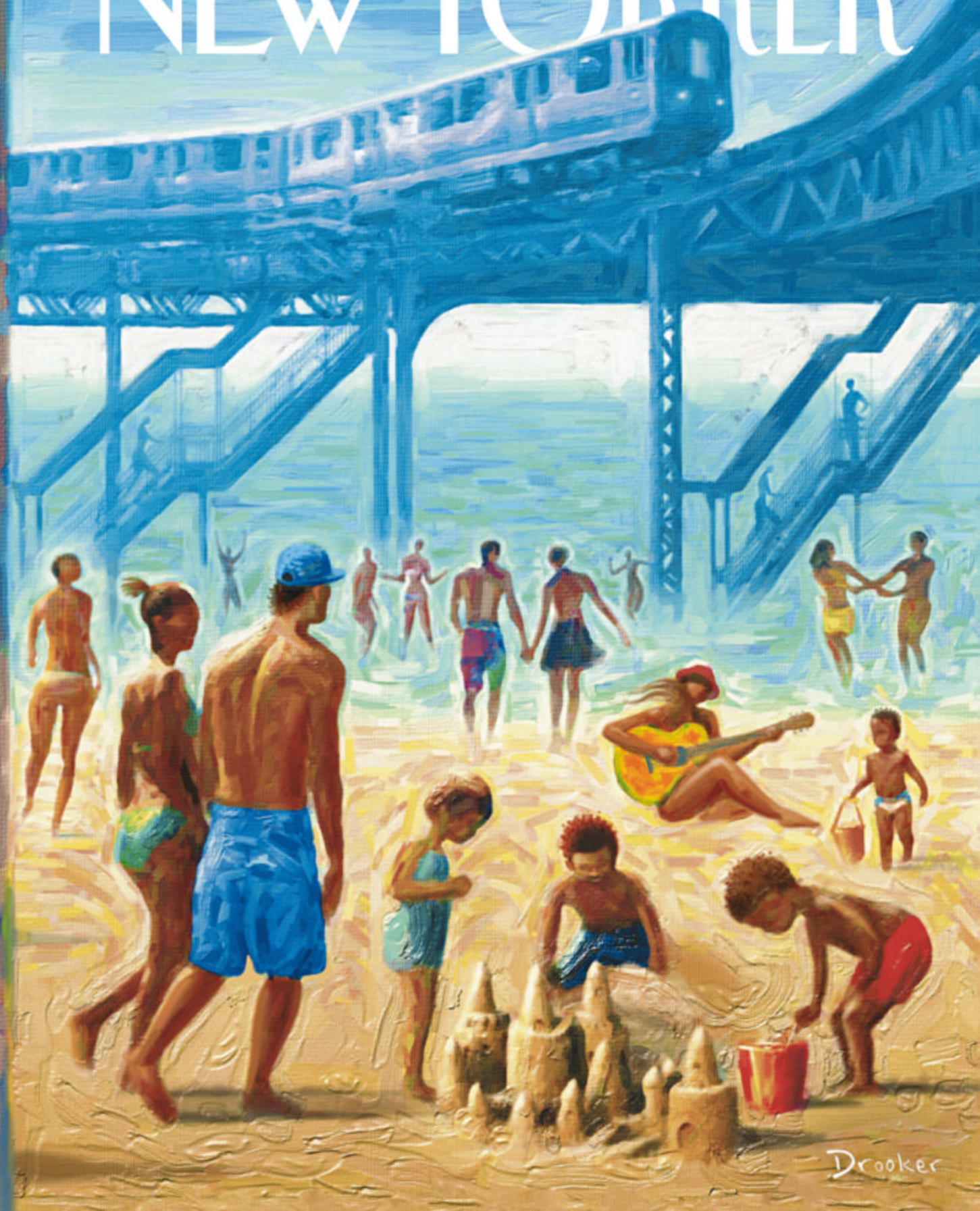


PRICE \$8.99

THE NEW YORKER

JULY 6 & 13, 2015



Drucker



BEND CURVES
TO YOUR WILL



2015 Acura TLX

The available Super Handling All-Wheel Drive™ system in the Acura TLX responds faithfully to driver input and gives the car stability on the road. Combining front to rear torque distribution and the ability to send power side to side between the rear wheels, the TLX gives you the optimum amount of torque where needed so you can conquer the road.

TLX IT'S THAT KIND OF THRILL



WINNER 9 TONY AWARDS®

“THE

BE

MUSICAL OF



WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** MUSICAL • “THE SEASON’S **BEST** MUSICAL.” TIME OUT NEW YORK • GRAMMY AWARD **BEST** MUSICAL
MUSICAL • “BY FAR THE **BEST** NEW MUSICAL OF THE 21ST CENTURY.” NPR • “THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT SHOW ON BROADWAY, FOR
BEST SUNG, **BEST** WRITTEN MUSICAL OF OUR TIME.” DAILY EXPRESS • “PROVES WHAT BROADWAY CAN DO AT ITS **BEST**. HONORS
AWARD **BEST** FEATURED ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** DIRECTION OF A MUSICAL • “THE **BEST**
TIMES • DRAMA DESK AWARDS **BEST** MUSICAL • “A COMFORTABLY TRADITIONAL SHOW, IN THE **BEST** WAY.” THE NEW YORK
DESK AWARDS **BEST** LYRICS • “BROADWAY’S **BEST**.” MIAMI HERALD • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** SCENIC DESIGN • ASSO
BEST.” RELIGIOUS DISPATCHES MAGAZINE • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** LIGHTING DESIGN • NPR **BEST** NEW MUSICAL
FINANCIAL TIMES • ITUNES **BEST** BROADWAY SOUNDTRACK OF THE YEAR • DRAMA DESK AWARDS **BEST** ORCHESTRATIONS •
AWARD **BEST** NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** SOUND DESIGN • “SIMPLY OUTRAGEOUS IN THE **BEST**
THE **BEST** NIGHTS OF MY LIFE.” BBC 2 ARTS SHOW • NPR TOP 50 **BEST** ALBUMS OF THE YEAR • OUTER CRITICS CIRCLE
UNIVERSE.” DAILY EXPRESS • OUTER CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD **BEST** ACTOR IN A MUSICAL • “UNSELFCONSCIOUSLY USES THE

WINNER 4 OLIVIER AWARDS

EUGENE O’NEILL THEATRE 212.239.6200

INCLUDING BEST MUSICAL



THIS CENTURY.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES BEN BRANTLEY

THEATER ALBUM • “THE **BEST** NEW AMERICAN MUSICAL OF THE LAST 25 YEARS.” VOGUE • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** BOOK OF A
THE **BEST** POSSIBLE REASONS.” THE TIMES • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** ORIGINAL SCORE • “THE FUNNIEST, **BEST** PERFORMED,
THE TRADITIONS OF GREAT SONG-AND-DANCE MUSICAL THEATER IN ALL THE **BEST** WAYS.” ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY • WINNER TONY
CHOREOGRAPHY IN TOWN.” THE NEW YORK TIMES • “QUITE POSSIBLY THE **BEST** ENTERTAINMENT I HAVE EVER SEEN.” SUNDAY
OBSERVER • WINNER TONY AWARD **BEST** ORCHESTRATIONS • VOGUE **BEST** NEW US MUSICAL OF THE LAST 25 YEARS • DRAMA
CIATED PRESS #1 **BEST** SHOW OF THE YEAR • DRAMA DESK AWARDS **BEST** MUSIC • “DEPICTS RELIGION AT ITS IDEALIZED
OF THE 21ST CENTURY • DRAMA DESK AWARDS **BEST** DIRECTOR OF A MUSICAL • “BAD TASTE IN THE **BEST** TRADITION.”
“ONE OF THE **BEST** CONSTRUCTED - AND FUNNIEST - MUSICALS OF RECENT TIMES.” DAILY MAIL • OUTER CRITICS CIRCLE
POSSIBLE TASTELESSNESS.” SUNDAY TIMES • OUTER CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD **BEST** NEW SCORE • “SINGULARLY ONE OF
AWARD **BEST** DIRECTOR OF A MUSICAL • “THE **BEST** MUSICAL TO EVER HIT THE STAGE IN LONDON OR ANYWHERE IN THE
LANGUAGE OF BROADWAY AT ITS POPULIST **BEST**.” EVENING STANDARD • AMAZON.COM TOP 100 **BEST** SELLING ALBUMS

INCLUDING BEST NEW MUSICAL

BOOKOFMORMONBROADWAY.COM



ABT

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

75TH ANNIVERSARY
1940-2015

Final Week!



CINDERELLA

June 29-July 4

Your entire family will have a ball
at this rags-to-riches fairy tale!

KIDS GO FOR FREE!

July 1 mat & July 4 eve

For each full-price adult ticket purchased for the Wed, July 1 mat (2pm) or Sat, July 4 eve (7pm) *Cinderella* performances, a child age 6-17 may attend for FREE! For tickets, visit the Met Box Office or call 212.362.6000.

Note: No internet orders. Tickets print at half-price for adult and child. Theatre personnel may ask for ID for child age 6-17. Offer valid only for July 1 mat/July 4 eve and not valid on prior purchase.

212.362.6000

www.abt.org

Metropolitan Opera House
Broadway at 64th Street, Lincoln Center

No refunds or exchanges. Costs, prices and programs subject to change.
Hee Seo. Photo by Fabrizio Ferri.

THE NEW YORKER

JULY 6 & 13, 2015

9 **GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN**

27 **THE TALK OF THE TOWN**
Jelani Cobb on Confederate denialism; LeBron acts; sky writing; Twyla Tharp time; James Surowiecki on Uber and the job market.

RACHEL AVIV 32 **REVENGE KILLING**
Race and the death penalty in Louisiana.

PATRICIA MARX 39 **LET'S BE LESS STUPID AND OLD**

LIZZIE WIDDICOMBE 40 **THE HIGHER LIFE**
How mindfulness became the road to success.

LAWRENCE WRIGHT 48 **FIVE HOSTAGES**
Families fight to save Americans held in Syria.

ALEJANDRO ZAMBRA 74 **FICTION**
"READING COMPREHENSION: TEXT NO. 1"

ADAM GOPNIK 78 **THE CRITICS**
A CRITIC AT LARGE
Love songs and sonnets.

LAURA MILLER 84 **BOOKS**
"The Cartel."
87 *Briefly Noted*

ALEX ROSS 88 **MUSICAL EVENTS**
The Ojai Music Festival.

EMILY NUSSBAUM 90 **ON TELEVISION**
"UnREAL."

ELIZABETH METZGER 36 **POEM**
"For My Brother, in Bluegrass"

ERIC DROOKER **COVER**
"Rockaway Beach"

DRAWINGS Joe Dator, Liam Francis Walsh, Edward Steed, Frank Cotham, Drew Dernavich, Ken Krimstein, Benjamin Schwartz, Zachary Kanin, Carolita Johnson, Paul Noth, Victoria Roberts, Paul Karasik, David Sipress, Liana Finck, Farley Katz **SPOTS** Bendik Kaltenborn

2015 IS THE YEAR OF STEPHEN KING

THE #1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING FOLLOW-UP TO *MR. MERCEDES*,
WINNER OF THE EDGAR AWARD FOR BEST NOVEL

FINDERS KEEPERS



ALSO AVAILABLE AS AN EBOOK AND AN
AUDIOBOOK READ BY WILL PATTON.

ON SALE NOW!

STEPHENKING.COM

SCRIBNER AUDIO



**DRUNKEN
FIREWORKS**
THE NEW
AUDIOBOOK
EXCLUSIVE
ON SALE JUNE 30

...AND COMING IN NOVEMBER

A new collection of stories from
the master storyteller and
O. Henry Prize winner

**THE BAZAAR OF
BAD DREAMS**





BELOVED WRITERS RESPOND TO BOLD ART

Through Sept 9

JOHN ASHBERY
on R.H. Quaytman

NEIL GAIMAN
on Natascha Sadr Haghghian

JONATHAN LETHEM
on Rachel Harrison

JOYCE CAROL OATES
on Taryn Simon

ANNIE PROULX
on Maurizio Cattelan

MEG WOLITZER
on Carol Bove

AND MORE:

guggenheim.org/storylines

GUGGENHEIM

Supported in part by Culture.pl, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann, the exhibition's Leadership Committee, and the International Director's Council.

Clockwise from top: Agnieszka Kurant, *Phantom Library* (detail), 2011–2012; Nate Lowman, *Safe Travels* (detail), 2013; Zanele Muholi, *Zim's Salusala...* (detail), 2011.

CONTRIBUTORS

LAWRENCE WRIGHT ("FIVE HOSTAGES," P. 48) is a staff writer and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "The Looming Tower." His new book, "Thirteen Days in September: The Dramatic Story of the Struggle for Peace," came out in April.

JELANI COBB (COMMENT, P. 27), the author of "The Substance of Hope," is the director of the Africana Studies Institute, at the University of Connecticut.

RACHEL AVIV ("REVENGE KILLING," P. 32) has been a staff writer since 2013.

PATRICIA MARX (SHOUTS & MURMURS, P. 39) will publish, in July, the humor book "Let's Be Less Stupid: An Attempt to Maintain My Mental Faculties."

LIZZIE WIDDICOMBE ("THE HIGHER LIFE," P. 40) is an editor of *The Talk of the Town*.

ELIZABETH METZGER (POEM, P. 36), the poetry editor of the *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly Journal*, is a teaching fellow at Columbia.

ALEJANDRO ZAMBRA (FICTION, P. 74) is an award-winning Chilean writer. His latest book of short stories, "My Documents," came out in English in April.

LAURA MILLER (BOOKS, P. 84), a staff writer for *Salon*, is the author of "The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Adventures in Narnia."

ALEX ROSS (MUSICAL EVENTS, P. 88) has been the magazine's music critic since 1996. He has published two books, "The Rest Is Noise" and "Listen to This."

EMILY NUSSBAUM (ON TELEVISION, P. 90), *The New Yorker's* television critic, is a 2014 National Magazine Award winner for columns and commentary.

ERIC DROOKER (COVER) is the author of three graphic novels, including "Howl" and the award-winning "Flood!," a special hardcover edition of which came out in May.

NEWYORKER.COM

**EVERYTHING IN THE MAGAZINE, AND MORE
THAN FIFTEEN ORIGINAL STORIES A DAY.**

ALSO:

DAILY COMMENT / CULTURAL COMMENT: Opinions and reflections by Hua Hsu, Margaret Talbot, and others.

AUDIO: A meditation for commuters by Andy Puddicombe, Headspace's mindfulness expert.

PODCASTS: On the Political Scene, David Remnick and Jelani Cobb talk with Dorothy Wickenden about Charleston, and, on Out Loud, a conversation about boxing versus M.M.A., with Kelefa Sanneh and Reeves Wiedeman. Plus, the monthly Fiction Podcast, with Deborah Treisman and Yiyun Li.

VIDEO: The latest episodes of "Comma Queen," with Mary Norris, and "The Cartoon Lounge," with Bob Mankoff. Plus, Richard Brody comments on scenes from Djibril Diop Mambéty's "Touki Bouki," from 1973.

JOHN CASSIDY: Coverage of politics, economics, and more.

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

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Tad Friend's portrait of the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen and his ilk is enlightening, if also somewhat disturbing ("Tomorrow's Advance Man," May 18th). The V.C.s of Silicon Valley are, after all, the financial engineers of the vast capital flows that are transforming the way the economy operates. But these people are not investing in the wheel, the internal-combustion engine, or the telephone. Playing roulette with other people's money and, on occasion, hitting it big with a Web portal, a software platform, or a cell-phone app is not exactly "changing the world," in the traditional sense. I am not convinced that data analytics and online-marketing tools can ever insure human rights or change the infrastructure for distributing water, food, or energy. I hate to be cynical, but I would say that the engineering described in Friend's article is mostly concerned with changing the net worth of Andreessen and his investing partners.

*Tony Robinson
Dallas, Texas*

WEIRD SCIENCE

I read John Colapinto's Profile of Karl Deisseroth and the field of optogenetics with interest ("Lighting the Brain," May 18th). It was startling to learn that the origin of optogenetics, a technology that is now being used to study the brain using flashes of light, lies in a unicellular organism—basically, pond scum—that has no brain of its own. When scientists apply for federal grant funding, they are often asked to state what "public impact" the proposed work will have. Members of Congress like to mockingly highlight the stranger-sounding projects that taxpayers are funding. I can imagine something described as the "study of light-sensing proteins in saltwater-pond scum" being used

as an example in a representative's diatribe. But I hope that the story of the origins of optogenetic research will show Americans how basic science can lead to wonderfully unpredictable and pathbreaking progress.

*Padma Sundaram
Boston, Mass.*

THE PHANTOM PUNCH

Kelefa Sanneh exhumes an old Muhammad Ali tale in his otherwise excellent overview of boxing, which focusses on the story of the Floyd Mayweather–Manny Pacquiao fight ("The Best Defense," May 25th). Let me try to kill the apparently unkillable myth, about the "phantom punch" that felled the compliant Sonny Liston fifty years ago. I was in Lewiston, Maine, for the Ali–Liston rematch. I saw the actual punch land on the actual chin, as did others in my area of the press section. It was a quick right hand that caught Liston as he was coming forward. Many people in the arena did not see it, understandably. Or they couldn't believe that it had the force to knock out the seemingly indestructible former champion, just as they couldn't believe their lying eyes when Liston quit in the middle of the first fight, fifteen months earlier. Many years later, I did a show on knockouts for HBO, which included frame-by-frame proof: the punch, the chin, and Liston's neck jerking backward momentarily. According to ringside doctors I've spoken to, that is a classic example of a medulla-oblongata K.O. Still, many people believe that the moon landings were staged, probably right there in Lewiston.

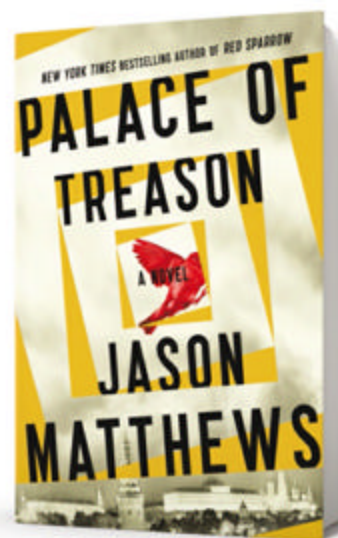
*Larry Merchant
Santa Monica, Calif.*

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 or return letters.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

**"Enthralling...
Palace of Treason
shimmers with
authenticity."**

—*The New York Times Book Review*



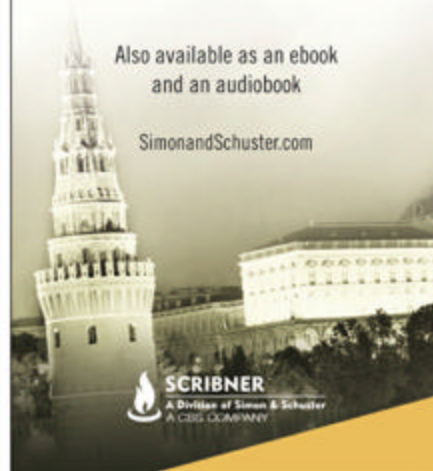
New from the bestselling,
Edgar Award–winning author of
Red Sparrow—a compulsively
readable novel about the Kremlin,
the CIA, and the deadly game of
counter-espionage that never stops.

**"Who better than a CIA officer
turned novelist to plumb the
hot-button issues of
Iran's nuclear program?"**

—*USA TODAY*

Also available as an ebook
and an audiobook

SimonandSchuster.com



SCRIBNER
A Division of Simon & Schuster
A CBS COMPANY

BOSE
Better sound through research®

The power to
escape it all.

Rory McIlroy



Bose® QuietComfort® 25
Acoustic Noise Cancelling® headphones

1-800-699-BOSE • Bose.com

Engineered with industry-leading
noise cancellation technology
and acclaimed Bose sound.

#BetterNeverQuits



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

JULY
2015

WEDNESDAY
1ST
8TH

THURSDAY
2ND
9TH

FRIDAY
3RD
10TH

SATURDAY
4TH
11TH

SUNDAY
5TH
12TH

MONDAY
6TH
13TH

TUESDAY
7TH
14TH

LIANNE LA HAVAS BOASTS a rich and velvety alto, but the half-Greek, half-Jamaican performer has more to offer than a pretty voice. The twenty-five-year-old London native is a polished guitarist and an inventive songwriter who fuses soul, jazz, R. & B., and folk, and her fans include Prince, who chose the living room of her flat for an impromptu gig and a press conference announcing his London shows last year. Though La Havas's first album, "Is Your Love Big Enough?," from 2012, nabbed a Mercury Prize nomination, it didn't quite push her into the spotlight. Her forthcoming follow-up effort, "Blood," which is heralded by the breezy single "Unstoppable," might just do the trick. She plays the Bowery Ballroom on July 9.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
DANCE | ART
THE THEATRE
MOVIES | NIGHT LIFE
ABOVE & BEYOND
FOOD & DRINK

PHOTOGRAPH BY PARI DUKOVIC

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS IN TOWN

Lincoln Center Festival: “Danny Elfman’s Music from the Films of Tim Burton”

For nearly three decades, the collaboration of the composer Danny Elfman, the master of the musical macabre, and the accomplished cinematic fantasist Tim Burton has spawned a stunning string of movies, beginning with “Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure” and on through “Batman,” “Edward Scissorhands,” “Beetlejuice,” “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” and other films. Elfman—who is also famous for his bustling theme for “The Simpsons,” and whom listeners of a certain age might remember as the front man for the nineteen-eighties stadium band Oingo Boingo—joins the veteran conductor John Mauceri and a full orchestra and chorus at Avery Fisher Hall for a journey of visual and musical excerpts from this singular partnership. (lincolncenterfestival.org, July 6 at 8, July 8–10 at 7:30, July 11 at 2 and 8, and July 12 at 2.)

“Billy Martin: Wandering”

As the first installment of its “Drawing Sound” series, the Drawing Center presents a three-day festival dedicated to the graphic scores—musical documents written not on staves but in an unlimited range of visual imagery, giving extraordinary freedom to the performer’s imagination—of Billy Martin, who also enjoys a substantial career as a jazz drummer. The author Paul Auster, the chamber orchestra Alarm Will Sound, the Sirius Quartet, Fang Percussion, Annie Gosfield, the keyboardists Anthony Coleman and John Medeski, and the reed player Ned Rothenberg, as well as Martin himself, number among the starry array of interpreters. (35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166, July 8–10 at 7:30.)

National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America

This acclaimed teen-age ensemble, now in its second year, gathers at Carnegie Hall to perform a concert that will launch an upcoming tour of China. With a renowned conductor, Charles Dutoit, and a starry soloist, the pianist Yundi, on board, the orchestra offers a new work by a world-famous composer, Tan Dun, whose “Passacaglia: The Secret of Wind and Birds” begins a program that continues with Beethoven’s Piano

Concerto No. 5 (“Emperor”) and Berlioz’s “Symphonie Fantastique.” (212-247-7800, July 11 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN Tanglewood

The supreme music festival of the summer hits its stride in the next two weeks. Here is a selection of concerts. July 2 at 8: Apollo’s Fire, which under the direction of Jeannette Sorrell has put Cleveland firmly on the period-performance map, comes to Ozawa Hall to offer “A Night at Bach’s Coffee House,” an evening of convivial music by Bach (the Fourth and Fifth Brandenburg Concertos), Telemann, Handel, and Vivaldi. • July 3 at 8:30: The official opening-night concert finds the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its dedicated home, the Shed, conducted by Jacques Lacombe in a variety of Americana favorites: Gershwin’s bounding “Concerto in F” (with the superb young pianist Kirill Gerstein, no stranger to jazz) and Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait” (with the inimitable Jessye Norman narrating), along with music by Duke Ellington and John Harbison. • July 10 at 8:30: The conductor Stéphane Denève takes the B.S.O. through a tour of French repertory for organ and orchestra—Poulenc’s Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani and Saint-Saëns’s Symphony No. 3, “Organ,” with the dazzling American soloist Cameron Carpenter as guest. The concert begins with Barber’s Adagio for Strings. (Note: Carpenter, performing on the fabulous Marshall & Ogletree touring organ made exclusively for him, returns to the Shed for a solo recital at 10:45.) • July 11 at 8:30: Bramwell Tovey conducts an evening of Italian opera favorites that features some serious Met-worthy talent taking leading roles in Act I of Puccini’s “Tosca”: Sonda Radvanovsky (Tosca) and Bryn Terfel (Scarpia). With the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. • July 12 at 2:30: The composer John Adams is a leading figure at Boston’s musical duchy, but another Adams—John Luther Adams, also a Pulitzer Prize winner—is gaining ground. The Seattle Symphony’s Ludovic Morlot conducts the B.S.O. in Adams’s “The Light That Fills the World” as well as Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major (with Pinchas Zukerman

and Dvořák’s Seventh Symphony. (Lenox, Mass. bso.org.)

Maverick Concerts

The Maverick’s hundredth season of music in the woods continues with back-to-back piano recitals by a doyenne of the standard repertory, Simone Dinnerstein, performing Bach’s Goldberg Variations, and by the intrepid young Adam Tendler, who performs classics of American experimentalism by Cage (“Sonatas and Interludes” and “4’33”,” which was premiered at the Maverick Hall) and Cowell (such hair-raising novelties as “Antimony,” “Dynamic Motion,” and “The Sword of Oblivion”). On the following weekend, the invigorating young Cypress Quartet plays string quartets by Beethoven (the “Harp”), Dvořák (No. 10 in E-Flat Major), and a Hudson Valley notable, the Grawemeyer Award-winning composer George Tsontakis. (Woodstock, N.Y. maverickconcerts.org, July 3 at 7, July 4 at 6, and July 12 at 4.)

Music Mountain

The string quartet lies at the core of the long-established Connecticut festival. On one Sunday, the Arianna String Quartet, a Music Mountain favorite, teams up with the probing cellist Colin Carr in a concert of music by Mozart (the Quartet in D Minor, K. 421), Boccherini (an intimate performance of one of his diverting Cello Concertos), and Grieg. The next, however, features a special guest, the pianist Peter Serkin, who, with a protégée, Julia Hsu, offers a program of four-hand works by Schumann, Bizet (selections from “Jeux d’Enfants”), Mozart (the Sonata in B-Flat Major, K. 358), Schubert, and Brahms. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126, July 5 and July 12 at 3.)

Caramoor

Here are some highlights from the elegant Westchester festival’s early-July lineup. July 5 at 4:30: In an amicable battle of the bands, two of the hottest young American string quartets—the Ariel and the Dover—divide works by Schubert and Schumann (the Quartet No. 1 in A Minor) between themselves, but team up for performances of Shostakovich’s blistering Two Pieces for String Octet and Mendelssohn’s beloved Octet. • July 11 at 8: Under the discerning eye of the conductor and scholar Will Crutchfield, the festival’s Venetian Theatre has become

a temple of bel-canto singing, offering nineteenth-century lyric works in musicologically sound concert stagings. This season, Crutchfield’s theme is the Church, its power, and the attraction of monastic refuge. The first entry is Donizetti’s exquisitely crafted grand opera “*La Favorite*,” about a young novice (the tenor Santiago Ballerini) preparing for holy orders who instead falls in love with the mistress, or “favorite” (the mezzo-soprano Clémentine Margaine), of a king (the baritone Stephen Powell). Crutchfield conducts the production in the original French, rather than the better-known Italian version, which was sanitized by Vatican-friendly censors. • July 12 at 4:30: Music from Copland House offers a concert honoring one of the festival’s founders, Lucie Rosen, who was a notable performer on one of the world’s first electronic instruments, the theremin. The thereminist Carolina Eyck joins the ensemble in music for her instrument by Martinů and the film composer Miklós Rózsa (the eerie “Spellbound” Concerto), part of a program that comes down to earth with works by Debussy, Copland (the Sextet), and Shostakovich (the Piano Trio No. 2 in E Minor). (Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org.)

Glimmerglass Festival

July 10 at 7:30: The Cooperstown company, the major summer opera festival of the Northeast, opens its fortieth-anniversary season with an English-language adaptation of Mozart’s “*The Magic Flute*,” directed by Madeline Sayet, who brings her Mohegan heritage and a master’s in art, politics, and postcolonial theory to bear on the Enlightenment-era work. Tweaking the opera’s fairy-tale setting and Masonic imagery, Sayet moves the action to the Northeastern woodlands, where the characters commune with rather than escape the natural world. • July 11 at 8: Following a much ballyhooed role début as King Philip, in Verdi’s “*Don Carlo*,” at Opera Philadelphia earlier this year, the magnificent bass-baritone Eric Owens plans to put another feather in his Verdian cap with his first outing as the dastardly Thane of Cawdor, in the composer’s flinty treatment of “*Macbeth*.” Also with Melody Moore and Michael Brandenburg; Anne Bogart directs and Joseph Colaneri conducts. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255, Through Aug. 23.)

AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION® HOTELS

Exactly like *nothing else*



You are not just a person, and we are not just hotels.
We are a 15-room boutique hunting lodge in Colorado.
A 17th-century palace with secret gardens in Venice.
And a former haunt for British Intelligence agents in London.
We are a distinct collection of nearly 100 independent hotels.
We may share an Autograph, but everything else is different.
Autograph Collection Hotels. Exactly like nothing else.

Explore our collection at AutographHotels.com



SEEING RED

The National Ballet of China performs an iconic ballet from the Cultural Revolution.

ON JULY 11 AND 12, the National Ballet of China will bring its country's most famous ballet, "The Red Detachment of Women," to the Lincoln Center Festival. In the early nineteen-sixties, Jiang Qing, or Madame Mao, decided that Chinese performing arts did not sufficiently reflect the spirit of the masses, and so she and the rest of her Gang of Four commissioned new, revolutionary works, eventually assembling what were called the Eight Model Operas—actually five operas, a symphony, and two ballets, including "The Red Detachment." These were the only works of musical theatre that most of China's citizens were allowed to partake of during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Indeed, the people were not just allowed. When they turned on the radio, this was the music they heard. When they went outside, this was what was coming out of the loudspeakers in the streets. The Chinese have a joke about this: "Eight hundred million people watching eight shows."

