PRICE $7.99

THE NEW YORKER

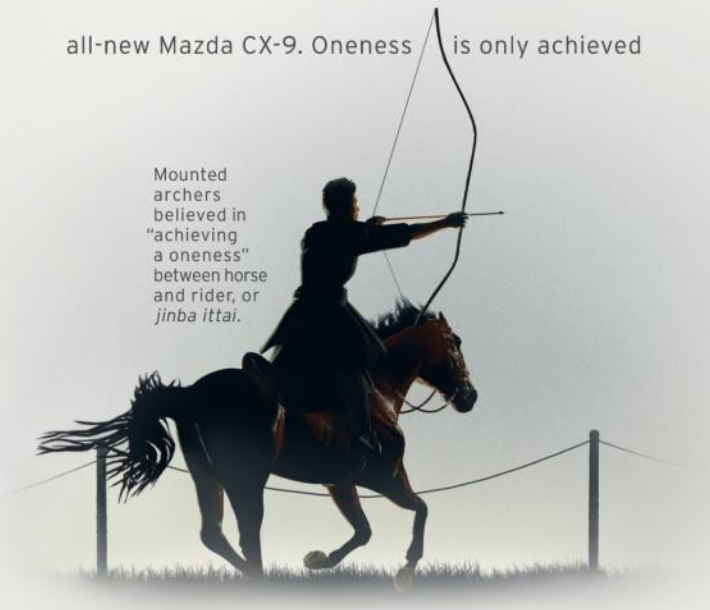
JUNE 27, 2016

HOW CAN A 900-YEAR-OLD
JAPANESE TRADITION CREATE
A BETTER-DRIVING SUV?

zoom-zoom

THE ALL-NEW THREE-ROW MAZDA CX-9

During the Kamakura period in Japan, mounted archers believed that the key to mastering their skill was to "achieve a oneness" between horse and rider. In Japanese, this is known as *jinba ittai*, (jin-ba ee-tie) or "horse and rider as one." And it's the engineering inspiration for the all-new Mazda CX-9. Oneness is only achieved



Mounted archers believed in "achieving a oneness" between horse and rider, or *jinba ittai*.

when the vehicle becomes a natural extension of the driver. So every detail of our new Mazda CX-9 is engineered to create perfect harmony between car and driver. So from the throttle-response, to the driver-centered cockpit, to the agile steering, the principles of *jinba ittai* live on. Because Driving Matters.

DRIVING MATTERS®

mazda

THE NEW YORKER
JUNE 27, 2016

NEW FROM THE PULITZER PRIZE– AND NATIONAL BOOK AWARD–WINNING AUTHOR

BARKSKINS

ANNIE PROULX

"MAGNIFICENT... *Barkskins* flies....It possesses the dark humor of *The Shipping News* and the social awareness of *Brokeback Mountain*."

—ANTHONY DOERR, *OUTSIDE MAGAZINE*

"A contemplation of greed, violence, freedom, the colonization of North America, and trees both literal and familial...A MASTERPIECE."

—*BUZZFEED*

"EXHILARATING...A MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT, one that will perhaps be remembered as her finest work."

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY* (STARRED REVIEW)

"AN EPIC SPANNING MORE THAN 320 YEARS OF HISTORY, *Barkskins* opens in 1693 in what is now the Canadian province of Quebec as two young men arrive from France to work as indentured woodcutters. The book follows the men's descendants around the world as they exploit the forest and grapple with the ecological consequences." —*THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

"A BIG SUMMER BOOK IN EVERY RESPECT... the epic story of two striving Frenchmen who come to the New World in the late 17th century and make a living as 'barkskins,' or woodcutters. Proulx follows their descendants across the centuries, never losing sight of the bounteous forests that are being destroyed." —*NEWSDAY*

Also available as an ebook and an audiobook.

SimonandSchuster.com

SCRIBNER
An Imprint of Simon & Schuster
A CBS COMPANY

CONTRIBUTORS

Evan Osnos (*"Making a Killing," p. 36*) writes about politics and foreign affairs for *The New Yorker*. His book "Age of Ambition" won the 2014 National Book Award for nonfiction.

Amy Davidson (*Comment, p. 17*), a staff writer, contributes regularly to Comment and to newyorker.com.

Jill Lepore (*"The Woman Card," p. 22*) is a professor of history at Harvard. She is writing a history of the United States.

Ben Taub (*"The Shadow Doctors," p. 28*), a 2015 graduate of Columbia University's journalism school, is a contributor to the magazine.

Michael Schulman (*The Talk of the Town, p. 18*), the theatre editor of Goings On About Town, published his first book, "Her Again: Becoming Meryl Streep," in April.

Frank Viva (*Cover*) is an illustrator and a graphic designer. "Sea Change" is his latest children's book.

Paige Williams (*"Digging for Glory," p. 46*), a staff writer and the 2015-16 John S. Carroll Fellow at the MacDowell Colony, is working on a book about the international fossil trade.

Max Ritvo (*Poem, p. 50*) was awarded a 2014 Poetry Society of America Chapbook Fellowship for "Aeons." His début collection, "Four Reincarnations," will be published next year.

Paul Theroux (*Fiction, p. 58*) is a novelist and a travel writer. "Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads" is his latest book.

Joan Acocella (*A Critic at Large, p. 64*), who has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1992, is working on a book about Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Elizabeth Kolbert (*Books, p. 68*), a staff writer, won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in general nonfiction for "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History."

Alex Ross (*Musical Events, p. 72*) is the magazine's music critic.

NEWYORKER.COM

Everything in the magazine, and more.

HARRY GRUYAERT/MAGNUM; OLIVER MUNDAY

PHOTO BOOTH

The history of competitive cycling, through the eyes of Magnum photographers.

VIDEO

On the latest episode of "Comma Queen," the copy editor Mary Norris tucks dangling participles into place.

SUBSCRIBERS: *Get access to our magazine app for tablets and smartphones at the App Store, Amazon.com, or Google Play. (Access varies by location and device.)*

THE MAIL

FREEZE FRAME

Andrew Marantz's article on how filmmakers are embracing virtual reality—and the technical, narrative, and visual challenges they face when they do—seemed to me to reveal the unnatural fit between V.R. and movies, rather than depict how well they work together ("Studio 360," April 25th). Talented storytellers show the audience exactly what they want the audience to see: no more and no less. They create a condensed and sculpted reality. So how does a storyteller function if his audience can see and hear everything that's happening outside the intended field of view? V.R. will be transformative, but in other areas, like gaming, and in still undeveloped creations blending experiential images and sound. V.R. technology is finally reaching its technical and economic tipping point, and the field that is furthest ahead in making use of its potential is the games industry. It will also have a huge impact as a training tool, and in various forms of therapy, where the viewer will be not just a passive participant but an active one as well.
Kevin Koch
Shreveport, La.

COMPLICATED CHARACTERS

I enjoyed Ted Chiang's lighthearted essay on how the character script might have influenced China's culture ("Bad Character," May 16th). It's true that a writing system that requires readers to know thousands of unique symbols and that does not contain reliable cues to their pronunciation seems, at first, especially challenging. However, psychological research reveals that the cognitive demands are not as great as they seem. Despite the number of characters, ninety-six per cent of Chinese adults are literate. By comparison, the five countries with the worst literacy rates in the world—all under forty per cent—are Francophone (Niger, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic) or Anglophone (South Sudan). As the linguist M. A. K. Halliday once pointed out, "A language usually gets the sort of writing system it deserves," and a character-based system is indeed well suited to the spoken Chinese languages. A key feature of Chinese is its astonishing number of homophones. This makes it possible for a poem like "The Lion-Eating Poet in the Stone Den," by Yuen Ren Chao, to be written with ninety-two characters that all have the pronunciation "shi." In writing, characters differentiate homophones, in the same way that intonation does in speech. Chiang notes that attempts to abolish the common use of Chinese characters in the past century have all been unsuccessful. This outcome may be frustrating in the short term, but it is probably a long-term cognitive victory.
Lindsay N. Harris
Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology
Northern Illinois University
Chicago, Ill.

COVER STORY

The augmented-reality cityscape created for the Innovators Issue took Christoph Neimann's cover illustration of a woman running to catch the train to the next level ("On the Go," May 16th). My two-year-old was especially fascinated, but, as with all things technological, he was not surprised when the Uncovr app made the image come to life, allowing us to zoom through New York and then high above it. For him, the line between technology and the physical world is fluid. When he sees his grandmother on FaceTime, it's just "Nana." When he holds a framed photograph, he tries to swipe it to see the next photo. He used to exclaim, "Book!," every time he saw an issue of *The New Yorker* lying around. Now he exclaims, "Movie!" This is just one instance of the ease with which his generation will assimilate the various media of the new world.
Jennifer Vasquez
Lakeland, Fla.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. We regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

Charlotte Brontë complained of Jane Austen, "The Passions are perfectly unknown to her." But Brontë never saw the Bedlam company's hurtling, ardent staging of **"Sense & Sensibility,"** which has returned to the Gym at Judson for an encore. Under the direction of Eric Tucker, Kate Hamill (who adapted the novel) plays the impetuous Marianne Dashwood and Andrus Nichols is the more circumspect Elinor, two sisters rendered financially impecunious and emotionally adrift following the death of their father.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC HELGAS

MOVIES

OPENING

Free State of Jones A Civil War drama, based on the true story of a Mississippi farmer (Matthew McConaughey) who leads a revolt against the Confederacy. Directed by Gary Ross; co-starring Keri Russell, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and Mahershala Ali. *Opening June 24. (In wide release.)* • **Independence Day: Resurgence** Roland Emmerich directed this sequel to his 1996 thriller, about a battle against aliens threatening to destroy the human race. *Opening June 24. (In wide release.)* • **The Neon Demon** Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. *Opening June 24. (In limited release.)* • **Nuts!** Reviewed in Now Playing. *Opening June 22. (In limited release.)* • **Right Now, Wrong Then** Reviewed in Now Playing. *Opening June 24. (In limited release.)* • **Swiss Army Man** Reviewed in Now Playing. *Opening June 24. (In limited release.)* • **Wiener-Dog** Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. *Opening June 24. (In limited release.)*

NOW PLAYING

The Conjuring 2

In the unremarkable London suburb of Enfield, a girl named Janet (Madison Wolfe), her three siblings, and their weary mother (Frances O'Connor) are plagued by visiting spirits. The intrusion, at first, is low-grade; the fact that the TV remote won't stay put is not, one feels, the stuff of nightmares. By the end, however, Janet is being sucked through the ceiling, knives are on the loose, and only a fool would risk a tour of the cellar. That fool is Ed Warren (Patrick Wilson), who, with his wife, Lorraine (Vera Farmiga), travels to England to investigate the haunting, and it seems odd that the director, James Wan, should take an hour—almost half the movie—to get them to the scene of the crime. If it really *is* a crime; the movie is based on a true story. What happened in Enfield in 1977 has been written about and dramatized ever since, and many commentators have diagnosed a case of pranks and jinks. The whole saga bears definite traces of domestic comedy, but Wan is at pains to ignore them, preferring an old-school parade of creaking doors, sputtering lights, and demonic jolts, and borrowing freely from "Poltergeist" and "The Sixth Sense." Still, his framing of the scares is artfully managed, and it is the accomplished Wolfe, rather than any monster, who takes true possession of the tale.—*Anthony Lane (In wide release.)*

Daisy Kenyon

From the first scene, when Dana Andrews haggles with a New York cabdriver and then waits to be buzzed into a walkup building, Otto Preminger builds his sombre yet frenetic 1947 melodrama from the stuff of life. Daisy Kenyon (a fiercely restrained Joan Crawford), a successful fashion illustrator, is in love with Dan O'Mara (Andrews), a domineering corporate lawyer who happens to be married. Suffering the eternal fate of the other woman, with stolen moments and broken dates, she starts to see Peter Lapham (Henry Fonda), a naval architect, twice-wounded war veteran, and depressed widower she finds "unstable." Peter wants to marry her at once, but Dan doesn't give up so easily; caught between the two, the tough, worldly Daisy begins to fall apart. Jolting behavioral touches—hard stares and startled retreats, sudden kisses, blows, and tears—thrust the action into the realm of mental disturbance. The city seems steeped in postwar trauma; the very fabric of urban life is torn by the fury of warped and damaged men. As Dan's marriage breaks up and moves to the tabloid scandal of divorce court, the triangle builds to a fearsome pitch of public conflict and psychic crisis. Rarely have love and madness seemed so fruitfully allied.—*Richard Brody (MOMA; June 22.)*

De Palma

This new documentary, co-directed by Jake Paltrow and Noah Baumbach, is alluringly smooth and uncluttered, as if taking its cue from one of the tracking shots so beloved by its subject. The film consists of Brian De Palma—now aged seventy-five, and merrily expansive in his mood as in his girth—recounting his life and times. Even as he guides us through the mansion of his movies, he emphasizes that, when it comes to directors' careers, "We don't plan them out." There are bountiful clips, ranging from the rough energy of his apprenticeship to the florid choreography of his grander studio projects; if you seek a link between those phases, consider Robert De Niro, who starred both in "Greetings" (1968) and, as Al Capone, in "The Untouchables" (1987). There are moments when one craves more talking heads—a female voice, in particular, that might challenge the blithe assurance of De Palma's attitude toward women. Yet his gifts as a raconteur and the precision of his memory keep the film flowing. It may seem perverse for Paltrow and Baumbach to start their tribute with a scene from "Vertigo," but, then again, who has been more devout than De Palma in paying homage to the glory of movies past?—*A.L. (In limited release.)*

Genius

This thin and staid drama is based on the true story of Maxwell Perkins (Colin Firth), Scribner's editor, and his relationship with the young novelist Thomas Wolfe (Jude Law). Arriving at Perkins's Fifth Avenue office one day in 1929, the volatile Southerner is delighted to learn that his novel will be published, but then confronts the editor's plan to reshape the lengthy text. Meanwhile, Perkins, living in Connecticut with his wife, Louise (Laura Linney), a former actress whose talent he belittles, and their five daughters, lets his work with Wolfe interfere with his home life. When the book finally comes out, Wolfe's success goes to his head, leading to a break with his lover, Aline Bernstein (Nicole Kidman), a wealthy older woman who supported him in the lean years. Soon, Perkins's own time of reckoning comes. F. Scott Fitzgerald (Guy Pearce), Zelda Fitzgerald (Vanessa Kirby), and Ernest Hemingway (Dominic West) make appearances, and—with the exception of Linney—all the actors are miscast. John Logan's script is a jigsaw puzzle of clichés, and Michael Grandage's direction is antiseptic, but a few scenes of family life in Connecticut, though brief and undeveloped, suggest the core of a fine movie unrealized here.—*R.B. (In wide release.)*

Now You See Me 2

The Horsemen from the 2013 film return to right unredressed wrongs, thwart evildoers, and put on a good show, but this sequel, directed by Jon M. Chu, lacks even the deftness of the average party entertainer. Eluding an F.B.I. agent (Mark Ruffalo) on their trail, three world-class vigilante magicians (Jesse Eisenberg, Dave Franco, and Woody Harrelson) come out of hiding, joined by a newly arrived Horsewoman (Lizzy Caplan), in an effort to prevent the launch of a data-stealing smartphone. Chaos ensues, and the agent turns to an imprisoned "magic debunker" (Morgan Freeman) to help chase the magicians across the globe to Macau, where they are in even more dangerous pursuit of even more dastardly villains. Hypnotizing, prestidigitating, or masquerading their way out of tight spots, they perform tricks that seem like C.G.I. simulations and stage hugely complex false-front operations with a wave of the hand. The movie offers neither the astonishment of the magicians' artistry nor a dramatic view of how they do it. One brief romantic scene between two pickpockets winks at the classic comedy "Trouble in Paradise," with none of its breathless eroticism or dramatic stakes.—*R.B. (In wide release.)*

Nuts!

The astonishments of this documentary are as much in the telling as in the story told. The filmmaker Penny Lane latches on to an oddball of history—Dr. John Romulus Brinkley, who, in Kansas in 1917, successfully treated impotence with goat-testicle implants—and follows his career through deep and distant strains of modern society. Soon famous, and with his treatment greatly in demand, Brinkley spread his surgical gospel—and built and operated the country's most powerful radio station to do so. The medical establishment's skepticism, the judicial consequences, and Brinkley's audacious foray into electoral politics come into play as well; Lane builds a grandly picaresque tale about the power of celebrity in the age of modern media, and she tells it with diabolical glee. Her extraordinary archival research—yielding newsreel footage that she allows to play at length and photographs that she treats as physical objects—restores the past to a vital immediacy. Reinvigorating the familiar technique of animated reënactments by employing many animators to generate many styles, Lane revels in the story's playfully nostalgic wonders without stinting on its implications or its passions.—*R.B. (In limited release.)*

Right Now, Wrong Then

The South Korean director Hong Sang-soo doubles the emotional stakes of this cinema-centric romance by doubling the drama itself. It's the story of a well-known art-house filmmaker, Ham Chunsu (Jeong Jae-yeong), who has a day and a night to kill before introducing his new movie at a festival in the town of Suwon. Visiting a shrine, he meets Heejung (Kim Min-hee), a young artist, who—awed by his renown—invites him to her studio. There, he expresses an interest in her work; then, in the course of a shambling evening of drinking, alone together and in the company of other friends, he admits his attraction to her. For an hour, Hong follows the ups and downs of this incipient relationship—and of the self-absorbed comedy of the artist on a spree—and then he does it again, starting the story over from scratch and showing what Ham and Heejung could have done differently. Either hour alone would be a wry, incisive, painful drama at the intersection of art and life, in which foregrounded action strains under the burden of personal history. Together, the two parts form a radical fiction about the crucial role of imagination and audacity in intimate experience and filmmaking alike. Hong's narrative gamesmanship blends artistic bravado with metaphysical wonder and agonized regret. In Korean.—*R.B. (In limited release.)*

Swiss Army Man

This excruciatingly cute fantasy, identified since its Sundance première as the "farting corpse movie," lives up to that epithet. Paul Dano plays the shipwrecked Hank, alone and unrescued on an isolated beach, who's about to hang himself when he spies a

body washed up on shore. Daniel Radcliffe plays that body, which is both dead and eerily flatulent; Hank drags the body onto dry land and into a forest. The body soon speaks, calling itself Manny and posing naïve questions that force Hank to explain the basics of societal organization, manners, and romance, and to recreate, by way of illustration, urban spaces out of branches and stones. Meanwhile, Manny also spews water from his mouth, and Hank harnesses both ends of Manny's energy—hydraulic from the top and pneumatic from the bottom—to aid in his survival in the wild. Along the way, Hank divulges his own sad story of solitude and thwarted love. The directors and writers, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, offer a hint of an idea in Hank's display of a vision of responsible masculinity and the frustrations that it entails; yet they smother that idea in bland images, wheedling and sentimental performances, and banal emotions.—*R.B. (In limited release.)*

Warcraft
Orcs are vast and rapacious hulks; of their many weapons, none are more lethal than their protruding underbites. In short, the last thing you need, if you inhabit the world of men, is an orc passing through a mysterious portal and trashing your peace of mind. Needless to say, that's just what happens in Duncan Jones's new movie, which is based on a video game. Azeroth, ruled by a valiant king (Dominic Cooper), is besieged by an army of invading orcs, among them the vicious Gul'dan (Daniel Wu) and the more reasonable Durotan (Toby Kebbell). Other names include Varian, Medivh, and Halforcen; one of the rare charms of this fantastical world is that most of the characters sound like medications, to be taken twice daily after meals. Jones's previous features—"Moon" and "Source Code"—turned on sympathetic heroes, whereas the new film is crowded and scattershot. We hang out with a young magician (Ben Schnetzer), an older magician (Ben Foster), and a resourceful warrior (Travis Fimmel), but neither their gifts nor their destinies detain us for long. Even acts of sacrifice, in the grand finale, feel morally weightless, designed largely to pave the way for a sequel. With Paula Patton, as a half-orc, risking a romantic smooch despite her disconcerting fangs.—*A.L. (In wide release.)*

The Witness
This extraordinary documentary reconsiders one of the most infamous of all modern crime stories—the 1964 murder, in Queens, of Kitty Genovese, while her screams were reportedly ignored by dozens of neighbors. Though its nominal director is James Solomon, its main character and virtual auteur is Bill Genovese, one of Kitty's three younger brothers, who was sixteen at the time of her murder. His on-camera investigation brings him back to the murder site in Kew Gardens, where he visits apartments, calculates sight lines, and interviews current and former residents about the crime. He also consults trial transcripts and police records and does meta-journalistic research involving reporters, editors, and producers responsible for the original accounts of the murder and later revisions of that story. What he discovers turns out to be at odds with the headlines. The film raises questions of present-day import regarding the penal system, police procedure, domestic violence, and journalistic ethics; it also offers a moving, complex vision of gay life in New York a half century ago. The movie's one reënactment—an ingenious experiment in forensics and social science—unites drama, journalism, and first-hand experience in a masterstroke of pure cinema.—*R.B. (In limited release.)*

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera Summer Recital Series
The company's outdoor summer recitals may be a far cry from the old days, when full-length operas were performed with superstars in lead roles, but they do provide a chance to hear up-and-comers sing a sampling of opera's greatest hits in an alfresco setting. The soprano Angel Blue, the tenor Ben Bliss, and the baritone Alexey Lavrov bring arias and duets from "Roméo et Juliette," "Tosca," and "Carmen," as well as selections from Broadway musicals, to Central Park SummerStage and Brooklyn Bridge Park; Dan Saunders accompanies them at the piano. *(Central Park SummerStage, June 22 at 8; Brooklyn Bridge Park, June 24 at 7. No tickets required. For details, see metopera.org.)*

New York City Opera: "Florencia en el Amazonas"
The recently revived company continues to explore what its direction should be, and the current production of the late Daniel Catán's tuneful, popular opera, from 1996, shows one way it could go: bringing successful contemporary operas to New York City more regularly than the Met does (and, preferably, not on a two-decade delay). The work—conducted by Dean Williamson, directed by John Hoomes, and starring Elizabeth Caballero in the title role—inaugurates the company's "Ópera en Español" series. *(Rose Theatre, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. June 22, June 23, and June 25 at 7:30 and June 26 at 4.)*

"Patience & Sarah"
Paula Kimper's opera about two women who fall in love in early-nineteenth-century Connecticut made waves when it first appeared, at the Lincoln Center Festival, in 1998, and it returns this year in a concert staging timed to the city's Gay Pride celebrations. The composer conducts a new arrangement for seven instruments, with direction by Douglas Moser. *(Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. 866-811-4111. June 23-24 at 7.)*

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Naumburg Orchestral Concerts: Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
The versatile virtuosos of the conductorless chamber orchestra, usually found at Carnegie Hall, come to Central Park's Naumburg Bandshell for the next free concert in the series, which has been going strong since 1923. They offer an all-Beethoven program that features the "Coriolan" Overture, the Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor" (with Nobuyuki Tsujii), and the Fifth Symphony. *(Mid-Park, enter at 72nd St. June 28 at 7:30. No tickets required.)*

RECITALS

Bargemusic
The doughty, floating chamber-music series once again embraces extremes. On Friday, new music abounds, with the pianist Nadia Shpachenko offering premières of recent pieces inspired by places and buildings (including Amy Beth Kirsten's "h.o.p.e." and Hannah Lash's "Give Me Your Songs"). The rest of the weekend belongs to two young iconoclasts, the violinist Johnny Gandelsman (of Brooklyn Rider) and the pianist Ethan Iverson (of the Bad Plus), performing the three violin sonatas by Brahms. *(Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. bargemusic.org. June 24 at 8; June 25 at 8 and June 26 at 4.)*

Michael Hersch: "Zwischen Leben und Tod"
Hersch, a mid-career American composer respected for his uncompromising tragic vision, receives his second important New York performance of the month, this time at Williamsburg's National Sawdust. "Between Life and Death" is an acclaimed ninety-minute sequence of short movements inspired by the art works of Peter Weiss (1916-82), who was better known as a novelist and playwright ("Marat/Sade"). The violinist Carolyn Huebl and the pianist Mark Wait perform the New York première of this demanding piece, in a recital with full multimedia accompaniment. *(80 N. 6th St., Brooklyn. nationalsawdust.org. June 28 at 7.)*

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor
Chamber music headlines the week at the gracious Westchester festival. On Friday evening, the cellist Edward Arron, Caramoor's chamber maven for the past several years, joins a group of esteemed friends (including the violinists Tessa Lark and Jesse Mills) to perform works by Barrière, Korngold, and Mozart (the "Grand Sestetto Concertante," an intimate arrangement of the Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola). On Sunday afternoon, three famed New Yorkers—the violinist Philip Setzer, the cellist David Finckel, and the pianist Wu Han—arrive for an all-Beethoven program (featuring the Trio in B-Flat Major, "Archduke"). *(Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org. June 24 at 8 and June 26 at 4:30.)*

Tannery Pond Concerts
The beloved flutist Eugenia Zukerman joins the vibrant young players of the Jasper String Quartet in a program at the elegant upstate series, held in a beautifully restored Shaker tannery barn. The program features quartets by Beethoven (in B-Flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6) and Debussy as well as pieces with flute by Foote and Ginastera ("Impresiones de la Puna"). *(New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-1696. June 25 at 8.)*

Maverick Concerts
The oldest summer chamber-music festival in America begins its second century in an idyllic music chapel in the forest outside Woodstock, N.Y. The Escher String Quartet, a young group already admired for its exacting precision and burnished sound, continues the Bartók cycle it began at the festival last summer, performing the Quartet No. 2, Op. 17, as the centerpiece of a concert that begins with Beethoven's first quartet (in F Major, from Op. 18) and closes with one of Dvořák's last (in G Major, Op. 106). *(maverickconcerts.org. June 26 at 4.)*

Tanglewood
In a quiet week for classical programming here, John Harbison, the doyen of Boston composers, pursues one of his favorite pastimes, conducting Bach cantatas. He leads talented singers and players from Tanglewood's fellowship program in several of them (including No. 57, "Selig is der Mann") in a concert at Ozawa Hall. *(Lenox, Mass. bso.org. June 27 at 8.)*

Jean-Antoine Houdon's terra-cotta statue "Diana the Huntress" is flanked by clusters of Meissen plates in Arlene Shechet's installation at the Frick.

COURTESY THE FRICK COLLECTION, NY

Earth Angel

A New York sculptor mixes and matches the good china, at the Frick.

ARLENE SHECHET IS the first living artist to exhibit in depth at the Frick. Given the whimsical beauty and deep smarts of her installation in the museum's portico, which pairs early-eighteenth-century Meissen porcelains with sculptures that Shechet recently made at the same German factory, she won't be the last. But her show, called "No Simple Matter," is a triumph that could have been a disaster, a paragon of old-master virtue jumping on the make-it-new bandwagon. The Frick's curator of decorative arts, Charlotte Vignon, deserves major credit for taking the risk. So does the collector Henry H. Arnhold, who gave Shechet free rein of his trove of hand-painted plates, bowls, vases, tea services, and sublimely absurd figurines. They were made in Meissen, just forty minutes outside Arnhold's home town of Dresden, which he left as a teen-ager, fleeing the Nazis with his family. (Given Hitler's fondness for German white porcelain, there's a bittersweet revenge to the collection, part of which was amassed by Arnhold's parents in between the wars.)

Shechet's installation is a balancing act of respectful and radical. The portico's stone walls have been papered in damask-patterned green; the vitrines have turned legs that nod with propriety to Boulle tables. But look up and you'll catch a riotously colorful pair of eighteenth-century hoopoes perched improbably close to the ceiling, with a bird's-eye view of the viewers. Or look out the window, where a life-sized, stark-white nanny goat nuzzles her kid in the garden.

For two thousand years, the process of making white porcelain was a secret known only to the Chinese. After the kings of Europe got an eyeful of China's Imperial treasures, thanks to Marco Polo's adventures on the Silk Road, the objects became so highly prized that the Germans coined a word for the mania, *Porzellankrankheit,* or "porcelain sickness." The Germans were also the first to crack the porcelain code, in 1708, two years after King Augustus the Strong imprisoned the alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger and ordered him to produce the "white gold." (The recipe involves high-silica clay and high heat.) By 1710, the Royal Meissen manufactory was in business, employing a small army of mold-makers, hand-modellers, and miniaturist painters, as it still does today.

What makes Shechet such an inspired choice for the Frick isn't simply the twenty months she spent, on and off, in a Meissen studio, working closely with the company's artisans. It's also her long-term interest in East-West connections. Since the nineteen-eighties, she's made a close, secular study of Buddhist art. At one delightful point in the Frick's installation, a robin's-egg-blue and white fluted bowl, from 1730, seems to float in midair above a porcelain sculpture by Shechet, from 2012. Both objects were made using the same mold (Shechet's elegantly chunky object is, in fact, a cast of the mold itself), whose form was inspired by a lotus. In Buddhist lore, the lotus is a reminder that even beauty is rooted in mud. It's a good metaphor for porcelain, too.

—Andrea K. Scott

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum of Modern Art
"Bouchra Khalili:
The Mapping Journey Project"
The transit of refugees across the Central and Eastern Mediterranean is more than a humanitarian crisis; it is a moral challenge, one that Europe's leaders seem likely to fail. Each of the eight urgent videos, from 2008-11, by this Lebanese-French artist, which the museum has installed in its atrium, features one migrant's recounting of his or her journey to Europe. (As they narrate their stories offscreen, we see their routes plotted with markers on maps.) They describe payoffs to smugglers, harassment at borders, and time spent in jail and at Red Cross camps. More than one person stops in Lampedusa, the Italian island off the coast of Tunisia which has become a grave for so many. "The Mediterranean sea is so fearful," a Sudanese man says, in halting English. Another, speaking in Arabic and French, tells us why he braved a sea crossing that still claims lives every week: "To be able to live like everyone else. To work, that's all." *Through Oct. 10.*

Guggenheim Museum
"Moholy-Nagy: Future Present"
The high point of this powerful retrospective of the Hungarian-born painter, sculptor, photographer, filmmaker, designer, writer, teacher, and all-around modernizing visionary is a replica of his "Light Prop for an Electric Stage" (1930). It's a sleek, motorized medley of rods, screens, perforated disks, and springs, set in a box with a circular cut in one side—a sort of industrialized synthesis of Cubist and Constructivist styles. Moholy-Nagy took the original with him in 1934, when, after the Nazis' ascent to power, he moved from Berlin to the Netherlands, and then to London, and, finally, in 1937, to Chicago, where he directed the New Bauhaus school. Two years later, he founded the School of Design, still part of the Illinois Institute of Technology, which the art historian Elizabeth Siegel writes in the catalogue was "his overarching work of art." It was in America, after Moholy-Nagy was diagnosed with leukemia (he died in 1946, at the age of fifty-one) that he began to abandon rigor in favor of delight, exposing the heart that had always pulsed within the technocratic genius. To be a student of his then must have been heaven. *Through Sept. 7.*

Whitney Museum
"Stuart Davis: In Full Swing"
Davis's ebullient paintings rank either at the peak of American modern art or a bit to the side of it, depending on how you construe "American" and "modern." Davis, who died in 1964, at the age of seventy-one, laid heavy stress on both terms. In the exhibition catalogue, the art historian Harry Cooper, the show's co-curator, quotes a list of self-exhortations that the painter wrote in 1938. The first item: "Be liked by French artists." The second: "Be distinctly American." Davis is best known, and rightly esteemed, for his later work (begun in the forties), tightly composed, hyperactive, flag-bright pictures, with crisp planes and emphatic lines, loops, and curlicues, often featuring gnomic words ("champion," "pad," "else") and almost always incorporating his signature as a dashing pictorial element. Their musical rhythms and buttery textures appeal at a glance. If the works had a smell, it would be like that of a factory-fresh car. But, in this beautifully paced show, hung by the Whitney curator Barbara Haskell, Davis's earlier phases prove most absorbing. They detail stages of a personal ambition in step with large ideals. *Through Sept. 25.*

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Billy Al Bengston
In the nineteen-sixties, Bengston was one of several California artists whose so-called finish fetish took the form of smooth abstractions made of acrylic, resin, and other high-gloss materials. But in the nine affable paintings and collages here, made in Hawaii, in the early eighties, abstract precision gives way to figurative enjambments of palm trees, anthuriums, airplanes, and loopily limned human figures. Cloudy backgrounds of mauve and indigo give the canvas works a dreamy air. The collages feature jolting watercolor splatters, marks of improvisation. Unconstrained by fashion or his own past, the Bengston seen here recalls another artist who pushed through dogma to invention: Sigmar Polke. *Through June 25. (Parrasch, 53 E. 64th St. 212-246-5360.)*

Martin Creed
Hats off to the co-curators Tom Eccles and Hans Ulrich Obrist: their large, painstaking retrospective of the deadpan British artist and musician is a demented joy. The Aestheticist interiors of the Armory are almost too perfect a backdrop for Creed's brilliant one-liners. His notorious, Turner Prize-netting "Work No. 160: The lights going on and off" is installed in a parlor that's chock-full of outmoded portraits, adding an element of surprise. The Herter-designed Board of Officer's Room is filled with white balloons, and seems destined to become the summer's hot spot for selfies. At intervals, a marching band passes through the proceedings (the singer is equipped with a bullhorn) to play some of Creed's cheekily innocuous music. Some tunes repeat as the soundtracks to videos—none more than five minutes long—of such subjects as a breast and a pro-refugee protest. The cavernous drill hall is almost empty, save for a sequence of gross-out videos and the modest—and strangely moving—opening and closing of a loading-dock door, which transforms the sidewalk of Lexington Avenue into a readymade. *Through Aug. 7. (Park Avenue Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 212-933-5812.)*

Lucas Samaras
Like many New Yorkers in the freewheeling late sixties, the first thing the artist did with his new Polaroid camera was take pictures of himself in the nude. Working late at night, in a frenzy of erotic and artistic experimentation, Samaras performed for the camera with audacity, wit, and the obsessiveness of an athlete in training. On the evidence of the nearly sixty photographs here, made between 1969 and 1971, he found ways to push the format to the edge of its limits. He augmented Fauvist lighting effects with meticulously hand-painted backgrounds, outlining his figure in pointillist bursts and paisley patterns. He inventoried his body, zooming in on a foot, a hand, or a screaming mouth, and transformed his apartment into a series of still-life tableaux. Whether the focus is on a fingertip or a faucet, Samaras expresses a hot-wired intensity and shifting identity that feel completely attuned to our time. *Through Aug. 12. (Starr, 5 E. 73rd St. 212-570-1739.)*

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Philip Guston
This epic show tracks Guston's portentous course, from 1957 to 1967, in august abstract paintings that seethe with figurative intimations. White stroked into black—often wet into wet—generates fields of voluptuous grays, at times enfevered with pinks. Worrisome black shapes loom. The mood is tense and searching. Knowing what comes next—the demotic revolution of Guston's late style—it's easy to imagine a Yeatsian rough beast struggling to be born. But the paintings compel in their very indecision. Guston's matchless, soft-handed touch animates the drama of an artist at work with history at his shoulder, as he inched toward changing the mind and heart of painting for everyone ever after. *Through July 29. (Hauser & Wirth, 511 W. 18th St. 212-790-3900.)*

Simen Johan
Think of these big color photographs as the pictorial equivalent of natural-history dioramas: hybrids of fact and fiction. In one fourteen-foot-long image, ten zebras pose in a jungle of palms and ferns that, thanks to Johan's digital intervention, uncannily mimic their stripes. Elsewhere, dozens of seals are surrounded by ominous smoke, in an obvious homage to Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa." The mood shifts when Johan leaves the animal kingdom out of the picture, in smaller scenes of a lunar orb and a misty waterfall, shimmering settings for quieter dramas. *Through Aug. 10. (Milo, 245 Tenth Ave., at 24th St. 212-414-0370.)*

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Anna and Bernhard Blume
In the late nineteen-eighties, the German couple began collaborating on a series of photographs in which they star as hapless characters stumbling through the modern world—Mr. Hulot meets Lucy Ricardo in a Cologne kitchenette. The earliest pieces in this terrific survey find Anna levitating, alarmed and amused, amid tumbling chairs and crockery, while potatoes orbit her like rogue planets. In the two longest sequences (one with twenty-four black-and-white panels), the Blumes tangle with a geometric sculpture that bombards, ensnares, and impales them. Even the natural world has its perils: playing Hansel and Gretel in a dark wood, the couple clings to and falls from branches, as if the forest were spinning out of control. *Through July 22. (Freeman, 140 Grand St. 212-966-5154.)*

"The Magic Flute"
Last year, Vaginal Davis, a trailblazer of alternative queer performance—and Berlin's own Queen of the Night—wrote the libretto for a wild transmutation of Mozart's opera, set to a new score by the experimental noise-pop band Xiu Xiu and staged as a series of wistful tableaux vivants. The video documentation in this exhibition can't capture the crazed spirit of the live events, but you'll see a 3-D printer extruding strange, ice-blue orifices, a watermelon defiled in histrionic fashion, and a nude Prince Tamino. The libretto has its shocks, too, but they are carefully aimed: at one point, Davis recites a graphic fantasy involving Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish President who has prosecuted his opponents for far milder offenses. *Through Aug. 12. (80WSE, 80 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-5747.)*

In Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's new play, "War" (at LCT3's Claire Tow), Woodard plays a woman suffering from the effects of a stroke.

Family Ties

The actress Charlayne Woodard finds reflections of her life on the stage.

TWO OF THE major, and majorly beautiful, monologues in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's new play, "War" (at the Claire Tow, through July 3), are spoken by Charlayne Woodard. She plays Roberta, a mother with two adult children, who is and is not present in the opening moments of the first scene. You see, Roberta is in a coma; she had a stroke while spending time with a sibling, Elfriede (Michele Shay, who, like Woodard, has a beautiful voice), whom she did not grow up with. Their father had two different families, worlds and cultures apart. So as we meet the strange amalgam of Roberta's different worlds arrayed around her hospital bed, the real Roberta, dressed in white, floats into our line of vision; she's watching the family as she watches us, wondering who she is and, by extension, what makes a life, or a clan.

Woodard, who has had five of her own plays produced, owns the part, just as she has owned every role I've ever seen her in. In recent years, that has included a modern-day Hester Prynne, in Suzan-Lori Parks's masterwork "In the Blood," from 1999, and an academic housekeeper, in David Adjmi's piece "Stunning," from 2008. Neither of these scripts is a traditional narrative, nor is "War," which is why Woodard signed on. "It's not linear, which challenges the actor," she told me recently, meaning she can't play her emotions from start to finish; she has to follow the trajectory of the author's, and thus the character's, mind. Indeed, to prepare for the role, Woodard read an account of a stroke victim who could see the malady happening to her as it spread through her brain and affected her body. "When I first read Branden's play—it was my life," she said. Her father had a stroke when he was fifty-nine, and her beloved mother-in-law ultimately succumbed to Alzheimer's.

Growing up in Albany, Woodard fell in love with the stage at an early age, because she fell in love with Shakespeare and the Greeks. She moved to Chicago to attend the Goodman School of Drama at the Art Institute of Chicago, where, she says, she got the foundation necessary to start her life in the theatre. Work came relatively soon after she graduated. Upon moving to New York, she joined the legendary ensemble that made the 1978 show "Ain't Misbehavin'" such a hit, and worked in films, too, such as "Hair," in 1979, in which she danced movement choreographed by Twyla Tharp and sang "White Boys" with her "Ain't Misbehavin'" cast mate Nell Carter.

Now, in "War," she performs a kind of duet with Shay's Elfriede, the sister Roberta never knew. "I love that Branden put all this nuance in," Woodard said, expressing her admiration for all the nooks and crannies and silences that an actor looks for in order to live the character. Part of what Woodard and Shay confront is race—does it divide or complement their sisterhood? Speaking rhetorically, Woodard wondered how "I got dropped in a piece that's so honest about my life and the lives of my friends." Then, the true performer's credo: "It means a lot to me to step on that stage every night."

