *The New York Times*, listening to a Brandenburg Concerto and entertaining his Swedish wife.” Today, our multitasker might be nursing a Belgian craft beer while nibbling on sushi, reading *The Economist*, listening to Lorde, and booking tickets to visit his girlfriend in Stockholm, but you get the picture.

One of Keynes’s biographers, Robert Skidelsky, has called “Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren” a summation of “many of the ambivalences” in Keynes’s thinking. Keynes was an economist who made fun of economics, a savvy investor who disdained moneymaking, a brilliant and hardheaded analyst given to airy flights of fancy. Perhaps more than anything else he wrote, “Economic Possibilities” expresses Keynes’s utopianism: not only would people solve the problem of fulfilling their material needs; they’d also solve the problem of how to take advantage of having solved the problem.

In the future, Keynes imagined, the fruits of capitalism would redeem capitalism. “All kinds of social customs and economic practices . . . which we now maintain at all costs, however distasteful and unjust they may be in themselves, because they are tremendously useful in promoting the accumulation of capital, we shall then be free, at last, to discard,” he wrote.

It is, to say the least, disappointing that things haven’t turned out that way—that inequality has grown, that leisure is scarce, that even the rich complain of being overwhelmed. And yet so much of what we do, collectively and individually, suggests that we still believe more wealth is the answer. Reexamining this belief would probably be a good idea—that is, if anyone had the time for it. ♦

The Poetry of Parmigianino’s *Schiava Turca*



Through July 20

The Frick Collection

1 East 70th Street, NYC 212-288-0700 frick.org

The exhibition is organized by The Frick Collection with the Foundation for Italian Art & Culture (FIAC).
Parmigianino, *Schiava Turca* (detail), c. 1531-34, oil on panel,
Galleria Nazionale di Parma; photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY

CLIMATE CHANGE

The final edition of Spring for Music, at Carnegie Hall.

BY ALEX ROSS



Spring for Music, the annual orchestra festival that began running at Carnegie Hall in 2011, was one of the best ideas to hit the New York music world in a decade or more. Here was a series dedicated not to the empty-headed pursuit of technical excellence but to the exploration of ideas. Orchestras were invited on the basis of the freshness of their repertory and the inventiveness of their programming. Twenty-three North American ensembles performed music by sixty-six different composers, half of them still living. The overplayed warhorse was Charles Ives, five of whose symphonies were heard. Mozart and Beethoven received only token representation; Brahms, Tchai-

kovsky, and Mahler appeared not at all. Some concerts were riveting, others rambling; none were pointless. In a better world, the festival would have run forever, but Spring for Music failed to secure funding for further seasons, and this year's edition, which unfolded over a week in early May, is the last.

One stumbling block for Spring for Music was the very mystique of the place where it unfolded. In the popular imagination, Carnegie is the Everest of the musical world, the ultimate goal that every artist must reach. When orchestras from cities like Toledo, Ohio, or Portland, Oregon, made their debuts in the hall, home-town newspapers hyped the

occasion, and hundreds of locals, sometimes more than a thousand, travelled to New York to celebrate. These displays of civic pride, complete with the waving of color-coded handkerchiefs, were fun to witness, yet the journey-to-Carnegie narrative tended to valorize just the sort of temple-of-masterpieces mentality that Spring for Music hoped to avoid. At its best, the festival did more than demonstrate that a particular group had made it to the big time; it showed that the big time no longer exists. Greatness can flare up anywhere.

Until this year, my most memorable Spring for Music outing was a concert by the Oregon Symphony, in 2011. Carlos Kalmar, the orchestra's music director, took the theme of "Music for a Time of War," presenting works of Ives, John Adams, Britten, and Vaughan Williams. The musicians played ferociously well, and the program wove an affecting tale of humanity attempting to survive its own urge toward self-destruction. What it didn't do was to look toward the future; the mood was one of lamentation and remembrance. Enter the Seattle Symphony, which, on May 6th, played John Luther Adams's "Become Ocean," Edgar Varèse's "Déserts," and Debussy's "La Mer." A meditation on climatic extremes, prompting thoughts of one coast drenched in floods and the other parched by drought, the program was that rarest of classical happenings: an intellectual event. Just as significant was the twentieth and twenty-first-century chamber concert that the orchestra had mounted the previous night, at (Le) Poisson Rouge. This was representative of an auxiliary Seattle Symphony series called "[untitled]," and it suggested a new, more flexible kind of ensemble.