"The Red Detachment of Women" opens in a dungeon where the evil Tyrant has imprisoned Wu Qionghua, the daughter of a peasant unable to pay his rent. We see Wu writhing prettily, in red, against a column to which she has been lashed. Soon she escapes to the nearby coconut-palm forest. The Tyrant tracks her down, whips her savagely, and leaves her for dead. But she's alive, and is soon discovered by members of a women's detachment of the Red Army, who

take her in. By the end of the ballet, they, with Wu's heroic participation, have eliminated the Tyrant, released his prisoners, and opened his granaries to the local peasants.

However Chinese "The Red Detachment" is in its message, its artistic means are far from indigenous. In 1964, when it had its première, most people in China had never heard of ballet, let alone seen one. (The National Ballet had been founded only five years earlier.) The three choreographers—Li Chenxiang, Jiang Zuhui, and Wang Xixian—who put together "The Red Detachment" had obviously seen how the Russians, their predecessors in the manufacture of revolutionary art, used classical ballet to inculcate Marxist teachings: how a grand battement (big kick) could communicate fury, a piqué arabesque could spell purposefulness, and look fabulous at the same time.

"The Red Detachment" does look fabulous, still. A lot of it is camp—a vein tapped by Mark Morris in the version he made for John Adams's 1987 opera "Nixon in China." Teeth are gnashed; fists are shaken. Nobody lands in fifth position. But there is a place in art for the simple, even the strident. And everything here is done with exhilaration. At the end the Tyrant, on his knees, begs Wu for mercy. She shoots him. Then the other women come in, in their cute Bermuda shorts, and they shoot him some more. Hooray!

—Joan Acocella

A promotional poster for the TV show Ray Donovan. The main image shows a man in a dark suit and sunglasses, leaning against a metal railing on a rooftop. The background is a weathered, corrugated metal wall. The text 'RAY DONOVAN' is written in large, bold, red letters across the center. Above it, 'HIRE POWER' is written in smaller white letters. At the bottom, the premiere date and time are listed, followed by the Showtime logo.

HIRE POWER

**RAY
DONOVAN**

SEASON PREMIERE
JULY 12 SUNDAYS 9PM  **SHOWTIME**

Come together



MASTERS OF SEX

SEASON PREMIERE
JULY 12 SUNDAYS 10PM **SHOWTIME®**

American Ballet Theatre

Frederick Ashton's "Cinderella" (1948), set to Prokofiev's jazzy, sensual score, is a ballet full of contrasts: silliness and poetry, over-the-top mime and pure, classical dance. Filled with evocative solos for secondary characters and dazzling ensembles, it's also a great showcase for the company. If you can, try to catch Marianela Nuñez (a guest from the Royal Ballet), an Argentine-born dancer of great charm and technical prowess. • June 30 and July 2-3 at 7:30, July 1 at 2 and 7:30, and July 4 at 2 and 8: "Cinderella." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000.)

MOMIX

The ingredients of "Alchemia," the latest spectacle by Moses Pendleton, are those of all MOMIX productions: props, shape-altering costumes, momentarily striking theatrical illusions, acrobatic performers, soft-porn sensuality, grating New Age music. The titular theme comes with scenic categories—the traditional elements of earth, air, fire, and water—but the alchemy that's needed is the kind usually missing from MOMIX shows, the kind that transforms kitsch into art. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 6-11 and July 13-14. Through Aug. 1.)

"Tap City"

The New York City Tap Festival

celebrates its fifteenth year. "Tap Forward," on July 8, is a standard sampler, though this one features such knockout dancers as Max Pollak, Roxane Butterfly, and Melinda Sullivan. "Thelonious," on July 9, is more unusual, a tribute to the music of Thelonious Monk directed by Sarah Petronio, the doyenne of jazz tap in France. Her show, staged as if in a Parisian apartment, is an intimate tap conversation among deeply musical dancers, including Baakari Wilder, Michela Marino Lerman, and Tamango. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010. July 8-9.)

National Ballet of China

The company, an infrequent visitor, presents two large-scale productions as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. The first, "Peony Pavilion," from 2008, represents a recent effort to create new works that fuse ballet technique with Chinese aesthetics. The story, which dates to the sixteenth century, is about a love so overpowering that it defies death. The choreography is by Fei Bo, an up-and-coming dancemaker who trained in contemporary dance; the score, a fusion of Chinese opera and Western impressionism, is by Guo Wenjing. The second, "The Red Detachment of Women" (1964), was one of two "model ballets" sanctioned by Mao during the Cultural Rev-

olution. (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600. July 8-12.)

"Victory Dance"

The New Victory Theatre's lively, low-cost, kid-friendly festival offers three programs of short works. Program A includes Sean Curran's "Dingle Diwali," a charming piece that combines Irish stepping with Indian classical dance, performed by the Darrah Carr Dance company. In Program B, the Martha Graham Dance Company performs a bit of "Appalachian Spring," among other things. Max Pollak's fusion of tap, body percussion, and Latin music anchors Program C. (209 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010. July 8-14. Through July 24.)

Noche Flamenca

Though flamenco isn't primarily a narrative form, many flamenco choreographers have tried their hand at telling stories, with varying degrees of success. (A notable example is Antonio Gades's "Bodas de Sangre.") For this evening-length show, Martín Santangelo, of Noche Flamenca, has adapted the story of Sophocles' "Antigone." The title character will be played by Soledad Barrio, a dancer of uncommon intensity. Juan Ogalla, a master of *zapateado*, is her betrothed, Haemon. The young singer Manuel Gago is Creon. The music is traditional, with the exception of an electric guitar, played by Hamed Traore. (West Park Presbyterian Church, 165

W. 86th St. 212-352-3101. July 13-14. Through Aug. 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow

Dorrance Dance returns with "The Blues Project," a terrific show that has become tighter and brighter since its 2013 debut. As before, Toshi Reagon and her band, BIGLovely, perform all manner of blues as a crew of brilliant tap dancers playfully explore tap's mixed origins (Ted Shawn, July 1-5). • BodyTraffic, a rising group of appealing, topnotch contemporary dancers based in Los Angeles, brings a program ranging from the dark, shallow aggression of Hofesh Shechter's "Dust" to the ebullient jazz of Richard Siegal's "The New 45" (Doris Duke, July 1-5). • Nederlands Dans Theater 2 (Ted Shawn, July 8-12) bets heavily on stylized eccentricity, with pieces by choreographic duos that specialize in oddity: Sol León and Paul Lightfoot, Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar. A better bet is Johan Inger's "I New Then," a study in disaffection set to Van Morrison songs. • Perhaps only Big Dance Theater would think of combining the films "Terms of Endearment," "Le Cercle Rouge," and "Doctor Zhivago," but few other troupes have the wit and skill to make the resulting mashup, "Alan Smithee Directed This Play: Triple Feature," so engaging (Doris Duke, July 8-12). (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745.)

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum

"The Roof Garden

Commission: Pierre Huyghe"

"Gradually," Nick Carraway tells us after one of Gatsby's parties, "I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world." On the roof of the Met, Huyghe rewinds New York much further: lampreys and tadpoles, their forms little evolved for hundreds of millennia, swim in an aquarium whose glass fogs up at intervals; a boulder of lava floats inside. Nearby, another boulder, this one of Manhattan schist, rests like a garden ornament on the roof, four holes bored through its million-year-old surface. The French artist has also lifted nearly two dozen of the

granite tiles that cover the roof, and the dirt underneath has been mixed with water from the aquarium to create muddy pools of life, at once ancient and fleeting. Even Huyghe's most ardent defenders will concede that his deep-thinking art can be too abstruse; for a brush with the artist's accessible side, visit the mezzanine of the modern wing and watch his remarkable video "Human Mask," starring a monkey and shot in an abandoned restaurant near Fukushima. Through Nov. 15.

Museum of Modern Art

"One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North"

In 1993, seven years before his death, at the age of eighty-two,

Jacob Lawrence recast the title and most of the captions of a stunning suite of sixty small paintings that he had made in 1941. The pictures, in milk-based casein tempera on hardboard, detailed the exodus—beginning during the First World War—of African-Americans from the rural South to the urban North. The original title, "The Migration of the Negro," became "The Migration Series." The prolix captions were condensed and clarified, with only five of them left unedited. Art historians quail at alterations of canonical works, even by their creators. But Lawrence wasn't working for art history, even if he was making it. He wanted to change the world. This profoundly moving show—all sixty paintings and contemporaneous works by other

artists, photographers, musicians, and writers—stirs reflection on the character and the relative success of that aim. Two impressions stand out. One is the terrifying obstinacy of racial injustice on the eve of the Second World War. The other is the moral grit that was needed to overcome it. In context, "Migration" appears as a hinge of the national consciousness: inward to the untold history of African-Americans and outward to the enlightenment of the wide world. It would not have worked were it not superb art, but it is. Through Sept. 7.

MOMA PS1

"Wael Shawky: Cabaret Crusades"

At three and a half hours, the Egyptian artist's video trilogy about

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends." Opens June 30.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960-1971." Through Sept. 7.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Doris Salcedo." Through Oct. 12.

WHITNEY MUSEUM

"America Is Hard to See." Through Sept. 27.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Basquiat: The Unknown Notebooks." Through Aug. 23.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"Spiders Alive!" Opens July 4.

FRICK COLLECTION

"Leighton's Flaming June." Through Sept. 6.

JEWISH MUSEUM

"Repetition and Difference." Through Aug. 9.

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

"Alice: 150 Years of Wonderland." Through Oct. 11.

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

"Folk City: New York and the Folk Music Revival." Through Nov. 29.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

"Meryl McMaster: Second Self." Through Dec. 11.

NEW MUSEUM

"Sarah Charlesworth: Doubleworld." Through Sept. 20.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST

CHELSEA

Deborah Remington

Wallspace

619 W. 27th St. 212-594-9478.

Through Aug. 7.

"All Watched Over"

Cohan

533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.

Through Aug. 7.

"The Secret Life"

Murray Guy

453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.

Through Aug. 7.

"What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art"

Marks

502, 522, and 526 W. 22nd St.

212-243-0200.

Opens July 8.

DOWNTOWN

Roger Brown

Maccarone

630 Greenwich St. 212-431-4977.

Through Aug. 7.

"Close to the Skin"

Company

88 Eldridge St. 646-756-4547.

Through Aug. 9.

"The Daily Show"

Bureau

178 Norfolk St. 212-227-2783.

Through July 31.

"Grand Illusion(s)"

Preston

301 Broome St. 212-431-1105.

Through Aug. 8.

the medieval history of the Middle East feels epic. But in a series of episodic vignettes performed by marionettes (speaking Arabic with English subtitles), Shawky leavens his weighty subject with artful zaniness (puppet-on-puppet violence gives way to the occasional musical number), as he relays the West's centuries-long holy wars against the infidels from a Muslim perspective. "The Secrets of Karbala" (2015), the final work in the series, uses Murano-glass marionettes—marvelous human-animal hybrids inspired by African sculptures, displayed here in vitrines—to tell a story that encompasses the 680 A.D. split between Sunnis and Shiites, Saladin, Richard the Lionheart, and the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, in 1204. Parallels with current events in the same regions are almost too easy to draw. The work's greatest appeal is the compelling oddity of Shawky's Mister Rogers approach to this charged history and the on-ionlike layers of his reappropriation. Through Aug. 31.

Morgan Library & Museum

"Life Lines: Portrait Drawings from Dürer to Picasso"

Four centuries of portraits are grouped by thematic divisions ("Family and Friends," "Formal Portraits") so open-ended that the exhibition can feel slack. There are standouts, to be sure, including a large charcoal by Dürer depicting his brother in a fur coat and tilted cap and a rigorous sketch by Anthony van Dyck, of a fellow-painter's wife and child (the baby was clearly in no mood for posing). Just before his death, in 1802, the French artist Joseph Ducreux drew a fine portrait of a gentleman with a white bow knotted at his neck, his dark skin a gentle contrast to the beige background. The subject may or may not be the Haitian revolutionary Toussaint Louverture, but, regardless, it's an extraordinary drawing, which radiates revolutionary virtues—liberty, equality, fraternity—that feel especially resonant now. Through Sept. 8.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Frédéric Brenner

Best known for his documentation of the Jewish diaspora since the late nineteen-seventies, the French photographer is also the organizer of "This Place," a project in which twelve noted photographers (including Josef Koudelka, Jeff Wall, and Thomas Struth) took pictures in the West Bank and Israel from 2009 to 2013. Brenner's contribution is an ambitious series titled "An Archaeology of Fear and Desire"—big color images that are as layered and complex as their wide-ranging subject. Whether portraying an Orthodox

family at the dinner table or two bearded men embracing in a garden of cacti, Brenner's photographs feel at once empathetic and evenhanded. Through July 3. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

Park Seo-bo

A godfather of modernism in South Korea, Park was a leading figure in Dansaekhwa, a monochrome-painting movement that emphasized process, materiality, and the negation of the self. Each of the eleven works here is titled "Écriture"—Park studied painting in Paris—and the earliest ones, from the mid- to late seventies, feature calligraphic waves on gray backgrounds. Later, Park had a breakthrough when he began to layer his canvases with sheets of watercolor-soaked *hanji* paper, which he fashioned into uniform ridges. The fibrousness of the paper and the uniqueness of each painstaking ridge turn the impassive gray or black surfaces of Park's canvases into unexpected terrains. Through July 3. (Galerie Perrotin, 909 Madison Ave., at 73rd St. 212-812-2902.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Kate Manheim

This New York stalwart came to prominence on the stage of the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, where she was the lead actor, the muse, and at times the doppelgänger of her husband, Richard Foreman. For the past twenty years, she's been making art in the face of an acutely painful neurological disorder—colorful paintings on scraps of cardboard, sometimes patterned, sometimes featuring stylized female nudes. The most arresting works are painted on paper towels. One features a cross-legged figure in a Matisse-like interior; others sport hieratic symbols—circles, hash marks, chevrons—against pulsating backgrounds of intensely packed dots that recall the indigenous art of Australia. Through July 25. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212.)

Tim Roda

The subject of family has absorbed photographers, from Julia Margaret Cameron to Sally Mann, as a way of combining the personal and the universal. Roda, who is the father of four young sons, takes a theatrical approach to the subject, constructing playful tableaux in domestic interiors. He underscores the slapdash air by burning or splicing his negatives, but the most special effect isn't technical: like the mothers one can often detect in nineteenth-century portraits of children, Roda often hides himself under a blanket, supporting his boys like a friendly ghost. Through July 17. (Cooney, 508 W. 26th St. 212-255-8158.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Josef Astor

These intriguing portraits (by an occasional contributor to *The New Yorker*) were selected by the singer Antony Hegarty, who appears in one of the photographs as a wraith in a sheer white gown and a halo. Most of Astor's other subjects are performers as well, accustomed to transformation and artifice, including Leigh Bowery, John Kelly, and Michael Clark—a detail that's reinforced by the theatrical settings in which they find themselves here. While Astor's sitters can often seem otherworldly, some moments are more down to earth, as when the choreographer Mark Morris is shown naked and collapsed on the floor. Through July 12. (Participant, Inc., 253 E. Houston St. 212-254-4334.)

Niele Toroni

For fifty years, the Swiss painter has relied on just one size of paintbrush to make his signature, standardized brushstrokes. (He shares many of the aims of the French conceptual-minimalist Daniel Buren, with whom he collaborated in the late sixties.) In this overdue exhibition, Toroni has cunningly hung twenty-five square paintings from 1987, each one marked with fourteen orange strokes, at the height of the gallery's mezzanine: in the main space, the canvases are a tick below eye level, while in the upper space they're propped against the wall, as they rest on the floor. Toroni compounded this overlapping of art work and architecture by painting the gallery's garage door and panelboard. In a related exhibition uptown (at the Marian Goodman gallery), new canvases and wall paintings jostle with three older quincunxes made of white paint on yellowing newsprint. Through Sept. 6. (Swiss Institute, 18 Wooster St. 212-925-2035.)

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

Mark Reynolds

When a Greek mathematician discovered that the square root of two was irrational, his fellow-Pythagoreans threw him into the sea (so the story goes). If only those philosophers could see the exquisite drawings of this San Francisco-based artist, who, armed with straight-edge and compass, transmutes the mysteries of geometry into dense meshes of colored lines, alive with spiritual intensity. The drawings are marvels of harmony, their beauty compounded by Reynolds's subtle pastel shading. In the margin of one thicket of rectangles, the artist has scribbled a note that would make a Pythagorean proud: "There is always order. The trick is to find it sometimes." Through July 12. (Pierogi, 177 N. 9th St. 718-599-2144.)



THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Amazing Grace

This new musical, by Christopher Smith and Arthur Giron, tells the story behind the famous hymn, as John Newton (Josh Young), a former slave-ship captain, finds musical inspiration during a journey on the high seas. Gabriel Barre directs. In previews. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 866-870-2717.)

Awake and Sing!

The National Asian American Theatre Company performs Clifford Odets's 1935 drama, about a Jewish family living in the Bronx during the Depression. Stephen Brown-Fried directs. Previews begin July 6. Opens July 13. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

DruidShakespeare:

The History Plays

Druid Theatre Company returns to the Lincoln Center Festival, with Mark O'Rowe's marathon retelling of "Richard II," both parts of "Henry IV" and "Henry V," from an Irish perspective. Previews begin July 7. Opens July 11. (Gerald W. Lynch Theatre, John Jay College, 524 W. 59th St. 212-721-6500.)

Hamilton

Lin-Manuel Miranda's hip-hop musical, in which Miranda plays the founding father Alexander Hamilton, moves to Broadway after a sold-out run at the Public. Thomas Kail directs. Previews begin July 13. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 800-745-3000.)

The New York Musical Theatre Festival

Selections at the twelfth annual festival include "Claudio Quest," about a Super Mario-like hero; "Acappella," about a gospel singer who hits it big; and the figure-skating saga "Tonya & Nancy: The Rock Opera." Opens July 7. (Various locations. 212-352-3101.)

The New York Story

Jerry Seinfeld directs Colin Quinn in a comic monologue about the evolution of New York City, from Dutch settlers to hipster Williamsburg. Previews begin July 9. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 866-811-4111.)



Audrey has "a beautiful heart," Ellen Greene says. "She sees the good in everyone, even in bad people."

ETERNALLY AUDREY

Ellen Greene returns to her seminal role in "Little Shop of Horrors."

THERE'S A CLASS OF PERFORMERS—Paul Reubens, Carol Channing—who create a single comedic character so idiosyncratic that neither the actor nor the role is ever quite complete without the other. In the early eighties, Ellen Greene was on an unemployment line practicing the audition song she'd been given for "Little Shop of Horrors," Alan Menken and Howard Ashman's musical about a jive-talking, people-eating Venus flytrap. The song was "Somewhere That's Green," in which the heroine dreams of a life in suburbia. "I instantly knew the lyrics," she recalled recently. "And I was shocked that I knew the lyrics." Greene landed the part of Audrey, a skid-row floozy with a heart of gold. In rehearsal, she refashioned the character to her contours: squeaky baby voice, B-movie hairdo, and a sexy, innocent sweetness that grounded the caricature in tender reality. The show opened in May, 1982, in a tiny theatre above a brothel, and moved Off Broadway that July. Greene reprised her role in the 1986 film version, with Rick Moranis playing her geek boyfriend, Seymour. Since then, the part has been, indelibly, hers.

Perhaps that's why the "Encores! Off-Center" series, which presents high-spirited concert versions of Off Broadway musicals, has called on her for its own rendition of "Little Shop of Horrors," at City Center July 1-2. Now sixty-four, Greene lives in Los Angeles (she left New York in the late nineties), but she was willing to don her Audrey wig once more. She even has the original dress: black, with sequins and a fringe under the bust. "I have the same measurements—what can you do?" she said. More important, she has held on to what made her Audrey so enduring. "She's got a beautiful heart. She sees the good in everyone, even in bad people."

Over the years, Greene has sung "Somewhere That's Green" a number of times, including with the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C., in 2011, and at the New York Film Festival, in 2012. But it's been some thirty years since she played the part in full. At City Center, she'll be joined by Taran Killam, of "Saturday Night Live," as the sadistic dentist Orin Scrivello, and, as Seymour, the decidedly un-geeky Jake Gyllenhaal, who is three decades her junior. "I will not hold Jake's beauty or height or age against him," Greene said.

—Michael Schulman

ALSO NOTABLE
AN ACT OF GOD
Studio 54

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS
Palace

BEAUTIFUL—THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL
Stephen Sondheim

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME
Ethel Barrymore

DOCTOR FAUSTUS
Classic Stage Company.
Through July 12.

FINDING NEVERLAND
Lunt-Fontanne

FISH IN THE DARK
Cort

THE FLICK
Barrow Street Theatre

FUN HOME
Circle in the Square

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER
Walter Kerr

GLORIA
Vineyard

GUARDS AT THE TAJ
Atlantic Theatre Company.
Through July 12.

HAND TO GOD
Booth

HAPPY DAYS
Flea

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH
Belasco

HEISENBERG
City Center Stage II

IT SHOULDA BEEN YOU
Brooks Atkinson

THE KING AND I
Vivian Beaumont

OF GOOD STOCK
City Center Stage I

ON THE TOWN
Lyric

ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
American Airlines Theatre

SEAWIFE
South Street Seaport
Museum

SHOWS FOR DAYS
Mitzi E. Newhouse

SOMETHING ROTTEN!
St. James

THE SOUND AND THE FURY
Public. Through July 12.

10 OUT OF 12
SoHo Rep

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY WAY
Rattlestick

WOLF HALL: PARTS ONE & TWO
Winter Garden. Through
July 5.

Penn & Teller on Broadway

The duo perform a six-week run of magic and shtick, including tricks from their popular Las Vegas act. Previews begin July 7. Opens July 12. (Marquis, Broadway at 46th St. 877-250-2929.)

The Weir

The Irish Rep revives Conor McPher-son's 1997 drama, directed by Ciarán O'Reilly, set in a rural Irish pub. In previews. Opens July 9. (DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-727-2737.)

NOW PLAYING

Ada/Ava

Some paper, some light, a wealth of plastic sheeting, and a row of dinky overhead projectors—that's all that Chicago's Manual Cinema needs to practice theatrical magic. This nearly wordless shadow-puppet play concerns a pair of elderly sisters who keep a lighthouse. Initially divided by death, they are mysteriously reunited after a visit to a carnival hall of mirrors. (Think Orpheus and Eurydice as retold by Shirley Jackson and art directed by Alfred Hitchcock.) Three women and two men, accompanied by live musicians, stand beneath a screen, manipulating paper cutouts and the projectors so as to suggest crosscuts and fade-ins, closeups and blackouts. Sometimes the women, wearing strips of mask that alter and age their profiles, portray the sisters in silhouette. If the arc of the story is ultimately familiar, the methods are continually surprising, and the precision of the artists astounding. (3LD Art & Technology Center, 80 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101. Through July 5.)

Ice Factory 2015

The festival of new works continues with "Body," performed by the physical-theatre troupe Blessed Unrest (July 1-4), and Morgan Gould's drama "Losing Tom Pecinka" (July 8-11). (New Ohio Theatre, 154 Christopher St. 888-596-1027.)

Preludes

Dave Malloy's intimate piece, directed by Rachel Chavkin for LCT3, is set in Moscow in 1900. It's been three years since the première of Sergei Rachmaninoff's First Symphony. Savaged by the critic César Cui, the hitherto prolific composer (Gabriel Ebert—tall, delicate, and focussed) is thrown into a terrible funk. Though engaged to the sweet and smart Natalya (the charming Nikki M. James), he can't move forward in his personal life, either. At the suggestion of a friend, he seeks help from an auto-suggestive therapist (the openhearted Eisa Davis). It's difficult to dramatize composer's block for more than two hours, and Malloy's music and lyrics—imaginative, stylized, and authentic to the characters and the situations—struggle with this. The show is crammed with more ideas than it can handle, but

when was the last time you could say that a contemporary musical was an embarrassment of riches? (Claire Tow, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

The Qualms

Bruce Norris's play has success written all over it, but it relies on a number of stereotypes that make it a little cheap. A group of thirty- and forty-somethings have gathered for a sex party at the home of Teri (the fantastic Kate Arrington) and Gary (the hilarious John Procaccino). There's a nice, naughty familiarity among them—but a new, recently married couple joins this improvised family: Chris (Jeremy Shamos) and Kristy (Sarah Goldberg). Kristy's willing to go with the flow, but Chris can't deal with the hypocrisy in what is supposed to be an alternative scene. Shamos is a fascinating actor, but he's saddled with an issue-driven script that forces him to spout all sorts of predictable, reactive stuff, especially when it comes to characters Chris considers self-deluding, such as Ken (Andy Lucien), a black physical therapist who gives lots of sass. The director, Pam McKinnon, doesn't challenge Norris's rather racist and homophobic depiction, dragging down the production as a whole. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through July 12.)

Significant Other

The playwright Joshua Harmon gave the Roundabout a hit with "Bad Jews," in 2013, and his new play is likely to do the same. Crisply directed by Trip Cullman, it centers on Jordan (Gideon Glick), the only guy in a quartet of close friends in their late twenties. One by one, the women (Sas Goldberg, Lindsay Mendez, and Carra Patterson) acquire husbands, inevitably affecting the dynamics of the group. The most emotionally longing of the four, Jordan feels abandoned by his support group as he struggles to find a man of his own. Harmon mixes boisterous hilarity with resentment and hurt, all energetically and expertly performed. Providing tender balance to this youthful angst is Barbara Barrie, as Jordan's grandma. Barrie and Glick, actors a couple of generations apart, slow things down in their scenes together, finding lovely, touching humor and humanity. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

The Tempest

Sam Waterston first played Prospero for the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1974, when he was thirty-three and likely more suited to Ferdinand, the love-struck youth. Now in his seventies, Waterston plays the sorcerer as an old man itching to get out of retirement; he offsets his natural avuncular sweetness with spasms of fury—less a tempest than a partly cloudy sky, with occasional T-storms. Michael Greif's staging, for Shakespeare in the Park, accentuates the play's tight-knit power struggles, whether among the shipwrecked nobles of Milan or between Prospero

and his island subordinates, the spirit Ariel (Chris Perfetti, dressed for the White Party) and the mud-smeared monster Caliban (Louis Cancelmi). It's only after intermission, when the sun goes down, that the production gives itself over to enchantment, with glowing blue orbs and extravagant masques. (Delacorte, Central Park. Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555. Through July 5.)

OUT OF TOWN

Bard SummerScape

Daniel Fish directs an intimate, immersive new version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" Staged in the round, the production features a six-piece Americana band, and actors and audience share a communal meal of chili and cornbread. The ten-person cast includes Mary Testa, as Aunt Eller. (Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900.)

Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival

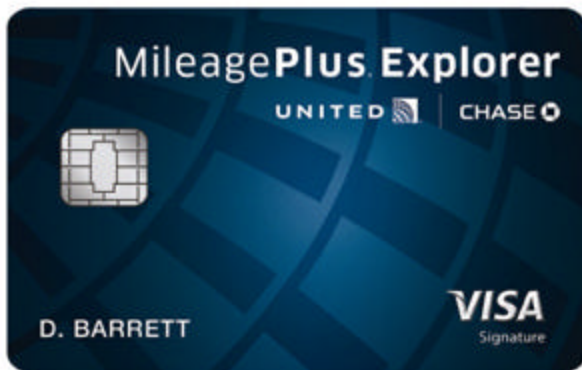
Davis McCallum has made the unusual but wise choice to open his first season as the festival's artistic director with Mary Zimmerman's "The Arabian Nights," from 1992. In Lileana Blain-Cruz's production, the stories of Scheherazade (Susannah Millonzi) are conjured not only to save her own life at the hands of the murderous King Shahryar (Babak Tafti) but to heal a dangerously damaged man. The tales pile up, circle back, and reflect on one another, creating a dizzying and delightful theatrical canvas. In this magical outdoor setting, the hills along the Hudson stand in beautifully for Baghdad, Cairo, and points east. (Running in repertory with "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Winter's Tale.") (Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575.)

New York Stage and Film

Summer offerings at Vassar's Powerhouse Theatre include Keith Bunin's "The Unbuilt City," directed by Sean Mathias (July 1-12); the Debate Society's "The Light Years" (July 23-Aug. 2); "Desire," a sextet of short plays based on stories by Tennessee Williams (July 2-5); and musical workshops of "Rain," by Sybille Pearson and Michael John LaChiusa (July 10-12), and "Noir," by Kyle Jarrow and Duncan Sheik (July 31-Aug. 2). (124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 845-437-5599.)

Williamstown Theatre Festival

Highlights include, on the Main Stage, William Inge's "Off the Main Road," directed by Evan Cabnet and starring Kyra Sedgwick (June 30-July 19); Dominique Morisseau's "Paradise Blue," directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson and starring Blair Underwood (July 22-Aug. 2); and Eugene O'Neill's "A Moon for the Misbegotten" with Will Swenson and Audra McDonald, directed by Gordon Edelstein (Aug. 5-23). (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)



Free Checked Bag.

Dream bigger than your carry-on.

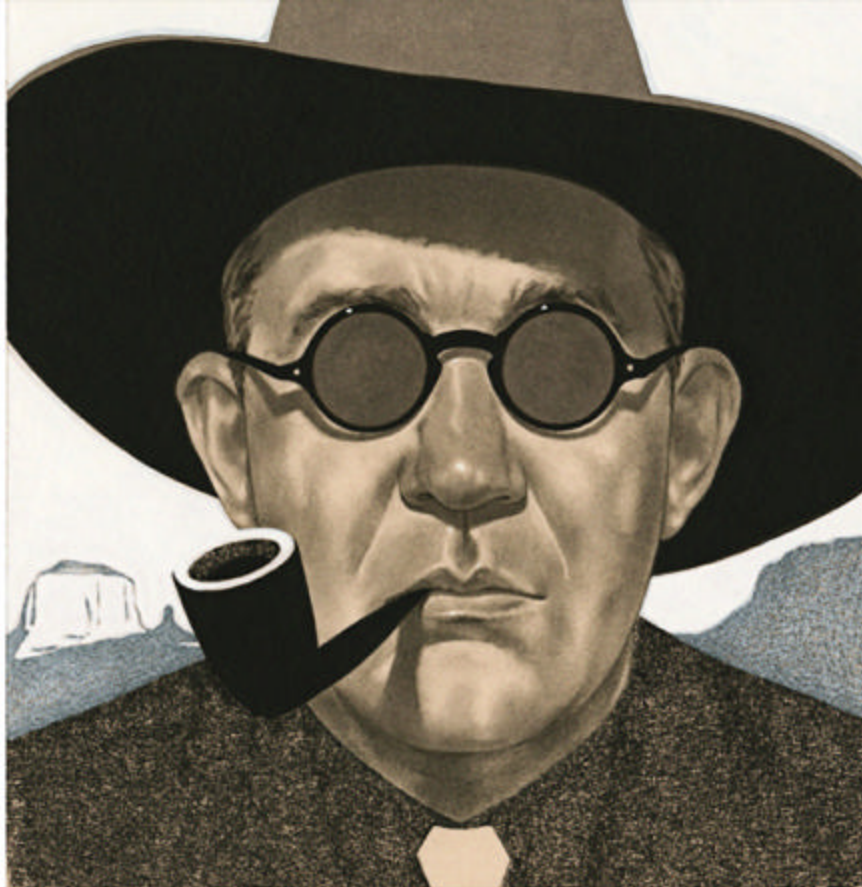
Save up to \$100 per roundtrip with the United MileagePlus® Explorer Card. You and a companion each get your first standard checked bag free when you fly United® on the same reservation purchased with your Card. So you can bring home more than just memories. Explore a new way to travel with the United MileagePlus Explorer Card.

