



Rolling Stone

Issue 1265/1266
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SPECIAL REPORT

**Can New
York City
Survive
Global
Warming?**

**On
the
Road**

WITH
THE DEAD

DIPLO

**PAUL
McCARTNEY**

**CHRIS
STAPLETON**

**Samantha
Bee**

Late-Night
Revenge

Future

Syrup, Strippers and
Heavy Angst With the
Hip-Hop Hit Machine

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RS1265/1266

“All the News That Fits”

FEATURES

Future

Studio nights, dirty Sprite and metaphysical visits with strippers: Inside the life of a hip-hop superstar.

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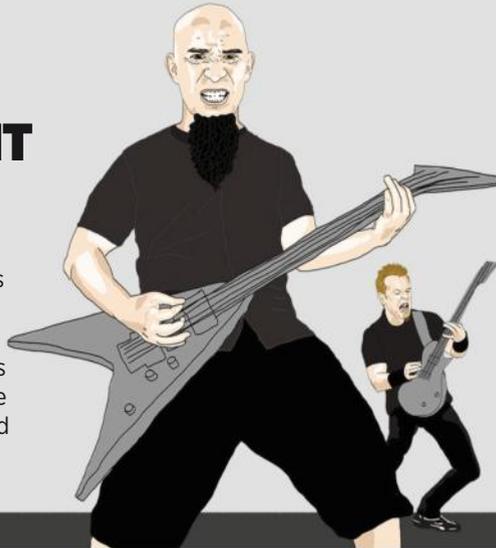
ON THE COVER Future photographed in Atlanta on March 31st, 2016, by **Theo Wenner**. Styling by Bobby Wesley. Hair by Shekinah Anderson. Grooming by Mike Rogers. Jewelry by Elliot Avianne.

ROCKIN' IN THE FREE WORLD
Eddie Vedder
at Bonnaroo.
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VIDEO

METAL'S BIGGEST NIGHT

In the latest episode of our "Had to Be There" series, Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian narrates an animated short film about 2010's "Big Four" concert - featuring Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer and his band - when the metal giants rocked on the same stage for the first time. Says Ian, "I was excited to see the photos and go, 'Wow, that really happened.'"



LIVE Gilmour

GOING BACK TO POMPEII

Read our exclusive coverage of David Gilmour's return to the site of the legendary concert film *Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii* 45 years later for an unforgettable show.



POLITICS

IT'S TRUMP'S CONVENTION

Our politics team goes into the heart of the GOP meltdown: Read daily reports and live updates from the craziest Republican National Convention in our lifetime.



MUSIC Nowell

SUBLIME LOOK BACK

Drummer Bud Gaugh and bassist Eric Wilson discuss the making of their self-titled album, which was released just weeks after the death of lead singer Bradley Nowell in 1996.

BOWIE'S ENDLESS CHANGES

We talk to contributing editor Rob Sheffield about some of his favorite moments in his new book, *On Bowie*, and the life, influence and unforgettable personae of the late great David Bowie. Plus: We go inside the state of concert security after the death of singer Christina Grimmie and a fatal shooting at a T.I. show. The Rolling Stone Music Now podcast goes live every Monday.

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Go where your
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& Advice



King of Broadway

GREAT INTERVIEW WITH Lin-Manuel Miranda ["Hamilton Mania," RS 1263], the man who revolutionized Broadway. Musicals can never return to what they were before – post-*Hamilton*, even the classics seem stodgy.

George Smith, via the Internet

I PLAYED MY AP HISTORY students the rap battles between *Hamilton* and Jefferson. Now I hear them rapping about excise taxes and the Federalist Papers. Talk about a revolution!

*Mike Brocchini
Merritt Island, FL*

YES, "HAMILTON" HAS BEEN overhyped, but it's still great to read an interview with a new master so close to the end of his run. And the factoid that Jefferson accused Adams of being a hermaphrodite in the 1800 election puts the current campaign in much-needed perspective.

*Stephen Atlas
Via the Internet*

Bernie Speaks

TIM DICKINSON DID A GREAT interview with Sen. Bernie Sanders [The Rolling Stone Interview, RS 1263]. Thanks, too, for running it despite the magazine having endorsed Hillary Clinton for president.

Steven Downer, Joshua Tree, CA

American Master

Fans responded to Neil Strauss' profile of the great singer-songwriter Kris Kristofferson ["An Outlaw at 80," RS 1263].

AT 80, KRISTOFFERSON IS a national treasure for sure. Makes me feel a little bit prouder to be an American. Thanks, Neil Strauss, for your good words.

*Rick Thorum
Capitol Reef
National Park, Utah*

Kristofferson wrote and performed, I also think of the films he made so much richer. What a terrible irony that such a fertile mind would now be so wounded. Here's hoping he regains some of his strength.

*Dan Curtis
Via the Internet*

THE KRISTOFFERSON story sticks to ROLLING STONE'S ideals as I have always known them: profiling artists through their golden years while explaining the profound effects Kristofferson's generation of artists had on our world.

Pete Steeves, via the Internet

A LOVELY BUT HARROWING story on a triple-threat American artist. When I think of the incredible songs

I WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT that there wasn't a mention of Kristofferson's ex-wife Rita Coolidge. She was in my opinion the best part of his fame.

Tony Allotta, Las Vegas



FROM THE WEB

A 2nd Amendment Challenge

Constitutional-law professor David S. Cohen argued for the repeal of the Second Amendment on RS.com in June. More than 17,000 readers commented.

THE AUTHOR TAKES THE intellectually honest route of amending the Constitution, unlike the anti-gun movement as a whole. But we'll be keeping the Second Amendment, thank you.

@Dave Bennett

AN ASSAULT WEAPON IS not a fundamental human right like freedom of speech. The powerful NRA has

proved that it will object to any reasonable gun-control legislation. The Second Amendment is outdated and needs to go.

@skylarkphillips

I'M ALL ABOUT THE SECOND Amendment, but we don't need assault rifles to be legal. Our country's messed up, man.

@lousycouncil

SANDERS HAS LAID OUT VERY clear policy positions. On Donald Trump's site, you find barely anything. Clinton, meanwhile, has created her platform largely based on the issues Sanders has championed. Subjected to intense scrutiny, Sanders still comes out ahead.

*John Voss
Via the Internet*

SANDERS' UNWILLINGNESS to concede is starting to look like vanity. Given that he'll have a lot of influence at the convention, why continue kicking and screaming? Democratic voters have made their choice.

*Rebecca Brown
Via the Internet*

Fight the Power

PROPHETS OF RAGE MAY END up expressing the disenchantment that many Americans are feeling ["Prophets of Rage Restart the Rap-Rock Revolution," RS 1263]. I grew up on Chicago's South Side listening to Public Enemy and Cypress Hill. Combine them with Rage Against the Machine? This should be very interesting.

*Jennifer Janine Thompson
Via the Internet*

Country Supreme

JOE LEVY NICELY CAPTURED Maren Morris' 21st-century appeal ["Maren Morris' New Nashville," RS 1263]. Rejected by *The Voice* and *American Idol*, yet now Number One on the country charts? Sweet.

*Joe Berry
Via the Internet*

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The Playlist

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW

1. NAF "Door"

A low-flying post-punk torpedo from Jenny Lewis and her new awesomely named band, Nice as Fuck. The droning bass and stark, spacey production imply moody drama, but Lewis' voice is warm and friendly: "Don't close the door/We are so close," she sings. It's like Joy Division or Public Image Ltd bathed in California light.



2. Neil Young "Love and Only Love"

Young's new ecology-themed live album, *Earth*, closes with "Love and Only Love," from 1990's *Ragged Glory*, stretching out for nearly half an hour of cloud-burst distortion and raging hope.

3. Disclosure and AI Green "Feel Like I Do"

U.K. house-music whiz kids flip a bit of Green's 1972 hit "I'm Still in Love With You" for a glistening late-night dance-floor come-on.

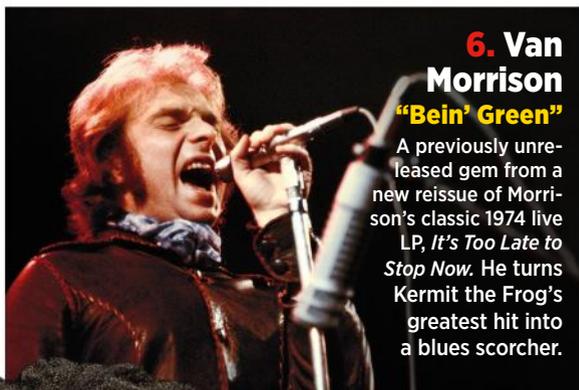
4. Esme Patterson "No River"

A subtle Sixties soul throwback from rootsy pop artist Patterson, who sings, "I can't keep running, I'm no river," fighting against life's weird flow with elegant determination.



5. Drive-By Truckers "Surrender Under Protest"

Truckers main man Patterson Hood recently moved from his native South to Portland, Oregon. But the DBTs still can't escape the burden of history. This barreling rocker, written by co-leader Mike Cooley, takes on Dixie holdouts over scorched-earth guitars.



6. Van Morrison "Bein' Green"

A previously unreleased gem from a new reissue of Morrison's classic 1974 live LP, *It's Too Late to Stop Now*. He turns Kermit the Frog's greatest hit into a blues scorcher.

7. Danny Brown "When It Rain"

The shape-shifting Detroit rapper's first song in some time is worth the wait. Over a five-alarm EDM-heavy beat, Brown hollers, "When it rain, when it pour, get your ass on the floor," making desperation feel like a party.



MY LIST



Rob Zombie

Five Songs I Wish I'd Written

The former White Zombie frontman, who is spending his summer on the road with Korn, broke down his favorite monster songs.

Roky Erickson "Creature With the Atom Brain"

It's a very big-sounding rock song because he's got a really big voice. The song itself isn't particularly creepy - it's the lyrics and delivery.

The Cramps "I Was a Teenage Werewolf"

Their whole thing is horror-rock monster songs. This is pretty low-fi and trashy. It has a really 1960s garage-rock sound.

The Castle Kings "You Can Get Him, Frankenstein"

A doo-wop-y song from when I was a kid, like "Monster Mash." If you went to a Halloween party, you heard this.

Tom Waits "King Kong"

It's a great song. He's just telling the story of the love story of King Kong, screaming in his super-raspy, heavy voice.

Misfits "Vampira"

I had to pick the Misfits. I've done that song with Danzig many times. It's barely a minute and a half - one buzz-saw riff, basically, like all their songs.

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with Paul
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Phish, Diplo
and more.

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FROM ME
TO YOU
McCartney
in Portland,
Oregon,
in April

Diplo during
a Major Lazer
show in Paris
last year



Diplo: How to Start a Party

Aspiring DJs, producers and other would-be mindblowers, take heed: The Major Lazer superstar on how to turn your gig into a blowout bash

NO ONE EMBODIES THE 21ST-CENTURY dance party like Diplo, whether he's cooking up hits with Skrillex in Jack Ü or making whimsical dancehall with Major Lazer. "People lose their minds," Diplo says of Major Lazer's gigs. "At one show, we had naked girls climbing speaker boxes." This summer, he'll serve as ringleader at his hip-hop/EDM festival, the Mad Decent Block Party, which tours the U.S. through October.

Play to Win

When I'm DJ'ing in Vegas, I might be on for four hours, but when Major Lazer play a big festival, we might only get an hour. When we're onstage, it's a competition. If we're not the headliner, we try to beat every band. Our shows are like a Zumba class. We're gonna make you dance and participate.

Always Steal From the Best

We stole all of our original gimmicks from the Flaming Lips, no lie. I used to roll out

into the crowd inside a huge empty ball. We stole that from them. Wayne Coyne actually texted me where to buy the ball. It's boring when it's just one guy up there with a thousand video projectors. A rock & roll band has to rehearse. There's so much more care in a show like that.

Keep the Visuals Tasteful

When you're a DJ and you're doing just one thing with your hands, you have to have crazy videos and lights. But make it a little more tasteful. Our lighting programmer takes ideas from Broadway, and I'm also into artists like Kendrick Lamar and Travis Scott, where it's almost like clip art that gives the flavor of the songs. Ours is more fast-paced to fit the music.

Only Play the Good Parts

It's a little bit like a jukebox. We pick samples from different pieces of music and do a dance-off section - we have the whole crowd do a line dance back and forth, left

and right, jumping up and down. What keeps it fresh is that we always make ourselves supplementary. It's the crowd that wins, not us.

If Possible, Absolutely Hire Dancers

Having choreo is almost as important as the song now. Our dancers come from pop music - they performed with Chris Brown and Nicki Minaj. We're more into free-style, and it's really fun for them. They can do trendy dances, they can do solos. I think they love it. They're part of the family.

Know Your Audience

Our target audience is kids who want to hear something that's cool, underground, and kind of on that tipping point. We started out as a dancehall band and, luckily, right now tropical music is really popular because of Rihanna and Drake. It wasn't like that when I was younger. Now, all of a sudden, pop music is cool. 

SIMON SARIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



SO SWEET YOU
CAN'T HELP BUT CHEW.



A Sweet Piece of Fun.

Secrets of Macca's Set List

For his new tour, Paul McCartney revamped his show with rarities and never-played Beatles classics. Here's how he put it all together

A Hard Day's Night 1964

At the opening night, in Fresno, California, McCartney played the song for the first time since 1965. "That chord is pretty iconic," he says. "I suggested that [we open with] it to the band and we all got a bit sort of goose-bumpy. If it excites us, it will probably excite an audience."

Temporary Secretary 1980

"I made this when I was experimenting with synthesizers and sequencers on *McCartney II*," he says of the obscure single, which has recently taken on a second life as a kind of cult hit. "It started getting picked up by a DJ in Brighton, England, then I heard it was being played in clubs. My piano player Wix had to figure out the sequencing. After a few false starts, we got it."

Maybe I'm Amazed 1970

"It's the first one I made right after the Beatles - it has good associations for me," McCartney says of the ballad, which has long been a staple of his live shows. "Liza Minnelli once said it was her favorite song of mine. I would have expected more of a show song, but that's cool. This one's for Liza!"

In Spite of All the Danger 1958

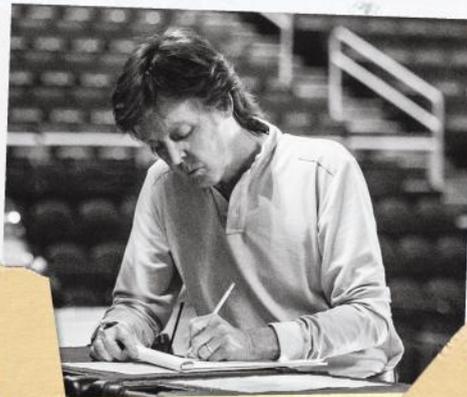
During his acoustic set, McCartney takes the crowd back to the day his pre-Beatles band the Quarrymen - "me, John, George and two other guys" - cut their first song for £5. Each member agreed to keep the original master recording for a week at a time, except "[bandmate John] Duff had it for 23 years."

Love Me Do 1962

"Another song I'd never done before this tour," McCartney says of the Beatles' first single. "People would talk to me and say, 'Aw, I love that one.' And I say, 'But it's so simple!' Then they say, 'That's why I like it.' It's quite random how things wind up in our set."

Queenie Eye 2013

The upbeat single from his newest LP, *New*, is a great mood-lifter after the acoustic set - even if it's not one of



A Hard Day's Night
Save Us
Can't Buy Me Love
Letting Go
Temporary Secretary
Let Me Roll It
I've Got a Feeling
My Valentine
Nineteen Hundred
and Eighty-Five
Here, There and Everywhere
Maybe I'm Amazed
We Can Work It Out
In Spite of All the Danger
You Won't See Me
Love Me Do
And I Love Her
Blackbird
Here Today
Queenie Eye
New
The Fool on the Hill
Lady Madonna
FourFiveSeconds
Eleanor Rigby
Being for the
Benefit of Mr. Kite!
Something
Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da
Band on the Run
Back in the U.S.S.R.
Let It Be
Live and Let Die
Hey Jude
ENCORE***
Yesterday
Jet
Birthday
Golden Slumbers
Carry that Weight
The End

McCartney's best-known songs. "If you play the hits, all the phones light up like a galaxy," he says. "When you play the new stuff, it's a black hole. I bust the audience for that: 'We know which ones you like!' But we enjoy doing it."

New 2013

He usually follows "Queenie Eye" with this harpsichord-flavored song from the same LP. "There's part of me that wants to just do a show with deep cuts," McCartney says. "It would be a special series of concerts where you call it 'You're Not Going to Like This One!'"

FourFiveSeconds 2015

McCartney was concerned how older fans would react to this Rihanna single, which he wrote with Kanye West. "They know more than you think," he says. "I started playing it in the key I'd originally [written] it in. Kanye sped it up for Rihanna and put it into her key. It's nice having something that recent in the show."

Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite! 1967

For decades, McCartney swore this *Sgt. Pepper* cut, sung by John Lennon, was one of two Beatles songs he'd never play live (the other was "Day Tripper"), but he reversed himself in 2013. "The bass parts are too intricate to sing the lead vocal alongside," he says. "It's almost impossible. But that makes it intriguing. Let's take the challenge up!"

Band on the Run 1973

For McCartney, this classic brings back memories of his ramshackle early-Seventies tours with Wings. "I had a ban on Beatles songs, even though I knew people wanted to hear them," he says. "But once we had things like 'Jet' and 'Band on the Run,' we'd established that there is life after the Beatles."

Yesterday 1965

McCartney has an odd relationship with perhaps his most famous song - but that doesn't stop him from playing it at nearly every show. "I'm often thinking, 'This is the work of a 22-year-old guy,'" he says. "It's like it's not mine. I'm getting the chords right, trying to sing in tune and thinking, 'You shouldn't be thinking about this guy. You've got to be in the now.' It's a very strange thing, performing."

STEVE APPLEFORD

A rendering of the set list for his May 19th show in Argentina ▶

— THE HUFFINGTON POST —

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— USA TODAY —

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— The Washington Post —

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— Entertainment —

“SWEET AND FUNNY.”

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC



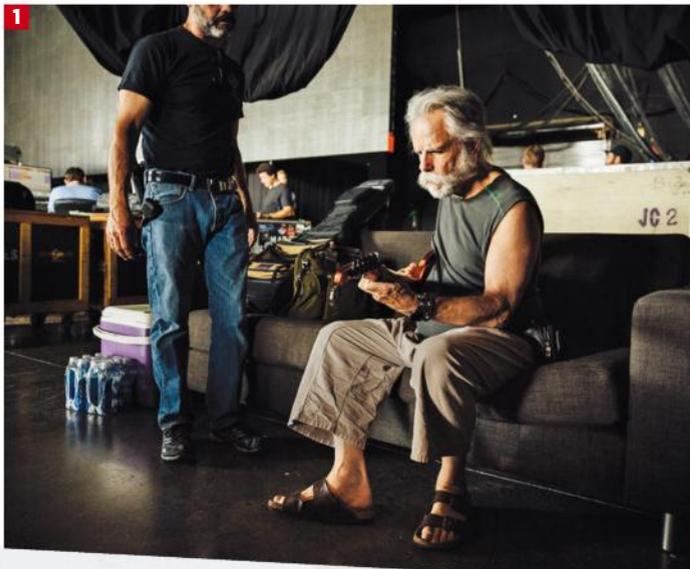
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BLEEKER STREET AND SHIVHANS PICTURES PRESENT AN ELECTRIC CITY ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A FILM BY MATT ROSS VIGGO MORTENSEN "CAPTAIN FANTASTIC" FRANK LANGELLA WITH KATHRYN HAHN AND STEVE ZAHN CASTING BY JEANNE MCCARTHY, C.S.A. MUSIC BY CHRIS DOURIDAS SUPERVISOR MUSIC BY ALEX SOMERS COSTUME DESIGNER COURTNEY HOFFMAN EDITOR JOSEPH KRINGS PRODUCTION DESIGNER RUSSELL BARNES DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHANE FONTAINE, AFC CO-PRODUCERS SAMANTHA HOUSMAN CRYSTAL POWELL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NIMITT MANKAD DECLAN BALDWIN PRODUCED BY SHIVANI RAWAT MONICA LEVINSON PRODUCED BY LYNETTE HOWELL TAYLOR, p.g.a. & JAMIE PATRICKO, p.g.a. WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MATT ROSS

STARTS FRIDAY, JULY 8 IN SELECT THEATERS

Opening Night With the Dead

"It feels new," drummer Bill Kreutzmann said of the Dead and Company's current tour. "With the add-on that I know the songs really well." After a successful run last fall, the band decided to make this summer's shows even more ambitious, rehearsing intensely and expanding its repertoire (they didn't repeat a single song the first four dates). * Backstage before opening night, in North Carolina, on June 10th, the mood was light. Guitarist John Mayer and drummer Mickey Hart joked about how Bob Weir used to wear cutoff shorts onstage. "I wonder where he keeps them?" mused Hart. * "They're under his pants," Mayer decided. GAVIN EDWARDS



1. Crazy Fingers

Before opening night, Weir tried out a new, lightweight Parker guitar. "I'm looking forward to what it has to say," says Weir. He played soundcheck wearing a fanny pack, which his guitar tech jokes contains a buzzer that electric-shocks the drummers when they don't play in time. No one seems happier than Weir that Dead and Co. are back out on the road this summer. "I'm not sure a guy like me can walk away from this body of music," the guitarist says.

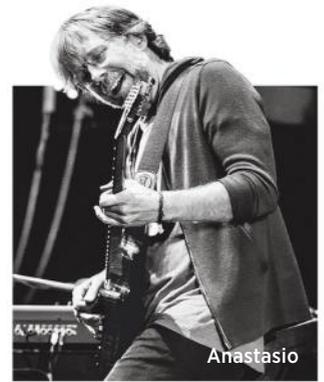
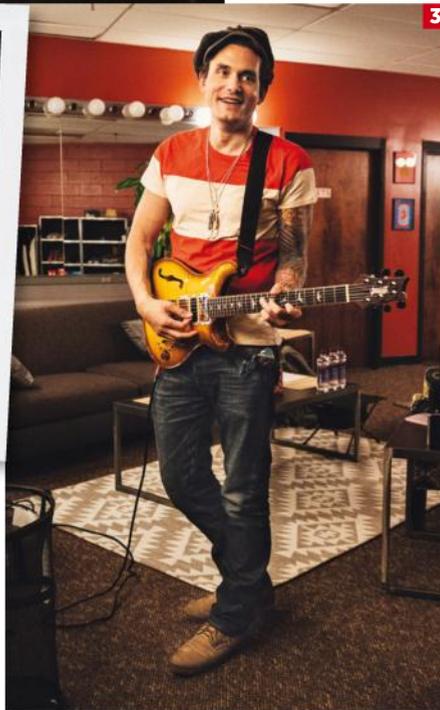


2. Shakedown Session

Hart tested out his high-tech 50-piece kit - which combines both acoustic and electronic equipment, and includes hand drums he painted himself.

3. Mayer's Master Class

"I'm a student again," says Mayer. With 100 Dead songs in his arsenal, the guitarist is ready to play whatever ends up in the set list - as long as he has a couple of days to prepare.

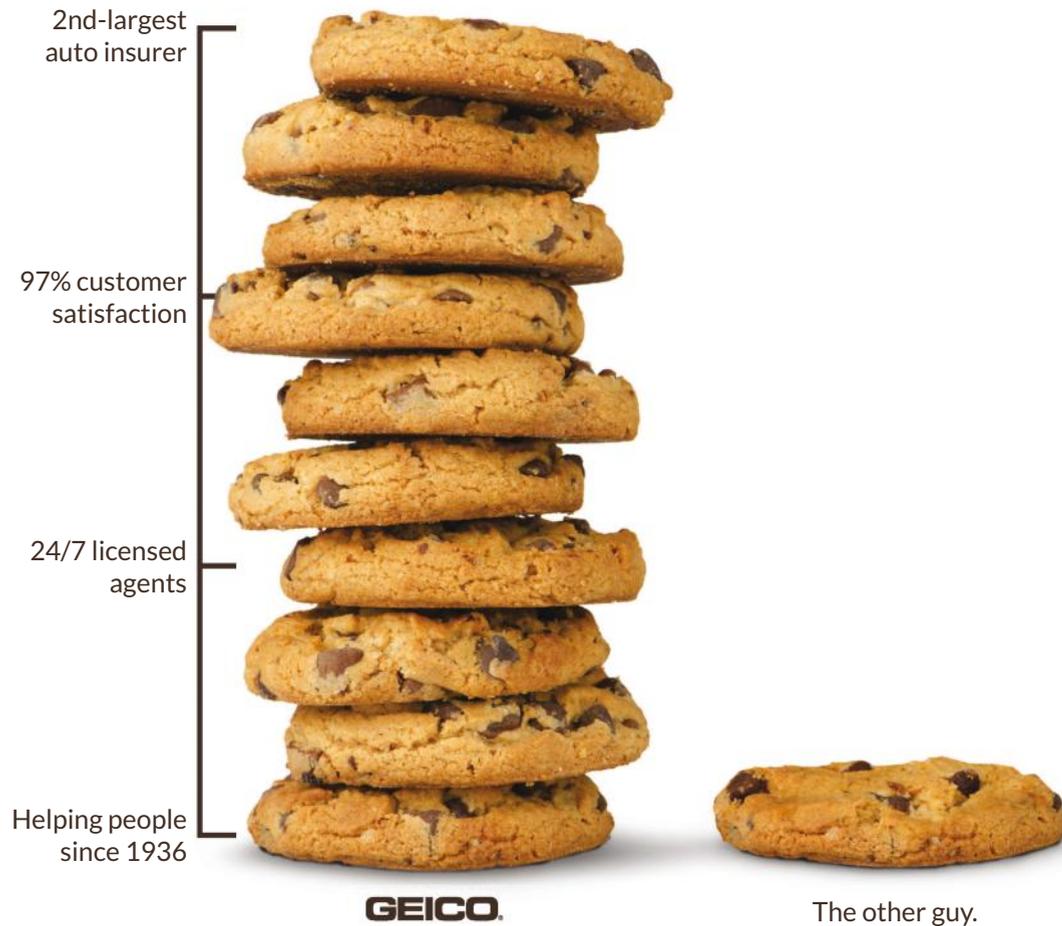


How to Dissect a Jam: Phish's Post-Gig Routine

The band stays sharp with after-show analysis and two different apps

Two things tend to happen in Trey Anastasio's brain as he walks offstage after a Phish show: "One, it feels like the whole show was three minutes," says the singer-guitarist. "Two, I usually can't remember what we played at all." Anastasio's memory is jogged when he gets back to his tour bus. That's when the members of Phish - each of whom has his own bus - start analyzing the night's gig via text message. "Page [McConnell] will hit me: 'How about that staccato thing at the end of 'Twist'?" says Anastasio of the live staple.