I wrote about "Become Ocean" last July, on the occasion of its première, in Seattle. It has since won a Pulitzer Prize. On second hearing—or fiftieth, if you count the times I've listened to an unofficial recording—it remains a transfixing phenomenon. It offers a seductive surface, its expanded tonal harmonies evoking Wagner, Debussy, and Sibelius. At the same time, it is a cold, relentless machine, as distinct groups of instruments rotate through recurring musical palindromes, the sub-orchestras coinciding in three tsunami-like swells. The fearsome beauty of the sea finds a near-per-

R. Nathaniel Dett's Biblical oratorio "The Ordering of Moses" was a festival highlight.

fect musical analogue. Much of the score's glittering detail—notably the piano part, which consists of 17,640 notes in a continuous stream—was lost in Carnegie's mellow acoustics. As a result, the piece felt more static than it had in Benaroya Hall, the Seattle Symphony's home. It engulfed the senses all the same. Ludovic Morlot, who has been the Seattle's director since 2011, followed "Become Ocean" with clean, purposeful accounts of the Varèse and the Debussy. The orchestra needs more plushness in the strings, but it is a far more responsive organism than it was under Gerard Schwarz, its preceding music director.

Morlot introduced the Poisson Rouge event and then ceded the spotlight to the players. Kimberly Russ, the orchestra's indefatigable pianist, gave a luminous rendition of Debussy's "Pagodes"; Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby crystallized Varèse's "Density 21.5," for solo flute; the percussionist Michael Werner led John Cage's "Imaginary Landscape No. 1," which requires variable-speed turntables; the violinist Mikhail Shmidt supplied background for Vladimir Nikolaev's antic quintet "vnik-ton experience," which, in a nod to Seattle culture, had lashing lines reminiscent of Jimi Hendrix. Angelique Poteat's "Much Difference" and John Luther Adams's "The Light Within" completed the program. Orchestral musicians have been known to roll their eyes at outré fare, but here they were fully engaged: Shmidt had a look of delightfully solemn concentration as he operated a turntable in the Cage. When conductor, players, and administrators are of one mind, an orchestra can become a singularly vital beast.

The other major discovery of Spring for Music this year was R. Nathaniel Dett's Biblical oratorio "The Ordering of Moses," which arrived courtesy of the Cincinnati Symphony and the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus. This neglected landmark of African-American composition had its world première at the May Festival in 1937; NBC radio carried a broadcast, but cut it off about ten minutes before the end, alluding to "previous commitments." At Carnegie, the conductor James Conlon suggested, in remarks from the stage, that NBC had received complaints from racist listeners. While that speculation is unconfirmed—African-

American composers were not unknown on radio at the time, and NBC had featured Florence Price's First Symphony four years earlier—Dett has certainly been the victim of an injustice. His oratorio, a setting of texts from Exodus with spirituals interwoven, is a startling, potent piece, and the skilled amateur singers of the May Festival Chorus, which has been in existence since 1873, made sure that it shook the rafters.

Dett was born in 1882, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and grew up on the New York side of the falls. After attending Oberlin, he served for two decades as the choir director at the Hampton Institute, the venerable black college in Virginia. Though he cherished African-American heritage, he resisted stereotypes of black music as an atavistic, shake-your-body affair: his singers didn't clap their hands or sway about, and his programs intermingled spirituals with Renaissance polyphony, Bach chorales, Russian liturgical anthems, and his own a-cappella pieces, which fuse folk and classical strains. (The Nathaniel Dett Chorale, in Toronto, has a fine CD of them.) His works on black themes were criticized for being too refined; on hearing "The Ordering of Moses," Olin Downes, of the *Times*, wrote that Dett had "not gone nearly far enough in striking the racial note." As Lawrence Schenbeck observes, in his 2012 book "Racial Uplift and American Music," Dett once turned down an invitation from the Library of Congress for a piece involving banjo and saxophone, detecting condescension in the request.

"The Ordering of Moses" was Dett's master's thesis at the Eastman School of Music, which he attended in the early nineteen-thirties, decades after his initial schooling. He studied there under Howard Hanson, the school's longtime director; in a curious coincidence, this year's Spring for Music also presented the Rochester Philharmonic in a concert performance of Hanson's only opera, "Merry Mount"—an entertainingly schlocky piece about Pilgrims doing unsuccessful battle with the temptations of the flesh. Dett's score is not as polished as his teacher's, but it is a more original and substantial creation. The great spiritual "Go Down, Moses" and related motifs are cycled through stark choral declamations, an extended fugue, Wagnerian half-diminished sevenths, a brush or two with

atonality, an exotic march sequence over a "Bolero"-like snare-drum pattern. Throughout, there are novel combinations of timbres: a Berliozian passage pairing horns and harp, for example. The interpolation of hard-edged wind lines into vocal textures recalls Janáček, another late bloomer with a love of folk heritage, although Dett probably did not know Janáček's music. At times, the choral writing has a chattering minimalist surface, anticipating John Adams's 1981 tour-de-force "Harmonium," which opened the Cincinnati program.