Get **30,000 Bonus Miles** after you spend \$1,000 on purchases in the first three months from account opening. \$0 intro annual fee for the first year, then \$95.

Priority Boarding • 2 United Club™ Passes • No Foreign Transaction Fees • Chip-Enabled Card

TheExplorerCard.com • 866-556-7201

Free Checked Bag: Free bag is for first standard checked bag for the primary cardmember and one companion traveling on the same reservation. Service charges for additional/oversized/overweight bags may apply. Purchase of ticket(s) with Card is required. See united.com/chasebag for details. **Pricing:** Purchase and balance transfer APR is 15.99% variable. Cash advances and overdraft advances APR is 24.99% variable. Variable APRs change with the market based on the Prime Rate, which was 3.25% on 4/15/15. Annual fee: \$0 introductory fee the first year. After that, \$95. Minimum Interest Charge: None. Balance Transfer Fee: 3% of the amount of each transaction, but not less than \$5. Note: This account may not be eligible for balance transfers. Cash Advance Fee: 5% of the amount of each advance, but not less than \$10. Foreign Transaction Fee: None. Credit cards are issued by Chase Bank USA, N.A. Subject to credit approval. To obtain additional information on the current terms and information on any changes to these terms after the date above, please call 1-866-556-7201 or visit www.TheExplorerCard.com. You must have a valid permanent home address within the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. Restrictions and limitations apply. Offer subject to change. See www.TheExplorerCard.com for pricing and rewards details. **MileagePlus:** Miles accrued, awards, and benefits issued are subject to the rules of the United MileagePlus program. For details, see www.united.com.



Born and raised in Maine, John Ford was a master of Westerns, as well as dramas set in the South.

THE DIRECTION OF JUSTICE

John Ford's cinematic fight for civil rights.

THE GREATEST AMERICAN POLITICAL FILMMAKER, John Ford, gets a twenty-film retrospective at Museum of the Moving Image (July 3-Aug. 2), which spotlights the links between two of his crucial obsessions: mob violence and racial hatred. The series opens with "Young Mr. Lincoln," from 1939, in which the fledgling attorney and future President, played by Henry Fonda, defends two poor young white men wrongly accused of murder—but only after physically saving them from being lynched by the angry townsfolk. In "Judge Priest" (July 4-5), from 1934, set in a Kentucky town in 1890, Ford depicts the official of the title (played by Will Rogers) protecting Jeff (Stepin Fetchit), a black workingman, from unjust prosecution. Perhaps twisting history but also defying segregationists of his own day, Ford shows the judge warmly welcoming Jeff as his newfound fishing buddy; Ford also filmed an attempted lynching of Jeff, but the studio cut the scene. In the director's 1953 near-remake, "The Sun Shines Bright" (Aug. 2), Priest defends another unjustly accused young black man (Eltzie Emanuel) from a lynch mob; the movie culminates in an oration by Priest in a black church.

Ford, of course, is most famous for his Westerns, and one of the best of them, "Sergeant Rutledge," from 1960 (July 19), set in Arizona in 1881, stars Woody Strode in the title role. Rutledge, the leader of the all-black 9th Cavalry, one of the buffalo soldiers of lore, is charged with the rape of a white girl and the murder of her father, a major. It's a courtroom drama, centered on Rutledge's trial at court-martial, where the interrogation of witnesses leads to elaborate and stirring flashbacks—including a scene where Rutledge, wounded by gunfire, fears the compassionate ministrations of a local woman (Constance Towers) whom he has saved from an Apache attack, telling her, "White women only spell trouble for any of us." While depicting the bravery of Rutledge and his troop, Ford also shows a courtroom filled with white people braying for Rutledge's blood and a prosecutor who tries to demean Rutledge's testimony on the ground of race. The story is riddled with scarring memories of slavery; under the movie's taut martial virtue, Ford virtually shouts with rage at the country's unredressed legacy of violent racism.

—Richard Brody

MOVIES

NOW PLAYING

Dope

A minor film on a major subject. The writer and director Rick Famuyiwa sets the story of Malcolm Adekanbi (Shameik Moore), a high-school senior, in a predominantly black neighborhood in his home town of Inglewood, California. There, Malcolm—whose father is a Nigerian man he's never met and whose mother is a bus driver—is something of a cultural oddball. A scholarly fan of nineties hip-hop, Malcolm has a punk-rock band with his two best friends, Jib (Tony Revolori) and Diggy (Kiersey Clemons). He's a free-spirited, hardworking student who dreams of going to Harvard and a classic nerd who's the inevitable victim of bullies. Caught between Bloods on one street and drug dealers on another, Malcolm does a favor for a local kingpin named Dom (A\$AP Rocky) and meets—and quickly falls for—Nakia (Zoë Kravitz), a smart girl who unintentionally lures him into Dom's orbit. Malcolm ends up with a gun and a backpack full of drugs, and the only way out of his predicament is to sell the stash. Though there are outbursts of violence and a risk of arrest, Famuyiwa keeps the tone light; the many comic asides suggest his stifled flair for satire. —Richard Brody (In limited release.)

Eden

Mia Hansen-Løve's new film follows Paul (Félix de Givry), the Dorian Gray of the French electronic-music scene. His story begins in 1992 and lasts more than twenty years, during which he barely seems to age: a remarkable feat, given that his principal foodstuff is cocaine. Paul, a d.j., specializing in what he calls "New York garage with a Parisian twist," forms a duo with his friend Stan (Hugo Conzelmann). There is almost no plot; our hero drifts through Paris, falls in love and tumbles into debt, and takes a lengthy detour to America, during which, in an excruciating sequence, he revisits an old flame (Greta Gerwig). Even in the busiest clubs, in the small hours, Hansen-Løve keeps her distance, serenely surveying the Dionysian throng. If the result feels anesthetized, that could be seen as a tribute to the music, which remains ecstatically dull; when you are lost in it, the movie implies, the rest of life—and even time itself—can pass you by. In French. —Anthony Lane (In limited release.)

Escobar: Paradise Lost

Andrea Di Stefano's film is about Pablo Escobar, the Colombian who once bestrode the international cocaine trade like a chunky colossus. But the movie is not all about Escobar; most of the time, we see him through the innocent—not to say uncomprehending—eyes

of Nick (Josh Hutcherson), a wandering young Canadian who has the misfortune to fall in love with the drug king's niece (Claudia Traisac). Nick is embraced by the family and then put to work running errands; when required to commit murder, he tries to flee. The story only takes fire, however, when Benicio Del Toro, as Escobar, heaves into view. With his paunch, his sad smile, and the sluggish tone of his delivery, Del Toro cuts a frightening figure, all the more so because the imposition of fear is done at such a modest volume and with so little apparent effort; you can see how the man became a myth. He deserves the whole movie to himself.—*A.L.* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/29/15.) (In limited release.)

The Flame and the Arrow

This 1950 swashbuckler stars Burt Lancaster as Dardo, the leader of a peasant revolt in twelfth-century Lombardy against the Hessian overlords. The director Jacques Tourneur, working with a script by Waldo Salt, turns the medieval adventure into a symbol of the French Resistance in the Second World War and locates its roots in class warfare. Tourneur also makes exuberant use of his star's acrobatic gifts, casting Lancaster's former circus partner, Nick Cravat, as his sidekick, Piccolo, and incorporating their astounding leaps and catches, balancing acts and high-wire daring, into the revolutionary raids. The romantic backstory highlights the sexual thrill of illicit power. Dardo's wife, Francesca (Lynn Baggett), has run off with Count Ulrich (Frank Allenby), the predatory commander of the Teutonic occupation, known as the Hawk, and left Dardo to care for their five-year-old son, Rudi (Gordon Gebert). The action is sparked by the Hawk's kidnapping of Rudi, whom he holds hostage in an attempt to break Dardo's fighting spirit. But the hero, of course, rises to the intrepid occasion. Scenes of a rebel camp amid Greek ruins suggest political redemption through the marriage of popular and classical arts, as does Norman Lloyd's sparkling turn, as a troubadour who exudes the insolent energy of revolt.—*R.B.* (MOMA; July 9.)

Inside Out

Much of the new Pixar film is set in the mind of a child. Riley (voiced by Kaitlyn Dias) and her parents have just moved to San Francisco. It's hardly a traumatic upheaval, but it's enough to cause havoc among her governing emotions. There is Joy (Amy Poehler), Anger (Lewis Black), Fear (Bill Hader), Sadness (Phyllis Smith), and—a curious choice—Disgust (Mindy Kaling). We watch the crew of them at work as though they were in the control room of a spaceship, coping with the sensations of Riley's everyday life and overseeing the construction of her personality. Almost everything that we expect from Pixar is here: the dazzle of the design, rich in chromatic range; the bountiful dishing up of gags; and the moral reminder that melancholy and regret are not things to be blocked out, let alone suppressed, but a necessary part of who we are, at any age. (The director, Pete Docter, also made "Monsters, Inc." and "Up.") If there is a hitch, it's that the inventiveness is so unrelenting that it verges not just on the manic but on the clever-clever, and there are stretches when some viewers will crave a cleaner narrative line. Not for the first time, adults may feel like sneaking out to a Pixar movie by themselves, and leaving the younger kids behind.—*A.L.* (6/29/15) (In wide release.)

Jurassic World

The island setting is the same as in "Jurassic Park," but, in order to sate the public's appetite, the park is now crammed with new breeds. One of them is

Indominus rex, a super-sized variant of Tyrannosaurus, who flees her ostensibly impregnable compound and starts to refine her biting skills on humans, herbivores, and other easy meat. Ranged against her are Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard), an uptight executive who gradually simplifies her clothing, like Maureen O'Sullivan in the Tarzan movies, to prove that she is jungle-tough; Owen Grady (Chris Pratt), a former Navy man who now trains raptors as if they were fine-boned yearlings; and Hoskins (Vincent D'Onofrio), whose plan is to redeploy dinosaurs as military weapons, and whose nasty smile suggests that, just possibly, he may not survive the film. We also get a couple of kids (Nick Robinson and Ty Simpkins) who are stranded in harm's way; their perilous state, like so much in the story, is borrowed without shame from Steven Spielberg's initial movie. One minor character even takes the trouble to remark, in awe, that another is wearing a Jurassic Park T-shirt. The director of this touching and noisy homage is Colin Trevorrow.—*A.L.* (6/22/15) (In wide release.)

The Little Death

The debut feature from the Australian actor and director Josh Lawson is set in a pleasant neighborhood of Sydney, where desires of every kind are brewing behind closed doors. We meet five couples, each of them sundered by frustration. One woman admits to a rape fantasy, which her partner (played by Lawson himself) struggles to fulfill; another man is aroused by his wife only when she sleeps; and a third couple is advised to try role-playing, although one of them finds it far too consuming to be bothered with its erotic side. The most provoking character is that of Rowena (Kate Box), who is a dactyphiliac—turned on, in other words, by seeing someone weep. That spells trouble for her spouse (she proposes watching either "Sophie's Choice" or "Philadelphia" in bed), and the farce and distress of her condition could fill an entire movie. There is also a long scene, late in the film, about two deaf people falling for each other over a video link; it's both sweet and dirty, yet it further demonstrates that, despite the wealth of sexual content and connotation, the real theme here is not sex at all but lines of communication—how they fray over time and get snarled in misunderstanding. The mood will be too mild and shock-free for fans of Todd Solondz or early Neil LaBute; yet the film is sufficiently cool and quizzical to make you wonder where Lawson will turn next.—*A.L.* (In limited release.)

A Poem Is a Naked Person

The triumph of Les Blank's documentary portrait of the singer-songwriter Leon Russell, completed in 1974 but unreleased until now, is its texture. Though the film follows Russell as he builds a studio in his native Oklahoma, records in Nashville, and performs in concert, he often seems like a supporting character. Blank fills the cinematic canvas with a teeming cast of tangy personalities who tell stories, crack wise, or just show up, as well as a bustle of side business—ranging from the demolition of an old Tulsa building and a musical service in a traditional black church to a snake's constriction and swallowing of a bird. He evokes a wild and crazy world to which Russell adds his own wise tones of joy. But Blank's hearty enthusiasm feels indiscriminate; he's as disinclined to stick with his subjects as he is to look at them deeply, intimately, or critically. The film's good cheer seems less infectious than enforced; the cinematic embrace is stifling, and the good vibes feel overdone and oversold, like a present-tense trip of instant nostalgia.—*R.B.* (Film Forum.)

The Metropolitan Opera

2015–16 Season



Sondra Radvanovsky
in Roberto Devereux

**SINGLE TICKETS
NOW ON SALE**

at the new metopera.org
or 212.362.6000
Tickets start at \$25

Photo: Kristian Schuller/Metropolitan Opera

OPENING

AMY

A documentary about Amy Winehouse, directed by Asif Kapadia. Opening July 10. (In limited release.)

CARTEL LAND

Matthew Heineman directed this documentary, about vigilante groups fighting drug dealers on both sides of the border between the United States and Mexico. Opening July 3. (In limited release.)

DO I SOUND GAY?

A documentary, directed by David Thorpe, about the stereotype of the "gay voice." Opening July 10. (In limited release.)

JIMMY'S HALL

Ken Loach directed this historical drama, about the deportation of a political activist from Ireland in the nineteen-thirties. Starring Barry Ward and Francis Magee. Opening July 10. (In limited release.)

MAGIC MIKE XXL

A dramatic sequel, about a male stripper (Channing Tatum) who goes on a final show tour. Directed by Gregory Jacobs; co-starring Elizabeth Banks and Matt Bomer. Opening July 3. (In wide release.)

A POEM IS A NAKED PERSON

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening July 1. (Film Forum.)

STRAY DOG

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening July 3. (Film Society of Lincoln Center.)

TANGERINE

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening July 10. (In limited release.)

TERMINATOR GENISYS

A science-fiction sequel, set in a dystopian future, where time travellers seeking to save the human race are transported back to 1984. Directed by Alan Taylor; starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jai Courtney, and Emilia Clarke. Opening July 1. (In wide release.)



MOVIE OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Djibril Diop Mambéty's "Touki Bouki," from 1973, in our digital edition and online.

The Princess of France

The Argentinean director Matías Piñeiro invests a cream-puff conceit—the intertwined romantic and artistic adventures of a young Buenos Aires theatre troupe—with an ingenious and intricate armature. From the opening shot, a five-minute take that turns a nighttime soccer game into a tour de force of analog magic, Piñeiro reveals the emotional overload of performers offstage. The company's leader, Victor (Julian Larquier Tellarini), returns early from a planned year in Mexico City and finds everything changed, in love and art. His girlfriend is involved with another member of the company, his new lover is keeping her distance, and friends and lovers covet each other's roles in his radio production of "Love's Labour's Lost" while falling prey to misapprehensions mirroring those of the play. Piñeiro builds elaborate sequences of rapid-fire verbal jousting over psychological and emotional subtleties, and he films them as he films his Shakespearean scenes: with roving, probing images that emphasize the highly charged spaces that both separate and bind people onstage and in love alike. Packing three hours of complications into a sixty-five-minute featurette, Piñeiro lends intimate conflicts in claustrophobic settings a vast scope. In Spanish. —R.B. (In limited release.)

Stray Dog

Despite the title, this is not a remake of Kurosawa's 1949 thriller but a documentary about a biker named Ron Hall, who lives in a trailer in Missouri. If Santa Claus wore leathers and a bandanna, he would look like Ron. There is plenty to admire in Ron's existence: his forging of close friendships, his easy riding, and his rapport with his second wife, Alicia, whose humor, patience, and piety are on frequent display. (Later in the movie, her sons arrive from Mexico and gaze in polite perplexity at life in the trailer park.) But there is also an enduring wound: Ron served and suffered in the Vietnam War, and many of his waking hours—and his troubled dreams—are filled with the legacy of that era. Not only does he attend public tributes to the fallen, as far afield as Washington, D.C.; we also see him in conversation with a therapist, admitting to atrocities that seem wholly out of keeping with the bonhomous guy onscreen, ever quick to lend a charitable hand. The director is Debra Granik, who made "Winter's Bone" (2010), in which Ron had a minor role; the melodramatic strain in that film was less convincing than its observational acuties, which return to the fore here. With no narrator, it is up to the camera to shepherd us through Ron's days—watching fondly, say, as he and his appreciative pals take turns quaffing from a jar of new hooch. —A.L. (Film Society of Lincoln Center.)

Tangerine

The director Sean Baker brings empathetic curiosity to the story of Sin-Dee (Kitana Kiki Rodriguez), a transgender prostitute in Hollywood who, hours after her release from jail, learns that her pimp and boyfriend, Chester (James Ransone), has been unfaithful to her during her twenty-eight-day absence. To make matters worse, the other woman is everything that Sin-Dee is not—white (like Chester) and physically female from birth—and Sin-Dee careens through town to find her and kick her ass. While considering the practicalities and degradations of street life as endured by Sin-Dee and her best friend, Alexandra (Mya Taylor), Baker also looks at their Johns—in particular, Razmik (Karren Karagulyan), an Armenian cabbie who flees his overbearing mother-in-law (Alla Tumanian) for the prostitutes' company. The action is set on Christmas Eve, and Baker leans hard on sad sentiment and cheap irony. For all the ugliness he depicts—none worse than the ordeal of Chester's lover, Dinah (Mickey O'Hagan), who works as part of a team of prostitutes in a sordid motel room—Baker revels in the power of cliché and the generic energy of his low-fi cinematography, which is done with a cell phone. The results are picturesque and anecdotal. —R.B. (In limited release.)

What Did the Lady Forget?

Tradition and modernity, freethinking and emotional inhibition form the lines of conflict in Yasujiro Ozu's 1937 melodrama, centered on Komiya, a nearly middle-aged Tokyo doctor and medical professor, and his wife, Tokiko, who welcome Setsuko, her nearly grown niece from Osaka, as a houseguest. Tokiko dresses and lives according to Japanese custom; Setsuko wears American-style clothing and enjoys the freedoms of Western manners—smoking, drinking, driving, and indiscreetly displaying her interest in the doctor's most promising medical student. But Tokiko imposes her traditional ways on the rationalist Komiya as well; she bluntly dictates his schedule and sharply interrogates him about his activities, and Setsuko, seeing him squirm, prods him to revolt. The plot pivots on Komiya's lie to his wife about playing golf when in fact he visits a geisha house—and meets Setsuko there. Ozu catches quietly violent feelings in images of a seemingly improvisational spontaneity, and he imbues the action with an exquisitely understated eroticism. But the story also involves physical violence, and Ozu discerns a strange and disturbing tangle of mixed emotions beneath established formalities; his view of progress is bitterly ironic. —R.B. (IFC Center; July 10-12.)

The Wolfpack

A documentary, directed by Crystal Moselle, about the Angulo clan:

two parents, one sister, and—at center stage—six brothers. The boys closely resemble one another, and their lives, in an apartment on the Lower East Side, could not be more tightly interknit. Homeschooling is the least of it. Seldom do the kids leave the place (once, they didn't go out for a year), and their principal conduit to the outside world is through films—watching them; typing out the scripts; learning the lines; fashioning costumes and props, including cardboard guns; and restaging sequences from favorite flicks. "Reservoir Dogs," complete with black suits and ties and white shirts, goes down especially well. If there is a ghost at the feast, it is the father, a Peruvian immigrant who is often glimpsed in old video clips but is seen infrequently in Moselle's own footage, and whose abusive habits and lofty beliefs are mentioned with quiet trepidation. Any shock comes from seeing how thoughtful and decent, by and large, the boys have turned out. Their virtual imprisonment has shaped but not ruined them, and we slowly see them venture into the wilds of regular existence. Should anyone be looking for half a dozen film critics, these guys would fit right in. —A.L. (In limited release.)

The Wrong Man

Though Alfred Hitchcock declares, in a prologue, that this 1957 drama differs from his other films because it's closely based on a true story, it nonetheless belongs—in method, tone, and theme—with his more celebrated works of practical mystery and elusive identity. Henry Fonda stars as Manny Balestrero, a Stork Club bass player and a devoted husband and father who lives with his family in Queens. Upon entering a local insurance office, where he solemnly attends to some family business, he's mistaken for someone who had previously robbed it. Eyewitnesses link him to other robberies, as does circumstantial evidence, and, though there's no doubt of his innocence, his alibis don't check out and the struggle for his exoneration pushes his wife (Vera Miles) into a nervous breakdown. The more that Manny is forced to assert his innocence, the more he's afflicted with a sense of guilt—one that's fuelled by his Catholic faith, his intense feeling of family responsibility, and his confidence in the law. Hitchcock places a hallucinatory emphasis on Manny's point of view, as in grim sequences of his fingerprinting, imprisonment, and transport by paddy wagon; few films play so tightly on the contrast between unimpeachably concrete details and the vertiginous pretenses of reality. Hitchcock's ultimate point evokes cosmic terror: innocence is merely a trick of paperwork, whereas guilt is the human condition. —R.B. (Film Forum; July 14.)

NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

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

Death Grips

This Sacramento trio has made nearly every “wrong” move in the music-business handbook, yet its powerful and unpredictable combination of hip-hop, noise, and hardcore is appealing. In 2012, the group leaked its album “No Love Deep Web” for free (and chose an image of an erect penis for the cover) and was unceremoniously dumped by its label, Epic Records. Last year, the band “broke up” and dropped out of a large-scale tour with Nine Inch Nails. And the three of them are infamous for not showing up for gigs. This commitment to irreverence and antiauthoritarianism has won Death Grips a legion of black-clad

followers, who will likely be winding around the block at their shows this week in hopeful anticipation. (July 7: Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. 212-353-1600. July 8: Brooklyn Masonic Temple, 317 Clermont Ave. lepoissonrouge.com.)

Rosie Flores

Flores, a guitar-toting rockabilly singer from Texas, has long been the darling of the country circuits in L.A. and Austin (where August 31 was declared Rosie Flores Day, in 2006). She has a voice that, like Gram Parsons's, cracks in all the right places and an untempered approach to guitar picking that's a wonder to behold. She's worked with Wanda Jackson and other icons, and her career can be traced back to the Screamin' Sirens, a punk-oriented group from the late seventies. A true radical to the core, she doesn't neglect her roots, peppering recent shows with

Sex Pistols covers. (Hill Country, 30 W. 26th St. 212-255-4544. July 10.)

4Knots Music Festival

If the prospects for print media are uncertain, the future of alternative weeklies is downright dire. Despite these circumstances, the *Village Voice* continues to pull off its summer music festivities. Rising out of the ashes of its “Siren” festival, which ran for free in Coney Island from 2001 to 2010, the 4Knots gathering has been a regular fixture of the summer offerings at the South Street Seaport. This year, it moves to Hudson River Park's Pier 84, and it's now a ticketed event. One thing that's not changing is the quality of the bands. Two nineties royalty acts, the Welsh psych-rockers **Super Furry Animals** and the slacker-rock king, **Stephen Malkmus**, are the headliners. Joining them are a cadre of young indie rockers, including **Twin**

Peaks, **Screaming Females**, and San Francisco's garage-pop darling **Mikal Cronin**. (Twelfth Ave. at W. 44th St. villagevoice.com/4knots. July 11.)

An All-Star Tribute to the Music of B. B. King

When King died, in May, the world lost one of the greatest voices of the blues, which he expressed both with his vocals and by bending notes on his beloved guitars, which he always called Lucille. Early in his career, two guys fighting over a woman caused a night club in Twist, Arkansas, to go up in flames. King went into the inferno to save his guitar, realized that he had almost died, and from that point on named all his guitars after her, to remind himself never to do something so stupid again. **Jim Weider**, who replaced Robbie Robertson in the Band, **Joe Louis Walker**, one of the most vibrant singers and shredders in the blues



Stories that Surround You.

audible
an amazon company

More than **180,000** audio titles—from this week's bestsellers to literary classics. Download your first audiobook for free at **Audible.com/NY**.

business today, and **Marcia Ball**, a piano-pounding belter with roots in Louisiana, pay tribute. (City Winery, 155 Varick St. 212-608-0555. July 6.)

The Ludlow Thieves

Dan Teicher, the guitarist, mandolinist, producer, and songwriting engine of this up-and-coming local group, came of musical age in the era of Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden and went on to get a master's in classical composition. The band, which includes the violinist Amanda Lo, the keyboardist Isamu McGregor, the drummer Bruno Esrubilsky, and the vocalist Laura Martin (there's no bass player), goes well beyond the normal borders of soaring folk rock. The front man, Danny Musengo, is a fervent singer, and the band—which is not above a bit of good hand clapping to get the crowd going—brings a joyous and earnest energy to the stage. (Music Hall of Williamsburg, 66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn. 718-486-5400. July 11.)

Soak

The stage name of Bridie Monds-Watson is a portmanteau of the words “soul” and “folk,” but her music is, strictly speaking, neither of those things. Sure, she strums a guitar and sings about matters of the heart, but the Derry, Ireland, native is a skateboarder at her core, and she's radically frank about loneliness and pain, shredding all notions of deception or evasion in her songs. She's still a teen-ager, after all. Her debut album, “Before We Forgot How to Dream,” came out last month. (Le Poisson Rouge, 158 Bleecker St. 212-505-3474. July 14.)

Stiff Little Fingers

Through lineup changes and the vicissitudes of life, this nervy Northern

Irish punk act, which formed in 1977, continues to tour and release albums that pack the same punch that they did when the group first started. During the Troubles, they made music that reflected the turbulent atmosphere of their native Belfast. Buoyed in 2000 by a glowing endorsement in the John Cusack vehicle “High Fidelity,” they continue to maintain a dedicated group of fans; last year, they raised the funds necessary to record “No Going Back,” their first album in more than a decade, in less than twelve hours. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl. 800-745-3000. July 9.)

SummerStage

The twenty-year-old Brooklyn-based m.c. **Joey Bada\$\$** dropped his debut LP, “B4.DA.\$\$,” earlier this year, after putting out a series of widely acclaimed mixtapes with his collective, Pro Era. A slew of first-rate producers supply simple, jazz-infused beats on the album, and Bada\$\$ delivers tightly constructed lyrics with a relaxed and methodical flow, in a throwback to the sound of the nineties. In Central Park on July 7, he leads a hard-hitting celebration honoring the life of the late Pro Era member Capital Steez, featuring the **Flatbush Zombies**, the **Underachievers**, and many others. (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park, mid-Park at 69th St. summerstage.org.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Tribute to Nat Adderley

The cornettist, long overshadowed by his brother Julian (Cannonball) Adderley—the vibrant alto saxophonist with whom he collaborated for the majority of his career—was himself a

commanding stylist and a composer of distinction. (His “Work Song” and “Jive Samba” still have a solid spot in the jazz repertory.) Tipping its hat to this hard-bop hero is a quintet featuring the trumpeter **Brian Lynch** and the saxophonist **Ralph Moore**, as well as the legendary drummer **Jimmy Cobb**, whose association with the Adderleys dates back to the late fifties. (Smoke, 2751 Broadway, between 105th and 106th Sts. 212-864-6662. July 3-5.)

Ravi Coltrane

Offsetting an analytic nature with a fervid spirit, Coltrane lends an inviting balance to his involving improvisations on tenor and soprano saxophones. It's been a while since he released a new album, but the ambitious nature of “Spirit Fiction,” from 2012, and his recent appearances confirm that Coltrane remains one of the most assured saxophonists of his generation. His quartet at Birdland features the guitarist **Adam Rogers**, the bassist **Scott Colley**, and the drummer **Nate Smith**. (315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. June 30-July 4.)

Fred Hersch

A paragon of modern jazz piano, Hersch has a knack for bringing together just the right bassist and drummer in his trios. “Floating,” a 2014 release, found the leader, the bassist **John Hebert**, and the drummer **Eric McPherson** uncovering the beauty of Hersch's melodic originals and compatible standards by Dietz and Schwartz, Lerner and Loewe, and Thelonious Monk. Hebert and McPherson join him at the Village Vanguard June 30-July 5. (178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. 212-255-4037.)

Russell Malone

Malone's latest album, “Love Looks Good on You,” is as far from the cutting edge as the majority of this skillful guitarist's work has been for the past two decades, and that's just fine. Having fashioned a comfort zone where swinging, warm-toned bop is the rule, Malone has staked out territory all his own. His supportive rhythm team includes the pianist **Rick Germanson**. (Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. 212-255-4037. July 7-12.)

John Scofield

The guitarist may have fun occasionally dipping into funk and rock, but when he wants to really display his prodigious chops, he calls on the electric bassist **Steve Swallow** and the drummer **Bill Stewart**. Balancing languid lyricism with whiplash improvisation, this threesome is a gift to guitar wonks and jazz aficionados alike. (Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. July 7-11.)

Vision Festival

Free jazz and creative improvisation continue to be the focus of this intrepid festival, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year. Familiar and welcome faces are in abundance, including the drummers **Milford Graves** and **Whit Dickey**, the bassist **Henry Grimes**, the pianists **Marilyn Crispell** and **Matthew Shipp**, the vibraphonist and composer **Karl Berger**, and the saxophonist **David Murray**, all under the aegis of the bassist **William Parker**, the festival's artistic director. The closing act, the **Hamiet Bluiett Telepathic Orchestra**, features such heavyweight players as the saxophonists **Charles Gayle** and **Kidd Jordan**. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. artsforarts.org. July 7-12.)