—Hilton Als

ILLUSTRATION BY OWEN GENT

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

The Healing
Theatre Breaking Through Barriers stages a new play by Samuel D. Hunter ("The Whale"), in which a group of disabled friends who met at summer camp reunite to mourn one of their own. *(Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. Opens June 22.)*

On the Verge or The Geography of Yearning
In Eric Overmyer's play from 1985, revived by the Attic Theatre Company, three Victorian women go on an expedition into the future. *(Walkerspace, 46 Walker St. 212-868-4444. In previews. Opens June 23.)*

Oslo
Bartlett Sher directs J. T. Rogers's play, which recounts how a Norwegian diplomat (Jennifer Ehle) and her husband (Jefferson Mays) orchestrated the secret talks that led to the Oslo Accords in the nineties. *(Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. In previews.)*

NOW PLAYING

ANT Fest 2016
The annual festival of new work continues with "Power Gay," Chris Tyler and Joe Castle Baker's satiric fund-raiser for gay animals; "Kings and Queens of Love," Emily Oliveira's multimedia meditation on Princess Diana; and "Awful Event! or The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln as Interpreted by the Unseen Internal Organs of His Wife, Mary Todd." *(Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-352-3101.)*

Indian Summer
Gregory S. Moss's comedy-drama is a wistful tale of summer lovin', mostly the unrequited kind. Daniel (Owen Campbell) has been plunked down at his widower grandfather's Rhode Island beach shack for the summer. Some teens might enjoy this, but Daniel, a loner who keeps his shirts buttoned up to his Adam's apple, isn't one of them. He attracts the aggression and interest of Izzy (Elise Kibler), a tanned and mouthy local girl with a muscled-up boyfriend (Joe Tippett). Under Carolyn Cantor's sympathetic direction, on a set that looks borrowed from Beckett's "Happy Days," the characters diffidently negotiate their love polygon. Moss's structure is loose, even baggy (as in recurring sequences in which characters detail their fantasies), but the play is sun-warmed by the performances, particularly Tippett's splendid turn as the lunkheaded, openhearted Jeremy, who describes his spiritual practice as "a Christian-orientated martial art of my own devising." *(Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through June 26.)*

Planet Connections Theatre Festivity
The socially conscious, eco-friendly arts festival returns, with offerings including "Disability," in which two nursing aides implement a hazardous new therapy; "The Pink Hulk," Valerie David's stage memoir about her brush with breast cancer; and "The Renaissance Dueling Plays," a swordplay-themed night of one-acts. *(Paradise Factory, 64 E. 4th St. 866-811-4111.)*

Radiant Vermin
Would you kill for your dream home? That's the question at the acid heart of Philip Ridley's social satire, about a young British couple scrabbling up the property ladder. Ollie (Sean Michael Verey) and Jill (Scarlett Alice Johnson) seem pleasant enough, yet, as they explain to the audience, the things they've done to secure domestic comfort are not exactly nice. "In fact, they're horrible," Ollie says. This is, after all, a play by Ridley, one of the most consistently macabre writers working today. In David Mercatali's production, at the "Brits Off Broadway" festival, the carnage is described rather than depicted, but the play still racks up a staggering body count. If Ridley's moralizing critique is overlong and too on the nose—a local mall is named the Never Enough Shopping Experience—the play is enlivened by his flair for grisly imagery, like a tree hung with "dull fruits the size of a baby's eyeballs." *(59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)*

Summerworks 2016
Clubbed Thumb's summer play festival concludes with Ethan Lipton's "Tumacho," a Western-inspired comedy with music, featuring Jeremy Shamos, John Ellison Conlee, and Celia Keenan-Bolger. *(Wild Project, 195 E. 3rd St. 212-352-3101.)*

The Taming of the Shrew
"The whole thing is run by chicks! What the hell is going on here?" No, Shakespeare didn't write that line. It's Judy Gold, as Gremio (sort of), in a standup-comedy interlude that comes during Act III of Phyllida Lloyd's all-female production, at Shakespeare in the Park. Lloyd's version seems possessed by the rebellious spirit of its shrew, Kate (the charismatic Cush Jumbo): it's framed as a hillbilly beauty pageant, reigned by the fair Bianca (Gayle Rankin) and m.c.'d by the disembodied voice of Donald Trump. If that sounds like a lot of directorial bells and whistles, it is. But Lloyd's goal is to explode the play's queasy gender politics. By casting women in the men's parts, including the macho tamer Petruchio (Janet McTeer), Lloyd transforms the contentious comedy into a giddy, subversive sendup of male swagger. Happily, shrew power prevails. *(Delacorte, Central Park. Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555. Through June 26.)*

Turn Me Loose
The past darkly mirrors the present in this rousingly infectious take on the life of Dick Gregory, the groundbreaking comedian, civil-rights crusader, and still active scourge of bigots everywhere. The discomfiting resonance of Gregory's humor is established in the play's opening scene, set in a club in the nineteen-sixties, with unsparing jokes about racial inequality and unrest. Gretchen Law's script bends backward and forward in time, capturing both the standup's rise to stardom and his garrulously cranky dotage, while dilating on formative moments (Gregory's success-making routine at Chicago's Playboy Club; his tragically curtailed friendship with Medgar Evers). Joe Morton delivers a brilliantly varied performance in the starring role, ranging in tone from boisterous levity to glowering disillusionment, and John Carlin ably supplements a raft of bystanders (including a Southern heckler and a pandering interviewer) who serve to highlight the challenges of Gregory's improbable career. *(Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)*

Universal Robots
As scientists still struggle to build an automaton that can tie its shoes, a takeover by robot hordes seems less than imminent. But that's the alternate past imagined in Mac Rogers's ambitious new drama, a fantastical riff on Karel Čapek's 1921 science-fiction classic "R.U.R.," the play that popularized the word "robot." In Rogers's version, set just before the Second World War, Čapek is a character, as is the Czechoslovakian President Tomáš Masaryk. They're presented with a new invention: androids that can perform basic human tasks. As with Rogers's "Honeycomb Trilogy," the director Jordana Williams demonstrates an ability to unfurl world-changing plots on a small budget. But this time around, there's an unnecessary metatheatrical frame, too much talk, and a need to explain what the real Čapek wisely left elliptical. As a character tells Čapek, "You want to save the world. You don't know when to stop." *(Sheen Center, 18 Bleecker St. 866-811-4111. Through June 26.)*

OUT OF TOWN

Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival
The open-air festival, centered at Boscobel House and Gardens, with the Hudson Highlands as scenery, celebrates its thirtieth season with three Shakespeare plays in repertory: "Measure for Measure" (staged by the festival's artistic director, Davis McCallum), "As You Like It," and a three-woman version of "Macbeth." *(Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575. hvshakespeare.org.)*

New York Stage and Film
The summer season at Vassar's Powerhouse Theatre includes mainstage productions of "Transfers," written by Lucy Thurber and directed by Jackson Gay (June 30-July 10), and "The Wolves," written by Sarah DeLappe and directed by Lila Neugebauer (July 21-31). Workshop presentations include Taylor Mac's "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music" (July 22-23 and July 30). *(Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 845-437-5599. powerhouse.vassar.edu.)*

Williamstown Theatre Festival
The theatrical summer haven in the Berkshires kicks off with Tennessee Williams's "The Rose Tattoo," directed by Trip Cullman and starring Marisa Tomei (June 28-July 17). Later mainstage productions include Boo Killebrew's comedy "Romance Novels for Dummies," directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel and featuring Justin Long (July 20-31), and Wendy Wasserstein's "An American Daughter," directed by Evan Cabnet and featuring Grace Gummer and Deborah Rush (Aug. 3-21). On the Nikos Stage, Martyna Majok's "Cost of Living," starring Wendell Pierce, plays June 29-July 10. *(Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400. wtfestival.org.)*

ALSO NOTABLE

An Act of God Booth. • **Bright Star** Cort. *Through June 26.* • **Cirque du Soleil—Paramour** Lyric. • **The Color Purple** Jacobs. • **The Crucible** Walter Kerr. • **The Effect** Barrow Street Theatre. • **Fiddler on the Roof** Broadway Theatre. • **Fully Committed** Lyceum. • **A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit . . .** Lucille Lortel. • **Hadestown** New York Theatre Workshop. • **Hamilton** Richard Rodgers. • **Hero's Welcome** 59E59. • **Himself and Nora** Minetta Lane Theatre. • **The Humans** Helen Hayes. • **I'll Say She Is** Connelly. • **Incognito** City Center Stage I. • **The King and I** Vivian Beaumont. *Through June 26.* • **Long Day's Journey Into Night** American Airlines Theatre. *Through June 26.* • **The Purple Lights of Joppa Illinois** Atlantic Stage 2. *Through June 26.* • **School of Rock** Winter Garden. • **Sense & Sensibility** Gym at Judson. • **She Loves Me** Studio 54. • **Shining City** Irish Repertory. • **Shuffle Along** Music Box. • **The Total Bent** Public. *Through June 26.* • **Waitress** Brooks Atkinson. • **War** Claire Tow.

NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

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

A$AP Ferg
Lin-Manuel Miranda's stage triumph "Hamilton" has an unlikely sibling in "Always Strive and Prosper," the enthralling April album from A$AP Ferg, a native of Harlem. It's a roster of the family members and block stars who populated the rapper's childhood in Hamilton Heights, the uptown enclave named for Alexander himself, where the Founding Father and his wife, Eliza, lived out their days. "Hungry Ham," Ferg's cacophonic, Skrillex-produced single, could fit right into Miranda's first act: "We all go-getters, we go get it. Some gon' fake it, half won't make it. Get a chance to make it out? We takin' it," Crystal Caines narrates in the opening diegesis, before Ferg and a wily chorus line recast his Harlem street into a writhing set of milk crates, burning buildings, and lunatics. Catch the siren-driven snarl at this homecoming show on Ferg's nationwide New Level tour. *(Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl. 212-777-6800. June 23.)*

Factory Floor
Mix cold, modular synths with menacing industrial sounds, add a pinch of minimal Kraut and disco, and drizzle with droning, Nico-inspired vocals. The result is a hypnotic blend of electronic music that is entirely unique to this British trio, who workshopped the sound on a handful of EPs before perfecting it with a self-titled 2013 début on James Murphy's D.F.A. label. They perform this week at the North Brooklyn discothèque Good Room, although their music owes as much to Steve Reich's cyclic minimalism as it does to techno and house. *(98 Meserole Ave., Brooklyn. 718-349-2373. June 28.)*

Macula Dog
In the early eighties, ABC aired a short-lived, scrappy "Saturday Night Live" competitor called "Fridays," complete with twitchy sketches that shot through the fourth wall and musical performances from cult acts. Larry David and Michael Richards were writers and cast members, and the show loved a good Devo performance: the sci-fi surrealists played all three seasons. The Queens four-piece Macula Dog imbibes the spastic theatrics of those performances in their videos and live shows, in which its lead-fingered techno demos come to life through several synthesizers, an electronic drum kit, and a pair of unsettling, teen-sized puppets. Haord Records has released a handful of disorienting tapes from the band, and you may be able to snag one at this headlining gig, after sets from labelmates **Tender Cruncher, Bernard Herman,** and **Cabo.** *(The Glove, 885 Lexington Ave., Brooklyn. 657-456-8310.)*

Dolly Parton
Born to a sharecropper, Parton grew up in a one-room cabin in Locust Ridge, Tennessee, the fourth of twelve children. While she was brought up in poverty (depicted tenderly in her signature song "Coat of Many Colors"), her corner of Appalachia was musically rich with Smoky Mountain ballads, honky-tonk, and bluegrass, all of which she absorbed before making her pilgrimage, in 1964, to Nashville. By then, the eighteen-year-old had already shown her gifts as a songwriter, and within a decade she became a huge country-music star. In the late seventies and early eighties, she attained pop-music and Hollywood fame (with her depiction of an exploited secretary in the working-class comedy "9 to 5"), but despite her success Parton has never shed her image as a down-to-earth woman of the people. Currently on her first major tour in more than twenty-five years, she will perform new and old songs from a forthcoming double album due out in August, called "Pure & Simple with Dolly's Biggest Hits." *(Forest Hills Tennis Stadium, 1 Tennis Pl., Forest Hills. 718-268-2300. June 25.)*

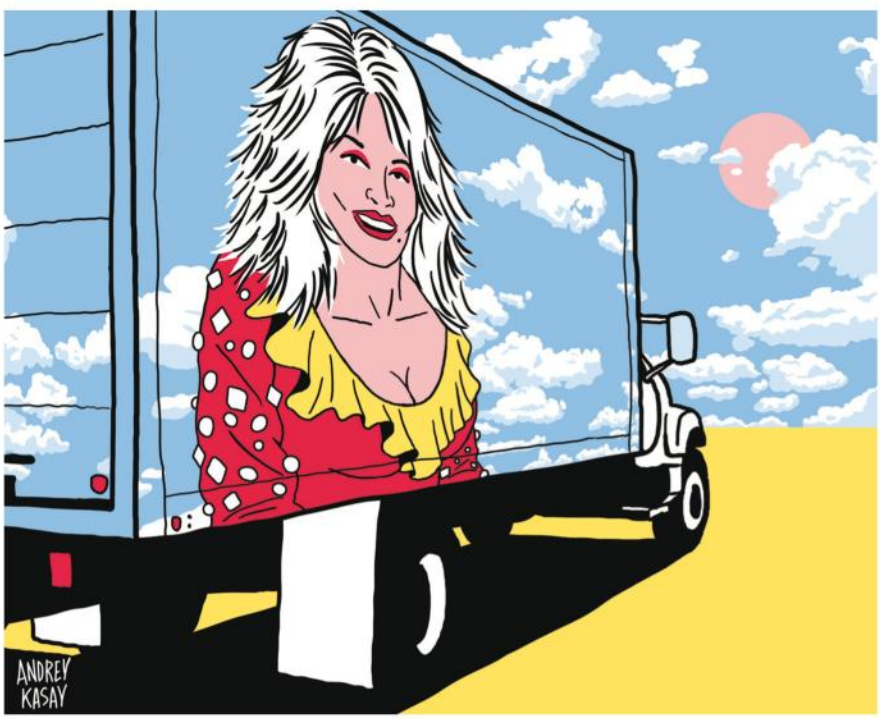


ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREY KASAY

The country icon Dolly Parton performs cherished standards and all-new numbers on her first major tour in more than twenty-five years, mapping the road from her Tennessee roots to her reign as Nashville royalty.

The So So Glos
Alex and Ryan Levine, Matt Elkin, and Zach Staggers are revered names in New York's D.I.Y. punk scene, and for more than the ripping gigs they've stomped through for almost a decade. Formed in Bay Ridge garages around 2007, the So So Glos boast a dirty beach sound with metropolitan hooks: "There's a handful of kids on my block, they're crying," Ryan sings on the 2009 track "My Block." "They all tell me New York City is dying." It's the kind of thing that locals love to say, but few have taken as much action as this band: they soon helped to establish the performance spaces Market Hotel and Shea Stadium, venues where young local bands and fans of all ages can coalesce and develop. They return to a reopened Market and a reawakened city scene. *(Market Hotel, 1140 Myrtle Ave., Brooklyn. June 25.)*

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Will Calhoun, Melvin Gibbs, Vernon Reid
A power trio that brings in the noise, the funk, the rock, and the jazz, this longstanding (if intermittent) unit includes the versatile guitarist Reid alongside two equally genre-spanning players: the bassist Gibbs and the drummer Calhoun, Reid's bandmate in Living Colour. *(Shapeshifter Lab, 18 Whitwell Pl., Brooklyn. 646-820-9452. June 22.)*

Freddy Cole
Old-school suave and still in hale voice at eighty-four years old, Cole has yet to encounter a ballad or swinging blues number that he couldn't finesse to a shine. It took him decades to step outside the shadow of his brother Nat, but Freddy now commands from a throne of his own. *(Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. June 21-25.)*

Robert Glasper Trio and Guests
There will be plenty of chances to savor both the virtuosic power and the wide-ranging musical purview of the pianist Glasper during an engagement—following two nights fronting his charging trio—that finds him welcoming such guests as the fellow-pianist **Jason Moran** and the hip-hop multi-instrumentalist **Taylor McFerrin.** *(Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St. 212-475-8592. June 21-26.)*

Kendra Shank / Frank Kimbrough Duo
The vocalist Shank has collaborated for years with the gifted pianist Kimbrough, usually in a group setting. Here, the two conjoin in intimate duets, bringing charm and invention to well-chosen standards. *(Jazz at Kitano, 66 Park Ave., at 38th St. 212-885-7119. June 22.)*

"Special Piano Extravaganza"
This multi-generational meeting of piano luminaries brings together three exceptional stylists: **Frank Kimbrough, George Cables,** and **Don Friedman.** United in their authority of the post-bop idiom, each has a wholly distinctive approach to the genre—consider this evening a master class in keyboard expertise. *(Jazz at Kitano, 66 Park Ave., at 38th St. 212-885-7119. June 25.)*

DANCE

American Ballet Theatre
For "Romeo and Juliet," one of the company's most beloved productions, from 1965, Kenneth MacMillan created a detailed and brutal portrait of Verona to frame Shakespeare's tragic love story. On June 23, Alessandra Ferri, who retired in 2007 but is now in the middle of a comeback—at the age of fifty-three—returns to the role of Juliet, with which she is closely identified. Her Romeo is the ardent Argentine heartthrob Herman Cornejo. Diana Vishneva and Marcelo Gomes step into the lead roles on Saturday evening. • June 22 at 2 and 7:30, June 23-24 at 7:30, and June 25 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." • June 27-28 at 7:30: "The Sleeping Beauty." *(Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 2.)*

RIOULT Dance NY
Always skillful, rarely original, the choreographer Pascal Rioult returns to the Joyce with his slightly musty modern-dance troupe. The first of two programs has a theme—heroines of the Trojan War—reminiscent of Rioult's mentor, Martha Graham; it combines works about Helen and Iphigenia with the première of "Cassandra's Curse," using a live score by Richard Danielpour to accompany the prophetess. (The deep-voiced actress Kathleen Turner serves as narrator.) The other program mixes repertory with the New York début of "Polymorphous," which follows the changing shapes of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier." *(175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 21-26.)*

River to River Festival
In the summer, many public spaces downtown become hubs of free outdoor dance thanks to this festival, curated by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. One of the most intriguing offerings this week is "The Set Up: Kapila Venu," a dance based on a meeting between a trio of experimental artists—Wally Cardona, Jennifer Lacey, and Jonathan Bepler—and a master of Kutyattam, a traditional dance form from Kerala, India. Other artists presenting work include Jillian Peña and Luciana Achugar. *(For information, call 212-219-9401. June 22-26.)*

Susan Marshall
For "Chromatic," the fourth of five presentations in the American Dance Institute's season at the Kitchen, the acclaimed imagistic choreographer collaborates with the visual artist Suzanne Bocanegra and the composer Jason Treuting. Treating Josef Albers's foundational 1963 handbook "Interaction of Color" as a kind of script, the three creators, who are also the performers, set color theory into motion, using the sound of paper and other objects to draw analogies between color and sound. *(The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. June 23-25.)*

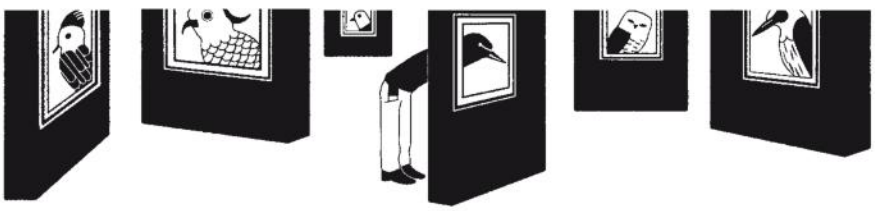
BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! / Philadanco
The Philadelphia-based company Philadanco performs an appealing program, including a suite of dances set to songs by James Brown, by a trio of choreographers: Thang Dao, Ronald K. Brown, and Abdel Salaam. Brown's "Think," a septet set to "Get on the Good Foot," makes excellent use of the veteran Brooklyn-based choreographer's signature fusion of West African and American club dance. Like most of his work, it's irresistibly sexy and packs a punch. And it's free! *(Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-683-5600. June 25.)*

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival
Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe, appearing simultaneously at the Pillow, share more than a home city. In 2014, the ballet troupe adopted the scrappier flamenco group into its management structure. Alas, the two companies also share questionable taste. With Juan Siddi (at the Doris Duke), the problem is mediocrity. With Aspen Santa Fe (at the Ted Shawn), the danger is of well-trained dancers wasted in a European mode of shallow twitchiness, though the current program is less egregious than some. Alejandro Cerrudo's "Silent Ghost" is quietly moody, while Cayetano Soto's "Huma Rojo," set to vintage Latin pop, is merely goofy. *(Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 22-26.)*

Wendy Whelan / Brian Brooks
To many, the best part of "Restless Creature," from 2013, was the duet of falls that Brian Brooks made for himself and Wendy Whelan. That was the show in which the sui-generis ballerina jumped barefoot into contemporary dance before retiring from New York City Ballet. The two reunite for "Some of a Thousand Words," a suite of duets and solos made by Brooks and performed to live music by Brooklyn Rider. After débuting at the Arts & Ideas Festival, the production will head to Jacob's Pillow in July. *(Shubert Theatre, 247 College St., New Haven, Conn. 203-562-5666. June 23-24.)*

ABOVE & BEYOND



"Games for Change"
"If," a subscription-based game for the iPad, is designed to help children develop decision-making skills through an emphasis on empathy and compassion: two populations of cats and dogs are warring in the fictional town of Greenberry, and the player must find a way to bring about peace. The video game's developer, Trip Hawkins, created the hugely successful "Madden NFL" franchise, but calls "If" his biggest accomplishment yet. The "Games for Change" festival elevates socially minded games like these, cultivating investors and providing platforms for designers and publishers hoping to leverage gaming technology's enormous appeal for public good. This year's festival will include programs on early-childhood development, gender dynamics, and V.R.'s potential as an educational tool. *(Parsons School of Design, 66 Fifth Ave. 212-242-4922. June 23-24.)*

Pride March
Despite its jubilant atmosphere, festive outfits, and common delineation as a parade, this annual gathering is, in fact, a march: a political event meant to honor decades of L.G.B.T.Q. history, celebrating representation and social progress while acknowledging gains to be made. Still, nobody imagined the urgency that Pride Week would take on this year: in the wake of the attack on the Pulse night club, in Orlando, and during an election season that has rewritten American politics from every angle, the gay community and its allies have dire cause to take to the street. Sparked in 1969 by riots outside of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in the West Village which was frequently targeted by police, the Pride March has swept Fifth Avenue every June since, and is the culmination of a month of events across the five boroughs. Its central cause, unwavering pride in one's identity, resonates ever more loudly. *(March begins on 36th St. at Fifth Ave. nycpride.org. June 26.)*

READINGS AND TALKS

Greenlight Bookstore
You've likely read the story of the World's Best Hot Dog on the side of a Nathan's soda cup, perhaps during a summer afternoon on the Coney Island Boardwalk. Nathan's grandson, Lloyd Handwerker, traces his grandfather's impoverished childhood and long journey to the U.S. in "Famous Nathan: A Family Saga of Coney Island, the American Dream, and the Search for the Perfect Hot Dog," and explains how the food mogul rented the five-foot boardwalk countertop that would eventually change his life. Nathan's Famous celebrates its hundredth summer at the Coney Island Boardwalk this year; hear an account of the timeless American tale at this book launch, followed by a reception with Coney Island Lager. *(686 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-246-0200. June 22 at 7:30.)*

McNally Jackson
Meg Guroff reads from her new book, "The Mechanical Horse: How the Bicycle Reshaped American Life," which pedals through two centuries of engineering, transportation, recreation, and athletics to trace a changing world and its evolving modes of mobility. From local governments paving town streets to military strategists experimenting with combat usages, the bicycle has had a sprawling cultural influence throughout its history, some of which has been lost to generations. Guroff even asserts that the bicycle inspired the Wright brothers in their early designs for the airplane. The magazine editor and Johns Hopkins professor shares and discusses her findings with the author and N.Y.U. professor Mark Crispin Miller. *(52 Prince St. 212-274-1160. June 27 at 7.)*

ILLUSTRATION BY PABLO AMARGO

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOLLY FAIBYSHEV FOR THE NEW YORKER; ILLUSTRATION BY JOOST SWARTE

TABLES FOR TWO

The Original Crab Shanty

361 City Island Ave., the Bronx (718-885-1810)

ANTOINE'S, IN THE French Quarter of New Orleans, lays claim to the invention, in 1889, of oysters Rockefeller. On any given day, a waiter there might tell a visitor to the Big Easy that the shells are filled with an herby green sauce "because green's the color of money." The oysters Rockefeller at the Original Crab Shanty, in City Island, however, are bigger, better, and golden, because that's the color of melted cheese. There are few green things on the menu here, apart from, recently, the City Island Iced Tea, which a server described as "very similar to a Long Island Iced Tea" (typically a brown drink), and which arrived as emerald as the lantern on Daisy's dock. Other times, it's been blue.

Colors are also key when ordering appetizers: "red or white soup," the server might offer. Go with the white—it's velveteen with clams—or, better yet, begin with a juicy pile of fried calamari. The fare in this shanty doesn't follow today's trends, which insist that the ocean's bounty should be light, salubrious, and, hopefully, mercury free. The stewards of this corner of the Bronx look back to when a seafood dinner had to be hearty enough to sate a skiff-full of ravenous crab fisherman emerging from the roiling North Atlantic.

Crustaceans reign, particularly those of the infraorder Brachyura. The Craby Clams, in spite of being misspelled, are a must. They're stuffed with crab meat and bread crumbs, and put any mere crabcake to shame. Combo deals, named "A Banquet for Crab Lovers" and "Italian Feast," are recommended for a group. Before you dive into the heaps of chitinous exoskeletons, which arrive with a casual "bon appétit, guys," you'll want to don the plastic bib provided, to mitigate the inevitable spatter of red sauce and lobster juice. If you've ordered the Banquet, be prepared to crack your way through a forest of soft-shell crabs and thickets of snow-crab legs; the Feast features crustaceans bathed in a superlative marinara sauce, served over a bed of disappointingly rubbery pasta.

The shanty bustles on any night of the week, and the bar at the front makes sure the tempo is maintained until late. As butter and claws fly around the table with increasing alacrity, you might just end up like the misty-eyed man in an Adidas tracksuit who, late on a Tuesday evening, considering a pile of empty shells and a table of sated friends, clapped the waiter on the back and declared, "Sal, this is all on me." *(Dishes $7.99–$59.99; combo platters $71.99–$79.99.)*

—Nicolas Niarchos

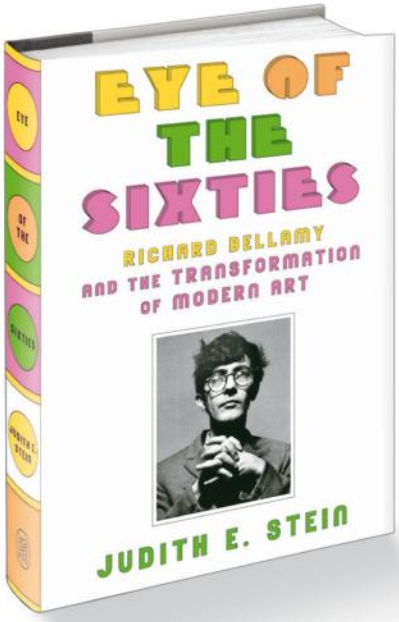
BAR TAB

The Brooklyn Barge
3 Milton St., Brooklyn (929-337-7212)

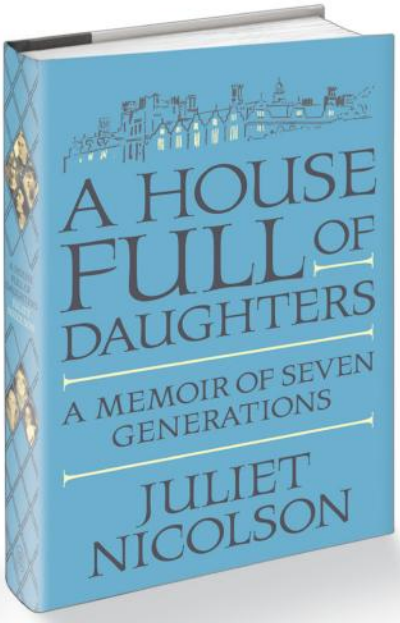
Magical things happen on the first summery night in New York. The East River Ferry seems like the most necessary form of transportation, Walt Whitman's odes to the city summon themselves from the depths, and the much-awaited Brooklyn Barge bar finally opens. Strung with fairy lights, the bar floats in the East River, anchored off WNYC Transmitter Park, on an edge of Greenpoint best reached by that ferry. It aims to be a community center in addition to a watering hole, with paddleboard and sailing lessons. On opening night, though, all that was a distant dream; the kitchen was closed and the bar was cash only. But after a permit-beleaguered inaugural season last year (blink and you missed those two weeks of service), summer-hungry New Yorkers weren't feeling picky. It was a fight through the crowd to reach the deck's rusted bar, which serves moderately priced beer, wine, and mixed drinks. The current eddied beneath. "I always liked to think I was someone who had sea legs," a wobbling patron said, sadly. If you go, steel yourself against the disappointment that buckets of Corona—bro catnip—have already found their way here, and turn toward the view: the green-gray water, the smoke stacks, the glittering Chrysler Building. "Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemm'd Manhattan?" When it's time to regain your footing, wander back onto land. If you're lucky, a man named Joe will be in the park, strumming Hank Williams, and he'll tell you how, in the fifties, he'd often try to swim across to Manhattan. The tide of change is almost comforting to him in its inevitability. "Jump in the water at Metropolitan, you'll end up here. You can't fight the current."—*Becky Cooper*

SUMMER PLEASURES *from* FSG

Meet the gallerist who changed the course of American art, and enter the bohemian downtown world he inhabited.



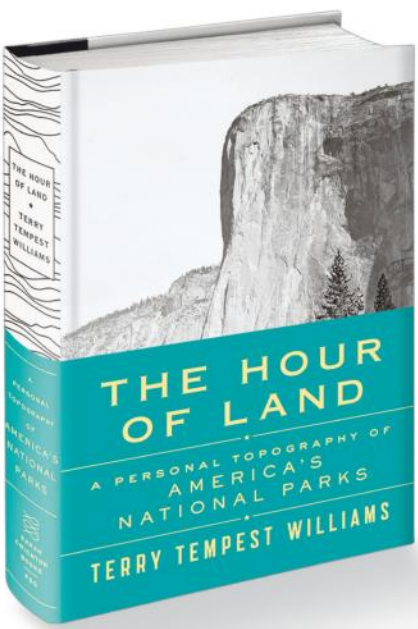
"Perfectly captures the circus that was the art world of the sixties, in which Richard Bellamy was an inadvertent but essential ringmaster."
—Adam D. Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art



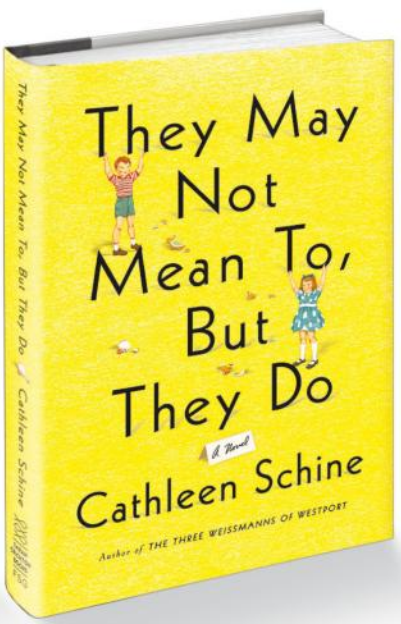
Journey through the lives of many women in one family—aristocrats, diplomats, artists, and writers—including the singular Vita Sackville-West.

"All these women took life by the throat and shook it. It's a wonderful read."
—Julian Fellowes, creator of *Downton Abbey*

Celebrate our national parks, what they mean to us and we to them, with the bestselling author of *When Women Were Birds* and *Refuge*.



"A collection of essays that's a personal journey as much as a meditation on the purpose and relevance of national parks in the 21st century."
—Andrea Wulf, *The New York Times Book Review*



Laugh and cry at this tale about children and their aging parents from one of America's greatest comic novelists.

"This marvelous novel is emotionally stirring and hilarious on virtually every page."
—Meg Wolitzer, author of *The Interestings*

www.fsgbooks.com

FSG

SARAH CRICHTON BOOKS FSG

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
FOUR WORDS

Of all the words that Donald J. Trump flings into the world, the four most Trumpian are "We have no choice." It's a favorite phrase, and one that he used last week in response to the attack at Pulse, a gay dance club in Orlando, where Omar Mateen shot and killed forty-nine people and wounded fifty-three more. Mateen was an American, born in New York to Afghan parents. Yet Trump said the lesson of Orlando is that "we have no choice" but to institute a temporary ban that would prevent non-citizen Muslims from entering the United States. He said the same thing when he first called for the ban, last December, after the San Bernardino shooting. That time, he chanted it in triplicate—"We have no choice! We have no choice! We have no choice!"—as if it were a spell that would make him Presidential, or make his listeners forget that he is not.

Trump has invoked choicelessness to explain everything from why he will build a wall on the border with Mexico to why he talked about his anatomy during a Republican primary debate. The phrase is a dismissal of rational discussion and an intimation of the doom that awaits if Trump is not heeded. In his recent book, "Crippled America," he said of his decision to run for the White House, "I had no choice. I see what's happening to our country; it's going to hell."

Orlando was the first major domestic-terrorism crisis since Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee. His first response was to brag about "the congrats" he'd been receiving for having been "right on radical Islam." Over the next few days, he suggested that President Obama had willfully failed to stop the shooting, for mysterious and possibly sinister reasons ("There's something going on"), and accused American Muslims as a group of being similarly delinquent. He said, "They're not reporting people, and they have to do that," and insisted that America is "not going to continue to survive like this."

He apparently meant that America cannot endure as a nation of immigrants, or as one that respects the rights of immigrants or even those of their American-born children. "What's going to happen in fifteen and twenty years?" he asked Bill O'Reilly, on Fox News. "A lot of times, the children of people that come into the country become a big problem." The same day, at the White House, after reviewing the state of the campaign against ISIS, President Obama warned about responses to Orlando from "politicians who tweet." "Are we going to start treating all Muslim Americans differently?" he asked. That would be a betrayal of what American forces were fighting to protect, "and then the terrorists would have won. And we cannot let that happen." The President added, "*I* will not let that happen."

Reflecting on the rebuke at a rally a few hours later, Trump decided that Obama "was more angry at me than he was at the shooter." Then he spoke again about the danger that the children of immigrants posed, which, he said, was made worse by political correctness. By mid-week, at an event in Atlanta, where Trump was introduced as "the man who is going to save America," he had managed to formulate an idea of foreignness that was indifferent to citizenship. Mateen may have been born in America, but his parents weren't, Trump said. "And his ideas weren't born here. His ideas were born from someplace else." The wrong ideas, in other words, as much as the wrong parents, could get a person disqualified as an American.

Trump arrived at that conclusion even as stories from Orlando were reminding others of the broad embrace that this country can offer. One of the oldest

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

people killed in the attack was Brenda Lee Marquez McCool, born forty-nine years ago, in Brooklyn. She had gone to the club's Latin Saturdays night to dance with her son, whom she shielded from the bullets, and who lived. One of the youngest was nineteen-year-old Jason Benjamin Josaphat, who had recently started college, and called his mother moments before he died.

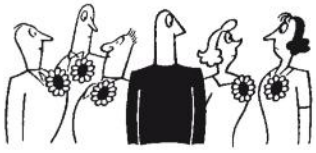
If there is a group eager to explain that it has no choice, it is the leaders of the Republican Party. As Trump railed against Muslims, a few in the G.O.P. murmured that they wished he wouldn't be so divisive. Paul Ryan, the Speaker of the House, said at a press conference that a religious test like the Muslim ban would not be "reflective" of the Party's values; he preferred a "security test." On that point, he and Trump, whom he has endorsed, would "agree to disagree." Ryan certainly did not believe that helping Hillary Clinton win was an option. Senator John McCain said that Obama was "directly responsible" for the Orlando attack; he later explained that he meant that Obama's policies were responsible, not that the President had been conspiring "personally" with the gunman. (The need to make that distinction shows how florid some of the charges against Obama have been.) McCain once accused Trump of having "fired up the crazies," after which Trump insulted his war record. But McCain endorsed him; he seems to think that he had to if he wants to win reëlection.

The idea that there is no choice has always been an alibi for those who in some sense have given up on democracy—whether to justify a decision to declare a state of emergency or to just stay home from the polls—or on the rule of law. Perhaps not incidentally, Trump, despite his narrow view of this nation's prospects, seems to imagine his own potential scope of action as almost limitless. If he is in the White House, trade deals will be easy. Winning will be routine. Reporters he doesn't like will be denied press credentials, as the Washington *Post* learned last week. National security will be insured by his wall and by law-enforcement agents watching mosques.

"We have no choice" is the definitive Donald Trump phrase in another way: it is almost never true. Republicans are not bound never to vote for the candidate of another party, however unprincipled their own might be. Speakers of the House can resign. Senators can decide that they would rather lose an election. For that matter, any senator could have joined Chris Murphy's fifteen-hour filibuster last week to force a vote on modest gun-control measures; only one Republican, Pat Toomey, of Pennsylvania, did. That was a choice, too.

—Amy Davidson

AFTER ORLANDO
THE THIRD PLACE



In Jackson Heights, there is a cluster of gay bars and clubs on either side of Roosevelt Avenue, with the elevated No. 7 train rumbling down the middle. They are the nucleus of New York's Latino gay scene, especially on Saturday nights, when salsa, merengue, Spanish pop, and house music are blaring, and people come from Long Island, New Jersey, and the Bronx to drink and dance. Mauro Julca moved with his mother and sisters from Lima, Peru, to Mill Basin, Brooklyn, in 2003, and felt isolated until his first boyfriend took him dancing at Club Evolution, a big venue in Jackson Heights. "It was amazing just to go out and see Latin people dancing to Latin music," he said last Wednesday. "It wasn't just the club. It was the whole *street*."

Julca, who is thirty-four, helps run Latinos Diferentes, an L.G.B.T.Q. organization known to its members as Latinos D. The massacre in Orlando, in which forty-nine people were killed on Latin night at the gay club Pulse, has been particularly destabilizing for the Latino gay community; ninety per cent of the Orlando victims were Latino, of whom twenty-three were Puerto Rican. "You can't help but take it personally," Julca said. He was in the back room of Manhattan Cocktail Lounge, a bar on Roosevelt at Eighty-eighth Street (it's a good place to "pregame" on weekends, he said), making final preparations for a vigil organized by Latinos D. Out on the avenue, dozens of people carried rainbow flags and white roses, and two transgender women from a group called Make the Road held up a banner showing Rosie the Riveter and the words "Mi Existir Es Resistir": "My Existence Is Resistance."

The crowd crammed into the cocktail bar, where Hugo Ovejero, the director of Latinos D., stood under a disco ball and read the names of the dead—"Simón Adrián Carrillo Fernández, *treinta y uno años* . . . Mercedez Marisol Flores, *veintiséis años* . . ." After each one, the attendees mumbled, in unison, "*Que en paz descanse*," or "Rest in peace." Pastor Fabián Arias, from St. Peter's Church, in Manhattan, led a moment of silence, and then the group headed east down Roosevelt Avenue, past Taqueria Chila and Optima Beauty Supply and Crazy Tattoos Corporation. Manuel Buri, a twenty-six-year-old cosmetology student with a blond faux-hawk, said that he hits the bars on Fridays and Saturdays. "At first, I was scared," he said. "I came out when I was eighteen, and I was afraid because of my family. But now I'm not afraid to go to any bars." His friend Eder Castillo, whom he met through the gay-youth group Holatinos, said, "I grew up by Ozone Park. It wasn't until two years ago that I started coming to the clubs and the big gay scene. I'm not usually very social, so being out there has helped me come out of my shell."

The procession ended in front of Club Evolution, which has a Greek-temple façade and was lit up in rainbow colors. Several people made speeches in Spanish, including Daniel Dromm, the local City Council member; every few minutes, a 7 train would roar by and drown out the speaker. Luis Duque, a shift manager at Evolution, who wore a straw hat and a button that said "Resilience," read the names of the dead again, and, one by one, people taped photographs of the victims to the wall. "This club is like a sanctuary for many people," Duque said afterward.

He added that it would be installing a metal detector.

Alexis Roque, who wore a white ribbon, had travelled from Riverdale. One of the Orlando victims, Franky Jimmy De Jesús Velazquez, was a friend of his from Puerto Rico. They met in dance class when they were twelve and performed at the opening ceremony of the 1979 Pan American Games, in San Juan. Velazquez went on to dance internationally with a *jíbaro* troupe, while Roque moved to New York and joined Danza Fiesta. "The last time I spoke to Jimmy was Puerto Rican Pride last year," Roque said, through tears. "He called to tell us to break a leg. Then he moved to Orlando."

After the vigil, most of the crowd dispersed, while some went inside for live-guitar karaoke. Over at Hombres Lounge, on Thirty-seventh Avenue, Erik Gordon, who lives near J.F.K., was sharing a hookah with a friend. "This is a place where I feel comfortable," he said. "I used to work at Starbucks, and one of the big things there was the idea of a 'third place.' You have work, you have home, and then there's the third place."

—*Michael Schulman*

THE PICTURES
CUTTING ROOM

Brian De Palma tucked his napkin under his chin and said, "I woke up in the middle of the night with this idea for a script. In the last big scene, my lead character is photographing a movie set at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. Meanwhile, my other story line is winding up on top of the tower." Noah Baumbach and Jake Paltrow leaned in over their kale salads at Gotham Bar and Grill. De Palma, bearded and bulky at seventy-five, wore a safari jacket, as befits a Hollywood director; his clean-shaven, slimmer, much younger friends from the indie world bracketed him in navy suits. De Palma went on, "So I asked myself, 'What movie could be shooting at the foot of the Eiffel Tower?' And I said, 'Vertigo'!"

Everyone grinned; the Hitchcock classic had left a heavy impress on such De Palma films as "Body Double" and "Dressed to Kill." He went on, " 'Vertigo' was originally a French novel, so I have to read it and figure out how, in the French version, did they kill the wife?"

On Thursday nights, the three directors, often joined by Wes Anderson, meet for dinner here or at Bar Pitti. One week in 2010, Baumbach and Paltrow filmed De Palma to preserve his stories for posterity. Over the years, they shaped their home movies into a documentary, "De Palma," which just opened. Then they all went back to meeting simply to talk shop.

De Palma mentioned two enduring sources of chagrin: getting shot in the leg by the cops for hot-wiring a motor scooter when he was twenty, and casting the bronzed, wooden Cliff Robertson in "Obsession" in order to get the film made. ("That ridiculous tan!") Then Paltrow threw out an idea: "How about a surveyor? Someone buries treasure as he's watching through his lenses. That could be a De Palma." De Palma chuckled noncommittally. Baumbach said, "Sometimes we come up with our concept of a De Palma movie and see if De Palma likes it."

"We're batting in the low .120s," Paltrow said.

But De Palma said that their selection of clips from his movies for the documentary—cat-footed tracking shots, women being slashed to bits, cascades of blood—proved that they understood his predilections. "Watching it was like when you die and everything . . ." he revolved his hand, film-reel style, to indicate his life flashing before his eyes.

Paltrow said that De Palma had taught him to "stick with the thing you feel—don't worry that *this will be too gross*." Baumbach said, "I've become more open to Brian's Mt. Rushmore idea that you come up with characters and a story to justify a great visual set piece"—like Hitchcock's chase scene atop Mt. Rushmore at the end of "North by Northwest." In "Frances Ha," he said, "I went with just having Frances running down the street, and figuring out what that had to do with anything later."

De Palma said, "I've always been fascinated, as with 'Scarface,' by megalomaniacs who build their own world, where everything in it is an extension of their reality. If you're Walt Disney, it's Disneyland; if you're Hugh Hefner, it's the Playboy Mansion. People who get rich and famous, which happened to a lot of my friends"—he meant his posse in the seventies, which included Steven Spielberg and

Brian De Palma

George Lucas—"don't go out with the boys to get a hot dog. You have to meet them in their universe. But I *do* go out with the boys. I don't have a universe."