The closing section of the oratorio, "Sing Ye to Jehovah," takes a turn toward the visionary: the soloists portraying Moses and Miriam chant in free rhythm while the chorus sustains enriched F-major triads and the strings shimmer ecstatically. Conlon and his Cincinnati forces, augmented by the tenor Rodrick Dixon and the soprano Latonia Moore, conveyed the moment with precision and fervor. The uncanny radiance of this music is tied to a fundamental ambiguity: does the Exodus story serve as a metaphor for the black experience, or does that experience serve to amplify the religious text? When we hear the rattling of chains in the percussion, whose enslavement is being invoked? The doubleness of the work is evidence of a large, cosmopolitan spirit. The sadness of Dett's career is that he began composing in earnest so late; he died, at the age of sixty, just six years after the première of "The Ordering of Moses."

There were other riches in this final Spring for Music: the New York Philharmonic's traversal of Christopher Rouse's turbulent Requiem, whose best passages were the intimate ones; the Winnipeg Symphony's exacting account of R. Murray Schafer's moody, surreal Symphony No. 1; the Pittsburgh Symphony's driving rendition of the "Dies Irae" of the Mozart Requiem. But the most winning moment came in the wake of "The Ordering of Moses," when, for an encore, the Cincinnati singers and players dared to offer something supremely familiar: the "Hallelujah Chorus," which ends the May Festival each spring. Hundreds of visitors from Cincinnati joined in, voicing well-tuned four-part harmony. The border between performers and audience fell away; Carnegie has seldom felt so alive. ♦

ON TELEVISION

THE NEW NORMAL

Ryan Murphy takes on Larry Kramer's "The Normal Heart."

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM



Early in Larry Kramer's 1985 play, "The Normal Heart," Ned Weeks—the Kramer stand-in—meets Dr. Emma Brookner, who is trying to get the word out about a disease that is killing her gay male patients. As she examines Weeks, a journalist, she says that she's heard he has a big mouth. "Is big mouth a symptom?" he asks the doctor. "No, a cure," she snaps.

"The Normal Heart" is not a nuanced play, and reading it in 2014, nearly thirty years after its premiere, you can feel as if fingers were jabbing at you from the page. But it's witty and it's alive. In the polemical tradition of Odets and Chayefsky, Kramer named

names, gay and straight, major and minor: Mayor Ed Koch, who wouldn't allocate enough resources to AIDS, and associated closet cases in high places; the *Times*, which would barely cover the disease (and which barred the use of the word "gay," even in its review of the play); Ronald Reagan, who didn't mention the disease until 1985; the "disco dummies" who wouldn't stop screwing; and Kramer's colleagues at Gay Men's Health Crisis, too fearful to use anything but an acronym on their envelopes. Most painfully, there was Kramer's straight brother, who loved him but refused to accept him as an equal.

Considering how much the world

has changed in the past three decades, to the point where right-wingers now claim they're being bullied by gay lobbyists, you'd think the play might be a period piece. It's not—just read the news from Russia or Brunei, if you doubt that. But it captures a highly specific moment, full of panic and loss, when the plague transformed gay male identity, upending the celebration of the seventies. In an introduction to the script, Joe Papp praises Kramer's "ardor," and that's the right word for this vexed, romantic, incendiary text, which galvanized Ryan Murphy, the creator of "Glee," when he read the play, as a student at Indiana University. He lobbied hard to do an adaptation for HBO, paying "a very high price" with his own money, collaborating with Kramer and using his screenplay.

The two men are in many ways a natural match. Like Kramer, Murphy is a groundbreaker, a devotee of overkill with a streak of sentimentality. (Also like Kramer, he's unafraid to piss people off.) His 2003 FX series, "Nip/Tuck," felt like a modern update of Kramer's 1978 novel "Faggots," that satirical screed against drug-fuelled hedonism. His best series, "American Horror Story: Asylum," was a grisly allegory straight out of Kramer's handbook, condemning conformist institutions—medical, religious, and political—for the ways they scapegoated and tortured sexual minorities, often literally. For "The Normal Heart," however, he's chosen an earnest approach, without archness or irony. His adaptation, which airs May 25th, is grand and glossy, and even square at times. Yet this method is effective, and affecting, because Murphy's own ardor is so transparent, his longing to celebrate the vitality of both the play and its trouble-making creator, that Big Mouth incarnate. At its best, the production captures not merely Kramer's fury but the utopian vision within it, which has deep American roots, from Walt Whitman through the Radical Faeries: a longing for gay men to take what the world sees as their weakness—their tenderness for one another—and forge it into strength and unity.