The next morning, the recap continues when Anastasio makes his coffee in his hotel room and cues up last night's show on two different apps: LivePhish, which features a soundboard mix by Phish's sound engineer Jon Altschiller, and Phish on Demand, a fan-made app that includes a database of audience recordings and set-list stats. "I don't listen to the whole show anymore," says Anastasio. "I listen to about two minutes of each song, mostly to adjust my guitar tone." Often, he gets distracted: "I usually end up thinking, 'Oh, my God, listen to that drum part.' And that makes me grateful. Everyone else in the band sounds so good." On tour through September, Anastasio says the band will likely be playing fewer covers in favor of new songs and their back catalog: "Last year, we didn't play 'Fluffhead' the whole summer. We have a lot of songs. The originals have moved to the front burner." PATRICK DOYLE



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CHEAP THRILLS

Nielsen with his "Uncle Dick" guitar last month in Minnesota



Rick Nielsen's Portable Guitar Heaven

As a kid, Rick Nielsen spent lots of time in his father's music store. "I was an only child," he says. "The guitars were like my brothers and sisters." Today, Nielsen brings more than 25 axes – from his 1,000-plus collection – to his shows with Cheap Trick, who tour with Joan Jett and Heart this summer. Nielsen's guitar tech Larry Melero is always perched stage right, handing off a new guitar every song, including a custom

1981 Hamer with five necks and "Uncle Dick," an Eighties double-neck designed to look like a cartoon Nielsen. "Guitars are works of art," says Nielsen. "And I've never once paid retail for one." **ANDY GREENE**

Chris Stapleton's
Traveling Country-
Music Free-for-All

The Nashville star keeps it loose with surprise covers, killer jams

It's an hour before Chris Stapleton steps onstage at Bonnaroo, and he just finished making his set list, which he texts to his band. "Sometimes they don't get it till 10 minutes before we go on," says Stapleton with a grin. Unlike some country stars who play the same set every night, he aims for a loose "club mentality." Stapleton (who opens stadium gigs for Luke Bryan and Guns N' Roses in July) has invited guests like Willie Nelson's harmonica player Mickey Raphael for jammy shows with surprise covers like "Nothing Compares 2 U." When he plays on TV, Stapleton can rankle producers who wish he'd use a prerecorded vocal track. "They're uncomfortable with it," he says. "But that's fine." **JOE HUDAK**

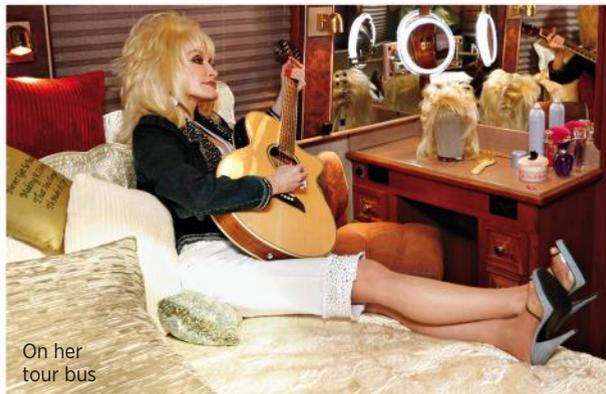


Stapleton and wife Morgane at Bonnaroo

Dolly Parton's Road Rules

Chocolate gravy, rhinestoned pajamas and lots of paperwork: Parton rides in style on her biggest tour in 20 years

"I'VE BEEN LIVING OUT OF suitcases for over 50 years," says Dolly Parton. "To me, that's normal." As a result, Parton, 70, has touring down to a science. A month before hitting the road this summer, she started cooking her favorite dishes – chicken and dumplings, biscuits with "chocolate gravy" – and stocked them into her tour-bus freezer. "That way I can have good old country cooking every single night on the road," she says. Parton had to cook more than usual this year: Her Pure



On her tour bus

& Simple Tour is her most extensive run in 20 years. She's playing spare versions of her hits, plus covers like the Band's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" in

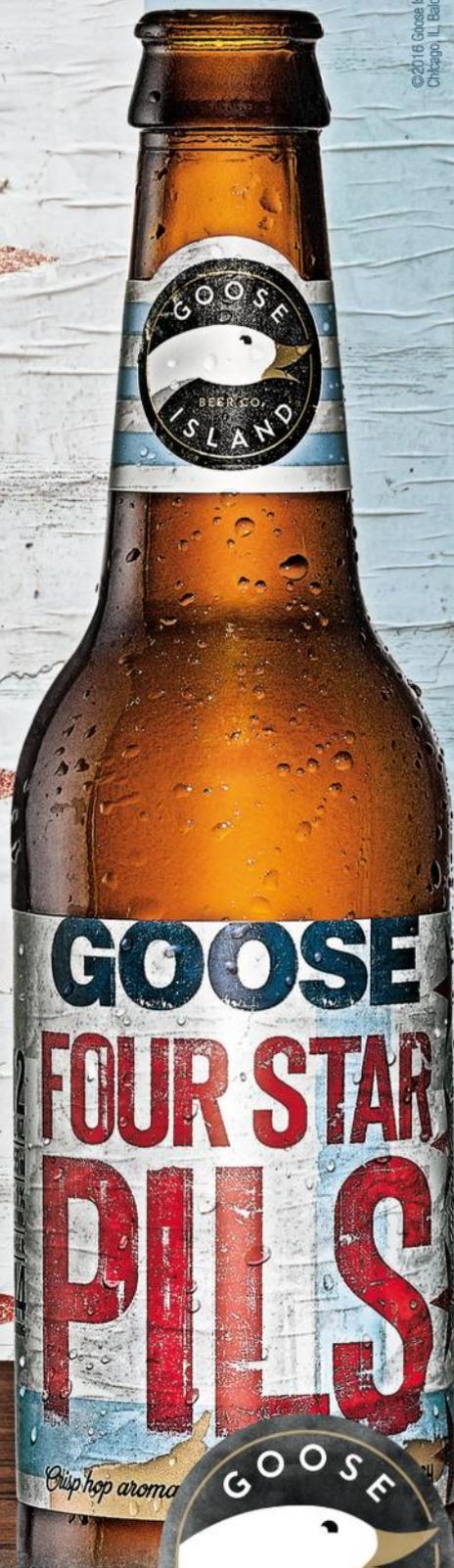
areas she rarely visits, like the Northeast U.S. and Canada. Parton travels in style on her bus, which features gold-painted walls, two bathrooms and her full ward-

robe, all "supertight and super-sparkly," she says. "Lord, my pajamas even have rhinestones on them." She doesn't sleep much, usually waking up in the middle of the night to start in on music and paperwork for her businesses, from her publishing company to a brand-new dinner theater in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. "Just because I'm on tour doesn't mean all the rest of the work stops," she says. This lasts right until it's time to get stage-ready at her vanity table, stocked with all her wigs and makeup. "By the time I step out, I've done it all," she says. "If you think for a second that I walk out of this bus without looking like 'Dolly Parton,' you've lost your mind." **DAVID BROWNE**

RIGHT, FROM TOP: ALYSSE GAFKJEN; COURTESY OF DOLLY PARTON ENT.

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TO WHAT'S NEXT. GOOSEISLAND.COM

Beck Restarts the Party

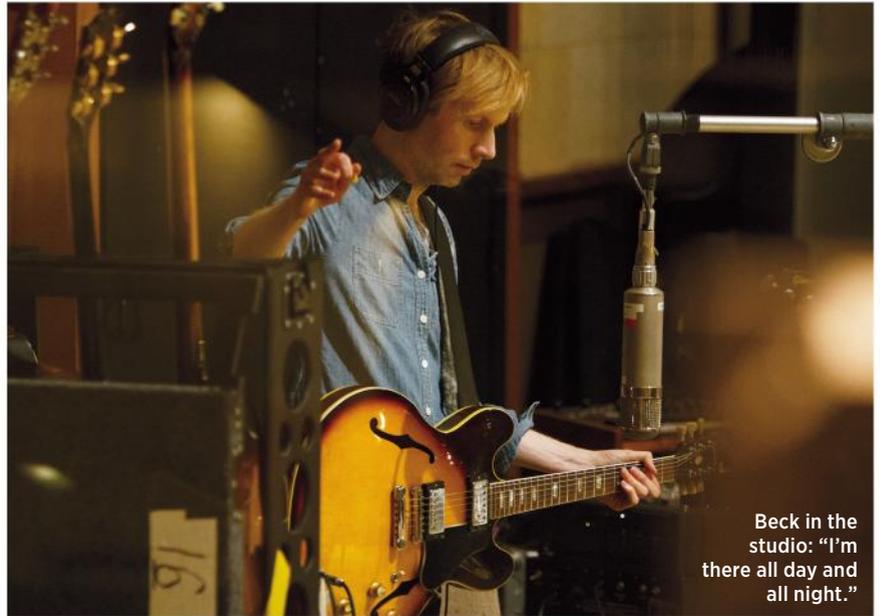
After winning a Grammy for the stripped-down 'Morning Phase,' he returns with a poppy and adventurous LP

BECK WAS AS SURPRISED AS anyone by the success of 2014's *Morning Phase*, which won a Grammy for Album of the Year and became his best-selling album in a decade. "I had no expectations," he says, describing a lot of his albums as "ships in the night." *Morning Phase* was intended to be a quick project – "just so we would have something out, because we were going on tour" – as he took a break from a more ambitious album he had been struggling with.

More than three years later, he has finally finished that album. Due in October, the still-untitled record is a left turn from its predecessor, taking the harmony-heavy beauty of *Morning Phase* and charging it with big hooks, hip-hop loops and the poppy energy of his classic Nineties work.

The sound, Beck says, was inspired by five years of heavy touring. He played big summer festivals to young audiences, and he soaked up the energy of acts like the Strokes, with whom he toured last year. "It's a summer night, people have their hands up," he says. "It's a communal, celebratory thing. I wanted to take that into the studio, a kind of energy or joy. The thing that wakes you up a little bit."

Beck recruited Greg Kurstin, a multi-instrumentalist in Beck's *Sea Change* touring band who later went on to produce acts like Sia and Adele (and co-wrote "Hello"). Like the Dust Brothers on records such as *Odelay*, Kurstin produced and wrote with Beck, resulting in upbeat material like "Seventh Heaven," a chiming anthem about falling in love, and "No Dis-



Beck in the studio: "I'm there all day and all night."

tractions," a dance-y, Talking Heads-like stomp. The single "Dreams" went through more than a dozen incarnations before its final version, a stuttering groove and a garagelike riff inspired by Sixties psych architects the Creation. "There's a substratum to a lot of the songs – songs within other songs, choruses that became bridges," Beck says. "It's not far from how I made my first couple of records."

For Beck, a noted studio tinkerer, it sometimes felt like the album might sink under its own ambitions. Sessions were sandwiched between tours, making it dif-

icult to find a consistent sound. Beck estimates he recorded three albums before finishing this one. "After the Grammys, we got rid of half of it and started again," he says. "It took a while for it to find an identity."

The result captures Beck's contented new chapter; he's enjoying fatherhood and his renewed interest in touring. "It's kind of life-sparking," says Beck, 45, of the shows. "I want to have some new things to say. I'm still filling out the picture. We do 'Where It's At,' and you're like, 'OK, we needed that.' Then you do another one. It's all adding up to a picture."

PATRICK DOYLE

STUDIO NOTES

GROUPLOVE KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

Indie rockers Grouplove found platinum success with their synth-y single "Tongue Tied" in 2011. Following a lot of touring, the band took a break while its two singers, Christian Zucconi and Hannah Hooper, welcomed a baby daughter. The group aimed for rebirth on its third album, *Big Mess* (due in September), which combines sunny hooks with personal lyrics about the couple's new chapter. "Traumatized" centers on



Hooper

their living-room talks regarding parenthood, and "Welcome to Your Life" even samples their daughter's voice. "We tapped into a lot of levels of life you don't really tap into until you become a parent," says Hooper.

ANNIE LICATA

RINGO FINDS A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS

This year, Ringo Starr planned to record a country album in Nashville. But due to touring commitments, he postponed that project and decided to self-produce tracks at his L.A. home studio. At least one song from his previous project – "a real country, old-style sad song," which he wrote with Dave Stewart – will likely appear on the new album (expected early next year). It will also feature music written with Van Dyke Parks, Richard Marx and Toto's



Starr

Steve Lukather. "I love to play, and I'm blessed I'm still doing it," says Starr, who turns 76 in July. "Paul, too. We're old-school. I've played weddings for beer. We like to think we're 24, but we're a bit older than that now."

JORDAN RUNTAGH

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: NATE HOROWITZ; MARK SAGLIUCCO/GETTY IMAGES; TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES

vitamins. electrolytes. spin the bottle.



vitamin water.
focus
blue-strawberry
flavored + other natural flavors

excellent source of c and b vitamins
100% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
100% potassium
100% electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhanced water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL

vitamin water.
revive
fruit punch
flavored + other natural flavors

excellent source of c and b vitamins
100% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
100% potassium
100% electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhanced water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL

vitamin water.
refresh
tropical mango
flavored + other natural flavors

excellent source of c and b vitamins
100% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
100% antioxidant vitamin e
100% electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhanced water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL

vitamin water.
power-c
dragonfruit
flavored + other natural flavors

excellent source of c and b vitamins
150% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
zinc & chromium & 25mg ta
electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhanced water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL

vitamin water.
energy
tropical citrus
flavored + other natural flavors

excellent source of c and b vitamins
100% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
50mg caffeine
electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhanced water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL

vitamin water.
xxx
açai-blueberry-p
flavored + other natural

excellent source of c and b vitamins
100% vitamin c
100% vitamins b5 b6 b12
manganese & anti
electrolytes

120 CALORIES PER BOTTLE

nutrient enhance water beverage
20 FL. OZ (1.25 PT) 591 mL



At the Barclays Center in Brooklyn in May

NEW ARTIST

Desiigner's Master Plan

'GODDAMN, IT'S HOT OUT here!" Desiigner cries out. "It's like Jesus times - Bible heat! I'm about to pass the fuck out."

It's noon in Las Vegas, and the 19-year-old MC is on his way to the airport. He's from Brooklyn, so the desert climate is taking some getting used to. Desiigner's in Vegas because he performed at the club IOAK last night, riding the success of his breakthrough single, "Panda." The song, which Kanye West sampled extensively on *The Life of Pablo*, recently rose to Number One on the Hot 100, powered by a bullying beat and Desiigner's slurred singsong. The beat, it turns out, was made by a European kid named Menace, who Desiigner never met - he bought it from him on-

How a teenage Brooklyn rapper turned a \$200 beat into a deal with Kanye - and a smash hit

BY JONAH WEINER

line for \$200, in what has to be one of pop's all-time greatest returns on an investment.

"Panda" is both hard and playful - its central conceit is that a white BMW X6 resembles a panda, which is an adorable way to celebrate conspicuous consumption. (The song's sonic and thematic resemblances to the music of Future have been identified by admirers and detractors alike.

Desiigner routinely brushes off the comparisons: "God gave him a blessing, but he gave me a blessing too," he's said.) The six-foot-five Desiigner says he relates to music intuitively. "I got a whole lot of slugs in the chamber. Music is everything. I'm like a big-ass music note with arms and legs!"

He was born Sidney Selby III and grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant. "My dad worked on ambulances for a while; my mother had a lot of different jobs with the city," he recalls. He's loved music as long as he can remember. "I played the sax at school. I was in marching band. My moms and pops listened to Funkadelic, Michael, Aerosmith - I fucked with rock & roll. My grandfather is a blues musician" - Sidney Selby, who played with the Isley Brothers and the Drifters, among others - "so my mind was everywhere. You'd be surprised what you'd catch on my playlist."

For Desiigner, music wasn't just a passion but a means of escape. "I tried selling drugs - it didn't work," he says. When he

was 14, in circumstances that he declines to detail, a bullet hit him in the hip - an experience that put him briefly in the hospital, and which convinced him to pursue music for a living: "My advice now is stay positive and get your money."

That attitude paid off in January, when he was interrupted by a phone call while working on new music. It was Kanye, who had caught wind of "Panda" as it bubbled online, asking Desiigner to meet him in L.A. Desiigner soon signed with G.O.O.D. Music, Kanye's imprint at Def Jam. His rapping tends to privilege sound over sense - he's hypermelodic, rhythmically inventive and frequently unintelligible. "I play with my voice, make it sound crazy," he says.

In recent weeks, Desiigner has called a studio in North Hollywood home. His camp tells me he'll be releasing a mixtape imminently, but when I ask him what he's got coming, he's whimsical: "I'm working on a whole lot of bangers. I'm making movies, you feel me? The album will come out maybe the top of next year - but I'm a true artist. I might drop an album tomorrow!"

When I ask how he celebrated "Panda" going to Number One, he laughs. As some lyrics on "Panda" indicate, he's partial to mellow drugs. "I just smoke weed - only the herbals, maybe a little lean here and there," he says, and any time he spends in nightclubs is as a performer, quickly shown the door the moment he's done onstage. "I'm 19!" he reminds me, getting ready to board his plane. "I need to turn 21 so I can actually stay in these clubs!"

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR LIVE NATION



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FLEXIBLE PASTE.



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ANYWHERE.

AXE
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Magnetic Zeros' Hippy Hangover

After the loss of a key member, the band made a highly personal album and found a new, less-crunchy way forward

When Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros began recording their new album, *PersonA*, they faced a serious identity crisis. The band had become a huge festival draw early this decade, thanks in large part to "Home," a whistling, horn-happy singalong that was used in multiple commercials. But according to frontman Alex Ebert, the Zeros "started crumbling" around 2014. Several members lost parents. Their democratic songwriting process – in which each member's ideas were pursued equally – stopped working. ("It was a free-for-all, like throwing daggers to the wall," says backup vocalist Crash Richard.) To make things worse, Jade Castrinos, Ebert's former partner and co-lead singer, had left the band. ("They voted me off tour a week before they left, via e-mail. lol," she wrote on Instagram. The Zeros refuted the claim with a long statement.)

As the band recorded *PersonA* at its New Orleans studio, Ebert took more control over arrangements of songs – "There were a couple of instances of hurt feelings, but that's normal," he admits – and adjusted

to being the sole lead singer. "The music had to be even better, because we were no longer this boy-girl sideshow." Ebert urged the band to embrace the music it loves, including jazz and piano ballads. "It went down a pretty sobered path," says Richard. "The Ballad of Yaya" remembers guitarist Nico Aglietti's late father. "Let It Down" is about Castrinos' departure ("You're gone to trade gold for pennies when our love was free," Ebert sings), and "Free Stuff" seems to take a swipe at the Lumineers and other new-school folk acts. "I remember saying nothing we do is going to be on the radio," says Ebert, "and I shouted it triumphantly."

The singer hopes the new album will move the Zeros further away from the crunchy image that stuck to them years ago (the band became a punchline during the most recent season of *Girls* when Marnie got flak for wearing a Sharpe-esque flower crown to her wedding). "The band is perceived as a bunch of flowery, over-jubilant hippies," says Ebert. "That's not reality. It's all in transcendence of some pain."

PATRICK DOYLE



Ebert at Coachella in April

Life After the Folk Boom

Like the Zeros, these bands rode a wave of strummy good vibes to success during Obama's first term. The hard part: finding a second act

Mumford & Sons

The Brit band injected banjos, busker hardiness and songs titled "Thistle & Weeds" into the mainstream.

The Latest They jettisoned the kick-drum-only approach on 2015's *Wilder Mind*, and went a rhythmic step further on the Afrobeat-influenced *Johannesburg*. "We could've done *Sigh No More 2*," says bassist Ted Dwane. "But we probably would be pretty depressed by now."



Marcus Mumford

Of Monsters and Men

Using the splashiest aspects of Mumford's sound, they became Iceland's biggest musical export since Björk with their 2011 debut.

The Latest For 2015's *Beneath the Skin*, they teamed with Muse producer Rich Costey for a more straight-ahead rock sound. Sales dipped, but they got a cameo on *Game of Thrones* in May.



Of Monsters and Men

The Head and the Heart

A Seattle six-piece whose first two LPs recalled a more acoustic Arcade Fire. So hippie that they sold copies of their first album in denim sleeves.

The Latest Their next album has burlier guitars and rhythms. But frontman Josiah Johnson will not be appearing on their summer tour, as he recovers from an unspecified addiction.

The Lumineers

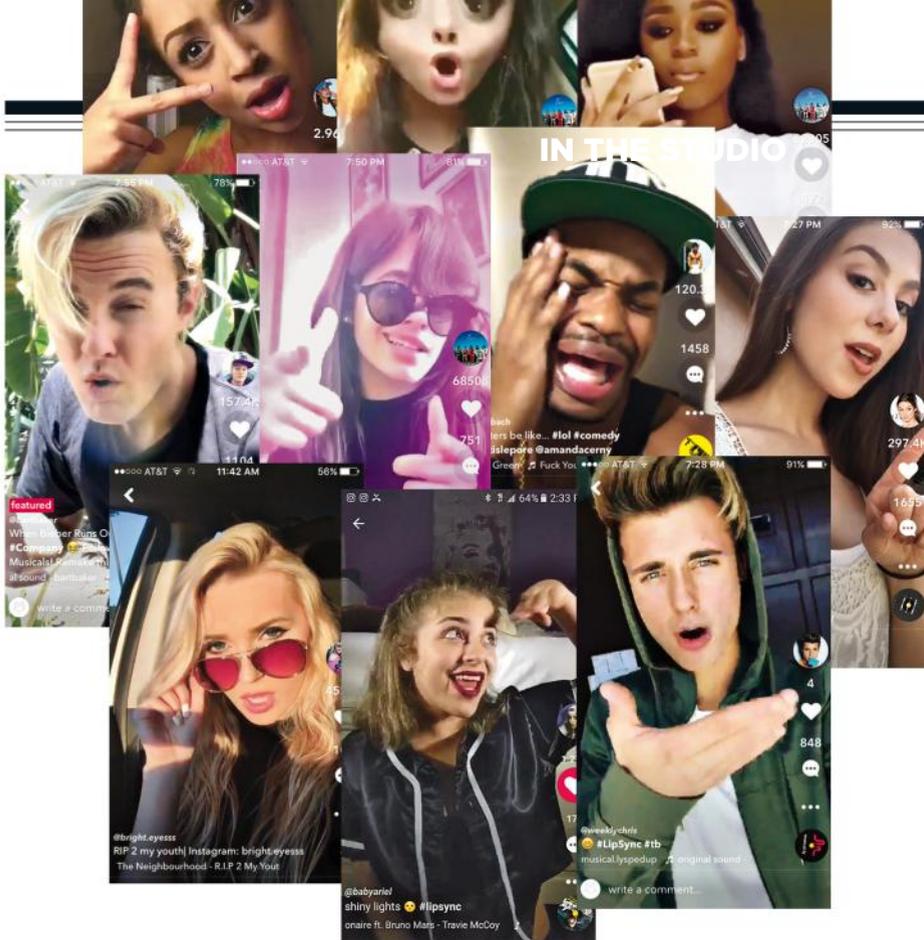


Wesley Schultz

Colorado trio who vaulted from folk clubs to two Grammy nominations, thanks to their ubiquitous hit, "Ho Hey."

The Latest The Lumineers told ROLLING STONE in 2013 that they had a "new approach," but on their latest LP, *Cleopatra*, they largely stuck with their stomping sound. It's working: *Cleopatra* debuted at Number One, and the band remains a steady draw on the road.