"You have a duplex," Baumbach noted.

De Palma went on, "The studios gave us the keys to the kingdom, and we all made a lot of extraordinary movies before they discovered *sequels*." He made the word sound repellent. "But it's a corrosive system. When I was working on 'The Fury,' Frank Yablans"—who produced the 1978 film—"said, 'Dino will pay you a million dollars to do "Hurricane." Go see him right now.' " Dino De Laurentiis was an impresario of gaudy schlock. "So I go to Dino's office, and he holds up this picture of an island and says, ' "Hurricane"! You will live in my hotel and shoot it all!' After I read this terrible script and was embarrassed that I'd been lured, I told myself, 'You can't stay here any longer.' "

He left, but he kept returning. "What would *you* do if somebody offered you

'Hurricane'?" he asked, with a mirthless chuckle.

"It would all depend on how they'd let us make it," Paltrow said.

Baumbach went into pitch mode: "Here's the thing—the hurricane never happens. It blows over."

"Or the *relationship* is the hurricane," Paltrow suggested, equally tongue-in-cheek.

"The last shot is on her and her *view* of the hurricane!" Baumbach declared.

De Palma liked it.

—Tad Friend

DEPT. OF MYTH-BUSTING
SISYPHEAN

A few years ago, Andrew Hacker, the political scientist, wrote an Op-Ed for the *Times* titled "Is Algebra Necessary?," in which he proposed eliminating mandatory high-school math. "Think of math as a huge boulder we make everyone pull, without assessing what all this pain achieves," he wrote. Although some of the article's readers suspected Hacker of satire, he was as serious as calculus, and has extended his argument in a book called "The Math Myth: And Other STEM Delusions." Recently, the National Museum of Mathematics, on East Twenty-sixth Street, invited Hacker to defend his assertions in a public debate with James Tanton, the mathematician at large of the Mathematical Association of America, and an educator and consultant.

"I may be the only non-mathematician in the house," Hacker said in opening, a remark that was met with stony silence. (He was off by a count of one: also present was a reporter who cannot pretend to objectivity, and who admits to weeping with frustration over her fifth grader's math homework.) Hacker outlined his case: mastery of the high-school-math sequence—algebra, geometry, calculus—is unnecessary for most students, and by making math a requirement for graduation and college entrance, the U.S. educational system sets up for failure millions whose talents might lie elsewhere. "Colleges mindlessly require mathematics of everybody, even if you are going to major in poetry, modern dance, or interior design," he said.

Hacker, who has taught at Queens College for almost forty-five years, considered some of the arguments put forward by the math lobby—for example, that math sharpens the mind. "I agree that really doing well at it sharpens your mind for dealing with mathematics. But there is no evidence whatever that mastering mathematics makes you agile and adept in other fields," he said. Hacker cited the cautionary example of Paul Wolfowitz, the former Deputy Secretary of Defense and an architect of the Iraq War: "He was a math major, and his father was a math professor." Instead, he suggested, schools should offer classes in arithmetic numeracy, insuring that students master the ability to read a corporate report or to parse the federal budget. Higher math, Hacker conceded, is one of humanity's greatest accomplishments. "I would really love for everybody to appreciate mathematics—its glories, its goals," he said. "But this isn't being done by making people slog through polynomials year after year."

When Tanton took the floor, he paced, TED-talk-like, and spoke in a rapid-fire Australian accent. "I have never used the quadratic formula in my personal life," he acknowledged. "I don't think I have ever used it in my research life. But learning the formula wasn't the point. It was the *story* of quadratics. And, from that story, I know I can nut my way from most any problem to do with that subject." Algebra II, he said, need not be too high a bar to set for most students. "The issue is: How do we teach the subject? Do we teach with beauty and joy and wonder and humanness?" Tanton offered one of his own methods for attaining joy and wonder: as a teacher—in a private school, exempt from state standards—he handed out math quizzes that gave both a problem and its answer, but also provided a large white space for students to show how to get from one to the other.

There were a few questions from the audience. A middle-school teacher asked how she might add joy to the curriculum given the demands of the Common Core standards. "Write to your congressman," Hacker suggested. A high-school teacher from the South Bronx asked whether eliminating mandatory math would only exacerbate the achievement gap. Tanton agreed that it would. "Where's the line?" he asked. "Do we have it that in grade seven, grade eight, people self-identify as 'I am going into a career that doesn't need math—therefore, I will stop it when I am twelve'?"

The math-phobic reporter asked Hacker whether he thought math really is harder than other classes that

students are required to take. "Unqualifiedly, yes," he said. "Every other subject is about something. Poetry is about something. Even most modern art is about something." He looked around, and lowered his voice to a whisper. "Math is about nothing," he went on. "It sounds like 'Seinfeld.' Math describes much of the world but is all about itself, and it has the most fantastic conundrums. But it is not *about* the world."

Tanton was asked how he would counsel the parent of a grade-school student who found no joy in the math curriculum. "Is it taught with context and relevance and meaning?" he asked, sympathetically. On being assured that it was, and that it nonetheless remained stubbornly joyless, Tanton looked taken aback. "Can you let it go? Just have a break from math?" he suggested. The reporter said that she would do so, and would cite his authority in her very next exculpatory note to the teacher.

—Rebecca Mead

THE MUSICAL LIFE

TUTOR

Born in York, Pennsylvania, but reared in North Carolina and Virginia, the country singer Robbie Fulks came to New York in 1980, to get off the farm (his parents were back-to-the-landers) and enroll at Columbia: "I didn't know that there wouldn't be women there, or even that it was in the Ivy League," he said the other day. He dropped out after two years to give the singer-songwriter thing a go, while working as an assistant to Donald Fine, a publisher of mid-list thrillers. In 1983, he moved to Chicago, where, except for a three-year dalliance with Nashville (memorialized in his song "Fuck This Town"), he has lived ever since.

In the early nineties, he started making records on the Bloodshot label, often with the recording engineer Steve Albini. After nearly a dozen of them, he's better loved than paid, and best (but not well enough) known not only for his guitar wizardry and his urbane honky-tonk wit but for his crafty country songs and his wicked sendups of such songs.

For a time, he also taught at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, on North Lincoln Avenue. One of the students in his Saturday-morning Guitar 1 for beginners class was Tina Fey, then a member of the Second City comedy troupe. She and her boyfriend (now husband), Jeff Richmond, often went to see him perform, and so he got to know them, but not too well. "I am loath to gurm acquaintances who achieve celebrity," he said. ("Gurm" is a Nashville term for an invasively keen fan.)

Nonetheless, one morning earlier this month he found himself walking along Broadway, guitar case in hand, to pay Fey a visit at her offices in midtown, during a day of errands relating to the recent release of a new album, "Upland Stories."

Fulks, who is tall and lean, sat down with Fey for office-machine coffee in a brainstorm room with a piano, a Lego model of a locomotive, and a whiteboard with garbage bags taped over it, to hide from prying eyes her notes for a forthcoming musical adaptation of her film "Mean Girls."

"I took Robbie's class on a whim," Fey said. "I'm not musical. I was onstage at Second City, and I thought it would be helpful if I could play the ukulele or the guitar in one of the sketches, the one called 'Grandma's Records.' "

"That was a great sketch," Fulks said.

"Dirty as all get out," Fey said. "There was this guy, Jim Zulevic, who used to make up these songs that sounded like they were from the twenties." The sketch involved a priest and some nuns going through a dead nun's record collection to find something to play at her funeral.

Fulks imitated an old gramophone voice: " 'To describe your many charms would take a large thesaurus.' And then the clitoris rhyme would be approaching."

"And just before it came you'd turn the record off."

Fulks imitated a retracted stylus: "*Zrrrp*."

Fey went on, "The guitar lessons were a real scam, because Robbie would just sing for an hour, so we'd get a free show."

She went on, "I made it all the way up to an Elvis Costello class."

"With who?" Fulks asked. "I can't believe it wasn't me."

"That was where I Peter Principled myself. It was the far end of my skill set. Too many bar chords for me."

Fey's husband, a composer and musician, had recently bought her a small guitar, in the hope that she might take it up again. She fetched it from another part of the office. Fulks took it in hand and tapped the body. "What is this? Plywood?"

As he strummed lightly, talk turned,

Tina Fey and Robbie Fulks

as it will, to their kids, and to contemporary taste—to Kesha and Dr. Luke. At one point, Fey knelt before Fulks, whose ringtone is music from "Laurel and Hardy" but who once made an album of Michael Jackson covers, to show him a new J. Lo video on her phone.

"Do your kids like country music?" she asked him.

"No, they hate it. It's stained by my doing it. Well, my oldest kid, he's thirty-two, he likes Buck Owens and all the stuff I like. My eighteen-year-old is a musician. He plays drums, a little guitar and bass. He's at Bard. He has broad taste, which includes stuff I really don't like, like jam-band music."

After a while, Fulks was back on the street with his guitar, on his way to play it at a satellite-radio station. "When I lived here, I was at the mercy of the generation we are now, and trying to break in," he said. "The sheen's gone off the world, I find, at my age. I keep thinking of that Schopenhauer line about how when you're young it's like being halfway back in a theatre, looking at a beautiful backdrop. When you're older, it's like being two feet away."

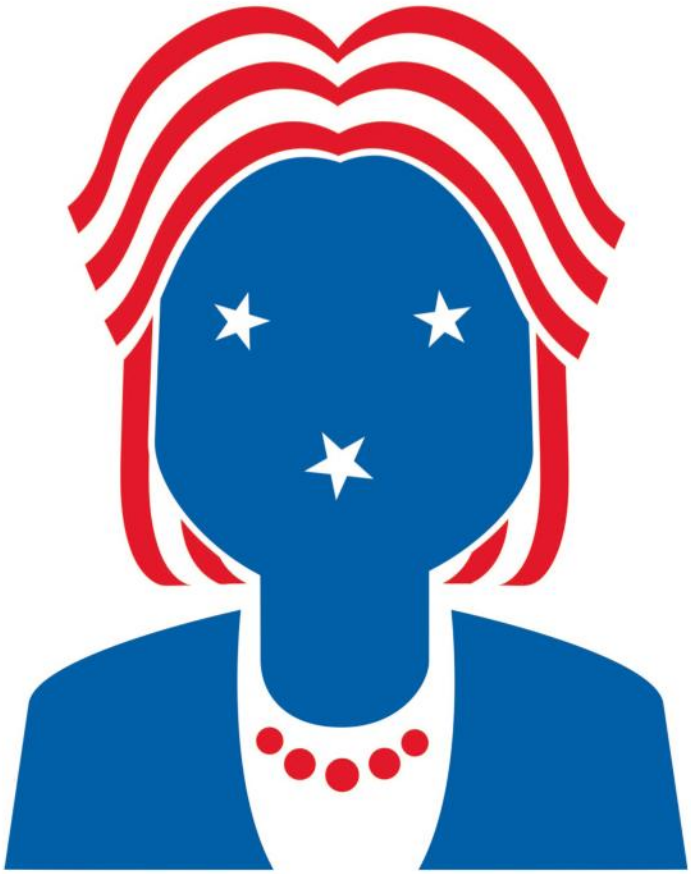
—Nick Paumgarten

AMERICAN CHRONICLES

THE WOMAN CARD

How feminism and antifeminism created Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

BY JILL LEPORE



"IT MEANS FREEDOM FOR WOMEN TO VOTE AGAINST THE PARTY THIS DONKEY REPRESENTS" read the sign on a donkey named Woodrow who, wearing a bow, was paraded through Denver by the National Woman's Party during its campaign against the Democratic incumbent, President Wilson, in 1916. This year, the hundredth anniversary of the Woman's Party arrived, unnoticed, on June 5th. Two days later, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to claim the Presidential nomination of a major party: the Democratic Party.

If elected, Clinton will become the first female President in the nation's history. She will also join John Quincy Adams, James Monroe, Martin Van Buren, and James Buchanan as the only Presidents to have served both in the Senate and as Secretary of State. If she loses the election to Donald Trump, he will be the first man elected President who has never served the public either in government or in the military. Trump wants to make America great again; Clinton wants to make history. That history is less about the last glass ceiling than about a party realignment as important as the Nixon-era Southern Strategy, if less well known. Call it the Female Strategy.

For the past century, the edges of the parties have been defined by a debate about the political role and constitutional rights of women. This debate is usually reduced to cant, as if the battle between the parties were a battle between the sexes. Republicans and Democrats are "just like men and women," Trent Lott liked to say: Democrats might be from Venus, but the G.O.P. is "the party of Mars." Democrats have talked about a Republican "war on women"; Trump says, of Clinton, "The only card she has is the woman card." She polls better among women; he polls better among men. The immediacy and starkness of the contrast between the candidates obscures the historical realignment hinted at in their own biographies: she used to be a Republican and he used to be a Democrat. This election isn't a battle between the sexes. But it is a battle between the parties, each hoping to win the votes of women without losing the votes of men. It's also marked by the sweeping changes to American politics caused by women's entry into public life. Long before women could vote, they carried into the parties a political style they had perfected first as abolitionists and then as prohibitionists: the moral crusade. No election has been the same since.

The G.O.P. was built by women, who brought the moral crusade to party politics.

FOR A VERY long time, the parties had no idea what to do with women. At the nation's founding, women made an argument for female citizenship based on their role as mothers: in a republic, the civic duty of women is to raise sons who will be virtuous citizens. Federalists doffed their top hats, and no more. In the eighteen-twenties and thirties, Jacksonian democracy involved a lot of brawls: women were not allowed. When the social reformer Fanny Wright spoke at a political meeting in 1836, she was called a "female man." Instead, women entered public affairs by way of an evangelical religious revival that emphasized their moral superiority, becoming temperance reformers and abolitionists: they wrote petitions. "The right of petitioning is the only political right that women have," Angelina Grimké pointed out in 1837.

The Whig Party was the first to make use of women in public, if ridiculously: in 1840, Tennessee women marched wearing sashes that read "Whig Husbands or None." Because neither the Whig nor the Democratic Party was able to address the question of slavery, a crop of new parties sprang up. Fuelled by antislavery arguments, and adopting the style of moral suasion favored by female reformers, these parties tended to

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

be welcoming to women, and even to arguments for women's rights.

The Republican Party was born in 1854, in Ripon, Wisconsin, when fifty-four citizens founded a party to oppose the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which threatened to create two new slave states. Three of those citizens were women. Women wrote Republican campaign literature, and made speeches on behalf of the Party. Its first Presidential nominee, in 1856, was John Frémont, but more than one Republican observed that his wife, Jessie Benton Frémont, "would have been the better candidate." One of the Party's most popular and best-paid speakers was Anna Dickinson, who became the first woman to speak in the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The women's-rights movement was founded in 1848. "It started right here in New York, a place called Seneca Falls," Clinton said in her victory speech on June 7th, after effectively clinching the Democratic nomination. Advocates of women's rights were closely aligned with the Republican Party, and typically fought to end slavery and to earn for both black men and all women political equality with white men. In 1859, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote to Susan B. Anthony, "When I pass the gate of the celestials and good Peter asks me where I wish to sit, I will say, 'Anywhere so that I am neither a negro nor a woman. Confer on me, great angel, the glory of White manhood, so that henceforth I may feel unlimited freedom.'"

After Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Stanton and Anthony gathered four hundred thousand signatures on petitions demanding the Thirteenth Amendment. They then began fighting for the Fourteenth Amendment, which they expected to guarantee the rights and privileges of citizenship for all Americans. Instead, they were told that "this is the Negro's hour," and that the amendment would include the word "male," so as to specifically exclude women. "Do you believe the African race is composed entirely of males?" Stanton asked Wendell Phillips. And then she warned, "If that word 'male' be inserted, it will take us a century at least to get it out."

The insertion of the word "male" into the Fourteenth Amendment had consequences that have lasted well into this year's Presidential election. At the time, not everyone bought the argument that it was necessary to disenfranchise women in order to secure ratification. "Can any one tell us why the great advocates of Human Equality . . . forget that when they were a weak party and needed all the womanly strength of the nation to help them on, they always united the words 'without regard to sex, race, or color'?" one frustrated female supporter of the Republican Party asked. She could have found an answer in an observation made by Charles Sumner: "We know how the Negro will vote, but are not so sure of the women."

This election, many female voters, especially younger ones, resent being told that they should support Hillary Clinton just because she's a woman. It turns out that women don't form a political constituency any more than men do; like men, women tend to vote with their families and their communities. But, in 1865, how women would vote was impossible to know. Would black women vote the way black men voted? Would white women vote like black women? The parties, led by white men, decided they'd just as soon not find out.

Women tried to gain the right to vote by simply seizing it, a plan that was known as the New Departure. Beginning in 1868, black and white women went to the polls all over the country and got arrested. Sojourner Truth tried to vote in Battle Creek, Michigan. Five black women were arrested for voting in South Carolina in 1870, months before Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for President. She announced that women already had the right to vote, under the privileges-and-immunities clause of the Constitution, and, in 1871, she made this argument before the House Judiciary Committee. Anthony was arrested for voting in 1872—not for Woodhull but for the straight Republican ticket—and, in the end, the Supreme Court ruled against Woodhull's interpretation of the Constitution. Thus ended the New Departure.

Prevented from entering the electorate, women who wanted to influence public affairs were left to plead with men. For decades, these women had very little choice: whatever fight they fought, they had only the weapons of the nineteenth-century religious revival: the sermon, the appeal, the conversion, the crusade. The full measure of the influence of the female campaign on the American political style has yet to be taken. But that influence was felt first, and longest, in the Republican Party.

At the Republican nominating convention in 1872, the Party split into two, but neither faction added a suffrage plank to its platform. "We recognize the equality of all men before the law," the Liberal Republicans declared, specifically discounting women. Stanton called the position taken by the regular Republicans—"the honest demand of any class of citizens for additional rights should be treated with respectful consideration"—not a plank but a splinter. Still, a splinter was more than suffragists ever got from the Democratic Party. In 1880, Anthony wrote a speech to deliver at the Democratic National Convention. It began, "To secure to twenty millions of women the rights of citizenship is to base your party on the eternal principles of justice." Instead, her statement was read by a male clerk, while Anthony looked on, furious, after which, as the *Times* reported, "No action whatever was taken in regard to it, and Miss Anthony vexed the Convention no more."

Close elections seemed to be good for the cause because, in a tight race, both parties courted suffragists' support, but women soon discovered that this was fruitless: if they allied with Republicans, Democrats campaigned against Republicans by campaigning against suffrage. This led to a certain fondness for third parties—the Equal Rights Party, the Prohibition Party, the Home Protection Party. J. Ellen Foster, an Iowa lawyer who had helped establish the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, spoke at a Republican rally and cautioned that a third party rewards women's support with nothing more than flattery: "It gives to women seats in conventions and places their names on meaningless committees and tickets impossible of success." In 1892, Foster founded the Women's National Republican Association, telling the delegates at the Party's Convention that year, "We are here to help you. And we have come to stay."

In the second decade of the twentieth century, anticipating the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, the parties scrambled to secure the loyalty of voters who would double the size of the electorate, no less concerned than

Sumner had been about how women would vote. "With a suddenness and force that have left observers gasping women have injected themselves into the national campaign this year in a manner never before dreamed of in American politics," the New York *Herald* reported in 1912. When Theodore Roosevelt founded the Progressive Party, it adopted a suffrage plank, and he aggressively courted women. He considered appointing Jane Addams to his cabinet. At the Progressive Party's Convention, Addams gave the second nominating speech. Then she grabbed a "Votes for Woman" flag and marched it across the platform and up and down the auditorium. Roosevelt had tried to win the Republican nomination by bribing black delegates, who were then shut out of the Progressive Party's Convention. When Addams got back to Chicago, she found a telegram from a black newspaper editor: "Woman suffrage will be stained with Negro Blood unless women refuse all alliance with Roosevelt."

Alice Paul, a feminist with a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania who'd been arrested for fighting for suffrage in England, decided that American women ought to form their own party. "The name Woman's Party is open to a quite natural misunderstanding," Charlotte Perkins Gilman admitted, introducing the National Woman's Party in 1916. It wasn't a party, per se; it was a group of women whose strategy was to protest the existing parties, on the theory that no party could be trusted to advance the interests of women.

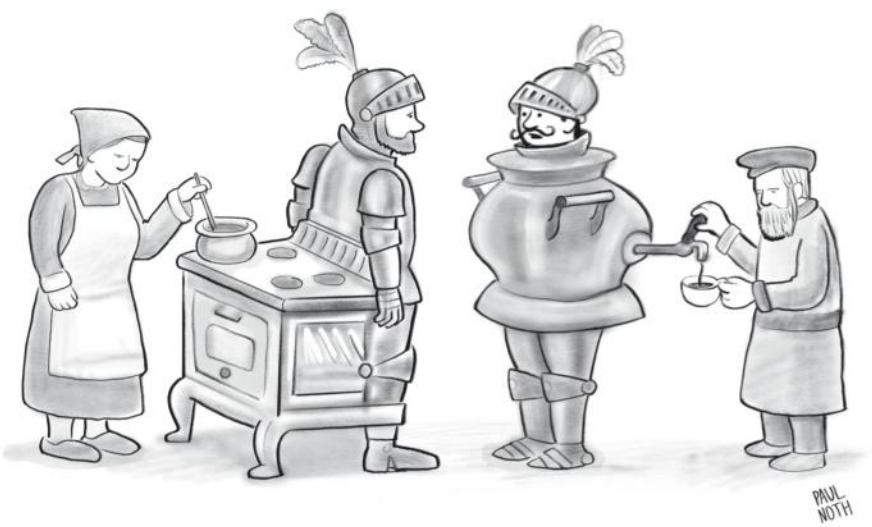
Terrified by the very idea of a party of women, the D.N.C. formed a "Women's Division" in 1917, the R.N.C. in 1918. The G.O.P. pursued a policy of "complete amalgamation," its chairman pledging "to check any tendency toward the formation of a separate women's party." White women worked for both parties; black women worked only for the G.O.P., to fight the Democratic Party, which had become the party of Southern whites. "The race is doomed unless Negro Women take an active part in local, state and national politics," the National League of Republican Colored Women said.

After 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt, the longtime head of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, turned it into the League of Women Voters, providing voter education and other aids to good government. Meanwhile, she told women to join the parties: "The only way to get things in this country is to find them on the inside of the political party." Inside those parties, women fought for equal representation. The Women's Division of the D.N.C. implemented a rule mandating an equal number of male and female delegates, in 1920. In 1923, the Republican National Committee introduced rule changes—billed as "seats for women"—that added bonus delegates for states that had voted Republican in the previous election. But the Democrats' fifty-fifty rule was observed only in the breach, and, as both Catherine E. Rymph and Melanie Gustafson have pointed out in their rich histories of women in the Republican Party, the real purpose of adding the new G.O.P. seats was to reduce the influence of black Southern delegates.

The League of Women Voters was nonpartisan, but the National Woman's Party remained antipartisan. It focussed on securing passage of an Equal Rights Amendment, drafted by Paul, who had lately earned a law degree, and first introduced into Congress in 1923. Yet, for all the work of the Woman's Party, the G.O.P. was the party of women or, rather, of white women, for most of the twentieth century. In the late nineteen-twenties and thirties, black men and women left the Republican Party, along with smaller numbers of white women, eventually forming a New Deal coalition of liberals, minorities, labor unionists, and, from the South, poor whites. F.D.R. appointed Molly Williams Dewson the director of the D.N.C.'s Women's Division, which grew to eighty thousand members.

In 1937, determined to counter the efforts of the lady known as "More Women" Dewson, the R.N.C. appointed Marion Martin its assistant chairman; during her tenure, she founded a national federation of women's clubs whose membership grew to four hundred thousand. Martin, thirty-seven and unmarried, had a degree in economics and had served a combined four terms in the Maine legislature. She led a moral crusade against the New Deal. In 1940, she also got the R.N.C. to pass its own fifty-fifty rule and to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment, formally, in its platform. This went only so far. In 1946, Martin argued that party women needed more power. "We need it not because we are feminists but because there are a great many non-partisan women's organizations that do wield an influence in this country," she said. Five days later, she was forced to resign.

Hillary Rodham was born in Chicago in 1947. In 1960, when Richard Nixon ran against J.F.K., she checked voter lists for the G.O.P. By then, the majority of Republican Party workers were female. During the Cold War, the G.O.P. boasted about "the women who work on the home front, ringing the doorbells, filling out registration cards, and generally doing the housework of government." As the historian Paula Baker has pointed out, party work is just like other forms of labor; women work



"Is it starting to feel like mission creep?"

harder, are paid less, are rarely promoted, and tend to enter a field when men begin to view it as demeaning. The elephant was the right symbol for the Party, one senator said, because it has "a vacuum cleaner in front and a rug beater behind."

Betty Farrington, one of Martin's successors, turned the women's federation into a powerhouse of zealous crusaders. After Truman defeated Dewey, in 1948, Farrington wanted the G.O.P. to find its strongman:

> How thankful we would have been if a leader had appeared to show us the path to the promised land of our hope. The world needs such a man today. He is certain to come sooner or later. But we cannot sit idly by in the hope of his coming. Besides his advent depends partly on us. The mere fact that a leader is needed does not guarantee his appearance. People must be ready for him, and we, as Republican women, in our clubs, prepare for him.

That man, many Republican voters today appear to believe, is Donald J. Trump, born in New York in 1946.

Political parties marry interests to constituencies. They are not defined by whether they attract women, particularly. Nor are they defined by their positions on equal rights for women and men. But no plausible history of American politics can ignore, first, the influence of a political style perfected, over a century, by citizens who, denied the franchise, were forced to plead, and, second, the effects of the doubling of the size of the electorate.

The Republican Party that is expected to nominate Trump was built by housewives and transformed by their political style, which men then made their own. The moral crusade can be found among nineteenth-century Democrats—William Jennings Bryan, say—but in the twentieth century it became the hallmark of the conservative wing of the Republican Party; it is the style, for instance, of Ted Cruz. This began in 1950, when the Republican Women's Club of Ohio County, West Virginia, invited as its principal speaker for Lincoln Day Senator Joseph McCarthy. It was during this speech that McCarthy said he had a list of subversives working at the State Department. "The great difference between our Western Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political—it is moral," McCarthy said. His rhetoric was that of the nineteenth-century women's crusade. The great crusader Barry Goldwater said in 1955, "If it were not for the National Federation of Republican Women, there would not be a Republican Party." That year, Republican women established Kitchen Cabinets, appointing a female equivalent to every member of Eisenhower's cabinet; their job was to share "political recipes on G.O.P. accomplishments with the housewives of the nation," by sending monthly bulletins on "What's Cooking in Washington." One member of the Kitchen Cabinet was Phyllis Schlafly.

In 1963, Schlafly nominated Goldwater to speak at a celebration marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Federation of Republican Women. In a straw poll taken after Goldwater delivered his speech, 262 out of 293 Federation delegates chose him. Meanwhile, Margaret Chase Smith was drafted into the race, a liberal alternative. As the historian Ellen Fitzpatrick recounts in a terrific new book, "The Highest Glass Ceiling," Smith was the first woman elected on her own to the Senate and the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress. Asked why she agreed to run against Goldwater, she once said, "There was nowhere to go but the Presidency." She was the first and boldest member of the Senate to oppose McCarthy, in a speech she made from the floor, known as the Declaration of Conscience: "I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear." At the Convention in 1964, she refused to endorse Goldwater, and denied him her delegates.

Young Trump had little interest in politics. He liked the movies. In 1964, he graduated from military school, where he'd been known as a ladies' man, and thought about going to the University of Southern California, to study film. Hillary Rodham was a "Goldwater Girl." But Smith was her hero. She decided to run for president of her high-school class, against a field of boys, and lost, "which did not surprise me," she wrote in her memoir, "but still hurt, especially because one of my opponents told me I was 'really stupid if I thought a girl could be elected president.' "

It's right about here that the G.O.P. began to lose Hillary Rodham. In 1965, as a freshman at Wellesley, she was president of the Young Republicans; she brought with her to college Goldwater's "The Conscience of a Conservative." But Goldwater's defeat led to a struggle for the future of the Party, and that struggle turned on Schlafly. In 1966, Elly Peterson, a Michigan state party chairman and supporter of George Romney, tried to keep Schlafly from becoming the president of the National Federation. "The nut fringe is beautifully organized," Peterson complained. At a three-thousand-woman Federation convention in 1967, Schlafly was narrowly defeated. Three months later, she launched her monthly newsletter. Rejecting the nascent women's-liberation movement, she nevertheless blamed sexism for the G.O.P.'s failure to fully embrace its most strenuous conservatives:

> The Republican Party is carried on the shoulders of the women who do the work in the precincts, ringing doorbells, distributing literature, and doing all the tiresome, repetitious campaign tasks. Many men in the Party frankly want to keep the women doing the menial work, while the selection of candidates and the policy decisions are taken care of by the men in the smoke-filled rooms.

In the summer of 1968, Trump graduated from Wharton, where, he later said, he spent most of his time reading the listings of foreclosures on federally financed housing projects. That September, in Atlantic City, feminists staged a protest at the Miss America pageant, the sort of pageant that Trump would one day buy, run, and cherish. They carried signs reading "Welcome to the Cattle Auction."

Rodham, a twenty-year-old Capitol Hill intern, attended the Republican National Convention in Miami as a supporter of the antiwar candidate, Nelson Rockefeller. For the first time since 1940, the G.O.P. dropped from its platform its endorsement of equal rights. Rodham went home to see her family, and, hiding the fact from her parents, drove downtown to watch the riots outside

the Democratic National Convention. One month too young to vote, she'd supported the antiwar Democrat, Eugene McCarthy, before the Convention, but later said she would probably have voted for the Party's nominee, Hubert Humphrey.

In 1969, Rodham, senior class president at Wellesley, became the first student invited to deliver a commencement address, a speech that was featured in *Life*. In 1970, a leader of her generation, a student at Yale Law School, and wearing a black armband mourning the students killed at Kent State, she spoke about her opposition to the Vietnam War at a convention of the League of Women Voters, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary. She had become a feminist, and a Democrat.

What followed is more familiar. Between 1964 and 1980, Schlafly's arm of the Party steadily gained control of the G.O.P., which began courting evangelical Christians, including white male Southern Democrats alienated by their party's civil-rights agenda. In the wake of Roe v. Wade, and especially after the end of the Cold War, the Republican Party's new crusaders turned their attention from Communism to abortion. The Democratic Party became the party of women, partly by default. For a long time, it could have gone another way.

In 1971, Hillary Rodham met Bill Clinton, Donald Trump took over the family business, and Gloria Steinem, Tanya Melich, Bella Abzug, and Shirley Chisholm helped found the National Women's Political Caucus, which, like the National Woman's Party, sought to force both parties to better represent women and to gain passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. At the 1972 G.O.P. Convention, in Miami, Republican feminists demanded that the Party restore its E.R.A. plan to the platform. They won, but at a cost. After the Convention, Schlafly founded STOP ERA.

The Democratic Party, meanwhile, was forging a new coalition. "A new hat, or rather a bonnet, was tossed into the Democratic Presidential race today," Walter Cronkite said on CBS News, when Chisholm, the first black woman to be elected to Congress, announced her bid. She went all the way to the Convention. Chisholm said, "You can go to that Convention and you can yell, 'Woman power! Here I come!' You can yell, 'Black power! Here I come!' The only thing those hard-nosed boys are going to understand at that Convention: 'How many delegates you got?'" She got a hundred and fifty-two.

By 1973, Trump was making donations to the Democratic Party. "The simple fact is that contributing money to politicians is very standard and accepted for a New York City developer," he explains in "The Art of the Deal." He also appeared, for the first time, in a story in the *Times*, with the headline "MAJOR LANDLORD ACCUSED OF ANTIBLACK BIAS IN CITY." The Department of Justice had charged Trump and his father with violating the 1968 Fair Housing Act. "We never have discriminated," Trump told the *Times*, "and we never would."

In 1974, Rodham moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked for the special counsel preparing for the possible impeachment of Richard Nixon. The next year, she married Bill Clinton, though she didn't take his name. The G.O.P., weakened by Watergate, and thinking to stanch the flow of departing women, elected as party chair Mary Louise Smith, an ardent feminist. In 1975, some thirty G.O.P. feminists formed the Republican Women's Task Force to support the E.R.A., reproductive rights, affirmative action, federally funded child care, and the extension of the Equal Pay Act.

The shift came in 1976. Rodham went to the Democratic Convention, at Madison Square Garden. Schlafly went to the Republican Convention, in Miami, where, as the political scientist Jo Freeman has argued, feminists won the battle but lost the war. For the nomination, Ford, a supporter of the E.R.A., defeated Reagan, an opponent, but the platform committee defeated the E.R.A. by a single vote.

In 1980, Republican feminists knew they'd lost when Reagan won the nomination; even so moderate a Republican as George Romney called supporters of the E.R.A. "moral perverts," and the platform committee urged a constitutional ban on abortion. Tanya Melich, a Republican feminist, began talking about a "Republican War against Women," a charge Democrats happily made their own. Mary Crisp, a longtime R.N.C. co-chair, was forced out, and declared of the party of Lincoln and of Anthony, "We are reversing our position and are about to bury the rights of over a hundred million American women under a heap of platitudes."

Buried they remain. Until 1980, during any Presidential election for which reliable data exist and in which there had been a gender gap, the gap had run one way: more women than men voted for the Republican candidate. That changed when Reagan became the G.O.P. nominee; more women than men supported Carter, by eight percentage points. Since then, the gender gap has never favored a G.O.P. Presidential candidate. The Democratic Party began billing itself as the party of women. By 1987, Trump had become a Republican.

In the Reagan era, Republican strategists believed that, in trading women for men, they'd got the better end of the deal. As the Republican consultant Susan Bryant pointed out, Democrats "do so badly among men that the fact that we don't do quite as well among women becomes irrelevant." And that's more or less where it lies.

With the end of the E.R.A., whose chance at ratification expired in 1982, both parties abandoned a political settlement necessary to the stability of the republic. The entrance of women into politics on terms that are, fundamentally and constitutionally, unequal to men's has produced a politics of interminable division, infused with misplaced and dreadful moralism. Republicans can't win women; when they win, they win without them, by winning with men. Democrats need to win both the black vote and the female vote. Trump and Clinton aren't likely to break that pattern. Trump, with his tent-revival meetings, is crusading not only against Clinton and against Obama but against immigrants, against Muslims, and, in the end, against every group of voters that has fled the Republican Party, as he rides with his Four Horsemen: Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear.

"This is a movement of the American people," Trump wrote in an e-mail to supporters. "And the American people NEVER lose." It took a very long time, and required the work of the Republican Party, to change the meaning of "the American people" to include everyone. It hasn't taken very long at all for Trump to change it back. The next move is Clinton's, and her party's. ♦

SHOUTS & MURMURS

MR. EVERYTHING

BY PAUL RUDNICK

I AM SICK AND tired of the lamestream media acting as if Mr. Donald J. Trump is anything but catnip to the ladies. My name is Jemmalynn Claster-Strakfort, of Boise, and I couldn't love Donald any more if he were my own adored first husband, Marcus, who passed away all those years ago from a mysterious gunshot wound in our bedroom on the eve of our first anniversary. Sadly, I was in my walk-in closet selecting a negligee and emerged too late to identify any possible suspects.

I've worshipped Donald ever since I saw him on the cover of a magazine with his first wife, Ivana, who clearly didn't deserve him. (I've heard that their divorce was granted on the ground that Donald was "too much man.")

Of course, I've watched every episode of "The Apprentice" more times than I can count, although, to be honest, I've never turned on the sound. I prefer to focus on Donald's expressive gestures and facial scrunching, which remind me of my great-aunt Marion swatting at a bee. I can always tell when Donald's about to fire someone, because his azure eyes get even tinier and his jowls start to flap like pillowcases in a hurricane, and I get a sensual tingling that's usually reserved for Karl Rove, Mr. Magoo, and my second husband, Gary, who perished of an unknown virus, shortly after relishing a Cobb salad I'd prepared for him.

That nasty, jealous Ted Cruz tried to smear Donald for his current marriage to the gorgeous Melania, but here's what I say: Melania is a proud example of Donald's forthright approach to immigration. Because, while this great country doesn't need any more lazy freeloaders who want to grab our jobs and sip our cleaning products, we will more than welcome attractive young women willing to marry our lonely, aging billionaires and then develop a method for leaving their physical bodies during lovemaking. From what I've heard, Melania adores keeping Donald happy in their glittering penthouse, where she and her young son, Barron, often re-watch their favorite movie, "Room."

When I see Donald and Melania together, I'm reminded of myself and my beloved third husband, Gerald, whom I tragically backed over with our Jeep Cherokee while he was lying unconscious in the driveway. Even now, I ask myself, "What sort of sociopath would have bound Gerald's wrists and ankles with duct tape and then bludgeoned him with my three-way lighted makeup mirror on the very afternoon I was driving off to buy more duct tape?"

The only thing that got me through the next three grief-stricken hours was gazing at my reproduction of an oil painting of Donald wearing a natty white tennis sweater. I was especially captivated by his hands. And, yes, I've heard all the coarse insults regarding Donald's short fingers, which shows just how little people understand about women. My most erotic fantasies always involve what I like to call Donald's "skin mittens." I shut my eyes and feel Donald caressing me with those plump, pink love paddles. I've read that he's actually had the remnants of his love nubbins sanded down to increase his appeal to female voters, and to court the powerful spatula lobby. Mission accomplished, sir!

Yes, I, like all sane women, dream of a life with Donald, and this happens most often when I'm gazing across the breakfast table at my fourth husband, Dane. While Dane is tall and handsome and twenty-three years old, he's not Donald. All too often, while Dane is cleaning our pool, bare-chested, I picture Donald staying up all night tweeting insults, like a real man. While I adore Dane, I've dared to dream that if he were to suffer some dreadful workplace accident, perhaps while removing leaves from the Jacuzzi filter, I would achieve closure through a relationship with Donald, after Melania realizes that the White House fence is not, in fact, electrified.

I see myself as Donald's second First Lady, taking his arm and stroking whatever manages to seductively emerge from his sleeve. I hear him whisper to me, as he stands before the Senate during his impeachment hearing, "Baby, you could lose a few." And I can picture myself, in slimming black, following Donald's casket after he's met his fate at the hands of an angry mob of his earliest supporters. Yes, I'll be alone, but until the end of my days I'll possess the proudest title any woman can aspire to, from a professional Eastern European catalogue model to any number of other well-compensated blondes: Mrs. Donald J. Trump. ♦

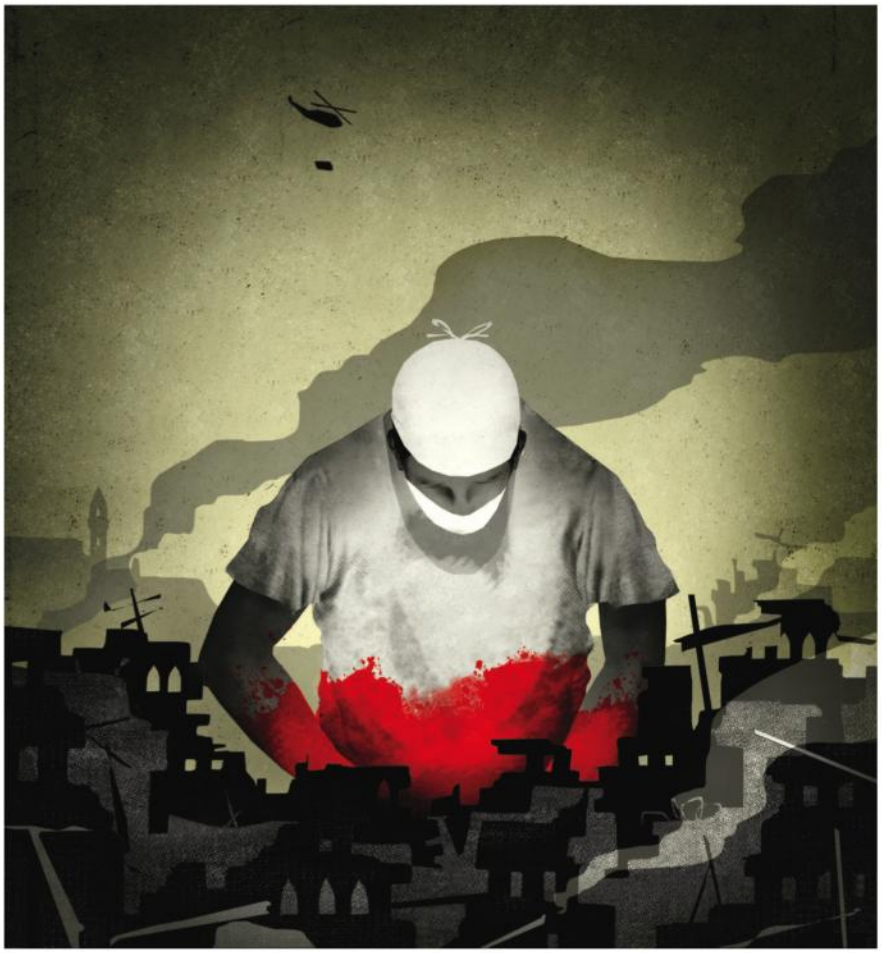
JEAN JULLIEN

ANNALS OF WAR

THE SHADOW DOCTORS

The underground race to spread medical knowledge as the Syrian regime erases it.

BY BEN TAUB



Assad's government has killed almost seven hundred medical personnel.

On a recent Tuesday evening in London, the surgeon David Nott attended a dinner at Bluebird, an upscale Chelsea restaurant. The room was packed with doctors, renowned specialists who had come for the annual consultants' dinner of the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, one of Britain's leading medical establishments. As waiters set down plates of lamb and risotto, Nott checked his phone and found a series of text messages. "Hi David," it began. "This is an urgent consultation from inside Syria." Attached was a photograph of a man who had been shot in the throat and the stomach.