The HBO film opens with a lush sequence—not in the play—that feels like a fable from a poisoned Eden. A heli-

The movie takes us back to the horror-film period of AIDS when rage itself was a tonic.

copter shot brings us in, and we see Ned (Marc Ruffalo) on the ferry to Fire Island, his expression flickering with pleasure and apprehension. On the pier, he ogles hot boys, then buttons his shirt, knowing he can't live up to the "clone" ideal. Even pre-plague, Ned is a melancholic crank: he's written a scathing satire of the hookup scene (his version of "Faggots," one presumes), and, when he goes to the beach, two men shout that he's not welcome there. Then a beautiful man coughs, and falls, and his friends circle around him, and the camera rises above—the first hint that something is wrong. At the White Party dance, men in tank tops kiss and dance, and wave to Ned. He won't join in. Instead, he wanders away, down a path into blue-green shadows, where he finds a four-way in progress, men's bodies posed like statuary. The sequence feels dreamlike, nearly underwater. Ned heads toward this orgy, into darkness. And then suddenly he is back on the ferry, lit up by the sun, returning to the city. He opens the newspaper and sees the notorious article: "RARE CANCER IS DIAGNOSED IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS."

At this point, the mood changes, clicking from reverie into reality. The pacing of the film varies—a baggy scene is followed by a thrilling one—but the changes that Kramer and Murphy have made to the story are mostly smart ones, emphasizing emotion over agitprop, and tweaking, lightly, the politics of the original. Where an activist once joked, "I don't believe in lesbians," now one says, "Thank God for the lesbians." There are visual re-creations of historical events, like a G.M.H.C. fund-raiser at which the Gay Men's Chorus sings the Gershwin standard "The Man I Love." Still, many of the most effective sequences come straight from the original, including Ned's blunt confrontation with his brother Ben, who accuses him of having a victim complex. Ned says that he was born gay, while Ben sees homosexuality as an illness, a pathology created by their bad parents—and he insists that Ned must accept the difference of opinion. "But your theory turns me into a man from Mars," Ned argues, in frustration. "My theory doesn't do that to you." He ends their relationship, storming out with what amounts to a thesis statement, a refusal

to kowtow to those in power, or to accept intimacy that requires moral compromise, even from his family: "I will not speak to you again until you accept me as your equal. Your healthy equal. Your brother!"

As Larry Kramer's avatar, Mark Ruffalo is more puppy than pit bull, but there's heat to the romance between Weeks and the *Times* writer Felix Turner, who is played with elegant savoir-faire by Matt Bomer. The men's tetchy, bookish first date remains intact, but we get more of their life together, including a flashback to an anonymous hookup, which Murphy brackets with a darkly funny ad for a bathhouse. We see the tender sex they have at home, and there's fresh pillow talk about Ned's history—the time he had sex with a woman, his suicidal years at Yale—as they cuddle, their bodies lit in gold. When Ned asks Felix to move in, he kneels on the West Village pier, the Statue of Liberty gazing down and black drag queens cheering—it's a moment that tilts into pure kitsch, always a danger with such subject matter (though the play's emphasis on marriage is strikingly prescient). But other scenes pay off, including a heart-clutching moment when an infected Felix, riding the subway, spots a man who is sicker than he is: skeletal, coated in lesions, a vision flashing in and out as lights flicker. The movie is at its best when it's capturing this horror-film quality of the period, the physical vulnerability that the poet Thom Gunn wrote about so beautifully in his poem "The Man with Night Sweats": the fruitless wish that "hands were enough/to hold an avalanche off."

The sprawling ensemble is strong, and it includes numerous openly gay actors, as well as straight actors who are comfortable playing graphic gay sex scenes—itsself an indication of how much has changed. (The original production starred Brad Davis, a closeted actor who died of AIDS, after a life twisted by Hollywood's punishing demands.) Denis O'Hare, as Koch's closeted aide, is funny and sinister; Joe Mantello shines as Mickey, the menschiest of the activists; and Jim Parsons is a scene stealer as Tommy Boatright, the self-described Southern Queen, who keeps Rolodex cards of the

dead, like a rubber-banded tomb. The unfortunate exception is Julia Roberts, who gives a one-note performance as Dr. Brookner—although a line of Brookner's, about how polio, the illness that crippled her when she was a child, is a virus nobody gets anymore, gains a new sting in an age of anti-vaccine foolishness.