DAVID BROWNE



SOCIAL MEDIA

15 Seconds of Stardom

Musical.ly, an app for lip-sync videos, has 90 million users – and it's launching future stars

TWO YEARS AGO, ALEX ZHU WAS THE CO-CEO OF A FAILING EDUCATIONAL APP called Cicada, which allowed students to watch lectures by experts in a variety of fields. One afternoon, he spotted kids on a train in Mountain View, California, taking photos and videos while blasting music, and he was struck by a bolt of inspiration. Zhu ordered his company to redirect its last \$20,000 of venture capital into a new idea: lip-sync videos. ¶ After changing its name to Musical.ly, the app – which allows users (or “musers”) to share 15-second videos in which they sing along to songs or recite TV dialogue – exploded. Musical.ly now has 90 million users worldwide, the majority of them teenagers. “It took on a life of its own,” says Ayal Kleinman, a Warner Bros. Records marketing vice president who introduced R&B star Jason Derulo to the service. ¶ What’s emerged is a mix of acting, comedy and performance art: a young man pretends to be pregnant during Carly Rae Jepsen’s “I Really Like You”; others dab to a Whitney Houston snippet as part of the #IWillAlwaysLoveYouComedy challenge. Unlike Vine, users can access a Spotify-like streaming database to play songs while shooting selfie videos on their smartphones. (Dubsmash, a similar app that debuted in 2014, had no social-networking features at the time.) “People are moving beyond lip-sync videos and sharing original content that features them dancing, acting, singing and cooking,” says Alex Hofmann, Musical.ly’s North American president. ¶ Artists like Derulo and Selena Gomez post videos on the app, but Musical.ly has also created its own stars. Its biggest, Florida 15-year-old Ariel Martin (a.k.a. Baby Ariel), is one of the headliners on DigiTour Summer, a 28-city run of clubs and theaters, featuring various social-media celebrities. She has amassed 10 million followers, and just hired her first manager. “My life has completely changed,” she says. “But I have the same long-term goals. I really want to pursue acting, whether it’s through social media or a TV show. We’re seeing where that takes us.”

STEVE KNOPPER

New Must-Have Rock-Star Item: A Pop-Up Shop

Musicians have found a new way to make up for declining revenue: pop-up shops (a.k.a. temporary retail spaces). Foo Fighters, Drake and more have had them; here are three of the hottest from recent months.

The Strokes

Vibe Retro. The band set up in an old furniture store near the former site of CBGB.

For sale The band’s new *Future Present* Past EP (\$15), a T-shirt featuring their fake band name, Venison (\$15)



Must-have item A glammed-out varsity jacket (\$150)

Did the band show up? Just Albert Hammond Jr.



Bieber at his pop-up in New York

Justin Bieber

Vibe Hot Topic at Christmas-time. Fans were let in 20 at a time at the shops, which were set up during two of Bieber’s *Purpose* tour stops.

For sale *Purpose* denim jacket (\$350), sweatpants (\$100)

Must-have item “My Mama Don’t Like You” tee (\$50)

Did Bieber show up? Yes, with a police presence.

Kanye West

Vibe Hip-hop couture. His downtown NYC shop took in a self-reported \$1 million.

For sale *A Life of Pablo*-themed jacket (\$400), a Yeezy Season 2 zine (\$200)

Must-have item The Donda West/Robert Kardashian memorial tee Kanye wore on *SNL* (\$55)

Did Kanye show up? No. **s.k.**



RIGHT, FROM TOP: SACHA LECCA, COURTESY OF VFILLES; ASTRID STAWARZ/GETTY IMAGES

Drake's World of 'One Dance'

The chart-topping hit – on its way to becoming this summer's biggest song – draws from a half-dozen styles and was built by a team from three continents. Here's a breakdown of the song's global influences

United Kingdom



The song's vocal hook and bouncing piano come from the house-music subgenre UK funky – specifically, "Do You Mind," a 2008 dance hit by Crazy Cousinz and singer Kyla. Kyla had taken a break from music to raise a family when she was contacted to sing on the track: "I was doing a mommy meet, and my e-mail went off," she says. "When I found out it was Drake, I couldn't believe it." London remixer Logan Sama was also tapped: "I just added some energy at the end of the song," he says.



Canada



Drake's hometown, Toronto, is one of the most diverse cities in the world, and that global sensibility informs the song. Toronto producer Noah "40" Shebib (who is of Irish-Lebanese descent) was Drake's right-hand man in assembling *Views*, and "One Dance" was spearheaded by producer Nineteen85, who grew up in Scarborough, a Toronto neighborhood with a large West Indian population; you can hear Trinidadian soca in the groove as well as dancehall (see right).



Nigeria



There are hints of the acrobatic funk sound of Nigerian Afrobeat on "One Dance," as well as vocals from Nigerian singer Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, otherwise known as Wizkid. "I saw that Drake followed me on Instagram, so I DM'ed him," said Wizkid, who later met Drake in London. Word has it there are more Wizkid/Drake tracks in the vault.



Balogun

South Africa



Pretoria-based producer DJ Maphorisa is responsible for slowing down the Kyla sample and adding other touches. "African sound is the future," he says. "English lyrics make it more relatable."

Jamaica



Drake sings the song in a breezy patois, and Logan Sama notes that "One Dance" has "stereotypical regga BPM. A lot of the dancehall tracks from the Nineties are produced at that speed."

ERIN MACLEOD

TRIBUTE

Prince Be of P.M. Dawn



Attrel Cordes – a.k.a. Prince Be, of the pioneering hip-hop group P.M. Dawn – died on June 17th of diabetes-related kidney disease. He was 46. Working alongside his brother Jarrett, Prince Be brought new levels of elegance and vulnerability to hip-hop with hits like 1991's "Set Adrift on Memory Bliss," which sampled Spandau Ballet, and "I'd Die Without You." "I didn't want to do anything that was in hip-hop already," he told

ROLLING STONE in 1995. P.M. Dawn's commercial fortunes faded in the late 1990s, but you can hear their influence in artists from Kanye West to Drake. "Prince Be could have been hip-hop's Brian Wilson," Questlove said. "Eccentric. Rich. Textured. A sad beauty." Added Boy George, who recorded with the group, "Working with P.M. Dawn was a blast. Prince Be was sweet, smart, creative and charming."

CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOSEPH OKPAKO/WIREIMAGE; GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/FILMMAGIC; JOSEPH OKPAKO/GETTY IMAGES; ANDRE CSILLAG/REX SHUTTERSTOCK/AP IMAGES



FORK IN THE ROAD Young with his electric LincVolt in October

Neil Young's New Harvest

After a divorce, he's back in L.A. with a new band and a new love. But he's still got plenty to be pissed off about

BY PATRICK DOYLE

YOU CAN HEAR HIM FROM THE hallway. Neil Young is kicked back on a couch in the center of his suite at New York's Carlyle Hotel one recent morning, stabbing away at the strings of his acoustic guitar. His wet hair is combed back and he's wearing a T-shirt that says EARTH, with jeans and sandals. He places his beat-up 1940s Martin—previous owner: Hank Williams—next to him on the couch. "Sit down, make yourself at home," he says. Just then, his Samsung phone rings; the ringtone is his own voice shouting "Hello?!" He picks up—a wrong number. "I'll just turn it off, that'll solve it."

Young is in the middle of a quick New York trip, and, as is typical for him, his schedule is ever-shifting. He just decided to do a sketch on *The Tonight Show*, forcing his team to cancel several interviews

today. In front of Young are lyrics to the comedy bit, a song called "Two Neil Youngs Sitting on a Tree Stump," sent to him by Jimmy Fallon. Young doesn't like singing his own name, so he's been tweaking the words with help from his manager, Elliot Roberts. "You're gonna get a credit on this one," Young says to Roberts with a smile.

Roberts, 73, has worked with Young since the late Sixties, and the two still speak several times a day. "I've never seen him happier," Roberts says. That's a recent development, however. In the past few years, several of Young's close pals died, including longtime film collaborator Larry Johnson and guitarist Ben Keith—losses that Young took hard. Then, in 2014, he parted ways with Pegi Young, his wife of 36 years, and moved out of Broken Arrow Ranch, the property in Redwood City, Cal-

ifornia, he had since 1970. "I got a divorce, and I gave my wife the ranch," he says matter-of-factly. (His son Ben, who has cerebral palsy, still lives at the ranch: "All his support systems are there.")

Young is dating actress Daryl Hannah, who said a big hello as she stepped into the hotel elevator just now. The couple live in L.A., putting Young in the city "for the first time since *Zuma*." The move has allowed Young to reconnect with several old friends. "I was so remote for so long," he says. "All my old friends are now just a few miles away." One is Stephen Stills, who's been making music with Young lately. Stills and other friends, including Graham Nash and the members of Crazy Horse, celebrated Young's 70th birthday in November at L.A.'s Roxy. "Daryl put together a great party," Young says. "I felt really loved."



LIKE A HURRICANE “They have no fear,” Young says of Promise of the Real (above). Right: With Daryl Hannah on a stroll in Malibu in January.

Hannah has helped Young focus on his health, with an organic diet, regular Pilates and a lot of walking. “I like to listen to the animals,” he says. “I like to track the beauty of what’s going on. I enjoy being with the plants and stuff.” Young aimed to capture that beauty on *Earth*, a new live album featuring his most environmentally conscious songs, from “After the Gold Rush” to tracks from last year’s *The Monsanto Years*, on which he attacked the agrochemical giant as a jumping-off point to sound the alarm on the planet’s decline. Young spent months enhancing *Earth* with animal and nature sounds – bees, roosters, crashing waves – that he recorded himself near his house. “There’s a lot going on in the world that isn’t all lovey-dovey and cool beach songs,” he says. “I’ve done all of that.” A week after *Earth*’s release, Young is putting out a new version of *Human Highway*, a 1982 film comedy that he co-directed, about a nuclear disaster that ends the world.

“I arrived in L.A. and joined Buffalo Springfield in 1966,” Young continues.

“Since then, we’ve lost 90 percent of the fish we eat from the ocean. There’s only 10 percent of them left, and there’s three times as many of us.” He shakes his head. “It’s math.”

Even for Young, the past decade has been full of left turns. He finally agreed to a Buffalo Springfield reunion tour in 2011, but canceled it after seven shows because he was disappointed with their playing, according to a representative for Young. He’s ramped up his output, releas-

ing theme albums like *Fork in the Road*, a love letter to his custom electric Lincoln Continental, and *A Letter Home*, cut in a 1947 recording booth at Third Man Records in Nashville. “This is the age where you should have freedom to do whatever you want and put it out.”

The only problem, according to Young, is getting that music heard. His music is not available on streaming services aside from Tidal, which supports high-quality audio. He spent several years developing his high-resolution Pono music player, which has struggled to catch on. “Technology has done a disservice to music,” he says. “I think there’s a place for rebel radio, with special receivers, where jocks play what they want: vinyl, new stuff, old stuff, and it’s all analog. Because

there’s no variety. It’s all, like, GMO music.”

But Young has plowed ahead anyway. “Just because everything else is broken doesn’t mean I have to be broken,” he says. On *Earth*, he’s backed by Promise of the Real, a band featuring Willie Nelson’s sons Lukas, 27, and Micah, 26. Young first played with them at Farm Aid in 2014, and they have been with him since. They usually join Young onstage after his acoustic set, and roadies in hazmat suits

pretend to spray the stage with chemicals. “They have no fear,” says Young, who loves the three-guitar attack he forms with the Nelsons. “They’re much better players than I am. Lukas is like a gunslinger, and Micah is very ethereal and spaced. So they’re completely different, and I’m somewhere in between.” Where Crazy Horse attack Young’s songs with a garage-y simplicity, Promise of the Real add virtuosity and youthful energy. They grew up on Young’s songs (their band name is inspired by a lyric from “Walk On”), and they’ve learned more than 100 of them, playing three-hour sets including rarities like 1974’s “Vampire Blues.” “I’ve always wanted to do this, but no one has ever been able to follow it,” Young says.

Recording *The Monsanto Years*, Young and the band drank lots of Amazonian yerba maté tea and smoked homegrown pot in the studio. “He seems like he’s 25,” says Micah. “He gets deeper with age. And danker.”

After he wraps his current tour in October, Young will continue work on *Archives II*, the follow-up to 2009’s *Archives*, which collected unreleased material up to 1972. Young says the project will include *Dume*, an album of songs from the Zuma era, and *Hitchhiker*, an acoustic LP from the mid-Seventies. The major hold-up has been developing technology for presenting the ambitious project: “We’re gonna have a website that’s, like, 60 years of music in chronological order, with links so you can look at my archives and play the music off the high-res source at the same time.” So what’s it like to reflect on all he’s accomplished over the years? “I don’t,” he says. “I need to take a break and go to the bathroom.”

In October, Young and Promise of the Real will play California’s Desert Trip, with Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan, the Who, the Rolling Stones and Roger Waters. “I was amazed that I was asked to be in it,” Young says. But don’t expect him to cater to the audience with a set full of hits. “I don’t give a shit,” he says. “I don’t care what people want to hear – that’s not why I’m playing. I’m not an entertainer in the classic sense. I play what I feel like playing, and I hope the people like it.”



“The world isn’t lovey-dovey stuff and beach songs,” Young says. “I’ve done all of that.”

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DOES ANYONE PLAY A DICKHEAD as winningly as Danny McBride? Since his indelible turn as the loudmouthed, lovably villainous baseball player Kenny Powers on *Eastbound & Down*, McBride has proved himself comedy's leading, and most brutal, satirist of modern white American bravado. His new HBO series, *Vice Principals*, concerns rival high school administrators gunning for the same job – or, put another way, two monomaniacs engaged in a ridiculous war for power. But it's a total coincidence that the show is making its debut during a savage election year. “The story was something [longtime collaborator] Jody Hill and I came up with in 2006,” McBride insists. “It's totally random that it's coming out while the country is facing a giant power struggle. But that's the way art works sometimes!”

Vice Principals takes place in a high school, Kenny Powers taught gym on *Eastbound & Down*, and you were a substitute teacher once – what were you like in the classroom?

It was important to me to explain to the kids that I wasn't like their other teachers: I tried to make sure they thought I was cool. But all they cared about was if I smoked weed and what kind of car I drove. I couldn't admit that I smoked, and I drove a Hyundai Elantra – so I wasn't really impressing them that much!

What kinds of classes did you substitute for?

Most of the classes were English, which I knew about, but one day I had to sub for German class. I don't speak German at all. The teacher left a video for us to watch, but the fucking tape broke. I dug around the classroom and found another VHS tape that had episodes of *Cops* on it. I was like, “Today you guys are just gonna watch *Cops*, and that's that.”

There's an insane LSD sequence on *Vice Principals*. You're on the record about your love of magic mushrooms. What's your craziest drug experience?

My buddies and I used to do a little vision quest up at Joshua Tree once a year – go eat mushrooms and have a weird little spiritual experience. Acid was never my thing. I tried it one time in college and fucking hated it. Jody Hill did it with me, and I remember him burning holes in his sweatshirt with a cigarette, like, “I think there's rats on me!” I was like, “Am I gonna start fucking seeing rats?” That sent everything into a downward spiral for 10 hours.

Q&A



Danny McBride

The ‘*Eastbound & Down*’ star on his new HBO show, the emotional burden of playing dickheads, and how Donald Trump is like Kenny Powers

BY JONAH WEINER

You've carved out a niche playing arrogant, obnoxious, frequently racist assholes. What goes through your head when you watch Donald Trump campaigning?

I'm one of the least-political people you'll ever interview. I don't have strong opinions either way. But it's shocking when people speak their minds in a way that's insensitive to how other people think – sometimes it can be so shocking it's funny.

Trump's not a million miles from Kenny Powers, the big difference being that Trump's not a work of satire.

With Kenny, the idea is that there's this image of alpha-male masculinity that back in the day people aspired to, but in the current social context it's seen as oppressive and narrow-minded. So these characters are trying to behave in the way they think they're supposed to, but the seat at the table for guys like them is disappearing. You're a proud Southerner, but the Southerners you portray are deeply flawed.

I'll go to parties in L.A. where people flippantly write off this whole section of the country, as if they understand what it's about and everyone who lives there is one way. I actually think the South is more diverse than Los Angeles: People mingle more, and I meet different types of people more. It also shows you that you can take a character like Kenny Powers, who isn't someone you'd politically or morally align with, but at the end of the day see how the same things that are important to you are important to them.

Is it liberating to portray loudmouthed jerks, or does it take a toll on you?

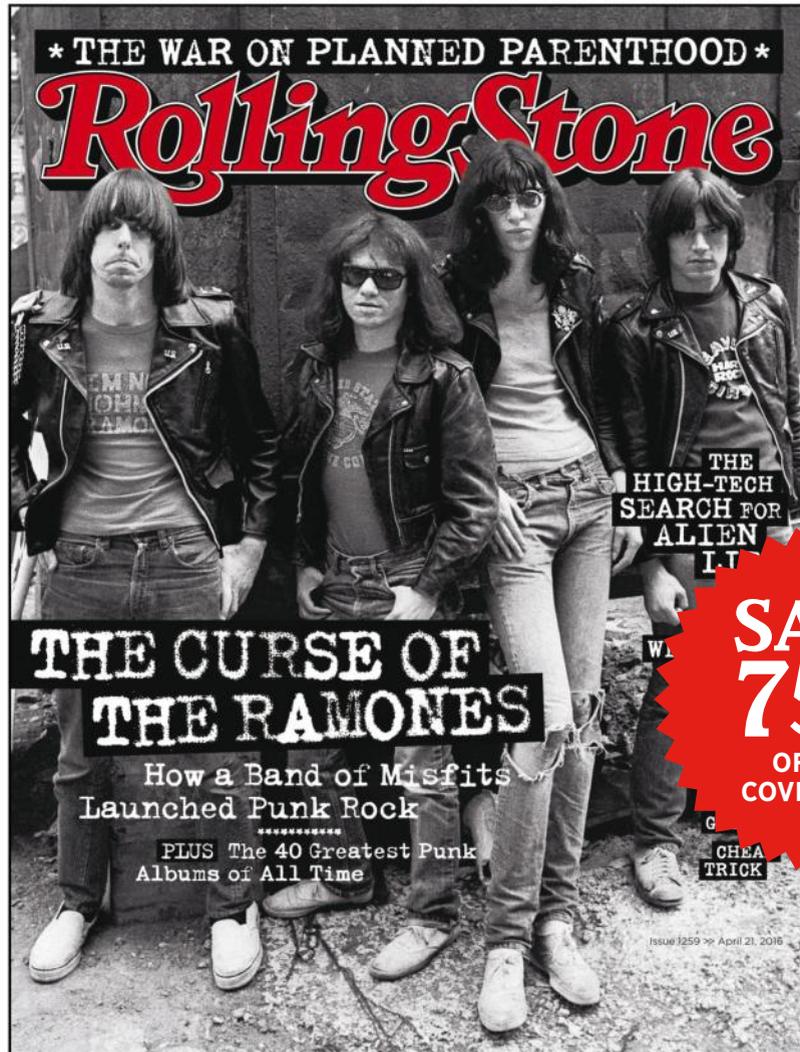
Playing Kenny was more difficult than I'd realized: You have these actors coming to set, and you just rip them apart. It was wearing on me – I figured it was the stress of production or whatever, but when we shot *Vice Principals*, I told my wife, “I'm enjoying making this show more, and I feel more myself coming home.” I think it's because my character, Neal, as much as he's a jerk, has a solid heart.

Neal has a very sweet relationship with his daughter. You have a four-year-old son. Has fatherhood changed your comedy?

You know, kids are little bastards – they change you without you realizing! Like, you asked me about mushrooms: I haven't done them in a while, but I never made a choice *not* to do them. [Pauses] But fatherhood hasn't, like, softened me. I don't think so, anyway. But maybe I'm just a soft sack of shit now. Who knows?

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Building 'Mr. Robot'

How an alienated computer nerd turned a dark show about anarchic hackers into a breakout hit

BY JOSH EELLS

ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF A warehouse-turned-office in industrial Brooklyn, through a glass door marked EVIL CORP, the man behind last year's most inventive, cinematically dazzling, mind-fucking new show is hard at work on a gorgeous Sunday. "Sorry it smells like Mexican food," Sam Esmail says. "We had burritos for lunch."

MR. ROBOT WEDNESDAYS, 10 P.M., USA

The tall, bookish Esmail, 38, is the creator of *Mr. Robot* – the hacker-themed techno-thriller that came out of nowhere (the USA Network, of all places) to become 2015's breakout hit. With its high-wire plot about a group of Anonymous-like hackers called fsociety plotting to take down global capitalism, the show didn't just borrow from the headlines, it often predicted them – like when *Mr. Robot*'s protagonist, the brilliant-yet-troubled cyber-vigilante Elliot Alderson, hacked into someone's Ashley Madison account, and then a few weeks later, the website was hacked for real.

For Season Two, which premieres July 13th, Esmail is hoping to satisfy towering expectations with a storyline that dives deep into mental illness and economic revolution. But this year, he's signed up for an even trickier undertaking: directing the entire season himself. It's a feat of auteurship that's not unprecedented in prestige TV (see *True Detective*, *The Knick*), but those directors weren't also co-writing every episode. Esmail says it's actually more efficient to direct himself, because he's such a control freak – but that doesn't mean it's easy. In January, when *Mr. Robot* took home the Golden Globe for best TV drama – upsetting ratings juggernauts such as *Empire* and *Game of Thrones* – Esmail celebrated with a milkshake with his fiancée (actress Emmy Rossum), then flew straight back to New York to rejoin the writers room. "I don't know when I'm going to crack," he says, laughing. "It's looming."

Rami Malek, who stars as Elliot on the show, says that when Esmail laid out his Season Two plans for him, "My first re-



HACKERS DELIGHT Skeptical TV execs told Esmail (left) that "people on keyboards aren't interesting." Above: Malek (left) with Slater.



sponse was, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' Sam was like, 'It may fall flat on its face. But I think it's going to work.'

The show – which also stars Christian Slater as the titular Mr. Robot – was inspired by the 2008 financial crisis and the Arab Spring. Esmail initially conceived it as a movie, but when he got to page 90 of his script and hadn't even finished the first act, he decided to rework it for TV instead. He shopped it to the AMCs and HBOs of the world, but, he says, USA was the only network that offered to make *Mr. Robot* exactly how it was. Esmail suspects executives were put off by the show's darkness and interiority (the main character is a mentally unstable, morphine-addicted loner who often cries himself to sleep), along with the fact that – as he heard more than once – "people on keyboards aren't interesting."

And then there's that title, which sounds like a goofy Eighties android buddy comedy. "Everybody was like, 'Really? You want to go with that?'" Esmail says. "But I was pretty stuck on it. I remember growing up in suburban New Jersey, and all the computer stores were like, 'Motherboard Mayhem' and all these cheesy names. I just felt like it was the perfect vibe for this."

Much about *Mr. Robot* was inspired by Esmail's early life. "I was pretty much an outsider," he says. "I'm Egyptian, and my parents stupidly decided to move us down to South Carolina when I was five, which was pretty brutal. I got called 'sand nigger' all the time – to the point I didn't even know it was a slur. I just thought, 'That's who I am.'" Even after moving back to New Jersey in high school, Esmail still got beaten up a lot. "People thought I looked weird, that I talked weird. My parents were very strict Muslims, and they weren't shy about showing it. I wound up bonding way more with my black friends, because I had a sort of kinship with them that I didn't have with white people." [Cont. on 34]

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MR. ROBOT

[Cont. from 32] Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the show's subject matter, Esmail is also a lifelong computer nerd who used to do much of his socializing on "this rudimentary text-based BBS [bulletin board system]," pre-Internet. At age nine, he got a Commodore 64 and would "copy programs, and all those things you're not supposed to do with a Commodore 64." He started writing his own code a few years later, but says he wasn't any good at it: "I could come up with *ideas* for software. But to actually sit and write every bit of code, every command – I just didn't have the patience."

Lucky for Esmail, he was also a budding movie geek who, at age 14, organized a sleepover to watch every Stanley Kubrick movie. At NYU, he majored in film and minored in computer science – a fitting preview of what he's doing today. After graduation, he started a Web company called Portal Vision, which built software for Internet service providers that was easy to use like AOL (this was in 1998), then licensed it to AOL's competitors. "We raised \$6 million, and I ran the company for two years," Esmail says. "And then, in 2000, we went bust with the crash." He went back to film school, directing his first indie feature, *Comet*, in 2014. Around the same time, he started writing *Mr. Robot*.

In addition to the computer stuff, some of the show's darker elements come from Esmail too. "One of the big things in my life that overlaps with Elliot is that I have tremendous social anxiety," he says. He men-

tions a scene in which Elliot stands outside a bar during a friend's birthday party, watching through the window but afraid to go in. "I did that same thing – I would get all the way there, then leave," he says. He also says Elliot's addiction to morphine – which the character uses to self-medicate – was pulled from his own life. "There's a loneliness [to anxiety], and with that comes a lot of pain," Esmail says. "I lucked out and was able to quit cold turkey – I didn't have to go to rehab. Whatever makeup I have, I'm grateful I can turn it off."

"One of the big things in my life that overlaps with Elliot is that I have tremendous social anxiety," says Esmail.

A couple of mornings later, the *Mr. Robot* crew is in midtown Manhattan to film a scene for the Season Two premiere, in a fancy hotel suite overlooking Times Square. (Vice President Biden is staying here, and it took a while for the Secret Service to check everything out.) Esmail – perched on his director's chair in the same jeans and black hoodie he had on two days earlier – calls "Action," and three actors playing Evil Corp executives launch into a tense conversation about digital encryption and ransomware that suggests the fsociety hackers aren't finished with them yet.

Mr. Robot's first season – and spoiler alert for anyone who hasn't seen it yet – ended with fsociety successfully hacking Evil Corp and erasing millions of dollars in debt, while sending the international financial system spiraling toward collapse in the process. This season, which Esmail promises will be "darker," opens 30 days later, with the world still struggling to process the shock waves. "We've pulled the trigger, and the bomb has gone off," Esmail says. "The reactions and consequences will go all over the place."

"What this show does that's so cool is that we create this whole financial meltdown and revolutionize society – but we also deal with the fallout," Malek says. "It's not like one of these superhero movies where an entire patch of New York gets blown up and no one has to clean up the rubble. Sam is asking, 'Who's going to clean up the rubble?'"