The image had been sent by a young medical worker in Aleppo. He had removed several bullets from the patient's small intestine, but he wasn't sure what to do about the wound in the throat. For the past hour, the man had been slowly dying on the operating table while the medical worker awaited instructions.

"Sorry, didn't see your message till now," Nott typed under the table. "Is the neurology ok?" It was: a bullet had pierced the trachea and the esophagus, but it hadn't damaged the spinal cord. Nott told the medical worker to insert a plastic tube into the bullet hole, to provide an even supply of air. Then, he instructed, sew up the digestive tract with a strong suture, and, "to buttress the repair," partly detach one of the neck muscles and use it to cover the wound.

Nott returned to his lamb, which had gone cold. There were around fifty specialists in the room—many more than there are in the opposition-controlled half of Aleppo, where, in 2013 and 2014, Nott had trained medical students, residents, and general surgeons to carry out trauma surgeries far beyond their qualifications. Several had since been killed, and Nott often checked in with the others, especially when he saw reports that Syrian or Russian aircraft had attacked hospitals around the city.

In the past five years, the Syrian government has assassinated, bombed, and tortured to death almost seven hundred medical personnel, according to Physicians for Human Rights, an organization that documents attacks on medical care in war zones. (Non-state actors, including ISIS, have killed twenty-seven.) Recent headlines announced the death of the last pediatrician in Aleppo, the last cardiologist in Hama. A United Nations commission concluded that "government forces deliberately target medical personnel to gain military advantage," denying treatment to wounded fighters and civilians "as a matter of policy."

Thousands of physicians once worked in Aleppo, formerly Syria's most populous city, but the assault has resulted in an exodus of ninety-five per cent of them to neighboring countries and to Europe. Across Syria, millions of civilians have no access to care for chronic illnesses, and the health ministry routinely prevents U.N. convoys from delivering medicines and surgical supplies to besieged areas. In meetings, the U.N. Security Council "strongly condemns" such violations of international humanitarian law. In practice, however, four of its five permanent members support coalitions that attack hospitals in Syria, Yemen, and Sudan. The conditions in Syria have led to a growing sense among medical workers in other conflict zones that they, too, may be targeted.

Despite the onslaught, doctors and international N.G.O.s have forged an elaborate network of underground

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

hospitals throughout Syria. They have installed cameras in intensive-care units, so that doctors abroad can monitor patients by Skype and direct technicians to administer proper treatment. In besieged areas, they have adapted hospitals to run on fuel from animal waste. Nott, for his part, trained almost every trauma surgeon on the opposition side of Aleppo, as part of a daring effort to spread medical knowledge as the government strives to eradicate it.

As a child, Nott constructed hundreds of model airplanes from kits and from scratch, and hung them from the ceiling of his bedroom, in Worcester. His dream was to fly commercial jets, and in secondary school he earned his pilot's license. But his father, an Indo-Burmese surgeon who had married a British nurse, wanted him to become a doctor. "He used to sit there in my room, forcing me to learn," Nott told me when I visited him at his private clinic in London, last month. Nott, who is fifty-nine, speaks softly, and has a calm, professorial demeanor. In 1978, he enrolled in the medical program at Manchester University, where he marvelled at human anatomy. "The most exciting machine is a human being," he said. "It's actually the same as an airplane or a helicopter. They both have an engine. They both require fuel."

Shortly before Christmas in 1993, Nott was working as a general surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital, in London, when he saw a television report from Sarajevo. For twenty months, the city had been under siege by the Bosnian Serb Army, and the program showed a field hospital in need of staff. The next day, Nott volunteered with Médecins Sans Frontières, and on Christmas Eve he left for a three-month stay in Sarajevo, where he worked at a facility that had been so severely damaged by shelling and sniper fire that people called it Swiss Cheese Hospital.

After that trip, Nott took long periods of unpaid leave from his jobs at various London hospitals to volunteer for humanitarian-aid agencies in other areas afflicted by war and natural disaster. He operated on thousands of patients in more than twenty countries—including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Haiti, and Nepal—often with rudimentary equipment and insufficient supplies of medication and donor blood. The conditions forced him to learn an array of surgical techniques that in London would all have been carried out by different specialists.

In 2008, on the day that Nott arrived at an M.S.F. hospital in Rutshuru, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he found a sixteen-year-old orphan whose arm had been improperly amputated. The stump was infected, and the muscles were gangrenous. Without a forequarter amputation—a complicated procedure in which the entire shoulder is removed, usually as a last resort to halt the spread of cancer—the boy would die. Nott had never done the operation, so he sent a text message to Meirion Thomas, who was Lead Surgeon at the Royal Marsden Hospital, in London. Minutes later, Thomas replied, "Start on clavicle. Remove middle third." He sent nine more steps, and signed off, "Easy!" The boy recovered.

At the time, military doctors in Iraq and Afghanistan were adopting a transformative approach to the worst battlefield-trauma cases. Typically, surgeons treated life-threatening abdominal bleeds from gunshots and bomb blasts by cutting open the abdomen, searching for the damaged organs and arteries, repairing them, and stitching up the incisions. The fixes could take hours, and patients often died on the operating table after their body temperature plummeted.

American and British military surgeons started practicing "damage-control surgery," an established concept that hadn't been applied in combat zones. Practitioners do the absolute minimum to stop the bleeding and prevent sepsis before sending patients to the intensive-care unit for warming, fluids, and resuscitation. The patient returns to the operating theatre only when his body is stable enough to handle hours under the knife.

"I wanted to be a part of this surgical revolution," Nott told me. "And the only way to do that is actually to be there, to get the case in front of you. You can't read it in a book." He volunteered as a surgeon with the Royal Air Force and was quickly deployed to Basra, in Iraq, and later to Camp Bastion, in Afghanistan. At Camp Bastion, in 2010, "we had a thousand and seventeen major trauma cases in six weeks," he recalled. "It was people with their arms and legs blown off. It was people shot in the head, people shot in the chest, people with fragmentation injuries everywhere." Two years later, Queen Elizabeth II awarded Nott the title of Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his medical work in war zones.

In the first weeks of March, 2011, the start of the insurrection in Syria, the security forces of President Bashar al-Assad detained and tortured children who had drawn anti-regime slogans on a wall in the southern city of Dara'a. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets, and on March 22nd Assad's forces stormed into the city hospital, kicked out the nonessential medical staff, and positioned snipers on the roof. Early the next morning, the snipers fired at protesters. A cardiologist named Ali al-Mahameed was shot in the head and the chest as he tried to reach the wounded. Thousands of people attended his funeral, later that day, and they, too, were attacked with live ammunition. For the next two years, the snipers remained stationed on the roof, "firing on sick and wounded persons attempting to approach the hospital entrance," according to the U.N. commission.

As protests erupted all over the country, government-run hospitals basically functioned as an extension of the security apparatus, targeting demonstrators who dared to seek treatment. "Some doctors manage to treat simple cases and manage to let them flee without being seen or registered," one doctor said, in testimony collected by Médecins Sans Frontières. "But if an admission is required for the patient, then the administration of the hospital is notified, and therefore it reaches security." Pro-regime medical staff routinely performed amputations for minor injuries, as a form of punishment. Many wounded protesters were taken from the wards by security and intelligence agents, sometimes while under anesthesia. Others didn't make it as far as the hospital; security agents

commandeered ambulances and took the patients straight to intelligence branches, where they were interrogated and often tortured and killed. M.S.F. concluded that, for Syrians who opposed the President, the health-care system was "a weapon of persecution."

In response, some doctors established secret medical units to treat people injured in the crackdown. One surgeon at Aleppo University Hospital adopted the code name Dr. White. Along with three colleagues, he identified and stocked safe houses where emergency operations could be performed. Dr. White also lectured at the university's faculty of medicine; he suspected that seven of his most promising students shared his sympathies toward the nascent uprising. Another doctor, named Noor, recruited them to join the mission. In Arabic, *noor* means "light," so the group called itself Light of Life.

At night, Noor and Dr. White gave the medical students lessons via Skype, concealing their faces and voices. The goal was to teach them the principles of emergency first aid, with an emphasis on halting the bleeding from gunshot wounds. During demonstrations, the students waited in cars and vans to shuttle injured protesters to the safe houses, then disappeared. "They had to leave the house before my arrival," Dr. White told me during a recent Skype call from Aleppo. "They could not know who this man is."

Similar covert medical networks sprouted up all over Syria. But the safe houses were equipped with little more than gauze, cotton, and serum. One doctor told M.S.F., "When we receive serious casualties—a patient who needs to be hospitalized—we have two options: either we let him die or we send him to hospital not knowing what will become of him."

In the first year of the uprising, Physicians for Human Rights documented fifty-six cases of medical workers being targeted by government snipers; tortured to death in detention facilities; shot and set on fire while driving ambulances; and murdered by security agents at checkpoints, in their clinics, or at home. Several were killed while treating patients. In July, 2012, the regime enacted a new terrorism law, making it an offense to fail to report anti-government activity; according to the U.N. commission, this "effectively criminalized medical aid to the opposition."

That summer, Noor, the founder of Light of Life, was kidnapped at his clinic by security agents and later killed. Three of Dr. White's students were also abducted; their charred corpses were found the following week. "From that day, I changed my name another time," he told me. "I became Abdul Aziz"—the name he uses today.

"Your room is exactly how you left it before you went to college, except, of course, for our boarder, Mr. Grunze."

In June, 2012, M.S.F. surreptitiously opened its first Syrian field hospital, in Atmeh, a rebel-held village near the Turkish border. For a year, the organization had been asking the Assad regime for permission to operate in the country, to no avail. The hospital, codenamed Alpha, was set up in six days, in a walled villa that had been donated by a local doctor. In September, 2012, David Nott travelled to Alpha with other M.S.F. staff from around the world. To make space for patients, the doctors slept on the roof, where they often heard explosions and watched jets streaking through the sky. After each attack, taxis and pickup trucks collected casualties and sped toward the villa.

Natalie Roberts, an M.S.F. doctor from Wales, directed the emergency room. "Often, a lot of patients would arrive at once," she told me. She stood at the gate, directing the less urgent cases toward beds on the shaded patio and the worst cases inside. As she began emergency treatment, Syrian staff members managed the crowd forming at the gate, turning away friends and family members who wanted to enter. The scene was always tense and emotional, Roberts said. "Sometimes they'd arrive with dead bodies, and we'd just have to say that there's nothing we can do."

The dining room served as a holding area for the most serious cases, which Roberts rated Red or Yellow on triage forms. Red patients needed to go into the operating theatre—at Alpha, this was the kitchen—within the hour; Yellow patients could survive for as long as four hours without surgery; the walking wounded were marked Green. Compared with other facilities in Syria, the M.S.F. hospital was well stocked, with surgical supplies filling the kitchen cabinets. Even so, Nott told me, "when someone comes in Red, the surgeon must ask, 'Do I have enough resources to operate on him?' If I don't, the patient is going to go into the Black Zone," which means he's going to die, and there's no point wasting supplies to try to save him.

Every trauma center requires a large supply of fresh blood. A person has about eleven pints, and, "if you've lost

FULL ACCESS TO THE WORLD'S BEST MAGAZINES.

texture

FREE TRIAL AT TEXTURE.COM

six pints, then your heart doesn't get enough oxygen, and your brain doesn't get enough oxygen," Nott explained. "That's why you collapse and go into a coma." In Atmeh, when the facility ran out of blood, a nearby mosque broadcast a call for donors, and locals lined up outside. Elsewhere in Syria, doctors donated their own blood, while the recipient lay on the operating table.

One day, a half-dozen people were delivered to Alpha hospital in a truck, some dead, some badly wounded. Roberts was perplexed; usually, large groups arrived only after jets had bombed houses, and she hadn't heard any planes that day. According to Nott, one of the wounded men was a rebel who, while fashioning makeshift grenades at home, had accidentally blown up his wife and child. In the operating room, the doctors cut away his pants, and Nott took a photograph of the scene, which he showed me last month, in London. "If you look here," he said, pointing to the man's sagging pants pocket, "there's the other bomb." The doctors found it when it dropped to the floor with a terrifying clink.

Inside the operating theatre, Nott often wore a GoPro camera, which he used to make surgical-training videos; for the past decade, he had been training doctors who work in conflict zones, and after six weeks in Syria he returned to London with thousands of images of grisly wounds from Alpha. Many of the victims were old men, women, and children, including a young boy who had picked up a cluster bomb that blew off his hands, and a nine-year-old girl hit by shell fragments, whose intestines dangled from her body.

As rebels captured territory, Roberts followed the front line deeper into Syria, visiting secret medical facilities and assessing their needs. Opposition fighters controlled significant portions of northern Syria, including the eastern half of Aleppo and several villages connecting it to the Turkish border. Roberts helped set up hospitals inside a cave in Idlib and a basement in Al Bab, as well as a blood bank and a vaccination program in Aleppo. However, she told me, "we couldn't find qualified doctors," especially in rural areas.

By late 2012, a number of Syrian expatriates had established medical charities. Although they sent aid and ambulances from Turkey into Syria, they rarely coördinated their efforts. "It was really chaotic," Roberts said. "You would turn up at a pharmacy with a kit of antibiotics to donate and find that they already had massive quantities of the same drug. And then you would go to another hospital and realize that they had practically no help at all, because the hospital manager didn't have experience working with international organizations." At that point, she said, the facilities that received support were "the ones that were shouting the loudest."

To handle the logistics, Aziz, of Light of Life, formed a group called the Aleppo City Medical Council. There were eight main medical facilities, and, with only twenty physicians and a handful of surgical specialists in the opposition-held half of the city, the staff used walkie-talkies to coördinate the distribution of patients. To evade detection, the doctors established sequential code names for each hospital, M1 through M8. Most of the staff had little, if any, formal training.

Eventually, the doctors built other medical centers and gave them random names, like M20 and M30, to obscure the actual number of targets. According to Aziz, the best location for a medical facility is on a narrow street, flanked by tall buildings, so that, after an air strike, helicopters and jets have difficulty tracking the movement of wounded civilians. Ambulance workers were routinely targeted by snipers and helicopters, so many of them removed sirens and medical logos, and coated their vans with mud. At night, they drove with the headlights off.

By the end of 2012, Syrian government forces had attacked medical outposts at least eighty-nine times, in eight provinces. Near Damascus, they raided and burned to the ground a clinic and three hospitals, killing all the patients and staff in one of them. In Homs, they shelled a field hospital twenty times in two days. In Aleppo, military aircraft fired rockets at a children's hospital, causing it to shut down. Ground forces spent four days shelling a mental hospital. M1 was bombed twice, M2 once, and M4, which was attacked at least four times, finally collapsed in a pile of concrete and twisted metal, crushing to death several patients and staff.

In early 2013, Nott gave a presentation at the Royal Society of Medicine about M.S.F.'s work in Syria. After the lecture, he sat with Mounir Hakimi, a doctor who is the vice-chairman of a charity called Syria Relief, based in Manchester. Nott and Hakimi had met once before, at Alpha hospital, in Atmeh: when the Syrian doctor who had donated the villa was wounded by shrapnel, Nott treated him in his own former kitchen, and Hakimi came to pick him up. But, because Hakimi wasn't a patient, Nott wouldn't let him inside the operating theatre, and they got into a shouting match. Now, at the lecture, Nott said, "I realized he was quite a nice chap." Hakimi, who had befriended Aziz, suggested that Nott travel to Aleppo with Syria Relief.

That August, in London, Nott led a five-day surgical-training course for around thirty-five doctors who work in "austere environments" all over the world. Hakimi attended, along with Ammar Darwish, another Syrian doctor living in the U.K. The next month, Nott, Hakimi, and Darwish set off for Aleppo.

Outside the entrance to M1, there was a large decontamination tent fitted with showers to rinse off victims of chemical attacks. A few weeks earlier, Syrian government forces had fired sarin-gas rockets into densely populated neighborhoods of Damascus, killing some fourteen hundred people; Western governments spoke of retaliation, but they quickly retreated, and since then the regime has habitually used chlorine as a weapon. On roads leading to the hospital, signs on lampposts listed chemical-attack survival tips. Aziz drove Nott to Aleppo, and introduced him to the medical

SOCIETY OF FIREFLIES

When it was warm enough, you came with your nighttime
show, costing us nothing. We caught you in Mason
jars, hoping to create a new kind of bedside
lamp. Leave days rationed out by the computer,
hoarded for a vain flicker of freedom. Weekends,
I zone out on "Homeland." Sordid. I do enough
careful work to satisfy my bosses. I save
for retirement—to my bohemian eyes,
a fortune—though they say you need more
than a million. Immerse yourself in the exponential
power of dividends. And what about decorating
your rental apartment? At least put up some
curtains after fourteen years. I don't mind
the metro, eavesdropping on other people's
lives. I don't die down there every day
a little. And you rise up once more
unsolicited from the fields, with your equal
measure of appearing and disappearing.

—*Maya Ribault*

staff at M1, where he lived for the next five weeks.

The emergency department at M1 was run by medical students. "Before David arrived, no one knew how to cut open a chest," Abu Waseem, a young medical worker specializing in plastic and reconstructive surgery, told me. On Nott's second day in Aleppo, a sixteen-year-old boy was carried into the operating room without a heartbeat. While one Syrian physician conducted chest compressions, another sliced open the abdomen, to check for internal bleeding. The guts were intact. Nott checked on the operation and realized that the boy's heart had been pierced by shrapnel. Abu Waseem and the others crowded around the operating table to watch Nott work.

Nott grabbed a scalpel and cut between two ribs. Then he inserted a Finochietto retractor—a stainless-steel crank that, in the age of laparoscopic surgery, looks practically medieval—and spread apart the ribs to gain access to the heart, which had a hole in the right ventricle. He told one of the Syrians to reach into the cavity and pump it with his hands. Soon, the heart started functioning, spurting blood into the air with each contraction. Nott stitched up the heart as it was beating, and the boy survived.

"There were a lot of things that we didn't know how to deal with," Aziz told me. "If I had a patient with thoracic trauma, I didn't know how to fix him, because I wasn't a thoracic surgeon. If I had a patient with vascular injuries, I used to send him to another hospital, where there was a vascular surgeon." He added, "Most of the cardiac injuries died."

In the evenings, as the sun set and the shooting let up, Nott taught his course on surgery in austere environments. (Darwish translated the lectures into Arabic.) He showed hundreds of surgical photographs and videos that he had taken in distant war and disaster zones, including examples of his own deadly mistakes. He also distributed digital copies of several hundred medical textbooks. In London, he had chopped off the bindings with an industrial paper cutter and run each page through a scanner.

Nott taught the physicians to move flaps of muscle and skin to cover exposed bone and open wounds. One day, he saw a man whose hand had been completely flayed. In lieu of amputation, he sewed the hand to a flap in the man's groin, which slowly sealed itself around the bones of the hand. After three weeks, Abu Waseem cut away the connective tissue, donating a large chunk of flesh to a hand that would otherwise have rotted. In vascular surgery, the circulatory system can be treated as a series of interchangeable tubes; when vital blood vessels were irreparably damaged, Nott sliced superficial veins out of healthy limbs and swapped them in for arteries. He did the same with injured nerves.

Nott also taught the physicians the principles of damage-control surgery, which he had learned at the bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because damage-control surgery calls for only minimal surgical fixes on the first pass, the practice allowed the Syrian doctors to tend to more patients after large-scale attacks. "It made a revolution in our work," Aziz told me. "Real changes. So many patients survived because of these techniques."

Some surgeons at M2 and M10 travelled to M1 for Nott's evening lectures. At the end of each class, the Syrians discussed the cases that had come in that day—"who lived, who died, and why they lived, and why they died," Nott said. "And then, because we'd get air-to-ground missiles after dark, we'd still have patients coming in. I'd carry on operating until midnight. And it would go on like that every single day."

M1 is in the neighborhood of Bustan al-Qasr, a few hundred yards from the only crossing point between the rebel and the regime sides of the city. (The route has since been closed.) Each day, thousands of locals crossed from one side to the other to buy food, visit relatives, and take school exams. Corrupt fighters on the rebel side extorted those desperate to cross; snipers on the regime side used the alley for target practice. Bystanders who dared to retrieve the victims were often shot, too.

"Every day, we'd receive about twelve to fifteen sniper wounds," Nott told me. Many of the victims were children, and the patients coming in from the crossing point arrived with eerily consistent injuries. "It was very strange," Nott said. "You'd know that, at the start of the day, if you got a patient shot in the right arm, you'd have six or seven more shot in the right arm. And if somebody got shot in the abdomen you'd have six or seven shot in the

abdomen." Nott suspected that snipers were targeting specific areas of the body, as part of a sadistic game. He consulted with Aziz, who claimed that the gunmen were making bets over whom they could hit, and where. Aziz told me, "We used to sometimes listen to the walkie-talkies of the regime. And they used to listen to us." One day, he said, "we heard a man say, 'I bet for a box of cigarettes . . .'"

Even pregnant women were targeted, the doctors suspected. "This is a pregnant lady who's just about to deliver," Nott explained, in London, as he clicked through a series of ghastly photographs on his laptop. "She was forty weeks pregnant and was about to have a breech delivery, and was shot in the uterus." A Syrian physician filmed Nott performing an emergency Cesarean section. Only the mother lived; an X-ray of the fetus showed a bullet lodged in its skull.

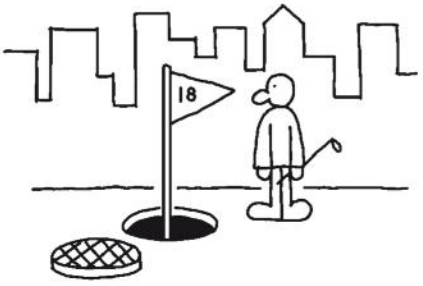
Nott was under constant threat of abduction. ISIS had already kidnapped sixteen foreign journalists and aid workers, and the Syrian government had captured another British doctor in Aleppo, an orthopedic surgeon named Abbas Khan, who later died in a prison cell in Damascus. Humanitarian doctors treat patients regardless of their loyalties, and, one day, as Nott was sewing up the artery that connected a man's heart and lungs, "the doors of the operating theatre just flew open, and we had about seven ISIS fighters come in," he said. They stood at the door, Kalashnikovs drawn. The leader, a Chechen, approached the table. The patient was one of his troops. Abu Abdullah, a young Syrian surgeon, stepped forward and told the man, in English, that if he disturbed the senior surgeon "your friend will die." Nott shook with fear. "I was trying to concentrate on my hands so much that I could hardly stand," he said. A commotion outside drew the guards away, but the leader stayed until the operation was complete. A month after Nott left M1, the same group of fighters returned and kidnapped a patient who had been wounded in both legs. They dragged him down the stairs, deposited him in the middle of the street, and executed him.

In January, 2014, ISIS kidnapped thirteen doctors from an M.S.F. field hospital in northern Syria. Eight were Syrian, and they were soon released, but the five foreigners remained hostages until the end of May. M.S.F. shut down its operations in ISIS-held areas and withdrew its foreign staff from the country.

Nott returned to M1 in September, 2014. Every hospital in the opposition-held eastern half of the city had been attacked. At M10, pieces of ceiling, glass, and concrete covered broken beds in a former ward, while a leftover bag of serum dangled near an electrical outlet. Medical staff at both facilities crammed equipment and patients into the basements and stacked sandbags around the entrances. The upper floors were deserted, serving only as shields against bombardment.

For almost a year, Syrian government helicopters had been lobbing barrels filled with shrapnel and TNT onto markets, apartment blocks, schools, and hospitals. Welded tail fins guide the barrels to land on top of an impact fuse. The methods of targeting are so rudimentary and indiscriminate that, in Aleppo, many residents have moved closer to the front lines, risking sniper fire and shelling, because the helicopters don't drop barrels near government troops.

When a large bomb explodes, it destroys bodies in consecutive waves.



The first is the blast wave, which spreads air particles at supersonic speeds. This can inflict internal damage on the organs, because, Nott said, "the air-tissue interface will bleed. So your lungs start to bleed inside. You can't breathe. You can't hear anything, because your eardrums are all blown out." A fraction of a second later comes the blast wind, a negative pressure that catapults people into the air and slams them into whatever walls or objects are around. "The blast wind is so strong that in the wrong place it will actually blow off your leg," Nott said. He showed me a photograph of a man on the operating table, whose left leg was charred mush and mostly missing below the knee. "It'll strip everything off your leg. And that's why people have such terrible injuries. It's the blast wind that does that, followed by fragmentation injuries," from bits of metal shrapnel that rip through flesh and bone, and the flame front, which burns people to death.

In the aftermath of a barrel-bomb attack, Nott said, "as you walked down the stairs to the emergency department, you just heard screams." Barrel bombs blow up entire buildings, filling the air with concrete dust; many people who survive the initial explosion die of suffocation minutes later. Every day, patients arrived at the hospital so mangled and coated in debris that "you wouldn't know whether you were looking at the front or the back, whether they were alive or dead," he said. "Every time you touched somebody, the dust would go into your face and down into your lungs, and you'd be coughing and spluttering away as you were trying to assess whether this patient was alive."

The tiled floor of the underground emergency department at M1 was slick with blood and other fluids. Screaming men carried in headless children, as if they could somehow be saved. Hospital staffers wrapped corpses in white shrouds and stacked detached legs that still wore socks and shoes.

When barrel bombs fall on homes, they often send entire families to the ward. One day, five siblings arrived. Unable to treat any of them, Nott started filming the scene, so that he would have proof, he said, of "how terrible it was." A baby with no feet let out a stifled cry, then died. An older brother lay silently nearby, his guts coming out. In the next room, a toddler with blood on his face shouted the name of his dying brother. Two medical workers carried in the fourth brother, who was about three years old. His pelvis was missing, and his face and chest were gray with concrete dust. He opened his eyes and looked around the room, blinking, without

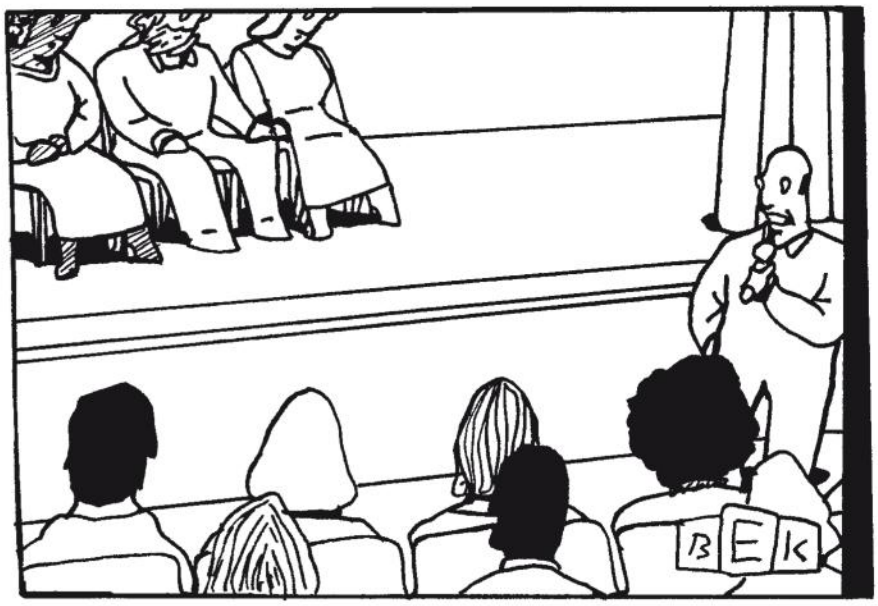
making a noise. There were wet, white blobs on his face, and Nott gently wiped them away. When the sister was brought into the room, he learned that a concrete block had fallen on her head, and the blobs were pieces of her brain.

The boy was dying. There was no treatment; he had lost too much blood, and his lungs had filled with concrete particles. Nott held his hand for four agonizing minutes. "All you can do is just comfort them," he told me. I asked him what that entailed, since M1 had exhausted its supply of morphine. He began to cry, and said, "All you can hope is that they die quickly."

A few weeks after Nott left Aleppo, he was invited to lunch at Buckingham Palace. Wild duck and vintage port were served. Janet Oldroyd Hulme, one of Britain's most prolific growers of rhubarb, sat on his left, and the Queen sat on his right. When the Queen turned to him, he explained that he had just returned from Syria. "How was it?" she asked. "I tried to play it light, and I said it was absolutely dreadful," he told me. The Queen pressed for details, but he couldn't bring himself to tell her, and his bottom lip began quivering. At that point, "she summoned the corgis," he said. For the next twenty minutes, Nott and the Queen petted the dogs and fed them biscuits under the table. As the lunch came to a close, he says, she remarked, "That's much better than talking, isn't it?"

Since Nott's last trip to Aleppo, Syrian government forces have dropped barrel bombs on all three trauma hospitals in the city. In separate missile strikes, they killed several of Nott's friends, including an anesthetic technician and a paramedic. Physicians for Human Rights has catalogued and corroborated three hundred and sixty-five attacks against Syrian medical facilities, more than ninety per cent of which were perpetrated by Syrian and Russian government forces. Many of them are "double-tap" strikes: around twenty minutes after the first bomb falls, a helicopter or a jet returns to the scene and blows up the rescuers.

In the first week of June, Syrian and Russian aircraft carried out more than six hundred air strikes on the opposition side of Aleppo, and Assad vowed to take back "every inch" of Syria. The next day, pro-Assad warplanes bombed three medical facilities, including a health center for newborn babies, in the span of three hours. M2, M3, M4, M6, M7, and M9 have been destroyed.



"This is for anyone on the panel—how can I be up there instead of down here?"

• •

Aziz told me that, in the opposition-held half of Aleppo, there are now five general surgeons, two or three orthopedic surgeons, one obstetrician, and one anesthesiologist. "I'm a general surgeon working as a thoracic surgeon, working as a cardiac surgeon, working as a vascular surgeon, sometimes doing ultrasounds, sometimes doing X-rays," he said. "And it's the same for the rest of the guys. He is a nurse? He became an intensive-care technician. He is a worker in the hospital? He became an operating-room technician, because he learned how to deal with sterilization, how to deal with surgical equipment."

"If you go to Aleppo and ask the doctors in any hospital, they will tell you that since David Nott came to Aleppo, there was a huge leap forward in the performance of medical practice," Ammar Darwish told me. "He's still saving lives down there, because he taught these doctors how to do a good job."

Nott continues to advise the medical staff at M1 from afar. Earlier this year, he and his wife, Elly, a former Middle East researcher at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, started a foundation to run surgical-training courses for doctors who live in war zones. In April, he and Darwish travelled to southern Turkey for the first session, held at a university in Gaziantep. Thirty-two Syrians attended, coming from Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, and Latakia provinces.

One of Nott's best students is Abu Waseem. When the war began, he was a fourth-year plastic- and reconstructive-surgery resident at a government hospital. "He sacrificed his future" to continue treating patients in Syria, Aziz told me. "He has no way to graduate, no way to do his fifth or sixth year and become a specialist." While other physicians in Aleppo take frequent breaks and visit family members who have escaped to Turkey, Abu Waseem remains at M1, because he doesn't have a passport.

Nott often asks Abu Waseem how he's coping. Not long ago, he replied, "Thank you, my friend, I am fine. But I am so sad." He sent two photographs of a young child with horrific injuries. "Look at this girl. This is one of the victims of a Russian bombing today. She lost her whole arm and her face."

"Terrible," Nott wrote back. "Is she going to survive?"

"Unfortunately, yes." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

MAKING A KILLING

The business and politics of selling guns.

BY EVAN OSNOS

Bars in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia let out at 2 a.m. On the morning of January 17, 2010, two groups emerged, looking for taxis. At the corner of Market and Third Street, they started yelling at each other. On one side was Edward DiDonato, who had recently begun work at an insurance company, having graduated from Villanova University, where he was a captain of the lacrosse team. On the other was Gerald Ung, a third-year law student at Temple, who wrote poetry in his spare time and had worked as a technology consultant for Freddie Mac. Both men had grown up in prosperous suburbs: DiDonato in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia; Ung in Reston, Virginia, near Washington, D.C.

Everyone had been drinking, and neither side could subsequently remember how the disagreement started; one of DiDonato's friends may have kicked in the direction of one of Ung's friends, and Ung may have mocked someone's hair. "To this day, I have no idea why this happened," Joy Keh, a photographer who was one of Ung's friends at the scene, said later.

The argument moved down the block, and one of DiDonato's friends, a bartender named Thomas V. Kelly IV, lunged at the other group. He was pushed away before he could throw a punch. He rushed at the group again; this time, Ung pulled from his pocket a .380-calibre semiautomatic pistol, the Kel-Tec P-3AT. Only five inches long and weighing barely half a pound, it was a "carry gun," a small, lethal pistol designed for "concealed carry," the growing practice of toting a hidden gun in daily life. Two decades ago, leaving the house with a concealed weapon was strictly controlled or illegal in twenty-two states, and fewer than five million Americans had a permit to do so. Since then, it has become legal in every state, and the number of concealed-carry permit holders has climbed to an estimated 12.8 million.

Ung had obtained a concealed-carry license because he was afraid of street crime. He bought a classic .45-calibre pistol but later switched to the Kel-Tec, which was easier to carry; for a year and a half, he stowed one of the pistols in his pocket or in his backpack. He had never fired it. Now, on the sidewalk, he held the Kel-Tec with outstretched arms. A pedestrian heard him yell, "You'd better not piss me off!" Ung maintains that he said, "Back the fuck up." DiDonato thought the pistol looked too small to be real; he guessed that it was a BB gun. He spread his arms, stepped forward, and said, "Who are you going to shoot, man?" Ung pulled the trigger. Afterward, he couldn't recall how many times—he said it felt like a movie, and he was "seeing sparks and hearing pops."

Ung hit DiDonato six times: in the liver, the lung, the shoulder, the hand, the intestine, and the spine. When DiDonato collapsed, Ung called 911 and said that he had shot a man. On the call, he was recorded pleading, "Why did you make me do it?" DiDonato, in a weak voice, can be heard saying, "Please don't let me die." When police arrived, Ung's first words were "I have a permit."

More American civilians have died by gunfire in the past decade than all the Americans who were killed in combat in the Second World War. When an off-duty security guard named Omar Mateen, armed with a Sig Sauer semiautomatic rifle and a Glock 17 pistol, killed forty-nine people at a gay club in Orlando, on June 12th, it was historic in some respects and commonplace in others—the largest mass shooting in American history and, by one count, the hundred-and-thirtieth mass shooting so far this year. High-profile massacres can summon our attention, and galvanize demands for change, but in 2015 fatalities from mass shootings amounted to just two per cent of all gun deaths. Most of the time, when Americans shoot one another, it is impulsive, up close, and apolitical.

None of that has hurt the gun business. In recent years, in response to three kinds of events—mass shootings, terrorist attacks, and talk of additional gun control—gun sales have broken records. "You know that every time a bomb goes off somewhere, every time there's a shooting somewhere, sales spike like crazy," Paul Jannuzzo, a former chief of American operations for Glock, the Austrian gun company, told me.

Sometimes the three sources of growth converge. On November 13th of last year, terrorists in Paris killed a hundred and thirty people and wounded hundreds more. On December 2nd, a husband and wife, inspired by ISIS, killed fourteen people in San Bernardino, California. This year, on January 5th, President Obama announced executive actions intended to expand the use of background checks. By the end of that day, the share price of Smith & Wesson, the largest U.S. gunmaker, had risen to $25.86, its highest level ever. After the attack in Orlando, shares of Smith & Wesson rose 9.8 per cent before the market opened the next day. Last week, the company reported that, in its latest fiscal year, revenue grew thirty-one per cent, to a record $733 million. In a call with investors and analysts, Smith & Wesson's C.E.O., James Debney, said that he was "very pleased with the results that we got." He attributed the growth in firearm sales to "increased orders for our handgun designed for personal protection."

The story of how millions of Americans discovered the urge to carry weapons—to join, in effect, a self-appointed,

Last year, mass shootings accounted for just two per cent of American gun deaths. Most gun violence is impulsive and up close.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN WINTERS

• •

well-armed, lightly trained militia—begins not in the Old West but in the nineteen-seventies. For most of American history, gun owners generally frowned on the idea. In 1934, the president of the National Rifle Association, Karl Frederick, testified to Congress, "I do not believe in the promiscuous toting of guns. I think it should be sharply restricted and only under licenses." In 1967, after a public protest by armed Black Panthers in Sacramento, Governor Ronald Reagan told reporters that he saw "no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons."

But the politics of guns and fear were changing. In 1972, Jeff Cooper, a firearms instructor and former marine, published "Principles of Personal Defense," which became a classic among gun-rights activists and captured a generation's anxieties. "Before World War II, one could stroll in the parks and streets of the city after dark with hardly any risk," he wrote. But in "today's world of permissive atrocity" it was time to reëxamine one's interactions with fellow-citizens. He ticked off the names of high-profile killers, including Charles Manson, and wrote of their victims, "Their appalling ineptitude and timidity virtually assisted in their own murders." Adapting a concept from the Marines, he urged civilian gun owners to assume a state of alertness that he called Condition Yellow. He wrote, "The one who fights back retains his dignity and his self-respect."

Soon armed citizens acquired a political voice: in 1977, at the N.R.A.'s annual meeting, conservative activists led by Harlon Carter, a former chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, wrested control from leaders who had been focussed on rifle-training and recreation rather than on politics, and created the modern gun-rights movement. In 1987, the refashioned N.R.A. successfully lobbied lawmakers in Florida to relax the rules that required concealed-carry applicants to demonstrate "good cause" for a permit, such as a job transporting large quantities of cash.

Under the new "right to carry" laws, which two dozen other states later adopted, officials had no choice but to issue a permit to anyone who was "mentally fit" and had not been convicted of a violent felony. Then the N.R.A. set about extending the right to carry into places that had remained off limits, including bars, colleges, and churches. Beginning this fall, Texas will be the eighth state to allow students and staff at public universities to carry on campus. (A smaller movement advocates "open carry"—bearing unconcealed weapons in public—but many gun owners consider that option counterproductive, because it repels moderate allies.)

For gun manufacturers, the concealed-carry movement was a lucrative turn. In 1996, the N.R.A.'s chief lobbyist, Tanya Metaksa, said, "The gun industry should send me a basket of fruit." Small-calibre guns, like Gerald Ung's .380-calibre, had been regarded as a joke. "They were called 'mouse calibres,'" Jannuzzo said. "People were very disparaging." But, as states loosened their laws, gunmakers marketed those weapons as "true pocket guns," with "maximum concealability." Ammunition companies reëngineered small rounds to increase their velocity and lethality. In 2014, manufacturers produced nearly nine hundred thousand .380-calibre guns, more than in any previous year, and a twenty-fold increase since 2001. In 1999, twenty-six per cent of gun owners cited personal protection as their top reason for buying a gun; by 2013, self-defense was cited more than any other reason. "I see grown men grab a .380-calibre gun out of the truck and put it in their pockets," Jannuzzo said. "It's a whole new world out there."

The Orlando massacre renewed calls to restore a federal assault-weapons ban, which expired in 2004, given that military-style rifles were used by killers in Orlando, San Bernardino, at the Sandy Hook Elementary school, and in Aurora, Colorado, among other places. But in 2014 rifles accounted for just three per cent of the more than eight thousand gun homicides recorded by the F.B.I. A ban would have a limited effect on gun-industry profits. The right-to-carry movement, by unbridling the presence of firearms in American life and erecting a political blockade against efforts to qualify it, has transformed the culture and business of guns.

The greatest legal and political questions around guns today are not what types of weapons people will be allowed to use in the future but who can use them and why. On June 9th, a federal appeals court in California sided with gun-control advocates, ruling that local governments can set conditions on the right to carry concealed weapons. "This is the beginning of a battle, not the end," Adam Winkler, a specialist in gun law at the University of California, Los Angeles, said. The Supreme Court has ruled that Americans have a right to "self-defense within the home," but it

has said nothing regarding what Americans can carry in public "It's the next great frontier for the Second Amendment," Winkler said.

Those who have taken to carrying concealed weapons often describe the experience as a change that reaches beyond physical self-defense. Laurie Lee Dovey, a gun-industry writer, reminded me of the moment, in 2008, when Barack Obama was recorded saying that small-town voters "cling to guns or religion." Eight years later, she said, those voters have upended American politics with a populist surge in both political parties, and Obama's words no longer feel like an insult. "*Of course* I cling to my guns and my religion!" Dovey said. "What's wrong with that? It's the greatest phrase ever." The expression has inspired pro-gun T-shirts that say "Proud Bitter Clinger."

Gerald ung received his concealed-carry permit in Virginia. To meet the requirements, he attended an N.R.A. basic-pistol-shooting class. I was curious to know what that involved, and on a recent Saturday morning I drove half an hour from my home, in Washington, D.C., to the N.R.A.'s headquarters, an office park of mirrored-glass buildings, in Fairfax, Virginia. I'd been advised to take the Utah Multi-State Concealed Firearm Permit Course. Utah's permit is popular because it is valid in at least thirty states.

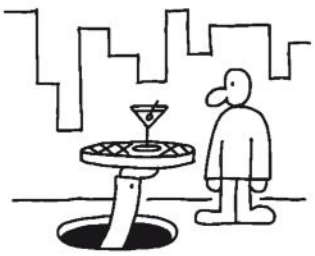
Our class, which consisted of five men and a woman, met in a room adorned with hunting trophies and a flat-screen TV. Our firearms instructor, Mark Briley, Jr., announced that we would not be touching any guns. "At the end of this class, you will have weapons familiarity as defined by Utah," he said. "They do not require live fire." (The N.R.A.'s lobbying arm opposes minimum training and proficiency standards for carry permits, calling them "needless mandates," and it has successfully spurred some states to eliminate them.)

Briley—father of three, African-American, goatee—wore black cargo pants and a black polo shirt, and he had the qualities of a great teacher: enthusiasm, patience, a sense of humor. "I was going to a predominantly white church in Farmville"—population: 8,169—"and people said, 'If you keep going with those white folks, the next thing you know they'll have you shooting guns and riding Harleys.'" He now teaches shooting and rides a Harley, he said.