There are grittier routes to the history of this period, including excellent documentaries such as "Gay Sex in the 70s" and "How to Survive a Plague." There are more expansive books, like Randy Shilts's "And the Band Played On," and more richly philosophical plays, like "Angels in America." Yet there's something implacable and pure about "The Normal Heart," not despite but because of its message-in-a-bottle specificity. Not for nothing was a 1994 book by Kramer titled "Reports from the Holocaust"; as a gay Jew, he saw one identity as a metaphor for the other, with a built-in warning system. When people began dying, the choice was clear: you could be the Warsaw resistance or you could be the American Jewish Congress, beggars who stayed behind the scenes, lobbying for help that never came. Even in 1985, Kramer knew the effect of this obsession on others. "All analogies to the Holocaust are tired, overworked, boring, probably insulting, possibly true, and a major turnoff," Felix says. "Are they?" Ned replies.

In 2014, AIDS and gay identity are no longer tied together in a three-legged race. The idea of making real change through the system is no pipe dream, either: each day, more Bens switch sides, now that gay rights has become a safe, default liberal perspective. But Murphy's adaptation is a useful time machine. It's a corrective to complacency, a reminder of a period when rage itself was a necessary tonic, a caustic application that could burn through the misery of shame and isolation. What's the use of an alarm, after all, if it's not loud enough to wake people up? ♦

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

From the Bergen County (N.J.) Record.

"That political cover is now thrown into [the] dustbin of history parked outside the archives of prejudice, collecting its rhetorical trash."

DOUBLE HELIX

The two sides of Arto Lindsay.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

*Lindsay in 1985, after the breakup of DNA, a band that altered the sound of rock.*

New York is the city that lives on the power of those who aren't from New York, which makes Arto Lindsay a perfect New Yorker. Lindsay, who turns sixty-one this week, grew up near Recife, part of the northeastern nub of Brazil, next to the Atlantic Ocean. His parents were Southerners who went to Brazil as missionaries. In the time between leaving Brazil, moving to New York, and returning to live in Rio, Lindsay has done enough important work to justify calling his new two-disk compilation "Encyclopedia of Arto"—it could easily be five disks. The collected halves represent, more or less, the two main categories of his music: a sensuous mode of songwriting heavily indebted to Bra-

zilian sounds and a strangled, atonal blend of singing and detuned guitar that he began pursuing in the nineteen-seventies, as a newly arrived New Yorker.

Lindsay graduated from Eckerd College, in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1974, and moved to New York, eager to be part of something. At first, having absorbed dance and what Lindsay called "lots of Miles Davis, Vito Acconci, and William Burroughs," he encountered the well-documented music scene at C.B.G.B.'s, hearing Television and other bands that wanted to alter the rules of rock as much as they wanted to play it. His first band, a trio called DNA, played Max's Kansas City in 1978, before the act had officially formed.

(The show was enthusiastically booked by Television's manager, Terry Ork.) In the band's four-year life span, it made many, many alterations to rock. With the drummer Ikue Mori and the keyboardist Robin Crutchfield (Crutchfield was later replaced by the bassist Tim Wright), Lindsay ignored almost everything considered standard about rock music. He played, and still plays, a twelve-string Danelectro guitar, in a style with no allegiance to tradition. "I tune for tension," Lindsay told me. "Sometimes I tune it in a melody. During a show, I am constantly retuning the low string, sometimes really low." His manipulation of the guitar is percussive, and rarely creates pitches in harmony with any of the other instruments accompanying him. Too often described as "noise," Lindsay's guitar figures have more in common with painting—they shift in tone and texture, often in disorienting ways, but none of them are random. Mori's drumming depends heavily on tomtom patterns, rather than the kick, snare, and high hat used by most timekeeping drummers.

While Lindsay and Mori upended the ways in which their instruments were played, Crutchfield and Wright generally played coherent, melodic lines. DNA songs rarely got past the two-minute mark. Lindsay sang as if he were bringing words out of his stomach with a hook, rendering them unintelligible, but they're friendly on the page, not nearly as aggressive as you expect. The entire lyric for "Blonde Red Head," all one minute and fifty-three seconds of it, is "Hit me, big head. Dance with me, big face. Blonde redhead, I've got a snake in my mind and it's not my spine." (The song title later became the name of a long-running New York indie trio that Lindsay ended up working with, in Ouroboros fashion.) A little bit childlike, the words carry a suggestion of sex and the evidence that Lindsay carefully weighs phonemes and rhythm before opening his mouth. He is frugal with language, skirting the edge of poetic practices like Dada but still remaining fairly straightforward. Lindsay has made a career of guiding you into abstraction and gently pulling you to the other side, to safety and to sense.