ABOVE & BEYOND

Fare Thee Well: Celebrating 50 Years of the Grateful Dead Simulcast

Twenty years ago, the Grateful Dead played its last show as a full group, at Soldier Field in Chicago. One month later, the collective's co-founder and front man Jerry Garcia died of a heart attack. Though there have been both full and partial reunions since, none have been so anticipated as their return to Soldier Field, which is being billed as the final concerts that the remaining “core four”—Phil Lesh, Bob Weir, Mickey Hart, and Bill Kreutzmann—will ever play together. Trey Anastasio, Jeff Chimenti, and Bruce Hornsby will join

them. The shows will be available as a Pay-per-View broadcast and to stream online, but why watch at home when you can join fellow-fans? (The following venues will have the shows on tap. Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg. 718-963-3369; City Winery, 155 Varick St. 212-608-0555; and the Capitol Theatre, 149 Westchester Ave., Port Chester. thecapitoltheatre.com. July 3-5.)

Fourth of July

For the first time in nearly forty years, there will be a parade in lower Manhattan to mark Independence Day, on July 3, starting at 11 A.M. At Pier 15, an original thirteen-star

American flag and a French flag are aboard the *Hermione*, a replica of the French frigate that brought Lafayette back to the Colonies in 1780 to help finish off the British. The flags will be marched along Water Street, up Wall Street, and down Broadway

to Bowling Green, where they will be raised amidst festivities. The *Hermione* itself, a majestic tall ship, has just crossed the Atlantic on its maiden voyage and will be docked at the South Street Seaport through July 4. (july4thinnewyork.com.)

READINGS AND TALKS

“Word for Word”

The al-fresco reading series in Bryant Park continues on July 1 at 12:30, with Mary Pilon, the author of “The Monopolists: Obsession, Fury, & the Scandal Behind the World's Favorite Board Game.” She will be in conversation with the writer James Andrew Miller. July 8, also at 12:30, Corey Taylor, the lead singer of the heavy-metal band Slipknot, discusses his new book, “You're Making Me Hate You: A Cantankerous Look at the Common Misconception That Humans Have Any Common Sense Left,” with the radio personality Lou Brutus. (42nd St. side of the park, between Fifth and Sixth Aves. 212-768-4242.)

McNally Jackson

John Keene discusses his new story and novella collection, “Counternarratives,” with the writer Christine Smallwood. (52 Prince St. 212-274-1160. July 1 at 7.)

BookCourt

The poet Nick Flynn reads from his new collection, “My Feelings.” (163 Court St., Brooklyn. 718-875-3677. July 9 at 7.)



TABLES FOR TWO

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

295 Grand St., Brooklyn (718-599-4900)

"IF I COULD SEE all my friends tonight," James Murphy sang once, or rather, many times, at the end of the biggest song on LCD Soundsystem's biggest album. Eight years after that album, and four years after the band played its farewell shows at Madison Square Garden, Murphy has willed his wish into being, with a captivating wine bar in Williamsburg. He can be seen there frequently, with his wife, Christina Topsøe, who is also a partner in the restaurant, and a fluid circle of drinking companions.

The atmosphere alone could be enough to warrant a visit: a burlap-walled, cedar-accented party hosted by a low-key, affable celebrity. "We're music writers," offered a pair in contrasting flannel shirts, who explained one recent evening that they'd travelled across town to catch a glimpse of Murphy. Once he'd been spotted, a glass of marmalade-colored Languedoc in hand, the music writers made quick work of a plate of prosciutto and calculated an intricate split of their bill. A food writer, though, was also gratified, by the garlicky jolt of the aioli on patatas bravas; steak tartare in puddles of buttermilk; a pork shank with shelling beans made summery with strands of zucchini and dollops of salsa verde. There was a spectacular salad of snap peas, shot through with chili and Microplaned out of sight by a blanket of ricotta-salata cheese. Consider that a calling card from the chef, Nick Curtola, who came from Franny's; his vegetables taste like treats, in a style familiar to acolytes of Park Slope's unofficial clubhouse.

Best of all, though, is the way the unpretentious waitstaff talk about the wines. The "What do you like?" approach—an attempt at solicitousness that manages to be completely unhelpful and intimidating—is banished. Instead, there's a brief list, and a firm hand. In the mood for a glass of red? "There are two Gamays. One has a baked-raisin vibe." (Wine that sounds like a scone is hard to pass up.) By the time a late-night June rainstorm appears, and the subway's lesser, more beige lines are being contemplated, Murphy has migrated from a table to the bar, where the bartender is pouring a quietly effervescent rosé out of a not so quiet magnum. As Murphy has noted, New York can bring you down. It might do so pretty soon, as you stand on the J-train platform. But tonight, it bought itself some time.

—Amelia Lester

Open daily for dinner. Plates \$13-\$20.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BRANDON GEETING



FOOD & DRINK

BAR TAB KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY

299 Sands St., Brooklyn (347-689-4211)

"Times down here ain't what they used to be when the old stuff was flowing from the still," a clay-pipe-puffing Vinegar Hill resident told the *Times*, in 1894. He went on, "The fellows who had luck have all moved up town, where they are living in brownstone houses, wearing diamonds, and driving fast horses." The "fellows" were those who'd prospered from vast illicit distilling operations, until raids shut them down. Now new hooch flows in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, near former bootlegging battlefields; on summer Fridays and Saturdays, in the pleasant garden of the Kings County Distillery, one can enjoy a mint julep or a John Collins (apologies to Tom—it has bourbon in lieu of gin). The distillery is in a brick building with the warm smell of a country club's oak locker room. Outside, one recent afternoon, Hank Williams, on the stereo, lamented, "My bucket's got a hole in it / I can't buy no beer" as people at picnic tables sampled honey moonshine (flavored with honeycombs from the Brooklyn Grange's apiaries) and bitter chocolate whiskey (infused with Mast Brothers' cacao husks). The sun had set on what the *Times* dubbed the "golden era for the bold and buoyant brigands" with their "mountain dew," but it still shone upon those playing corn hole and sipping mercifully legal Manhattans. The waiter called patrons "miss" and "boss." They seemed like the type to drive fast horses.

—Emma Allen



Great Summer Reads

“Riveting . . .

the best new book that defies every genre.”

—*The New Yorker*

“An instant classic.”

—*New York Times*

“Breathtaking.”

—*New York Times Book Review* (Front Page Review)



“Dazzling.”

—*Vogue*

“One of the loveliest things you’ll read this year.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Captivating.”

—*People*

“A wonder both of nature and of meditative writing.”

—*Fresh Air*, NPR

Costa Book of the Year
2014 Samuel Johnson Prize for Nonfiction

Top Ten
Bestsellers

The New York Times

“Taut, witty, fiercely intelligent . . . a love triangle in extremis.”

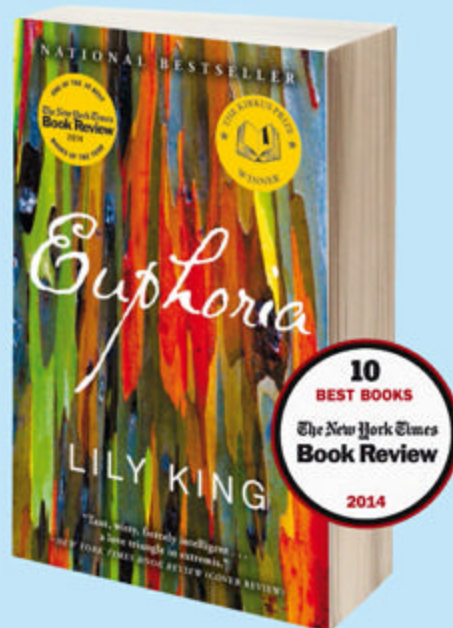
—*New York Times Book Review* (Front Page Review)

“Enthralling.”

—*Vogue*

“Atmospheric and sensual.”

—*npr.com*



NOW IN PAPERBACK

“Smart, sexy, concise.”

—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“Poetic . . . Arresting . . .

Captures the amber of one man’s exquisite longing for a woman who changed the way we look at ourselves.”

—*Washington Post*

“Masterful . . .

thrilling and beautifully composed . . . riveting and provocative . . .

absolutely first-rate.”

—*Seattle Times*

2014 Kirkus Prize
2014 New England Book Award for Fiction
Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award



THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT LAST BATTLES

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

In some future footnote or parenthetical aside, it may be observed that although General Robert E. Lee surrendered in 1865, the Confederacy's final retreat did not occur until a century and a half later. The rearguard movement of Republicans in the aftermath of the slaughter in Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church marked the relinquishing of the Confederacy's best-fortified positions: the cultural ones. We have for decades willfully coexisted with a translucent lie about the bloodiest conflict in American history and the moral questions at its center. Amid the calls last week to lower the Confederate battle flag at the state capitol, the defenders of the flag averred that it represents "heritage, not hate." The great sleight of hand is the notion that these things were mutually exclusive.

Americans, both in the South and beyond, attach a particular brand of exceptionalism to the region. This is the reason that there is a Southern Historical Association but not a Northern one; a genre known as Southern literature but no Northern corollary; and a concept of Southern politics as something distinct from the national variety. The notion of the Confederate flag as a benign tribute to that exceptionalism rests upon another premise that illustrated, long before our present concerns with climate change and vaccination did, the political usefulness of denial: the idea that the Civil War was not fought over slavery—a claim that would have bewildered those who served in it—allowed Southerners to memorialize the leaders of an armed insurrection without the sticky moral baggage of bondage attached.

That interpretation held that the war was sparked by a conflict over

tariffs that penalized Southern agriculture to the benefit of Northern industry. Or, more vaguely, that the war was fought over "states' rights." This evasion proved amazingly effective. Monuments to the valor of the Confederate ideal dot the South like matériel left on a battlefield. But none of these arguments bear scrutiny. Were the Southerners who erected those monuments concerned primarily about the valor of men, there would be many more dedicated to the former slaves who fought for the Union and risked death or, arguably worse, reenslavement. Were the war mainly about tariffs, we would be left to think that these fugitives fled farms and plantations to join the Union Army because of their abiding belief in trade protectionism. Or that the nearly forty thousand of them who died did so defending their views on Federalism. The Confederates themselves did not believe this. Here is the South Carolina convention in 1860, explaining the rationale for secession:

A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the admin-

istration of the common Government, because he has declared that that "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free," and that the public mind must rest in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

This sectional combination for the subversion of the Constitution, has been aided in some of the States by elevating to citizenship, persons who, by the supreme law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens; and their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South, and destructive of its beliefs and safety.

The South is exceptional not primarily because of its literature or its food or its politics but because, as historians have pointed out, it is the only region of the United States that has lived for the



majority of its history with the experience of military defeat. Four decades after the U.S. withdrawal from Saigon, Vietnam remains a spectral presence in American foreign policy and military strategy. But when the Vietnam War began the South had already been familiar with that kind of recrimination and self-doubt for a hundred years. It not only fought tenaciously for the right to own human beings; it did so unsuccessfully. Neither of these facts can be easily accepted, but only one of them can be easily denied. So detached from slavery is the conception of the war that the controversial Memorial Day tradition of sending a Presidential wreath to the Confederate Memorial, in Arlington National Cemetery, which began with Woodrow Wilson, continued into the present. (President Obama amended the tradition by also sending a wreath to the African American Civil War Memorial, in Washington, D.C.)

Such denialism has governed an important portion of our national affairs and distorted our self-image, but it collapsed in the hail of fire in the sanctuary of Emanuel A.M.E. Church. As is often the case, tragedy was the burden we shouldered for a moment of square introspection. This is probably why the eulogy that Barack Obama delivered for the Reverend Clementa Pinckney on Friday was sober and self-reflective in a way that we seldom hear. "The flag," the President said, "has always represented more

than just ancestral pride. For many, black and white, that flag was a reminder of systemic oppression and racial subjugation. We see that now. Removing the flag from this state's capitol would not be an act of political correctness." He added, in reference to the Confederate soldiers, that "it would simply be an acknowledgment that the cause for which they fought, the cause of slavery, was wrong."

It may seem odd, decades after the civil-rights movement, to note that for a sitting President to say that the Confederacy fought for the institution of slavery—and that doing so was a moral wrong—is a radical statement. Yet it is, and shortly after making it the President fell silent. It appeared that perhaps he had lost his way, but then, in a remarkable moment, he began to sing "Amazing Grace," a hymn that is at once a lament, a prayer, and a hope—written by John Newton, a onetime slave trader who became an abolitionist. Immediately after the speech, people began debating whether the song had been part of the prepared text or whether the President sang it out of an impromptu spiritual imperative. In either case, he was likely hoping to see in the national culture precisely the transformation that Newton had experienced in himself, one that facilitated his first truthful accounting of the evil of slavery.

—Jelani Cobb

MOONLIGHTING LAYUP



The list of athletes who act is long, the reviews mixed. Kareem stole "Airplane!," Shaq made "Kazaam," and, somewhere in between, Michael Jordan, in "Space Jam," was the best human actor in the scenes he shared with Bugs Bunny. "The challenge is getting them comfortable being silly," Judd Apatow said the other night at the Beacon Theatre, where he was preparing to do standup with Amy Schumer, the writer and the star of his new movie, "Trainwreck." Apatow has given cameos to athletes before—several Philadelphia Flyers hit on his wife, Leslie Mann, in "This Is 40"—but "Trainwreck" hands an entire role to LeBron James.

"I wrote LeBron's name into the script because he was the only basketball player I knew," Schumer said. "And because I thought it would get Judd to make the movie."

Schumer may have misjudged her

audience. "I have a natural hostility toward athletes," Apatow said. "When I see a person jogging who's my age"—forty-seven—"I always think, Fuck that guy." Apatow, who wore a dark blazer and jeans, surveyed his own athletic career. "I'm one of those 'picked last in gym class' guys," he said. "And, if you're picked last, you end up in right field—deep right field—and the ball never goes to you to prove you can catch it." Once, when Apatow was ten, he worked as a ball boy for Martina Navratilova and Renée Richards. "In the middle of the match, I got bored and just walked up to the line judge and said, 'I gotta go,'" he recalled. "I was hungry."

In "Trainwreck," Bill Hader plays a sports surgeon. James plays his patient turned best friend and romantic adviser—the Bruno Kirby to Hader's Billy Crystal. Over lunch in Los Angeles, Apatow pitched James on a "bizarro LeBron" with both fictional characteristics ("He's really cheap") and real ones ("He's really into Cleveland"). James agreed, and joined the production during its final week, just after announcing his return to Ohio. At one point, the producers had to call the police to report that officers

who were supposed to be guarding the set were, instead, badgering James for his autograph. "Suddenly, friends you haven't seen in ten years show up on set," Apatow said. "There's a whole run of Chris Rock's jokes, because he showed up and wanted to introduce his kids to LeBron."

James had hosted "Saturday Night Live" in 2007—he dunked on Jason Sudeikis—and he adapted quickly to Apatow's filmmaking style: lob different jokes at the actors and see what sticks. James improvised many of his lines expressing adoration for Cleveland, and when Schumer suggested that he recite several lines from Kanye West's "Gold Digger," James delivered them like an open-mike-night veteran.

"I couldn't do that with my favorite song in the world," Hader, who was introducing Schumer at the Beacon, said. "Everyone's supposed to be good at one thing—I can do voices—but LeBron's instincts were all totally right, and he's the best basketball player on the planet. So the whole thing's really shitty for me." One scene called for Hader to go one-on-one against James. "Bill was very happy, because he thinks in one take he actually made a layup off LeBron," Apatow said.

"It's true!" Hader said. "I ruined the take because I started celebrating. I looked right into the camera and said, 'Oh, shit!' and did a goofy walk."

"It's questionable how much LeBron was playing defense at that moment," Apatow said.

James appears in half a dozen scenes, but Apatow had hired several other athletes to fill out the roster of Hader's patients, including Chris Evert. "It's the summer of Chrissie!" Evert said, noting that she is also set to appear in an HBO mockumentary about a tennis match that lasts for seven days. "They wanted me to say that the lines on the court were made of cocaine. And they wanted—I can't



LeBron James

even say it—they wanted me to say f . . . u . . . c . . . k." James had been up for every line Apatow suggested, but Evert blanched when she was asked to tell James, "Stop cock-blocking me, LeBron," an expression that she had to ask her son to explain later. Evert hadn't yet seen the movie. "It's not in there, is it?" she asked. It is.

"I guess that's a childhood fantasy, to get Chris Evert to say something dirty," Apatow said, backstage at the Beacon. Both James and Evert made their acting debuts as teen-agers—James on an ABC sitcom, Evert in "Burt Bacharach in Shangri-La." "Every athlete wants to be an actor," Evert said. "And I think every actor probably wants to be a professional athlete." Apatow wasn't sure. "Actors don't want to exercise that much," he said.

—Reeves Wiedeman

INK BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



Mark Vanhoenacker became a pilot late, after descents into academia and management consulting, but he became a pilot, steering Airbuses among the capitals of Europe, before he became a writer. In 2008, having logged more than three thousand hours in the cockpit, he published his first article, in *Sanctuary*, the journal of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. It was about shopping, not birds. He wrote more. He switched to 747s. Now he has eight thousand five hundred and thirty hours and forty-three minutes, and a book out, "Skyfaring." It traverses wind, air, water, light, home, away, between, and how Mariah Carey got her name (from the gold-rush musical "Paint Your Wagon," which features the Maria, a fictitious California gale).

Vanhoenacker flies long-haul routes for British Airways: LHR to JFK, YVR, CPT, PEK. "As if we had only pulled out of a driveway, I turned right toward Tokyo," he writes, contemplating the way that airplane views "hint at the circuitry of more or less everything." The other morning, he was at the airport in Geneva. It was not the parking lot of the In-N-Out Burger next to LAX—according to Vanhoenacker, one of the world's great plane-spotting venues—but it was, nonetheless, a decent place to geek out.

"Northeasterly wind straight down the runway, eight knots. Cloud at twelve hundred feet, good visibility," Vanhoenacker said, reciting the conditions from a window table at the airport's café. "A thousand and eighteen is probably the most important thing—that's the altimeter setting."

In "Skyfaring," he reminisces about the weekend mornings of his Massachusetts adolescence, eating doughnuts and watching "the small planes land and taxi in behind a low metal fence, the clear boundary of an airfield that many who love airplanes will have a memory of deeply wanting to cross."

There were no crullers. Vanhoenacker

ordered some muesli with red fruits. His breakfast companion, who had been enjoying the gentle intensity of his company—the Concorde doesn't take an article in British English, he said; he was certain that left-handers were overrepresented in the pilot population; he loves the B and C gates of Heathrow's Terminal 5; flying back from Vancouver in winter, you can see the Northern Lights almost every night; when a B.A. pilot shows up for work, his iPad must be charged to at least seventy-five per cent—was suddenly put in mind of an ancient activity of her own, going on dates in restaurants that had televisions.

"Sorry, I was distracted by my company ship sailing by there," Vanhoenacker said, willing his glacier-blue eyes from the runway back to contact position. He'd been ogling a British Airways Airbus A319.

"So that's Papa Foxtrot," he said, explaining that pilots refer to a plane by the last two letters of its registration. He got out his laptop and hit a few keys. "The eighth time I flew an airliner, it was that one. April, 2003, Vienna to London."

Vanhoenacker turned back to the runway, where the plane was slipping away from the ground, frictionless as the peel coming off a banana. "And off we go," he cried. "Gear up!"

A pilot's vantage corresponds to the rhythm of his workdays. Las Vegas is "sandwiches and coffee"—a snack before the start of the descent into L.A. "Geneva is coming back from a long-haul flight to London," Vanhoenacker said. "Geneva's breakfast. There aren't that many short-haul flights in the sky at that hour, and as you move into an area where the day is finally catching up, as the sun comes up this separate flock of birds rises up all over Europe."

Flying, a century after Kitty Hawk, can seem both scary and banal, the realm of underwear bombers and miniature mouthwashes, but Vanhoenacker recovers its metaphysics. "Time in airplane mode is a gift, really," he said. "Just the way you'd go and sit in a coffee shop, you can watch the world go by." Soaring over Belgium, where his father, a priest, grew up, moves him. "To think that it's 2015, and all those people there that I'm related to—they have no idea that this distant relative is flying over

them and staring down at their lights.”

Out on the runway, a queue was forming: a Middle East Airlines A320, bound for Beirut; a KLM 737, heading back to Amsterdam; the state aircraft of the United Arab Emirates, a private 747, half snow goose, half tapir, its snout sniffing the sky.

Vanhoenacker was flying to London as a passenger that afternoon. In the evening, he would continue to New York. Westbound, he likes to sit on the right-hand side of the plane, in a window seat.

—*Lauren Collins*

DEPT. OF AMATEURS THE HORDE



The cane is good,” Twyla Tharp said to a middle-aged man who had presented himself for her inspection. He was one of some hundred people of varying ages and shapes who showed up at a storefront space in Battery Park City on a humid Saturday afternoon with the intention of performing as a dancer that very night. For eleven seconds, precisely—Tharp is nothing if not precise, although she did concede that there would be a few seconds more of glory if one counted the time spent taking a bow.

Tharp, one of the great choreographers of the modern age, is celebrating her fiftieth year of making dances with a program of new material and, come fall,

will take a company of dancers on a ten-week tour that culminates at Lincoln Center. But first, in a look back at her past, she was staging “The One Hundreds,” an experimental work from 1970, a moment when ordinary people, doing ordinary moves, had transfixed the dance avant-garde. Tharp was then a powerful dancer who, despite her avant-garde bonafides, loved working with other powerful dancers, and she gave this sixties populism a twist. “The One Hundreds” opens with two trained dancers performing a hundred rehearsed movement sequences of eleven seconds each, in unison, without looking at one another; they are followed by five dancers, each performing a different twenty of those movements, simultaneously, and, finally, by an onrush of a hundred ordinary folk, each of whom performs one of the eleven-second phrases. Tharp has called the piece “a study in deterioration.”

“You don’t have to memorize it movement by movement,” Tharp said to a worried-looking woman in bluejeans, who was struggling to remember her sequence. “There’s a logic to it. This little phrase takes you in every direction: first you move out, then in, then up, then down.” This seemed to help. Tharp’s vocabulary is full of unexpected trills and sudden changes in direction, with moves from ballet—“That turning of your heel should be *en dehors*. Do you know that term?”—juxtaposed with moves from baseball, golf, swimming, sock hops and drunken shamblings, as well as a multitude of other, less classifiable human activities.

A small contingent of Tharp’s danc-

ers had been gently teaching these moves to the volunteers, and, as the afternoon lengthened, Tharp—small, sharp as a pinprick, with a sheaf of gray hair—also took a turn at instructing. The man with the cane moved slowly, under her watchful eye, and somewhere between counts six and eight, with a grin, he thrust the cane emphatically into the air. The arm thrust was part of the sequence, and the cane added a kind of exclamation point, but what Tharp congratulated him on, with the hint of a grin herself, was finishing on the count of eleven, just in time.

In the hours before the performance, which would take place in Rockefeller Park, the participants hung around the ad-hoc studio. Throughout the room, people were tilting and shimmying in what seemed to be sudden seizures or attacks of uncontrollable emotion. A couple of the professional dancers sat together on the floor by a window, stretching. A little girl with a ballerina bun and sparkly silver shoes orbited them cautiously. A young man named Henry, who wore a yellow shirt, announced that he was going home to take a shower: “This is a lot of pressure.”

Then it was showtime. “The One Hundreds” has a certain austerity—all that counting, the cool concern with process and geometry. It was designed to be performed in silence; another year would go by before Tharp gave in to the decadence of dancing to music. But on this evening, on a wedge of green grass along the river, with the sound of a guitar drifting in from somewhere—would it upset the counting?—the work didn’t look austere, nor did it look like deterioration. From the moment they appeared, the first pair of dancers were in constant transformation, slapstick jazz babies turning into classical discus throwers in a single phrase, the wild variety of movement yielding a series of stories that the mind was always just on the verge of catching. The five dancers who followed spread the insinuations and reverberations ever wider. Then the horde rushed on, and it didn’t matter that the woman in bluejeans collided with one of the real dancers, or that somebody else took a tumble. (It wasn’t the man with the cane.) It looked as though the unmediated language of dance were taking over the world.

—*Claudia Roth Pierpont*



THE FINANCIAL PAGE

GIGS WITH BENEFITS

If someone uses Uber to get to the airport, is the driver an Uber employee, or an independent contractor using Uber to find customers? For companies in the so-called sharing economy—Lyft, Postmates, TaskRabbit, Instacart, and so on—there may be no more important question. A couple of weeks ago, a California labor commissioner gave her answer: she ruled that an Uber driver who had filed a claim against the company was, in fact, an employee. The ruling applied only to that particular worker and the only upshot was the reimbursement of the plaintiff's car expenses. But, if other regulators and courts were to follow that decision, it isn't just the future of Uber that would be transformed. The U.S. job market would be, too.

We hear a lot these days about the gig economy, but the issue of whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor has been the subject of intense legal battles for decades. The distinction can be surprisingly hard to make. The I.R.S. has a list of twenty factors that it takes into account, but other federal agencies have different criteria, as do most states. The fundamental issue is usually whether an employer has "control" over the work being done, but defining control isn't always easy.

In the past century, laws designed to protect workers have proliferated, and the social safety net has expanded significantly, in ways that give employees benefits and security not available to independent contractors. Hiring employees costs businesses more than hiring independent contractors—estimates suggest that it can be twenty to thirty per cent more expensive. So companies have become remarkably inventive at finding ways to call workers contractors. A 2005 Cornell study found that roughly ten per cent of workers in New York State were miscategorized. Certain industries—trucking, construction, housekeeping—are notorious for doing this, but it happens everywhere. In the late nineties, Microsoft lost a major lawsuit because it had labelled some of its engineers contractors and denied them stock options and other benefits, even though they did essentially the same work as regular employees. More recently, FedEx settled a series of class-action suits brought by drivers who claimed that they had been misclassified.

Uber's critics insist that it, too, is simply disguising employees as contractors. It sets the prices that its drivers can charge, monitors their performance (based on ratings from passengers), and can boot them off the service if their ratings are too low. Uber, meanwhile, claims that it's much more like

eBay than like McDonald's: it's a platform connecting customers and drivers, and taking a cut (twenty per cent) of the transaction. It doesn't tell drivers when they have to drive, or where. It doesn't determine how many hours they work, or if they work at all. And its use of ratings isn't that different from what eBay does with its sellers.

Much worker-protection legislation takes the view that, when there's a tough call like this, we should put workers' interests above corporate ones. But it's not clear that most of Uber's drivers would be better off if we declared them employees. The ones who treat their gig as a full-time job—driving forty hours a week or more—would probably benefit. But Uber would likely recoup its rising labor costs by taking a larger cut of fares and shrinking its workforce. Arun Sundararajan, a business-school professor at N.Y.U. and an expert on the sharing economy, told me, "It's very unlikely drivers' take-home pay would rise. There also would be fewer drivers. They would be able to drive more hours, but they'd have less

flexibility in how they worked." Studies suggest that flexibility—no supervisors to answer to, working when you want rather than when the boss wants—is an important part of what attracts workers to companies like Uber.

The real problem here is that Uber drivers don't quite fit into either of the traditional categories. Declaring them independent contractors or employees, as a California judge presiding over a lawsuit against Lyft commented, means forcing a square peg into one of two round holes. We'd do better to create a third legal category of workers, who would be subject to certain regulations, and whose employers would be responsible for some costs (like, say, reimbursement of expenses and workers' compensation)

but not others (like Social Security and Medicare taxes). Other countries, including Germany, Canada, and France, have rewritten their laws to expand the number of worker categories. There's no reason we can't do the same, and give gig-economy workers a better balance of flexibility and security.

The bigger issue here, though, is the outdated nature of our social safety net. It's still dependent on the idea of the full-time employee, who gets health care, a pension, unemployment insurance, and so on from one company. That worked fine in a world of stable employment, but lots of Americans no longer live in that world and plenty more will be joining them. And, as Sundararajan says, "It makes no sense to have a well-developed safety net for one category of employment and virtually none for other kinds of productive work." Obamacare was a step in the right direction, and Senator Mark Warner, of Virginia, has suggested that we could use a similar system for benefits like workers' comp and unemployment insurance. Work is changing. The protection we offer workers should change as well.

—James Surowiecki



REVENGE KILLING

Race and the death penalty in a Louisiana parish.

BY RACHEL AVIV



A week after his son turned one, Rodricus Crawford woke up a few minutes before 7 A.M. on the left side of his bed. His son was sleeping on the right side, facing the door. Crawford, who was twenty-three, reached over to wake him up, but the baby didn't move. He put his ear on his son's stomach and then began yelling for his mother. "Look at the baby!" he shouted.

Crawford was lanky, with delicate features, high cheekbones, and a patchy goatee. He lived in a small three-bedroom house with his mother, grandmother, uncle, sister, and a younger brother in Mooretown, a neighborhood in Shreveport, Louisiana, bordered by a stretch

of factories and next to the airport. His mother, Abbie, a housekeeper at the Quality Inn, rushed into the room and picked up the baby, who was named Roderius, after his father. He looked as if he were asleep, but his forehead felt cool.

Crawford's uncle called 911, and an operator instructed him to try CPR while they waited for an ambulance. Crawford's mother and sister took turns pumping the baby's chest.

"I'm doing it, Ma'am, but he ain't doing nothing!" Abbie said, out of breath.

The ambulance seemed to be taking too long, so Crawford's younger brother called 911 on another line. "The baby's

not talking, not breathing, not saying anything," he said. "Can you get an ambulance?"

They were used to waiting a long time for city services; the alarm could go off at their pastor's church and ring all night, and the fire department would never come. There was a saying in the neighborhood that the police were never there when you needed them, only when you didn't. The community was populated almost entirely by black families, many of whom had grown up together. After a few more minutes, Crawford's brother called 911 again. "We need an ambulance, Ma'am," he said. "It's been twenty minutes!"

Not long afterward, another 911 operator called a dispatcher and asked what was happening at the address. "They probably slept on the damn baby," the dispatcher said. "There's a hundred folks in that damn house."

When the ambulance arrived, moments later, Crawford ran out of the house with the baby in his arms. The paramedics put a breathing mask over Roderius's face, and Crawford thought he saw his son's eyes open. He tried to climb into the back of the ambulance, but the paramedics shut the doors and told him to stay outside. They couldn't find a pulse. Roderius's jaw was stiff and his eyes were milky, a sign that he had been dead for more than an hour. They decided to wait in the ambulance until the police arrived before telling the family.