Briley moved briskly through the lesson: we compared ammunition malfunctions (a hang fire versus a squib load), defensive rounds (the hollow point versus the full-metal jacket), and styles of shooting (the Weaver stance versus the isosceles). Periodically, he paused. "Any questions on any components of the semiautomatic pistol frame?" There were none.

We reviewed different kinds of threats—home invaders, muggers, druggies—and Briley urged us to "get out of the realm of just thinking about people hurting us with weapons." He said, "Honestly, if they have arms, they're armed." He lingered most on the risk of mass shootings. "We're approaching a time here in America where knowing the difference between concealment and cover may be the difference between living and dying," he said. "What's concealment and cover at a mall? What's concealment and cover at a movie theatre? There is no safe place." He urged us to scan every room with an eye for potential hiding places. "Does it have plants? Are they fake or real? If they're real, does it have potting soil?"—which could deflect incoming fire. "I'm always thinking."

He warned us against trying to be



heroes or losing our tempers. We'd all heard of an argument over texting that erupted in a Florida movie theatre in 2014. A man threw popcorn at a fellow-moviegoer, who pulled out a .380-calibre pistol and killed him. (The shooter, Curtis Reeves, Jr., who has pleaded not guilty, is awaiting trial for second-degree murder.) Briley warned us against ending up in court in what he called "today's anti-gun climate." He quoted his grandmother: "'Marky, there's a reason they call it the criminal justice system.' I said, 'Why?' She says, 'Because the criminals get the justice and you'll get the shaft.'"

We moved on to the law, and Briley, cautioning that he was not giving legal advice, pulled up the text of Utah Code 76-2-402, and read it aloud with the speed of an auctioneer: "A person does not have a duty to retreat from the force or threatened force . . . in a place where that person has lawfully entered or remained." He put it plainly: "So Utah would be what we call a Stand Your Ground state. Let me tell you this: Stand Your Ground is not a blank check to use your firearm. It just says, 'I don't have to retreat.'" He brought up George Zimmerman, the neighborhood-watch volunteer in Florida, who, in 2012, claimed self-defense in fatally shooting Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black seventeen-year-old. Nearly three years after Zimmerman was acquitted, he has critics as well as admirers in the gun community. In May, he tried to sell at auction the gun that he used to kill Martin. The auction was sabotaged—at one point, a leading bidder registered as "Racist McShootface"—but he auctioned it again a few days later and reportedly received two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Briley urged us to see Zimmerman's story as a warning. He said, "Who would trade places with Zimmerman today? No hands ever go up in any class I've asked that question." Briley went on, "The growing concern I have about folks in the concealed-carry community is that we don't look at less than lethal options as a part of our tool kit."

We finished class on schedule. We had been there four hours, and I had fulfilled all training requirements to receive my concealed-carry permit. I was home in time for lunch.

Americans have come to accumulate three hundred and ten million firearms, and to understand how they achieved this it's useful to visit the home town of the gun business. Most gun owners today are in the South and the West, but most gunmakers are in New England, because in 1794 George Washington picked Springfield, Massachusetts, to make military weapons. The

Springfield Armory, which trained early gunsmiths, such as Horace Smith, spurred the construction of factories along the Connecticut River. It's still known as Gun Valley.

As a business proposition, guns suffer from an irreparable flaw: they last a very long time. Therefore, the industry constantly needs new customers or novel ways to sell more guns to old customers. (It was Samuel Colt who is said to have coined the phrase "new and improved.") These days, the business relies mostly on old customers. In 1977, more than half of all American households had a gun in the house. By 2014, it was less than a third. Each gun owner now has an average of eight guns, according to an industry trade association.

Mike Weisser entered the gun business in 1965 and has worked as a wholesaler, a retailer, an importer, and an N.R.A.-certified instructor. At seventy-one, he is a blunt and voluble storyteller who lives outside Springfield, with his wife, Carolyn, a pediatrician. Weisser received a doctorate in economic history from Northwestern, and has taught at the University of South Carolina and elsewhere. "The first home movie of me was at the age of five, twirling a plastic revolver," he recalled. In 2001, he bought a storefront in Ware, Massachusetts, and over the next thirteen years he sold, by his estimate, twelve thousand guns, while writing six books. As a blogger, he is known as Mike the Gun Guy. On a recent morning in Springfield, Weisser pulled his car up to a vast brick factory complex that once held the headquarters of Smith & Wesson. In the seventies, Weisser was a Smith & Wesson distributor, and business was steady. "They had a lock on the police market," he said. "They had a certain number of guns they made every year. It was very quiet."

But by the late eighties American gun manufacturers were facing two serious problems: popular European imports, such as Glock, were luring away police and military consumers; and hunting, once a reliable market, was in decline as rural America emptied out. In 1977, a third of all adults lived in a house with at least one hunter, according to the General Social Survey; by 2014, that statistic had been halved. Weisser said, "The gun industry, which had been able to ride on an American cultural motif of the West, and of hunting, is realizing that's gone. Plus, you've got the European guns coming in that are so good that the U.S. Army is even using them. Jesus Christ Almighty, we're fucked." In 1998, an advertisement in *Shooting Sports Retailer* warned, "It's not 'who your customers will be in five years.' It's 'will there be any customers left.'" Richard Feldman, a high-ranking N.R.A. lobbyist in the eighties, who worked as a liaison to the industry, told me that companies looked for ways to make up for the decline of hunting: "You're selling whatever the market wants. It doesn't matter where you make your money. It's irrelevant."

A solution, of sorts, arrived in 1992, when a Los Angeles jury acquitted four police officers of using excessive force in the beating of Rodney King. The city erupted in riots. "It was the first time that you could see a live riot on video while it was going on," Weisser said. "They had a helicopter floating around when a white guy pulled up to the intersection. These black guys pull him out of the truck and are beating the shit out of him right below that helicopter." The new market for self-defense guns was born, Weisser said, and it was infused with racial anxiety. "That was the moment, and if you talked about 'crime' everybody knew what you meant."

Selling to buyers who were concerned about self-defense was even better than selling to hunters, because self-defense has no seasons. The only problem, from a marketing perspective, was that America was becoming, by any measure, a less dangerous place. Violent crime peaked in 1991, during the crack-cocaine era, and has dropped by almost half since then. Victimization rates of rape or sexual assault are down sixty per cent from their historic highs. (The reasons for the decline are debated, but most scholars credit a combination of an improved economy, more police, better technology, and a broad decline in alcohol use.) Nevertheless, in a 1997 article in the magazine *Shooting Industry*, Massad Ayoob, a popular pro-gun writer and trainer, urged dealers to seize the opportunities created by the new concealed-carry laws: "Defensive firearms, sold with knowledgeable advice and the right accessories, offer the best chance of commercial survival for today's retail firearms dealer."

By the end of the nineties, the gun industry was ailing again. Inspired by lawsuits against the tobacco industry, more than thirty local and state governments had sued gun manufacturers. The N.R.A. refused to settle, but the suits were damaging. In one case, a whistle-blower named Robert Hass, who had been Smith & Wesson's marketing-and-sales chief, said that companies knew far more than they admitted about how criminals obtained guns, and that "none of them, to my knowledge, take additional steps . . . to insure that their products are distributed properly."

This time, a gunmaker thought he had a solution—one that would not only sell more guns but lower the toll of gun violence. Ed Shultz, who was then the C.E.O. of Smith & Wesson, had grown up attending a one-room schoolhouse, the son of an Iowa hog farmer. Though he called himself a "rabid gun owner," he was also a pragmatist: easygoing with the press, and experienced. He had manufactured lawnmowers, furniture, bicycles, and other goods. In the hope of ending the lawsuits, he secretly agreed to negotiate with the Clinton Administration. To avoid detection, the talks were held in airport hotels and obscure federal offices. After six weeks, the negotiators were near a deal, and Shultz was sitting across from the Administration's point man, Andrew Cuomo, who was Bill Clinton's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Cuomo, now the governor of New York, told me recently, "I was a gun owner at the time, and I have kids in the house." He said to Shultz, "If you tell me you could sell a gun that my child couldn't operate, even if it was sitting on the counter, loaded, that is appealing to me." In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, Smith & Wesson manufactured more than half a million handguns with a two-part safety that the company boasted was "perfectly harmless in the hands of a child," but it abandoned them during the Second World War, when it focussed on producing military guns.

Shultz was open to building a new, high-tech version—a "smart gun" that could be fired only by its owner. "He says, 'I'm not interested in any political statement. I'm interested in a business-survival strategy,'" Cuomo recalled.

On March 17, 2000, Clinton and Cuomo announced the deal: among other things, Smith & Wesson agreed to develop a smart gun and take steps to prevent dealers from selling to criminals. Cuomo declared, "We are finally on the road to a safer, more peaceful America." But on the day the deal went public the N.R.A. denounced Smith & Wesson as "the first gun maker to run up the white flag of surrender." It released Shultz's phone number, and encouraged members to complain. He received many threats. One caller said, "I'm a dead-on shot, Mr. Shultz." Another executive took to wearing a bulletproof vest, according to "Outgunned," a history of gun-control politics, by Peter Harry Brown and Daniel G. Abel. Online, a boycott took hold, and sales of Smith & Wesson guns fell so sharply that two factories temporarily shut down. In ten months, the stock lost ninety-five per cent of its value, and the company was sold the next year for a fraction of its former worth.

Shultz left the company, and he all but stopped talking to the press. When I happened on a phone number for him, he called me back only to ask how I'd found it. "I need to know where the hole is, so I can plug it," he said, and declined to talk about the gun business.

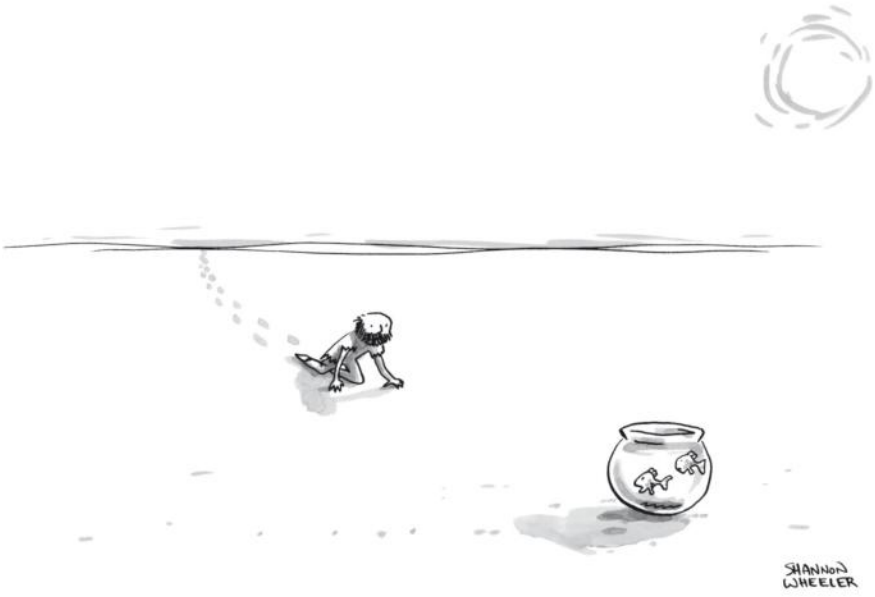
With the help of Congress, the industry has avoided further lawsuits. In 2005, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act immunized gun manufacturers, distributors, and dealers from civil liability for damages caused by their products. Mike Fifer, the C.E.O. of the U.S. gunmaker Sturm, Ruger, said at an N.R.A. convention in 2011 that the law is "probably the only reason we have a U.S. firearms industry anymore."

Smith & Wesson has repaired its relationship with the N.R.A. In 2012, Debney, the current C.E.O., was inducted into the N.R.A.'s Ring of Freedom, the highest rank of donors, reserved for those who give at least a million dollars. He received a yellow sports coat and was featured on the cover of an N.R.A. magazine, wearing the jacket and holding a concealed-carry gun. Smith & Wesson underwrites several N.R.A. initiatives, including "The Armed Citizen," a column, in print and online, that celebrates civilians who draw their guns in self-defense. The gunmaker has never forgotten Ed Shultz's attempt at compromise. "It almost took down the company," Debney told an interviewer in 2013. "We won't make that mistake again."

In may, seventy thousand members of the N.R.A. convened in Louisville for the organization's annual meeting, which combines elements of a trade show, a political convention, and Comic-Con. When I arrived, I encountered a figure in a giant bird costume—the mascot of the N.R.A.'s Eddie Eagle GunSafe program, which teaches children up to fourth grade not to touch guns. After that, the industry hopes they will become gun users. A 2011 report by the industry's trade association urged the creation of "hunting and target shooting recruitment programs aimed at middle school level, or earlier."

On a stage to one side, two men with guitars were performing under a sign marked "N.R.A. Country," a program that sponsors musicians in order to attract younger members, a major industry priority. The challenge is a "slow-motion demographic collapse," according to the Violence Policy Center, a gun-safety advocacy group. Last year, *Shooting Sports Retailer* warned that "the problem with failing to recruit and grow is that numbers equate to political power."

In Louisville, a giant banner promised "11 Acres of Guns and Gear." For kids, there were .22-calibre handguns designed to look like military-issue sidearms. (In 2013, the magazine *Junior Shooters* gave one to a thirteen-year-old reviewer, who raved that it "looks cool and feels like a Beretta, which I think is awesome.") For sport shooters and survivalists, who talk about teotwawki ("The end of the world as we know it"), there were AR-15s, or "black rifles"—the civilian version of military M-16s—which are known in



"Uh-oh."

• •

the industry as the "Barbie doll of guns," because buyers keep coming back for new grips, sights, and other mix-and-match accessories.

Much as the industry capitalized on the Los Angeles riots, it has excelled, since 9/11, at tapping into the fear of terrorism. Feldman, the former N.R.A. lobbyist, told me, "The threat is no different on 9/12 than it was on 9/10, but the perception of it changed dramatically. It is fear, but it's not a fear that the gun industry is promoting. It doesn't have to." Survivalist fantasies about the breakdown of society "crossed over from being the lunatic fringe to more serious after 9/11," Feldman said. "It's not about the government coming after you. It's about terrorists taking out the electrical grid."

In recent years, the gun industry's product displays have become so focussed on self-defense and "tactical" gear that some hunters feel ignored. After a trade show in January, David E. Petzal, a columnist for *Field & Stream*, mocked the "SEAL wannabes," and wrote that "you have to look fairly hard for something designed to kill animals instead of people." The contempt is mutual; some concealed-carry activists call hunters "Fudds," as in Elmer.

The U.S. Concealed Carry Association had a large exhibit. Based in Wisconsin, it promotes what it calls the "concealed-carry lifestyle" and sells training materials and "self-defense insurance," which subsidizes legal fees for gun owners if they shoot someone. Tim Schmidt, the founder, told me, "When I had kids, I went through what I call my 'self-defense awakening.'" In 2004, he launched the magazine *Concealed Carry* and then expanded. Members now receive daily e-mails urging them to buy additional training and insurance, in case, as a recent e-mail put it, "God forbid, the unthinkable should happen to you, and you're forced by some scumbag in a drug fueled rage to pull the trigger."

For several years, Schmidt had a sideline in packaging his sales techniques. He calls the approach "tribal marketing." It's based on generating revenue by emphasizing the boundaries of a community. "We all have the NEED to BELONG," he wrote in a presentation entitled "How to Turn One of Mankind's Deepest Needs Into Cold, Hard CASH." In a section called "How Do You Create Belief & Belonging?," he explained, "You can't have a yin without a yang. Must have an enemy."

The meeting featured seminars, and one after another the speakers encouraged attendees to be ready to fight. Kyle Lamb, a former Delta Force operator, urged the mostly middle-aged crowd to adopt a "combat mind-set." He said, "Ten minutes from now, or an hour from now, or two days from now, you may be in that fight." He said that we must prepare for the emotional consequences, including "the sound people make when they get shot."

The biggest crowd turned up for Dave Grossman, a prolific author who has taught psychology at West Point. In "On Combat" (2004), he described society as populated by sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs. "If you want to be a sheep, then you can be a sheep and that is okay," he wrote. "But you must understand the price you pay. When the wolf comes, you and your loved ones are going to die if there is not a sheepdog there to protect you." The concept went viral, inspiring T-shirts and a fictional scene in "American Sniper," the film based on the memoir of Chris Kyle, in which Kyle's father tells him to be a sheepdog, "blessed with the gift of aggression."

Grossman, who is friendly and intense in person—I discovered later that he is a paid lecturer for Tim Schmidt's group—gave his audience the bleakest portrait of the future that I've heard. He predicted that terrorists will detonate a nuclear weapon on a boat off the coast of the United States, and that they will send people infected with diseases—"suicide bio bombers"—across the border from Mexico. Then he said, "I'll tell you what's next, folks: school-bus and day-care massacres." Eventually, he wound his way to the solution: concealed carry. "There is a time, in the first five to ten minutes in every one of these events, when one or two well-trained people with a concealed weapon can rise from the entire pack." Americans, Grossman told us, must accommodate to a future of "armed people everywhere."

Gerald Ung, the man who shot Edward DiDonato during an argument on a Philadelphia street, didn't buy a gun because he was thinking of a "bio bomber." In 2008, while he was in law school, he moved to an unfamiliar neighborhood and heard about a girl who was raped nearby and a classmate who had been robbed. He remembered a statistic from the news that Philadelphia averaged a murder a day. It seemed to him, he said later, that "kids were just basically jumping people all

the time." Ung's anecdotes composed a chaotic portrait, and there was truth in it—Philadelphia had one of the highest crime rates in America—but they didn't give him much context, and the city, in fact, was safer than it had been in years. In 2008, major crimes, including murder, rape, and aggravated assault, had dropped to their lowest level since 1978. By 2009, murders were down twenty-five per cent in three years. Ung's sense of unease was widespread. When crime rates were actually dropping, in the mid-two-thousands, almost seventy per cent of Americans believed that crime had risen in the previous year. Some studies of those misperceptions blame a change in life style: as people drive more, and have less contact with neighbors, they report a greater fear of crime. Other studies focus on news reports that give heavy attention to low-probability threats. An analysis of Los Angeles television stations in 2009 found that local broadcasts often started with crimes that were not even in Los Angeles, leaving viewers with the impression that the biggest thing happening most days is something awful. Frightening but remote threats, such as shark attacks, which some scholars call "fearsome risks," throw off our judgment. Our instinct is to respond with action—in Ung's case, by carrying a gun.

Ung was charged with attempted murder and aggravated assault. He went on trial on February 8, 2011. DiDonato remained in critical condition for a month. After fourteen surgeries, he had regained the ability to walk, but his left foot hung limp, and he suffered lasting damage to his intestines.

In court, many of the participants from that night testified, and it became clear that, in the seventy seconds in which the encounter unfolded, each side had misread the intentions and emotions of the other. Thomas Kelly, the reveller who had lunged at Ung's group, had misjudged the effect of his cursing and gesturing. "It was more of a humorous 'Fuck you,'" he said, though Ung's friend Joy Keh was convinced that Kelly and the others were a "bloodthirsty gang." Ung's misreading may have been the most catastrophic. When Kelly hiked up the drooping belt of his pants, Ung suspected that he, too, might have a gun. That mistake is not uncommon: a person holding a gun is more likely to misperceive an object in another person's hand to be a gun, according to a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

After a six-day trial, the jury acquitted Ung of all charges. ("A victory for all of us," a gun-rights blog declared.) In the courtroom, Ung sobbed and clasped his hands in prayer. "Just get me out of here," he said, weeping, as he was led away by his supporters, and he never said another word in public.

The centerpiece of the N.R.A. annual convention this year was the endorsement of Donald Trump for President, the most fervently pro-gun nominee in Presidential history. He has called for a national right to concealed carry.

Trump and the N.R.A. were not always allies. In his book "The America We Deserve," published in 2000, Trump accused Republicans of toeing "the N.R.A. line" by rejecting "even limited restrictions." He wrote of his support for a ban on assault weapons and a seventy-two-hour waiting period on gun purchases, both anathema in the gun-rights community. But as a candidate Trump had abandoned those views, and he was forgiven: at gun shows this year, venders have been selling olive-green "Trump's Army" T-shirts, alongside shirts in red and white, lifeguard-style, marked "Waterboarding Instructor." (Trump has promised to resume the use of waterboarding.)

When Trump took the stage in Louisville, he said, "There are thirteen million right-to-carry permit holders in the United States. I happen to be one of them." (He has a permit in New York State; it's not clear how often he has carried a gun.) Trump can seem like the ultimate spokesman for the age of concealed carry: the original "tribal marketer," the man who sees enemies everywhere. He reminded the audience of the fourteen people who were killed in San Bernardino: "If we had guns on the other side, it wouldn't have been that way." He made a gun out of his thumb and forefinger, and said, "I would have—boom!"

There was a time when the N.R.A. defined itself by conservative free-market principles, but in recent years, as American incomes have diverged, it has given greater emphasis to a populist line, suggesting that powerful Americans are seeking to disarm and endanger less privileged citizens. Before Trump took the stage, the crowd watched a video about "political élites and billionaires." "The thought of average people owning firearms makes them uncomfortable," the narrator said. "They don't like how the men and women who build their office buildings, vacation homes, and luxury cars, who mop their floors, clean their clothes, and serve their dinner, have access to the same level of protection as their armed security guards." Alert to the theme, Trump called on Hillary Clinton to give up her Secret Service protection. "They should immediately disarm," he said. "And let's see how good they do." He promised his audience, "We're going to bring it back to a real place, where we don't have to be so frightened."

Having an enemy is also part of N.R.A. strategy, according to Feldman, the former lobbyist. During George W. Bush's Presidency, when the threat of gun control receded, membership dropped, he said. (The group declines to confirm that.) "Negatives are so much more powerful than positives in politics," he told me. "I can get people all fired up about something that takes something away. Even if you don't own one of these guns, if they're going to take one away from you, all of a sudden I want to buy one." In writing mailings to members, Feldman emphasized the threat posed by Americans who support gun control. He gave me a hypothetical example: " 'If you can't send us twenty-two dollars and fifteen cents by the close of business Friday, the lights on your cherished Second Amendment freedoms will dim forever.' I mean, I can go on, but that's your standard fund-raising shtick."

For all the bluster, in two days at the convention I encountered few members of the rank and file who actually believed it. Many were wary of the hucksterism, the bravado, the odes to the "sheepdog." "Even if you're going to intervene, it should never be with a gun first," Lowell Huckelberry, a concealed carrier and retired businessman

from southern Illinois, told me. When I asked people, as I did dozens of times this spring, why they chose to carry, most attributed it to a compounding sense of vulnerability, a suspicion that spectacular displays of violence signal a breakdown of public morality and the state's ability to provide security. "We had a recent mall shooting," Rachel Keith, a forty-six-year-old woman who has been carrying for six years, told me. In response, she taught her daughters to scout for exits in public places, and enrolled them in pistol classes so that they will "be confident that they, too, can work a gun."

Armed citizenship generates its own momentum. Sid O'Nan, a genial and self-effacing father of two teen-agers, who works as an I.T. specialist for the Department of Agriculture, told me that, growing up, he had done some hunting, but not much. Yet in recent years he saw more guns around. "As I would invite buddies over, they would always have handguns," he said. He now carries a Glock 17. The notion that more firearms reduces the risks posed by more firearms is paradoxical to some and reassuring to others. I asked O'Nan what he meant when he said that times had changed. "I just see all the garbage that's going on, and I thought, You know what? I couldn't live with myself if I couldn't be there to protect my family," he said. "I don't know firearms. I don't know ballistics. I don't know holsters. I'm just trying to glean from a friend what he says. I've asked him, 'Should I go for the head if somebody has full-body armor?' He says, 'No, just center mass. Your 9-mm. will knock them to the ground, and you can get the heck out of there.'"

At the heart of the concealed-carry phenomenon is a delicate question: Does it save lives?

Last month, I called David Jackson, a thirty-two-year-old truck driver in Columbia, South Carolina. He has six children. On January 26th, he was getting a haircut at Next Up Barber and Beauty, accompanied by his girlfriend and two youngest sons, ages two and four, when a pair of men in masks and hoodies came in the front door. One pumped a shotgun and said, "You already know what this is." The other waved a handgun, and started moving down the line of chairs, demanding wallets and cash, and reaching into the barbers' pockets.

A surveillance camera recorded what happened next. When the robber with the handgun had his back turned, Jackson reached under his plastic salon smock, pulled out a .357 Magnum—he had obtained his license six months earlier—and fired. It happened that one of the barbers, Elmurray Bookman, was also licensed to carry. Bookman pulled out his gun, and, together, he and Jackson fired at the robber, who tumbled out of the back door, collapsed on the sidewalk, and died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Jackson turned to the front of the shop, where the first robber was fleeing through the door. Jackson fired three more bullets but missed, and the robber escaped. When the police arrived, they watched the footage, took down Jackson's statement, and ruled the shootings self-defense. It was a one-day story on the local news. Jackson returned to work the following Monday.

When the gun industry talks about concealed carry, it highlights experiences like Jackson's. But he was no ordinary shooter: he spent two years in the Air Force, where he trained for hundreds of hours. Later, he erected targets behind his home so that he could practice. (Gerald Ung visited a gun range

on three or four occasions.) When I spoke to Jackson, he was in the cab of his truck. I asked how he felt about the experience. "Terrible," he said. He wouldn't change his decision to shoot, but it had shaken him. "I don't feel good. You know, kind of sick about it. A lot of times, you know, you close your eyes to go to sleep and you think about it. I can see everything that happened, and then, right before the shots go off, I wake up. I jump."

I asked Jackson why he had obtained a permit. "I thought it was going to be more an ISIS thing, or something," he said. "I never thought I'd need to use it like that." I asked how his kids were doing. "They're like kind of obsessed with guns now. Especially my four-year-old. He's like, 'My daddy shot the robber!' That's what he always says. The other day, he asked me, 'Daddy, could you teach me?' I was like, 'Teach you what?' 'How to shoot.' I told him when he turns five I'll start teaching him."

In the early years of concealed carry, there was a debate about whether it reduced violence or increased it. A decade ago, when mass shootings were emerging as a frequent phenomenon, the conservative economist John Lott asserted that carry guns could halt those killings—a precursor to the N.R.A.'s current maxim that "the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." It's a mantra among concealed carriers, but evidence is sparse. A 2014 study by the F.B.I. found that, in a hundred and sixty "active shooter" incidents from 2000 to 2013, armed citizens who were not security guards stopped the "bad guy" on one occasion (when a patron shot an attacker at the Players Bar and Grill, in Winnemucca, Nevada, in 2008). Unarmed citizens, by contrast, stopped active shooters on twenty-one occasions. In recent years, scholars have found that concealed carry may be altering society in measurable, and unwelcome, ways: in 2014, a study led by the Stanford law professor John J. Donohue III examined the effect of concealed-carry laws on crime, using data from 1979 to 2010. He found that the laws led to "substantially higher rates" of aggravated assault, rape, robbery, and murder.

For the past decade, the most reliable business in Gun Valley has been concealed carry. But, nearly a century after Jonathan Mossberg's family began to profit from the gun business, he is betting that this is about to change.

On a warm morning in northern Connecticut, Mossberg brought me to a private shooting club. He was wearing loafers, khakis, and a

blue-and-white oxford shirt. O. F. Mossberg & Sons, founded in 1919 by Jonathan's great-grandfather, is one of the world's largest makers of shotguns. When he was sixteen, Jonathan started work at the company, and by the time he left, in 2000, he was vice-president of acquisitions.

He took a twelve-gauge shotgun from a long black plastic case. Sixteen years after Ed Shultz's attempt to build a smart gun all but drove him into hiding, Mossberg thinks that times have changed. His invention, which he calls the iGun, is synched to a ring that he wears on his right hand. "You don't swipe it," he said. "You don't do a retina scan or anything like that." He loaded three shells, put the gun to his shoulder, and fired three rounds toward the far end of a trap-shooting range. He put the gun on his other shoulder, and said, "Left hand, no ring." He pulled the trigger and nothing happened.

Mossberg first started talking publicly about his smart gun last year, and he braced for hate mail. Officially, the N.R.A. does not oppose the development of smart-gun technology, but it frames the idea as fanciful or dangerous. (On its Web site, it says that the government would exploit the technology to "allow guns to be disabled remotely.") "But I got literally almost no hate mail," Mossberg said. "I got maybe three negative ones."

Mossberg hopes to get his technology into a handgun—and then get the gun into the hands of prison guards, air marshals, and parents. An ordinary Mossberg shotgun sells for about three hundred and fifty dollars. He figures that his gun will cost up to two hundred dollars more. "I get e-mails every day. 'Where can I buy it? What's your stock symbol?' I answer them all very politely. 'We're trying to raise money.'" The big gun companies aren't interested. "They're doing so well now that they really don't have to care." No C.E.O. wants to be the next Ed Shultz, and ever since the 2005 law immunized gunmakers against lawsuits they have little incentive to develop new ways of reducing accidents or misuse.

Many smart-gun advocates believe that the only way the guns will become available is if military and police agencies agree to buy them, which would spur companies to invest in the technology. In April, the Obama Administration announced that the Justice and Homeland Security departments are preparing standards that smart guns will need to meet for government contracts. Valerie Jarrett, a senior adviser to the President who is in charge of the project, told me that it had a personal relevance. "My grandfather was shot and killed with his own handgun," she said. "He was a dentist here in D.C. He was an avid hunter. He kept a gun in his office, because, as a dentist, he kept opiates in his office. One day, two people broke in and pulled out a toy gun. He pulled out the real gun and they proceeded to take his real gun away from him and shoot and kill him." She went on, "We're not saying that smart-gun technology is going to save every life. But, if it saves a few, why wouldn't we take those steps?"

A smart gun would not prevent most gun deaths, but it could have a powerful effect on six hundred or so accidental gun deaths each year—including an average of sixty-two, each year, that kill children under fourteen. During one week in April, four toddlers shot and killed themselves. Another, a two-year-old boy, found a gun on the floor of a car and shot through the back of the driver's seat, killing his mother. The statistical story of American gun violence is less about "active shooters" and "sheepdogs" than about impulses and cruelties of fate.

The chances of being killed by a mass shooter are lower than the chances of being struck by lightning, or of dying from tuberculosis. The chance of a homicide by a firearm in the home nearly doubles the moment that a firearm crosses the threshold. Dave Grossman's vision of "armed people everywhere" has a seductive certainty, but having a gun at hand alters the chemistry of ordinary life—the arguments, the miscalculations, the perceptions of those around us.

If the American gun business stays on its present course, its market will likely continue to consolidate into the hands of a smaller, more dedicated community. That will widen the gap between those with a "combat mind-set" and those without, between "friends" and "enemies." If Donald Trump reaches the White House, he will bring with him a moral logic of concealed carry. If he falls short of the Presidency, his admirers will have gained, at a minimum, fresh evidence of their encirclement. As the pro-gun and the anti-gun worlds grow further apart, it gets harder for each side to understand the intentions of the other. They are, more than ever, like two groups squaring off in the dark, convinced that the other wishes them harm. ♦

"O.K., Peter, time to go."

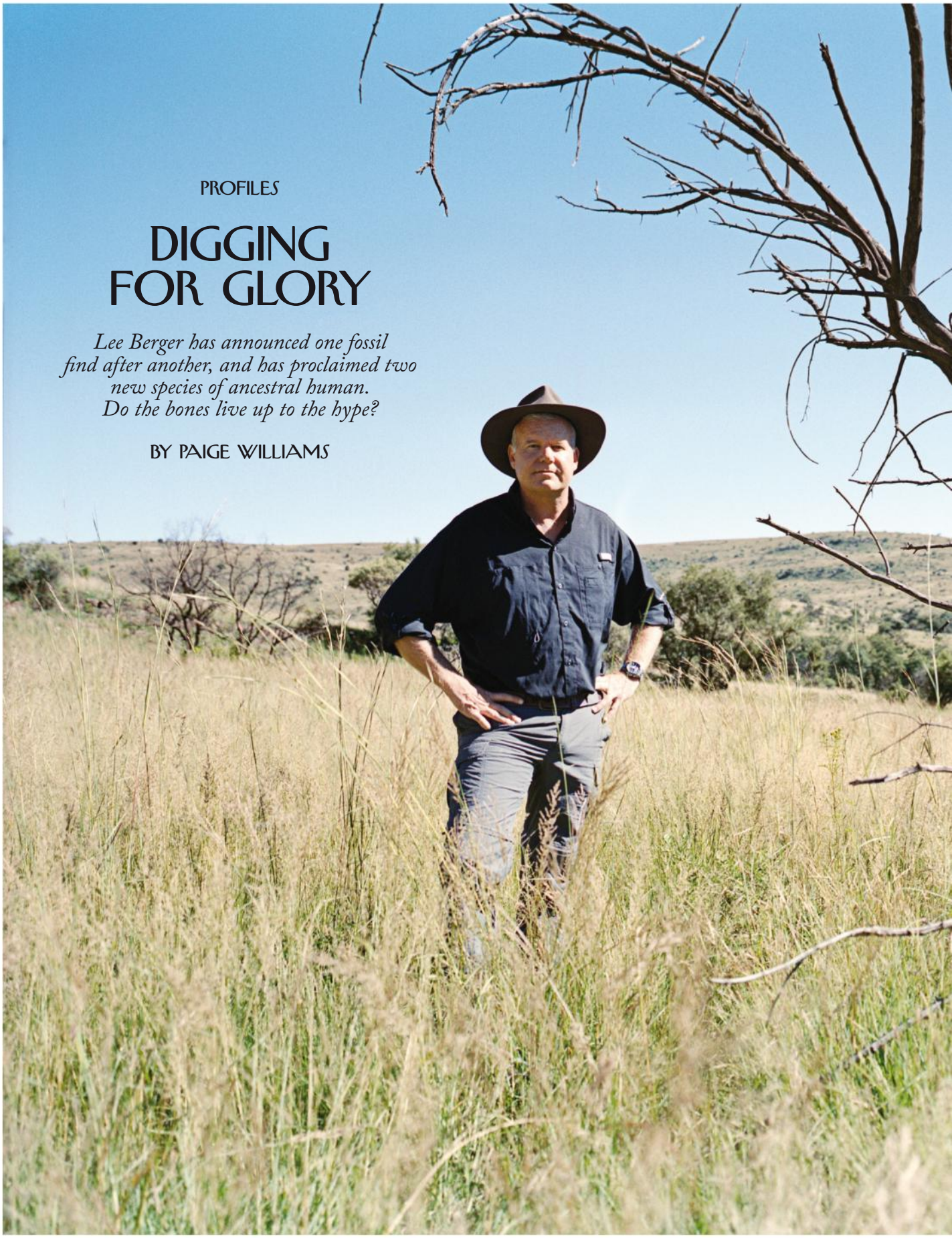
• •

PROFILES

DIGGING FOR GLORY

Lee Berger has announced one fossil find after another, and has proclaimed two new species of ancestral human. Do the bones live up to the hype?

BY PAIGE WILLIAMS



"It's a competitive sport," Lee Berger says of paleoanthropology. The field is split between those who consider him a visionary for

PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN GODFREY

sharing his fossil data and those who worry that he places showmanship over rigor.

One evening in September, 2013, two amateur cavers, Steven Tucker and Rick Hunter, drove into a swath of semi-wilderness an hour northwest of Johannesburg and parked at the foot of a stony slope. Wearing jumpsuits and helmets with headlamps, they ducked into the mouth of a cave, descending into a maze of jagged limestone. After worming through a series of narrow passages, they climbed a rise of rock and squeezed through one last fissure, reaching what appeared to be the end of the path. But there was a hole in the floor: a "chimney" chute leading downward.

Caving is a form of improvisation: you say yes to whatever door the earth opens. The vertical crevice measured barely seven inches wide, but Tucker, a human reed, was able to squirm down it. Forty feet below, he dropped into a chamber the size of a walk-in closet. He walked a little farther. The ceiling was spiked with stalactites. On the floor, everywhere, was bone.

The cavers hadn't been searching for fossils that day, but they knew someone who would be very eager to see them: a paleoanthropologist named Lee Berger. Fossils of hominins—ancestral humans and their relatives—have been discovered in South Africa since the nineteenth century, when prospectors started blasting for lime, which is used in refining gold. The area surrounding this cave is known as the Cradle of Humankind, because skeletal remains of our early ancestors have been found there. But Berger was the first paleoanthropologist to systematically search underground. He was paying a former student, Pedro Boshoff, an ex-diamond prospector who rode motorcycles and wore a skull-emblazoned do-rag, to scout for him. Boshoff couldn't fit through some openings, so he had asked local cavers—among them Tucker and Hunter—to keep an eye out for bone.

Soon after Tucker and Hunter made their discovery, they returned to the chamber and photographed the remains. When Boshoff saw the images, he and Tucker rushed them to Berger's house, even though it was late at night. One scrap stood out: a partial jawbone, still wearing its teeth. Berger brought out a round of drinks.

Berger, who presents himself as equal parts explorer and scientist, grew up near Savannah, Georgia, and earned his Ph.D. at the University of the Witwatersrand,

or "Wits," in Johannesburg. He's now a research professor there. He hopes to surpass the groundbreaking finds of East Africa, including the iconic australopithecine, Lucy, a 3.2-million-year-old fossil discovered by the paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson, in Ethiopia, in 1974. For many years, Berger found so little that he considered abandoning exploration. Then, in August, 2008, his son, Matthew—a nine-year-old who sometimes joined his forays into the Cradle—came across a loose rock in an old limestone mine. Embedded in the rock was a clavicle and a jaw fragment. An excavation led by Berger revealed a profusion of bones nearby, including the partial skeleton of an adolescent boy and one of a woman of about thirty, both nearly two million years old. Berger named the site Malapa, a word that in the Sesotho language means "homestead."

All early human remains are scientifically valuable, but those dated in the vicinity of two million years old are especially prized, because they fall near a key point in the fossil record: the origin of *Homo*. There isn't a paleoanthropologist alive who wouldn't like to clarify what happened in the million-year evidentiary gap between the small-brained, long-armed australopithecines and our own, big-brained genus. The Malapa fossils showed an odd mixture of primitive and modern traits. In a series of papers published in *Science* between 2010 and 2013, Berger and more than a dozen co-authors described a new species: *Australopithecus sediba*.

Berger aggressively promotes his scientific papers. He called a press conference at the Cradle of Humankind's visitor center to announce the discovery of *sediba*, which means "spring." He later told *Science,* "We're not saying this is the direct ancestor, but, if you start weighing this all, it will end up as the most probable ancestor."

Paleoanthropologists were excited by the Malapa discovery, but many were skeptical about Berger's bold evolutionary claims. To some, he had long seemed more interested in fame than in careful science, and his press conference struck them as theatrical and unscholarly. Yet any scientist who wanted to vet his *sediba* research could do so: Berger shared his data and declared the fossils available for outside study, something that paleoanthropologists traditionally had not done. Ian Tattersall, a paleoanthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History, has said that the field often resembles "a swamp of ego, paranoia, possessiveness, and intellectual mercantilism."

Berger donated replicas of the Malapa bones to museums and schools, and started attending conferences with a *sediba* cast, allowing anyone to inspect it. Jeremy DeSilva, a Dartmouth paleoanthropologist who collaborates with Berger, recalls that when he visited Wits in 2009 Berger offered to open the fossil vault. "A lot of people in our business are petrified to be wrong," DeSilva told me. "You have to be willing to be wrong. What Lee is doing takes that to another level."

As specialists debated whether the Malapa fossils truly represented a new species, *sediba* became a cultural icon. A female hand was bronzed, so that South African politicians could present it to foreign dignitaries. Gift shops sold *sediba* earrings. Berger arranged for a tourist platform and an open-air laboratory to be built at Malapa. (It opens this summer.) Then he returned to his explorations.

South Africa's cave openings can be hard to spot, but many have wild olive and white stinkwood trees growing near them. Berger used Google Earth to find these natural markers. Some of the emerald clusters that appeared on his computer screen might as well have been flashing arrows. The cave where Tucker and Hunter had found the chamber of bones was well known to spelunkers, but satellite images led Berger to locate an entire underground network that had not been combed for fossils. When he drove me into the Cradle, last December, he pointed out what looked like solid earth and said, "That's a cave. And that's a cave." In his public appearances, Berger often shows a photograph of the golden high veldt and tells audiences, "When I look at that, I see Swiss cheese."

In the century and a half during which scientists have been formally studying humankind's earliest ancestry, they've found fossil remains of only about six thousand individuals. Most have been fragments and isolated finds. Donald Johanson, who is now seventy-two, has said that before he found Lucy all of the hominid fossils older than three million years could "fit in the palm of your hand." The skull is the anatomical key to identifying a species and deducing how its face looked, and how it thought and ate. But the merest scraps of a hominid—a rib, a toe bone—are so rare that they are deeply coveted.

Paleoanthropologists have pieced together fossil evidence showing that the ancestry of humankind and our relatives begins about six million years ago, moving from *Sahelanthropus* to *Ardipithecus*, and from *Australopithecus* to *Homo*, of which *Homo sapiens* is the last surviving species. The time line remains somewhat contested and fluid: new discoveries and interpretations have overturned old theories. Gone is the early metaphor of human evolution as a straightforward family tree. As more fossils surfaced and better research tools allowed for nuanced comparisons, the tree became a bush with many branches, depicting diverse species that overlapped in time. Genetic analysis revealed that some of our ancient relatives were surprisingly intimate with one another, encoding traces of their hookups in our DNA.

Some paleoanthropologists believe that the evolutionary picture has become overcomplicated, and that certain creatures described as "new" are mere variations, leading to "species inflation." There are experts who think that the *sediba* bones are just more examples of *Australopithecus africanus*. The key to settling such debates is finding more fossils. But paleoanthropology is a small discipline, and the number of paleoanthropologists who hunt bones is smaller still. "It's a competitive sport," Berger said in a recent lecture. "There are very few players. And once your head is above the parapet—" He didn't finish the sentence.

The chamber that Tucker and Hunter found was a hundred feet below the surface. Other scientists have said that, upon finding such a promising site, they would have moved with extreme deliberation, consulting experts in deep-cave excavation. William Kimbel, the paleoanthropologist who directs Arizona State University's Institute of

Human Origins, told me, "I'd have assembled the best, most experienced senior scientists *in the world*."