Meanwhile, Esmail promises that the central twist of Season One – that Mr. Robot is just a figment of Elliot's imagination, a hallucinatory projection of his long-dead father – is a mere jumping-off point. "A lot of people, when they read [the script], said, 'Why don't you do it as a movie that ends with that reveal?'" he says. "That wasn't interesting to me. I wanted to do more of the aftermath: What do you do when you become aware that you have this disorder? There must be a lot of denial and shame and self-loathing. So that's what Season Two is all about: watching Elliot figure out, A) can you live with this? And B) if you can't, then what do you do about it?"

Four 'Mr. Robot' Hacks, Explained

When it comes to hacking, 'Mr. Robot' has one rule: If it can't be done in real life, don't show it onscreen. That's where Kor Adana comes in. An ex-hacker who quit after a brush with the law, Adana is a writer and in-house expert on 'Mr. Robot.' Here, he walks us through four of his favorite hacks from the show.

1. The Minicomputer

"The Raspberry Pi is a small, credit-card-size computer that you can program any number of ways," Adana says. Last season, when Elliot's crew attacked a data-storage facility, they attached one to a thermostat and used it to hack into the facility's climate-control system. "That was an exciting thing for us to showcase, because it's relatively new," Adana says. "We took the time to solder every single copper wire, just like in real life. None of it mattered, because we covered it up with electrical tape. But we knew."



2. The Super CD

Elliot secretly stores information from his hacks on his own audio CDs, using a tool called DeepSound, which lets you hide files within other files. "He's encrypting images inside audio tracks, but if anyone ever came across his CDs, they'd play like normal," says Adana. "It's a Windows tool, but I usually want Elliot to operate in Linux, like real hackers do. So we had him running Windows *inside* Linux, in what's called a virtual machine, which was fun – or fun for geeks like me."

3. MagSpooF

A MagSpooF is a device that can wirelessly copy the magnetic strip on any credit card, giving a hacker who gets close to your card access to your account. For an episode in Season Two, the writers wanted something similar, only for a hotel-room key – so they made it themselves. "We worked with the guy who created it to make a custom tool," Adana says. "It actually works. But I promise I haven't used it."

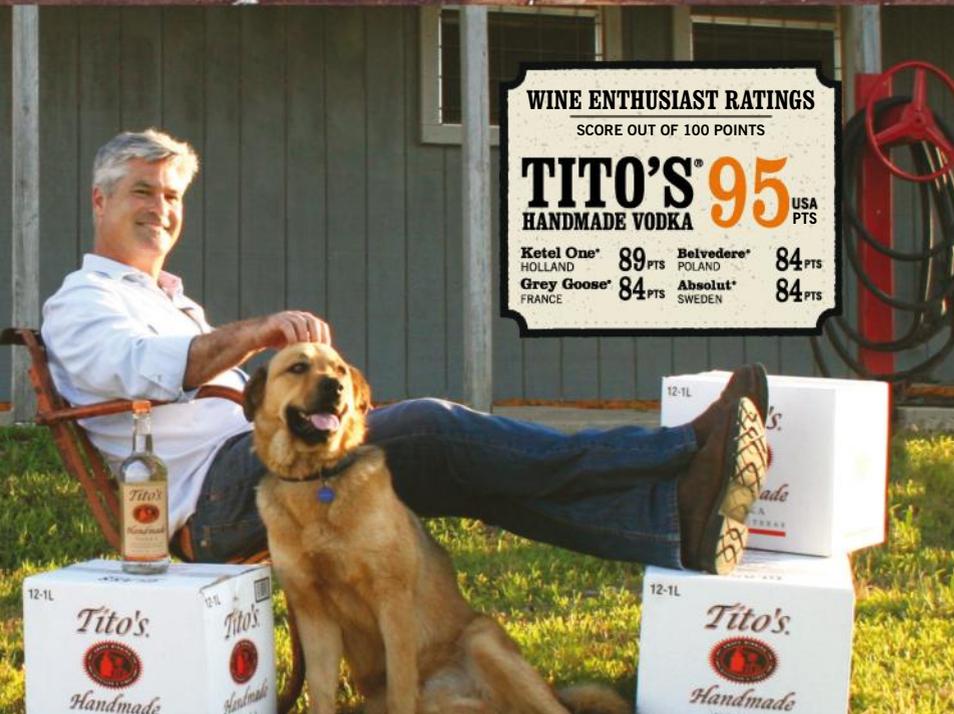


4. Grand Theft Auto

On their way to the data-storage facility, two hackers steal a minivan using a 315MHz remote-control scanner. "It's basically a device that intercepts the signal on your car's key fob and clones it," Adana says. Once inside the van, the hackers plug their laptop into the vehicle's CANbus port. "Most new cars have them – they give you access to the main computer, and they are hackable," Adana says. "Once they tap into the PCU, they're able to manipulate the car using the laptop." J.E.



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An All-American Nightmare

The extraordinary 'O.J.: Made in America' forces us to look back at how the country created a monster

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

IT'S NEW YEAR'S EVE AT O.J. Simpson's mansion, and the cops are knocking at the door. It's the ninth time they've been called out here for domestic violence. They find his wife, Nicole, cowering in the bushes in a bra and sweatpants, covered in bruises, sobbing, "He's going to kill me!" O.J. evades arrest by breezing off

O.J.: MADE IN AMERICA
ESPN FILMS

in his Bentley. The judge decides to get tough by giving O.J. community service: playing golf for charity. The Juice charmed his way out of this one. He charmed his way out of everything. And America kept looking the other way – until it was too late.

Somehow, 2016 has turned out to be the year of O.J. – the year America looks back at the murder trial of the century to figure out what the hell it was all about, and what it says about us. *O.J.: Made in America* has become a major cultural event, using TV to go deep on a story that couldn't be told any other way. It's the first miniseries from ESPN's groundbreaking *30 for 30* franchise, an extraordinary eight-hour documentary that makes you rethink a case you thought you already knew inside out, dredging up all the national obsessions: race, fame, money, sports, sex, drugs, violence. Already this year we've had the excellent Ryan Murphy FX miniseries *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story*, treating the 1994 murders and subsequent trial as the L.A. celebrity burlesque they always were. But as *Made in America* shows, O.J. Simpson is a nightmare America has kept having about itself for decades.

Made in America is a sprawlingly ambitious epic that wouldn't have been possible in the TV culture of five or 10 or even two years ago. Director Ezra Edelman has dug deep, interviewing friends, family, lawyers and jurors – most devastating of all, revealing excerpts from Nicole's diaries. It focus-



Bad Juice

(1) Simpson on trial for double murder in 1995. (2) In 1980 with his dad and his son Jason. (3) With ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson, 1993.



es on the twisted racial history of black L.A., and on details usually left out of the story, like O.J.'s reportedly gay dad, Jimmy Lee, who died of AIDS-related complications in 1986, and the Juice's bizarre history of cheating at golf.

Most important, *Made in America* shows how Orenthal James Simpson may have been a football legend at USC and in the NFL, but his gridiron days were just a fraction of his amazingly long run as a celebrity, always genial, always bemused, the smiling ex-jock corporate America could send out there to sell anything. As a movie star, he could rescue a kitten from a burning building in *The Towering Inferno* or play John Belushi's brother in the *SNL* sketch "Samurai Night Fever." Lots of other jocks from O.J.'s era tried to make this transition to mainstream fame – Joe Namath sure screwed it up, and Jimmy Con-

nors never got close – but the Juice's magnetism allowed him to transcend race and become the most uncontroversial of American heroes.

It's fascinating how the current O.J. revival connects with the remake of *Roots* – another story from the Seventies that TV has brought back this year – but also with the death of Muhammad Ali. (Of course, O.J. was in the original *Roots* – it's like he's in the background of every American story.) In their overlapping heydays, Ali was everything O.J. wasn't: brash, mouthy, a nonconformist, happy to play the bad guy. But now, as we look back on Ali and the ways he represented the best in us, it's even more chilling to revisit the O.J. case. His warm smile still represents everything America would like to forget about itself, which is why he could turn anyone into a fan – even the cops who kept getting those disturbing 911 calls from his wife.

Made in America is also a story about TV right now – the way it uses the rapidly expanding frontiers of the small screen to make this story an opus that would be unthinkable for a feature film, and unwieldy in the era before binge-watching and streaming made it possible for so many people to participate in the documentary as an ongoing event. Part of *Made in America*'s power is that it doesn't shy away from O.J.'s genuine charm – in the footage, you can see him smile, and you can see its effect on people. Unlike *The People v. O.J. Simpson*, *Made in America* has the real O.J. right there onscreen, and his opaque charisma is more disturbing than ever. That's why the O.J. trial has once again turned into a national obsession – it doesn't feel like the distant past, or even the past at all. It's not merely the most famous American crime story – it suggests America is a crime story. **R**

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RandomNotes



WHO'S THE BOSS?
Bruce Springsteen showed off some fan signage before tearing into "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" in Munich. The E Street Band returns to the States in August.



"Very charming," says Hiddleston of Swift, who recently split with Calvin Harris.



SUMMER OF LOVE
Taylor Swift and beau Tom Hiddleston spent time in Rhode Island, and Jay and Bey enjoyed a Hawaiian getaway.

Beyoncé's Formation tour runs through the fall.

A Very Special 'Roo

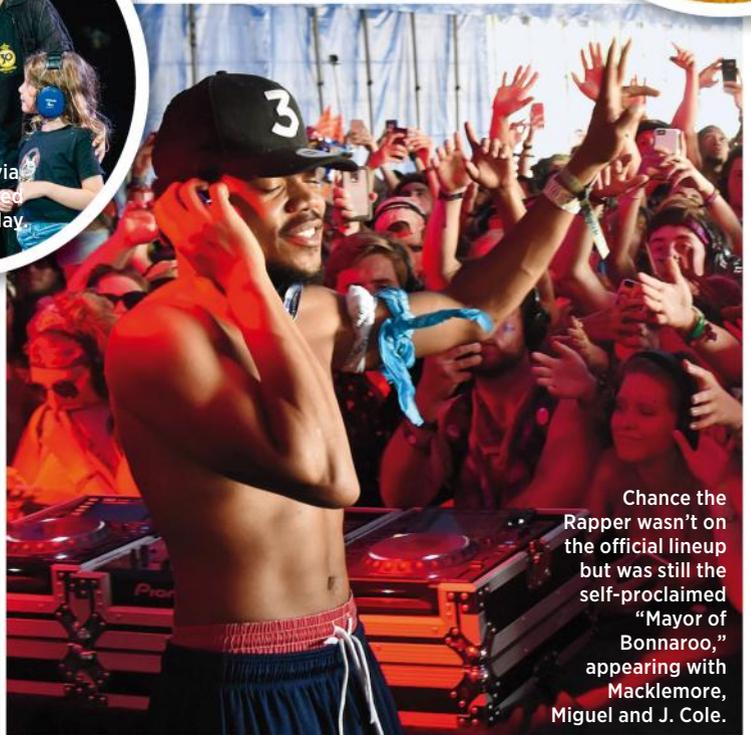
This year's Bonnaroo featured Dead and Co., LCD Soundsystem and Pearl Jam, who fought through a rain delay and capped their two-hour set with a cover of "Rockin' in the Free World."



Wedder's daughter Olivia (left) celebrated her 12th birthday.



Macklemore donned a hair-metal wizard costume to hold the rain at bay: "A little lightning can never stop the music," he said.



Chance the Rapper wasn't on the official lineup but was still the self-proclaimed "Mayor of Bonnaroo," appearing with Macklemore, Miguel and J. Cole.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PAUL WHITFIELD; THEMAGEDIRECT.COM; SPLASH NEWS; JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC FOR BONNAROO ARTS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL; SPLASH NEWS; ROURK ANGELO



Still Ramblin'!

Gregg Allman hit the town in New York with his fiancée of four years, Shannon Williams. "I love going there and wandering around all the different neighborhoods," says Allman, who is on tour this summer with his traveling Laid Back Festival, featuring ZZ Top. "Add my beautiful gal to that picture? Good livin'."

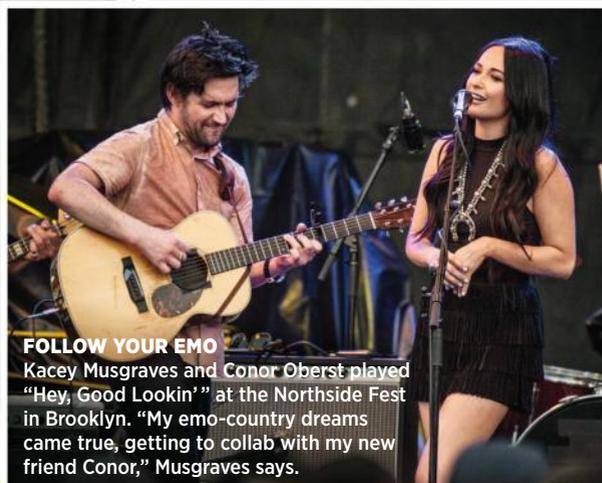


FOOT SOLDIER Harry Styles got in shape for his role in Christopher Nolan's World War II movie, *Dunkirk*. "His readings made him the obvious choice," said the casting director.



IT'S JUST A SHOUT AWAY

Longtime soccer fan Mick Jagger took in England's match against Russia at the 2016 Euro Cup with his son Lucas. "My son is half Brazilian and absolutely mad keen on football," Jagger has said.



FOLLOW YOUR EMO

Kacey Musgraves and Conor Oberst played "Hey, Good Lookin'" at the Northside Fest in Brooklyn. "My emo-country dreams came true, getting to collab with my new friend Conor," Musgraves says.

Gucci Mane: Free at Last!

"It's great to be home, and I'm having a ball out here tonight," said Gucci Mane, who was all smiles at Atlanta's Mansion Elan during his first public appearance since being released from prison. He performed several songs at the event and announced an upcoming tour, Gucci Mane and Friends, to start in September.



CRAZY ABOUT ELVIS

Tom Petty and Elvis Costello were among the honorees at the 47th Songwriters Hall of Fame Awards dinner. "I am probably the least commercially successful songwriter to have ever been inducted," Costello said.



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Exxon's refinery in Baytown, Texas, is the nation's largest.

THE EXXON INVESTIGATION

For decades, the oil giant knew the dangers of climate change and did everything in its power to deny the threat of a warming planet. Will the company finally pay the price?

★ By McKenzie Funk ★

AT 9 A.M., EXXONMOBIL'S SHAREHOLDERS start to file into Dallas' Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center for their annual meeting. Security personnel check IDs and confiscate phones. Uniformed police stand guard. Everyone passes through metal detectors. Outside is a crowd of protesters hoisting signs – "Exxon Lies, Seas Rise" – while standing beside a 13-foot ice sculpture of #ExxonKnew. Inside the cavernous auditorium, Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson stands onstage, his podium framed by two massive pots of white carnations and a pop-up forest of green ferns. Behind him is a beautiful image of a snow-dusted desert landscape – Utah, perhaps – with an oil derrick perched lightly atop a rock outcropping. "For many years now," Tillerson

begins, "ExxonMobil has held the view that the risks of climate change are serious and do warrant action."

On this muggy Texas morning, the world's largest publicly traded oil company, one of the most profitable corporations of any kind anywhere ever, is facing unprecedented pressure. A series of in-depth reports recently revealed that Exxon, a font of climate skepticism in the 1990s and 2000s, had also been on the cutting edge of climate science as far back as the 1970s. It ran its own computer models, built up a team of in-house experts, and understood from the beginning that any effort to stop global warming would mean an effort to reduce fossil-fuel use. As the threat of regulation grew, the company gave tens of millions of dollars to dozens of think tanks and advo-

cacy groups that churned out white papers questioning even the most basic facts of climate change. It took out full-page advertorials in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* with titles like "Climate Change: A Degree of Uncertainty" and "With Climate Change, What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us."

Last November, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman opened a fraud investigation, subpoenaing the company for 39 years' worth of internal memos, e-mails and other documents related to climate change. In March, he announced a new coalition of 17 states and territories that will pursue climate litigation against Big Oil. Members of Congress and both Democratic presidential candidates have called on the Department of Justice to do the same. The

BENJAMIN LOWY/REPORTAGE BY GETTY IMAGES

FBI is circling. The 70,000-person company, long a symbol of American corporate might, is under siege. This investigation, Al Gore has said, “may well be looked back on as a major turning point.”

Now, in Dallas, Exxon is being confronted by yet another group: its own shareholders. As never before, Exxon’s investors are worried about how global efforts to curtail rising temperatures will hurt the company’s profits. To meet the climate goals of last year’s Paris Agreement, more than two-thirds of global fossil-fuel reserves – \$100 trillion worth, according to a Citigroup estimate – would have

plains Exxon’s current thinking on climate change, comes after a question from the audience. The temperature projections made by climate models 30 years ago have proved fundamentally correct, a scientist named Mike McCracken says, so what is Exxon doing to plan for the dire warming today’s models project?

“We’re not ignoring the risk that’s out there,” Tillerson says. Climate change could be “catastrophic,” and Exxon must be part of mitigating it. But the people of the world will not – and should not – give up refrigerators and cars and increasing standards of living. “We are grounded in

New York fraud laws, however, carry a six-year statute of limitations. Raymond retired a decade ago, and under Tillerson, Exxon has dropped almost all of its funding for climate-denial think tanks. Believing some form of climate regulation is inevitable, the company now factors in a theoretical carbon price – \$80 a ton – when evaluating the long-term economics of new oil and gas projects. Since the start of the Obama administration, Exxon has also said it supports a carbon tax (which Tillerson views as less onerous than cap-and-trade), and once secretly partnered with another organization to lobby for the tax on Capitol Hill: the Sierra Club.

“The best way to say it is that our understanding of the science evolved along with that of the rest of the world,” says Exxon spokesman Alan Jeffers. “People focus on the public-policy groups” – that is, the ones Exxon funded that raised doubts about man-made climate change – “while choosing not to focus on the science we supported.” Jeffers notes that Exxon scientists have published more than 50 peer-reviewed papers on climate change, and the company funded the climate-modeling team at MIT with \$3.8 million over 19 years. (Although tax filings reviewed by Greenpeace show that Exxon also gave \$31 million to climate skeptics over roughly the same period.)

While it’s true Exxon no longer requires the threat of law enforcement to admit global warming is real, the case against Exxon is most significant – a possible “turning point” – because one form of climate denial remains almost wholly uncorrected: Exxon’s stock price.

An oil company’s value rests, in large part, on its booked reserves: the petroleum deposits it has discovered and claimed a legal right to someday produce. ExxonMobil is a reliable blue-chip stock because it has forever grown its reserves, aggressively chasing and booking new deposits the world over. Some of its wealth is tied up in refineries and gas stations and real estate, but it is mostly on paper – that is, mostly in the ground. Meaningful action on climate change threatens to leave these assets “stranded.” “There is arguably no material fact more important to the future value of companies that own massive amounts of carbon-based fuel,” Gore tells me, “than the answer to the question ‘Is global warming real, man-made and a problem that must be urgently addressed?’”

There are more than 1.5 trillion barrels of oil reserves on the books of multinationals and petro-states. If we are to keep global warming to two degrees Celsius, only a third of this – more than \$25 trillion worth, according to the Citigroup analysis – can be burned. Gore compares these holdings to the junk mortgages Wall Street bundled and sold off at top dollar to unknowing investors, only Big Oil’s exposure



HOT SEAT Protesters gather outside Exxon’s shareholders meeting in Dallas – officials are investigating whether the oil giant lied about climate change to protect its stock price.

to remain in the ground. If Exxon believes climate change is real, that warming more than two degrees Celsius could be catastrophic, and that the world is finally serious about averting this disaster, it must also accept that it may never sell tens of billions of barrels of oil currently on its balance sheet.

After Tillerson’s opening remarks, Edward Mason, a financial manager who represents the Church of England’s \$10 billion investment fund, proposes that Exxon publish an annual study on how meeting the Paris benchmarks will affect the company’s portfolio. Natasha Lamb, with the activist-investor firm Arjuna Capital, suggests the company beat a managed retreat from a future that no longer has a place for oil giants. To each, Tillerson responds calmly in his Texas twang that “the board recommends a vote against this proposal.”

The moment many in the crowd are waiting for, though, when the CEO ex-

plains the reality of the day and grounded in the technology of the day,” Tillerson continues. “Just saying ‘turn the taps off’ is not acceptable to humanity.”

In other words, the world will not actually meet the Paris goals. So Exxon will be fine. The auditorium, packed mostly with corporate die-hards, erupts in applause, but the case against Exxon may turn on moments like this. Schneiderman does not have to show that the company injured a specific victim or conspired to hide what it knew about climate science from the public – just that it did not tell its own investors the truth about the risks climate change poses to its bottom line.

EXXON’S HISTORY OF SOWING confusion about climate change is well-documented. Its uncompromising former CEO Lee “Iron Ass” Raymond publicly derided computer climate models as “notoriously inaccurate.” The idea that societies could stabilize the climate by cutting man-made greenhouse emissions, he said in a 1997 speech, “defies common sense.”

MCKENZIE FUNK, author of “Windfall,” wrote about climate-change profiteers for *ROLLING STONE* in 2010.

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is about 20 times bigger. “Subprime carbon assets, they’re not going to be burned,” Gore says. “If companies are offering stock under the assumption that it’s all going to be burned, they are not being candid. The longer these companies represent ‘There’s absolutely no problem with global warming, nothing to see here – move along,’ the bigger the crash is going to be.”

IN EDITORIALS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS, Exxon and its defenders frame the “coordinated attack on Exxon-Mobil” as a battle over the First Amendment. By prosecuting the company based on past statements and internal communications, the argument goes, activists and attorneys general – the “climate po-

Efforts to hold Big Tobacco accountable finally got traction, the meeting’s participants learned, because state attorneys general got internal documents that revealed a sophisticated disinformation campaign. The tobacco companies hadn’t tried to convince the public that cigarettes didn’t cause cancer – just that the science was unsettled and still being debated by experts. “Doubt is our product,” reads one strategist’s memo, “because it is the best means of competing with the ‘body of fact’ that exists in the minds of the general public.”

One of the UCS meeting’s organizers, Naomi Oreskes, co-author of the influential book *Merchants of Doubt* and now a professor at Harvard, underscored the

ICN was the first to publish its investigation, built on documents its reporters discovered in the ExxonMobil Historical Collection at the University of Texas-Austin library. Its September 2015 stories on what Exxon long knew about climate change upended the popular image of the oil company. In 1979, Exxon fitted a supertanker with custom-made sensors to measure increased CO₂ concentrations in the oceans and atmosphere. In 1982, it hired scientists and mathematicians and collaborated with outside researchers to build its own computer climate models, secretly bolstering the growing scientific consensus about the dangers of unbridled greenhouse emissions.

Columbia’s first story, published in partnership with the *Los Angeles Times* in Oc-

“EXXON DID MORE THAN STUDY THE FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE - IT LOOKED INTO HOW CLIMATE CHANGE COULD BENEFIT OIL EXPLORATION.”

line,” to quote *The Wall Street Journal’s* editorial page – are criminalizing free speech. To which Schneiderman has a stock response: “The First Amendment doesn’t give you the right to commit fraud.”

The legal strategy against Exxon has been years in the making. In 2012, the advocacy group Union of Concerned Scientists held a two-day meeting in Southern California to examine whether tactics in the fight against Big Tobacco, which had long suppressed what it knew about the link between cigarettes and cancer, could be deployed in a fight against Big Oil. The tobacco companies were eventually charged with racketeering and agreed to a record \$200 billion settlement. A network of pseudoscience think tanks unraveled while the number of smokers in the United States fell toward historic lows.

clear parallels with Big Oil: Some of the same industry-funded scientists who once clouded evidence of tobacco’s harms had reappeared – and recycled the same tactics – in the climate debate. It was fair to assume, notes the UCS meeting summary, that “similar documents may well exist in the vaults of the fossil-fuel industry and their trade associations and front groups.”

Schneiderman’s investigation of Exxon would get an assist from two small teams of journalists: Columbia University’s Energy and Environment Reporting Fellowship, led by veteran investigative journalist Susanne Rust, and InsideClimate News, a nonprofit, digital-only publication that got its start trying to stir up what co-founder David Sassoon calls “Digg storms.” Together, the two outfits started a house fire for Exxon.

tober, made clear that Exxon had done more than study the fundamental science of the greenhouse effect – it looked into what benefits climate change could have on new oil exploration. One person quoted in the series was Ken Croasdale, an ice researcher who had worked for Exxon’s Canadian subsidiary, Imperial Oil. Part of Croasdale’s job was to report to Exxon headquarters on the warming Arctic, where Exxon still holds oil leases. He speculated that the company was “taking a gamble” that it would be able to drill when the ice inevitably broke up.

Exxon responded forcefully, noting that both ICN and the Columbia fellowship have received support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which bears the name of the family that founded Exxon but now strongly backs climate action. In a letter to

FROM LEFT: SENATE TELEVISION/AP IMAGES; BILL CLARK/CO ROLL CALL/AP IMAGES; JENNY ANDERSON/WIREIMAGE; NO CREDIT; MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; GHEWADEI/SHUTTERSTOCK; EZRA SHAW/GETTY IMAGES; NO CREDIT

THREAT ASSESSMENT THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY



WITH US

Dems lead 15-hour filibuster on **gun control**.

Elizabeth Warren gets vetted for Clinton VP spot.

‘Curb Your Enthusiasm’ to return for ninth season.

Hackers tweet gay pride from pro-**ISIS** Twitter accounts.

Trump’s unfavorability reaches 70 percent.

Coffee taken off World Health Org list of cancer causes.

LeBron brings a championship home.