DNA broke up in 1982, leaving behind only one EP, a single, and an

appearance on the “No New York” compilation, produced by Brian Eno in 1978. Lindsay moved quickly through two brilliant New York bands—the Lounge Lizards and the Golden Palominos—and eventually formed Ambitious Lovers, with the keyboardist Peter Scherer, “in a conscious attempt to join soul and samba,” Lindsay said. Ambitious Lovers represented Lindsay’s first détente with the pop audience, a way to load his fractious style onto a familiar vehicle. With the clacking drum sounds and iridescent finish of eighties digital keyboards, Ambitious Lovers records sound a bit like Janet Jackson records from the eighties, remixed by a man with a sleepy, sexy voice. The yelping is gone, and the lover has front and center. The 1988 track “It Only Has to Happen Once” is a lilting, subtle use of synthesizers that aren’t often particularly subtle. Lindsay sings in a bassy whisper, though he’s kept his guitar sounds from DNA—they’re a concertina wire that is sometimes cloaked in his work but never eliminated from it. “Too salty or sweet, it doesn’t take two nations or two signatures, just two pupils and one fool. It only has to happen once,” he sings. It’s not surprising that he initially thought of naming the band’s first record “The History of Sex.”

The first half of “Encyclopedia of Arto” is drawn from a series of six solo records that he began releasing in 1996. They are a deeply underappreciated lode, his best work besides that of DNA. Most of them have been made with the bassist Melvin Gibbs and the producer Andrés Levin, and they provide Lindsay with the room to fuse all of his strands into a coherent whole. His guitar lurks and then emerges, talons out; the vocals are inviting, even when the lyrics are suspended on the edge of meaning; and the rhythms are Lindsay’s supplest yet. Gibbs and Levin sifted through the various electronic rhythms that emerged in the nineties—drum and bass, as well as other nameless versions of digital manipulation that fell under the useless term “electronica”—and folded them together with Gibbs’s liquid bass playing.

The rhythmic heart of this body of work is the alternating current of samba and forró, a style indigenous to the area

around Recife (though Lindsay rarely used the genre’s main instrument, the accordion). “Illuminated,” from “Invoke” (2002), shows how well Lindsay transitions into quiet-storm mode. The backing track isn’t that far removed from the world of Anita Baker and the Crusaders—keyboards cooing next to a well-behaved bass line and a steady rim shot on the second and fourth beat. Lindsay’s lyrics are the crucial link between the two halves of his career, and here he sounds both ecstatic and conversational, barely concealing the song’s sexual subtext, which you might miss, only because the production is so unassuming: “I know the world holds many words. Pearls hang down in necklaces, islands come round in archipelagos. I get all my light from one light bulb. I stand illuminated.” Lindsay’s guitar, for once, is absent. He has come to trust that he can do his work with his voice alone, if necessary.

The second half of “Encyclopedia” shows what happens to the same song when Arto brings it back to meet his Danelectro. Since his previous release, in 2004, Lindsay has been working largely in Brazil. After taking a break and then orchestrating freewheeling and strange parades (one with the artist Matthew Barney), Lindsay began playing solo shows a few years ago. A “spatialization” software program called Max allows Lindsay to send his guitar on preprogrammed missions. With spatialization, wherever there is a speaker, a sound can appear, allowing an instrument to move along whatever path the speaker describes, and in any direction.

In a live recording from 2011, in Berlin, Lindsay plays “Illuminated” and comes as close to reviving the sound of his early career as he ever has. The distinct melody has been smudged, and, though he is enunciating clearly, there are tiny shouts and swallows that suggest a DNA song. He chucks and slashes his guitar strings, letting them puncture the air while he sings. The breaks between words are swallowed up as the sound billows, stutters, and cracks apart. Now the single bulb of the lyrics is either Lindsay or his guitar. An entire world lies between the two disks, and it is extremely good news that Lindsay is touring again, as he’s the only musician who can bridge that distance. ♦



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Peter Steiner, Published April 4, 1988

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BIG GUY

"Godzilla."

BY ANTHONY LANE



The creature rises from the oceans once again in Gareth Edwards's new movie.