Berger's first call was to the National Geographic Society: several hours after seeing the photographs of the bones, he got in touch with Terry Garcia, the society's chief science and exploration officer. The organization, which is based in Washington, D.C., has funded exploration since the late nineteenth century, and had backed Berger for decades. He had been awarded an exploration prize in 1997, and after the 2008 Malapa discovery the society named him an "explorer in residence," placing him in the company of Robert Ballard, the discoverer of the Titanic wreckage, and the Leakeys, the family of scientists who made seminal fossil discoveries in Kenya and Tanzania. Berger told Garcia, "If you're ever going to believe in me, believe in me now." National Geographic agreed to bankroll an excavation.

Berger needed better images of the fossils, but he was too large to get into the chamber. Instead of dispatching a lithe paleoanthropologist with caving experience, he sent Matthew, his son, who was now fourteen. As Tucker and Hunter led Matthew down the chute, Berger turned off his headlamp and sat in the darkness, mentally designing an expedition. Ballard's Titanic project came to mind, as did the director of "Titanic," James Cameron, who had recently piloted a submersible to the Marianas Trench, the deepest point on Earth. Documentary footage had shown Ballard and Cameron using advanced technologies, and Berger pictured himself doing the same.

The next day, after seeing the photographs Matthew had taken, Berger decided that history "wouldn't forgive" him if he didn't "act quickly." On Facebook, he posted a call for experienced archeological or paleontological excavators. "The person must be skinny and preferably small," he wrote. Successful candidates could not be claustrophobic; they had to be cavers; they had to hold a relevant master's degree or doctorate; they had to come to Johannesburg immediately and accept a blind mission, for no pay. (Travel expenses would be covered.) Nearly sixty people applied. Berger chose six.

The cave went by various names, including Empire and Rising Star. Berger, wanting to preëmpt "Empire Strikes Back" jokes, called the expedition Rising Star. He christened the fossil chamber Dinaledi—"stars"—and referred to his excavators as "underground astronauts." With sizable grants from the National Geographic Society, he organized and outfitted a sixty-person team. In came tents, computers, microscopes, toilets, and a 3-D scanner. Infrared video cameras were installed throughout the cave; communications cables were run from the chamber to a "command center," a tent where a documentary crew filming for "NOVA" and National Geographic captured Berger as he watched a live feed of the excavation.

The dig, in November, 2013, lasted three weeks; a smaller dig followed in March, 2014. National Geographic live-blogged and tweeted the latest developments. Viewers watched the team recover bag after bag of remains—some fifteen hundred fossil elements, an unprecedented assemblage.

A dig is less than half the job. Scholars say, "It's not what you find—it's what you find out." To analyze the fossils, Berger again turned to Facebook, inviting "early career" scientists to apply for a six-week workshop, in May, 2014. He promised that, together, they would describe the fossils for "high-impact publications." By the end of that August—an extraordinarily fast turnaround by traditional standards—Berger had submitted twelve papers to *Nature*. One of them asserted that the cave fossils represented another new species—*Homo naledi,* or Star Man. After an anonymous peer-review process, the papers were not accepted. The editors asked Berger to heavily revise them. After several back-and-forths, he withdrew them.

Two papers about *naledi* found a home in eLife, a new online peer-reviewed journal started by the Wellcome Trust. The eLife model is intended to counter traditional journals, which some scientists criticize as too slow and expensive. eLife was "open access": papers could be downloaded free. Two of its slogans are "Taking the pain out of peer review" and "Get your results out fast."

"When we play the footage backward, it'll look like you're repairing it."

• •

Berger is a fifty-year-old Eagle Scout with thinning, once blond hair and a ruddy, boyish face. After twenty-six years in South Africa, he says "shed-dule" for "schedule," "pay-tent" for "patent." Extremely comfortable onstage, he delivers lectures in a singsong voice made sibilant by a slight lisp. He usually wears a leather or linen jacket,

and on camera he often adds a safari hat.

On September 10, 2015, a National Geographic pin winked from his lapel as he took the stage at the Cradle's visitor center, to announce the eLife papers. "It's showtime, folks!" a Wits faculty member declared, as the event streamed live. Berger first noted that the Rising Star project was "not 'The Lee Berger Show,'" and praised his team. Then he stated that the cave bones represented a beguiling new species. The orange-size brain (a third the size of ours) and the high shoulders were apelike; the feet were "Nike-ready," as *National Geographic* put it. Adults stood about five feet tall. The hands had the sophisticated wrists of a recent relative but the well-curved fingers of an old species. Altogether, the fossils suggested a deft climber who also walked on two legs. Berger said, "I am pleased to introduce you to a new species of human ancestor." On a large video screen loomed an artist's rendering of a bearded creature with shrewd eyes and a furrowed brow.

Fifteen individuals, from infant to elderly, had been found at the site, Berger went on—the demography of an entire population. Fossil deposits usually contain other organic matter, providing hints about ecosystems and geologic age, but, apart from a few mouse teeth and owl bones, excavators had found no signs of plants or other animals. Oddly, the bodies appeared to have been isolated in the cave. There was no evidence of predators or scavengers. There were no tools, or hints of fire or natural disaster. Some skeletons were intact. The bizarre configuration had led to the "rather remarkable conclusion that we have just met a new species of human relative that deliberately disposed of its dead," Berger told his audience. He added, "Until this moment in history, we thought that the idea of ritualized behaviors directed toward the dead . . . was utterly unique to *Homo sapiens*."

Again, Berger was sharing his data. This time, he would also post digital shape files online: anyone could replicate *naledi* on a 3-D printer.

Naledi fossils lay at the foot of the stage, in a display case covered with a blue cloth. As cameras flashed, the cloth was swept away, revealing bones and fragments placed in the rough form of a skeleton. The impression was that of a single individual, though the photogenic array was a composite.

Berger held up a cast of a skull, its nasal cavity and eye sockets glowing white with filler, as if packed with snow. After the Deputy President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, kissed the skull, Berger kissed it, too. In the coming days, he delivered one provocative line after another to reporters and audiences: "My discovery turns science on its head"; "We have to start rewriting textbooks"; "A paragraph on Facebook may be as powerful as a paper in *Nature*."

BERGER'S TITLE AT Wits is Research Professor in Human Evolution and the Public Understanding of Science. He gives hundreds of talks a year. The first time I met him, nine weeks after the *naledi* announcement, he had arrived in Manchester, New Hampshire, for a flurry of East Coast appearances. He accepts as many speaking invitations as possible, and encourages other scientists to do likewise. "I don't care if it's the little old ladies' knitting club—go *do* it," he once said. He presented his *naledi* story at Dartmouth, at a Vermont science museum, at a New Hampshire high school, at N.Y.U., and at NeueHouse, an office-sharing space in Manhattan. He gave the presentation again, in December, at a supper club in Johannesburg and, in April, at a sold-out National Geographic event, in Washington. In every talk, the narrative began with the challenges of his early career and ended with the triumph of the *naledi* discovery—one destined to have "profound destructive effects on the fields of archeology, paleoanthropology, and paleontology."

Berger's storytelling is expertly paced, his details winsome. Boshoff, the fossil scout, resembled a pirate. The expedition was so dangerous that a doctor stood prepared to live underground with anyone who broke a femur or a rib. Rick Hunter, one of the discoverers of the *naledi* chamber, wasn't just a caver; he got kicked out of high school for causing an explosion in a chemistry lab. (In fact, he graduated.)At Dartmouth, a

POEM TO MY LITTER

My genes are in mice, and not in the banal way
that Man's old genes are in the Beasts.

My doctors split my tumors up and scattered them
into the bones of twelve mice. We give

the mice poisons I might, in the future, want
for myself. We watch each mouse like a crystal ball.

I wish it was perfect, but sometimes the death we see
doesn't happen when we try it again in my body.

My tumors are old, older than mice can be.
They first grew in my flank, a decade ago.

Then they went to my lungs, and down my femurs,
and into the hives in my throat that hatch white cells.

The mice only have a tumor each, in the leg.
Their tumors have never grown up. Uprooted

and moved. Learned to sleep in any bed
the vast body turns down. Before the tumors can spread,

they bust open the legs of the mice. Who bleed to death.
Next time the doctors plan to cut off the legs

in the nick of time so the tumors will spread.
But I still have both my legs. To complicate things further,

mouse bodies fight off my tumors. We have to give
the mice AIDS so they'll harbor my genes.

I want my mice to be just like me. I don't have any children.
I named them all Max. First they were Max 1, Max 2,

but now they're all just Max. No playing favorites.
They don't know they're named, of course.

They're like children you've traumatized
and tortured so they won't let you visit.

I hope, Maxes, some good in you is of me.
Even my suffering is good, in part. Sure, I swell

with rage, fear—the stuff that makes you see your tail
as a bar on the cage. But then the feelings pass.

And since I do absolutely nothing (my pride, like my fur,
all gone) nothing happens to me. And if a whole lot

of nothing happens to you, Maxes, that's peace.
Which is what we want. Trust me.

—*Max Ritvo*

woman attending Berger's lecture whispered to a companion, "Isn't he *amazing*?"

The Rising Star documentary was released the same day that the *naledi* bones were unveiled. A teaser said that the discovery promised to "revolutionize our understanding of human origins." Footage showed Berger composing a tweet as a narrator's voice said, "It's a way of doing science that earlier generations of paleoanthropologists could never have imagined." On camera, Berger said of them, "There was a sense that people who made discoveries were somehow very special beings, and there was almost a club that you had to belong to, to actually *see* the things."

The documentary was titled "Dawn of Humanity," but in fact nobody knew how old the bones were. Berger had omitted this fact from his press briefing—the fossils' age didn't come up until a reporter mentioned it. Berger explained that his team had not yet succeeded in dating the remains, because Cradle geology is especially complex and the bones had been found without any collateral clues. But he promised that, no matter the age, *naledi* would prove important.

The media didn't wait for clarity. A photograph of the composite skeleton appeared on the front page of the *Times*. A headline in the London *Times* declared, "AFRICAN CAVE BONES REWRITE THE HISTORY OF MANKIND."

Paleoanthropologists agreed that it was stunning to find so many specimens, especially in such an unusual context. But the field was split, largely between those who consider Berger a visionary for sharing data and those who consider him a hype artist. "Intentional corpse disposal is a nice sound bite, but it's more spin than substance," the paleoanthropologist William Jungers, of Stony Brook University, told reporters. *Naledi* is "just another headline-grabber," the anthropologist Christoph Zollikofer, of the University of Zurich, said.

Donald Johanson, the Lucy discoverer and an early mentor of Berger's, told me that Rising Star was a "glaring example of how *not* to do fieldwork." An excavation that took twenty-one days should have taken "more like twenty-one months." Johanson scoffed at Berger's claim about moving quickly in order to protect the fossils, saying, "It was urgent only to *him*."

Berger often dismisses his critics as clubby "emeritus" thinkers, but his questioners include young scientists in his own department. In Johannesburg, a number of them expressed concern to me that his enthusiasm leads him to overstate his findings. A Wits postdoc, Aurore Val, had just submitted a critique to the *Journal of Human Evolution*, challenging the body-disposal claim. "Darwin took twenty years before writing his book on evolution theory," she told me. "O.K., things have changed, and we have more people working and better techniques—but it still takes a lot of time to understand what is going on, especially if you're putting forward a hypothesis of deliberate body disposal. That's quite a big statement for human evolution."

At Wits, Berger works out of an office suite on the edge of campus. He keeps his blinds drawn and the fluorescent lights off. When I visited, "A Scrapbook of British Jazz" was playing on a turntable; a vanilla candle burned on the desk. He told me, "I've never seen any rule about a time stamp on how great science is produced." On another occasion, he said, "When people attack me, that's a way of trying to distract the media and other scientists. They're trying to prevent people from noticing that the science is changing."

Kimbel, the Arizona paleoanthropologist, told me, "The only thing he's doing that's new is social media." Johanson said, "Berger *wants* criticism, so that he can then say, 'Look at me, I'm not an élitist—I'm just a Georgia boy, and you're old school and jealous.'" He paused. "Well, *no*."

BERGER GREW UP an hour northwest of Savannah, in the farming town of Sylvania. His parents, Art and Rose Mae, met at the University of Arkansas. Art was the son of a Texas wildcatter. In one National Geographic documentary, Berger says, "My father was a geologist—exploration, discovery. It's probably in my blood."

Actually, his father was in real estate. He

ran a business called the American Land Company, largely out of his Lincoln Continental. "If you want to buy a railroad, give me twenty-four hours and I'll buy you one," Art told the Savannah *Morning News*, in 1990. He added, "I am rather flamboyant. But I pay attention to all the people in my life. . . . I treat kings and paupers all the same. I can chew tobacco or eat caviar with the best of them."

For most of Berger's childhood, his family lived on a farm of about five hundred acres. Rose, who is in her seventies, described the house as white, with columns, "like Tara."

Berger and his brother, Monty, who is two years older, divided the chores: Monty tended the cattle, and Lee raised the pigs. Rose told me that Monty was quieter, and worked hard; Lee was social and disliked feeding his animals. She said of Lee, "I get tickled—I kind of had to *make* him work. The last time he visited me, he said, 'Mama, you taught me my work ethic, and I really appreciate it.'"

Showing animals at the county fair, Berger found a love for public speaking. Rose helped him smooth his stage presence, and tutored him in math, his worst subject. Berger told me, "I was obviously bright in a very rural environment, so very early on I realized I could do the bare minimum and get by without having to do the studying."

He liked attention, and his exploits appeared frequently in the Sylvania *Telephone:* crafting Christmas ornaments with dough, entertaining children as a ventriloquist. He became statewide president of the 4-H Club. ("Lee loved being an officer," Rose said.) He joined the debate team. ("They won *all the time*.") He found arrowheads. ("We had them framed.") He started a refuge for gopher tortoises. ("He won the state wildlife award for saving those turtles.") Rose collected news clippings in a scrapbook, underlining her son's name in red ink.

Berger attended Vanderbilt, on a Navy R.O.T.C. scholarship, but after failing several classes he dropped out. Having enjoyed a course in videography, he got a job in Savannah as a TV-news cameraman. One night in September, 1986, he heard on the police scanner that someone had jumped into the Savannah River. He rushed over with his camera. Rescuers were throwing lines to a woman—psychiatric problems had led her to make the leap—but she didn't seem to be grabbing hold. Berger plunged in and hauled her out, and was hailed as a hero. "I became very, very famous around the country," he told me.

Berger is such a facile storyteller that people have wondered if the river story is true. It is, though one fact gets lost in the retelling: the presence of a second rescuer. "Both men jumped into the river after reporting officers got the life preserver to the victim," the Savannah Police Department's incident report reads. "Both men swam out to the victim and put her ashore." (Berger says that the other man only swam alongside him.)

Berger decided to leave TV news. "Suddenly, I was more famous than the news anchor," he told me. He eventually enrolled at Georgia Southern University, where his mother taught math. "I'd covered a couple of archeology stories, and I suddenly realized that I'd grown this passion for collecting things—I was really good at finding things," he says. "And every time I met someone who was an archeologist I realized they were happy."

He told his mother that he'd found a career. "He said, 'I know what I want to be, but I won't make much money, and I know you won't like that,'" Rose recalls. "I said, 'Lee, if you'll be the best in your field, the money'll come.'"

Rose arranged for a colleague to enlist him in a South Dakota dinosaur dig. After reading Johanson's 1981 best-seller, "Lucy," Berger decided instead to pursue paleoanthropology and search for what he likes to call the "rarest, most sought-after objects on earth." He says, "I realized, There's a field that if you made even one tiny discovery you could have this huge effect. And it was a young field—there was hardly anyone in it."

When Johanson came to Savannah, to deliver a lecture, Berger offered to drive him around and put him up at his parents' beach house, on Tybee Island. He asked for help getting into the field, and wound up on an expedition in Kenya. He tells audiences that he got hooked his first day of fossil hunting, after he "looked down and there was a femur of a hominid, lying on the ground."

He decided to attend graduate school. East Africa was all "sewn up." South Africa, though, was wide open.

In November, 1924, lime quarrymen found a small skull embedded in breccia near the South African town of Taung. The skull and other fossils were sent to Raymond Dart, a comparative neuroanatomist at Wits. Using his wife's knitting needles, Dart flaked away the rock matrix, and a tiny face was revealed.

Dart initially thought that the skull belonged to an ape. But there were anomalies; the hole where the spine extends from the head was positioned too far forward to be simian. "The Taung child," as the specimen came to be known, had walked upright. Less than three months after receiving the skull, Dart described it, in *Nature*, as an intermediate creature between apes and humans. It took more than a decade for the scientific community to accept the Taung child as the first evidence of human evolution in Africa.

Scientists subsequently made significant fossil finds in South Africa, but by the late eighties the discoveries had largely dried up. Academics were boycotting the country, because of apartheid. Berger enrolled at Wits, anyway, having learned that the school's fossil vault held specimens that had never been described.

He studied with the head of the paleoanthropology department, Phillip Tobias, a respected anatomist and a strong opponent of apartheid. Tobias had expanded excavations at the Sterkfontein caves, a famous fossil site, and had appeared in TV documentaries; later, he received an award from Nelson Mandela. Tobias once told a journalist that Berger initially had impressed him with his "enormous enthusiasm."

Berger tells audiences that he made a find "very quickly" in South Africa, at a site called Gladysvale: "two hominid teeth—the first new early-hominid site discovered in South Africa in forty-eight years." The find, he adds, "made *National Geographic!*" The moment is a key milepost in Berger's narrative: his good fortune was followed by nearly two decades of fruitless searches.

In fact, Berger found neither tooth. A student named Michelle Erasmus found the first one; someone else found the

second. Following convention, Berger was named the discoverer because he led the dig. "I'm the one who recognized the teeth as important," he says. At the time, he declared to the media, "Within ten years or so, we will be able to state the exact origins of man."

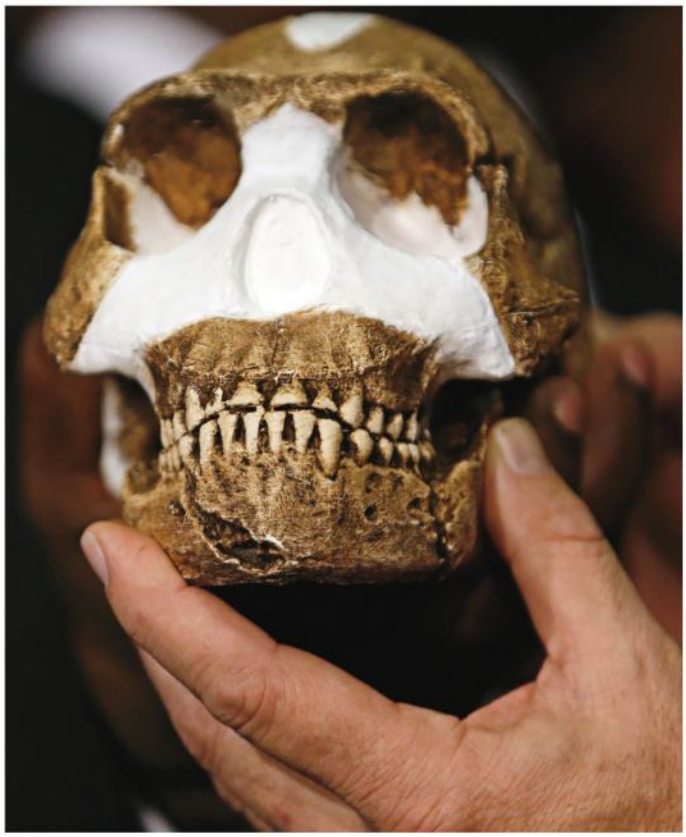
As Tobias later put it, Berger was proving himself to be a student whose "push and drive, bordering on the aggressive, tended toward rivalry with some of the other very bright students." He was still pursuing his Ph.D. when, in the early nineties, Tobias announced his retirement, and it became clear that Wits would scale back the paleoanthropology program. By then, Berger had married Jacqueline Smilg, a South African radiologist. (In addition to Matthew, they have a daughter, Megan, a college student.) In 1994, Berger co-founded a nonprofit, the Palaeontological Scientific Trust, which raised enough money to preserve the Wits program—and showed that Berger had a talent for fund-raising.

Berger characterized himself as Tobias's chosen successor, though others thought that the position might go to his colleague Ronald Clarke, a British scientist whom Tobias had hired to direct excavations at Sterkfontein. Clarke and Berger had once collaborated, publishing a paper suggesting that an eagle had killed the Taung child. But with Tobias's job in play they clashed.

Berger won the position. The following year, dissatisfied with Clarke's productivity, he decided not to renew his contract, later defending the decision by telling the press that Clarke had "no great record."

Clarke had been secretly working on a new find: *Australopithecus* foot bones from Sterkfontein. As he completed the remaining months of his contract, he came across more *Australopithecus* material in the Wits vault. He sent assistants to search for related fossils at Sterkfontein, and they found matching leg bones. An excavation produced a stunning skeleton, one of the few ever found. Clarke decided not to tell Berger, worried that he would take the credit.

Clarke made his discovery public in December, 1998, characterizing the skeleton, Little Foot, as the oldest hominin remains on record. The South Africa *Sunday Times* named Berger the Idiot of the Week. Clarke had accepted a position in Germany, but Thabo Mbeki, then South Africa's Deputy President, was calling him a national hero, and Wits moved to keep him at Sterkfontein. In an internal review, the university credited Clarke for the discovery and Berger for raising "nearly 98%" of Sterkfontein's recent operational funds. After that, Berger and Clarke worked separately; Berger no longer oversaw the Wits fossil collection.



A reconstruction of the skull of Homo naledi.

THEMBA HADEBE/AP

Soon after this embarrassment, Berger published a memoir, "In the Footsteps of Eve," co-authored with a radio journalist, Brett Hilton-Barber. It was the inaugural title for Adventure Press, an imprint of National Geographic. The book's tone was sometimes combative: Berger wrote that he'd been the victim of a "coup" at Wits, and suggested that such scientists as Tim White, a prominent scholar at U.C.-Berkeley who had made important finds in Ethiopia, had tried to thwart his attempts to show South Africa's importance in the field. Berger sensed a "lingering bias" against South African fossils. He predicted that South Africa, not East Africa, would prove to be the true birthplace of humankind.

In a review in the *Journal of Human Evolution,* Bernard Wood, a George Washington University paleobiologist, said that the book exceeded "by literally an order of magnitude the mistakes and errors I have ever encountered in a book": readers learned about "Astralpithecus" and the "Scottish midwife" Robert Broom (a noted South African paleontologist). Moreover, Wood wrote, Berger took too much credit, misleadingly suggesting that he had single-handedly discovered the complexity of australopith limb proportions.

Berger blames the errors on bad editing and says that his criticisms of other scientists were consistent with "the tenor of the field at the time." He attributes any persistent complaints about him to his "policies of open access" and his willingness to challenge esteemed scientists. Clarke, upon hearing this, told me, "There may be territorial fights between people, and professional disagreements, but the thing about Berger is not to do with that. It's to do with the fact that he just wants to be at the top. He's like Kim Jong-un, in North Korea: he just wants to show off, with theme parks and photos of himself riding something. Or Donald Trump—full of his own ego and self-importance."

Berger's second book, also written with Hilton-Barber, was a field guide to the Cradle of Humankind, intended for use in schools. When it appeared, in 2002, the *South African Journal of Science* commissioned two reviews. Judy Maguire, a Wits colleague,

noted an abundance of errors. (For example, sunlight does not, in fact, contain Vitamin D.) "Rarely was a guide in such a position to lead innocents astray," she concluded. The other review was by Tim White. He, too, listed mistakes: Olduvai Gorge, a famed fossil site, is in Tanzania, not Kenya. Calling the book "worse than useless," he observed that Berger "presents himself as the saviour, rescuing a moribund South African paleoanthropology with his fund-raising skills and ushering in 'A New Era.'" White noted, "It is true that Berger's rise to prominence signals a new era: one of smoke and mirrors."

White is the director of Berkeley's Human Evolution Research Center and a professor of integrative biology. His book "Human Osteology" is the standard text on skeletal anatomy. In 2000, his peers elected him to the National Academy of Sciences. White is "an extremely careful scientist," Carol Ward, a University of Missouri paleoanthropologist, told me. "Tim doesn't release information until he's sure."

In Ethiopia in 1992, White discovered what was then the oldest known hominin fossil: *Ardipithecus ramidus*. "Ardi" was 4.4 million years old—roughly a million years older than Lucy. It took three field seasons to extract the partial skeleton, and fifteen years before White's analysis and interpretation of the bones appeared in *Science*.

Berger has cited both White and Clarke, who is still working on Little Foot, as examples of scientists who withhold data and take too long to publish findings. White considers Berger to be engaged in "selfie science." When I first asked White about his feud with Berger, he declined to discuss it. He was wary of false binaries: old scholars versus new scholars, Luddites versus techies.

Then he changed his mind. One morning in January, I found him at Berkeley, at the Free Speech Movement Café, sitting beneath a placarded quote by the political activist Mario Savio: "There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part . . . and you've got to make it stop."

White, a wiry man in his sixties, wears Woolrich sweaters and speaks in a resonant bass. He expressed concern about the future of paleoanthropology and the public's understanding of science. The "C.E.O. types" who increasingly run universities mistake media attention for scholarship, he said: "It's the arm-wavers who can command attention."

Shortly after the *naledi* announcement, White wrote, in the *Guardian*, that society is "witnessing portions of science collapsing into the entertainment industry." He told me, "I have issues with narrative, as a scientist. If you don't recognize the boundary between fact and fiction, you should not be talking about science to a public that has to navigate that boundary."

In June, 2006, Berger vacationed with his family in the Pacific archipelago of Palau. During a guided tour, he learned of a cave that contained old bones. Palau protects its burial grounds, but tourists had been known to venture inside caves that contain human remains. Berger followed a guide to a small pile of fossils, and immediately identified them as hominin.

Two years earlier, some fifteen hundred miles to the southwest, on the Indonesian island of Flores, scientists had made headlines with the discovery of a population of tiny humans. Scholars were still debating whether the "hobbit" fossils represented a separate species, *Homo floresiensis*, or modern humans living with dwarfism or disease. Berger thought that the Palau bones might elucidate the Flores mystery. Upon returning home, he got the Palau government's permission to excavate, accompanied by National Geographic filmmakers. Weeks later, he returned with several colleagues and a film crew.

"The Lost Tribe of Palau" opens with Berger paddling around in a kayak. "Lee Berger is a renowned paleoanthropologist responsible for many groundbreaking discoveries about early man," a narrator says. Berger, sitting amid dense foliage, says, "It really is one of the last places on earth you'd expect to make a major paleontological find."

A plot twist comes early: the cave contains far more bones than Berger had expected. Viewers learn that "the find, combined with the range of ages and sheer number of bones here, suggests this cave could have been home to an entire community." By the eighth day, the team has collected more than twelve hundred fossil fragments—the cave appears "less like a dwelling and more like a mausoleum." The bones may be more than ten thousand years old, the scientists decide; a prominent brow ridge on one skull compounds the sense that the creature had an "almost freakish" appearance.

The brow bone, however, turns out to be a calcrete deposit often found in caves. Geologic dating soon shows the skull to be younger than expected—between fifteen hundred and three thousand years old. But the documentary doesn't linger on disappointment: Berger's team decides that the bones may represent a "tribe of previously unknown tiny humans." This leads to an enticing new mystery: why were the people so small? The scientists conclude that perhaps they weren't getting enough food.

On camera, Berger ponders whether cannibals—a "warrior tribe," as the narrator puts it—killed the islanders. Then he sets out to explore a sunken cave. The show winds down with him in scuba gear, having made what the narrator calls "the discovery of a lifetime." Publicizing the show, National Geographic declared that Berger's discovery "could challenge rules of human evolution."

Berger served as the lead author on a paper on the Palau bones, and in 2008 it appeared in PLoS ONE, an open-access, peer-reviewed online journal. An archeologist named Scott Fitzpatrick, now at the University of Oregon, read the paper. He has been conducting excavations on Palau since 1999. In a rejoinder titled "Small Scattered Fragments Do Not a Dwarf Make," he and two co-authors wrote that the bones were consistent with those of juveniles, and that the idea of nutrition-based dwarfism was preposterous, given the archipelago's "virtual cornucopia" of seafood.

Berger recently told me, "Our paper is solid." As for the Palau documentary, he said, "It's a *film*," and added that he had had no editorial control over it. Fitzpatrick told me, "To Lee's credit, he gets people excited about things, and with *naledi* he's found what are probably some amazing fossils. He's going against the grain of established paleoanthropology and doing it in a way that brings in young scholars and social media. And he's a reasonably smart guy and knows the

literature. But he gets excited and wants to publish something on the data he has, without going through those careful steps."

The Palau documentary isn't among the DVDs that National Geographic sells in its gift shop or online, but the film can be found on YouTube and, occasionally, on television. When it appeared on Australian TV, in 2010, Fitzpatrick publicly expressed dismay that "this pseudo-documentary is still being distributed."

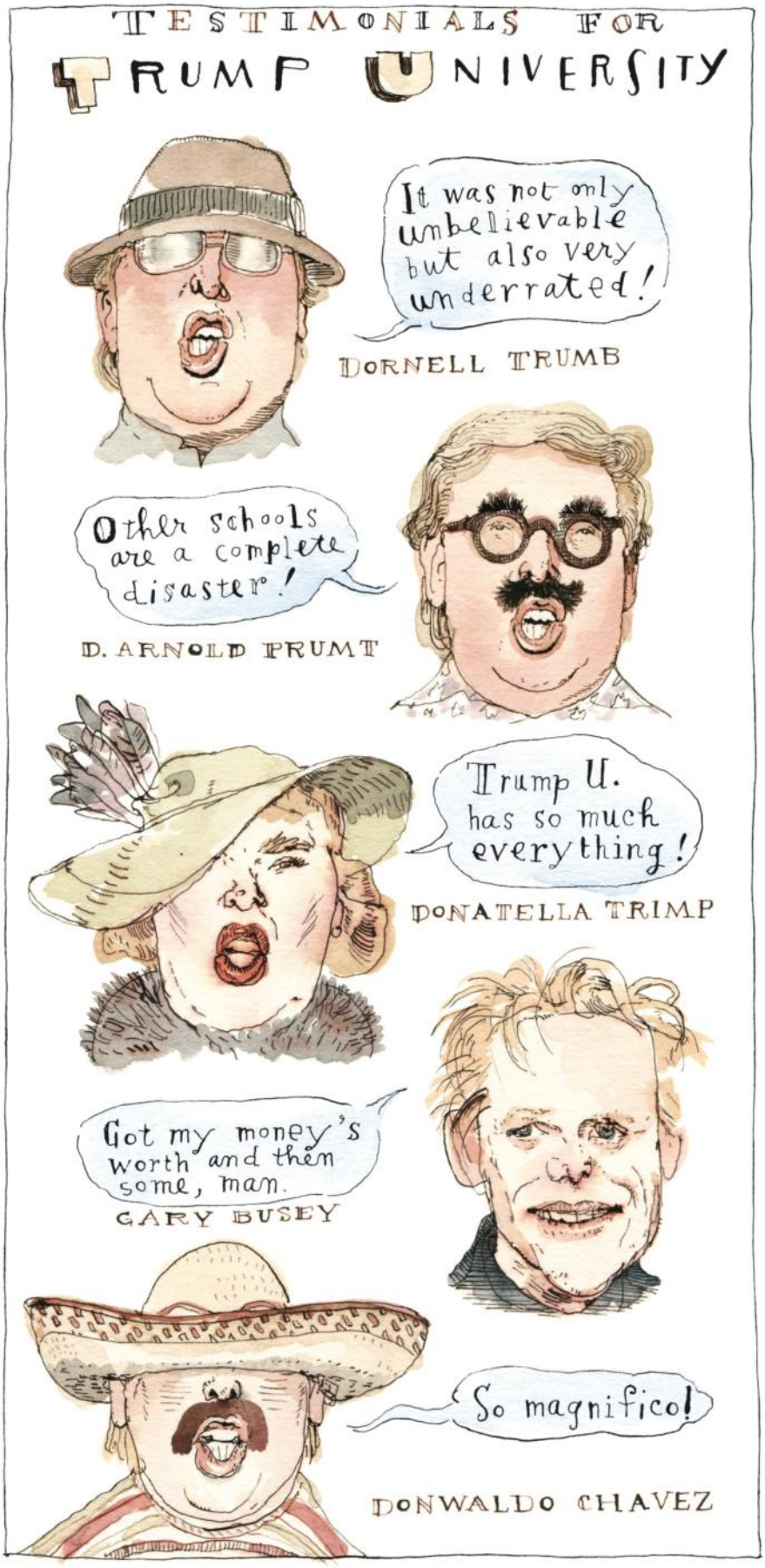
Berger's career path has coincided with the National Geographic Society's expanding interests. In the late nineties, a hundred years after its founding, as a "society for the increase and diffusion of geographic knowledge," the organization began extending its brand with film, television, and Web projects. A speakers' bureau was launched, as was a furniture collection. The National Geographic Channel is now available in nearly five hundred million homes. Its programming is scattershot: "Chasing U.F.O.s," a 2012 series on paranormal claims that included tales of alien abductions, was widely derided.

Last September, in a deal valued at seven hundred and twenty-five million dollars, the National Geographic Society and 21st Century Fox, a Rupert Murdoch company, announced plans to create a for-profit enterprise, National Geographic Partners. The society's endowment stands to grow to about a billion dollars, the *Times* reported, which will allow it to "double its investment in science, research, and education work." The new venture consists of cable, magazine, multimedia, e-commerce, and travel services. In January, Berger led tourists on a three-week around-the-world adventure, on a private jet, organized by National Geographic.

Last year in Johannesburg, Berger founded a nonprofit, the Lee R. Berger Foundation for Exploration. His past efforts have been supported not only by National Geographic but also by "senior captains of industry," he told me, including Richard Branson. "This type of science attracts people like that."

Berger has amassed a small fleet of vehicles whose side panels are emblazoned with decals advertising his foundation and National Geographic. One morning last December, in Johannesburg,

SKETCHBOOK BY BARRY BLITT



he picked me up in a silver Jeep Rubicon, and we drove into the Cradle of Humankind. His son, who had just turned sixteen, joined us, as did John Hawks, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Hawks, who supervised the peer review of the Palau paper, had flown in to work on the *naledi* project. More fossils had been discovered, not far from the first location, but this hadn't been announced publicly yet. Berger said, "We're both into game strategy, and we like to talk about timing."

About thirty miles northwest of the city, we entered the Cradle, which is a hundred and eighty miles square. The high veldt rolled away, in shades of coffee and wheat. We passed blesbok, oryx, wildebeest. At Maggie's Farm, a roadside restaurant, we ordered breakfast on the patio. A weaverbird, yellow as police tape, flitted about, building a nest.

Berger said to Hawks, "You see ranting and raving about a 'NOVA' show and the 'contamination of science,' and how one should never have television cameras related to major discoveries, or coördinate the output or outcome."

"It's interesting to think of the ways people exercise control," Hawks said. "So much of the process of science is in knowing who the peer reviewers are, and in the reviewers calling each other and talking about things."

Hawks, who is forty-three, has a short beard and often wears a fedora. He has appeared in TV segments for National Geographic, PBS, and the Discovery Channel, and recently launched an online class. He blogs, and has written, "Blogs are not research, but in some fields they have become an important part of the process of networking and critical commentary." Berger has chastised his opponents for criticizing him in the media, but his most steadfast defense takes place on Hawks's blog. Last Thanksgiving weekend, just after Tim White published the *Guardian* article lamenting that pop storytelling was "skewing the science," Hawks wrote, "Let's face it, the paleoanthropology family has a few cranky uncles who fart at the dinner table just to get a rise out of people."

After breakfast, Berger drove to a field office and swapped the Rubicon for a game-reserve vehicle. Going off-road, he took a jolting path through acacia trees toward Malapa, the *sediba* site. The place was deserted. Matthew disengaged an alarm that deters baboons, and we entered the graceful open-air shelter that had been built above the excavation pit. Berger pointed out the platform's architectural features, including legs angled to harmonize with the landscape. "There's a lot of tricks in perception," he said.

Berger next drove toward Rising Star, the *naledi* site. Upon seeing a herd of blesbok, he stopped the vehicle and said, "*Pfftttt*," in the animals' direction. A bull snorted in response. Berger, louder, went, "*Pfffffttt!*" The bull ran off, and Berger said, "Ha! I won."

At Rising Star, the cave's mouth was now blocked by a padlocked gate. He walked upland, pointing out where he hoped to build a high-end visitor center, possibly in the shape of a skull.

The Cradle of Humankind is a government designation, but the land is privately owned. Berger's nonprofit had bought fifty-two acres, and was thinking of buying seventy-seven more. He said, "If we do this right, in twenty or thirty years we could insure that the caves benefit the economy of the region and conserve it in perpetuity." He had shown me blueprints of the visitor center in his office, where he'd also let me sit in on a meeting about making interactive *naledi* holograms available to schools, museums, and South African tourism officials. Gauteng province was talking about installing a hologram at the airport. "It would be standing there as you pick up your bags," Berger had told two philanthropists on his foundation's board. At Rising Star, tourists would use smartphones and virtual reality to "experience" the journey to the fossil chamber; in a theatre, they might ponder how we had thought that our treatment of the dead separates us from other animals, only to realize that *naledi* "takes that from us."

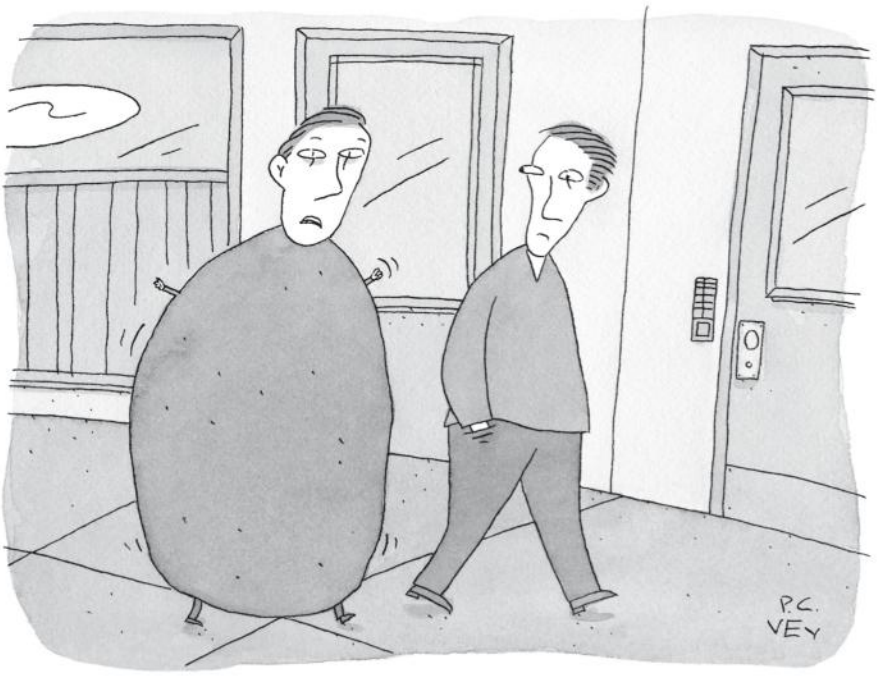
Berger pointed toward the new fossil location, and hinted that the find would support the body-disposal theory. Hawks said, "I have to say, I'm pretty shocked that there hasn't been more criticism."

Three months later, the *Journal of Human Evolution* published the critique by Val, the Wits postdoc who had questioned the body-disposal claim. Val wondered how the team could have made its radical conclusion without having established the bones' geological age or having excavated beyond a small fraction of the chamber. Only a third of the fossils had been "microscopically analysed," and the bone surface was intact

on only six of five hundred and fifty-nine pieces, she noted. As a result, tooth marks, or cuts, or signs of trampling by predators "might not be preserved." Val added that the team had used an "unknown" method of analysis, making it hard for future researchers to check the findings. She urged a broader excavation and an "extensive geological assessment," using "established methods."

The journal then published Berger's response to Val, in a paper whose lead author was Paul Dirks, an Australian geologist who led part of the *naledi* analysis. The researchers noted that Val had neither examined the *naledi* materials directly nor visited the fossil chamber before offering a "reinterpretation" of the data. Responding to her doubt that hominins with small brains could establish and maintain a complex funerary tradition, they said, "The closest living relative of *H. naledi* is our own species, which exhibits elaborate mortuary behavior in every culture."

Another Wits colleague, Francis Thackeray, did examine the fossils, and he recently joined Val in disputing the disposal theory. Thackeray found what he calls evidence of lichen on the bones, and this suggested to him that the remains had been exposed to extensive daylight; this is hard to reconcile with the idea that the creatures lugged carcasses through narrow, pitch-black passageways and then left them to rot in a remote chamber. Thackeray thinks that maybe the creatures got trapped by rockfall. Berger has discounted this possibility; to him, the evidence suggests that the bodies came into the cave over time. In the press, he called Thackeray's hypothesis "flimsy" and said, "I am sticking with my theory."



"If you're ever granted three wishes, don't blow them all on a giant potato body with tiny arms and legs."

• •

On December 2, 2015, *Discover* chose *Homo naledi* as the second-best science story of the year—after the flyby of Pluto. That evening, in Johannesburg, Berger gathered with thirteen young entrepreneurs at a restaurant called the Codfather. The group meets regularly to discuss social issues. Berger had brought a cast of the *naledi* skull. On a private table in the restaurant's wine vault, it sat among the stemware like a wayward Halloween prop.

Berger stood to speak, describing the 2008 *sediba* discovery as the period when "all my dreams came true." To be published in *Science* was "like, if you're a rock star, being on the cover of *Rolling Stone*." *Naledi,* he suggested, was a lottery won twice.