U.S. federal court: **Internet** is a public utility.

the president of Columbia, an Exxon representative leveled charges of journalistic malpractice against Rust and her fellows, claiming the company was not given a chance to respond to questions – despite an e-mail record showing the opposite. Columbia’s journalism-school dean, Steve Coll, investigated Exxon’s claims, soon rebutting them point by point in a six-page response. As for ICN, Exxon has repeatedly called its journalists – who include veterans of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times* and PBS – “anti-oil-and-gas activists.” This spring, ICN was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize for its Exxon reporting.

Schneiderman cannot rely entirely on what the journalists uncovered – he needs proof of an ongoing fraud within the six-year statute of limitations – but no other attorney general is better positioned to find a smoking gun. Under a 1921 New York statute called the Martin Act, Schneiderman has almost unlimited subpoena power. The act has helped win a series of billion-dollar settlements against Wall Street’s biggest banks over the subprime-mortgage scandal, and perhaps more important, anchored a case of climate fraud against the world’s largest publicly traded coal company, Peabody Energy. After two years of quiet investigation, the coal company was hanged by its internal documents – an unsettling precedent for Exxon, which so far has been forced to turn over some 600,000 documents. “Peabody is the same legal theories,” Schneiderman says. “We found several clear-cut examples of fraud.”

Another aspect of Peabody is worrisome for Exxon’s investors: When it settled with Schneiderman, agreeing to revise its financial statements to reflect the potential for stranded assets and other climate-related risks, coal-fired power plants were already struggling with new federal regulations and a widespread switch to cleaner-burning natural gas. By the time

Peabody signed the agreement, its shares were down 90 percent. In April, the coal giant declared bankruptcy. “That’s not because of our case,” Schneiderman says. “But it proves our point. The market is moving from coal very rapidly – and from oil.”

AFTER THE VOTES ARE TALLIED in Dallas, Natasha Lamb of Arjuna Capital, wearing a red blazer in a sea of gray and black suits, mills about the symphony lobby with Exxon’s other investors. “There was a change in tenor,” Lamb says of this year’s meeting. “There was a lot more admission



OIL KING CEO Rex Tillerson has tried to calm fears that climate change will hurt profits.

by Tillerson that climate change is real – that the science is real.” At the same time, Lamb adds, “Tillerson seems comfortable that there can be outcomes other than a two-degree rise in temperature. That’s where it breaks down. And that’s a frightening view looking into the future.”

In 2014, Lamb helped force Exxon to publicly own up to this dystopian view of the future. Lamb’s group had proposed a resolution asking Exxon to do the math on stranded assets in a carbon-constrained world. Exxon tried to strike the proposal from the ballot, Lamb says, but “I perse-

vered.” Exxon’s head of investor relations ultimately cut a deal with her: The company would write a paper on “carbon asset risk” – the first such report by an oil major – if Lamb and her partners would agree to withdraw their proposal.

Exxon’s paper, “Energy and Carbon – Managing the Risks,” previews the arguments Tillerson made onstage. In the coming decades, more people, especially poor people, will want more energy. The world will use more renewables – but also more fossil fuels. A truly low-carbon future will not happen. “ExxonMobil believes that although there is always the possibility that government action may impact the company, the scenario where governments restrict hydrocarbon production in a way to reduce GHG emissions 80 percent... is highly unlikely,” the report says. “We are confident that none of our hydrocarbon reserves are now or will become ‘stranded.’”

It’s possible that Tillerson’s hoped-for technological breakthrough will magically save us all – and save Exxon’s stock price. It’s possible that Exxon, demonstrably richer and bigger, will out-compete its fossil-fuel rivals, even as carbon constraints begin to pinch – someone else’s carbon assets may have to stay in the ground, but not Exxon’s. It’s possible that Exxon is already a toxic asset, that it is subprime, that it is no longer one of the most valuable companies on the planet because its reserves are already unburnable. All of this is possible.

It’s likewise possible that the future we fear – three or four or five degrees of temperature rise, and with it fire and famine and rising oceans – will come to pass. Exxon, we now know, has chosen to bet on it. Its 2014 white paper, acknowledging that climate change is real, though not a threat to its future profits, is well within the statute of limitations for Schneiderman’s case. The courts will have to decide if this is fraud or just wishful thinking. ☹

TOP: ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: FROM LEFT: © LUCY YOUNG/REX SHUTTERSTOCK/ZUMA PRESS.COM; CLIFF OWEN/AP IMAGES; ROLLS-ROYCE; JOHN PAUL FILO/CBS/GETTY IMAGES; ANATOLY VARTANOV/SHUTTERSTOCK; NATTANANZ/SHUTTERSTOCK; NASA E.O.S.D.S.; VADIM GHIRDA/AP IMAGES



AGAINST US

Led Zepplin on trial

Trump donates \$50 million to his own campaign.

Rolls-Royce unveils driverless car with lasers to project a virtual red carpet.

Lin-Manuel Miranda leaving *Hamilton* cast.

Senate rejects gun-control measures.

Gator attacks, drowns toddler at Walt Disney World resort.

Greenland hits record high temperatures, above-average melt.

U.N.: A record **65.3 million** people displaced by conflict.

The Dark Past and Glittering Present *of* Future

Studio nights, dirty Sprite and metaphysical visits with strippers: Inside the life of a superstar MC **By Brian Hiatt**

OUTSIDE, IT'S RUSH HOUR, A STILL-sunny spring evening in Atlanta, but in here, you'd never know it. This room is windowless and dark, illuminated only by a projector shooting shimmering green stars onto the ceiling, a computer monitor displaying Pro Tools, and the glowing rack of gear beneath it. The air seems composed mostly of high-grade kush smoke, accompanied by just enough oxygen to sustain life. On a shelf in the corner are liter bottles

of sugary sodas – Sprite, Pineapple Sunkist, Strawberry Fanta – mixers for a bottle of codeine cough syrup adorned with a picture of Homer Simpson.

This control room and its adjoining vocal booth, in a gated studio complex on an industrial road a couple of miles from downtown, is the workplace of choice for Atlanta's reigning hip-hop king, Future. Six feet three with long, blond-tipped dreads, top-notch cheekbones and the sleepy swagger of the high school athlete he once was, he looks less like an actual rapper than a movie star



cast as one. Even leaked mug shots from his pre-fame hustling days look like outtakes from magazine shoots. He has a big, bright leading-man smile that he holds in reserve, unleashing it most consistently in the presence of attractive women.

He's puffing on a blunt, taking a sip or two from a Styrofoam cup of the narcotic beverage mostly known to hip-hop fans as "lean" or "drank" or "sizzurp" before he helped rebrand it as "dirty Sprite." With his lyrical salutes to Xanax, codeine, Adderall and Oxycontin, he's one of the first rappers who could conceivably sign a sponsorship deal with Big Pharma: "I just took a piss and I seen codeine coming out," he rapped not long ago. He considers himself a rock star, and he's dressed like one: pale jeans, strategically shredded, with a plaid shirt tied at his waist and a crisp white tee. (The following day, he wears a \$435 T-shirt by the high-end brand Enfants Riches Déprimés, emblazoned with the words HIGH RISK/CHILDREN WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE.)

Tonight, Future will write and record four songs from start to finish. ("Ain't gonna never be sober," he raps in one of them. "You can't lose your composure/Cause once you lose it, it's over.") "Future was always the person to knock out multiple bangers in one night," says producer Mike Will Made It. That ability helps explain Future's astounding output since October 2014, a creative run pretty much unmatched in quantity and quality by any contemporary in any genre: four mixtapes, two full-fledged solo albums, plus *What a Time to Be Alive*, his smash collaborative album with Drake. The last three of those projects all debuted at Number One.

The influence of Future's ever-evolving sound – centered on his melodic gifts, spontaneous, mesmerizing flow and a digitally augmented baritone growl that sounds like he's gargling ones and zeros when the Auto-Tune is cranked up – is everywhere: Fetty Wap seems to have gotten his entire style from Future's 2012 hit "Turn on the Lights," while Brooklyn rapper Desiigner has been dominating radio with "Panda," a song so derivative in its lyrics and production that Mike Will, for one, thought it was a Future track on first listen. (Future is reluctant to address this subject: "I never worried about anyone else.... I don't even want his name in the article," he says of Desiigner.) The actual Future pops up on standout tracks on both Drake's and Chance the Rapper's new albums (at one point, a Drake-free version of the *Views* track "Grammys" plays in the studio), and Future and Drake are touring arenas together this summer.

It's been an insane streak, all in the wake of a life-shaking mid-2014 split from his former fiancée, R&B star Ciara, the moth-

er of the youngest of his four children. He's determined to keep it going. "I want to keep doing what I'm doing and see how far I can go," he says. "See when it stops. See what the end is like. I want to make this moment last as long as I can make it. If I miss a day, I'm afraid I'll miss out on a smash record."

Even up close, his songwriting method is hard to comprehend. Seth Firkins, his longtime engineer, a friendly stoner with a John Belushi vibe, compares Future to a "medicine man." Firkins, who is parked semipermanently in front of that Pro Tools monitor, plays a looped beat from one of Future's preferred producers – today there are tracks by Mike Will and Metro Boomin – while Future hangs out in the control room, maybe mumbling to himself, maybe smoking his blunt, maybe just pacing. Until he gets on the mic, he can be silent for 45 minutes at a time. Eventually, without a word, Future disappears into the vocal booth, in front of a portrait of Jay Z, and begins rapping. After years of collaboration, he and Firkins have an uncanny bond: Without any instruction, the engineer always knows when to cue up the verse again, always understands which part to loop as the chorus.

There is a rotating crew of visitors on hand, in addition to two ever-present helpers – Shootrr, who shoots Future's Instagram pictures, and Nyce, his videographer. (Future's personal assistant, an efficient woman named Ebonie, is elsewhere in the studio complex.) A rapper named Mexico Mark hangs around for a while. Another guy introduces himself as a childhood friend of Future's, before imbibing enough

dirty Sprite to lapse into near-catatonia on the couch. It's a Tuesday night, so it's relatively quiet – late on a weekend, it can be hard to find a place to stand.

The vocal booth is even more dimly lit than the control room, almost pitch-black. Once Future is in there, swaying at the mic to the beat of the moment, a song almost always manifests itself. That includes the choruses: Future usually writes and sings his own hooks. Singing rappers are nothing new in the post-Drake era, but Future's actual melodic inspiration came from closer to home: His cousin Rico Wade is the leader of the groundbreaking Atlanta production crew Organized Noize, and Future hung out in Wade's fabled studio, the Dungeon, for months at a time, learning from the likes of Outkast and Cee-Lo. Even as he helped shape a new Atlanta sound, Future served as a bridge between the soulful, progressive Organized Noize approach and the trap anthems of Young Jeezy and Gucci Mane.

When he sings, Future has a tendency toward melancholy, and the strongest of tonight's hooks combines triumphant lyrics with a hint of actual blues: "I got it way gone, gone, gone," he sings over a martial Metro Boomin beat, with a soulful half-tone bend on the last "gone." "We gon' get whatever we want." In the verse, he raps, "Feel like I ain't done enough/Make you feel my pain/I ain't done yet."

He later learns that the hard drive holding all four tracks, the whole night's work, was somehow corrupted, and the songs may be lost forever. He shrugs it off: There's more where those came from, and he has more pressing things to worry about.

After he split with Ciara, "I was scared as shit. I felt like I failed publicly. I didn't have anything to fall back on."

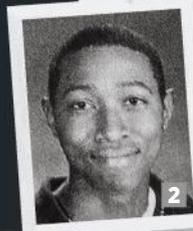
FUTURE MET CIARA RIGHT outside these studio doors, where she was also recording one day (veteran pop and R&B producer Tricky Stewart owns the studio). They took pictures together, and the glamorous singer immediately called him by his real name, Nayvadius – and, as one of Future's friends recalls, began giving him suggestions on how to pose for the shots. They hit it off, and were soon dating seriously. Future moved to Los Angeles to live with Ciara, putting aside his deep ties to Atlanta and his perch at the top of the city's music scene. He recorded a single with Miley Cyrus, dressing up as an astronaut in the video, and released *Honest*, an album that was perceived as a pop-cross-over bid, despite tracks as grimy as the trap banger "Move That Dope." He dyed his dreads blond and started walking red carpets, hitting fashion shows, smiling more in pictures. "He was with an R&B chick, you know what I'm saying?" says Mike Will. "Ciara, she didn't even really like when people cursed." She became unpop-

Senior writer BRIAN HIATT wrote about Oscar Isaac in May.



Future Is Now

(1) With Drake in Atlanta last June. Their 2015 collaboration, *What a Time to Be Alive*, is one of three Future albums to hit the Top 40 in the past year. (2) Decatur, Georgia, high schooler Nayvadius DeMun Wilburn, a.k.a. "Meathead." (3) With then-fiancee Ciara, 2013. (4) Future with his and Ciara's son, Future Jr., in Jamaica this summer.



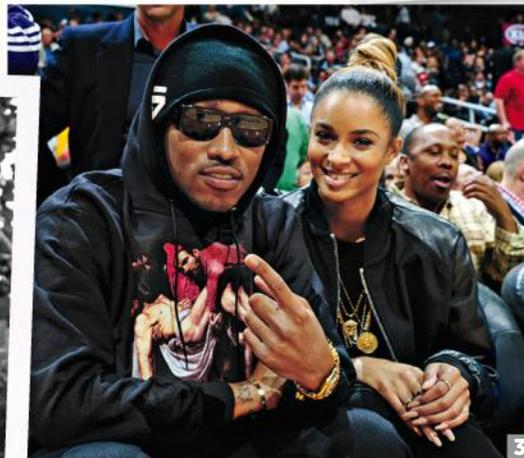
music." Future was worried about being seen "like a fucking joke."

The first of the ensuing flood of releases was the instant-classic mixtape *Monster*, where Future deliberately played into the backlash. "I embraced what I thought they was gonna hate about me," he says. "I was gonna turn the hate into love." In the title track, he was a "monster on these ho's," guzzling codeine and having copious casual sex. He coined the phrase "fuck up some commas" to denote spending

large sums, and got unnervingly confessional about Ciara on the track "Throw Away," which is half *808s & Heartbreak*, half Elvis Costello's "I Want You": "Got my dick sucked and I was thinking about you... When you're fucking another nigga, hope you're thinking about me."

Future quickly regained his street cred, garnering buzz worthy of a brand-new artist. He was soon back in Atlanta and began crossing over to wider fame simply by refusing to do anything to cross over. "Tryna make me a pop star and they made a monster," he raps on "I Serve the Base," a mission-statement track on last July's uncompromising *DS2*, a woozy, psychedelic triumph that stands as his best-selling solo album.

But he and Ciara were about to go to war. Future publicly objected to a picture of Ciara's



One of Future's closest collaborators, DJ Esco - who helped break Future's earliest music via his Monday-night gig at the Atlanta strip club Magic City, perhaps the most important tastemaking spot in all of hip-hop - encouraged him to

get back to his roots. Future had broken through with a relentless series of street-focused mixtapes (his first solo hit was the sublimely unhinged "Tony Montana," where he raps in a half-assed *Scarface* imitation and, in between more conventional boasts, claims to have "crab cakes everywhere"). "I told him, 'We didn't get here doing this kind of music,'" Esco recalls. "Let me remind you what kind of music we used to do." He also encouraged Future to focus on his verses as much as his choruses, to let loose his lyrical skills.

"I remember Esco going, 'You need to spend time in the studio and get back to creating,'" Future says. "Block all that shit out. You going through a lot right now. Turn that shit into music, or it's gonna get the best of you.' Because everything's popping up in the media. Every day, it's something. It was getting bigger than my

new boyfriend, star NFL quarterback Russell Wilson, pushing Future Jr. in a stroller. (Wilson and Ciara are now engaged.) And in January, he tweeted of Ciara, "This bitch got control problems" and "I gotta go through lawyers to see babyfuture... the fuckery for 15k a month." She promptly sued him for libel, and the case is ongoing - though a judge did recently rule against a separate attempt by Ciara to gain sole custody of Future Jr.

The battle looms large in Future's mind. As he steers his black Ferrari along a freeway one afternoon, a blunt in his left hand, he lets out a weird, extended half-groan, half-laugh - it lasts maybe 15 seconds - when I remind him we're doing his first interview since Ciara's suit. "I can't deal with it," he says, eyes hidden by reflector shades. "I can't even think about it. I never imagined my life would be like that: 'I'm going to sue you and take away from you.'" The studio, then, becomes a place to hide, too: "I don't know how to deal with something like that," he says. "All I know is record, record, record, record."

A source close to Ciara accused Future of wishing failure upon her, but he denies

ular among some of Future's friends. "She was bougie as hell," one says. The couple got engaged in October 2013; soon afterward, Ciara announced she was pregnant.

By the middle of the next year, the relationship imploded amid widespread rumors that Future had cheated. ("I [don't] respond to rumors I respond to money," he wrote on Instagram.) It was just three months after the birth of their son, Future Zahir Wilburn, and public backlash hit Future hard. That, combined with a lukewarm response to *Honest*, left the rapper adrift. "I was scared as shit," he says. "I was one step away from being married, and I feel like I failed publicly in relationships. Then you want to go back to doing music, to what you know. And if the people didn't accept you again, the one thing you feel like you can fall back on, it walked away from you. You feel like it's over."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PRINCE WILLIAMS/WIREIMAGE.COM; COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL; SCOTT CUNNINGHAM/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES; DWIGHT "SHOOT'R" ELDER

that. “I would never wish that,” he says. “Her being successful, her being happy, helps me.” He starts addressing her directly. “I’m attached to you. If you’re happy, I’m happy. You’re connected for life. I don’t want you to go through this shit and for it to come back on my son, my kid. I want you to be in the best situation.”

He tries to explain, elliptically, why it upset him to see Wilson with his son, and why it’s a topic he wants to avoid going forward. “It’s something that’ll take more time for me. It ain’t even about [him] playing daddy. I don’t even want to think about it. That’s my son forever. My son is going to be able to read this. He’s going to be able to look at those pictures. He’s going to be able to have a judgment for himself, and have a conversation with me man-to-man. That’s my blood. He is me. I am him. We is one.”

FUTURE LIVES IN A \$2 MIL-LION mansion that still smells of fresh paint, tucked away in a gated community that is itself ensconced in an upscale Atlanta suburb. The ceilings are high enough that there’s a regulation-height basketball hoop on a great-room wall. It’s immaculately clean, but for all the pictures of his kids on the walls, the house seems underdecorated, slightly impersonal, like he barely spends time there. We head to the house one night after another long day in the studio, which had been interrupted only by a trip to a Zegna store in an upscale mall to pick out his outfit for the Met Gala in May. As usual, his videographer and photographer follow him home, where they’ll hang out until he goes to sleep.

The mansion is a 50-minute drive from Kirkwood, on Atlanta’s east side, where Future grew up. He was born Nayvadius Wilburn – the last name is his mother’s; his dad was in and out of his life, and wasn’t even on Future’s birth certificate. His childhood nickname was Meathead, because “everybody was making fun of him as a kid, saying he had a big-ass head,” says Rico Wade. (Nayvadius recorded as Meathead early in his career, but soon thought better of it. Wade thinks “Future” came from a song idea the producers had, while others suggest it came from Dungeon habitués continuously calling him “the future of rap.”)

In the mansion, Future endlessly, compulsively scrolls through Instagram on one of his three phones – “one business, one personal,” the other a mystery – while his hairstylist, a curvy former reality-show star named Shekinah Jo Anderson, begins the lengthy process of washing his dreads for an upcoming photo shoot. His assistants are watching *The People v. O.J. Simpson* in the corner; it’s loud, but Future never glances at it.

Future’s mom was a 911 operator, but almost everyone else around him was involved in crime and/or drugs. “Some people are from rich families,” he says. “I was from a drug family.” He experienced true poverty: In songs I watch him record, he recalls heating his house with a stove and eating uncooked Spaghettios straight from a can.

“The worst thing that happened,” he says without emotion, “was, I was in my grandma’s house, and some robbers came in and kicked in the door.” He was six or seven years old. The assailants tied everyone up during the robbery. “At the time,” Future says, “it wasn’t even traumatic. I come from that kind of family. I had to get over it.”

Nayvadius was a high school basketball player with real promise, but he couldn’t focus on school. He was selling drugs, asking himself why he should listen to teachers he was already out-earning. “I was caught up in the streets,” he says, with real regret. “I’m smarter today than I was then. If I was smart as I am now, I would have asked for *more* work. I would have been reading more books. Just as much as I work in the studio now, I would have been in school that much.” Instead, he dropped out of high school during his senior year, “lost connection” with his mom and started sleeping on relatives’ floors. Around that time, he was robbed at gunpoint. When he reached for his assailant’s gun, he was shot in the hand. There’s still a scar.

He was arrested more than once – “too many times.” “I don’t even talk about being locked up in any of my songs,” he says. “I did whatever came with my environment. I played the hand that was dealt to me.” He had his first child, a son, at age 18.

“Some people are from rich families. I was from a drug family.... I played the hand that was dealt to me.”

Nayvadius’ life wasn’t heading anywhere good, but he had a sense that there was another path waiting. He’d been rhyiming since he was a kid, was pretty sure he could be a professional rapper. And he knew that he had a very successful second cousin whom he had never actually met: “I just didn’t have an introduction.”

For his part, Wade kept hearing from his family that he had a “cousin who raps.” “In my mind,” recalls Wade, “I was thinking, ‘Is this really my cousin? Or is this somebody in the neighborhood that they think is talented?’” A mutual relative brought Meathead by Wade’s studio, but the producer still didn’t believe they were actually related – until a few months later, when they ran into each other again at a family funeral, where Wade learned that Meathead’s grandfather was his uncle.

The two men struck up a friendship, and Wade started taking Meathead into the studio, and into his house. When Meathead saw Wade’s mansion – and began crashing there for months at a time – his sense of life’s possibilities changed. “You never think a person can live like this,” he says. “And he got this from creating music. Man, I just dropped out of fucking high school! And it put tremendous pressure on you, ‘cause you’re living a normal life and then you see that, and this is what you have to work towards.”

Meathead threw his lot in with the Dungeon Family – his first tattoo, on both his forearms, is of the crew’s name. He saw quick success in the Dungeon, writing a hook for Ludacris’ 2004 single “Blueberry Yum Yum.” And Wade got him a small advance as part of a group called Da Connect. But progress was slow, and the streets were calling; he kept hustling even as he worked on his craft. Eventually, Wade ran into trouble with the IRS and lost his house; he and Future parted ways for a while. But Future always saw Wade as a father figure and an inspiration. “I haven’t even reached my whole potential yet,” Future says. “All the game I got from him, I haven’t even used half of it.”

Somewhere in there, Future discovered the substance that would be his greatest muse, the one that would lead him to call his breakthrough 2011 mixtape *Dirty Sprite* (and his 2015 comeback *DS2*, with the name shortened to avoid issues with the soft drink’s corporate owners). “At first, it wasn’t something that I loved,” he says. “It wasn’t till I discovered what I loved about it. Some people take drugs and they don’t *understand* the high. They take it just to *be* high.”

As Future tells it, the codeine served a therapeutic purpose: “It started making me more relaxed. Sometimes you experience anxiety, and it did me some good for that. I don’t feel like I ever abused it. I used it for what I felt was needed.”



Jumpman

Silver Spring, Maryland, February. "If I miss a day, I feel like I'll miss out on a smash record."

FUTURE NAMED HIS MOST recent album *EVOL* – love backward – and in the wake of his near-marriage, romance is a vexing topic. The idea of settling down again is “very scary,” a potential threat to his creative streak. “I’m not broken,” he says. “Why fix something if it’s not broke? If I break it, and I try to fix it again, it might not be the same. I’m creating my legacy right now.” He’s equally wary of the kind of musical evolution he attempted on *Honest*. “To stop in the middle of my run, and settle down and create a whole different kind of music? It’s gonna be superhard to make that transition. People look at what I did as one of the greatest comebacks of all time. But to do it a third time?”

To be sure, there are women in his life. During his trip to the mall, he stops in a Chanel store and drops a couple of thousand for a purse, recipient unspecified. (When his credit card is declined, he takes out an Instagram-ready wad of cash.)

Future has made an almost taxonomic study of potential romantic partners.

Chatting with Mike Will in the studio one day, Future explains the glories of Miami: “It’s plentiful, man,” he says. “It’s everything you want. They breed wifeys down there! That’s where everyone comes to – baseball players, football players. It’s a bidding war down there. In Miami, they all 21, 22. By the time they get to 23, they *gone*.” When Future gets enthusiastic in conversation, which isn’t often, the music lurking in his drawl comes out. “They *raising* them. They *young*. *Fresh*. Partying till six in the morning. They’re doing that shit every *night*.”

California women, he says, are more chill. “You spend money just on weed. A chick can come to the house and smoke and be *cool*. They know how to kick it.”

He has plans for a Jamaican sojourn around June. “I’m going there for two weeks at a big-ass house. That shit is stupid – studio on that motherfucker, pool. I plan this shit out with bitches. You fly some of them in on Sunday, and then another group come in – a rotation. We have to create our vibe and let other people deal with the real world, while we create

our world. Get a girl to bring her friend, get another girl to bring *her* friend, and it’s gonna be a movie. We’re having naked parties, for real. Every moment, I’m making moments.”

The next afternoon, fresh from a photo shoot, Future stops by a couple of strip clubs. He starts at the upscale spot the Cheetah, where dancers are more likely to undulate to mid-2000s indie rock than hip-hop. He claims to have chosen this spot on my behalf (“I thought you’d like it!”), but quickly starts chatting up a pale brunette dancer who sits at our table. He takes note of her accent: “You sound like you’re black,” Future says. Out comes the smile. Without apparent effort, he gets her number, and she shows up at the studio that night.