Wrinkled and crinkled, huge in Japan, heroically reluctant to give up, and forever touring the world on a mission to make us scream, Godzilla is the Mick Jagger of giant amphibians. In the latest version of the legend, directed by Gareth Edwards, Godzilla even has a Ronnie and a Keith to mess around with: a pair of scaly, primeval throwbacks who rise from the depths and join him in merry mayhem. For food, they snack on nuclear power plants and other sources of radiation, chomping atomic warheads as if they were Twinkies. All that's missing from this film is a Charlie Watts figure: some slender beast, nicely preserved, calmly beating time at the back of the action.

We begin in 1999, in the Philippines, where mining operations have unearthed what is either a fossilized rib cage the size of an aircraft hangar or a stage set that Ridley Scott ordered for "Prometheus" and then forgot to use. Its principal function is to allow a visiting scientist (Sally Hawkins) to utter the phrase "Oh my God, is it possible?," indicating that the next two hours are unlikely to stray from a well-trampled path. Other pleasing exam-

ples, for any scholar of disaster movies, include "I can't believe this is happening!" and—a truly outstanding contribution to the genre—"I'm assuming that your organization has situational awareness of the unidentified creature." In common parlance, this means "Where's the big bug gone?," but that would break the mood. The screenplay is by Max Borenstein, and the story by David Callahan, but no doubt other hands were involved. The computerized imagery in "Godzilla" is so prodigious, and therefore so greedy for the filmmakers' attention, that it seems to have sucked the life out of the writing.

From the Philippines, we spring to Japan, where Joe Brody (Bryan Cranston) and his wife, Sandra (Juliette Binoche), both work at a nuclear facility, which has the misfortune to be treated as an all-you-can-eat buffet by predators unknown. Next, we advance fifteen years, by which time Brody—strangely unaged, with the same bad hair, as if a dose of plutonium keeps you young—is still hung up on what happened. By contrast, his son, Ford (Aaron Taylor-Johnson), has brushed the past aside and become a valiant,

buff, and indomitably boring naval officer, with a devoted wife (Elizabeth Olsen), a home in San Francisco, and a job in bomb disposal. He has one of those tricky talks with his father about moving on, making a change, and so forth; they then wake up the next morning and have the same conversation all over again. I took this to be an editorial oversight, but it's the start of a pattern. We get an exciting scene on a bridge, for instance, which is then compounded by a slightly less exciting scene on a different bridge—the Golden Gate, indeed, which not long ago had an army of indignant chimps clambering all over it, in "Rise of the Planet of the Apes." When was the last time that anyone actually succeeded in driving across without interruption?

The geography of "Godzilla" is a curious matter. Once the monsters get their heads down and start causing serious damage, their first port of call is Honolulu. Then comes Las Vegas. The implication is clear: these are not mutants, or Jurassic dinosaurs that have somehow survived the eons, or the result of technological hubris on the part of mankind. No, they are tourists—hellbent on the nation's hot spots, like the students in last year's "Spring Breakers," but minus the Day-Glo bikinis. "Why would they go to Nevada?," somebody asks, and the obvious answer is "To get rat-assed on forty-dollar mai tais, hauled off the blackjack tables, and married in an Elvis suit at two o'clock in the morning." Some hope. The beasts just want to have fun, but the gravest letdown in Edwards's film is that, most of the time, he fends off the chance to have fun himself. How he manages to insert a humongous creepy-crawly into the Strip, have it stomp around in the footsteps of Sinatra, and not derive a single decent visual gag from the experience is, to be honest, beyond me. According to this movie, the best reason to go to Nevada is to gather radioactive waste. Get a kick out of *that*.

It didn't have to be this way. Four years ago, Edwards made his first feature, with the no-frills name of "Monsters." There *were* frills on view, but much of it consisted of two young Americans journeying across the "In-

fectured Zone”—a portion of Mexico where a probe, sent into space by NASA to collect samples of alien life, had crashed. The movie had its longueurs, but there was a scruffy plausibility to it, and, for anyone interested in the issue of border control, a whiff of acrid political unease. Though the monsters were few, they were hardly far between; you sensed them dangling at the edges of the tale, and, when they did arrive in plain sight, like tentacled towers, the awe was unfeigned. The climax, which unfolded by night at a deserted gas station, was so frightening, and also so beautiful, that it moved our heroes—and maybe some viewers—to the verge of tears, although others, lured by the title, may have been outraged that so little blood was shed.

The budget for “Monsters,” whose special effects were created by Edwards on his laptop, was eight hundred thousand dollars. “Godzilla,” his second feature, is estimated to have cost a hundred and sixty million dollars. There’s a moral here somewhere. The smaller movie was unhurried, but it knew where it was heading and set a clear course, whereas the blockbuster lopes and lollops around like a stoned stegosaurus, neither knowing nor caring where it needs to go next. The invading beings in “Monsters” were vast, yet their motions—and the meetings between them—bore the air of a delicate, writhing dance, which belied their aggression and made you wonder whether, despite the evidence, they were really here for a rampage. Was mankind not reaping what it had sown?