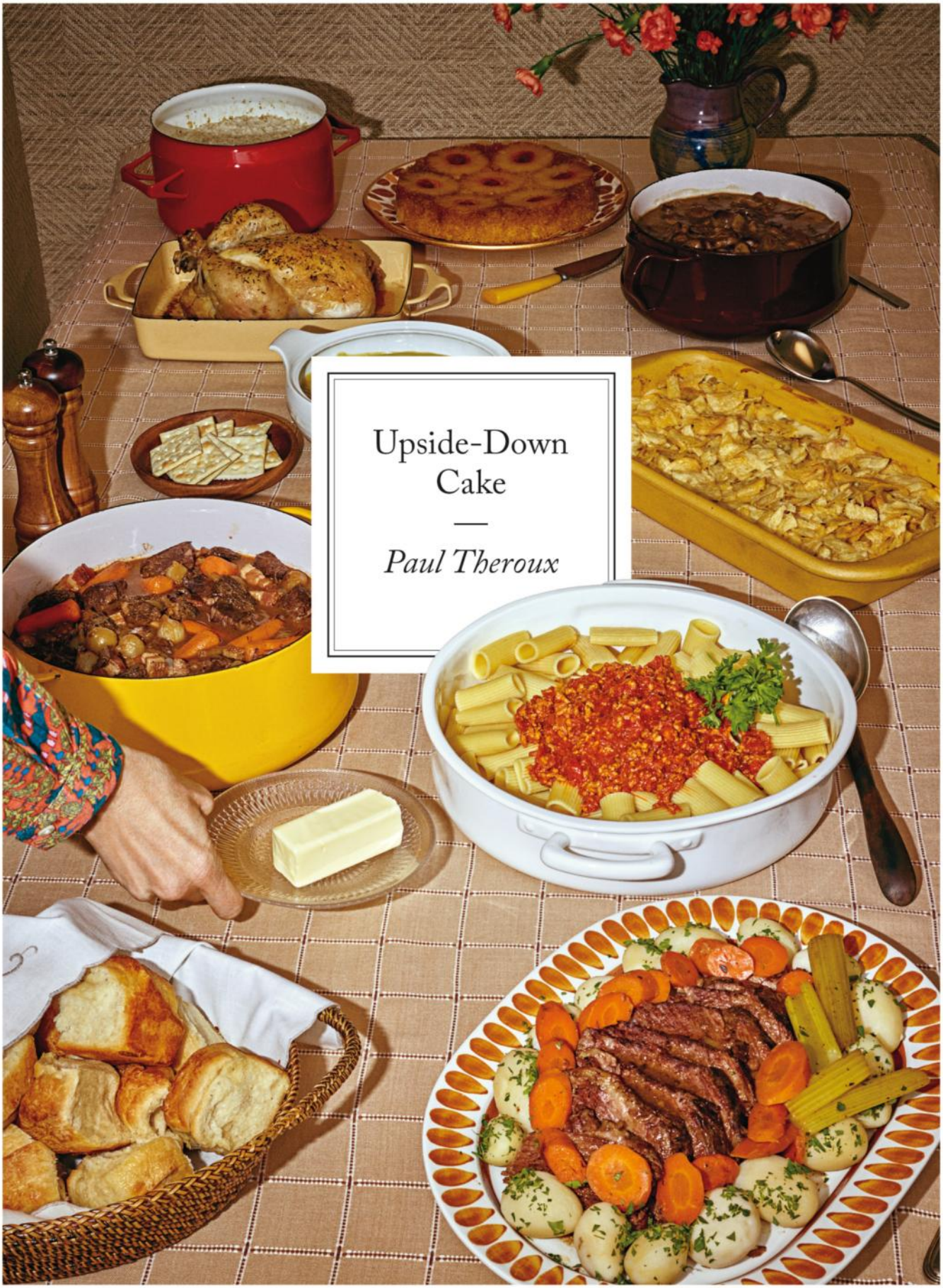
One guest said that people with good ideas often find it challenging to convince investors that "*they're* the risk" worth taking. Berger told him, "Every time I tell the story of *sediba,* and my son, Matthew—'Dad, I found a fossil'—it sounds like a eureka story of kid, dog, fossil, hero. That's because it's a good story. And people like to hear good stories." (He caps the story with a reminder that the find came after years of persistent fieldwork.)

In 2000, four months after Berger's "Footsteps of Eve" was published, the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* published a piece, by Tim White, about the state of paleoanthropology. White drew a distinction between "the scientist versus the careerist," warning that "irresponsible proclamations momentarily seize the public's attention in popular news and go straight into textbooks. The retractions rarely do."

Berger often references this paper in his talks, but that isn't the part he cites. He mentions a passage in which White predicted, "The best of the African fossil fields have probably already been found and exploited." White says that he was referring to open-air fossil beds—the kind East Africa is known for—and that he never intended to sound so pessimistic. Berger, in public addresses, deploys the line like a narrative shiv: it's the moment when a lion of the science announces the death of discovery, and the field desperately needs salvation. Then, describing *naledi* and *sediba* as evidence of treasure waiting to be found, Berger leaves audiences energized by the idea that anyone can make important discoveries. He tells them that we're living in the "greatest age of exploration."

In April, Berger proclaimed on social media that he had "big news." Given the many questions surrounding *Homo naledi*, some assumed that his team had finally dated the fossils, and could now say with more authority how the discovery fit into the evolutionary picture.

But that wasn't it. Berger announced that he had made *Time's* annual roundup of the world's hundred "most influential" people. He was soon disseminating photographs of himself in a tuxedo, at a Manhattan gala, walking a red carpet. ♦



Upside-Down Cake

Paul Theroux

PHOTOGRAPH BY GRANT CORNETT

Every visit to an aged parent is in the nature of a farewell. When I got a save-the-date postcard for Mother's ninetieth, I thought, Oh, God. A birthday can seem like a kind of funeral. Then I saw an opportunity, and said yes, and made my arrangements, and looked forward to the event. But the private function room at the Happy Clam *was* funereal, with bouquets and long faces—Rose with her back turned, Gilbert and Fred conferring, Franny fussing over her son, Jonty. We all stood gaping and glassy-eyed, as though we were about to bury Mother.

I had arrived on time, resolved to see it through. The spouses were rattled—Franny's husband, Marvin, ill at ease out of his security-guard uniform, Fred's wife, Erma, sighing and snatching at her hair, Rose's husband, Walter, monkeying with a camera as a way of snubbing everyone else. Jonty's little girl, Jilly, was the center of attention, the adults shouting at her as she ran back and forth.

"Run to Granma! Run to Granma!" Jonty called out. "Jilly, listen to me!"

Mother recoiled as the child approached, then smiled slightly when Jilly tripped and fell. Jonty swept up Jilly, who began howling.

"I had a child named Angela," Mother said. "She died. She's in Heaven."

"Granma is, I believe, the name of the official Cuban newspaper," someone said very loudly. It was Floyd, in a black fedora, leaning on his tightly rolled umbrella. "I always found that terribly ironic. It was named after the yacht that brought the guerrillas to fight in the Cuban Revolution in 1956."

"But why was the yacht called Granma?" Rose asked.

"Funnily enough, because the man who owned it, a gringo, had named it after his Granma. But you knew that, of course."

"Jilly, tell me where it hurts, honey," Jonty pleaded with the shrieking child.

"Who was it who said, 'If you're strong enough to scream, it can't hurt that much'?" Floyd said, winking at Mother and stepping past me to give her a kiss. "Was it you, Mother?"

This was the Floyd I remembered from happier days, the man who burned up the air in the room and left people gasping in the vacuum, the man who told me once, "Mother's obsession with dead Angela is harmless enough. Think of Paul Verlaine's mother. She kept her dead fetus—was it a pair of foeti?—in a bottle of alcohol for years, for the family to mourn."

"We're waiting for Hubby—oh, there he is," Fred said, as Hubby appeared at the door. His wife, Moneen, hurried to the other spouses, the second tier of relations, in the cheap seats.

Franny handed Floyd a shopping bag. "Your favorite," she said. Floyd picked through the bag, sorting fruit and candy, and held up a pink metal drum of Almond Roca.

"The trouble with them is I can't open them fast enough," Franny said.

"One would never have known that," Floyd said, "to look at you." He found something else, a cellophane bag. "Mixed nuts. That is so appropriate to this day of days."

The triumph at such a family gathering lay in concealing your real feelings. But already this was unravelling.

"Maybe we could sit down," Fred said, raising his arms. "Everyone's here."

Floyd began shaking nuts into his hand. "Why is it," he said, as he rattled the nuts in his fist like dice before shooting them into his mouth, "that people always do this when they're eating nuts?"

"I'm not sitting next to him," Hubby said, and moved his place card down the table.

"Lovely shirt, Hubby," Floyd said, chewing. "I always knew those were going to come back into style someday."

"For the love of God," someone muttered.

"The *placement*," Floyd said, pronouncing the word the French way—*plassmon*—and fluttering his fingers at the place cards. "It's worthy of the court of Versailles. 'I know my place.' 'Who's in, who's out?' 'I won't sit next to you.'"

"But there's an extra place," Marvin said.

Mother stared at him. He stammered and clutched his belt, as no doubt he did at the mall, one hand on his Taser, one on his Mace can.

"Mah-vin," Franny said. Still an outsider, not one of us, after all these years, Marvin did not realize his mistake even when it was pointed out to him. This seemingly extra place was, of course, for Angela, who had been with us, guiding Mother, for fifty years, since dying at birth.

Fred and Gilbert sat on either side of Mother, Franny and Rose next to them, then Hubby, Jonty—Jilly on his lap—and the spouses, Marvin, Moneen, and Erma. Walter was snapping pictures. Floyd took his seat, and I sat next to him.

Floyd started to tug at my shirt. "This is—what, Jay? Shirred silk? Chiffon? I like its epicene *in-soo-shuntz*. Its diaphanous drape. Its hand."

Mother sat like a queen, beaming over the motley crowd at the table. Seven years on from Father's funeral, we all looked bigger but droopier, the same people wearing odder, older masks, all of us like large, misshapen children.

"How wonderful to have all my family here," Mother said. "I'm so lucky."

"We're the lucky ones, Ma!" Franny said.

"Mumma, we've been looking forward to this," Rose said.

Hubby said, "Will someone pass the bread?"

Floyd juggled a bread stick and said, "Are you saying you'd like one of these up your end?"

Breathing hard with impatience, Hubby scowled. He said, "So, do we get menus?"

"Menu is, of course, the grandson of Brahma, and his law must be obeyed," Floyd said. "One apposite law regarding temperance is 'He must eat without distraction of mind.'"

"No menus. Fred chose the meal," Mother said. "It's simpler. We thought you'd prefer it that way."

Mother said she was happy—and for once she seemed to be telling the truth. But her happiness was possible only because the rest of us were miserable. Looking around the room, I saw how shamefaced we seemed. We had betrayed one another too many times to be able to sit comfortably around the same table together. But Mother had prevailed; she had insisted on our being there, and had implied—as she often did—that if we coöperated there would be a reward for us in her will. She held out the prospect of her death to command our attention, yet she was the only person at the table who, small and sinewy, looked healthy, even

indestructible. Just a glance told me that the rest of us would leave the table much angrier than before. So Mother had got her wish and was fulfilled in all the important ways—having her birthday party, receiving presents, and, with this large get-together, dividing us by creating more confusion.

"May I request a beverage?" Floyd said.

"Take your hat off," Fred said.

"If you say the magic word," Floyd said, removing his hat and spinning it on his finger. "A drink, 'a beaker full of the warm South'"—he was leaning toward Jonty—" 'the blushful Hippocrene, with beaded bubbles winking at the brim.' Source?"

Jonty turned away. Hubby set his face at him. Franny and Rose shrugged.

"You want Johnny Keats," Floyd said, and raised a finger, reciting, "'The dunces flutterblasting, with food-splashed faces'—a citation, if you please."

Hubby said "Diet Coke" to the waiter.

"I think you'll find that it was I who penned those words," Floyd said, crossing his legs. "Why is it that your so-called diet drinks are the preference of the chubbies and the chunkies, as if some arcane magic attached…"

"Shut up," Hubby said.

The drinks were handed out, we toasted Mother, and the first course was served—clam chowder and soda crackers.

"Careful, hon," Franny said to Marvin, "don't season it." She explained to the table, "He's got acid reflux wicked bad. He's on Zantac."

"For the P.P.I.," Marvin said, with the pedantry of a chronic sufferer. "Proton-pump inhibitors."

"I seem to recall it was stool softeners," Floyd said. "A bewitching pair of words. Like panty shields."

When Marvin looked up, his chin thrust out like a claw hammer, Rose said, "It's not funny. I'm on prednisone, Ma."

Mother smiled like a cat and licked the chowder rim from the bristles above her lips.

"Has anyone here tried Ambien?" Gilbert said. "I've finally gotten a night's sleep with it. Call it my drug of choice."

"Walter's on Paxil," Rose said. "It seems to calm him down—doesn't it, honey?—and helps him sleep."

"I take, like, a ton of potassium," Jonty said. "I've got a problem with electrolytes."

"I love the gallant names," Floyd said. "Ceedrex, for my liver and lights. I eat them like candy."

"All I take is blood thinner," Hubby said.

"What about that stuff to lower your cholesterol?" his wife said.

"And that—Lipitor."

"What are you on, Ma?" Franny said, raising her voice, as we all did when addressing Mother.

"These people who take nitroglycerin for their heart," Floyd said. "Why don't they explode? And, by the way, in which novel does a character self-combust?"

"'Bleak House,'" I said. "The rag-and-bone man, Krook. 'Inborn, inbred, engendered in the corrupted humours of the vicious body itself.'"

"Isn't education a wonderful thing?" Floyd said.

"What am I *on*?" Mother said, but did not speak again until all eyes shifted to her, as she sat glaring at Franny. When we had fallen silent, she said again, "What am I *on*?" She spoke loudly and became indignant. Her girlish shudder was studied and stagy. "I'm not *on* anything."

Though we marvelled at Mother for taking no medication, it seemed to me that she was calling attention to her stoicism; mortification was her way of outdoing us in our maladies.

"There is no medicine for what I have," Mother said, her fingers stroking the skin flaps of her scrawny throat.

"Mumma!" Franny cried, as though summoning her.

"Old age is incurable." Mother half closed her eyes. "My bags are packed."

"Please don't, Mumma," Rose said, whinnying a little.

Gilbert placed a reassuring arm around Mother, who wore an expression of quiet suffering.

Marvin whispered to Jonty, "You gonna finish the rest of that chowda?"

The spouses were flustered. In his confusion, Walter was still walking around the long table, his head bowed over his viewfinder, snapping pictures of us.

"Why don't we all take turns telling our happy memories?" Fred said. "Of Ma. Way back when."

Mother closed her eyes completely. She seemed to be lying in state as the meal became a proper funeral, with valedictions and reminiscences, Mother in the place of honor among the flowers, looking thwarted and doll-like, as the dead do, her skinny fingers twisted in her green shawl.

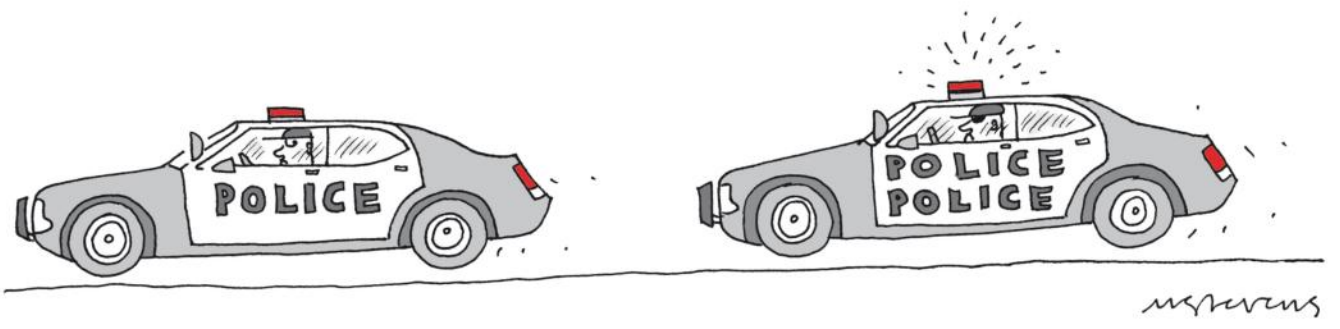
"Like when we had that creamy oatmeal," Hubby said, "that was never lumpy. Yum-yum."

"My favorite was the al-dente pasta," Rose said. "With the Bolo sauce."

"Both were thewy and farinaceous," Floyd said, tearing at a piece of bread. "And what was that witches' brew we had on Saturday nights, with the crunchy undercooked onion? And the fatty meat—that was the best part!"

"Pea soup," Franny said. "Kidney stew."

"Dad's favorite," Mother said. She was deaf to irony. Believing that her cooking was being praised, her eyes puddled, she began to cry. She dabbed



at her eyes. "I tried so hard to please you."

Floyd said, "Pot roast. Baked chicken. Fork tender."

"The way you put crunched-up potato chips on your fish casserole is what I used to like," Rose said. "I do that for my Walter."

"Ma made her own rolls," Hubby said. "No one does that anymore. Home-baked and fluffy."

"Parker House rolls," Mother said.

"Your pineapple upside-down cake," Gilbert said. "You put a cherry in the middle of each pineapple slice. The top was on the bottom, kind of a metaphor."

"My favorite," Mother said.

"And *bœuf en daube*," Floyd said, "a splash of brandy and a lovely Côtes du Rhône in the pot, served with baby carrots, lightly sautéed morel mushrooms, the pancetta, the bouquet garni, the white truffles, just a hint of tarragon."

"Don't be a jerk," Fred said.

"I have all Ma's recipes," Franny said.

"Sure you do," Hubby said. The flecks of chowder in the corners of his mouth made him seem more menacing.

The sarcasm about Mother's food thickened the air with frank hostility. We disapproved of the way we were behaving; we were childish and insincere. None of us wanted to be there, so we were spoiling it, and as we did the main course was served. Broiled scallops, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, and for each person an ear of corn in its own trough-shaped dish.

"I can't eat," Mother said, her face slackening.

"Are you upset, Ma?" Franny said.

Jonty said, "Just take a bite for Daddy," to his daughter, poking at her face with a spoonful of potato.

"Bay scallops," Marvin said, but pronounced it the off-Cape way, instead of rhyming it with "wallop," and we all stared at him.

"You always wonder, Which bay?" Floyd said. "But I happen to know. It is, of course, a species and not any specific bay! Your anthropologists will tell you that communal eating is a grand gesture of harmony. We are partaking, therefore we are in accord, and all our ill will is behind us, our—dare I say?—motiveless malignity."

Mother's eyes were shut, her expression meditative, slightly sunken. No one responded to Floyd. We went on eating. The conversation became milder, brittle with forced politeness. The more correct we were, the more obviously hostile.

"May I have a piece of bread?"

"You *may* have a piece of bread."

That sort of thing. This went on for a while, and then the table was cleared, the cake brought in and placed before Mother. The waitresses seemed harassed and incompetent, teen-age girls with untidy hair. "Enjoy," one of them said.

"An expression I deplore for its being a grammatical goofball," Floyd said. And to Jonty, "A solecism, as you might put it."

Mother smiled at the slumping, soggy cake, topped with eight lurid pineapple slices, most of them with a cherry in the middle, two with candles, and, on the sloping side, "MOTHER" spelled out in shaky worm-cast piping, with scrolls and roses around it.

"Make a wish, Ma," Franny said. "Pineapple upside-down cake. Your favorite."

But Mother had begun to look past us. "Hello?" she said, as though answering the telephone.

I followed Mother's gaze and saw, at the door of the room, just entering, Charlie and Julie, and little Patrick asleep in Julie's arms. The moment they arrived, the temperature in the room went down, the silence and the stillness shadowing forth a chill.

I stood up and said, "Let me introduce everyone." When I turned back to the table I saw puzzled, unwelcoming faces—crouching savages, staring at outsiders who had invaded their jungle feast. "This is Charlie, his wife, Julie. And Patrick."

"Dead to the world," Charlie said. "Long ride!"

No one spoke. Mother straightened in her chair and looked resentful, for the attention had been taken from her. Hubby and the others shifted in their seats. As though sensing the bewilderment, Jilly began to bawl. Little Patrick's eyes fluttered at the squawk, seeming to recognize the child's complaint, like a common language.

"Let me get you chairs," I said.

"How about this one?" Charlie seized a chair back.

Someone snorted. "No, no," I said. "That's Angela's."

"She in the john?" Charlie said.

"She's in Heaven," Mother said.

I found some folding chairs stacked in the corner. Charlie helped me set them up, a second row behind me. No one else moved or spoke.

"Blow out your candles, Mumma," Rose said.

The candles had melted and dripped and charred the flesh of the pineapples, but still the orange flames swayed.

"Here goes," Mother said.

"Her ninetieth," Marvin explained to Charlie, who had drawn his chair nearer the table so that he could see better. Julie held their sleepy child. Their presence delighted me.

Everyone at the table had gone silent, not knowing how to handle the abrupt entrance of these intruders at Mother's birthday party. They had stumbled upon our secret ritual and might have overheard us in our mumblings and chants. And, because I had introduced them, the hostility was directed at me. I was glared at more than Charlie.

"Take a group picture, Walter," I said.

"What about Angela?" Charlie said, gesturing to the empty chair. He must not have heard when Mother had said that Angela was in Heaven. Mother shut her eyes and suffered a little, as Franny and Rose gave Charlie dark looks.

After the upside-down cake had been cut and apportioned, Walter obliged with a family portrait. Floyd stood at the rear and, just before Walter snapped, exclaimed, "The House of Atreus!"

I knew my family's moods from the pulses in the air, the barometric pressure, a certain unmistakable whiff and wrinkle of sound, and I could tell that they resented these strangers' sharing in the photograph, taking up space with their smiles.

"Jay is something of a fop, but we forgive him his pretensions and his résumé inflation," Floyd said to Charlie. "He's the objective correlative by which we assess our plausibility. Let's face it"—we were still posing, Walter still snapping—"he has made some questionable choices. But in his mind he is

the sane one, and we are grotesques."

"Give it a break," Fred said. "Ma has a headache."

But family needling was a form of congeniality, and Floyd was being friendly. I took his teasing as a peacemaking gesture.

"Floyd's choices have been irreproachable," I said, and Floyd laughed.

"It's nice of you to have us," Charlie said, glancing at Mother, who stared at him. "Especially on this big day."

"Ya welcome," Rose said out of the corner of her mouth.

As though dismissing Charlie and Julie, Fred said, "Want seconds on the upside-down cake?"

Coffee was served by the harassed waitresses, but by then the family members had got to their feet, yawning, making grunts of farewell, mutters of apology, shufflings of departure. With the arrival of Charlie, the birthday had come apart, and only a residue, a faint echo of the meal remained. The hostility had leaked away, leaving—what? Confusion, collapse, for ill will had held us together and now there was simply indifference.

"Stick around," I said. "We can talk."

But no one lingered; no one gave Charlie a second glance.

"Charlie owns a software company in Boston," I said. "Ma, Charlie was looking forward to meeting you."

But Mother was being helped out of the room by Gilbert, and Fred pointed his finger at his head and made a face, meaning "headache."

When we were alone in the room, Charlie said, "Sorry, did we break up the party?"

"No, of course not," I said. As I spoke he gave me a hug, and little Patrick said, "Who's that man?"

Everyone in the big, porous, leaky family complained about Mother's birthday party afterward, whispering heavily into the phone, even Mother—guest of honor, recipient of presents—who'd had a good time.

"I can't believe that Jonty had the nerve to bring that daughter of his," Mother said to me, when I visited. "Who ever gave him permission to do that? And where was Loris—isn't that supposed to be his wife's name?"

I was surprised by Mother's fierceness, excessive even for her. She grew hoarse in her indignation and choked slightly—*hlook! hlook!*—a bone-in-the-throat gasping that always got my attention, even when I despaired of the naggy emphasis of her ham acting.

"Jonty should have known better. I specifically said, *no children.*"

Child-hating was not a pretense for Mother, the jokey exasperation of a sentimental woman, who spoke of her children insincerely as rug rats and burdens. She had already raised seven of them, plus the ghost of Angela—why more? Children bored her, they irritated her, they were always in the way. Worst of all, they took attention away from her.

"And only the immediate family," she said.

Then I knew what this was about. In this outburst of criticism, Mother was, of course, reprimanding me for inviting Charlie and Julie and little Patrick to the family event. This was how she stirred: criticism was always oblique.

Mother said, "Who did Jonty think was paying for that party?"

"I forgot to ask—aren't we sharing it?"

"I paid for it with my own money!" Mother said, screeching like a child shaking an empty piggy bank.

I watched her for a while and then said, "Maybe I shouldn't have invited Charlie."

Mother said, "He seemed very nice. I didn't mind his being there. I'm sorry

I didn't get a chance to talk with him." The noncommittal way she rolled the bones in her shoulders told me otherwise. The bones said, Why are you putting me through this by saying that?

"No one said much to them."

Seizing this with a jeering laugh, Mother said, "We were there for another reason, Jay. You can't just show up and expect people to be at your beck and call."

"But they had a good time. They liked meeting the family."

Mother smiled unpleasantly. "The little one came back for a second piece of upside-down cake."

A day or so later, Franny confirmed my suspicions.

"Ma was kinda put out by your friends," Franny said.

"They didn't eat much."

"They had an awful lot of cake."

Criticizing a three-year-old for eating cake was so preposterous I could not think of a reply. I hoped my silence would shame Franny. But she persisted.

"Hubby had seconds of chowder. And three big hunks of cake, a pineapple slice on each one."

"Is that a problem?"

"I'm just saying. I'm kinda worried about his health. He has issues. And he's always been heavy."

Another family irony was that the target of one person's criticism was often the critic of his accuser, and the complaint was usually identical. Franny said that Hubby was fat and greedy, and then covered it with this insincerity about his health; Hubby returned the compliment.

"Franny really stuffed herself," he said to me the next day. "And she's a blimp."

When, a few days later, Rose found fault with Fred—"wicked bossy bastard, playing God with the menu"—I knew that Fred would have a reply, and he did: "Her pushy husband sticking his camera in my face. And she's getting so manipulative."

My phone kept ringing, and always it was a brother or a sister carping about another brother or sister. The subject was Mother's birthday party, what a bad idea it had been, what a failure. And the soggy upside-down cake!

"At least Ma had a good time," I said.

"She was upset by all the little children," Fred said.

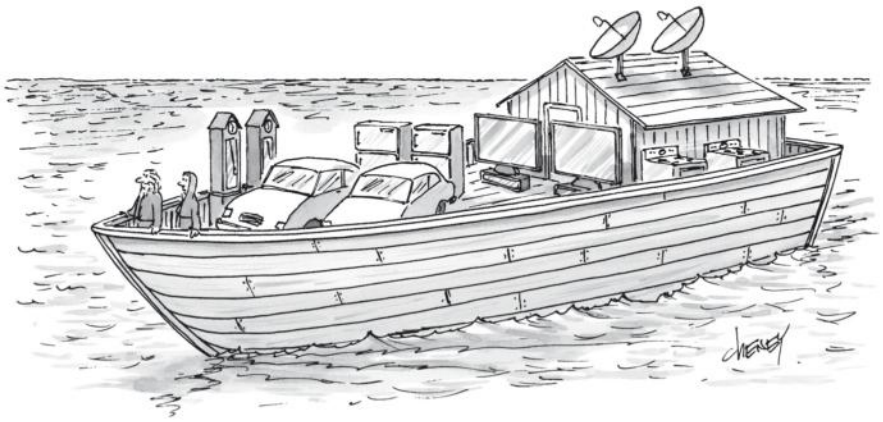
Two children—one of them my guest. No one dared criticize me to my face, which meant that behind my back they were buzzing, all of them angry with me.

All Charlie said afterward was "Thanks for having us. What an amazing family, even if it's a little scary. But I'm so happy to have a real grandmother."

In all this rancor, a voice that was generous.

The biggest surprise to me at

Mother's birthday party was Floyd—that he showed up was something of a miracle, but that was not all. His bearishness and his way of flaunting his scholarship were immutable aspects of his personality. What I had not expected was the energy and inventiveness of his incessant fooling. Though you had to have grown up in the family to appreciate the nuances of it, his teasing had been a compliment, the nearest thing there was in this family to a hug.



• • •

Walter sent everyone a set of pictures. Most of them were generic snapshots of us eating—faces chewing, busy arms—or of Mother posing with Fred and Gilbert, then with Franny and Rose. Hubby was shown sneaking a second helping of cake. Jonty's daughter, Jilly, looked ghoulish, like a furious dwarf in a folktale, her face smeared with resinous yellow icing. One of Mother—amazing how merciless the camera is—made her look like a Roman matriarch, one of those poisoners and plotters. From the snapshots, ours was clearly a heavy family, with balding men, pot-bellied women, hunched joylessly with fixed expressions, only Mother exulting.

The best picture, one I had hoped for and treasured, showed us all, with Charlie and Julie in front, little Patrick on Charlie's knee. I was crouched next to them. Mother was right behind them, affecting a pose of superiority in the way she leaned back, the better to be seen.

This was my prize. I had the photograph enlarged, so as to give it the formality of a portrait. Then I wrote a little note and made multiple copies of it:

> I am enclosing a picture taken at Mother's birthday party, which shows my son, Charlie, his wife, Julie, and my grandson, Patrick. You may remember that he was born in 1961 and put up for adoption. He has recently come into my life and is a part of my family. I omitted to mention this on the day.

This I sent to everyone. It was a dig, of course. They had not deserved to be told who he was. They had blamed me when he was born, had never inquired about him, had forgotten about him. At the party, as an anonymous stranger—but a cheery soul—he had been ignored. Yet here he was with a name, my flesh and blood, prosperous and happy, with an obvious family resemblance. I wondered what they would say.

Mother was the first to call. She was at once combative, cross that she had been upstaged. "Why didn't you tell me?"

As a stranger, Charlie had excited no interest; as my long-lost son, he was sought after.

"No one talked to him," I said.

"We didn't know him."

"You were angry that I invited him."

"How was I to know he was your son?"

"That's the point. He was a guest, obviously someone close to me. You thought he ate too much. Afterward, when I mentioned him, you said to me, 'You can't just show up and expect people to be at your beck and call.'"

"I never said that. I am a warm and hospitable woman, who would never send a helpless person from my door."

"Charlie has a lovely house. He owns a big company."

"Where does he live?"

"I'd rather not say."

"I want to write to him."

"He's thirty-eight years old. Isn't it a bit late for a letter?"

"I'm his grandmother!"

"You were angry when he was born. You said I should be ashamed. You never went to see him at Mass General."

Snorts on the phone indicated that Mother had begun to cry.

"Want to hear the funny part?" I said.

Sobbing, she sounded to me as if she were swallowing soup, gulping it.

"I want to send him a little something," Mother said.

"That's the funny part," I said. "He's a multimillionaire."

"Jay," Mother said, moaning with regret. "You can be so cruel."

Fred called. He said, "You made me feel like a fool. You didn't say anything about him."

"I left it up to you. It was a test of initiative. You failed, Freddy. Everyone failed. Ma failed."

"She called me. She told me you insulted her. She's a wreck."

I had no sooner put the phone down than Franny called.

"I had a feeling," Franny said. "I thought he looked like you. I knew all along. I didn't want to say anything."

Rose didn't call. Gilbert sent me a postcard from Bahrain. Hubby said, "I was just a little kid when he was born. As Dad would say, it's ancient history."

Floyd sent me a postcard with an enigmatic image on it, a painting by Goya titled "Perro Semihundido en la Arena," "Dog Half-Submerged," a dark study of a little mutt buried up to its ears in sand, its snout upturned, its eyes imploring, under a big smoky-yellow sky. His message: "I think this just about sums it up."

Not wishing to let him have the last word, I replied with a postcard of my own, a more hopeful one, Poussin's painting of Moses discovered in the bulrushes, and wrote, "Or this." ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
Paul Theroux on the fascination of large families.

A CRITIC AT LARGE

MAD SCENE

Baryshnikov plays Nijinsky in the grip of insanity.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

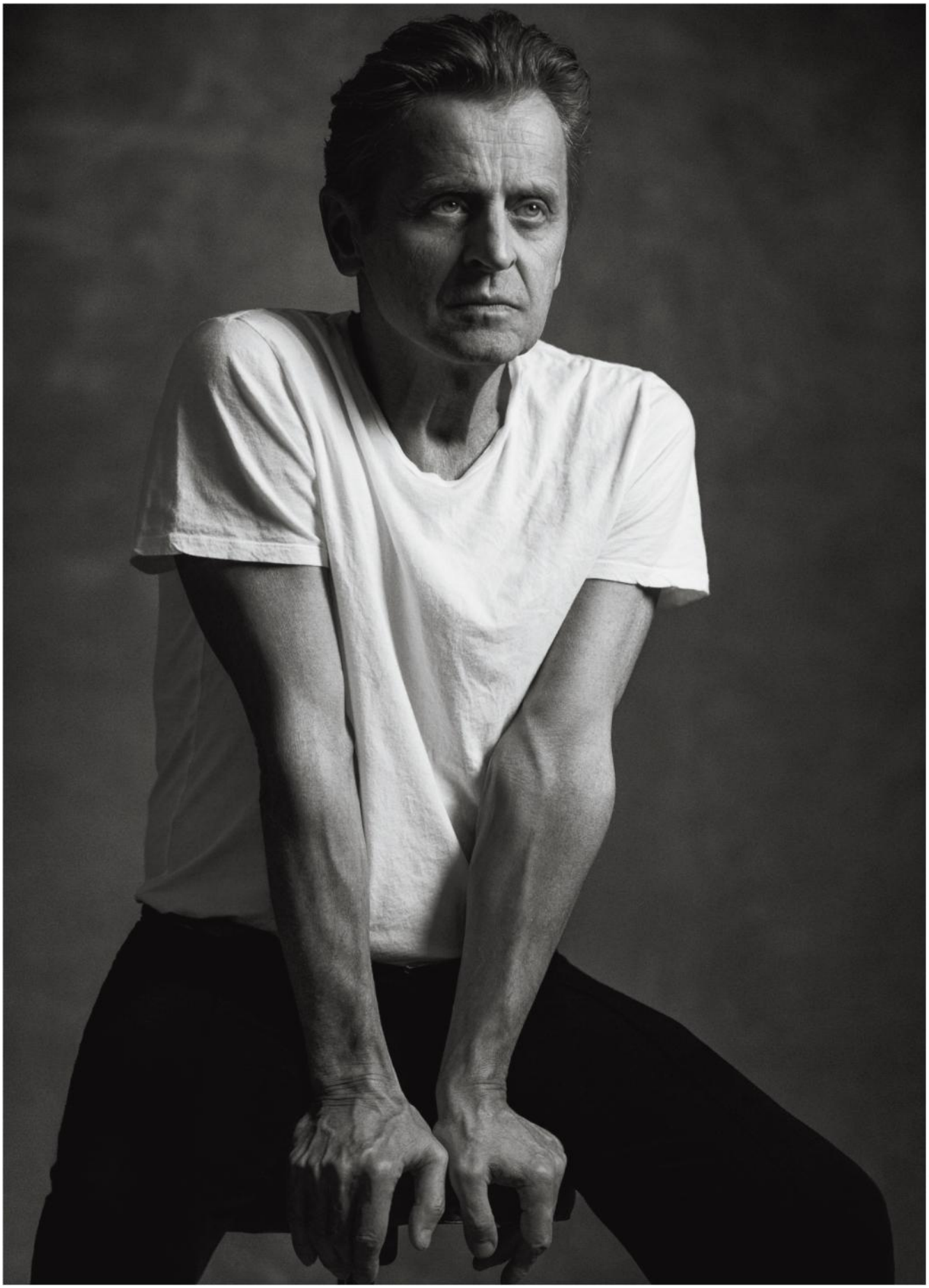
Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950), the great Polish-Russian dancer who, in his early twenties, introduced modernism into ballet and then went floridly insane, is a subject that was just waiting for the experimental theatre director Robert Wilson. Wilson has always been interested in mental aberrations. Indeed, as a child he had a "processing disorder," as he has called it. He was slow to read and slow to learn, and he had a terrible stutter. Once he overcame those problems, he addressed problems in others. When he was a young man, he worked as a therapist for brain-damaged children. Later, he cast an autistic teen-ager, Christopher Knowles, in a number of his shows. So it's easy to see why Nijinsky's condition, which is thought to have been schizophrenia, would have attracted him—as would Nijinsky's profession. Probably to the annoyance of some choreographers, Wilson, who has had no formal dance training, speaks of himself as a choreographer. "All theatre is dance," he has said.

If Nijinsky was perfect for Wilson, so was Wilson for Nijinsky. I have seen many plays and films and dances about Nijinsky, and most of them have been very bad, because the weight of sorrow in his story is so hard to carry. The author is never able to get the thing strong enough without its tipping over into a sort of freak show. The most familiar example is probably Herbert Ross's 1980 movie, "Nijinsky," with the dancer George de la Peña, in the title role, rolling on the floor and screaming gibberish. But this is not the kind of spectacle that Wilson would have wanted to produce. He belongs to the nonrealist, nonnarrative, visionary strain in modern theatre, the line stretching from Wagner down through the Symbolists and the Surrealists. (In 1971, when Wilson first showed his work in Paris, Louis Aragon, a surviving Surrealist, wrote that he was "the future that we predicted.") Wilson's dramatis personae are not regular people but wraiths, saints, murderers. In his skies are floating chairs, hanged men. Such imagery is obviously the product of strong feeling, but the image has closed over the feeling, shutting out psychology—the tears, the explanations—and thus keeping melodrama at bay.

Wilson also had the ideal star: Mikhail Baryshnikov. What a trick! To get the foremost male ballet dancer of the late twentieth century to portray the foremost male ballet dancer of the early twentieth century. In fact, a drama about Nijinsky's madness would not require a great classical virtuoso. What it would need is an actor-dancer of extreme subtlety, which is what Baryshnikov, in his late-sixties, had become. He was interested in playing Nijinsky. Over the years, he had had many offers. In 2013, Baryshnikov and Wilson were working together, on a different project, when each discovered that the other was fascinated by the diary—a torrent of pronouncements on lust and war and God—that Nijinsky produced in 1919, right before he was institutionalized. Wilson said that he had thought of undertaking a stage version. He asked Baryshnikov if he wanted to play the lead. Wilson's longtime collaborator, the writer Darryl Pinckney, was brought in, to assemble a scenario. In July of last year, "Letter to a Man," a one-person show, had its première, at the Festival of Two Worlds, in Spoleto. This summer, it is touring in Europe. In October, it will land at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

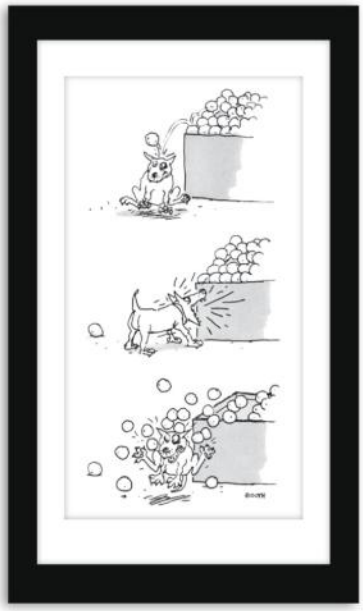
The "man" in "Letter to a Man" is the impresario Serge Diaghilev, who spotted Nijinsky in 1908, when he was the nineteen-year-old prodigy of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Ballet, bedded him, and then made him the leading man of the Ballets Russes, the company he founded, in Paris, in 1909. In the roles Nijinsky danced for that troupe—Petrushka, the Spectre of the Rose, the Golden Slave—he became famous throughout Europe. Under Diaghilev's tutelage, he also began to choreograph. His "Afternoon of a Faun" (1912) and "Rite of Spring" (1913) can be called the first modernist ballets. By the time of the "Rite," however, the intimacy between Nijinsky and Diaghilev had cooled, and Nijinsky, going behind Diaghilev's back, married a Hungarian society girl, Romola de Pulszky, who was a sort of groupie of the company. This was a shocking action on Nijinsky's part. Whatever the two men's feelings toward each other, they were a couple. They lived together, openly. Furthermore, Nijinsky's career depended on Diaghilev—a fact that he apparently did not understand. When, soon after the wedding, Diaghilev fired him, the dancer wrote to Igor Stravinsky, asking

ABOVE: MIGUEL PORLAN



Mikhail Baryshnikov and Robert Wilson share a fascination with Nijinsky's diary, written as he was going mad.

PHOTOGRAPH BY INEZ AND VINOODH



him to intercede: "If it is true that Serge does not want to work with me—then I have lost everything."

He had. By the end of 1917 he was without work. He and Romola, with a three-year-old daughter, moved to Saint-Moritz, and there, over the course of the next year, Nijinsky slowly went mad. Eventually, he bought some school notebooks at the local stationer and began his diary, recording his horror over the First World War, his disgust with sensuality, his fear that the world was being destroyed, and his certainty that he was being hunted down, spied upon, slandered, poisoned. Sometimes he believed he was God—at the end of the first half of the diary, he signs off as "God Nijinsky"—while at other times he feared he had been abandoned by God.

Always, in the margins of the diary, we feel the looming presence of Diaghilev. Included in the text is a series of letters, none of which seem to have been sent. The most passionate is headed "To a Man" (hence Wilson's title). The letter is to Diaghilev, whom Nijinsky says he will not deign to name, but whom he bitterly denounces.

"Letter to a man" is a sort of vaudeville show, a series of acts, most of them featuring Nijinsky-Baryshnikov in a tuxedo and elaborate whiteface: the face of Pierrot, of Petrushka, of Joel Grey in "Cabaret"—all those figures in whom the smile meets the horror. In one scene, he appears on a set flanked by cliffs; in another, big wooden cutouts (a little girl, a chicken) slide across the stage like targets in a shooting gallery. The lighting, always a special concern of Wilson's, is elaborate: thick, inky shadows; then sudden, slicing lights; then something else again. (In the show's seventy minutes, there are more than three hundred lighting cues.) In the first scene, we hear jaunty little tunes, and Nijinsky, in his tux, does a bit of foxtrot, a bit of Suzi-Q. A big cutout photo of Diaghilev, sitting in a spangled bathtub, floats across the backdrop. We hear a shot, and the great man's hat flies off. Nijinsky can handle him, he thinks. No problem.