Meanwhile, the baby's mother, Lakendra Lott, and her family had arrived. They lived on the same street, five houses away. Lott and Crawford had known each other since they were children and had been close since middle school. He was hyper, affectionate, and fondly known as a clown. She was quiet and withdrawn; she had "been to the tenth floor," a phrase used in the neighborhood to describe the psychiatric ward of the closest hospital. There had been rumors that someone else might be Roderius's father—Crawford and Lott both had daughters from other relationships—but when Crawford held Roderius at the hospital he was sure that the newborn was his. The baby usually slept at Lott's house, but Crawford visited him almost every day. He was a gifted dancer—in

The Caddo Parish D.A. recently told a reporter, "I think we need to kill more people."

high school he had been in the marching band and started a dance troupe called the Black Boys—and he liked to entertain the baby by setting his feet on the floor and making him dance like a marionette.

The families began knocking on the windows of the ambulance, asking the driver why he hadn't left for the hospital. The paramedics reported to their dispatcher that they were surrounded by a mob; they worried that there was going to be some sort of riot. "If the crowd gets bad, we don't have anything—there's no protection," one paramedic said later. "We had to leave for our safety." The ambulance drove away with its sirens and lights on, but switched them off as soon as it turned the corner.

The police arrived at the Crawfords' house shortly after. Crawford was with his cousins, who lived across the street. When an officer asked for him, his mother admitted that he was afraid of the police, because "he's got a little charge going on, and he's worried about that." He had an open warrant for marijuana possession. In the past, he'd been arrested for battery, after fights with girlfriends, and for minor infractions, like driving with his headlights off and not wearing a seat belt. Crawford came home a few seconds later and tried to hug his mother, who was standing at the foot of their driveway, but the officer told him to sit in the police car. He slid into the back seat, held his head in his hands, and began rocking back and forth and crying.

After a few minutes, he looked out the back window and saw Lott, who seemed disoriented. He motioned her over, and as soon as she opened the car door he wrapped his arms around her and buried his head in the back of her neck. When she told him that she knew the baby must have died, even though the cops wouldn't answer the family's questions, he pulled away. "What is wrong with you?" he said. "Don't do that to me. He's all right."

The police wouldn't let Lott or Crawford go to the hospital. Instead, they drove them to the police station. An officer asked Crawford why the baby had bruises on his head and his lip, and Crawford explained that the day before the baby had been standing on the bath-

room floor when he slipped and fell between the toilet and the bathtub, hitting his head and cutting his lip. "I gave him an ice cube and put it in his mouth and wiped the blood off his lip, and he was straight," Crawford said.

When detectives interviewed Lott, she was reticent and leaden. In emotional situations, she was known to retreat by staring at her phone.

"Have you ever seen him lose his cool?" they asked her, referring to Crawford.

"No, sir," she said. "Until today."

"What happened today?"

"He was just upset," she said.

She told the officers that Roderius "had a little cold," so she'd stopped by Crawford's house the day before to drop off a nasal aspirator. While she was there, Crawford had told her about the baby's fall, and she'd looked at his injuries. "There was a bruise right there," she said, pointing above her right eye. "And his mouth—he had bust his lip. But he was still happy and everything."

That morning, a forensic pathologist performed an autopsy and determined that the bruises on Roderius's lips were the marks of smothering. Later, when he reviewed slides of Roderius's lung tissue, he discovered that the baby also had pneumonia, but he decided that the illness was a coincidence.

The detectives interviewed Crawford for the second time that day, and told him that the pathologist had found bruises on the baby's bottom, indicating that he had suffered from "chronic child abuse."

"Chronic child abuse," Crawford repeated, as if testing a new phrase. "I don't know if he's ever been beaten at his mom's house, but at my house he's never been beaten by me," he said. "He's a baby. He's a one-year-old. What could he do to me to make me beat him?"

"We see it all the time," the detective said. "We can't answer that."

"I told you—he fell. That's the only thing that ever happened to him. He fell in the bathroom. But me beating him? No!"

Then the detective said, "There are certain fluids in your one-year-old son's lungs that tell us that he was suffocated before he died."

"He was suffocated?" Crawford

Fine Estate Jewelry
(Yellow gold and platinum by Oscar Heyman, c. 1960)

Baguette sapphire and round diamond 5 row dome ring \$8,500

Pair round diamond bombe earrings \$9,500

Round sapphire and diamond necklace \$24,500

SHOWN ACTUAL SIZE

FIRESTONE AND PARSON
30 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 266-1858 • www.firestoneandparson.com

Advertisement

TALK TO US.

Share your insights on a variety of topics with *The New Yorker's* marketing department as a member of our online Opinion Leaders panel. As one of our most influential readers, you will be eligible for VIP access to exclusive *New Yorker* events and special offers.

Sign up at

NewYorkerOpinionLeaders.com/join

THE
NEW YORKER
OPINION LEADERS

CONDÉ NAST

said. "What do you mean by suffocated? Like somebody held him down?"

"The cause of death is asphyxiation with acute suffocation."

"No. When I woke up this morning—I'll tell you again, sir—when I woke up this morning..." His voice began wavering, and he trailed off. "That's too much," he said.

"Did you wake up on top of your son?"

"No, sir. No, sir!"

"If that's what happened, that's what you need to say. It's important."

"I know it's important. I'm telling you I didn't wake up on my son. I didn't wake up suffocating him—nothing. That's some real talk."

The autopsy report was sent to the office of Dale Cox, the first assistant district attorney of Caddo Parish, which includes Shreveport. After reading the police reports, he decided to seek the death penalty. Cox told me that in the past forty years he had never prosecuted a man between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six who grew up in a nuclear family. "Not one," he said. He believes that the "destruction of the nuclear family and a tremendously high illegitimate birth rate" have brought about an "epidemic of child-killings" in the parish.

At the time that he learned of Crawford's case, he was prosecuting another young black man accused of killing his infant. After the man was sentenced to life without parole, rather than death, Cox told a local TV station, "I take it as a failure that I was unable to convince the jury to kill him."

The only structure on the front lawn of the Caddo Parish courthouse, in downtown Shreveport, is a monument to the Confederacy, which includes the busts of four Confederate generals. A large stone slab on the ground is inscribed with the Confederate flag and a tribute to the "deeds and valor of the men who so gallantly, nobly, and conscientiously defended the cause."

In the decades after the Civil War, Caddo Parish—home to the last capital of the Confederacy—had more lynchings than all but one county in the South. Several men were lynched in front of the courthouse. In 1914, when some Louisiana newspapers called

for the abolition of the death penalty, an editorial in the Shreveport *Times* warned that without capital punishment the number of lynchings would rise: black criminals wouldn't be able to reach the jail before they were overwhelmed by the "vengeance of an outraged citizenship."

Juries in Caddo Parish, which has a population of two hundred and fifty thousand, now sentence more people to death per capita than juries in any other county in America. Seventy-seven per cent of those sentenced to death in the past forty years have been black, and nearly half were convicted of killing white victims. A white person has never been sentenced to death for killing a black person.

Since 2011, Dale Cox, a jowly sixty-seven-year-old man with thinning white hair, has been responsible for more than a third of the death sentences in Louisiana. When I met him at his office, which overlooks the courthouse, I asked him if he worried about the possibility that the parish's fraught racial history and its approach to capital punishment were related, but he said that he didn't see the connection. "People have played the race card in this country for so long, and at some point we really need to stop and say, 'O.K., that was a long, long, long time ago. It's different now.'" He said, "Yeah, a lot of terrible things have happened in the world everywhere. And in some



places it gets better, like here. And in some places it doesn't, like Africa or Kosovo." He told me, "I don't get this discrimination business, I really don't."

Cox, who is Catholic and went to a Jesuit school, was opposed to the death penalty at the start of his career, and in 1983, after working in the district attorney's office for six years, he left, because he didn't feel comfortable pursuing capital cases. He believed that it was God's decision when to end someone's life. He

joined a civil firm while working part time as a special prosecutor. By 2011, when he returned to the office full time, he said that his thinking had evolved. After constant exposure to violence, he began to reinterpret the Bible. He thought about passages in which Christ was judgmental and unforgiving—Christ's belief that it would be better if Judas Iscariot had never been born, for instance—and saw Him as retaliatory in ways that he hadn't appreciated before. After the Church's pedophilia scandals, Cox no longer felt obliged to follow its teachings precisely. He told me that "we just exclusively use the Old Testament over here," and that he had ripped the New Testament out of all the Bibles. He quickly added, "That's a joke!"

Last March, a former colleague of Cox's published a letter in the Shreveport *Times* apologizing for causing an innocent black man to spend thirty years on death row. "We are simply incapable of devising a system that can fairly and impartially impose a sentence of death," he wrote. When a journalist with the paper, Maya Lau, asked Cox for his response, he said that he thought courts should be imposing the death penalty more, not less. "I think we need to kill more people," he told her. "We're not considered a society anymore—we're a jungle."

Cox does not believe that the death penalty works as a deterrent, but he says that it is justified as revenge. He told me that revenge was a revitalizing force that "brings to us a visceral satisfaction." He felt that the public's aversion to the notion had to do with the word itself. "It's a hard word—it's like the word 'hate,' the word 'despot,' the word 'blood.'" He said, "Over time, I have come to the position that revenge is important for society as a whole. We have certain rules that you are expected to abide by, and when you don't abide by them you have forfeited your right to live among us."

Mooretown, the neighborhood where Crawford's family lives, was developed early in the twentieth century by Giles Moore, a black schoolteacher who intended to create a "colored town." He owned a farm west of Shreveport that he divided into plots and sold to black people. A follower of

the black-unification leader Marcus Garvey, he wanted people to own their own property and be free of discrimination by white people. The social experiment thrived for a few decades, but the town, which didn't have its own utility infrastructure, was never self-sufficient. In 1958, it was annexed to Shreveport.

In the next three decades, many people with aspirations moved away, leaving vacant lots and discarded cars, which led to problems with stray dogs, rats, and snakes. Community leaders led campaigns to clean up the neighborhood, but its schools floundered; like nearly forty per cent of his classmates, Crawford didn't finish high school. He could find only sporadic jobs, installing air-conditioners and mowing lawns. Shortly before Roderius died, he had arranged to work at his church as a spiritual mime, using dance and gestures to share the Gospel. His pastor, John Dent, described him as "a vibrant kid who loved cracking jokes—that was his thing." The first time that Dent saw Crawford pushing a stroller, he told him, "No way. No way that you already have a kid." He said that Crawford responded, proudly, "No, man, this is my boy. This is my little one."

At a preliminary hearing a month after Roderius's death, Lott told the judge that she had never seen Crawford mistreat their son. "Why would he kill his baby, as bad as he wanted a little boy?" she said.

On her Twitter feed that fall, she posted a picture of Crawford and wrote, "Free my hot boi," with four hearts and a smiley face with hearts in its eyes. She visited him in jail every few weeks, usually catching a ride with Crawford's family. "She was the type who would call our house every day, no matter who Rodricus was going with," Crawford's mother, Abbie, said. "She just wouldn't let Rodricus go."

Lott was the only one in her family who testified that Crawford was innocent. After an initial period of confusion, her family had accepted Cox's version of events. Investigators from the D.A.'s office told them that the medical evidence proved that the baby had been killed. "They know what happened because the autopsy came back," a family member told me.

Abbie Crawford seemed as dis-



"I think I was only invited for one reason."

tressed by the Lotts' position as she was by the charges against her son. "We went through all our lives together," she told me. "We ate together, raised our children together. We had get-togethers for Mother's Day. We were family."

Dent, who had presided over Roderius's wake, tried to get the families to reconcile, but the Lotts stopped answering their door when he knocked. "That they could go from embracing one another at the funeral and praying for each other to not even speaking was crushing," he said. "I believe the prosecution forced ideas into their heads."

From jail, Crawford urged his family to talk to Lott's mother, Sharon. One day, his aunt Latosha, who owned a hair salon and assumed the role of family matriarch, saw Sharon sitting alone at the courthouse. She sat beside her and said, "You know good and well that Rodricus would never hurt his baby." She said that Sharon responded, "Well, what do you think happened? That my daughter did something to

the baby?" The Crawfords wondered if the Lotts felt that someone would inevitably be prosecuted: if it wasn't the Crawfords' child, perhaps it would be theirs. Latosha said, "I think the prosecutor had the mind-set that 'I don't have to kill the village, because I'll just turn the villagers against each other and they'll kill themselves.'"

Crawford was represented by a Shreveport attorney named Daryl Gold, who had argued in court against Cox in the late seventies and remembered him as "one of the nicest people I had ever known." By the time Crawford was tried, Gold wondered if Cox had "a brain tumor or something." Other Shreveport lawyers were similarly confused. When Henry Walker, the former president of the state's criminal-defense bar, heard that Cox had screamed "God damn it!" in court, he e-mailed the bar's Listserv to express concern that Cox had "developed a state of mental imbalance and may need help very badly." He wrote, "I

remember a very different Dale Cox, a person of unquestioned integrity, whose demeanor was always very professional and courteous,” adding, “Of course, he may have, by always masking his true volatility, become over time so tightly wound that an explosion was inevitable.” A few lawyers guessed that Cox’s divorce and a personal bankruptcy, in 2005, had made him bitter. (Cox dismissed the idea.) Others thought that he had become too immersed in the culture of the D.A.’s office; it was the sort of institution where a longtime assistant district attorney felt comfortable hanging a large portrait of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate general and an early leader of the Ku Klux Klan, on the wall. “Nobody there is that far from turning into a savage,” Walker told me. “If somebody releases the chain, they’ll be off and running.”

The week before Crawford’s trial, in November, 2013, Gold asked Cox to dismiss the case. He had just received a report from his medical expert, Daniel Spitz, a forensic pathologist from Michigan, who co-authored a pathology textbook that is widely used in medical schools. Spitz found that Roderius’s blood had tested positive for sepsis, and he concluded that he had died of pneumonia. Spitz told me that after reviewing the case he thought that there “wasn’t enough evidence to even put this before a jury. You didn’t have anybody who thought this guy committed murder except for one pathologist who decided that it was homicide on what seemed like a whim.”

Cox told me that the new medical report “gave me pause.” But after meeting again with the first pathologist, James Traylor, he felt confident about the theory of smothering. In court, Traylor testified as cross-sections of the baby’s bruised bottom were displayed for the jury. Traylor said that the baby’s pneumonia couldn’t have been severe, because family members hadn’t reported a fever or rapid heartbeat. “I’m the guy that did the autopsy,” Traylor told the jury. “There is no one else that can speak for the victim other than myself.”

Traylor said that his finding of suffocation was based entirely on the bruises on Roderius’s lips, but he never sampled the tissue to date the injury, a basic

test that would have revealed whether the bruises came from the earlier fall in the bathroom, an explanation that he ignored. He misstated medical science, telling the jury that Roderius’s brain had swelled as a result of suffocation. Swelling does not occur in cases of smothering, because the person dies rapidly, and the brain can’t swell if blood has stopped circulating. The brain can swell, though, in cases of pneumonia with sepsis.

When Spitz testified, he explained that sepsis in young children can be fatal within a few hours, with early symptoms passing unnoticed. But his testimony was eclipsed by a cross-examination that lasted twice as long as the direct testimony. Cox interrogated him about a mistake he’d made in an autopsy in Michigan, where he had overlooked a bullet wound in a decomposed body. “You are overextended,” Cox told him. “You are overworked.” The judge later wrote of Spitz that “any veracity that he had was destroyed.”

FOR MY BROTHER, IN BLUEGRASS

Ever since you were placed in the 99th percentile
I’ve been trying to be exceptional—

I made you the father of my dolls.

I made you my in case of emergency.

When we walked down the street I was the stranger.
You were whatever moved you.

Either you were a thoroughbred glistening through clay
or you spoke a language you made up by the minute.

Then you drove away to join the normal.

O Lawyer, let me compose you.

Let me leave you in the prodigal field,
back between boyhood and the prematurely old.

You gave me up for the word *lovely*.

Listen, the North is kicking out at the door
for you to be familiar.

—Elizabeth Metzger

Crawford’s mother, Abbie, felt uneasy as soon as the jury, composed of nine white people and three black ones, returned to the courtroom. “All I remember hearing is ‘Guilty, guilty, guilty,’” she told me. “Rodricus looked at me, and I looked at him, and I just tried to hold it all in.”

The defense team hadn’t prepared for the penalty phase of the trial, which began the next morning. “We were too attached to ‘not guilty,’” J. Antonio Florence, a lawyer who worked on the case, told me. He described Cox as “probably the greatest trial lawyer I’ve gone up against,” adding that by “great” he meant that “he is very effective, like Darth Vader.”

Florence, who is black, said that he fantasizes about all the defense lawyers in the country banding together and refusing to work on capital cases, so that no trials can proceed. After the Supreme Court effectively suspended the death penalty in 1972, arguing that the punishment was unconstitutional

in part because it was disproportionately imposed on “minorities whose numbers are few, who are outcasts of society, and who are unpopular,” Louisiana, like thirty-four other states, rewrote its statute. As Florence saw it, little had changed. Proof of the penalty’s arbitrariness, he said, was the fact that “you have people like Dale Cox making the decisions about who should face death.”

The next morning, Jessica Williams, the mother of Crawford’s first child, Khasiah, who was six years old, told the jury that if he was executed it would “kill” her daughter, too. “She talks about him, asks about him, cries about him, dreams about him, everything,” she said. “She asks when her daddy is coming home. ‘Mama, where’s my daddy at?’ ‘Call my daddy.’ ‘Can you call him?’”

When Jessica told a story about shopping for diapers with Crawford, Cox asked her where he got the money.

“I’m not sure,” she said.

“Was he working at the time?”

“No.”

“During the one year of Rodericus’s life, did Rodricus Crawford ever work?”

“No.”

Cox continued, “Did you know that he was a habitual user of marijuana?”

“Yes.”

“Did it bother you that Khasiah would be around someone who used marijuana all the time?”

“No, because even with him being a habitual user, it didn’t take upon his character and how he would be around his child,” she said.

When Ramone, one of Crawford’s younger brothers, took the witness stand, Cox asked if he thought that smoking marijuana was wrong.

“No,” Ramone responded.

“Did they tell in your classes at school that you could go to jail for using marijuana?”

“Yes, sir.”

“So then you did know it was a crime.”

Ramone, who was crying, didn’t answer.

“But even though you knew it was a crime, you didn’t think it was wrong for your brother to do it?”

“No, sir.”

“And why didn’t you think it was

wrong for your brother to do it even though you knew it to be a crime?”

“I don’t know,” he said.

He asked Ramone to estimate how many weeks of the year Crawford worked. After determining that there was “no real pattern to how often he worked,” Cox asked if Crawford had a physical disability. “Or a mental disability, something wrong with his mind?”

“No, sir,” Ramone said.

“What would he do all day?” he asked. “On the days that he didn’t work.”

“I don’t know, just live a normal life,” Ramone said.

When Abbie Crawford took the witness stand, Cox asked again if Crawford was disabled. “Why didn’t he work?” he pressed.

“He looked for work,” his mother responded, crying.

“What did he do to ‘look’ for it?”

“He asked around for work.”

Later, Cox returned to the subject: “But he never worked on a regular basis.”

“Not on a regular basis.”

“Did you ever ask him to go to work?”

“He looked for work all the time.”

Cox turned again to Crawford’s marijuana use, asking her how much Rodricus smoked each day. When she said she didn’t know, he asked, “Have you ever smelled marijuana before?”

When the cross-examination was over, Florence approached the witness stand and said, “Ms. Abbie, was this just another black boy, worth nothing, at your house?”

Cox objected, and the judge accused Florence of inserting race into the proceedings. “It was something that welled up in me,” Florence told me later. “If we’re going to talk about it, let’s talk about it, because that’s what you’re doing. You’re just leaving out the word ‘nigger.’ But the jury can see past the code.”

In Cox’s closing statements, he said that Jesus Christ commanded the death penalty for those who killed a child, a point he had made the month before, in a trial where he won a death verdict against another young black man. “Now, this is Jesus Christ of the New Testament,” he said: “It would be better if you were never born. You shall have a millstone cast around your

neck, and you will be thrown into the sea.” Crawford was sentenced to death that evening.

A month after Crawford was formally sentenced, Dale Cox wrote a memo to the state’s probation department, which compiles reports on defendants sentenced to death. “I am sorry that Louisiana has adopted lethal injection as the form of implementing the death penalty,” he wrote. “Mr. Crawford deserves as much physical suffering as it is humanly possible to endure before he dies.”

The Lott family refused to speak with the probation officers who came to their house for a victim statement. A year later, when I knocked on their door, Lakendra’s mother, Sharon, spoke to me from behind the screen door; the interior of the house was so dark that I couldn’t see her. When I explained that I had talked with many people and wanted to include her voice, she told me, “I don’t have a voice. You can say whatever you feel. I don’t have a voice.”

I asked if she was satisfied with the way that the trial unfolded. “No,” she said. “I don’t know what happened.” She said that she knew that Crawford’s lawyer had told him not to testify, but she still felt it was wrong not to defend himself. “Just say *something*,” she said.

Lott had moved out of her mother’s house and now lived a little more than a mile away, in a government-subsidized housing complex. The first time I knocked on her door, at noon, she said that she was still sleeping. The next three times, a relative answered the door and said that she couldn’t talk. Sharon told me that my visit had upset Lakendra, and she urged me to walk down the street and speak with the Crawfords instead. “I’m not saying nothing bad about Rodricus,” she said. “If he didn’t do it and he gets out, that’s fine.” She pointed to the Crawfords’ house and said, “They shouldn’t be mad at us. The jury did it, not us.”

Crawford is the second-youngest man on death row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. He said that half of the people on his tier are from Caddo Parish; he has started calling two of them his

"uncles." When he first arrived, he would sleep all day, but they convinced him that sleeping wouldn't make life any better.

Prisoners on death row are not allowed to speak with anyone who isn't family, unless they are days away from execution. When the prison's warden, Burl Cain, told me that the policy was made "out of respect to the victims' family," I said that the victim's next-of-kin, Lott, had testified to Crawford's innocence. "We trust the Louisiana Criminal Justice System," he wrote in an e-mail. "Rodricus Crawford has been found guilty."

Crawford filed a motion for a new trial, arguing that the medical testimony presented at his trial had been insufficient and misleading, but in March his request was denied, without explanation. The brief filed by his lawyers included the opinions of three doctors who had concluded independently that the original autopsy was deeply flawed. Robert Bux, the coroner of El Paso County, in Colorado, told me that "there was no scientific evidence to support the diagnosis. They called it a homicide before they knew what was going on. I was amazed—amazed in the sense that I was horrified." Janice Ophoven, a pediatric forensic pathologist from Minnesota, told me, "To be really honest, the pathologist did not seem willing to consider the actual facts of this case."

A month after the court's denial, the district attorney of Caddo Parish died suddenly, and Cox filled the vacancy. In October, he will ask voters to elect him as district attorney. When I met with him to talk about Crawford's case, he seemed to struggle to remember the details. He said that Lott was "yukking it up with Samuel Jordan," a defendant in a different case. When I asked if it troubled him that there was no motive, he responded, "In baby-killing cases, almost always the defense is that the baby was crying and it got on my nerves. So I started to hit him, and I kept hitting him, and he kept screaming. So I hit him harder. And then I decided to bash his head against the wall, and then he wasn't screaming anymore, so I could sleep again."

I mentioned that Roderius had

slept through the night without crying. "Am I confusing that with another one?" he said. "Well, no, the lack of motive didn't bother me. It was more of a reason to seek the death penalty than it was not."

Like all inmates on Louisiana's death row, Crawford is confined to his cell twenty-three hours a day. He spends most of his free hour waiting in line for the phone. Earlier this month, I went to his house and waited for his daily phone call to his family, expected at about 10 P.M. It never came. Crawford wasn't released from his cell that day. When he asked his classification officer what had happened, she smiled and said, "You know what's going on." Crawford interpreted it as an effort to prevent him from speaking with me. (His calls are monitored, and his mother had arranged the call in advance.)

Abbie Crawford and I waited for her phone to ring while sitting at a card table in her driveway. Rodricus's uncle barbecued, and his twenty-one-year-old brother, Fostravz, ate a bowl of Trix. Abbie seemed to get comfort from analyzing the case—it made her feel as if she were actively doing something for her son—and she asked Fostravz to recount the last night of the baby's life. "This ain't no play," Fostravz told her. "I'm not going to keep practicing this over and over."

He and his family had recently posted flyers around Shreveport with a picture of Crawford and a note that said, "There is an injustice taking place in a city near you right now. It may seem unreal but believe it is all so real. . . . Rodricus C. Crawford could be YOU!" They hoped to get some media attention—the Shreveport papers had written only a few brief summaries of the trial—but no one responded.

Fostravz had his own theory of why his brother was in prison. A few months before the baby's death, the police had arrested Crawford for marijuana possession and then released him on the condition that he inform on people who lived five blocks away. After they let him go, he refused to follow through.

"I knew they were going to do something to get Rodricus in jail, because he wasn't snitching like they told him to," Fostravz said.

"It was revenge," his uncle, who had served time for drugs, said. "He didn't do what they said, so they charged him with the other thing."

"And that's why they kept saying, 'You don't do anything but smoke marijuana all day,'" Abbie said, though she didn't seem entirely convinced by the theory.

She appeared to have internalized Cox's criticisms of her son; she now talked about his unemployment as if it were the actual crime. She was eighteen and single when she first became a mother, and now she felt that she hadn't been strategic enough in raising her children, three boys and two girls. "I figured I could raise the boys just like the girls, but I'm not a man—maybe he needed a man," she said. "Now I know that you have to have your child get into something positive in the daytime. You've got to work and get a paycheck and go to church every Sunday, or every other Sunday. On Saturdays, you can socialize or whatever, but that's all."

Cox's judgments had become so central to her thinking that she worried about the D.A.'s age and his health and the fact that he could die before her son's innocence was proved. "Since the day that Cox sentenced my child, I've been praying. 'Father, please don't let Mr. Cox die until he knows that Rodricus is going to be all right,'" she said.

In April, Crawford's lawyers filed their first appeal with the Louisiana Supreme Court, which almost never overturns a verdict in capital cases. The brief described the "racial and geographic arbitrariness of the death penalty in Louisiana—confined predominantly to African-American men prosecuted in Caddo Parish"—and said that "Crawford's fate depended far more on where he was prosecuted than his ultimate moral culpability."

The Crawfords are so upbeat about each brief submitted to the court that their lawyers have to discourage them from unrealistic expectations. Crawford says that when he is free he intends to get married and to move away from Mooretown. "Rodricus doesn't want to be part of the same old world that he was in," Abbie Crawford said. "He tells me, 'Keep praying, Mama, because the Father is dealing with us. The Father is getting us ready. I know he's getting me ready to be a young man.'" ♦

LET'S BE LESS STUPID AND OLD

BY PATRICIA MARX

Directions: You have two minutes to answer the following questions. If you do not have a timer, start counting.

WHAT IS YOUR MENTAL AGE?

1. What's the word for the stuff you sprinkle on your food but it's not pepper? No, not salt, but like salt but supposedly better for you because it doesn't have salt in it.



2. What's that thing that you put in the thing? The thing you take pictures with. That thing. What's the thing you put inside that?

3. What's the car that's not a Toyota Camry?

4. Who's the guy who isn't Robert De Niro?

5. What is the little plastic person you used to play with called?

6. How do you spell the drink that's made with rum, lime juice, and sugar, and comes with a tiny umbrella?

7. Off the wagon? On the wagon? Which is the good one, and by good one I mean the bad one that's not fun?

8. Why is there a Post-it on the cutting board?

Answers:

1. No Salt salt substitute. Mrs. Dash is also accepted.

2. Memory card. "Film" is not accepted. Get with it.

3. Honda Accord

4. Al Pacino. Half a point for Harvey Keitel or James Caan.

5. Barbie

6. Daiquiri

7. I don't remember.

8. I thought you put it there.

Scoring: One point for every correct answer.

0: Older than the hills

1-3: Same age as Father Time's uncle

4-5: If you took your gray matter to "Antiques Roadshow," they'd be impressed.

6-7: Younger than springtime

8: Will you write the rest of this article?

FUN WITH MATH: WORD PROBLEMS

1. The Pomegranates are remodeling their bathroom. The contractor promises that he and his assistant, Drago, can do the job in fifteen days. Drago works three times as fast as the contractor. On Day Two, Drago is stricken with a hangnail and cannot work. The contractor hires Buster and Lester, who together can work one-fourth as fast as Drago worked. Buster and Lester put the toilet in upside down. The resulting flood spreads to the kitchen. The contractor says that redoing the kitchen and replacing the drowned dog will take six times as long as the bathroom. The contractor fires Buster and Lester and employs a team whose religious habits permit them to work only on days that begin with the letter "T." The first day on the job, the team works ten times as fast as the contractor. Every day thereafter, it works half as fast as the day before. The Pomegranates divorce. Mrs. Pomegranate is institutionalized. Will the bathroom be painted by the time Mrs. Pomegranate gets out of the hospital?

Answer: Yes, but when she sees that it is painted Crème Fraîche instead of Fraîche Crème, she will check herself back in.

2. Liz Taylor has been married three times. No, not that Liz Taylor, another Liz Taylor. She received a modest set-

tlement from each ex. The amounts, in chronological order, were as follows: \$1,000, \$8,000, \$27,000. She put this money into a fund to pay for her twins' college education. Her children will be attending Sarah Lawrence, one of the most expensive colleges in the country. The price tag is \$65,242 per year, and that doesn't include books, though maybe they're not necessary. Child support? There is none. It's a long story. Considering extras and assuming that the price tag goes up, let's say Liz Taylor is going to have to spend \$600,000 over four years. How many more times must Liz Taylor get divorced?

Answer: Three

WHAT WAS I DOING UPSTAIRS THAT MADE ME DECIDE TO GO DOWNSTAIRS?

You walk purposefully toward the kitchen, bathroom, or Oval Office, and on arrival you wonder, Why am I here? Did you come for a paper towel? Lip balm? Are you supposed to sign the telecommunications bill? In each scenario below, you wind up in a room, searching for something, though you no longer know what. Select the most likely object. There are no incorrect answers, but one is more correct than the others.

1. You turn on the TV to watch your favorite program. During a commercial, you put the remote in your pocket and run down to the garage. What for?