The next stop is Magic City, which is almost deserted at this early hour. It’s a squat, unlovely concrete building, smaller inside than its reputation might suggest. The catwalks are lined by bluish-purple neon, with matching neon on the ceiling, and a big pink Magic City logo in cursive over the bar. The music switches to an all-Future soundtrack as he starts talking to dancers named Vivian and Aimee. The conversation gets deep, fast. “I’m from the suburbs,” says Aimee, who’s in a ruffly top, with a flower tucked in her hair. She’s sitting on Vivian’s lap. “I grew up around white people – I always wanted to be from the hood.”

“You come to this world and you make two lives,” Future tells her, raising his voice over his own music. “You got to make the most of your second

life. I was born Nayvadius, but now I’m Future. Should I dwell on what Nayvadius was supposed to be? I get a chance to experience life as something else. I wasn’t supposed to be like this.”

“What do you look for in life,” she asks, “since you have all this success?”

“I’m just looking for stability and longevity,” Future tells her. “I’m really doing it for stability for my kids.”

She asks what he prays for. “Don’t ask for a million dollars,” he says. “Ask for the stuff that’ll *get* you a million dollars – your health, your brain, your sanity, wisdom. Prepare me for when I *do* get that million. Make sure I don’t go crazy, make sure I help my family. You don’t want to ask for a big-ass house and you burn the bitch down, and then you say, ‘God, give it to me again.’”

He pauses, and for a moment allows himself to embody the voice of God. “You begged for it,” he says, “and you don’t know how to handle it.” Lessons imparted, Future gets Aimee’s and Vivian’s numbers and heads out to his Ferrari. The studio awaits.

Who's Afraid of Samantha Bee?

How the former 'Daily Show' star crashed the late-night boys' club and became the fiercest and funniest woman on television

**By Alex
Morris**

Photograph by
BENJAMIN LOWY

D ECEMBER 1985: IT'S AN ICY TORONTO NIGHT, AND 16-year-old Samantha Bee is on a mission to not fail out of 10th grade. It's going to take some doing. Up until this point – and thanks to a “kind of criminal boyfriend,” who enjoys both car theft and tempting Bee to cut class so that they can lie around, watch TV and, you know, maybe do other things – Bee has managed to, as she explains, “skip the maximum amount of school that I could skip and still pull good grades,” which had been a carefully calibrated form of rebellion, “because I am still a Catholic schoolgirl, and I like my gold star.” But now, having blown off semester exams, she fears she's gone too far. It's time for drastic action. ¶ “So I went in the middle of the night to a parking lot, and I asked my boyfriend to break my hand,” she says matter-of-factly. “To break my writing hand. I was like, ‘That's the only way I can get out of this. I fucked up so badly. You need to break my hand.’ And he was like, ‘I'm not going to break your hand.’ And I was like, ‘Break it! You fucking break it, you pussy! You break my hand!’” ¶ She put her hand on the bumper of a car. He picked up a “boulder”



BEE STING

"I've completely dropped the artifice," she says. "I have a point of view, and you can know it."

and brought it crashing down. “And honest to God, I was like, ‘Thank you. OK. Done.’ I didn’t cry. I was so calculated about it.” Sometime past midnight, Bee showed up at a Toronto hospital wearing a cashmere sweater and pearls and cradling a swollen hand. “I told them I fell on it on the ice.” Bee grins wryly. “They X-rayed it. They were like, ‘You were obviously up to no good.’”

It did the trick. With her hospital wristlet and her sprained hand (“It wasn’t actually broken, thank God!”), Bee got away with skipping her exams, which meant she kept her gold star, which meant she remained on the path to a future of success and accolades, landing ultimately where she is now, on a Manhattan park bench, in the dappled sun of a perfect spring day, talking about what it’s like to host *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee*, her political comedy show on TBS, and mostly avoiding discussion of what it’s like to be the only female host on late-night TV, because how much more can be made of something that shouldn’t be so rare that it makes news in the first place?

She’s been up since 5:00 this morning (“I wake up when the birds start chirping”), has already perused the papers (“a little *New York Times*, a little *Washington Post*, a little *BBC World*”), downed two Nespressos, lured her three kids out of bed, fixed her daughter’s ponytail, ensured that everyone brushed his or her teeth, and prepared at least a dozen meals, including breakfast and lunch for her whole clan, and also a rice pilaf for good measure (“Oh, my God, I’m blushing. I did. I made rice pilaf”). She was out the door by 8:10 a.m. If she’s wearing any makeup at all, she slept in it, or sweated most of it off in her morning SoulCycle class. Wearing Lululemon yoga pants and colorful Nikes, she would look like the mom in a Tide commercial if there weren’t a smudge of something on the sleeve of her white T-shirt.

But don’t let any of this wholesome, bird-chirping, rice pilaf, Tide-mom stuff fool you. Don’t get caught up in the packaging. Remember: Samantha Bee is not afraid to take a boulder to her person. Do not think for one second, America, that when push comes to shove she will not take a proverbial boulder to you.

WHICH SHE DID, starting with Episode One this past February. “OK, so Iowans chose fist-faced horseshit salesman Ted Cruz as their new prize heifer,” she announced, after skewering both “Hermione Clinton” and “blustery old grandpa” Bernie Sanders – and fashioning a noose onstage. The mes-

Contributing editor ALEX MORRIS wrote about *Planned Parenthood* in April.

sage – that no one is safe from Bee’s disapprobation – and its bare-knuckle delivery (“It’s athletic, it’s sporting; I wear running shoes”) have changed the entire tone of the late-night satire conversation. Where John Oliver is affable/caustic and Jon Stewart indignant/bemused, Bee is quite literally outraged. “She happens to be one of those rare people who is able to see the urgency of things when others may not,” Stewart tells me. “Especially when it’s something that she really feels connected to. She is invested – she’s there for a reason.”

In Bee’s clenched hands, a story about untested rape kits getting thrown out in history’s most fucked-up round of spring cleaning (“Does this rape kit spark joy?”) named names (Georgia state Sen. Renee Unterman, among others) and turned evisceration into a high art (“Are you in the pocket of Big Rape?!?!”). In an abortion segment, she stared down a Texas legisla-

“We wanted a show that was visceral, that came from a really gut place, that tapped into our fury.”

tor who insisted that the regulations he’d sponsored were in the interest of women’s safety, and asked, “Have you thought about regulating the safety of back alleys? Because that’s where a lot of women will be having their abortions now.”

What’s surprised almost everyone, including Bee herself, is just how much America has liked this pummeling. When *Full Frontal* first aired, the country was midway through an election season that’s laid embarrassingly bare our nation’s squeamish relationship to women in power. From the get-go, Bee and her team leaned in to the sexism they knew would accompany a show in which wit is delivered in a higher register, from the tag line “Watch or you’re sexist” to the very first promo, in which Bee turns down a platter of meat (“Actually, you know what? I think I’m kind of done with sausages”) before signing off with a middle finger to the status quo: “And I am female as *beep*.”

But, really, she’d set the confrontational tone of her show a few months earlier, when a *Vanity Fair* spread celebrating the new wave of late-night hosts post-David Letterman, Jay Leno, Jon Stewart and Craig Ferguson featured a gaggle of (mostly white)

men in exquisitely tailored suits sipping brown cocktails – or, in James Corden’s case, a juice box. Never mind that Bee’s show (and Chelsea Handler’s, for that matter) had already been announced for 2016. “You know when you can feel your own heartbeat in your ears?” Bee asks, of the moment she first saw that photograph. Within two minutes, almost without thinking, she had responded, tweeting a Photoshopped version in which she had added herself into the picture. As a muscle-bound centaur. With laser eyes. And a one-word tag line: “BETTER.”

The tweet established Bee’s brand; it also went viral. “People responded to it,” says Bee. “And that was the first time I felt, ‘Oh, if a little tweet can electrify our potential audience, there are people out there whose desires are not being answered. There really is a place for our niche show.’”

More to the point: There is a place for her particular brand of gonzo outrage. “It wasn’t a conscious decision,” Bee says of taking this approach. “I don’t think you could put in a document, ‘The character will be Furious Woman. Just trust me. People will go for it. That would have been a really tough sell at the network.’ So Bee didn’t sell it; she just put on her cashmere sweater and pearls and told the network to trust her. Then she made the show that she herself would want to watch, one in which “women’s issues” are taken off the sidelines, and boulders are rained down on racism and sexism and any person, institution or -ism that needs a good whopping. Bee shrugs. “I don’t know how we would do it any other way.”

IN PERSON, BEE ISN’T ANGRY at all. She’s Canadian. Her parents were high school sweethearts who married young, divorced young and often left their only child in the care of a grandmother who worked as a secretary at the Catholic school Bee attended. She wasn’t a cheerleader. She had “good friends, but not too many of them.” Besides the criminal boyfriend who “turned me into maybe a bit of a sociopath,” Bee mostly did as a good Catholic girl should: She broke up with him and “became a much more responsible person.”

There was a lonely first year at McGill University before she transferred to the University of Ottawa. There was the thought that maybe she should be a lawyer, which she now knows she would have hated. There were, and still are, moments of extreme self-doubt and crying in the shower (“I’m a big crier. It’s really good for you. It just gets it out”). But things changed for Bee in a cosmic way when she signed up to take a theater class. “I thought it would be easy,” she says. “And it was, sort of.” She was cast as “Singing Bar



job actually entailed, and no one really has time to babysit you. I just tried to stay quiet as much as possible so nobody would figure out that I had so many questions that it would render me completely incapable of doing the job." For weeks she didn't realize that there was a free lunch.

Bee eventually found her niche doing field pieces "that no one else wanted to do, like the ones where you had to take two planes instead of one," going out to interview a gas-industry expert about the pink breast-cancer-awareness drill bits used for fracking (yes, for real), and a state senator and tobacco farmer about a loophole that allows child labor on tobacco

farms ("All kids complain about work!"). Jones was hired by *The Daily Show* in 2005, the couple had their first child in 2006, and Bee grew to like the patchwork nature of the job. "When you're traveling around, you don't know who you're meeting, you're doing your own makeup, buying your own clothes," she says. "It was very much like putting a play on in the barn for your parents. And then 12 years later, here we are."

In February 2015, Stewart announced that he was leaving *The Daily Show*. "We were surprised, but not surprised," says Bee. "The signs were all there. We all knew that he wasn't loving it anymore, that it was really grinding on him, but I think that we all thought that he would go through one more election cycle. I remember walking down the street after we heard, totally panicked. I mean, you are just jumping out into the unknown." That same month, Bee and Jones met with executives from TBS in L.A. They'd sold a pilot for a sitcom called *The Detour* in September, shot it in December, and were now more anxious than ever to see if the network would really fund the whole first season. "We actually had lots of conversations where we thought, 'If this doesn't get a green light, I don't know what we'll do.'"

Plenty of people had an idea of what Bee should do: take over Stewart's position at the helm of *The Daily Show*. When Trevor Noah got hired, it was tempting to view it as history repeating itself – a blond, middle-aged, white woman with tons of experience losing out to a younger, calmer, less experienced biracial dude. But TBS not only picked up *The Detour*, it upped the ante by offering Bee a satire show of her own – an offer she accepted well before Stewart's successor [Cont. on 74]

A Furious Woman

(1) Backstage with husband Jason Jones, producers Miles Kahn and Kristen Everman, and showrunner Jo Miller (from left). **(2)** Bee says the show has been "cathartic." **(3)** Covering 2012's Republican National Convention for *The Daily Show*.



Wench" in a Bertolt Brecht play, and "I loved it. I loved it so much. I just came alive." From that moment, it was on.

Sort of. "Then I tried to be an actor in Toronto," she says, "and I did not get hired for two years. I waited, I auditioned for things, but I did not get hired for anything, ever." By age 26, she had eked out a career of sorts in a traveling adaptation of the Nineties anime series *Sailor Moon*, of which "there is no photographic evidence, and if there were, I would not provide it readily." She was in the "A" cast, and a guy named Jason Jones was in the "B" cast. They were married in 2001.

Then, one day, just as she was about to give up the acting dream for good, Bee got a call from her agent. An American TV program called *The Daily Show* was holding auditions for women. At the time, few people in Canada – including Bee's agent – had even heard of *The Daily Show*, but for Bee and Jones, it was appointment television. "We would have tea, watch *The Daily Show* in our little attic room and go to bed," says Bee. "A nightly routine. So I flipped out." She was given two bits to perform, both of which had already aired. "No one else who was auditioning that day was familiar with the show at all. I knew it completely. I understood the tone they were

going for." A couple of weeks later, she got a call: The show wanted to fly her to New York to audition with Stewart. Later, when she found out she'd booked the job, she hung up the phone, went to the bathroom in the ad agency where she was working, cried in a stall for a while, then marched into her boss's office and said, "I quit, effective this moment." He took her to get a martini.

July Fourth weekend, 2003, Bee and Jones drove to New York with a cube van full of her possessions. The first night, they stayed at a hotel in New Jersey ("People were screaming; there were rubber sheets on the bed"). The next day, she moved into a studio only a few blocks from *The Daily Show* offices. Jones returned to Canada. Neither knew how long her *Daily Show* gig would last. "I remember just being terrified," she says. "I had no idea what the



CAN NEW YORK BE SAVED?

The future of
America's greatest city
in the era of global
warming

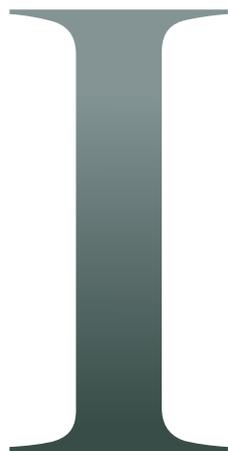
By **JEFF GOODELL**

Photo-illustration by John Blackford



THE COMING FLOOD

As sea levels rise in the next century, even a \$3 billion wall won't keep Lower Manhattan above water.



IT'S A BRIGHT spring day in New York, with sunlight dancing on the East River and robins singing Broadway tunes. I'm walking along the sea wall on the Lower East Side of Manhattan with Daniel Zarrilli, 41, the head of New York's Office of Resilience and Recovery – basically Mayor Bill de Blasio's point man for preparing the city for the coming decades of storms and sea-level rise. Zarrilli is dressed in his usual City Hall attire: white shirt and tie, polished black shoes. He has short-cropped gray hair, dark eyes and an edgy I've-got-a-job-to-do manner. Zarrilli may be the only person in the world who holds in his head the full catastrophe of what rising seas and increasingly violent storms mean to the greatest city in America. Not surprisingly, instead of musing about the beautiful weather, he points to the East River, where the water is innocently bouncing off the sea wall about six feet below us. "During Sandy," he says, darkly, "the storm surge was about nine feet above high tide. You and I would be standing in about four feet of water right now."

As Zarrilli knows better than anyone, Hurricane Sandy, which hit New York in October 2012, flooding more than 88,000 buildings in the city and killing 43 people, was a transformative event. It did not just reveal how vulnerable New York is to a powerful storm, but it also gave a preview of what the city faces over the next century, when sea levels are projected to rise five, six, seven feet or more, causing Sandy-like flooding (or much worse) to occur with increasing frequency. "The problem for New York is, climate science is getting better and better, and storm intensity and sea-level-rise projections are getting more and more alarming," says Chris Ward, the former executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the agency in charge of airports, tunnels and other

Contributing editor JEFF GOODELL is a 2016 *New America* fellow and wrote about artificial intelligence in *March*.

transportation infrastructure. "It fundamentally calls into question New York's existence. The water is coming, and the long-term implications are gigantic."

Zarrilli turns away from the river, and we walk toward the park that separates it from the Lower East Side. "One of our goals is not just to protect the city, but to improve it," Zarrilli explains. Next year, if all goes well, the city will break ground on what's called the East Side Coastal Resilience Project, an undulating 10-foot-high steel-and-concrete-reinforced berm that will run about two miles along the riverfront. It's the first part of a bigger barrier system, known informally as "the Big U," that someday may loop around the entire bottom of Manhattan, from 42nd Street on the East Side to 57th Street on the West Side. Zarrilli likes to underscore that the barrier will be covered with grass and trees in many places, as well as benches and bike paths – it's the East Side equivalent of the High Line, the hugely popular elevated train track on the West Side that has been transformed into an urban park. There are plans in the works to build other walls and barriers in the Rockaways and on Staten Island, as well as in Hoboken, New Jersey, across the Hudson River. But this project in Lower Manhattan is the headliner, not just because the city may spend \$3 billion or more to construct it, but also because Lower Manhattan is some of the most valuable real estate on the planet – if it can't be protected, then New York is in deep trouble.

Zarrilli, who won't use the phrase "Big U" because it sounds like a plug for BIG, the Danish architectural firm that helped design the barrier around Lower Manhattan, is uneasy talking about walls, in part because it obscures other, more democratic measures the city is taking to become more resilient, such as requiring buildings to elevate critical infrastructure, but also because wall-building is politically fraught: You can't wall off the city's entire 520-mile coastline, so how do you decide who gets to live behind the wall and who doesn't? "You have to start somewhere," Zarrilli says, "so you begin in the places where you get the maximum benefit for the most people."

In Zarrilli's view, there is no time to waste. By 2030 or so, the water in New York Harbor could be a foot higher than it is today. That may not sound like much, but New York does not have to become Atlantis to be

incapacitated. Even with a foot or two of sea-level rise, streets will become impassable at high tide, snarling traffic. The cost of flood insurance will skyrocket, causing home prices in risky neighborhoods to decline. (Who wants to buy a house that will soon be underwater?)

Then the big storm will come, as it always does. It might come this year, it might come in 2018, 2029 or 20-whatever. It might be bigger than Sandy. It might be smaller. But if you add a foot or two of sea-level rise to a 14-foot storm surge, you have serious trouble. And if it hits before the Big U is completed around Lower Manhattan, you have even more serious trouble. Water will flow over the aging sea walls at Battery Park and onto the West Side, pouring into the streets, into basements, into cars, into electrical circuits, finding its way into the subway tunnels. New Yorkers will learn that even after the region spent \$60 billion on rebuilding efforts after Sandy, the city's infrastructure is still hugely vulnerable. In the aftermath, it's not hard to imagine how this will play out: Businesses that don't need to be in Lower Manhattan – hedge funds, banks, law firms – will move to Midtown, others to Westchester County or the New Jersey suburbs. The economic engine of the city will sputter. Rents and property values will fall, eviscerating the tax base. Throughout the city, people with money will begin moving to higher ground, leaving the poor behind in polluted swamps of abandoned buildings along the waterfront.

Zarrilli knows as well as anyone that even the most indomitable city in America is facing a brutal future. I ask Zarrilli, who has three young boys, if it scares him to think about the economic and political chaos that may be coming. Can he imagine the end of New York? "We certainly have

challenges ahead, but you can't let yourself be paralyzed by fear," he says. "You have to take it one step at a time and do what you can right now."

ALMOST EVERY COASTAL city in the world is vulnerable to sea-level rise, but nowhere is there more at stake than in New York. In purely economic terms, the New York metropolitan area is responsible for almost 10 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product and is the largest financial hub in the world. The city has a symbolic value that is hard to quantify, with 8.5 million people from all over the world who live there, and

"The science calls into question New York's existence," says a former director of the Port Authority. "The water is coming, and the implications are gigantic."



WEATHERING THE STORM

Hurricane Sandy flooded huge parts of Lower Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn (above), and inundated anything underground, from subways to parking garages (right). Officials hope massive sea walls will one day keep the water out.



millions more who are connected to it by work or family or by their dreams to come here and make it big. “To deal with climate change, we need inspiration,” says Henk Ovink, the special envoy for international water affairs for the Netherlands who was deeply involved in rebuilding New York after Sandy. “New York City is the heart of the developed world. If it does things right, it can radiate inspiration to other places.”

In a world of rapidly rising seas, New York is better prepared than many coastal cities. As anyone who has seen the rock outcroppings in Central Park knows, much of Manhattan is built on 500-million-year-old schist, which is impervious to saltwater. There is plenty of high ground, not just in Upper Manhattan, in Washington Heights, but also along a ridge that runs diagonally through Queens and Brooklyn, including places like Park Slope and Jackson Heights. Finally, the city has brains and money and attitude – New York is not going to go down without a fight.

But in other ways, New York is surprisingly vulnerable. First, it’s on an estuary. The Hudson River, which runs along the West Side of the city, needs an exit. So, unlike a harbor city such as Copenhagen, you can’t just wall off the city from the

rising ocean. Second, there are a lot of low areas in Brooklyn, Queens and, most important, Lower Manhattan, which has been enlarged by landfill over the years. (If you compare the map of damage from Sandy in 2012 with a map of Manhattan in 1650, you’ll see they match pretty well – almost all the flooding occurred in landfill areas.) The amount of real estate at risk in New York is mind-boggling: 71,500 buildings worth more than \$100 billion stand in high-risk flood zones today, with thousands more buildings at risk with each foot of sea-level rise. In addition, New York has a lot of industrial waterfront, where toxic materials and poor communities live in close proximity, as well as a huge amount of underground infrastructure – subways, tunnels, electrical systems. And because of changes in ocean dynamics, as well as the fact that the ground beneath the city is sinking as the continent recovers from the last ice age, seas are now rising about 50 percent faster in the New York area than the global average.

Perhaps the international community will take action in the next decade and dramatically cut carbon pollution, which could help slow the rising seas. But the truth is, barring deployment of a radical geo-engineering scheme that quickly cools the planet, we have already heated up the Earth’s atmosphere enough to guarantee that the seas are going to rise – and they are going to keep rising for a long time. Recent studies have shown that even if we stabilize the greenhouse-gas emissions at today’s levels, the oceans will still rise by as much as 70 feet in the coming centuries and stay that high for thousands of years. In that scenario, New York will become an archipelago on the coast, with the high ground of Upper

Manhattan and parts of Brooklyn and Staten Island just above the waterline.

FOR ANYONE WHO THINKS sea-level rise is a distant problem, the latest news from the Arctic is not encouraging. This summer, temperatures in Greenland spiked to the highest levels on record. If just one-tenth of the Greenland ice were to melt, it would raise global sea levels by two feet. The breakup of West Antarctica, which has showed signs of increasing fragility, could raise the seas 12 feet.

The best clues to the future, however, may be found in the past. “I’m a scientist, but I like to think of myself as a detective,” Andrea Dutton, 43, a geologist at the University of Florida, told me at Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological State Park, near Key Largo, Florida. “Rocks can tell a story.” Dutton is studying 125,000-year-old corals that are exposed in an old quarry to see if they will tell her the biggest story of our time: how fast the seas will rise in the next century.

In her work, Dutton is interested in two questions: First, given that the temperature during the time these corals grew was roughly the same as today, does that mean that, over time, as the ice in Greenland and Antarctica continues to melt, we can expect the seas to rise 20 to 30 feet? And second, how long will it take? There is evidence, Dutton argues, that in the past, seas rose not in a gradual ascent, but in distinct pulses. The best explanation for that is the rapid melting of the polar ice sheets, particularly in Antarctica. If Dut-

ton's detective work is right, the implications for New York – as well as civilized life in general – are profound. It would mean the ice sheets are more unstable, capable of melting faster than current estimates account for and, consequently, that high-level predictions for sea-level rise at the end of this century could be seriously underestimated. Instead of six feet of sea-level rise by the end of the century, which is the high-end consensus of many scientists today, we could see seven or eight feet – or more. Former NASA scientist James Hansen, the godfather of global-warming science, suggested in a controversial paper published last year that the nonlinear dynamics of melting ice sheets mean seas could rise far higher and far faster than anyone is currently predicting. “We have a global emergency,” Hansen and his co-authors wrote.

Unlike a storm of the century, with sea-level rise the water comes in slowly and never leaves. It just keeps rising until the ice sheets are all but gone (or they reach a thermal equilibrium and stop melting). At a recent talk to engineers and policymakers in the Netherlands, Matthijs Bouw, a Dutch architect who is working on the Big U, flashed an image of New York with buildings poking out of the water like trees in a swamp. “This is the conversation that isn't taking place,” Bouw told the group.

BUILDING WALLS AROUND A city is an idea that is as old as cities themselves. In the Middle Ages, walls were built to keep out invading armies. Now they are built to keep out Mother Nature. Obviously, if they are built right, they work. More than a quarter of the Netherlands is below sea level; without walls, dikes and levees, much of the nation would be a kingdom of fish. New Orleans exists today only because of its enormous levees. Virtually every coastal city in the world is defended by sea walls of one kind or another. But even in the Netherlands, walls are falling out of favor. “We are beginning to realize we can't keep building walls forever,” Richard Jorissen, a Dutch expert in flood protection, told me as we drove by a dike in the Netherlands one recent afternoon. “Sometimes they are necessary, but we also realize that we have to learn to live with the water. If it is not built right, a wall can create as many problems as it solves.”

As far as walls go, the Big U is designed to be a nice one (“a wall with benefits,” as one urban designer puts it). It was one of the winning proposals in Rebuild by Design, a \$930 million competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that hoped to inspire the world's best architects and urban planners to rebuild a better New York. It's

the love child of a collaboration headed by the Bjarke Ingels Group, the hot Danish firm that has designed a number of playful buildings around the globe (the firm's design for a trash incinerator in Copenhagen includes a year-round artificial ski slope).