But shortly he is running. He reports that he has seen a trail of blood in the snow; he is sure that someone has been killed. Of course, it turns out that he is the person who is in danger. "I am standing in front of a precipice into which I may fall," we hear in voice-over. "I am afraid to fall." Soon afterward, he is on a bench gazing at a mullioned window high above him. Are we in a church or an asylum? Very slowly, millimetre by millimetre—slo-mo is another Wilson trademark—he moves backward, staring at the window. And what does he speak of, in this solemn atmosphere? Sex. He is afraid that he has committed terrible sexual sins, and will again: "I am a beast, a predator. I will practice masturbation and spiritualism. I will eat everyone I can get hold of. I will stop at nothing." Later, he will tell a story he heard about a woman who put something sweet up herself to get an animal to lick her. The creature who arrived to do the job turned out to be a gorilla, and in the course of receiving his attentions she died.

Nijinsky's sexual meditations are dirty and funny and sad, but mostly they're sad. When Baryshnikov arrives at the edge of the bench, he jumps off, removes his jacket, pulls it into a shape that resembles a body, and clasps it diagonally to his chest—a Pietà. If you never thought you could weep over a tale of gorilla cunnilingus, think again. In an interview, I asked Baryshnikov who choreographed the movement in the show. He said that he didn't really consider it choreography. The small things, such as the bits of foxtrot, were his. For the more elaborate passages, Wilson would improvise while being videotaped. Then he would give the footage to Baryshnikov and say, "Make it your own." Baryshnikov would play around with the material until the two arrived at something they both agreed on.

The sequence about sexual shame is the most poignant thing in the show, but it is in the next scene that you really feel you have reached the bottom of Nijinsky's nightmare. On the backdrop, you see what looks like a photograph of an enormous tract of brown ice, stamped into slush, but also, in places, studded with sharp spikes—spikes that could kill you if you fell on them. Nijinsky stands, with his back to us, moving

toward the backdrop very slowly. Cold, brown, mushy, dangerous—how could this be worse? Plus, you don't even know what it is. Soon, black things that look like bugs start crawling out of it. Now you realize that it is not a photograph but a video projection, and that the black things are men—five of them, seen from far away—so the tract of ice is much, much bigger than you thought. As I managed to find out, this is a video of the Danube in Budapest, at what was obviously the end of winter, but no one needs to know that. All we need is to see this vast, appalling brown mush and the luckless Nijinsky headed straight into it.

Nijinsky wrote in his diary for only six and a half weeks. Then the text breaks off, because Romola told him she wanted to take him to see a nice nerve doctor in Zurich. He agreed, but reluctantly. He was afraid that she was going to have him institutionalized. That is what happened. In the asylum, he was soon screaming and attacking people and declaring that his arms and legs weren't his—they belonged to someone else. He lived for thirty more years, but he never recovered. In his worst periods he smeared feces on the walls. In better times he was simply acquiescent, a typical "chronic" patient. He could not tie his shoes. He rarely spoke.

In "Letter to a Man" we never hear about that part. Instead, in the last scene, Wilson gives us back the suave, roguish Nijinsky from the opening of the show, doing little snatches of dance in his patent-leather shoes. Behind him is a red-curtained proscenium. He bids a defiant farewell to Diaghilev ("You are not king, but I am") and assures him that he is working. He's doing fine without him. Then he disappears behind the curtain. This is pretty chilly, but, as with the tract of ice, what might have seemed distant or cold comes off, rather, as an act of forbearance, restraint—art. ♦

Constabulary Notes from All Over

From the Portola (Calif.) Reporter.

In Quincy, a caller reported that she'd made a wrong turn in Paradise and ended up in Quincy. The caller was crying and very upset. A deputy met her and gave her the correct directions back to Paradise.

BOOKS

DRAWING THE LINE

How redistricting turned America from blue to red.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

*David Daley's "Ratf**cked" examines the legacy of the REDMAP initiative.*

Sometime around October 20, 1788, Patrick Henry rode from his seventeen-hundred-acre farm in Prince Edward, Virginia, to a session of the General Assembly in Richmond. Henry is now famous for having declared, on the eve of the Revolution, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"—a phrase it's doubtful that he ever uttered—but in the late seventeen-eighties he was best known as a leader of the Anti-Federalists. He and his faction had tried to sink the Constitution, only to be outmaneuvered by the likes of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. When Henry arrived in the state capital, his adversaries assumed he would seek revenge. They just weren't sure how.

"He appears to be involved in gloomy mystery," one of them reported.

The Constitution had left it to state lawmakers to determine how elections should be held, and in Virginia the Anti-Federalists controlled the legislature. Knowing that his enemy Madison was planning a run for the House of Representatives, Henry set to work. First, he and his confederates resolved that Virginia's congressmen would be elected from districts. (Several other states had chosen to elect their representatives on a statewide basis, a practice that persisted until Congress intervened, in 1842.) Next, they stipulated that each representative from Virginia would have to run from the district where he resided. Finally, they stuck in the shiv. They drew the Fifth District, around Madison's home in the town of Orange, to include as many Anti-Federalists as possible.

An ally of Madison's who attended the session in Richmond wrote to him that while it was unusual for the legislature to "bend its utmost efforts" against a single individual, this was, indeed, what had happened: "The object of the majority of today has been to prevent *yr.* Election in the house of Representatives." Another friend reported, "The Counties annexed to yours are arranged so, as to render your Election, I fear, extremely doubtful." George Washington, too, was pessimistic; Madison's defeat seemed to him "not at all improbable."

Henry's maneuver represents the first instance of congressional gerrymandering, which is impressive considering that Congress did not yet exist. (One of his biographers has observed that Henry was fortunate that "the wits of Virginia" weren't quick enough to invent the word "henrymandering.") Since then, every party out of power has railed against the tactic. Meanwhile, every party in power has deployed it. The Federalists, when they got their turn, gerrymandered just as energetically as the Anti-Federalists. So did the Whigs, the Democrats, and, once the Whigs collapsed, the Republicans. In the eighteen-thirties, the Anti-Masonic Party briefly came to power in Pennsylvania. The Party used its hour upon the stage to push through a round of gerrymandering.

In contrast to our union, gerrymandering actually has grown more perfect with time. Henry had only his gut to go on, and his gut, it turned out, wasn't that reliable. In spite of his machinations, the Fifth District elected Madison. Today, when party functionaries draw district lines, they have at their disposal detailed census results, precinct-level voter tallies, and a cloud's worth of consumer choices. The result, David Daley argues in "Ratf**ked: The True Story Behind the Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy" (Norton), is a system so rigged that it hardly matters anymore who's running for office.

Much of "RATF**KED" is devoted to a Republican scheme optimistically called REDMAP, for Redistricting Majority Project. REDMAP was created in early 2010, at a point when the

ILLUSTRATION BY TODD ST. JOHN

country's electoral map was largely blue. In twenty-seven states, Democrats held the majority of seats in both houses of the legislature, and in six more they held a majority in one house. The Presidency, the U.S. Senate, and the House of Representatives were all in Democratic hands. To describe their own party, Republicans were using words like "wounded" and "adrift."

And, as bad as things looked at the time, the G.O.P.'s prospects down the road looked even worse. In 2011, new census figures were due to be released, and this would trigger a round of redistricting. Republicans, Daley writes, were facing "a looming demographic disaster."

The idea behind REDMAP was to hit the Democrats at their weakest point. In several state legislatures, Democratic majorities were thin. If the Republicans commissioned polls, brought in high-powered consultants, and flooded out-of-the-way districts with ads, it might be possible to flip enough seats to take charge of them. Then, when it came time to draw the new lines, the G.O.P. would be in control.

"People call us a vast right-wing conspiracy," Karl Rove told potential donors to the project at an early fund-raiser in Dallas. "But we're really a half-assed right-wing conspiracy. Now it's time to get serious."

Daley conveys what happened next through the example of David Levdansky, a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Levdansky, a Democrat, had served in Harrisburg for thirteen terms. He was running for a fourteenth in a picnics-and-handshakes sort of way when flyers with out-of-state postmarks started landing in his constituents' mailboxes.

"Stop David Levdansky from increasing taxes by a billion dollars again," one declared.

"David Levdansky voted to waste $600 million taxpayer dollars and build an Arlen Specter library," a second announced.

"$600 million down the toilet just to honor Arlen Specter," a third flyer lamented. (Specter, then the state's senior U.S. senator, had recently switched his party affiliation from Republican to Democratic.)

Between mid-October and early November, prospective voters in Levdansky's district, south of Pittsburgh, received something like two dozen pieces of negative mail. The mail campaign was reinforced by equally negative cable-TV ads.

Levdansky tried to explain that the information in the flyers was false. The appropriation he'd voted for was to help finance a new library at Philadelphia University, and it amounted to just two million dollars. But the truth was no match for REDMAP. Levdansky lost his seat by a hundred and fifty-one votes.

"The fucking Arlen Specter library," he tells Daley.

Others who found themselves in REDMAP's crosshairs met similar fates. Daley, a journalist who now edits the Web site Salon, goes to interview a second former Pennsylvania representative, named David Kessler. The two meet in a pizza parlor near Reading.

"I could have been running against that saltshaker and I would have lost," Kessler says. "Because it all came down to those mailers." One flyer sent to Kessler's constituents likened the "$600 million" Arlen Specter library to the Taj Mahal.

This pattern was repeated in normally sleepy legislative districts from North Carolina to Oregon. All told, in 2010 Republicans gained nearly seven hundred state legislative seats, which, as a report from REDMAP crowed, was a larger increase "than either party has seen in modern history." The wins were sufficient to push twenty chambers from a Democratic to a Republican majority. Most significantly, they gave the G.O.P. control over both houses of the legislature in twenty-five states. (One was Pennsylvania.) The blue map was now red.

TWO OF THE most common gerrymandering techniques are "packing" and "cracking." In the first, the party in charge of redistricting tries to "pack" voters from the rival party into as few districts as possible, to minimize the number of seats the opposition is likely to win. In the second, blocs of opposition voters are parcelled out among several districts, to achieve the same goal.

Both techniques were brought to bear in Pennsylvania. The new Republican majority "packed" blue-leaning voters into a handful of districts around Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Then it "cracked" the rest into districts that tilted red.

The original gerrymander—named for Massachusetts' ninth governor, Elbridge Gerry—was a sinuous blob that wound around Boston. ("The Gerry-Mander: A new species of Monster" read the headline over a cartoon of the district that ran in the March 26, 1812, edition of the Boston *Gazette*.) Among the misshapen districts to emerge from Pennsylvania's 2011 redistricting plan is one Daley describes as looking "like a horned antelope barrelling down a hill on a sled." Another has been compared to Donald Duck kicking Goofy in the groin. So skillfully were the lines drawn that in 2012—when President Obama carried Pennsylvania by three hundred thousand votes and the state's Democratic congressional candidates collectively outpolled their G.O.P. rivals by nearly a hundred thousand votes—Republicans still won thirteen of Pennsylvania's eighteen seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"Arguably the most distorted map in the country" is how one researcher described the Pennsylvania districts. "In Pennsylvania, the Gerrymander of the Decade?" the Web site Real Clear Politics asked.

Another REDMAP target was Michigan. In 2010, the project poured a million dollars into legislative campaigns in the state, an expenditure that helped elect Republican majorities in both chambers. When the state's new congressional map was unveiled in 2011, one commentator likened it to a psychedelic confection, "with districts swirling around Southeast Michigan like colors in a Willy Wonka lollipop." *Roll Call* labelled Michigan's revamped Fourteenth District one of the "five ugliest" in the country. The Fourteenth, which starts in Detroit, snakes through eastern suburbs like Grosse Pointe, and then abruptly juts west and north to Pontiac, has an outline that resembles Bart Simpson holding a fishing pole. It became known as "the 8 Mile Mess," after a major thoroughfare that forms one of its boundaries. (Its rivals for the ugliest-district award included North Carolina's Fourth, nicknamed "the Hanging Claw," and Maryland's Third, dubbed "the Pinwheel of Death.")

REDMAP's strategists were so pleased with how the 8 Mile Mess and the lollipop swirls performed in November of 2012 that they boasted about it in an end-of-year analysis. "The 2012 election was a huge success for Democrats at the statewide level in Michigan," they

wrote. "Voters elected a Democratic U.S. Senator by more than 20 points and re-elected President Obama by almost 10 points." Still, Republicans ended up with the lion's share of the state's congressional seats—nine, to the Democrats' five.

Daley's account of REDMAP's craftiness is compelling—so compelling that it almost undoes itself. If gerrymandering is all-important, it's hard to explain how REDMAP ever got anywhere. In 2010, Republicans were dealing with lines that had, in several key states, been drawn by Democrats. Yet the G.O.P. managed to win control not only of state legislatures but of Congress.

Daley addresses this problem by presenting 2010 as an electoral outlier. First came the unanticipated frenzy of the Tea Party. Then came Citizens United. The Supreme Court's decision turned the usual torrent of campaign cash into Niagara Falls.

REDMAP was funded by a super-PAC-like group called the Republican State Leadership Committee. In the aftermath of Citizens United, the R.S.L.C. raised nearly thirty million dollars. (Altria, the parent company of Philip Morris, contributed $1.4 million; Reynolds American, owner of R. J. Reynolds and the American Snuff Company, kicked in another $1.3 million.) Many of the contributions—roughly eighteen million dollars' worth—were received just weeks before Election Day. To the extent that state lawmakers like Levdansky and Kessler even realized what was going on, they didn't have time to respond.

The blue equivalent of the R.S.L.C. is the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee. By the logic of "Ratf**ked," it should have been fighting REDMAP tooth and nail. And yet it seems to have been caught napping. Daley has no real explanation for this, aside from the old Will Rogers joke, "I belong to no organized political party. I am a Democrat." When Daley interviews Representative Steve Israel, of New York, who's in charge of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Israel tells him, "The Republicans have always been better than Democrats at playing the long game."

CREDIT FOR COINING the word "ratfuck" is often given to Donald Segretti, one of the dirty tricksters who worked on Richard Nixon's 1972 reëlection campaign. (A typical Segretti "ratfuck" involved composing a letter on Senator Edmund Muskie's letterhead accusing one of Muskie's rivals for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Senator Henry Jackson, of having fathered an illegitimate child.) The term comes in so handy in politics that it could be—and probably is—used all the time. Only rarely, though, does it make it into print, and it's from one of these appearances that Daley draws his title.

As Daley tells it, the story begins in 1989. Lee Atwater, who, a year earlier, as manager of George H. W. Bush's Presidential campaign, had said of Bush's opponent, Michael Dukakis, that he was going to "strip the bark off the little bastard," had just become chairman of the Republican National Committee. The map that confronted Atwater—much like the one that would later confront the R.S.L.C.—was awash in blue. Atwater decided Republicans needed to "do something about redistricting," and he assigned this task to the R.N.C.'s counsel, Ben Ginsberg. The "something" Ginsberg came up with was an appeal to the Congressional Black Caucus.

The caucus didn't have much reason to listen to the R.N.C. At the time, it had zero Republican members (and today it has just one). But Ginsberg argued that when it came to redistricting—or, from another perspective, gerrymandering—the two groups shared a common interest. How about if they collaborated?

The pitch worked. The R.N.C. and the Congressional Black Caucus joined forces to press for the creation of more majority-black districts. These districts were drawn so as to concentrate, or "pack," African-American voters, a move that had a dramatic and possibly permanent effect. Consider the example of Georgia. In 1990, the state sent nine Democrats to Congress. Eight of them were white; the ninth was the civil-rights leader John Lewis. In 1994, the state sent three African-Americans to Congress. The trade-off was that only one white Democrat got elected (and he switched parties five months later). Perhaps not coincidentally, in 1994, Republicans took control of the House. In an interview with this magazine the following year, Ginsberg said he was convinced that the alliance with the Black Caucus had been crucial to the G.O.P.'s victory. Asked if the strategy had had a name, he said no, then jokingly suggested "Project Ratfuck."

Like revolutions, ratfucks often turn on their own. In the case of REDMAP, this may be karmic, or it may simply be mathematical. The science of gerrymandering is now so precise that most incumbents' main fear is a primary challenge, and here the best defense is to play to the lunatic fringe. The net result, as many analysts have noted, is increasing polarization. Daley takes this analysis a half step further, arguing that the control Republicans exercised over the latest round of redistricting is the very reason the Party has lost control over its members. The representatives who make up the House Freedom Caucus—the group that last year forced House Speaker John Boehner to resign—hail from districts so red that the biggest danger they face is being branded insufficiently immoderate. Daley quotes James Huntwork, a Republican election-law expert, who describes a primary campaign in a typically lopsided district as a contest between one candidate who says, "I am completely crazy!" and one who says, "I am even crazier than you!"

WHAT IS TO be done about all this? Over the past few decades, dozens of lawsuits have been filed to block redistricting plans on the ground that they disenfranchise one party's voters or the other's. A few of these challenges have made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, without much success. (The Court has sometimes intervened in cases of racial gerrymandering, and it recently agreed to hear a challenge to the lines Republicans drew for Virginia's House of Delegates. The suit alleges that the lines reduce the influence of minority voters by "packing" them into too few districts.)

In the meantime, several states, including Iowa and California, have tried to slay the Gerry-Mander by shifting responsibility for redistricting from their legislatures to independent boards. Perhaps the most disturbing chapters of "Ratf**ked" deal with what happens when this sort of civic-minded effort bumps up against the realities of partisan politics. (Think of a small bunny

bumping up against a ten-ton truck.)

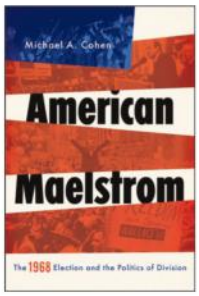
Daley recounts how, in 2000, Arizona voters opted to turn redistricting over to a board made up of two Democrats, two Republicans, and one independent. The commission's maiden effort, in 2001, was generally regarded as an improvement over previous plans. But by 2011 both Democrats and Republicans had figured out how to game the system, and Arizona's experiment in bipartisanship devolved into ever more devious forms of ratfucking. One of the commissioners was accused of lying about contacts with Democratic Party officials. A group that claimed to be working for "fair" districts turned out to be funded by a Koch-brothers-linked conservative network. The Republican governor tried to oust the commission's chairwoman, charging her with "gross misconduct." The only basis for the charge seemed to be that the governor did not care for the way the new districts had been drawn.

"The closer one looks, the less independent the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission appears," Daley writes. He finds the situation so disheartening that he proposes the whole election system be revamped. States, he suggests, should return to the multi-member districts that were popular back in Patrick Henry's day. There is no reason to expect this or any other reform to be enacted. Pretty much by definition, gerrymandering suits those in power.

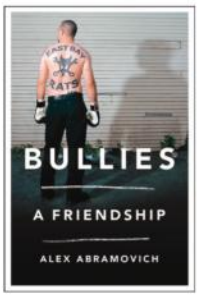
As far as the upcoming election is concerned, a REDMAP victory seems almost guaranteed. In House races in 2012, 1.7 million more votes were cast for Democrats than for Republicans. And still, thanks to the way those votes were packed and cracked, Republicans came away with thirty-three more congressional seats. A Trumpocalypse, if such a thing is possible, could put seemingly safe districts in play. But few pundits see that as likely.

In preparation for the next census, Democrats have come up with a REDMAP-like plan of their own. They call it Advantage 2020, and say they hope to fund it to the tune of seventy million dollars. Republicans, for their part, have announced REDMAP 2020. Their spending goal? A hundred and twenty-five million dollars. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

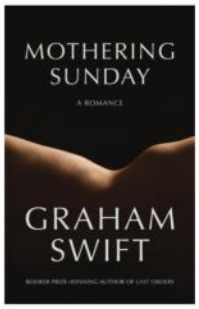


American Maelstrom, *by Michael A. Cohen (Oxford)*. In 1968, the Kerner Commission warned that America was becoming two societies, "separate and unequal." This book makes the case that that year's Presidential election offered an even more ominous warning: American voters were falling prey to the politics of extremism. Cohen assesses the campaigns of nine Presidential candidates—including insurgents like Eugene McCarthy and George Wallace—and outlines how their response to a "national nervous breakdown," precipitated by Vietnam, the counterculture, and the civil-rights movement, paved the way for anti-government conservative populism and the rise of the so-called "backlash" voter across the spectrum. Although the book does not make an explicit comparison to our current political moment, the parallels are hard to ignore.



Bullies, *by Alex Abramovich (Henry Holt)*. This memoir recounts the author's reunion with a childhood nemesis, Trevor Latham, who later became the founder of a biker gang in Oakland. What starts as a meditation on violence and hypermasculinity assumes larger proportions when links emerge between motorcycle culture and the city that Huey P. Newton once called "a ghost town with actual inhabitants." Beset by economic collapse and a crack epidemic, and animated by the Occupy movement, Oakland starts to resemble a combat zone, in which these "twenty-first-century Vikings," many of them veterans, set about "re-creating the camaraderie of the barracks." In the midst of such chaos, banding together with friends who will die for you has its appeal.

Modern Lovers, *by Emma Straub (Riverhead)*. What happens when members of an almost famous rock band grow up? Judging by this novel, they live in the same tree-lined neighborhood in Brooklyn, make gourmet salads, talk real estate, and fall in and out of love with each other. When plans emerge for a film about a bandmate (the only one who made it), memories of their "youthful embrace of reckless love" resurface. Straub sets in motion a series of fast-paced if predictable subplots, including a teen-age romance between the old friends' children and a long-hidden diary containing secrets about the aging musicians. "Does it matter at all, what happened a million years ago?" one of the characters asks. It does, this novel argues. Very much.



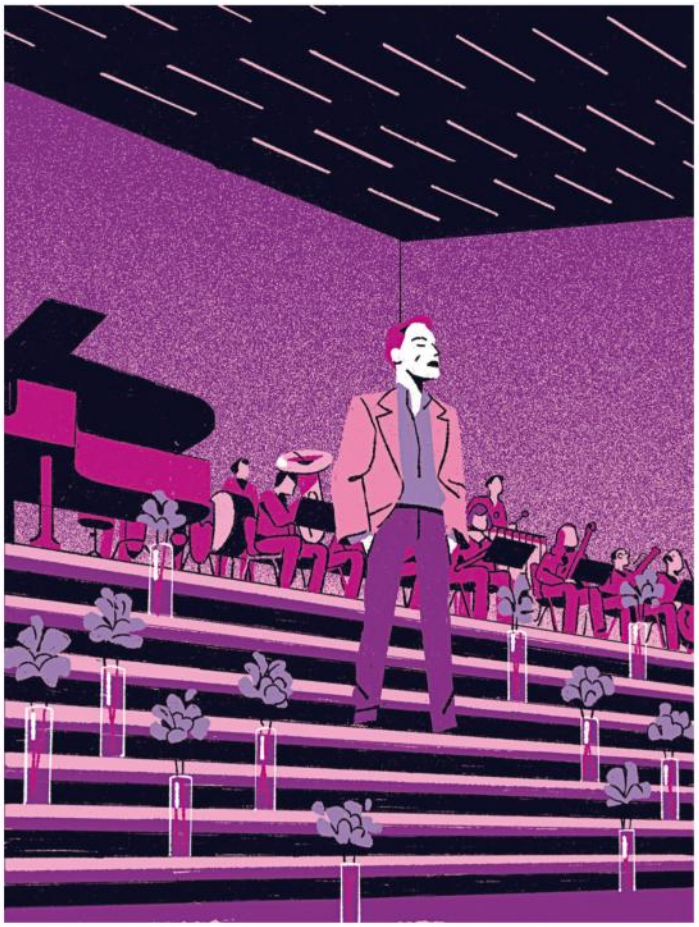
Mothering Sunday, *by Graham Swift (Knopf)*. A fairy tale of sexual and intellectual awakening, this novel is centered on an ambiguous tragedy that takes place on a spring afternoon in 1924. The book is remarkably spare, peopled as much by absent strangers (the ghosts of the "brave boys" killed in the war) as it is by the principal characters—Jane Fairchild, a maid, and her upper-class neighbor and lover Paul Sheringham. As their romance ends, Swift presents a sly, slow-motion view of the waning of the old English order. Jane's final hours with Paul transform her from an underling to the author of her own fate. "And was she even a maid any more," Jane considers. "It was the magic, the perfect politics of nakedness."

MUSICAL EVENTS

MAP OF THE NEW

Alan Gilbert's NY Phil Biennial.

BY ALEX ROSS



Gerald Barry's take on "The Importance of Being Earnest" was broad and caustic.

"What composers do is, without exaggeration and without any shred of hyperbole, the most important thing that is happening in music at any given time." So said Alan Gilbert, the music director of the New York Philharmonic, at this year's NY Phil Biennial, a sprawling three-week survey of new and recent music in the classical tradition. In a better world, the statement would have been tediously obvious. If an art-world figure were to say, "What artists do is the most important thing that is happening in art at any given time," an audience of gallerygoers would smirk. In classical music, though, the artistic leader of a major institution still comes across as a bit of a Jacobin if he or she pays more than minimal attention to living composers.

The Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera have both chosen new music directors in the past few months. In January, the Dutch conductor Jaap van Zweden was named the successor to Gilbert, who will depart at the end of the next season. In May, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was given the hallowed perch of the ailing James Levine. Neither of the appointed maestros is especially known for a commitment to new work. At a press conference, van Zweden appeared uncertain about what the Biennial was. Nézet-Séguin, when asked, by the *Times*, which operas he might add to the repertory, seemed at a loss. Rather, both were hired because of their facility with the classics: van Zweden impressed audiences with a forceful, somewhat brutal version of Beethoven's Fifth, Nézet-Séguin with an idiomatic "Otello."

Admittedly, Levine did little to advance contemporary opera at the Met. Of the thirteen works by living composers that reached the stage during his four-decade tenure, he led only two. In the Met's Carnegie concert series, though, Levine was a passionate promoter of the latter-day modernism of Carter, Babbitt, and Wuorinen. Gilbert's record with new music is unambiguously formidable, rivalling that of Leonard Bernstein and Pierre Boulez, the two great visionaries in Philharmonic history. Indeed, Gilbert may have been a more persuasive advocate than either of them, since, not being a composer himself, he could not be accused of serving his own agenda. Sadly, the Philharmonic and its board seem to be falling back on a more traditional model. In coming years, the New York music scene is in danger of reverting to a pallid definition of the art: not What Composers Do but What Composers Did.

The first biennial, in 2014, leaned too heavily on established names. This year's edition was more diverse, more unpredictable, and, in a good way, more chaotic. More than a hundred composers were featured, more than half of them supplying world premières. The stylistic and demographic range was broader, running from Pulitzer Prize-winning elders to theory-mad experimentalists fresh out of graduate school. At times, the Philharmonic seemed almost incidental to the proceedings, as programming decisions were delegated to a range of music schools and local groups, including Yale, Aspen, the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and National Sawdust. I heard thirty-five works, and caught various others on video streams.

The headline-grabbing event was Gerald Barry's raucous 2011 adaptation

ILLUSTRATION BY MATTEO BERTON

of "The Importance of Being Earnest," receiving its American stage première at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Barry, an Irish composer inclined toward manic musical surrealism, strips the Wilde play of its debonair veneer and exposes a core of punkish rage. The text is set in rat-a-tat, herky-jerky fashion, not unlike Stravinsky's manner in "Les Noces." Singers wield megaphones; a percussionist periodically smashes plates; the role of Lady Bracknell is given to a stentorian bass (here Alan Ewing). Just as the relentless abrasiveness of the conceit threatens to wear thin, a strange pathos takes hold, as if Wilde's well-heeled characters were imprisoned in a postmodern madhouse. Ramin Gray provided suitably garish direction; an octet of singers and twenty-one Philharmonic players created a handsome din; the young Israeli conductor Ilan Volkov was incisive on the podium.

The most arresting of the world premières was Ashley Fure's "Bound to the Bow," which appeared on a program by the Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra, at Geffen Hall. Fure, who is thirty-three, grew up on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and attended Interlochen in her teens. You may not guess her background from her music, which is steeped in the instrument-bending techniques of the European avant-garde. In the first few measures of "Bound to the Bow," wind players vocalize into their instruments; brass players smack their lips against their mouthpieces; credit cards are scraped across harp and piano strings; and violins are instructed to produce "white-noise hiss." Such devices recur throughout, to clear expressive purpose. Fure takes inspiration from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"—in particular, from the image of the albatross struck from the sky. She imagines the bird not hung around the mariner's neck but fastened to the bow of his boat. The fluttering and the clattering of the opening bars suggest a vain struggle to take flight. Three times, the disparate sounds of the deconstructed orchestra accumulate into enormous waves, then subside. I would happily have stayed in the world of this music for twice as long, not least because of the avid commitment of the Interlochen students.

Avant-garde audacity figured little in an evening of works presented jointly by the San Francisco Girls Chorus, the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, and the Knights, the Brooklyn-based chamber orchestra. Yet the program was up to date in other ways: it had a strong focus on the ambitions and insecurities of young women, which felt pertinent coming two days after Hillary Clinton's emergence as the Democratic Presidential nominee. Lisa Bielawa's "My Outstretched Hand" wove variegated, at times voluptuous choral textures around the 1901 memoirs of Mary MacLane, the radical freethinker of Butte, Montana. The text of Mary Kouyoumdjian's "Become Who I Am" was based on interviews with members of the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, who offered thoughts on gender roles and gender inequality as well as on the importance of music in their lives. "I want to become who I am," they sang, and the urgency of the sound seemed the fulfillment of the wish.

The Knights also gave the American première of Nico Muhly's song cycle "Impossible Things," a rapt setting of poems by C. P. Cavafy, in Daniel Mendelsohn's translation. Scored for tenor, violin, and ensemble, the piece inevitably recalls Britten's magisterial cycles, most of all the Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings. But Muhly has found his own musical language, a lyricism underpinned by subtle tension, and it achieves uncanny alignment with the lights and shadows of Cavafy's poetry. Nicholas Phan sang with extraordinary warmth of tone and clarity of diction. At the end, in curt, biting phrases, he delivered the line "By far the best life is the one that cannot be lived" over motoric arpeggios in the strings. Having heard Barry's broad, caustic take on Oscar Wilde, I couldn't help wondering what Muhly might find in the same material.

In a closing pair of concerts with the Philharmonic, at Geffen Hall, Gilbert led a quartet of twenty-first-century scores, each of them revelling in the resources of the modern orchestra. In William Bolcom's Trombone Concerto, the brass and winds shimmied about like a big band from the swing era, emulating the jazz panache of the soloist, Joseph Alessi, the Philharmonic's virtuoso principal trombone. In John Corigliano's "Conjurer," a percussion concerto, players kept pace with the sonic frenzy unleashed by Martin Grubinger, the hyperkinetic young Austrian percussionist. Many percussion concertos devolve into a numbing barrage; the most striking moment here was one of melancholy lyricism, as vibraphone blended with solo cello.

Rip-roaring as that concert was, Gilbert and the Philharmonic returned the following night with an all-out tour de force—a mighty demonstration of the undiminished power of symphonic writing in the early twenty-first century. The first piece was Per Nørgård's Eighth Symphony, the most recent major statement of a Danish master who has received little exposure in this country. His style is sui generis, though in its complex layering of elements, from rustic dance to dissonant pandemonium, it distantly resembles that of Charles Ives. I happened to hear the world première of the Eighth, in Helsinki, in 2013; it struck me then as a somewhat murky, elusive narrative. Gilbert solved Nørgård's riddles, finding a scenic majesty in the collision of forces.

The second half of the concert had the character of a memorial, though in a celebratory mode. First came a bow to Pierre Boulez, who died in January, in the form of his skittering "Messagesquisse," for seven cellos. Then came Steven Stucky's Second Concerto for Orchestra, which won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize but had never been played in New York. Stucky died in February, at the early age of sixty-six; among colleagues and students, he was as widely beloved as anyone in his profession. Yet that's not the reason the Philharmonic audience responded to the Second Concerto with an immediate ovation. The work has the exuberance of the great American symphonies of the mid-twentieth century, its swaggering brass choirs and lunging string melodies well suited to the Philharmonic's muscular sound. Gilbert conducted it as if it had been in the repertory for a hundred years. As the Biennial came to a triumphant end, I wondered again, Why is this man leaving? ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

PET PEEVES

"Wiener-Dog" and "The Neon Demon."

BY ANTHONY LANE

A dachshund passes through the lives of several owners in Todd Solondz's movie.

The new Todd Solondz film, "Wiener-Dog," really is about a dog. The animal in question is a female dachshund, with a sleek chestnut coat and a purposeful trot, plus the indefinable air that dachshunds have of being both highly perplexed by something (no breed has more expressive eyebrows) and determined to keep that something to themselves. In short, they are ready-made for Solondz. If he had picked an Afghan hound, without a thought in its head, the movie would have molted and shed its strangeness all over the rug.

The dog is like a relay baton, passed from one character to the next; indeed, without canine assistance, "Wiener-Dog" would be no more than a portmanteau of four short films. The first owner is Remi (Keaton Nigel Cooke), a lonely kid, aged around nine, and in remission from cancer. He has horrible parents (Julie Delpy and Tracy Letts), who buy him the dog to cheer him up and immediately start complaining about it. "Heel, motherfucker," the father says, tugging at the leash. Remi, however, is entranced, and keen to learn more about his faithful friend. ("What's 'spay' mean?") After an unfortunate series of events, involving the massacre of sundry cushions and the ill-advised consumption of a granola bar, the dachshund is offloaded, winding up in the care of a veterinary assistant named Dawn Weiner (Greta Gerwig), who takes the poor pooch home.

We have met Dawn, or an earlier version of her, before. As played by Heather Matarazzo, in Solondz's "Welcome to the Dollhouse" (1995), she was a seventh grader who felt unloved at home and unpopular at school, where other pupils called her—you'll never guess—Wiener Dog. Does that make the new movie a sequel? Not unless you count the fact that Dawn still wears clunky spectacles, and that she hooks up afresh with a charmless loser from the previous film, who offers her a ride to Ohio. "What's in Ohio?" she asks. "Crystal meth," he replies, as if it were a tourist attraction.

They set off, with Wiener-Dog in tow, although it's noticeable, by now, that the canine motif is beginning to flag. When Robert Bresson made "Au Hasard, Balthazar" (1966), about a donkey with a succession of owners, he, too, was largely concerned with the humanity—or the uncharitable lack of it—that was revealed in the process. Yet he never lost sight of his beast, and the burdens that it bore. That is why the tranquil climax of his film, at which the burdens finally prove too much, can still summon tears. Solondz's mutt, by contrast, is basically a MacGuffin with a tail. Halfway through the film, there's an intermission, of the sort that used to come with "Lawrence of Arabia," except that in this case we watch our dachshund scoot past an array of landscapes to the strains of a country ballad. The joke is that "Wiener-Dog" is about as non-epic as can be, but there's also a sleight of hand, with the dazzle of the images distracting us from the fact that the movie has run out of plot. Meanwhile, the depths of doghood remain unplumbed.

Without explanation, Wiener-Dog becomes the companion of Dave Schmerz (Danny DeVito), who teaches film in New York to derisive students, pitches screenplays in vain to his agent, and extends a cordial and comprehensive loathing to the world around him. (*Schmerz* is German for "pain.") The dog's last port of call is the home of Nana (Ellen Burstyn), who is blind, abrupt, and so darned crotchety that she names her new pet Cancer. She is visited first by a granddaughter, Zoe (Zosia Mamet), who arrives with a scowling paramour named Fantasy (Michael James Shaw) and a plea for money, and then by a parade of all the other selves that Nana could have been—young identical girls, with copper tresses, who chide her for missing out on forgiveness and love.

It's a bitter way to go, leaving the old woman imprinted on our minds as an irredeemable Scrooge, yet the scene is touched with an odd Pre-Raphaelite grace; as so often with Solondz, beauty descends, like an angel of irony, when we least expect it, and when the characters have done almost nothing to deserve it. That was the case with "Life During Wartime" (2009) and "Dark Horse" (2011), and it happens here, too, thanks to the lustrous cinematography of Edward Lachman, although even

ILLUSTRATION BY GUILLAUME PLANTEVIN

Solondz regulars may balk at the duties to which that lustre is assigned. A courteous travelling shot ushers us along a suburban gutter, drawing our attention to an apparently endless display of dog excrement, all to the strains of "Clair de Lune." You could find this disgusting, mockingly hilarious (not least if you recall hearing the same piece of Debussy, in "Twilight," on the hero's hi-fi), or plain cheap. How much imagination is required, after all, to vent your furies in the guise of filth?

For all the calm sophistication of Solondz's methods, they carry a hint of a raging and inquisitive child, eternally floored by adult duplicity, and "Wiener-Dog" struck me as the type of film that Remi might grow up to make. It's no coincidence that the only people who emerge from it with any moral credit, and whose claim to happiness does not get punished, are a couple with Down syndrome—a condition, the movie implies, that has somehow protected them from the wiles of the bourgeoisie. (Compare Remi's mother, who tells him a bedtime story about a stray dog named Mohammed; once upon a time, she says, it raped her beloved poodle. How many outrages can you pack into a single fable?) Solondz is hardly the first misanthrope to creep into the cinema, snickering with intent; Billy Wilder seemed to rate humanity even lower, and with better cause. (In 1945, in between "The Lost Weekend" and a Bing Crosby trifle called "The Emperor Waltz," Wilder directed a compilation of footage from the concentration camps, entitled "Death Mills.") But Wilder's deep doubts about *Homo sapiens* were balanced by his faith in *Homo ludens*—in the sportive play of our follies—whereas Solondz's creatures feel caged and cramped by their everyday plights, and their dialogue is drained of zing. The ending of "Wiener-Dog" is spectacularly heartless, yet there's no mistaking the yelp of its admonition: life's a bitch.

The heroine of "The Neon Demon" is Jesse (Elle Fanning), who just turned sixteen. Newly arrived in Los Angeles, all the way from Georgia, she has no ties, no connections, and, by her own admission, no talents. "I can't sing, I can't dance, I can't write," she says. On the other hand, she's pretty: "I can make money off pretty." That's a brutal line, but, then, prettiness and brutality both seep from the pores of the movie. Jesse is first seen reclining on a couch, as blood leaks flamboyantly from a gash in her throat; only afterward, as she wipes herself clean with the aid of a makeup artist named Ruby (Jena Malone), do we realize that the gore was cosmetic, devised for a photo shoot. That visual pun suggests an ominous confusion in the face of violence: Who can tell the fraudulent from the true? Who minds about human damage, as long as it looks good?

The director is Nicolas Winding Refn—or, as he is also referred to in the opening credits, NWR, which makes him sound like a hip-hop group or a defunct railroad. His craving for the ache of style, felt throughout "Drive" (2011) and "Only God Forgives" (2013), is unappeasable, and the loveliest sight in "The Neon Demon," a hilltop view of Los Angeles, suffused in a plum-colored dusk, harks back to a Gucci perfume commercial that he shot in 2012. "Beauty isn't everything," someone says in the new movie. "It's the only thing."

Jesse consults a modelling agent (Christina Hendricks), who tells her to crank up her age to nineteen. Soon enough, Jesse is posing nude for a brooding photographer, who anoints her in gold paint. Like most things in the film (including a mountain lion that drops into Jesse's motel room), this is meant to signal menace, although she may simply be angling for a job as one of those outsized statuettes which stand at the entrance to the Oscars. "I'm not as helpless as I look," she says, and Fanning introduces a glint of calculation into Jesse's seraphic poise.

For those of us who have always believed modelling to be a well-rounded profession, jammed with carbohydrates and mutual support, "The Neon Demon" comes as a blow. Modelling, it turns out, depends on the abusive modification of the body, and you know those jealous types who just want to chew you up and spit you out? They really do. No metaphor is involved. By the end of the movie, Refn has toyed with cannibalism, lesbian necrophilia, the egestion of an eyeball, and other minor sports, all of them filmed in lavish taste. It's enough to make you reflect longingly on the Agatha Christie drama that he made for British TV in 2007. Say what you like about Miss Marple, at least she merely questioned her suspects. She didn't eat them for tea. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
Richard Brody blogs about movies.

VOLUME XCII, NO. 19, June 27, 2016. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 8 & 15, June 6 & 13, July 11 & 18, August 8 & 15, and December 19 & 26) by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Condé Nast, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. Elizabeth Hughes, publisher, chief revenue officer; Risa Aronson, associate publisher advertising; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Fabio Bertoni, general counsel. Condé Nast: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman emeritus; Charles H. Townsend, chairman; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., president & chief executive officer; David E. Geithner, chief financial officer; Jill Bright, chief administrative officer. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If during your subscription term or up to one year after the magazine becomes undeliverable, you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Risa Aronson at (212) 286-4068. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE

CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Harry Bliss, must be received by Sunday, June 26th. The finalists in the June 6th & 13th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 11th & 18th issue. Anyone age thirteen or older can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit contest.newyorker.com.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

“ ”

THE FINALISTS

“The rear-facing camera lets him know I'm here.”
Jonathan Thompson, Washington, D.C.

“You're in his blind spot.”
Joey Narain, Bloomfield, N.J.

“He's over tired.”
Larry Rifkin, Glastonbury, Conn.

THE WINNING CAPTION

“Then maybe you should just tell me what you want for your birthday instead of saying you don't care.”
Christine Hurt, Orem, Utah

CARRY LESS IN YOUR CARRY-ON

Lighten that load. The pair of Hubbards you wear are all you need on your trip. You get the comfort of a sneaker with the style of a shoe. Bon voyage.

SAMUELHUBBARD.COM

SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1930

30 colors, 9 styles, 1 free catalog. 844.482.4800

What did one lizard say to the other?

Our savings are no laughing matter.

Go online, get a quote today, and see how much *you* could save.

GEICO

geico.com | 1-800-947-AUTO | Local Office