- (a) Fertilizer
- (b) Snowblower
- (c) Venison haunch in spare freezer
- (d) Garage-door opener

2. Uh-oh. Why did the lights go out? You make your way down to the basement, but, um, what is it you are here to look for?

- (a) Flashlight
- (b) Hand-crank radio
- (c) Fuse
- (d) Old Gladys Knight & the Pips album

Answers:

1. (d) Garage-door opener. The batteries in the remote are dead, but luckily the AAAs in the garage-door opener will work.

2. (d) The album. The lights came back on—how else could you look?—and now it's time to paaa-rrrr-ty! ♦

LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

THE HIGHER LIFE

A mindfulness guru for the tech set.

BY LIZZIE WIDDICOMBE



Last April, in New York City, three thousand people gathered for THRIVE, yet another TED-style ideas conference offering mental and spiritual rejuvenation to the business world. It was organized by the “Morning Joe” co-host Mika Brzezinski and the new-media mogul Arianna Huffington, and conceived, Huffington said, to correct a problem that she had perceived in herself and other harried strivers. According to the event’s Web site, “The relentless pursuit of the traditional measures of success—money and power”—had resulted in an “epidemic of burn-out”: stress-related illnesses, relationship problems. In addition to frantically pur-

suing the traditional measures, it was time to introduce a “‘Third Metric’—a combination of well-being, wisdom, wonder, and giving.”

THRIVE’s speakers included women with expertise in the first two metrics: Katie Couric, Tory Burch. But a keynote address was delivered by a Third Metric expert: Andy Puddicombe, a forty-two-year-old British meditation teacher. Puddicombe trained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk before creating an iPhone app called Headspace, which teaches meditation and mindfulness techniques. Since 2012, when the app launched, Headspace has been downloaded by three million users. Among

its acolytes are Richard Branson, who put the company’s meditation exercises on Virgin Airlines flights, and the Seattle Seahawks. The *Times* has written that Puddicombe is “doing for meditation what someone like Jamie Oliver has done for food.”

The main stage at THRIVE, which accompanied Huffington’s best-selling book of the same title, resembled a living room, with soothing lighting, couches heaped with silk pillows, and sprays of cherry blossoms. In between speakers, Huffington and Brzezinski bantered with the audience about habits that keep Type A women from thriving. “Judging yourself,” Brzezinski said. The audience groaned in recognition.

Finally, Huffington introduced Puddicombe, whose name made her stumble: “Addie Paddicombe is here to demystify meditation and help us get deeper into life.”

Brzezinski added, to titters, “You’re not going to think ‘monk’ when he walks onstage!”

Puddicombe emerged to a flourish of piano music, holding a set of juggling balls. He is bald, with blue eyes and a deep tan, and he looks as much like a personal trainer as like a personal guru. (Headspace bills itself as a “gym membership for the mind.”) He speaks with the kind of Estuary English accent that you might encounter in a London pub. Puddicombe started off by taking an informal poll. “How many of you meditate?” he asked. Many hands went up.

“Wow!” he said. “A very enlightened audience!”

Puddicombe’s surprise might have been exaggerated. For several years now, the overlapping worlds of business and self-help have been abuzz about mindfulness meditation. (In February, an executive coach opined in the *Harvard Business Review* that mindfulness “is close to taking on cult status in the business world.”) The World Economic Forum, in Davos, opens with daily meditation sessions; Fortune 500 companies like General Mills, General Motors, and Target offer their employees contemplative programs, embracing Huffington’s message that enlightenment need not be at odds with the pursuit of profit. Goldman Sachs and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute have

Andy Puddicombe’s iPhone app, Headspace, teaches meditation to digital burnouts.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF

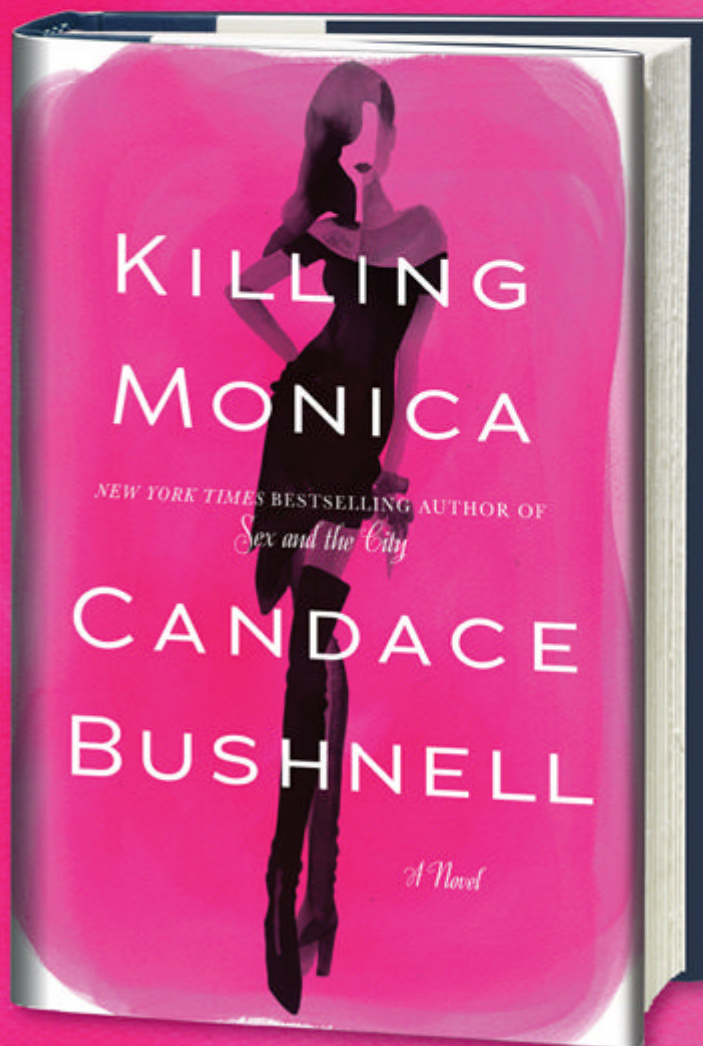
Sex and the City

CANDACE BUSHNELL

“The philosopher queen of the social scene.”

—*New York Times Book Review*

Recurring characters
never die. They just take
over a writer's life.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANN FIELD

On sale now in hardcover, ebook, audio, and large print

CandaceBushnell.com

 hachette
BOOK GROUP

 GRAND CENTRAL
PUBLISHING

bought bulk subscriptions to Headspace for their employees.

As with many contemporary trends, Silicon Valley was there first. Meditation was one of the habits that seeped from San Francisco's counterculture into its hacker culture. For years, its high priest was Steve Jobs, a Zen enthusiast. These days, it's Chade-Meng Tan, a Google engineer who, in 2007, helped create Search Inside Yourself, a "mindfulness-based emotional intelligence" course that has since been taken by thousands of the company's employees. Tan told David Gelles, the author of "Mindful Work," that Google's program represents "the fourth turning of the wheel of the dharma." Eastern spirituality seasons much of today's technoutopianism. HBO's "Silicon Valley" includes a C.E.O. who consults a guru and says things like "I don't want to live in a world where someone makes the world a better place than we do."

Silicon Valley's interest in meditation is, in some respects, adaptive. "We're at the epicenter of being stimulated with digital stuff," Mamood Hamid, a venture investor at Social Capital, told me. "Five years ago, it was just e-mail. Now if you're not on Twitter, if you don't know how to use social, you're a Luddite. And then you add the Apple Watch that's going to be giving you notifications every five minutes—text messages, e-mails. It's going to drive you insane." Stewart Butterfield, the C.E.O. of Slack, noted that this is a fate that awaits us all. "I feel like we're in the early stages of a species-level change with devices," he told me.

All of this has led to a strange but perhaps inevitable oxymoron: digital therapy. A new class of app has emerged on iPhone screens, promising to relieve the mental afflictions—stress, distraction—that have been exacerbated by its neighbors. A venture-funded company called Big Health is developing a suite of cognitive-behavioral-therapy apps. (Its first product, Sleepio, treats insomnia.) And though Hamid considers Headspace to be the best mindfulness-meditation app, in terms of its "content and sophistication," there are many others, including buddhify, which collects data via daily "mood check-ins"; Calm, which offers meditation exercises

set to soothing nature scenes; and Insight Timer, which provides Tibetan bell sounds. Huffington has an app, too, called GPS for the Soul.

At THRIVE, Puddicombe brought up the health benefits sought by some meditators—better sleep, lower blood pressure—before getting to the heart of the matter: attention. He cited a 2010 Harvard study about mind-wandering: "Forty-seven per cent of our life is spent lost in thought. Distracted!" If we meditate a lot, "it's almost like there's a little more room, a bit of space in the mind." Then he moved into a juggling routine meant to illustrate the advantages of the meditated mind. The hosts joined him for a Q. & A. that included his life story, Brzezinski's iPhone addiction, and inspirational quotes, supplied by Huffington. (Rumi: "Live life as if everything is rigged in your favor.")

"Meditation" is hard to define, because the word can apply to so many things. In the broadest sense, it is any method used to train the mind or to achieve a special state of consciousness. Many Westerners were introduced to the concept in 1968, when the Beatles took up Transcendental Meditation, the mantra-based technique created by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Mindfulness, the technique du jour, derives from Buddhist practices. Instead of focussing on a mantra, you try to pay attention to bodily sensations and the breath. By doing this regularly, practitioners say, you begin to cultivate an attentive, non-judgmental mind-set—mindfulness—that can be applied to activities beyond meditation; hence the proliferation of the word in everything from parenting groups to Weight Watchers meetings. Last year, the Huffington Post ran an article titled "Mindfulness for Mind-Blowing Sex."

The popularity of mindfulness has, inevitably, provoked a backlash. Skeptics dismiss it as the new aromatherapy, portraying Puddicombe and his ilk as snake-oil salesmen in religious robes. But Headspace has attracted a passionate fan base; its users tend to stay with the app, and their numbers are growing at a rate of fifteen per cent a month. Catherine Kerr, a neuroscientist at Brown, told me, "Just in the last five months, I've talked to several people using Headspace. They've all

reported these hard-to-quantify benefits that have to do with attention, equanimity, alertness, and being able to deal with daily life." Among my friends in New York, I'd noticed something similar. A d.j. told me that it had cured his anxiety: "It's like having a monk in your pocket."

Last year, following a period during which a combination of stress, caffeine, and Instagram addiction had me in a constant state of low-level hysteria, I downloaded Headspace. The app begins with a free sample program: ten minutes of meditation exercises for ten days. After that, it costs thirteen dollars a month, for meditation "packs" with titles like "Focus" and "Self-Esteem." The app has a slick, pastel-colored interface—no Buddhas or rushing waterfalls. Instead, you get Puddicombe's voice—"Hi, my name's Andy"—chatting amiably about "training the mind," which sounds at least as wholesome as a juice cleanse.

The rest of the Headspace app consists of three hundred and fifty hours' worth of guided meditation lessons, delivered by Puddicombe. The basics of mindfulness meditation are easy to find—you can download instructions from the Web. But, Puddicombe told Brzezinski at THRIVE, "I liken it to driving a car. It's helpful to have someone sit there with you at first." With noise-cancelling headphones, the app creates a surprisingly intimate experience—Puddicombe could be whispering in your ear. He starts each session with a "checking in" routine, the contemplative equivalent of buckling your seat belt and adjusting the rearview mirror. He tells you to take a few deep breaths, to notice any background noise (instead of blocking it out, or screaming at its creator to shut up), and to become aware of "the different physical sensations . . . the weight of the body, the contact between the body and the chair." Slowly, he draws attention to your breath, which you count in sets of ten. Puddicombe savors the breath the way some people do wine. He talks about it appreciatively, pointing out its protozoan wisdom ("Remember, the body *knows* how to breathe"), its soothing rhythm, its oceanic rise and fall.

The seconds pass slowly. You seem

to drop, briefly, into another dimension—the realm of quiet walks and kindergarten nap time. Like travel, the chief boon of meditation might be the way that it throws the place you came from into relief. I'd never noticed what an incredible racket was going on in my mind: to-do lists, scraps of conversation, ancient memories. Sometimes Puddicombe's voice would register as a distant peep. As calm set in, I'd occasionally achieve a few seconds of relaxed concentration—the meditative grail—which felt as if I were walking on a balance beam. Just as often, I'd lose the thread and nod off completely, or begin composing angry e-mails. Puddicombe's voice would interject. "It's perfectly normal to be distracted," he'd say. "Just bring the attention gently back to the breath."

Meditative techniques were widespread in northern India by the time that Gautama Buddha was born, around 480 B.C. Ascetics roamed the countryside, wearing rags and begging for their meals, and the Buddha became one of them. He famously achieved enlightenment—his insights about the cause of suffering and the way to end it—while meditating under a pipal tree. The Buddha taught his followers that practicing meditation was crucial to preparing their minds for enlightenment.

For most of Buddhism's history, however, meditation wasn't actually practiced that much, outside of monasteries. "There's an expression in Burmese Buddhism, 'A thousand lives away,'" Erik Braun, an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Oklahoma, told me. Buddhists generally believed that the world was so corrupt that the average person couldn't hope to attain enlightenment in a single lifetime. Monks were on a spiritual fast track—so meditation was great for them—but ordinary people focussed on praying and making donations to monasteries, in the hope of increasing their karma and being reborn as more spiritual beings.

This changed in the late nineteenth century, when the British invaded Burma, and Christian missionaries set about converting the populace. Fearing that their religion was being destroyed, Bud-

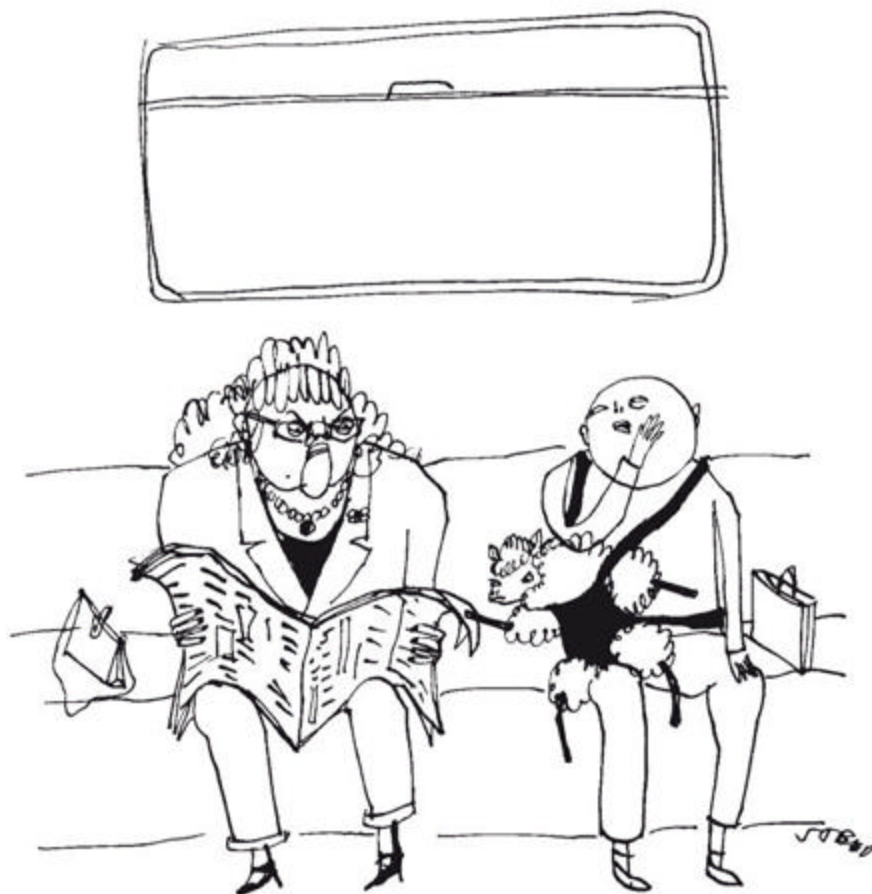
dhist monks began to teach laypeople the practices of the monasteries, in order to preserve them. One monk, the Ledi Sayadaw, travelled the country, encouraging people to study complicated philosophical texts, and to try meditation for themselves. Traditionally, meditation followed a rigorous curriculum, but the Sayadaw created a pared-down version for the masses. He argued that laypeople might not be ready for enlightenment, but they could still cultivate "insight," by practicing moment-to-moment awareness.

Along with his successors—including S. N. Goenka, the creator of Vipassana, or "insight" meditation—the Sayadaw and other Burmese teachers transformed Buddhism. "They rebranded it, in essence," David McMahan, the author of "The Making of Buddhist Modernism," told me. (This transformation is sometimes referred to as Buddhist Protestantism.) Lay-Buddhist meditation began to spread across Asia in the nineteen-twenties. By the sixties, it had made its way to the West, where it became

embedded in the era's counterculture.

In the West, a lot of credit for the modern mindfulness movement goes to one person: Jon Kabat-Zinn. In 1965, Kabat-Zinn, a graduate student in molecular biology at M.I.T., attended a lecture by the American-born Zen teacher Philip Kapleau. "I started my meditation practice that day, virtually," he told me. Later, while working in a lab at the University of Massachusetts, he developed an eight-week program called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, or M.B.S.R., to help patients at the university hospital who were being treated for severe medical conditions. The program incorporates both formal and informal mindfulness techniques: yoga, body scans, and such practices as mindful eating.

According to Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness teaches people to "find new ways to be in relationship to their pain"—mainly, to separate physical sensations from the emotions and fears surrounding them. "So when the thought arises, for instance, This is killing me!, instead



"Don't worry, he can't read."

of believing it, you investigate it. Is this killing me? No. Really, what you're doing is worrying." M.B.S.R. is now widely used in the medical field to help people suffering from everything from asthma to depression. Because it's standardized—and secular—it's become the method of choice for scientists studying meditation.

This isn't to say that M.B.S.R. *feels* clinical. At a class that I attended in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, I tried out short meditation sessions before spending about fifteen minutes mindfully eating a raisin—touching it, investigating it, biting off a tiny piece. The class was populated by young professionals. One student observed that the raisin "made me think of grapes, which made me think of wine and how I'd like to have a glass after this."

Puddicombe grew up in a town called Keynsham, between Bristol and Bath, where he had no access to Zen masters. "My friends' parents were either working in the local print shop or they were builders, electricians, plumbers," he told me. His father worked at a nursing home. Puddicombe's parents divorced when he was eleven, and his mother, an acupuncturist, took a meditation class in an effort to cope with the stress. Andy tried it, too, and, he said, "everything went kind of quiet for a few minutes." He meditated for several years before his interests gravitated toward more traditional areas: "Sports—football, rugby, tennis, gymnastics—girls, and booze."

On Christmas Eve of 1982, Puddicombe was twenty-one, and studying sports science at De Montfort University, when he left a party with a group of friends. A drunk driver plowed into the crowd, killing several people and putting twelve others in intensive care. Puddicombe wasn't hurt, but he witnessed everything. Soon afterward, his stepsister died in a bicycling accident. He couldn't shake the tragedies. "They lurked in the mind," he told me. Back at school, sports no longer interested him; neither did partying. One day, in his dorm room, Puddicombe had a strange experience. "It's a very difficult thing to put into words," he told me. "I felt—the only way I can say it is 'deeply moved.'" The feeling lasted for

several hours, Puddicombe said. When it ended, he knew what to do with his life: become a Buddhist monk. "It didn't feel like a choice," he said.

Puddicombe left college and, for the next ten years, lived in Buddhist monasteries. He started out in Nepal and India, and made his way to a monastery in Burma, where he became a novice monk in the Theravadan tradition, which is "quite strict," he said. His first retreat involved nine hours of walking meditation and nine hours of sitting meditation every day. His teacher was a Burmese monk who spoke no English, and Puddicombe didn't speak Burmese, but they met for daily check-ins. "Some days he'd smile, and I'd smile back. Sometimes my face would be drawn, like, *Meditation*. And he'd nod."

On a trip back to England, Puddicombe visited Samyeing, a Tibetan monastery in Scotland, where he met Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche, a bearded, stout Tibetan with a bright personality. "He was almost mischievous," Puddicombe said. Yeshe had spent twelve years in retreat and was known for his zealous commitment to meditation. "He was inspired by the great yogis in Tibet," Puddicombe said. Chief among them was Milarepa—a tenth-century aristocrat who began meditating so that he could learn sorcery, to get back at his neighbors. He ended up going down a contemplative rabbit hole, dedicating his life to meditation,



writing poetry, and living in a cave.

In 2001, Puddicombe did a year-long cloistered retreat at Samyeing, which included four-hour meditation sessions, four times a day. He discovered a new feeling. "The only way I can describe it is as a subtlety of mind," he said. He experienced "a dissolution of self and other, where I no longer felt so separate from the world." It took about two years for the experience to "settle," but when it did, Puddicombe

said, he was a different person. "I found I was no longer searching for anything," he told me. He was thirty years old.

Headspace recently set up its headquarters in Venice Beach, Los Angeles—around the corner from Google's offices and the wellness mecca Moon Juice. When I visited, on a seventy-degree day this winter, I wondered briefly if I'd arrived in Nirvana. Puddicombe walks to work, at an indoor-outdoor space that's filled with relaxed Millennials, typing on laptops. He is married to a British woman named Lucinda, who is an exercise physiologist, and they recently had a baby. His days are spent writing a book about mindful pregnancy—users requested it—and teaching meditation, alone in a recording booth.

Among a certain set, Puddicombe is a celebrity—although what people tend to recognize is his voice. When I met him for lunch, at a Venice café, I noticed that the couple at the next table kept staring at us. Finally, the man said, "Excuse me—are you Andy?" He turned out to be a Headspace devotee; he had once worked as a derivatives trader at Goldman Sachs, and had recently retired. "I wish I'd found this stuff when I was younger. Maybe I'd still be working." He said that meditation had eased his anxiety. "You know how you can spiral on things and keep repeating things? It's very helpful with that."

Puddicombe smiled. "I love hearing how people are using it," he said.

The man muttered, dreamily, "It's so surreal to hear your voice."

The next morning, at eight-thirty, Puddicombe picked me up, along with Rich Pierson, his business partner, a thirty-four-year-old British man, who wore sneakers and shorts. They'd wanted to take me surfing; according to Puddicombe, the sport is one reason that Headspace is based in California. After years of sitting, he was eager to move around again. The partners now discuss company issues during surf sessions every morning, off Santa Monica Beach. (After meditating, of course. Puddicombe meditates for about an hour, using a combination of "visualization and awareness techniques" that he learned at the monastery, and vowed to practice every day for the rest

of his life.) It had rained, however, and the water was too polluted for surfing, so, to my secret relief, we went on a hike instead. On the Los Leones trail, Puddicombe set off bouncily through the brush. He took a mindful breath and said, "The air is so lovely and clear after the rain!"

Headspace was created in London. Puddicombe, who in 2004 had handed in his monk's robes, was working at a medical clinic, teaching meditation to patients who were being treated for such problems as high blood pressure and insomnia. The clinic was situated in the City, and the financial crisis was in full swing, so many of his patients were stressed-out bankers. He shrank his monastic teachings to fit a ten-week meditation course. The bankers could be a tough audience, and Puddicombe soon realized that, if he wanted to engage them, he'd have to make some changes. He translated Sanskrit and Tibetan terms into English, and eliminated some of the trippier exercises, like "visualizing bright white lights," he said. "It gets into a space, for some people, where it feels a bit frightening." In the monastery, an hour of meditation was considered a brief session, but that didn't fly with Puddicombe's clients. "I realized early on that it had to feel manageable," he said. He set about condensing the exercises into short chunks: twenty or even ten minutes. It worked—perhaps too well. By the end of the course, several traders had quit their jobs, one to start a landscaping business, another to open a yoga studio.

Pierson was one of his students. When he came to see Puddicombe, he was a young director at BBH, a corporate ad firm, with an anxiety problem. He took to meditation right away. "It sounds glib, but it did change my life pretty quickly," Pierson said. Before long, he, too, had quit his job, and he and Puddicombe went into business together, borrowing fifty thousand dollars from Pierson's father. Pierson recalled, "He said he thought it was the worst business idea he had heard, but he believed if anyone could do it Andy and I could." (Apart from Headspace employees, the two men, and their friends and family, are the only owners of the business.)

Pierson brings out the non-monk side of Puddicombe. They call each other old nicknames, Richie and Pudsy, or just "mate." "We have similar types of friends," Pierson said. "They're, like, blokes." He argued that this background—blokedom—had prepared them for one of Headspace's challenges: marketing meditation to men. Pierson said that many males are closet meditators. "The beauty of having an app is that I can do it anywhere, and I don't have to tell anyone about it." He talked about the social isolation he'd experienced after "coming out" as a meditation enthusiast. Puddicombe snorted. "Try talking to your mates in a pub when you're wearing a skirt," he said.

By now, we were high on the mountain trail. We stopped to look out at the ocean, which was rough after the storm. Puddicombe salivated over the waves. "That's some corduroy," he said to Pierson. "Look at it peeling!"

I asked if it was possible to be a mindful surfing addict. "I think surfing lends itself particularly well to being present," Puddicombe said. He thought some more. "And there's an analogy for life. Sometimes there will be waves, you know? Sometimes just little ones, sometimes big and exciting ones, sometimes really big, terrifying ones." But, he added, we can't live for waves alone. "A lot of life, actually, is spent just being in the water." Puddicombe is full of these kinds of insights and analogies, which, though earnestly delivered, have a way of sounding as if they were lifted from a decorative pillow. I mentioned this, as delicately as possible. Puddicombe sighed. "I know," he said. "It can sound incredibly trite. Be present, let go, don't judge. Without the experience"—of meditation—"they're kind of meaningless."

Headspace has better luck appealing to skeptics by, as Puddicombe said, "pulling the science lever." As technologies for studying the brain have improved, a new field of inquiry has emerged, sometimes called contemplative neuroscience, which examines the effects of meditation on the brain. The preliminary findings of the studies are reported breathlessly: recent headlines in the *Times* include "MEDITATION FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP"

Back to School

Retirement Living where you can walk to Oberlin College – audit classes, with no homework, no tests and no tuition.

KENDAL
at Oberlin
Together, transforming the experience of aging

1-800-548-9469
kao.kendal.org/Oberlin-connection

McLean Pavilion
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL AFFILIATE

To find a solution, you must identify the problem.

Diagnostically informed treatment at U.S. News' Top Ranked Psychiatric Hospital

617.855.2874 mcleanpavilion.org

GARY WEEKS & COMPANY
FURNITUREMAKERS

Rockers, Dining Furniture, Barstools, Desks

800-986-3187 www.garyweeks.com

fortunoff
FINE JEWELRY

New Jewelry Boutique by Esther Fortunoff
1504 Old Country Road, Westbury, NY 11590

FortunoffJewelry.com | 800-636-7886

Roll-up Panama \$95

Handwoven straw. Made in Ecuador. Sizes: S–2XL. Ideal traveling sun hat. Colors: dark natural or light natural. Check or credit card w/exp. date. Add \$12 S/H. **johnhelmer.com**

John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N065 • Portland, OR 97205

FREE

The book
"An Introduction to Jewish History"
(Regularly priced at \$18.00)
is now available for a limited time at no cost.
For a complimentary copy, contact
zionpress@roadrunner.com

all in linen made in maine

SO ST
linen

southstreetlinen.com 774.234.7678



"Let's focus on the case before you start thinking about befriending a guard."

and "EXERCISING THE MIND TO TREAT ATTENTION DEFICITS." Headspace, which employs a chief medical officer, Dr. David Cox, has a promotional pamphlet that relates an array of "Quantifiable Positive Outcomes of Mindfulness Training." These range from "stress and anxiety reduction" to "immune function," "compassion," and "heart health." When it comes to psoriasis, Headspace notes, referring to a paper co-authored by Kabat-Zinn, "the meditators' skin cleared around four times faster than the non-meditators." This can make meditation seem like a wonder drug: Adderall, Prozac, and Proactiv rolled into one.

While it's true that a recent meta-study found that mindfulness meditation produces effects that are equivalent to those of antidepressants, scientists caution that the research is in its early stages. Most of the studies are pilot studies, and many lack an "active control"—a kind of meditative sugar pill, to guard against the placebo effect. (Headspace is considering developing a fake meditation app.) Bias can cloud the results, too. As one review put it, wryly, "Many researchers are enthusiastic meditators themselves." Kerr, the neuroscientist, said that if you join "a mindfulness group or get an app like Headspace, you should not assume that your depression will

magically lift or your skin will clear up."

Many Buddhists don't love the wonder-drug version of meditation, either. They are bothered by the way that it has come to be adaptable to any goal, from training marines to picking investments. (A Reuters article called "Meditation and the Art of Investment" quotes Ray Dalio, of the hundred-and-seventy-billion-dollar hedge fund Bridgewater Associates: "Meditation more than anything in my life was the biggest ingredient for whatever success I've had.") David McMahan, the scholar, pointed out that in Buddhism mindfulness doesn't quite work that way: "You are supposed to be mindful of *something*: the teachings of the Buddha!" The teachings of the Buddha are not always warm and fuzzy, nor would they play well at a corporate retreat. The most important precept, after all, is the universal truth of suffering.

Detractors worry that secular mindfulness teachers have whitewashed the technique, dulling its self-critical edge. The management professor and Zen practitioner Ronald Purser pointed to a Stanford study that demonstrated that most workplace stress is caused by things like corporate dysfunction and job insecurity—not by "unmindful employees." Corporations like mindfulness, he said, because it "keeps us within

the fences of the neoliberal capitalist paradigm. It's saying, 'It's your problem, get with the program, fix your stress, and get back to work!'"

Mindfulness and Meditation are only two of eight life-style choices that the Buddha instructed his followers to practice, in order to break free from the cycle of suffering and rebirth. The others involve a code of ethics. They include Right Understanding, Right Motivation, Right Livelihood (not making a living in a way that harms other beings), Right Action (not killing or hurting people), Right Speech, and Right Effort (diligence). To pluck some things from the list, while ignoring others, strikes many Buddhists as absurd. McMahan said, "It would be as if somebody went to the Catholic Church and said, 'I don't buy all this stuff about Jesus and God, but I really dig this Communion ritual. Would you just teach me how to do that bit? Oh, and I want to start a company marketing wafers.'"