In an animated video that BIG created to promote the project, the Big U is a delightful thing, an undulating public space where a rolling grass berm is planted with flowers and trees, creating parklike spaces for people to play basketball and stroll on a sunny day. The gritty, thundering, empty space beneath the elevated FDR Drive is transformed into a place where kids play ping-pong and pop-up vendors appear on weekends. The city is protected from the water by the berm (which is underlaid with steel and concrete) and walls covered in art that swing down from the FDR. It is all very cheerful and inspiring – disaster-proofing as an urban amenity.

The problem is, the actual barrier may or may not resemble the barrier in the video. Several urban planners I talked to believe that, due to cost-cutting and engineering complexities, by the time it is built, the wall will be stripped of its crowd-pleasing features. “When it's done, it's just going to be a big dumb wall,” says one architect who has watched the project closely.

But dumb or not, given the amount of valuable real estate in Lower Manhattan, some kind of defensive structure is going to be erected there to keep the water out. Building a wall is simple, quick and irresistible to politicians wanting to prove they have acted boldly. But that doesn't mean it's always the smartest or the safest solution.

For one thing, there's always a question about what level of protection the barrier is designed to provide. In parts of the Netherlands, barriers are required to protect from a one-in-10,000-year flood; in New York, most government agencies require protection only for a one-in-100-year flood plus 30 inches of sea-level rise. A barrier like the Big U would in theory be designed to protect from another Sandy, but not much more. (And by 2100, Sandy-like events are predicted to happen far more often.) I asked Kai-Uwe Bergmann, a partner at BIG, why the barrier wasn't designed to withstand, say, a 500-year flood: “Because it's infinitely more expensive,” he said.

Another obvious problem is that barriers only protect the people who are behind them. The

first stage of the Big U, which will run down the East Side from 25th Street to Montgomery Street, near the Manhattan Bridge, will have the virtue of protecting several large public-housing developments on the Lower East Side, as well as a key power substation that flooded during Sandy, causing a massive blackout in Lower Manhattan. “It's clearly about Wall Street,” says Klaus Jacob, a disaster expert at Columbia University. Given the importance of Wall Street to the U.S. economy, that's not surprising. But how long will it be before Red Hook, an economically diverse neighborhood in Brooklyn that was also heavily damaged by Sandy, gets a barrier? Worse, a wall around Lower Manhattan might actually deflect more water into Red Hook, says Alan Blumberg, a highly respected oceanographer at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. “It might keep water out of Manhattan, but it will make the problem worse for people in Brooklyn, not better.”

The most pernicious problem might be complacency. Barriers, dikes and levees make people feel safe, even when they are not. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, some people didn't evacuate because they assumed the levees would not fail; that assumption cost lives. “Barriers make people stupid,” says Jorissen. “They allow you to ignore the risk of living in dangerous places – if something goes wrong, it can be a catastrophe.”

There were other, less brutal ideas for how to protect the city. Even before Sandy hit, a team headed by Susannah Drake, a New York urban designer known for working with natural landscapes for flood protection, proposed elevating the Lower Manhattan coastline to the original 1650 contours, then waterproofing utilities in vaults under the sidewalks, raising

and redesigning streets to allow them to hold water during floods, and transforming the waterfront of Lower Manhattan with salt marshes and wetlands absorbing wave energy. But projects like this are complex and expensive, making them difficult to sell as a quick fix. And they require people to acknowledge that the world is changing fast and they will live differently in the future. So much easier to just build a wall and forget about it – “until a big storm comes along and washes away the wall,” Drake says. “Then you have a disaster.”

Perhaps the boldest idea for how to protect New York

“For New York, this is just the beginning of the story,” says one expert from the Netherlands. “The city is going to be dealing with rising seas for decades, even centuries.”

was called the Blue Dunes, a 40-mile-long chain of islands that a group of scientists and architects proposed building in the shallow water about 10 miles off the coast of New York. From the city, they would have been invisible, but together they would have formed a protective necklace of sand running from New Jersey to Long Island. In a world of spectacularly unimaginative ideas about how to deal with climate change and rising seas, the Blue Dunes were a brave and innovative proposal to absorb the wave energy of the Atlantic Ocean before it hit the city, lower the impact of high tides and buy the city time to recalibrate for sea-level rise. The idea, proposed by a group headed by Dutch landscape architect Adriaan Geuze as part of the Rebuild by Design competition, would have been controversial, expensive and disruptive to anyone with a sentimental attachment to a “natural” coastline. It would not save the city from sea-level rise, but it might have saved New Yorkers from *fearing* sea-level rise, showing them that there are ways, as Geuze puts it, of “working with nature and bending its will, rather than trying to punish it.”

The idea, of course, went nowhere.

NEW YORK MAYOR Bill de Blasio does not have a reputation as a visionary leader. But on climate change, he has a solid record, despite the fact that the issue was forced on him by Sandy, which hit the city just as the mayoral election was getting underway in late 2012. Michael Bloomberg, New York’s mayor at the time, had long been pushing action on climate change, including a landmark report called PlaNYC, a 25-year plan for a greener city that he released in 2007. De Blasio, a former city councilman, was interested in education and economic inequity. But after Sandy hit, de Blasio, who was living in Park Slope, Brooklyn, at the time, got schooled in the dangers of climate change. To his credit, he immediately understood that Sandy did not treat everyone equally, telling *The New York Times* a month after the storm, “You can look at this as ‘We need sea walls,’ or you can look at this as ‘We need to retool our approach for human security, economic security, for economic equity.’”

Rebuilding New York after Sandy was a joint city, state and federal project. Almost all the funds came from a \$60 billion federal disaster-relief appropriation from Congress, which has been doled out to various state and local agencies. The feder-

al response to Sandy was widely praised. But rebuilding from Sandy is not the same as rebuilding for the city’s long-term future. And in that, the city has had very little help from Washington, D.C., and much less from Albany. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has put some political muscle into greening the state’s energy grid, but the reconstruction of New York City hasn’t earned much of his attention (within City Hall, many believe it is personal – Cuomo, who thinks of himself as the Big Dog in New York state Democratic politics, won’t

proving building efficiency and purchasing more renewable power, among other CO₂-reduction measures. De Blasio deserves a lot of credit for pushing hard to reduce the carbon footprint of New York, and he often speaks convincingly about the implications of climate change for the poor and working class, but I wondered if maybe it was time for some strategic thinking about the long-term survival of the city too? Was it time to think about moving the city’s essential infrastructure to higher ground? Was it time to consider moving people out

of low-lying areas?

De Blasio resisted my line of questioning, preferring to focus on the climate challenges the city faces today and tomorrow. “The simple way to think about it is right now we have to do the most immediate resiliency measures to secure us against the kind of storms we’d have,” he told me. “Then you want to just keep going, and building up, building up, and trying to stay ahead of what will be a growing problem. Until, if we do our work right, the reversal begins. But to me, it’s literally block by block. Complete this phase and you roll immediately into the next. This has to be a priority of government perennially until we build a very different world.”

I asked whether that approach will work fast enough. “When you look at flood maps that project five, six feet of sea-level rise,” I said, “it’s a pretty apocalyptic scenario for New York, isn’t it?”

“Yeah. At the end of the century, true.”

“That’s not that long from now,” I replied.

“Yes, it is,” he argued.

“Your grandkids will still be here.”

“Yeah, but as a public-policy matter, if you’re talking 75, 80 or more years in the future, I think it’s very, very responsible to say, ‘OK, first let’s

deal with the needs of people right now,’ and that is both about resiliency and environmental concerns, but it’s also the totality of human need. If we don’t have that in the foreground, there’s something wrong with us. Right?”

You could argue, of course, that the government’s role is not just to deal with the needs of people right now, but also the needs of people in the years to come. That’s what they’re doing in London, for example, where the barrier that protects the city from flooding is now being retrofitted to protect it until 2100, or in Germany, where parts of the city of Hamburg have been elevated and floodproofed to withstand 25-foot-high storm surges. But, for better or worse, thinking [Cont. on 75]

The Great Wall of Manhattan

The proposed site of the Big U – an innovative series of barriers designed to protect Manhattan from sea-level rise and increasingly violent storms.



do anything to make his archrival de Blasio look good). In the aftermath of Sandy, Cuomo commissioned a high-level study about how to make the state of New York more resilient to climate change – then hardly mentioned it again after it was complete. Some of his recent pet projects, such as a \$4 billion proposal to renovate the aging LaGuardia Airport, which is located in a high-risk flood zone, make no sense in a world of rapidly rising seas.

With such a checked-out governor, de Blasio’s leadership is all the more vital. I met with him on Earth Day, just after he made a brief speech at the United Nations to celebrate the signing of the Paris climate agreement. In his speech, he rightfully touted New York’s progress on im-

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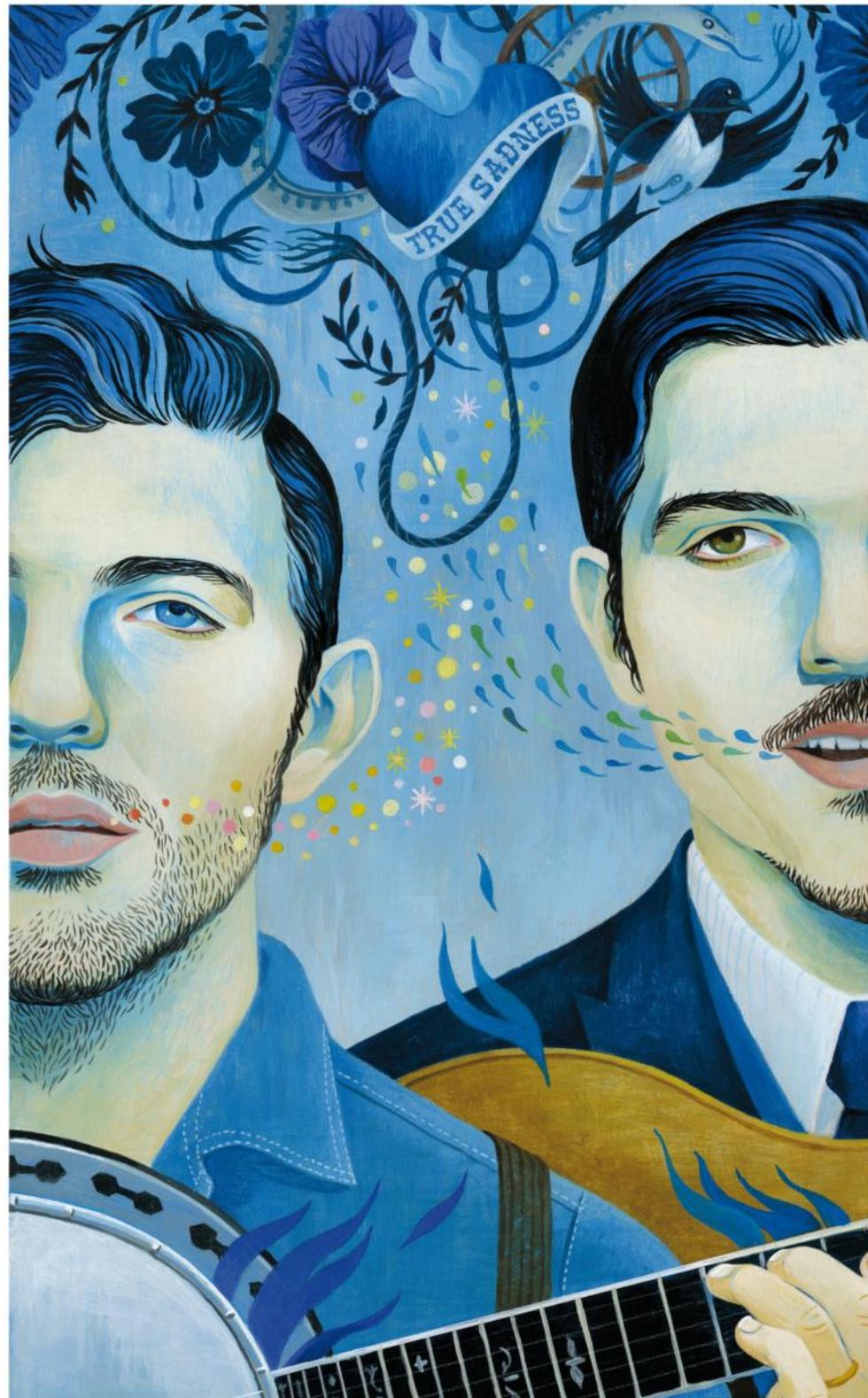
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Reviews

"Call the Smithsonian, I've made a discovery: Life ain't forever and lunch isn't free. Loved ones will break your heart with or without you."

— THE AVETT BROTHERS, "Smithsonian"



The Avetts Shake Up Their Roots

Sibling string band mixes old-timey beauty and modern beats on a deeply personal LP



The Avett Brothers

True Sadness American

★★★★½

BY WILL HERMES

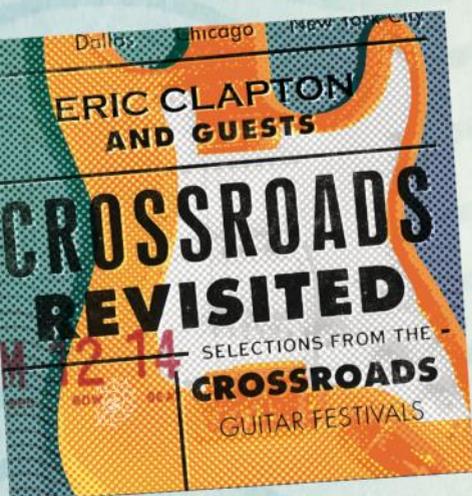
With echoes of old-timey string bands, singalong folk revivalists, boozy Americana roots rockers and big-box singer-songwriter softies, the Avett Brothers have carved out a remarkably successful 21st-century space for themselves. On each of their last three albums, producer Rick Rubin has helped shape their sound without changing the artisanal recipe. On *True Sadness*, however, the hip-hop-schooled song swami finally, gently, ushers the Avetts into the pop arena. Some may be startled. But given their restless ambition and Rubin's pedigree (everything from the Beastie Boys to Jay Z to Tom Petty), the only surprise is that this move comes on what, by some measures, is their most heart-baring LP, staring down loss and fingering scars amid the good-time jams.

You could hear the grooves ramping up on "Satan Pulls the Strings," a funky, hippie-skirt-

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Reviews

spinning hoedown from last year's *Live, Vol. 4*. Now, that song appears as the keystone of *True Sadness*; it's a fiddle-and-banjo-driven battle for the soul, goosed along by EDM synth belches, freestyle-ready beats and a Flea-grade bass line, while Seth Avett testifies that "God is in the song and the devil's in our feet!" like a deranged, Auto-Tuned preacher. It's a goofy pileup of signifiers, but charming too. Ditto the gospel stadium-stomp of "Ain't No Man," a self-reliance tent revival that reprises Dylan's maxim that you gotta serve somebody. "You Are Mine" and "May It Last," meanwhile, are pumped-up psychedelic pop with curlicuing electronics and strings (the band has a cellist, a fiddler and a violist in its ranks), and pep-talking love pledges that channel the Beatles via the Flaming Lips.

It's all effective enough. But it feels unnecessary. The Avetts' power and soul have always been rooted in their simplicity, clarity and raw sibling harmonies – that American-music gold standard, ringing with bedrock truth whether dissecting heartbreak or boozing it up in the bathroom. For the former, see "Divorce Separation Blues," which masks its pain with melodic strut and high-lonesome yodeling from recent divorcé Seth. For the latter, there's "Smithsonian," a self-deprecating banjo-and-guitar lark slinging sad barstool punchlines.

It's in this elemental balancing of sorrow and joy that the band burns hottest. On the title song, a tight beat propels verses alluding to rehab, toxic masculinity and universal hurt – "The way it seems is that no one is fine," the brothers holler on the hook. But it feels like the record's most profound celebration – just joyous strumming, bowing and the sound of earnest voices collectively making light out of dark. **C**

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Maxwell in
New Orleans,
April

Maxwell's Interstellar Soul Power

The ambitious R&B vet delivers Prince-ly pleasures on a sweeping LP

Maxwell *blackSUMMERS'night* Columbia

★★★★



Think of Maxwell as R&B's Thom Yorke – a cosmic love man riding open-ended grooves that shift from inner exploration to booty motivation in the blink of an eye. He's always one kiss away from falsetto-powered interstellar overdrive – just seeing his lady's face inspires "a thousand races into space" on "All the Ways Love Can Feel," the opening cut on his most consistent set since his debut, *Urban Hang Suite*, in 1996.

Maxwell anchors the cloud-eating sweep of these tracks with solid guitar and bass hooks. Sure, on "1990x" his idea of a come-on is "Let's ride the galaxy and find who we are," but a timpani-fueled boom-bap grounds the trip. When he proclaims he just wants to dance on "III" and then delivers a groove powered by roller-rink Seventies soul organ, it's pure pleasure. From the dub-reggae bass line of "Lake by the Ocean" to the sunshine-filled horn blasts of "Fingers Crossed," the music evokes a tradition disappearing before our eyes – the spiritualized eroticism of Prince, the jazzy soul extensions of Earth, Wind and Fire – without ever being of it. Grab ahold, before it's too late.

JOE LEVY

TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES



Neil Young and Promise of the Real

Earth Reprise ★★½
Young covers his entire career on an ecology-themed live LP

Mother Earth is more than the title heroine – she’s an instrument too. Recorded live last year with Neil Young’s current young-blood combo, these 13 songs – all from the ecology section of Young’s library – are overdubbed with choral gleam, extra guitar drama and noisy approval by a peanut gallery of livestock, insects and crows. There is also rolling thunder and hard rain, hinting at the payback to come. As Young sings in “Mother Earth (Natural Anthem),” from 1990’s *Ragged Glory*, “How long can you give and not receive?”

DAVID FRICKE



Blood Orange

Freetown Sound Domino
★★★★
U.K. avant-pop radical explores identity and refuses limits

Dev Hynes’ third Blood Orange LP is a masterful avant-pop mixtape, addressing black art and experience, refusing limits at every turn. It blends synth-pop, R&B, rock and jazz with matter-of-fact politics: “Love Ya” interpolates an Eddy Grant cut alongside a reflection by Ta-Nehisi Coates; “Hands Up” fronts like a bedroom slow jam until a “Don’t shoot!” chant erupts. Women shine, Debbie Harry and Zuri Marley (Bob’s granddaughter) among them. Hynes has called the LP “my version of *Paul’s Boutique*.” It’s that and more.

WILL HERMES



The Avalanches

Wildflower Astralwerks ★★★½
Sample-delic pop innovators return after 16 years

The Avalanches’ 2000 sample-based *Since I Left You* may be the greatest groove-mosaic LP ever. But it’s taken the Aussie crew 16 years to make a follow-up. They’re still good with stoner punchlines – “Frankie Sinatra” updates a decorous 1940s calypso diss track with Danny Brown and MF Doom. But the Avalanches’ sweetly nostalgic vibe sets them apart – the kid singing along to Honey Cone’s ’71 soul gem “Want Ads” (“Because I’m Me”), the wistfully trippy poet on “Saturday Night Inside Out.” By looking backward, they’re making something new.

WILL HERMES



Jake Bugg

On My One Island ★★★
A British roots revivalist tries updating his folk rock

On his third LP (and first minus additional songwriters), 22-year-old U.K. roots revivalist Jake Bugg mixes Americana and British folk as skillfully as ever – whether on the rockabilly riot “Put Out the Fire” or the acoustic-blues title track, which begins, “I’m just a poor boy/From Nottingham.” He’s less successful updating his sound; the funk drumming and electronic bass on “Gimme the Love” trip him up, and though he writes with empathy about the council-estate life on “Ain’t No Rhyme,” he’s got as much business rapping as Fetty Wap does playing guitar.

KEITH HARRIS

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SPECIAL OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS

Update: Hip-Hop

Rappers Search Their Souls to Fight the Power

THANKS TO ARTISTS LIKE Kanye West and Drake, hip-hop has become safe for emotions. Now, in this scary election year, artists are turning that introspective energy toward politics and social issues. On his excellent second album, Compton rapper **YG** details his paranoia, anger and sleep deprivation over minimalist G-funk like "Don't Come to L.A." and "I Got a Question." The South Central he describes is a war zone full of vicious Catch-22s: "They give us years for guns and we can buy 'em off the shelf/But you'll get life in the coffin if you don't protect yourself." On "FDT" – which stands for "Fuck Donald Trump" – he throws a Molotov cocktail. The rapper claims "FDT" elicited interest from the Secret Service, forcing him to remove lines like "surprised El Chapo ain't tried to snipe you." But the song looks inward,



too: "You got me appreciatin' Obama way more," he admits. With bursts of smooth, measured wordplay, *Still Brazy* is stressed out and suspicious but still unreasonably cool.

Rhyming in technical whirlwinds, Chicago's **Vic Mensa** is more explicitly political, and explicitly personal, on his EP *There's A Lot Going On*. The death of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald (gunned down by Chicago police in 2014) looms largest for Mensa, who counters oppression with old-fashioned N.W.A.-style boil-over: "Ready for the war, we got our boots strapped/100 deep on State Street, where the troops at?" On "Shades of Blue," he details the Flint water crisis over sad, synth-y avant-blues ("Now you got toddlers drinkin' toxic waste/While the people responsible still ain't caught no case"). The title track is the traditional



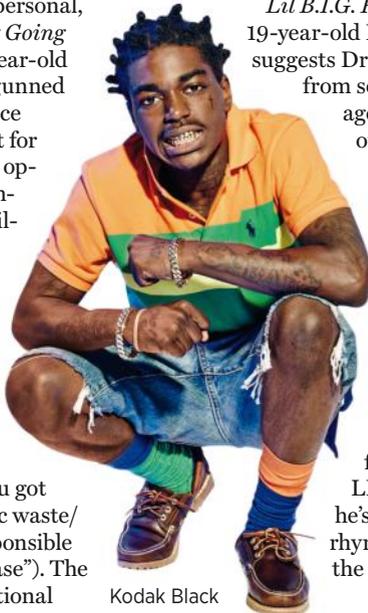
YG *Still Brazy* ★★☆☆½

Vic Mensa *There's A Lot Going On* ★★☆☆½

Kodak Black *Lil B.I.G. Pac* ★★☆☆½

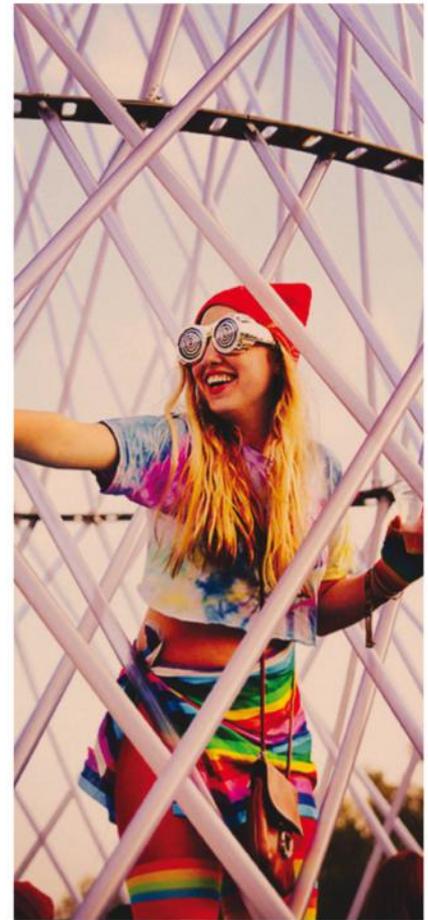
recap of a burgeoning rapper's career, but the twist is that it's deathly-dark: depression, Adderall, drunken fights with his girlfriend, jealousy, writer's block and suicidal thoughts.

Lil B.I.G. Pac, the new mixtape from 19-year-old Florida rapper **Kodak Black**, suggests Drake's emotional bloodletting from someone who spent his teenage years in institutions instead of a soap opera. He talks about prison time like it's already aged him decades ("I gave the judge a piece of me"), detailing cold baths, the joy of getting a letter and the constant battle to stay out of trouble. And his tribulations often reveal bigger societal injustices: "Made something out of nothin'/And nothin' what I'm from," he raps on "Can I." The LP's title may honor Biggie, but he's more like Scarface, a cool-rhyming MC who's more about the struggles than the spoils.



Kodak Black

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By Peter Travers

Spielberg's Giant Risk

The BFG

Mark Rylance

Directed by Steven Spielberg

★★★

EVEN STEVEN SPIELBERG feels pressure sometimes. On *The BFG*, the famed director must serve two masters: Roald Dahl's beloved 1982 novel about a little girl kidnapped by a BFG (big friendly giant), who saves her from unfriendly cannibal giants; and the liberties-taking script by Melissa Mathison, who wrote Spielberg's 1982 smash, *E.T.*, and died last year of cancer.

For visual effects alone, the film is spectacular. And there's no faulting Mark Rylance, an Oscar winner for Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*, whose motion-capture performance as a 24-foot giant is both subtly nuanced and truly monumental.

Things get "a bit grumbly" – to borrow a BFG phrase – when the worlds of Spielberg and Dahl collide. We're set for terror in giant country, where the BFG takes 10-year-old Sophie (a feisty Ruby Barnhill) after he sweeps her out of her orphanage bed in London. The



Rylance gives Barnhill a big shoulder to lean on.

BFG is bullied by the humongous Fleshlumpeater (Jemaine Clement), who longs to snack on "human beans" like Sophie. This is the darkest of Dahl, but Spielberg favors watching the BFG collect dreams in glass jars and blow them into the heads of sleeping humans. It's an apt metaphor for Spielberg's own method.