A trace of that worry lingers in “Godzilla,” and I was impressed by the film’s idea that the nuclear tests in the Pacific in the nineteen-fifties were not tests at all but attempts to destroy what lurked beneath the oceans. The emotional crux of the movie, however, after all the international to-and-fro, turns out to be the safety and togetherness of one middle-class family on the West Coast. The leading man of “Monsters,” gazing from the Zone toward a walled frontier, murmurs, “It’s different looking at America from the outside in,” but the new film never risks such an audacious thought. Instead, it takes refuge on the inside, and girds itself against the enemies from beyond.

To be fair, Edwards is not the first director to have his style cramped, rather than liberated, by being given a ton of money to disburse. Nor is he the first to be blessed with a wonderful cast—as well as Cranston, Binoche, Olsen, and Hawkins, we get Ken Watanabe and David Strathairn—and to contrive, by some miracle of mishandling, to waste every one of them. But who is at fault here? Who set up the grim routine whereby, whenever the drama flags, a child—sometimes an entirely random one, without a name, about whom we couldn’t give a damn—is tossed into peril and plucked free? That could be a desperate decision taken at the executive level, or simply a formula so commonplace, like the flea-bitten dialogue and the hokey delivery, that no one could be bothered to rethink it, still less to throw it away

and start afresh. After all, the audience might complain.

Credit to Edwards, then, that, here and there, he grabs the opportunity to flourish. Give him an overhead camera, say, and he’s a happy man. There’s a lovely shot of Godzilla at sea, his ridged spine plowing through the waves, with a warship riding shotgun on each flank, and an even cooler moment when he dives under the hull of an aircraft carrier, crossing smoothly at ninety degrees. (This is a straight steal from “Jaws,” but there are worse films to plunder.) As for the bright-blue, electromagnetic projectile vomit that one of the monsters coughs up, by way of a party piece, well, *that’s* not something you see every day. Best of all, as the light thickens and dies over the Bay Area, toward the end, the movie does grind and smash its way into a kind of majesty—a shadow play, almost, with airborne troops dropping in free fall through the storm clouds, devil-red flares strapped to their heels, and Godzilla and his cronies going mano a mano in the murk. By now, the beasts are barely distinguishable: an abstract, infernal chaos of warty skin and swipes of vicious claw. That’s what the perfect “Godzilla” should be: no character development, no backstory, no winsome kids, just hints and glimpses of immeasurable power—enough to make you jump and twitch and leave you sweating for more. Luckily, that ideal already exists, and it requires only two minutes, not two hours, of your time. So, skip “Godzilla” the movie. Watch the trailer. ♦

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CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Harry Bliss, must be received by Sunday, May 25th. The finalists in the May 12th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the June 9th & 16th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"I thought he wanted to be shredded."
Jann Russell, San Anselmo, Calif.



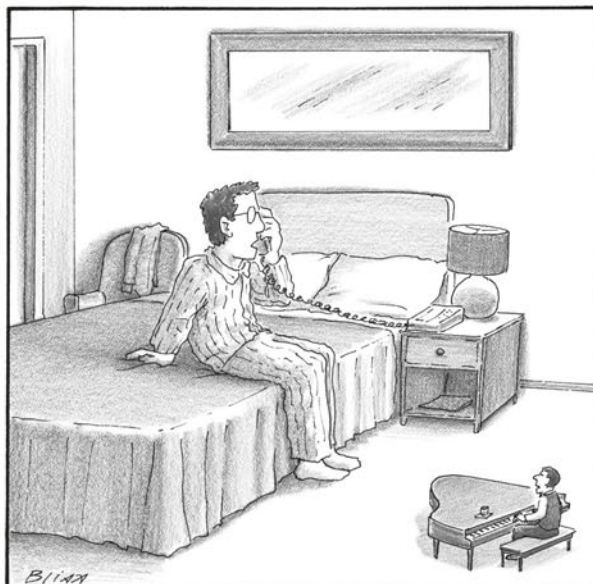
THE FINALISTS

"Let's hope for some nut allergies."
Nipali Bharani, Seattle, Wash.

"But first an amuse-bouche?"
Ralph Guggenheim, San Francisco, Calif.

*"I like that we're not trapped in
traditional gender roles."*
Gary Nowak, Chicago, Ill.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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