Puddicombe bristles at this criticism. "I never teach meditation in isolation," he told me. "I always teach View, Meditation, and Action. You can't teach the View without altruism." Indeed, much of the interstitial material on Headspace—the little chats that Puddicombe gives before and after meditation exercises, about things like listening to others—amount to dharma talks, even if he never mentions Buddhism. "What would be the purpose of doing it?" he said. "Is there any real benefit? I'm not sure there is." Puddicombe said that his goal is to convey "the heart of the practice." Should Headspace be selling subscriptions to the Goldman Sachs of the world, or denouncing them? Should he be scolding its Arianna Huffingtons? On these matters, as on many others, Puddicombe prefers not to judge. "I don't think it's for any one person to say, 'This is how you should use this,'" he told me. He invoked his hero, Milarepa: "He set out to learn meditation so he could practice black magic!"

Puddicombe is neutral on the subject of the moral status of money, saying, "It's our relationship to it and how we choose to use it." According to Puddicombe, one online critic called him a "very greedy monk." But if Headspace

is to bring meditation to every smartphone owner in the world—and do so better than its competitors—the company can't afford to be unmindful of its finances. Puddicombe and Pierson say they have been approached by more than fifty investors, including most of the prominent names on Sand Hill Road, the hub of venture capital. They haven't taken any money yet, but Puddicombe said, in a somewhat resigned tone, that "it's almost inevitable."

Mamoon Hamid, at Social Capital, said that, despite his admiration for Headspace, he has decided not to invest. His reason was Puddicombe. He told me, "It's extremely compelling when a Buddhist monk walks in the door. It's true to brand. It's authentic." But, he said, "at the end of the day, we want to create the biggest company around this concept without being shackled by your Buddhist-monk tendencies." Headspace has an impressive number of users for a product that has spread almost entirely by word of mouth. But, Hamid said, "in order to get to two hundred million users, you have to break a lot of glass along the way. Your company will change over time, and are you O.K. with that?" In the end, he said, "you have to let go"—the dharma of Silicon Valley.

Puddicombe has no backup plan in the event that Headspace fails to become the Uber of mindfulness. But he could always go back to teaching meditation using traditional methods. On the night after our hike, he met with one of his old clients from London: John Sanders, the founder of a British salon chain called Headmasters Hair, who was in Los Angeles for a hairdressers' convention. Sanders was staying at a hotel in Beverly Hills called the SLS, which had an ornate night-life feel, with club music throbbing. The lobby was packed with British hairdressers decked out for the evening.

Sanders is a tough-looking older man. He was dressed in a tight black T-shirt decorated with an X-ray of a hand, and was accompanied by a colleague named Mark: a large man wearing a skull T-shirt and a giant silver watch. Mark ordered a round of beers, which Puddicombe declined.

Sanders told Mark that the ex-monk had helped him sleep. Mark seemed confused. "How do you make someone sleep?"

It was becoming clear that Sanders isn't vocal about his practice in the workplace. "I learned meditation," he said, somewhat haltingly. "You know, relax and calm down."

Mark rolled his eyes. "Oh, I couldn't do that," he said. "My idea of relaxing is walking the dog. If I try to meditate—I have tried—I end up with other thoughts. Like—a Danish pastry comes into my head!"

Sanders took a helpful tone. "Well, not that I'm a teacher, but what Andy taught me is that is perfectly normal."

"Yes," Puddicombe said. "It's part of the process."

"Well, then, in that case I think I'm meditating now," Mark said. He grinned mischievously, and added, "The Danish pastry was a euphemism for something else!"

"It really helped me sleep, though," Sanders said.

Sanders and Puddicombe began discussing his practice. "What are you reading?" Puddicombe asked.

"I've read most of Pema Chödrön," Sanders said, referring to the author, the abbess of Gampo Abbey, in Nova Scotia.

Puddicombe nodded. "You read that first Chögyam Trungpa, the 'Spiritual Materialism'?"

"I did. Difficult book."

Puddicombe prescribed some additional exercises for Sanders, referring to them by their Tibetan names. "They're called the Four Ordinary Foundations," he said. "Because they precede the Four Extraordinary Foundations. Tibetans are quite grand."

The exercises, which are performed at the beginning of monastic training, involve asking yourself a question about each of a series of important topics before you meditate. Puddicombe has renamed the topics in English: Appreciation, Change, Cause and Effect.

"The final one sounds bleak when you do the Tibetan translation," he said. "I think it's the Truth of Suffering."

Sanders exclaimed, "Ha!"

Puddicombe smiled. "I changed it to Acceptance." ♦



THE TAPPAN FIVE-SLAT ROCKER.

Hand-crafted from solid walnut or cherry. Visit www.chiltons.com/NY to read more.

UTILITY • QUALITY • SIMPLICITY



chiltons.com 866-883-3366

SILVER HILL HOSPITAL
RESTORING MENTAL HEALTH SINCE 1931

Chronic Pain and Recovery Center

Adults with chronic pain co-occurring with substance misuse or psychiatric disorders

www.silverhillhospital.org
New Canaan, CT • (866) 548-4455



YOUR ANNIVERSARY IMMORTALIZED IN ROMAN NUMERALS

Crafted from Gold and Platinum

JOHN-CHRISTIAN.COM
OR CALL (888) 646-6466



RETIRE TO FEARRINGTON

A charming country village near Chapel Hill, NC with bluebirds, belted cows and fascinating people of all ages.

www.fearrington.com



JacksonCenter
FOR CREATIVE WRITING AT HOLLINS

www.hollins.edu/jacksoncenter

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Small space has big rewards.

To find out more, contact Sara Nicholson at 877.843.6967.

FIVE HOSTAGES

Families whose children were held captive in Syria felt that U.S. officials had abandoned them. So they secretly joined forces.

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

Five American families, each harboring a grave secret, took their seats around a vast dining table at the home of David Bradley, a Washington, D.C., entrepreneur who owns the media company that publishes *The Atlantic*. It was May 13, 2014, and in the garden beyond the French doors, where magnolias and dogwoods were in bloom, a tent had been erected for an event that Bradley's wife, Katherine, was hosting the following evening. The Bradleys' gracious Georgian town house, on Embassy Row, is one of the city's salons: reporters and politicians cross paths at off-the-record dinners with Supreme Court Justices, software billionaires, and heads of state.

The families weren't accustomed to great wealth or influence. Indeed, most of them had never been to Washington before. Until recently, they had not known of one another, or of the unexpected benefactor who had brought them together. They were the parents of five Americans who had been kidnapped in Syria. The Federal Bureau of Investigation had warned the families not to talk publicly about their missing children—and the captors had threatened to kill their hostages if word leaked out—so each family had been going to work and to church month after month and reassuring colleagues and neighbors and relatives that nothing was wrong, only to come home and face new threats and ransom demands. After hiding the truth for so long, the families were heartened to learn that others were going through the same ordeal, and they hoped that by working together they might bring their children home.

Bradley, who is sixty-two, has a priestly presence: meek, soft-spoken, hands clasped in his lap. He is pale and nearly bald, with a ring of vivid white hair. His courtly demeanor disguises considerable ambition and persistence. His publishing company, Atlantic Media,

has amassed half a dozen titles, from *National Journal* to *Quartz*. He was drawn into the families' tragedy because he had helped to free hostages once before. In 2011, Clare Gillis, a freelancer who had contributed a few stories to *The Atlantic's* Web site, was captured in Libya, along with two other reporters, by soldiers loyal to the government of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. (A fourth reporter was killed.) Bradley was surprised to learn that the U.S. government was not involved in negotiating the return of the hostages.

Even though Gillis was not an *Atlantic* employee, Bradley felt an obligation to help her. He assembled a small team, drawn mostly from his staff, to identify people who might locate Gillis. On a whiteboard, Bradley drew several concentric circles. The smallest represented people in charge of the hostages, such as guards and wardens; a wider circle included military officers and junior members of the Qaddafi administration; wider still was the circle of senior Libyan officials, including Qaddafi and his family. The largest circle contained any people Bradley or his staffers could think of who might have a connection to those in the smaller rings. Bradley called this a network-analysis chart. The idea was that someone would know someone who knew someone who could locate Gillis. The team pinpointed about a hundred people to approach. One led to an American woman, Jacqueline Frazier, who had once lived in Tripoli, serving as the personal assistant to one of Qaddafi's sons. Frazier volunteered to return to Libya, and she persuaded her contacts in the government to release the reporters, after forty-four days of captivity. It hadn't been that hard to gain Gillis her freedom. But where would she be had no one tried?

At the dinner in Washington, Brad-

ley urged the families to serve themselves before the main course—chicken pot pie—got cold. When everyone was seated, he suggested going around the table, with each guest telling the others about their missing children.

JIM

One of the reporters who had accompanied Gillis out of the Libyan prison was a thirty-seven-year-old freelancer named James Foley. Bradley had never met Foley, but he received a thank-you note after the release. A second note arrived a couple of weeks later, in which Foley said that he hadn't fully understood how much he owed to Bradley and his team. Bradley was touched that Foley had taken the extra trouble, and presented the second letter to his children as a model of grace. Scarcely a year and a half later, Foley was kidnapped again, in Syria, on Thanksgiving Day, 2012.

Foley's parents, John and Diane, live in a small town in New Hampshire. John practices internal medicine. Diane worked as a nurse practitioner until she quit to focus on obtaining her son's freedom. Three of the five mothers at Bradley's gathering happened to be nurses. Diane had already experienced the journey through gray government offices that the others were about to endure. Her anger and weariness were evident, and some of the parents found her off-putting. But to others her steeliness was inspiring. "She could run General Motors," one of the mothers said. Diane became the group's de-facto leader.

As Diane spoke about her son, she mentioned themes that the others recognized in their own children's stories—courage and idealism chief among them. Jim had been an altar boy in an observant Catholic family, the oldest of five children, growing up in "Norman Rockwell country," as Diane describes



Diane and John Foley endured two kidnapping ordeals. Their son Jim, a journalist, was abducted in both Libya and Syria.

it. After graduating from Marquette University, Foley joined Teach for America and spent three years teaching history and social studies and coaching basketball in a run-down Latino neighborhood in Phoenix. For years afterward, he kept in contact with the kids he taught, through e-mail and Facebook.

Foley was tall and striking, with his mother's long face and dark features and his father's jutting Irish chin. Women were drawn to his wide, gap-toothed smile and welcoming eyes. He struck up conversations effortlessly, even in Syria, despite having rudimentary Arabic. He'd pass out cigarettes, trusting in the good will of strangers, while children trailed after him in the streets. Those who knew him well saw another side to him, however—a vulnerability that left him unable to manage the feelings that war stirred up. He was fiercely opposed to violence but helplessly drawn to conflict.

After Foley was freed in the first kidnapping, his relatives joked about hiding his passport. Most of Foley's work had appeared in GlobalPost, an online news service founded by Philip Balboni. Balboni had offered Foley a desk job in Boston, but after a few months he longed to be back in the field. He returned to Libya in 2011, during the fall of Qaddafi, and the fol-

lowing March he was part of the first wave of Western reporters to enter Syria. The country quickly became a graveyard for correspondents, including Marie Colvin, of the London *Sunday Times*, and Anthony Shadid, of the New York *Times*. But the war was heating up, and the migratory troop of war reporters set up camp on the Turkish border. Clare Gillis arrived, as did many of Foley's colleagues from previous wars.

The friends noticed that Foley had become more introspective. It wasn't enough for him to bear witness to the chaos in Syria—he had to do something. He set up an online fund-raising campaign that brought in ten thousand dollars for a used ambulance needed by a hospital in Aleppo.

When Diane didn't hear from Jim on Thanksgiving, she was worried: he always called on holidays. The next day, the phone did ring. It was Gillis. Diane knew immediately that she wasn't calling to chat.

"I felt shock," Diane recalled to me.

"Anger," John added. "Why do we have to go through this again?"

It wasn't immediately clear how alarmed Foley's friends and family should be. After all, he had survived the previous kidnapping. It had become an anecdote—confirmation of his bravado. But it was disquieting that there had

been no word from his captors. Where was the ransom demand?

The Foleys believed that the Syrian government was holding their son, and in January, 2013, they publicly called for his release. Bradley wrote a note to Diane offering to help. Initially, she thought it unnecessary. Philip Balboni had hired Kroll, the investigations and security-consulting firm, and the F.B.I. was also on the case, so the Foleys felt that they were in good hands. By spring, however, their opinion had changed, especially of officials at the bureau.

"They kept telling us to do nothing," Diane said.

"And trust them," John added.

"And telling us that our kid is their highest priority. Which we didn't believe."

In April, 2013, Diane asked Bradley if he could put together another team.

Bradley enlisted his general counsel and chief of staff, Aretae Wyler, along with a few others in his office. He also contacted Wendy Kopp, the head of Teach for America, requesting volunteers. This new team, now numbering more than a dozen people, began creating another network-analysis chart.

The F.B.I. and Kroll shared the Foleys' view that Jim had been taken by the regime. It seemed logical: Shiite gangs affiliated with Bashar al-Assad, Syria's President, had kidnapped other reporters. (Some of them remain missing.) Sources claimed that Syrian Air Force Intelligence was holding Westerners in a Damascus prison. That seemed better than the alternative. Syria was in tumult, and more than a thousand armed groups roamed the shattered country. Assad's regime was brutal, but at least it was a government, with interests and alliances that could facilitate a deal. U.S. law forbids paying ransoms to terrorists.

Bradley's team sought out diplomats and journalists who had fixers in the region. They were looking for members of Assad's inner circle. Some Syrians living in exile had maintained ties to influential figures, and these élites would have been educated in American schools. Bradley's team also approached Russian supporters of Assad. But the sources consistently reported that the regime did not have Foley. Bradley recalled, "By summertime, I was of the view that, if this



"Not love. Targeted advertising."

was my child, I'd be looking in the north." That was ISIS territory now—a long way from Norman Rockwell country.

THEO

"Who is this man?" Nancy Curtis had asked upon being told to get in touch with David Bradley. "Why does he want to help us?" Skeptical by nature, she wasn't used to asking for favors. A museum administrator, Curtis lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is the picture of a New England intellectual: wry and doughty, her white hair chopped into an unruly pageboy. But by the time she attended the dinner her suspicions about Bradley had faded. It was comforting to be among people with the same secret. As Curtis learned about the other children, however, she was distressed to realize that the hostages themselves also carried secrets—ones that could get them killed. That was certainly true of her son.

Peter Theophilus Padnos had a doctorate in comparative literature from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and he spoke French, German, and Russian. He had been working as a bicycle mechanic in 2004, when he abruptly decided to move to Yemen and study Arabic. It was a year into the second Iraq War, and Americans were intensely unpopular in the region. Padnos had a little nest egg from the sale of his first book, about teaching poetry to prisoners, called "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun." The title came from an Emily Dickinson poem. That was Theo: erudite but interested in criminals and other outliers, always drawn to extremity.

Yemen fascinated him. He'd never lived in a society where everybody believed in God. He studied at one of the world's most radical mosques, Dar al-Hadith, where Al Qaeda members had reportedly trained. He wrote a memoir about his experiences, "Undercover Muslim." It wasn't hostile, but it was unsparing in its account of the dead-end lives of the students and the propaganda of the imams. At the mosque, Padnos had declared allegiance to Islam in front of witnesses, and so his book seemed tantamount to apostasy—a mortal sin to radical Islamists.

Padnos formally changed his name to Theo Curtis, in order to continue

travelling in Muslim countries, but he never bothered to change certain revealing personal details, such as his Facebook page. In the conspiratorial circles that Padnos often passed through, he had the profile of a spy, if not a very careful one.

In October, 2012, he travelled to Antakya, a Turkish border town that served as the informal headquarters of the press corps covering the Syrian conflict. The city had long been a tourist stop for Christian pilgrims. Now it was overrun with refugees, spies, and jihadis. To the east, across a mountain range, was Syria, where a hundred thousand people had already perished.

About fifty journalists were covering Syria at the time; the battle for Aleppo was under way and the war seemed to be nearing resolution. The wire services were still there, and occasionally the networks sent in a team, but most of the journalists were freelancers. They drank in the same bars and slept on one another's couches and sat in the same cafés in the morning, hiring fixers and making plans for their next trip across the border. They had little money and no security, but they were writing history. Islam was at war with itself, the map of the Middle East was being redrawn, and the freelancers had the story largely to themselves.

Padnos was forty-four, a decade or two older than most of his colleagues. He spent a few days at a ten-dollar-a-night hotel, then rented an apartment with a Tunisian fishmonger. Padnos soon met three young men who claimed to be providing supplies to the Free Syrian Army. At the time, reporters still regularly crossed into Syria: Foley wasn't kidnapped until a month later. The three men and Padnos went to the border and squeezed through a hole in a barbed-wire fence. Padnos hadn't told anyone where he was going. Few people even knew that Padnos had been in Antakya.

Nancy Curtis was puzzled when her son stopped writing. He was helping her buy a woodstove for a vacation home that she owned in Vermont, and they had been communicating daily. After three days, she finally got an e-mail. The

subject line said, "Hey." There was no message.

Curtis called her cousin Viva Hardigg. "Something calamitous has happened," Curtis said. Hardigg enlisted two other cousins: Amy Rosen, who was the chairman of the board of the KIPP charter schools in Newark; and Betsy Sullivan, an editor at the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. Rosen had served on Amtrak's board of directors and knew her way around Washington; Sullivan brought the experience of having been detained by the Bosnian Serb Army while reporting on that conflict. Curtis, Hardigg, Sullivan, and Rosen became known as the All-Girl Team.

Curtis contacted the International Committee of the Red Cross, which often visited prisons. She was hopeful that her son was being held by the Syrian government. The woman she talked to had no information about that, but shared some news. "I shouldn't be telling you this," she said. "But there's another family in New England you ought to call." She gave her Diane Foley's number.

At the time, U.S. government policy was to keep information about hostages strictly secret, for privacy reasons; and yet Diane and Nancy were immensely relieved to learn of another family searching for a son in Syria. They traded information about avenues they had explored and people they had approached—N.G.O. workers, State Department officials, F.B.I. agents—and they rebuked themselves for not having set up emergency contacts for their sons, and for not getting their digital passwords. As each learned more about the other's son, they saw how much the men had in common. What good friends they'll be when this is all over, they often said.

One night in May, 2013, Amy Rosen was invited to a dinner that was part of *The Atlantic's* Ideas festival in New York. She intended just to drop by for a drink, but she stuck around when she realized that she was seated next to David Bradley. Rosen had met him socially before. She confided in him about Padnos and the failure of the All-Girl Team to find him. Bradley described his theory of concentric circles, but admitted that his team



hadn't located Foley. They decided to combine efforts.

The first break in the kidnappings occurred on July 29, 2013, when an American photojournalist, Matt Schrier, escaped from his cell in Syria, after seven months of captivity, and crossed into Turkey. He told C. J. Chivers, of the *Times*, that in January he had been placed in a cell with another American, who was filthy and had a ragged beard. The American said that his captors had accused him of working for the C.I.A. For months, the men were tortured—sometimes by a twelve-year-old who beat them and shocked them with Tasers. They were forced to make videotaped confessions, wearing orange jumpsuits that mimicked the prisoner uniforms worn at the U.S. internment camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Schrier recalled that he and his cellmate had gouged a hole in the wire mesh on one window. Schrier said that he was able to squeeze through, but his cellmate was larger and couldn't break free. Although the *Times* didn't name the other American, Nancy received a call from officials at the State Department two days after Schrier's escape. We have proof of life on Theo, they said.

STEVEN

Shirley Sotloff felt that she was in a movie, watching people act out roles. Even the Bradleys' beautiful home, with servers carrying silver trays, resembled a set. And it didn't seem real when David Bradley said that Secretary of State John Kerry had been at this same table the previous week, and the King of Jordan before that.

Her husband, Art, observed the furnishings in the Bradleys' house with an appreciative professional eye. His business was organizing home shows—exhibitions offering furnishing ideas. He noticed the hand-carved dining set, the chandelier with actual candles, the pale-yellow fabric covering the dining-room walls.

The Sotloffs, who were from Pinecrest, Florida, a Miami suburb, brought with them Barak Barfi, a researcher for the New America Foundation. He was the best friend of their son, Steven, a journalist who had been held in Syria for nine months. Barfi, brilliant and asser-

tive, was controversial among the families. He clearly felt that he should lead the group, since he spoke fluent Arabic and was by far the most knowledgeable among them about the Middle East. On August 4, 2013, it was Barfi who notified Art that Steven was missing. Art didn't tell Shirley. He didn't want to worry her in case Steven suddenly showed up, but after four days Shirley suspected something. Art poured himself a Scotch and gave her the news.

Steven had lived in the Middle East for many years, but hadn't done much to disguise that he was Jewish; it could be discovered by a Google search or a look at his Facebook page. In 2005, Steven entered the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, an Israeli college, where he played rugby and joined the debate society. He also took Israeli citizenship. He wanted to become a reporter, and wrote to Barfi, then a producer for ABC News affiliates, asking for advice about studying Arabic abroad. Barfi, who was ten years older than Steven, became his mentor. "He was a young, chubby kid," Barfi recalled. "I told him, 'You can go to Egypt, which has a good teaching infrastructure, but you'll be overexposed to Western influences. You could go to Syria, where you won't be so exposed to the West but will be pursued by security people all the time. The best place is Yemen. There are no Westerners, the state is weak, and you'll be pretty much left alone.'" Steven took his counsel. In Sanaa, he posed as a Chechen-American from a secular Muslim family. "I 'converted' in my first week, so I wouldn't have to deal with all that rubbish," he wrote to a friend. "LOL."

The Arab Spring began in 2010, and aspiring journalists like Sotloff swarmed into the region. Soon he was freelancing for the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Time*. He was in Tahrir Square the day President Hosni Mubarak stepped down, in 2011, and in Libya the following year, where he first met Jim Foley. For *Time* he provided crucial coverage of the attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, where four Americans were killed, including the Ambassador. He wrote about the flow of arms from Libya to Syria, and in December of that year he reported from Aleppo. During that period, when American foreign policy

depended on information arising from these zones of conflict, Sotloff never made enough money to have to file a tax return.

The journalists in Antakya maintained a secret Facebook site that functioned as a message board for reporters and aid workers planning to enter Syria. The Turkish airports and train stations were filling up with foreign fighters who were flocking to the conflict—"beirdos," Jim Foley called them. No one knew what to make of this new element.

Some members of the site began speculating that spotters on the border were selling information about reporters to Islamists. In December, 2012, criminals associated with the Free Syrian Army abducted Richard Engel, an NBC correspondent, and five members of his crew. Two aid workers, an Italian and a British man, were taken in March, 2013; a Danish photographer in May; four French journalists and a German tourist in June. About seventy Syrian reporters had been killed in 2012 and 2013. Because the media observed a blackout on abductions, more reporters kept arriving, not fully aware of the dangers they faced.

Many journalists who were in Antakya at the time speak of having maintained a willful ignorance, even as the risks became obvious. They talked among themselves about the dangers but kept crossing the border, sustained by the adventure, the significance of the story, and the exhilaration of survival. "It's easy to feel invincible, even with death all around," Sotloff wrote to Janine di Giovanni, the Middle East editor for *Newsweek*. "It's like, This is my movie, sucker—I'm not gonna die."

PETER

David Bradley burst out laughing when Paula and Ed Kassig showed up for dinner that night. Earlier, when Bradley issued the invitation, Ed had nervously asked if there was a dress code. "Black tie, of course," Bradley had said. Ed arrived in a short-sleeved tattersall shirt with a black tie that he'd cadged from the concierge at the hotel. It became a running joke between them.

At the dinner, Ed and Paula tried to sort out who was who. Some of the other families had brought along an adviser.

Barfi, who came with the Sotloffs, had been folded into Bradley's team, as had Jim Foley's former girlfriend, April Goble, who runs the KIPP schools in Chicago. Several members of Bradley's staff were also present. "But you knew the other parents right away," Ed says.

Paula and Ed live in Indianapolis. She's a public-health nurse; he teaches high-school biology. He was in the classroom on October 1, 2013, when his phone began vibrating. His flip phone was so old that his pitying students could scarcely recognize it. Sometimes, when he left it

the East." The captors asked for a hundred million, but didn't specify dollars or euros. They also demanded the release of all Muslim prisoners worldwide. "Like that was something we were going to be able to do," Paula said.

ISIS warned that Peter would be killed if word of the kidnapping leaked out, so the Kassigs bore the additional weight of having their friends guess what might be going on. People were always asking about Peter's welfare. "I hope he's not in Syria!" people said, and Ed responded, "Don't worry, he's not." He was playing

just a hopeless romantic, and I am an idealist, and I believe in hopeless causes."

In 2012, Kassig established his own N.G.O., called Special Emergency Response and Assistance. His goal was to provide food and blankets and medical supplies where they were most needed. He enlisted Ed and Paula to raise money at their Methodist church. In Turkey, he taught emergency care to reporters and photographers on the border. One of his friends coined a verb, "to Kassig," which meant "to selflessly put oneself in harm's way in order to help others in need,



The five hostages, from left: Kayla Mueller, Steven Sotloff, Peter Kassig, James Foley, and Theo Padnos.

sitting on his desk, he returned to find coins left beside it.

Ed's phone indicated that he'd received an international call. He assumed that it was his son, Peter, who was doing humanitarian work in Turkey, and sometimes crossing into Syria. "I figured, Well, he'll call back if it's a big deal," he recalls. The school day ended and Ed went outside, where buses were loading. "So it's all this noise of the buses and kids leaving. And the phone rings again. I pick it up—it's not Peter." It was a friend of Peter's. He was trying to explain something, but Ed couldn't hear clearly, because of the racket. It was homecoming weekend, and as Ed moved to a quieter spot a marching band burst through the doors. Ed couldn't break away; the drum line seemed to be deliberately trailing him. The one word that registered through the din was "detained."

Unlike the other families, Ed and Paula received a message from ISIS right away. "It was almost cordial," Paula recalled: "'We have your son. We are treating him as a guest.'" A second, more ominous, note followed. "You say he is an aid worker. We know that all Westerners who say they are E.M.T.s or aid workers are just spies and just sent over as part of the war between the West and

with words: technically, he figured, Peter was in the Islamic State.

Like Theo Padnos and Steven Sotloff, Peter Kassig also had something to hide. He had served in Iraq in the Army Rangers. He left with an honorable medical discharge after only four months at war, and friends weren't sure what had happened. He returned to Indianapolis and trained to be an emergency medical technician, then studied political science at Butler University, but he was restless and looking for direction. He got married, but the union quickly dissolved. Kassig was a "driven soul," his parents acknowledge. During his senior year, he told Ed and Paula that he was spending spring break camping in the Smoky Mountains. A week later, he called them from Beirut, where he was working in a refugee camp, watching people die in front of him. In a few hours, his flight was scheduled to leave, but he couldn't abandon them. He said that he now knew what he was going to do with the rest of his life.

A CNN reporter later filmed him in a hospital bandaging wounded Syrian refugees. He still wore his hair in a military-style buzz cut, and his arms were covered with tattoos. "This is what I was put here to do," he told the reporter. "I guess I am

all the while looking suave and sexy."

Kassig had been friends with Steven Sotloff, and joined the effort to find him. "We have to be ruthlessly efficient and professional in securing information and his eventual safe release," he wrote to a friend. "Someone we know knows where Steven is and who has him. This can go 1 of 2 ways, either we do right and get our beloved friend back, or this goes south and he gets hurt or worse." But two months passed without any significant leads.

Shortly before Kassig was abducted, he admitted in a call to his parents that he was "a little more worried about this trip." He had promised to deliver medical supplies to Deir ez-Zor, the largest city in eastern Syria, where his medical expertise was desperately needed. The city once had about five hundred doctors; now there were only five. Factions and allegiances were shifting, Peter told his parents. Ed and Paula didn't know exactly what he meant, but it sounded dangerous.

Soon after Kassig entered Syria, he called a co-worker. He said that he'd been stopped at a roadblock and told to report to an ISIS commander. If you don't hear from me in several hours, Kassig said, institute the emergency protocol. That was when Ed got the call.

Later, a European hostage who had



"Guess what face I'm making now."

been held with Steven told Ed and Paula about the day Peter was put in their cell. "Steve!" Peter cried. "I finally found you!"

KAYLA

Carl Mueller was working in his body shop, in Prescott, Arizona, when he got a call from a man he'd never met, Barak Barfi, who said that he knew about the abduction of his daughter, Kayla. Carl froze. He and his wife, Marsha, had stopped seeing friends because people always asked about Kayla, and they didn't want to lie.

Kayla was well known and admired in town. In high school, she received a Presidential medal for public service, and she won a five-hundred-dollar prize for her local philanthropic efforts. She gave the money to charity. At Northern Arizona University, she founded a branch of Amnesty International and a service organization for veterans while also working for peace groups and teaching anger management in the county jail. Despite all this activity, she graduated in two years, impatient to get out into the world.

In India, she worked with orphans; in Tibet, she taught English to refugees. Kayla had grown up a Baptist, but she was fascinated by different religions. She was devoted to the teachings of the

Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, and for a time considered becoming a nun in his Buddhist community in France. But Kayla was an activist by nature. In Israel, she worked with African refugees, and in Palestine she stood outside houses scheduled to be bulldozed by the Israeli military. "Let me live on both sides of the wall before I act," she wrote in her diary. In the fall of 2010, she came home, suffering from typhoid and parasites, and recuperated for a year while volunteering at an AIDS clinic—which she took over—and working at a women's shelter at night. She hoped to join the Peace Corps; she had been told that if she became fluent in French she would be sent to Africa, so she took a job as an au pair in France. Before she left, she cut off her ponytail to donate it to Locks of Love, which provides hairpieces for children with cancer. She made Marsha promise to send it.

Given the scale of suffering in Syria, it wasn't surprising that Kayla was drawn there. She was abducted the same day as Sotloff, just before her twenty-fifth birthday.

Kayla had been missing for a few months when Barfi called Carl to say that a wealthy man in Washington, D.C., wanted to help the Muellers and others in the same situation. Carl and Marsha had been dreading that the news

of Kayla's abduction would get out and the kidnappers would follow through on their threat. Now somebody knew. What kind of name was Barak Barfi? Was he one of the terrorists? Carl went behind his shop, knelt down, and prayed.

Of all the families, the Muellers were the most isolated. Even at the Bradleys' home, Carl and Marsha were anxious. The F.B.I. had assured them that Kayla would probably be safe, because she was a woman. Was it wise to get her case mixed up with others?