The biggest laughs come at Buckingham Palace when the queen (Penelope Wilton) and her retinue imbibe the BFG's "froboscottle" and fart up a storm. But during a climactic helicopter roundup of evil giants, you want the movie to go for broke and haunt us like *E.T.* did. Sadly, *The BFG* plays it too nice and falls short. **C**

Bored in the Jungle With Tarzan and Jane

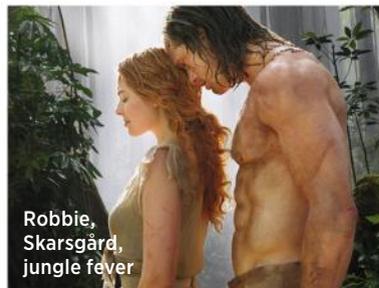
The Legend of Tarzan

Alexander Skarsgård

Directed by David Yates

★★½

ALEXANDER SKARSGÅRD brings heart, soul and body beautiful to the role of Tarzan. His vine-slinger, mostly minus a loincloth, has more on his mind than just Jane (a spirited Margot Robbie). *The Legend of Tarzan* is bursting with big ideas – animal vs. human, exploration vs. exploitation, primitivism vs. civiliza-



Robbie, Skarsgård, jungle fever

tion. Too much? You bet. Director David Yates wants to remind us that Tarzan is really an 1880s Brit, the fifth earl of Greystoke. He's being tricked

back into the jungle by Leon Rom (Christoph Waltz, oozing menace). Samuel L. Jackson tags along as an American who smells a rat involving slave traders, diamonds, Jane's kidnapping and a plot to kill Tarzan. Are you jarred by the anachronistic acting?

Troubled that the animals are all digital? Pissed that you've seen it all before? At least it's watchable. In summer, baby, that's high praise. **C**

Woody vs. Hollywood

Café Society

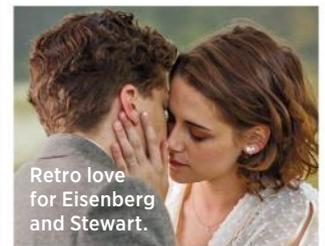
Kristen Stewart, Jesse Eisenberg, Steve Carell

Directed by Woody Allen

★★★

IN A SUMMER OF FX FLUFF, it's a kick to find Woody Allen working with flesh-and-blood actors and emotions that aren't computer-generated. *Café Society* isn't peak Allen; he's mostly coasting. But in this comic death match between New York and Hollywood, Allen spikes the laughs with stronger stuff.

The time is the 1930s. At an L.A. pool party, lit with old-school glamour by camera legend Vittorio Storaro, power agent Phil Stern (a terrific Steve Carell) finds a visitor from his Bronx past. It's his nerdy nephew Bobby (Jesse Eisenberg, expertly channeling Allen's halt-



Retro love for Eisenberg and Stewart.

ing delivery), and the kid needs work. Bobby is wide-eyed until he falls for Phil's secretary Vonnie (a radiant Kristen Stewart), who rejects the star-fucking aura of her job. Or does she?

Allen sure does. After getting dumped by Vonnie, Bobby crawls back to New York to run a nightclub for his gangster brother, Ben (Corey Stoll). After Bobby marries a shiksa goddess (Blake Lively), Vonnie returns to stir up the kind of romantic regret that Allen has been mining since *Annie Hall*. "Life is a comedy," says Bobby, "written by a sadistic comedy writer." Allen should know. In *Café Society*, he catches the joy of remembrance without ever skimming on the pain. **C**

SAMANTHA BEE

[Cont. from 57] was even chosen. Then again, Bee says that she was quick to jump on TBS's offer, in part, because she sensed that she would be passed over. "It was really flattering that people were talking about me in that way," she says of the calls for her to assume Stewart's role. "But it didn't seem like a reality to me, to be perfectly honest."

Besides, with her own show, she could create a new paradigm, one where humor doesn't soften the blow but channels it. "We didn't know what the show would look like," says Bee, "but we knew what it would feel like. We wanted a show that was visceral, that came from a really gut place, that tapped into our fury." That required hiring people who had fury to spare, beginning with showrunner Jo Miller, who'd worked with Bee as a writer for *The Daily Show*. "Jon loved Jo and believed in her for sure, but I don't know how imminently anyone was ready to offer her up her own show," Bee says. "I don't know that any television network would say, 'Hey, obscure woman. I'm going to pull you out of here and give you your own ship to sail.' I don't know what enabled me to see that, but step one was hiring Jo Miller."

Bee took the same approach to hiring writers, creating a blind application process that didn't favor people who'd already had success. (It spelled out, for example, how scripts should look when submitted, leveling the playing field for the uninitiated.) Lo and behold, she ended up with a writers' room that looked kind of like America: 50 percent female; 30 percent nonwhite. One of her hires had been working at the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles. "We don't feel like we solved the diversity problem. We didn't fix racism, quite," Bee jokes. "I mean, we almost did. We'll see how things pan out. I'm feeling really good about it." Anyway, the strategy worked. "I have literally filled my office with people who have been underestimated their entire careers. To a person, we almost all fit into that category. It is so joyful to collect a group of people who nobody has ever thought could grasp the reins of something and fucking go for it."

And go for it they fucking have. TBS recently granted *Full Frontal* 26 more episodes, extending it into 2017. While *The Daily Show*'s viewership has dwindled by close to 40 percent since Noah took over, *Full Frontal* has 3.2 million viewers per episode. America, take note. Sometimes the blond, middle-aged, white woman with tons of experience just so happens to be the way to go.

ONE RECENT MONDAY AFTERNOON, A week after our first meeting, I watch Bee do a rehearsal of *Full Frontal*. The writers and

producers milling about the studio have a familial, chummy vibe, which is heightened when Jones – who tends to drop in on Mondays to lend a fresh eye – starts pulling up cellphone videos of a towering snow fort he built for his kids. (He is also Canadian, though he and Bee both acquired dual citizenship a few years back.) On the phone's screen, Bee's children scamper about the fort's walls and squeal as snowballs are launched from on high. "Our kids think it's funny that people think that we're funny," Bee had told me earlier. "Because they don't." Just before she bounds onto the stage to the crew's claps and whistles, Jones settles into a seat toward the back.

To the uninitiated (me), the rehearsal seems so polished that I can't imagine what Bee will do with the rest of the afternoon, but right afterward she retreats backstage to tackle the script. This part of the studio once belonged to Bethenny Frankel's talk show, and you can tell. "We do like our white pleather," Bee had joked. She takes off her blazer and pulls a Tupperware container of a kale-based concoction out of the microwave while singsonging, "Thank you, thank you for your patience with my smelly lunch." Then she plops down on a sofa as Jones and about 15 writers and producers gather around. The script is projected on a huge screen to Bee's left. They start at the top.

Part of the team's job is keeping up the ad hoc, underdog air they've cultivated amid bona fide success. "Another massive Bernie slam," Jones says of a joke about Sanders' low popularity with African-American voters. "I'm OK with it," Bee responds. Miller agrees: "They already hate us."

In fact, it's almost a measure of *Full Frontal*'s success that it has been able to capitalize on its haters. "People love to hate-watch, and we're cool with that," Bee had told me. "The more the merrier. There's one news organization that transcribes our show every time it airs. It's a little messed up with spelling errors and a lot of all-caps and stage directions of me that are unflattering, but it's still a transcript, and that's a great service for us. That goes in our archives." After her staff set up 1-844-4-TROLLZ – "Hello, you have reached the Samantha Bee rape-threat line. No one is here to take your call, but your offer of nonconsensual sex is important to us" – a menacing voicemail was featured in a *Full Frontal* online video, to cheers and popped champagne.

Bee doesn't read anything that's written about her: "I'd be scared, probably." But on some level, she understands having a visceral reaction to someone and their point of view. With her *Full Frontal* field pieces, in particular, that visceral reaction is not something she tries to hide. "There was a setup to it on *The Daily Show*, pretending to be something you're not, and here I've

completely dropped the artifice," she says. "There's no pulling the wool over people's eyes. I have a point of view, and you can know it. It's a more fun way for me to do the stories. People don't freak out."

Where Bee goes soft is when she truly is puzzled by her subject: interviewing a young African-American man who supports Trump, for instance, or a Super PAC "victim" who donates to one failed candidate after another ("Sometimes the millionaires with the most to give have the most to lose"). Mostly, though, she doesn't. Where Oliver might throw in a zany analogy, Bee does not waste a chance to turn the knife. During the rewrite, much attention is paid to a short clip from last July in which African-American Rep. Keith Ellison warns a panel of mostly white pundits that maybe, just maybe, Trump could gain enough momentum with voters to make him a political threat. He's almost laughed off the airwaves. "I know you don't believe that," titters George Stephanopoulos. "Sorry to laugh!" adds Maggie Haberman from *The New York Times*.

"Hahahahahaha," Bee had guffawed in rehearsal, addressing the pundits frozen on the screen behind her. "Not as sorry as you'll be in 12 months."

"I don't know, I think we need a more outraged sentiment here," says Jones. "It's your job to prognosticate. You're fucking terrible!"

"It's funny 'cause we're white?" Miller tries. "Hahaha, you suck at your job?"

"Hahaha, you could've helped to make this a reality that didn't happen," suggests Bee. "You could've stopped this, hahaha."

A woman sitting next to Bee says, "They give him so much fucking coverage."

"Hahaha, we've given him 20 million in free advertising," Jones throws out.

"No, how many billions has it been?" asks Miller. She types on her laptop. "Two billion. *New York Times*. That's in March!" She types more. "It's \$3 billion now." She pauses. "Hahaha, that'll never happen unless people like you give him \$3 billion in free advertising!" Bee narrows her eyes and nods.

"It's been really cathartic for me to do the show," she had told me, but there are still some things she's working out. Like the fact that a woman may become president, but that woman is not infallible ("Sometimes we write too far and pull back; sometimes we don't write far enough"). And that the worse things get for America, the better they stand to get for Bee. Near the end of our time together, I ask if she secretly persuaded Trump to run, just for the priceless material. For a second, she actually looks aggrieved. Then, like any good comedian, she rolls with it. "Yes, I did. It's been a godsend. It's been good for us. And I'm just really thankful." She smiles, but barely. 🍌

NEW YORK

[Cont. from 63] hard about – and preparing for – the long-term future is not the American way.

KLAUS JACOB WAS HURRICANE Sandy's Cassandra. Jacob is a research scientist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. For the past 15 years, he has been deeply involved in shaping New York's response to rising seas, as a member of the city's panel on climate change. At 79, he still speaks with a hint of a German accent and has a twinkle in his eye (five minutes after we met, he mentioned that he used to move in the same circles as radical activist Angela Davis).

The year before Sandy hit, a New York state-sponsored research team headed by Jacob released a case study estimating the effects of a 100-year storm surge on the city's multibillion-dollar transportation infrastructure. Jacob told anyone who would listen that the combination of rising seas and a powerful storm could wreck the city's trains and subways, flooding tunnels and submerging aboveground equipment. As it turned out, that's exactly what happened when Sandy blew through the next year. The subways were out of commission for days, and it took weeks before a system that serves millions of commuters was fully back online. Thanks in part to Jacob's warnings, New York officials shut down the subway and removed electrical systems from the tunnels before Sandy arrived, limiting the worst of the damage.

Jacob is critical of de Blasio and others for not thinking big enough about the risks of climate change. "They are thinking on an election time scale," Jacob says. He cites the continued development of waterfront property in Manhattan and Columbia University's new Manhattanville campus, which is located on low ground on the West Side, near 125th Street. "We still allow development on the waterfront to take place where 50, 80 years from now it will be regretted," Jacob says. Even businesses that should know better are failing to grasp what's coming. Jacob points out that Con Edison, the utility that powers most of the city, proposed spending \$1 billion on rebuilding after Sandy without taking climate change into account (the company eventually did after ratepayers filed a complaint against it; Jacob was a technical consultant in the case).

In Jacob's view, New York's Achilles' heel is the subways, which are vulnerable to saltwater, which is highly corrosive to electrical circuits, as well as to the concrete in the tunnels. In theory, the subway system can be restructured to keep seawater out, but at some point, the cost gets prohibitive. "It's all

about money," says former Port Authority chief Ward. He notes that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the New York subways, had to spend \$530 million upgrading the South Ferry station in Lower Manhattan after it was heavily damaged on 9/11. After Sandy turned the station into a fish tank, the MTA had to close it for months and spend another \$600 million to fix it. The MTA has now installed retractable barriers to stop seawater from flooding the station in the next big storm, but the subway system remains vulnerable to rising seas. "We're not thinking systematically about climate change," says Michael Gerrard, director of the Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School. "We're focused on Sandy, and Sandy isn't the worst thing that could happen."

In the end, there is only one real solution for sea-level rise: moving to higher ground. In the near future, one of the main drivers of what policy wonks call "managed retreat" is likely to be the rising costs of flood insurance, which is provided to most property owners through National Flood Insurance Protection, an outdated, mismanaged federal program that subsidizes insurance rates for homeowners and businesses in high-risk areas (commercial insurers bailed out of the flood-insurance market decades ago). Under NFIP, few people who live in flood-prone areas pay the actual cost of the risk. In addition, grandfather clauses in the program often allow homeowners to rebuild in areas that are doomed to flood again very soon. Attempts by Congress to reform the program have failed miserably, and it's now \$23 billion in debt. Eventually, increasing property losses will force reform and insurance rates will go up and up. "When people have to pay more and own more of the risk themselves, their decisions about where they live will change," says Alex Kaplan, a senior vice president at Swiss Re, a global reinsurance company.

New York state is already experimenting with voluntary buyouts in high-risk areas. The logic is simple: In the long run, it's cheaper simply to buy people out of their homes than to keep paying for them to be rebuilt after storms (it also moves people out of harm's way). After Sandy, New York agreed to buy out about 300 homes in Oakwood Beach, a low-lying area of Staten Island that was devastated by the storm. Barbara Brancaccio, the spokeswoman for the state's storm recovery program, says upward of \$200 million will eventually be spent buying people out of homes in the borough. "Our plan is to knock down the houses and return the land to nature, creating a buffer between the land and the sea," Brancaccio says.

Of course, it would cost hundreds of billions of dollars to buy out residents and businesses in Lower Manhattan. Instead,

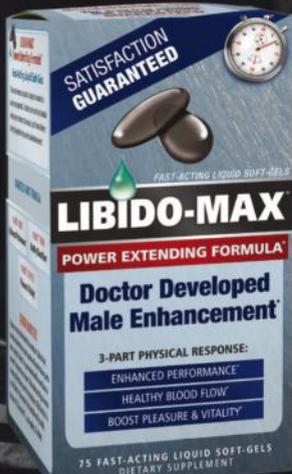
some urban planners have discussed offering tax breaks and other financial goodies to encourage residents and businesses to relocate to higher ground. Could parts of Lower Manhattan ever be de-populated and returned to nature? "Buildings were built," says Kate Orff, director of the urban-planning program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. "They can also be unbuilt." More likely, the walls will go up, getting higher and higher as the seas rise.

Welcome to Fortress New York.

FOR NEW YORK, THIS IS JUST THE beginning of the story," says the Netherlands' Ovink. "The city is going to be dealing with rising seas for decades, even centuries." If it's going to survive, fortifying New York will require more than just walls – it will require a radical rethinking of the relationship between the city and the people who live in it. If the central role of government is to keep people safe, what happens when people realize they are not? What is the government's role in keeping people out of harm's way? How does the government compensate people whose properties are underwater? Geuze, the Dutch architect who led the team that designed the Blue Dunes and who has done as much thinking about how to live with water as anyone, compares sea-level rise to other transformative catastrophes, such as the Dust Bowl, a partly man-made natural disaster that profoundly changed the geography of America and also expanded the role that government plays in ensuring the long-term welfare of even the most vulnerable people. "We're going to need a new New Deal," he says. "It is going to require a rethinking of the social contract in America."

Unlike Miami or Bangladesh, whose very existence is at risk, New York has enough money and enough high ground to ride out whatever comes this century. The question is, what kind of city will it be? Will it be a safe, livable place, alive with art and commerce, inspiring to the world? "New York has always defined our idea of what a city is and can be," says Guy Nordenson, professor of structural engineering and architecture at Princeton University. Now, New York may well define our idea of urban survival in a future of rapidly rising seas. "I have the frame of 100 years," Geuze tells me. "Maybe eight, nine feet of sea-level rise. We can deal with that. But there will come a moment when no matter what you do, even a rich city like New York won't be able to do anything to protect itself. When is that moment? I don't know. But it is coming. What Mother Nature is telling us right now is, we are not in control." 

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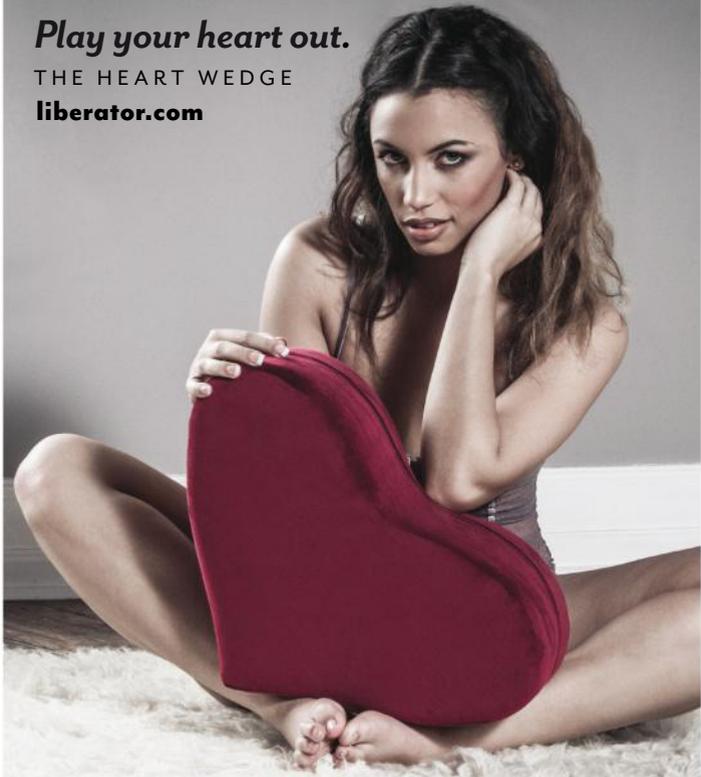


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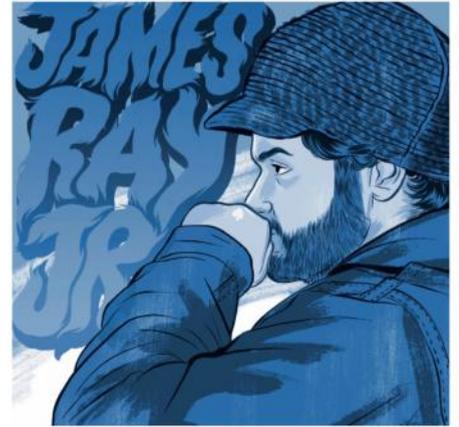
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Rachel Maddow

The MSNBC host on her 'work-success mantra,'
the key to a good relationship, and keeping a cool head

What are the best and worst parts of success?

The worst part is that people are inclined to say "yes" when you do not deserve it. People want to keep you pleased. That can eat away at your expectations for normal human interaction and turn you into a dick. The best part of success, in New York City, at least, is getting restaurant reservations. Having a job in television helps with that.

What was your favorite book as a kid, and what does it say about you?

I have it right here on my shelf: *All the King's Men*, by Robert Penn Warren. It's this great combination of politics and character, of lurid Southern Gothic and corruption and cravenness and human need. I read it every three or four years. My parents were great, but they were not touchy-feely about having kid-oriented things. I don't think I had kids' books.

Tell me the most conservative thing about you.

Probably my drinking habits. I am a rigorous curmudgeon when it comes to alcohol. All the mixed drinks and cocktails that anybody needs were pretty much settled a generation before I was born. There's no reason to have, like, cordials made out of new flowers. There's no reason to put bacon in your fucking bourbon.

What music moves you the most?

A wide range of things. Yesterday, my girlfriend was like, "What kind of a mood are you in today?" And I said, "Today, I am half Lyle Lovett's *Joshua Judges Ruth* and half Fugazi's *13 Songs*." Susan was like, "You're gonna have a difficult day." I listen to a lot of country and old-school melodic punk. I also listen to a lot more jazz than I used to - Hampton Hawes and Frank Morgan and Chet Baker.

What advice about the industry do you wish someone had told you when you started out?

I wasted time believing those who said I needed to be like others who were on TV. That was 180 degrees wrong. My advice would be, "Do what you can do best, and if what you can do best is something that is already being done really well, get a different job."

You've been with your partner a long time. What has that taught you about relationships?

If you have a good relationship, you have to make it the most important thing in your life. The constant in my life is my relationship with Susan, and I feel like, if everything else in my life went away, I'd be OK.

What's the best advice you ever got?

It's from an underarm-deodorant ad in the 1980s: "Never let 'em see you sweat." It's my life motto. It's my work-success mantra.

What's your favorite city in the world?

San Francisco, which is where I'm from. It's constrained on three sides

by water and on the other side by graveyards, which means that you can't have urban sprawl. And because it's hilly, you end up having unexpected magic, like the fog in the morning becoming the hot sun in the afternoon.

I always thought I would come back and make my life in the Bay Area. It didn't work out that way, partly because of what I decided to do for a living, partly because the Bay Area got so expensive and so techy, which isn't of very much interest to me.

What's the worst part about working on live TV?

When we're covering breaking news, I have to learn and understand the story at the same time I am explaining the story. I take the responsibility of what I say on TV very seriously, and it causes me a lot of anxiety to think I said something that wasn't exactly right. Even just talking about it right now makes my heart hurt.

You maintain a pretty cheerful disposition on camera. Are you ever tempted to have your "I'm as mad as hell and I'm not gonna take it anymore" moment?

I've definitely shown anger on TV. I'm not a very good actor, so if I am angry, it shows. But I feel like self-indulgent displays of anger on television are best served in very small doses.

Are you disappointed in your country for making Trump one of the two major-party nominees for president?

I am fascinated in my country! [*Laughs*] There's no mystery about Trump. I mean, there's a *little* mystery as to why he wanted to do this. Have you seen those frustration moments for him on the trail: "I had a good life. Why am I doing this?"

What is amazing is the Republican Party that picked him. They had 330 million people to choose from, and they've decided that he is the best one to be the standard-bearer of one of the two major parties of the greatest nation on Earth. Like, talk to me, Republican voters!

What's the worst-case scenario for America if he wins?

It can be pretty bad. You don't have to go back far in history to get to almost apocalyptic scenarios.

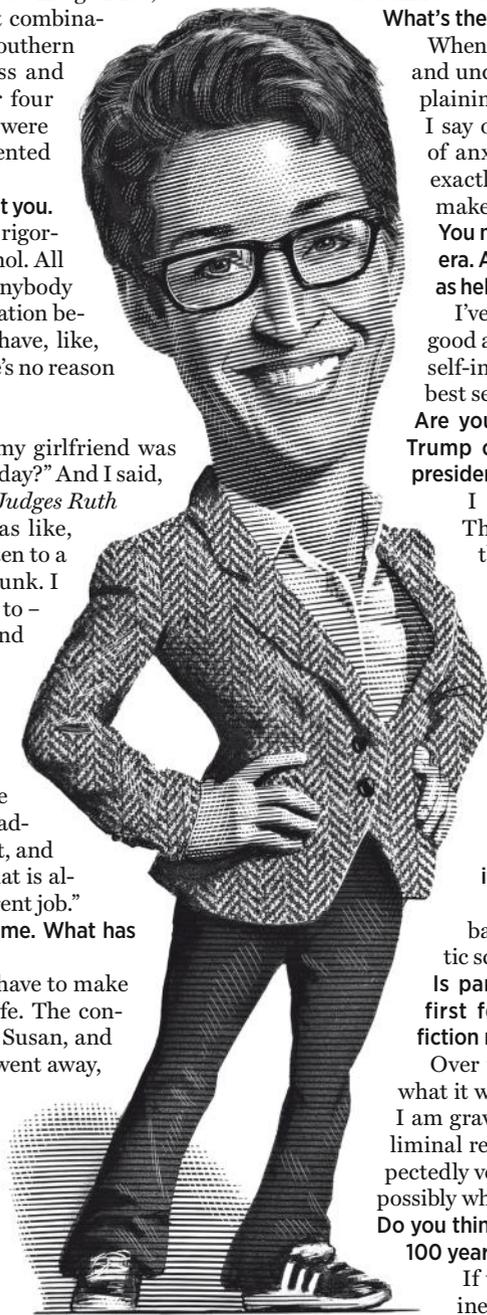
Is part of you worried we're living through the first few chapters of some dystopian science-fiction novel?

Over the past year I've been reading a lot about what it was like when Hitler first became chancellor. I am gravitating toward moments in history for subliminal reference in terms of cultures that have unexpectedly veered into dark places, because I think that's possibly where we are.

Do you think people will be writing books about 2016 in 100 years? It feels like a true historic moment.

If there is a future to look back from, I imagine, yes.

INTERVIEW BY ANDY GREENE





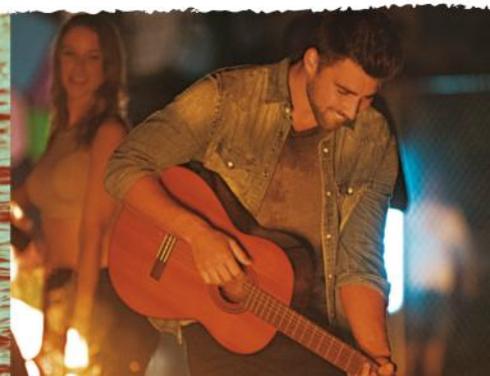
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