Marsha quickly felt a sense of solidarity with the other mothers, but Carl remained mistrustful. Bradley seemed like something out of a comic-book fantasy: a person with vast resources who could summon powerful people at will. And, given that Bradley was the publisher of *The Atlantic*, he wondered: Was this just an elaborate way of getting a story?

Less than a month before the dinner, four French journalists had been released by ISIS, apparently ransomed by the French government, along with five members of Doctors Without Borders. One of the journalists told Carl that Kayla had been held in another cell at the prison, and that he'd often heard her speaking French to one of the Doctors Without Borders prisoners. But in recent months Kayla had been in solitary. Sometimes the men were able to leave notes for her in the toilet. The day the French journalists were freed, the guards brought Kayla to them, so they could confirm that she was alive. She gave the journalists a letter to take to her parents, which Marsha read aloud at the dinner table.

"Everyone, if you are receiving this letter it means I am still detained," the letter begins. It was written in tiny script on paper ripped out of a spiral notebook, and full of abbreviations. "Please know that I am in a safe location, completely unharmed + healthy (put on weight in fact); I have been treated w/the utmost respect + kindness." She had wanted to write "a well thought out letter" but had been given the opportunity only at the last minute. "Just the thought of you all sends me into a fit of tears," she wrote. "If you could say I have 'suffered' at all throughout this whole experience it is only in knowing how much suffering

I have put you all through; I will never ask you to forgive me as I do not deserve forgiveness.”

Kayla listed some things she thought of with special fondness: her little niece, her first family camping trip. She fantasized about how much she'd love the reunion at the airport when they finally met again. The letter ended forcefully: “I DO NOT want the negotiations for my release to be your duty, if there is any other option take it. All my everything, Kayla.”

The other parents were moved by Kayla's letter and by the picture Carl painted of their daughter, who seemed like a cross between a bare-footed sprite and a Buddhist saint. He called her Special K. Of course, all the hostages were remarkable people, and their finest qualities had led them to Syria. “If anything bound us together, it was our children, and their courage and compassion,” John Foley recalled.

Earlier, Philip Balboni, the Global Post founder, had asked how many parents wanted the U.S. military to attempt a rescue. Not a single hand went up. It seemed too dangerous. Now Bradley suggested that the families consider publicizing the kidnappings. The Foleys agreed with Bradley that going to the media might put pressure on the U.S. government and, possibly, the hostage-takers. The Sotloffs were willing to consider this, but the Kassigs were so opposed that the idea was tabled. How could you know if ISIS was bluffing with its threat to kill the hostages?

The families tried to select one member of the team to deal with ransom demands collectively. But who could be trusted with the lives of their children? Barfi desperately wanted this responsibility, but some parents were wary. He was aggressive, and perhaps he was too heartbroken by Sotloff's abduction to think clearly. The Kassigs had brought along an adviser—Peter's partner in his N.G.O.—and they proposed him instead. A power struggle among the family advocates followed, which resulted in no one being chosen for the role. “Either I should have been more restrained or I should have gotten on top of the table and said, ‘Your kids are in dire danger,’” Barfi recalls. “They decided to go with unanimity. I said, ‘That's like the Arab

League—you'll never get anything done. You need a leader.’”

The families signed a statement authorizing Bradley to receive updates about the hostages from the F.B.I. and other government agencies. The families left the dinner feeling hopeful and relieved: Bradley was a powerful champion, and they now had one another. Art Sotloff impulsively hugged Bradley, who recoiled slightly. He has a formal manner, and the families quickly concluded that he doesn't like to be touched.

Before everyone left, Bradley expressed the hope that they would soon meet again—with their children, in the same lovely room.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

The next afternoon, the families met in the West Wing with Lisa Monaco, the homeland-security adviser to President Barack Obama, and members of the National Security Council. The families had written a letter to Obama. Calling themselves Parents of American Hostages in Syria, they asked Obama to give them a clear idea of what could be done. ISIS seemed to be proceeding in an orderly manner in releasing European hostages, first the Spanish and then the French; an Italian journalist was freed several days after the White House meeting. The released Europeans spoke of enduring torture and starvation. They heard frequent gunfire—presumably, the



sound of Syrian and Iraqi prisoners being executed. Some of the Westerners were more abused than others, but the treatment was always capricious and sadistic. These accounts dismayed the families, yet they also were fortified by the knowledge they had gained from the Europeans, many of whom had spoken to Barfi or to family members.

“This is a moment of opportunity,” the group letter said. “We have knowledge of the groups that are holding our

children; we have knowledge of their location and the motives of their captors; we have examples of successful releases facilitated by foreign governments.” At the meeting, the families asked that Obama appoint someone to coordinate among the White House, the F.B.I., and the State Department, providing the timely information they needed to make life-and-death decisions.

Officials at the White House meeting expressed sympathy and concern, but were vague about what the government might do to help. And on the subject of ransoms the officials were blunt. On this and two other occasions, Colonel Mark Mitchell, the director of counterterrorism at the National Security Council, warned the families that they risked prosecution if they paid terrorists or tried to persuade an allied power to do so. “I'd rather be in prison myself and have Jimmy home,” John Foley said afterward. Nancy Curtis shrugged it off: “I'm seventy-six years old. Let them put me in jail.”

The fact that the European hostages were safely home underscored the ineffectiveness of American policy. Didier François, a released hostage, told me that, although French officials publicly deny paying ransoms, “they do negotiate, because every French citizen taken is an attack on French sovereignty.” François added, “It doesn't mean we surrender to all the demands of the captors. It doesn't mean we change our foreign policy.” Last year, the German magazine *Focus* reported that the French government paid ransoms totalling eighteen million euros for the four journalists. François called this “ridiculous.” He explained that captors always start high, but skillful diplomacy can moderate their demands. He added, “As long as it doesn't change the situation on the ground, why should we not get our people out?”

The U.S. government's position is that the Europeans imperil everybody by paying off terrorists. In a 2012 speech, David Cohen, then the under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the Treasury Department, said, “Ransom payments lead to future kidnappings, and future kidnappings lead to additional ransom payments. It all builds the capacity of terrorist organizations to conduct attacks.” The U.S. government estimates that, between 2008 and 2014, radical Islamist groups

collected more than two hundred million dollars in ransom payments, which allowed those groups to spread. ISIS might not exist in its present rampant form without the funds that kidnapping provided.

The families had mixed feelings about ransoms. The Foleys were already seeking pledges (and eventually obtained nearly a million dollars' worth). The Kassigs stayed up late worrying over the morality of giving money to a terrorist group—yet their only child's life was at stake, and ISIS was already rich. "If we had been able to come up with any ransom, it would have been much smaller than what they were getting daily from the oil fields," Paula observed. Carl Mueller felt that the government was putting its precious policy ahead of their daughter's life; Marsha, however, didn't want ISIS to receive another cent, and didn't think that Kayla would, either. The Sotloffs were considering a ransom. Barfi privately thought the practice misguided. "You're funding terrorism," Barfi told me. "What happens if ISIS uses the money to fund an attack?"

This was the logic behind U.S. policy, and yet the government has paid ransoms to criminal organizations, such as drug cartels. Every Federal Reserve branch in the U.S. maintains a stash of bills to be used to pay ransoms. Corporations routinely take out ransom insurance for employees stationed abroad, and the F.B.I. even facilitates such payments. It's only when the kidnappers are part of an acknowledged terrorist group that payments become illegal.

Hovering silently over this wrenching discussion was the fact of Bradley's fortune. He was already bankrolling the team that was trying to free the hostages; he was absorbing the families' travel expenses; he was flying to foreign destinations himself. His generosity was without question but not, apparently, without limits. Prudent and conservative by temperament, he had forbidden his staff to discuss ransoms. Carl Mueller hinted that he was willing to sell his house, but Bradley didn't bite. The risk of prosecution that made Bradley wary of ransoms posed an obstacle to other potential donors as well. And there was an additional complication: if Bradley was

known to be involved, the ransom demands would inevitably increase.

Art Sotloff was incensed by the repeated threats of prosecution. He and Shirley had received the same outlandish ransom demand as the Foleys and the Kassigs—a hundred million euros. The U.S. government could refuse to help them, but why should it stand in their way? At one government meeting, Art excused himself to go to the men's room, and an F.B.I. agent escorted him down the hall. The agent confided that no American had ever been prosecuted for paying a ransom. The families were confounded by the mixed message: if the government actually did prosecute them, wouldn't these very agents have to testify against them?

In any case, because of international sanctions, it was exceedingly difficult to send money to Syria, much less millions of dollars. In September, 2013, Nancy Curtis had tried to wire eight thousand dollars to a fixer in Aleppo, who had heard a rumor that an American hostage had been condemned to death by a Sharia court. The source was willing to investigate further, but wanted payment. Curtis tried to use Western Union to send the money to an intermediary in Beirut, but, when she had to describe the purpose of the transfer, she was refused. The All-Girl Team then divided the sum among themselves. Viva Hardigg, Curtis's cousin, took her children to the bank, and while the kids begged for lollipops the teller put the wire transfer through.

The fixer reported hearing that the American hostage had been killed. The All-Girl Team decided not to tell Nancy Curtis. Several months later, Curtis received a Skype call from someone who claimed to be in touch with Padnos's kidnappers. The intermediary asked for proof-of-life questions that only Padnos could answer. Curtis and the All-Girl Team came up with such questions as "Where is your car?" (In the barn.) The correct answers came back the following day. Padnos was alive.

The intermediary was apparently able to relay messages from Padnos. One of them was "Sorry, Mom, I should have listened to you."

Curtis had previously dealt with intermediaries, and their demands had



Art and Shirley Sotloff, with their daughter,

ranged between three and five million euros. Those conversations never went anywhere. Were the intermediaries really in contact with her son? All the families had to contend with scammers who claimed to represent the hostage-takers. The Kassigs were approached by somebody they called Bitcoin Man, who described in detail how to transmit money through the Internet. Curtis had already calculated that she could raise



Lauren. The Sotloffs considered raising a ransom to save their son, Steven, even though U.S. officials threatened them with prosecution.

two hundred thousand dollars in cash, and perhaps twice that, if she sold her vacation house in Vermont. But if she had to sell her house in Cambridge, too, how would she live? Would there be anything left for her daughter and her family? Was it right to throw everything she had into a murky deal with terrorists?

Another intermediary demanded fifteen million euros to release Padnos—

triple what had been originally proposed but a fraction of what was being asked for Foley, Sotloff, and Kassig. The price for Kayla Mueller was five million euros. On the advice of the F.B.I., Curtis countered with fifty thousand dollars. The idea was to get the captors to think realistically about what the family could pay.

On May 31, 2014, while this negotiation was under way, the U.S. suddenly exchanged five Taliban leaders held in

Guantánamo for a sergeant in the U.S. Army, Bowe Bergdahl. President Obama justified the swap by noting that military prisoners are routinely traded at the end of a conflict. Evidently, he believed that American involvement in Afghanistan had reached such a point. Some of the families felt deceived—they'd just been told that ransoms and prisoner exchanges were out of bounds. They were also alarmed by the public furor that

followed the Bergdahl swap. It seemed certain to make the captors more intransigent and the U.S. government even less willing to act on the families' behalf.

Fortunately, the parents still had Bradley's team on their side. But none of them realized how little time they had left.

THE TITAN

David Bradley grew up as a Christian Scientist, believing that God created man as a perfect being. Disease, death, pain, and evil were imaginary afflictions that could be prayed away. Although Bradley doesn't see himself as especially religious now, many tenets of the faith have left their mark on him. "I remain deeply sympathetic to Christian Science, but, as to evil, I've changed my mind," he says. "There is evil in the world."

Katherine Bradley says that her husband has "a fundamental quality of faithfulness, which is not the same thing as faith." Most of the Bradleys' charities concentrate on education and poverty in the U.S. Her husband doesn't seek out additional projects, she says, but when a need arises he has a hard time turning away. She shared a story from the Philippines, where Bradley went on a Fulbright scholarship, in 1977. Ferdinand Marcos then ruled the country. Bradley, who had just received an M.B.A.

from Harvard, was studying whether multinational corporations prefer to operate under authoritarian governments. (They do.) He subsequently set up a child-protection unit at a Manila hospital. Every year, he returns to the city to visit the matriarch he stayed with as a student; she is now a hundred and three. "The Philippines just came into his life," Katherine says. "He attached and never let go."

Growing up in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C., Bradley developed a longing for power. At thirteen, he imagined becoming the Republican junior senator from Maryland by the age of thirty. When he was twenty, he worked as an intern in the Nixon White House, just as Watergate was unfolding. He then enrolled at Georgetown law school. Deciding that he needed an income to support a political career, he took a year off to start a policy-research firm, the Advisory Board Company, then spun off a division of it, the Corporate Executive Board. Most of his business was in health-care consulting. His office was in the living room of his mother's apartment in the Watergate complex. Twenty years later, he took one of the businesses public; two years after that, he sold the second. These deals made him about three hundred million dollars richer. He now owns one of the buildings in the Watergate complex.

By the time Bradley made his for-

tune, he had reluctantly abandoned his political dreams. He was not someone who could turn heads while entering a room. His elaborately deferential manner can make him seem aloof or strange, even enigmatic. He speaks in a near whisper, the result of nerve damage to his vocal chords. Although he desires power, he cherishes humility. Such qualities are ill-suited for a political life, and his shortcomings became especially apparent when he compared himself to his next-door neighbor on Embassy Row—an attractive young senator who seemed to be the embodiment of the man Bradley had sought to be. But eventually the life of that senator, John Edwards, took a wrong turn, and the house next door now serves as the Hungarian Embassy. Bradley's search for influence has found other outlets: in wealth, media, and philanthropy. He now considers himself a political independent.

In directing the families' efforts, Bradley was in some respects usurping the role of several federal agencies, and yet the families had largely lost faith in their government. The State Department appointed Carrie Greene, in the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, to be a liaison with the families. She seemed impatient with their independent investigations. "You really shouldn't be talking to these terrorists," she warned. "It's against the law." Viva Hardigg responded, "Excuse me, Carrie, but we are well acquainted with U.S. laws, and if someone you love is being held by terrorists, with whom else should you talk?" Greene ended her e-mails with "Please enjoy your day!"

When Peter Kassig was kidnapped, his parents got a call from a State Department official. Paula recalls, "She basically said, 'We know your son has been taken in Syria. We don't have an embassy in Syria. We don't have people on the ground in Syria. We don't have a diplomatic relationship with them, so we can't do anything to help you.'" In May, 2014, the families had a joint meeting with Daniel Rubinstein, a special envoy appointed to handle affairs in Syria. "He was nice, but when we asked how to contact him we were told not to e-mail or phone him," Diane Foley says. In order to talk with him on the phone, the families had to travel to a local F.B.I. office, so an agent could dial Rubinstein's



"The gluten's back. And it's pissed."

number for them. When the Foleys drove to the Boston office for this purpose, they learned that the phone line they were using wasn't even secure. They concluded that the only reason for the protocol was to allow local agents to monitor them.

At least three F.B.I. agents were assigned to each family: one supervising agent, one for "victim assistance," and one for hostage negotiation. The bureau deals with hundreds of thousands of crime victims every year. Nancy Curtis describes one of her agents as "professional, compassionate, and committed." But none of the other families believed that the bureau was aggressive enough. "The F.B.I. called me once a week from Washington, every Tuesday between three-thirty and four o'clock, without fail, just to see if I had information for *them*," Art Sotloff says. "Not to give *me* information. After three or four phone calls, I just let them go to voice mail."

The F.B.I. is authorized to investigate the kidnapping of American citizens. The bureau has long experience with the crime domestically, but is poorly equipped to handle foreign cases in which the motivation for the abduction is political. The State Department, however, informed Nancy Curtis that it was in charge.

Bradley's team scheduled a meeting for Curtis and the chief F.B.I. hostage negotiator. The agent insisted that the bureau had jurisdiction over kidnappings. Curtis left the meeting frustrated and confused. Not only was there a turf war; it was obvious that the agencies weren't sharing information. Bradley's team set up a meeting with Robert Ford, the last U.S. Ambassador to Syria. Ford agreed that the F.B.I. does have jurisdiction, but added that the State Department has an understanding of Syrian culture and the region which the bureau lacks. After these meetings, State essentially backed down, leaving the fate of the hostages in the hands of the F.B.I.

"When you look at overseas kidnappings, it has to be a multi-agency effort," a senior F.B.I. official told me. And to the F.B.I. it's natural that it should lead the kidnapping cases. The bureau, he said, pursues three related goals in a kid-

napping investigation: "the safe return of the hostage, collection of intelligence about the captor network, and the eventual prosecution of the perpetrators."

F.B.I. agents felt that Bradley and his team were acting nobly, but also considered them amateurs entering a sensitive and dangerous environment, with American lives in the balance. The bureau does not like its playing field to be crowded with competitors. Bradley's team gave the F.B.I. any leads it turned up, but the bureau made it clear that this was not a partnership. "We're happy to take their information," the F.B.I. official said, but noted that the relationship could not be fully reciprocal: Bradley, his team members, and the families lacked the security clearances that would allow them to look at all the data that the F.B.I. was collecting. The official admitted, however, that "in some of these cases the lack of information passed to the families was simply because there *was* a lack of information."

At certain key points, the F.B.I. forcefully shut down an investigative path that members of the Bradley team were following, usually with the explanation that they had to "deconflict" their effort with one that, presumably, the bureau was conducting on its own. "Swords get crossed," the F.B.I. official noted. But people close to the scene saw little evidence that the bureau was investigating with urgency. After Jim Foley's abduction, in November, 2012, it took two weeks for the F.B.I. to dispatch a pair of agents to Antakya to interview his friends. To be fair, the bureau requires permission from the Turkish government to conduct investigations. As in most other foreign countries where the bureau works, it is forbidden to go undercover there, and it has to get clearance from the C.I.A. before cultivating sources. In Antakya, the F.B.I. agents who showed up seemed woefully out of place and inexperienced—"fish out of water," as Nicole Tung, a photojournalist and a close friend of Foley's, put it. Tung and Clare Gillis, the freelancer who had been abducted with Foley in Libya, worried that Foley was a low priority for the U.S. The journalists on the ground believe that the bureau never interviewed any of the fixers who had been captured with the hostages and then released. (The journalists knew these fixers well.) In any case, that

was the last that the journalists saw of the F.B.I. The Bradley team eventually contacted more than a hundred and fifty people. Only a few of them said that they had spoken to the U.S. government.

According to a former federal official, there was a mistaken interpretation of the U.S.'s policy against ransoms: it was taken to mean no negotiating at all; even talking to the hostage-takers was forbidden. Neither the White House nor the National Security Council appeared to step in to clarify the matter, leaving the investigation essentially paralyzed.

The C.I.A., which collects intelligence abroad, apparently gathered little of use about the hostages. Robert Ford told Bradley's team that the agency had no assets closer to Syria than Gaziantep, Turkey, thirty miles from the border. Although Bradley's team and some of the reporters in Antakya identified sites where the hostages were likely being held, there was no drone surveillance until late in the crisis, and even then only one drone was made available—for part of the day. "The President wouldn't authorize it," Barfi says. "He didn't want to get into Syria."

Bradley lacked the government's resources, but he had connections, and he didn't feel constrained by protocol. Several of the families worried that information on the hostages' social media could be used against them—Sotloff's Israeli citizenship, Padnos's book on Islam, Kassig's experience in Iraq—but the F.B.I. said that it could not gain access to the hostages' accounts, because of privacy concerns. Bradley called Sheryl Sandberg, the chief operating officer of Facebook; Dick Costolo, then the C.E.O. of Twitter; and Brad Smith, the general counsel of Microsoft, and they were willing to work with the families to help. Facebook, for example, made Padnos's account invisible to the public.

Bradley prides himself on his ability to discover and enlist what he calls "extreme talent." Soon after he acquired *The Atlantic*, he successfully lured away Jeffrey Goldberg, a writer then working for this magazine. Bradley's blandishments included going to Goldberg's house with a trailer full of ponies for his children to ride. In an era when many magazines were retrenching or folding, it was extraordinary for a publisher to court a journalist

so lavishly, and the story spread through the trade. Barak Barfi heard about the Goldberg pony gambit in Turkey.

"Why are you doing this?" Goldberg asked Bradley when he heard about the team that had been assembled. After all, Bradley was not the attorney general or the Secretary of Defense. Bradley responded, "When I wake in the morning, I could study online advertising patterns—or I could try in some way to save the lives of Americans who are held by fanatics. When I looked at the options in front of me, it was obvious what was the best use of my time."

Goldberg believed that Bradley's obsession with hostages began with the death of Michael Kelly, the first journalist Bradley hired to edit *The Atlantic*. As Goldberg puts it, Kelly was "hysterically rude and biting funny"—qualities that Bradley admired but certainly didn't share. Kelly and Bradley became close. Kelly was the first reporter to be killed in the Iraq war, in April, 2003. After burying Kelly, Bradley says, "I had trouble letting one of my colleagues do something I couldn't do." The next year, he travelled to Baghdad, where William Langewiesche was reporting for *The Atlantic*. At the time, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq—the precursor of ISIS—was beheading Westerners and posting videos on the Internet. "I found it really scary," Bradley says. At the hotel where he was staying, he was told to shove the dresser and an extra bed against the door. Despite such precautions, a journalist was kidnapped from that hotel a few weeks later.

Bradley kept adding people to the team, paying their travel expenses, and often a salary as well. He installed two young researchers in cubicles in the Watergate office. He recruited a former Syrian diplomat, now known as Noor Azar, who had gone into exile after the revolution. Meanwhile, April Goble, Foley's ex-girlfriend, worked with eleven volunteers from Teach for America, looking for inroads into the Syrian regime.

Bradley also discovered a West Coast lawyer who had moved to Kandahar, Afghanistan, to study insurgencies. "She travelled around on a motorcycle with an assault rifle around her shoulders," Bradley recalls. "Her job was interview-

ing potential Taliban recruits and giving reports to N.G.O.s and the U.S. government." Because the lawyer still works in the region, she asked me to refer to her as Mary Hardy. Bradley's staff called her the Blond Bombshell.

Bradley sent Hardy to Antakya in June, 2013, when only Foley and Padnos had been taken. Antakya struck her as "a typical bad border town." The place was filled with intelligence agents, Turkish and otherwise. Jihadists and smugglers and young freelancers had taken over the tourist hotels. Because only Foley's name had been made public, Hardy recalls, she was besieged by people offering to sell her information about him: "The town was awash in 'Foley's alive, Foley's dead, Foley's in Damascus, Foley's coming out tomorrow. Just get in my van and I can take you to see him.'"

Hardy sought out more experienced journalists and aid workers in the area. They had fixers who spoke Arabic and could get the phone numbers of ISIS commanders and the G.P.S. coordinates of their various headquarters. Hardy learned that the people who had abducted Padnos and Matt Schrier were using Schrier's PayPal account to order such items as sunglasses; the items were delivered to a shop owner on the Turkish border who was known for providing fake identifications. Hardy believed that a gang connected to the shop owner had abducted Padnos. She obtained photographs of the shop owner and the gang members and sent all this information to the F.B.I., along with images of a prison in Aleppo. She suspected—correctly—that Padnos had been held there. The F.B.I. ordered her to shut down her operation. It's unclear whether the bureau had already acquired similar intelligence on its own.

Hardy thought that the gang who had kidnapped Padnos had sold him to the highest bidder. Foley's case was more complicated. He had been taken with John Cantlie, a British journalist; they were good friends, although Cantlie had a reputation for recklessness. Once, in Libya, Clare Gillis told me, Cantlie invited her and Foley to get into the car with him to chase down a story in a particularly dicey area. Gillis declined, but Foley went ahead. (To her relief, they returned unscathed.)

In Turkey, Hardy met a British security contractor who had seen Cantlie just before he disappeared. Cantlie had been making boorish jokes in front of a group of Syrians, and his countryman reprimanded him for his cultural insensitivity. Cantlie laughed it off. He had been kidnapped once before in Syria, in July, 2012, by British jihadists. They shot him in the arm when he tried to escape. A week later, he was liberated by the Free Syrian Army. Not long after, he returned to Syria with an assignment to make a documentary about his captivity. He intended to go to the site where he had been abducted—a foolhardy trip, but actual assignments were precious. He apparently enlisted Foley to be his videographer. Within days, they had been captured.

Mary Hardy had developed a theory about staying safe in dangerous places: "One third is good management—how many people do I have working with me, and how many bad guys are out there? The second third is local good will. And the last third is good luck." She faulted Cantlie and Foley on all three counts. They had been spotted filing their stories in an Internet café, speaking English: bad management. Cantlie's crude humor: a strike against good will. And both men had been taken before—so their luck had plainly run out.

"If you go into that environment, you have to do some soul-searching," Hardy says. "The macho thing is 'I am willing to take the risk.' But it's not just you and your freedom you're risking." A conflict journalist should acknowledge that he is also placing his institution at risk. He is asking his friends and his family to potentially stop everything while they pursue his freedom. And he is tacitly demanding that his government risk soldiers' lives if a rescue attempt is made. Not every journalist, Hardy says, wants to be encumbered by such considerations. But, she adds, "at least that's an interesting conversation to have at the bar."

THE QATAR CONNECTION

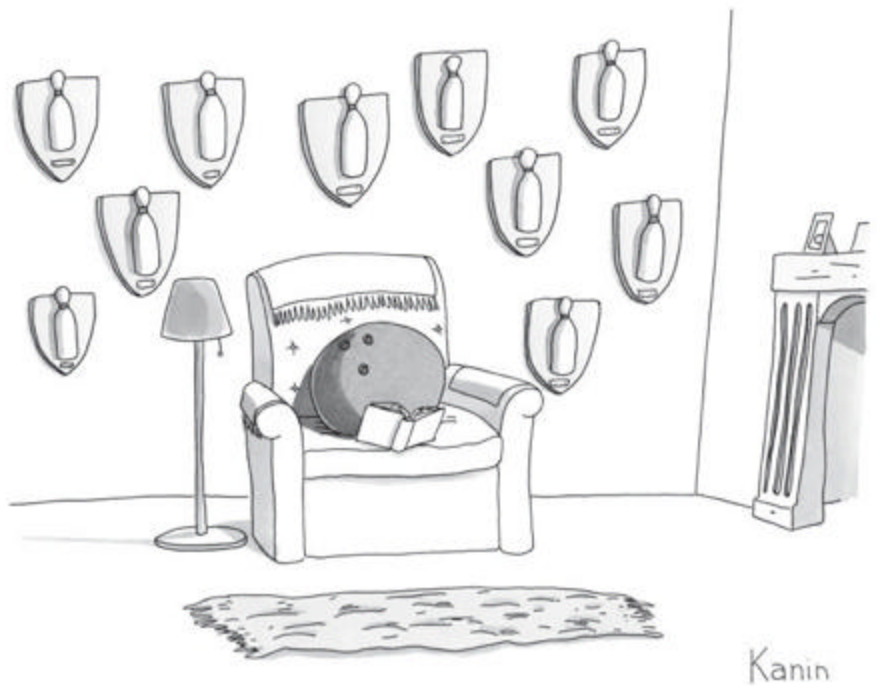
On June 10, 2014, ISIS forces overran Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. Sleeper cells had carried out assassinations that left the city leaderless, and the Iraqi Army had dissolved under assault. Because few journalists were on

the ground to document events, the news was shocking. The next day, Tikrit fell. On June 29th, ISIS announced the formation of a new caliphate. In Mosul, ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, climbed the minbar of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri and boldly declared himself the new caliph, demanding the fealty of Muslims everywhere. Henceforth, the territory held by ISIS would be called the Islamic State. Despite the disparagement of many mainline imams, thousands of new fighters answered Baghdadi's call, animated by the vision of a restored Islamic empire and exhilarated by the savagery practiced by his followers. Fifty thousand Yazidis, an ancient monotheistic community north of Mosul, fled when ISIS announced plans to exterminate them. The U.S. felt rising international pressure to stop an impending genocide. Simultaneously, ISIS forces swept toward the Kurdish capital of Erbil, where American advisers and diplomats were stationed. The hostages were caught in a vise: any American action to halt ISIS's advance would likely trigger retaliation against them, but their plight was still a secret, so little political effort was being exerted on their behalf.

The White House realized that intervening against ISIS could affect the fortunes of the hostages. "It weighed on everyone's mind," Ben Rhodes, a deputy national-security adviser, told me. But, he added, "not to take action in confronting the potential genocide against the Yazidis would be both a failure in terms of enabling the slaughter to go forward and also would suggest our own foreign policy can be held in check by the presence of hostages." That, he said, would be "the ultimate form of empowering the hostage-taker."

Meanwhile, the ransom demand for Padnos rose to twenty-two million euros. In July, a video of Padnos surfaced in several American embassies, through intermediaries. He was seated on the floor, wrists bound, with a gun pointed at his head. "My life is in very, very, very grave danger," Padnos said. "They've given me three days—three days to live." The video had apparently been made two days earlier.

On May 29, 2014, at the Peninsula Hotel in New York, Bradley met with Ali Soufan, a former F.B.I. agent whose



skillful interrogation of Al Qaeda members had led to the identification of the 9/11 hijackers. Soufan, who is Lebanese-American, has since founded a security company, the Soufan Group, with offices in New York and Doha. "Let me tell you a story," Bradley said. Soufan's heart sank as he learned of the hostages' plight. He doubted that the U.S. had assets on the ground. There was only one direction to turn. "Let's go to Qatar," he told Bradley.

Late on July 10th, Bradley and Soufan were in the lobby of the St. Regis hotel in Doha, waiting to meet Ghanem Khalifa al-Kubaisi, the head of the Qatari intelligence service. Qatar is a conservative Wahhabi society, but it sometimes plays a subversive role in the region, hosting both the Al Jazeera network and an American airbase. Bradley knew that many rebel groups in Syria depend on Qatari support. He also knew that Qatar provides an underground channel of communication between radical Islamists and the West. Six weeks earlier, Qatar had arranged the exchange of the Taliban prisoners for Bowe Bergdahl.

It was Ramadan, an awkward time to approach government officials. Moreover, Qatari intelligence was preoccupied by the military operation that Israel had just launched in Gaza. That very evening, Kubaisi was briefing the emir. After

midnight, Soufan got a call from Kubaisi's chief of staff saying that his boss couldn't meet that night. "You have to," Soufan told him. "We're leaving at three in the morning."

Kubaisi showed up at 1:30 A.M. Bradley had expected him to be a hardboiled veteran, but he was young and soft-spoken, with warm, lively eyes. Bradley presented flyers with photographs of the captives and details about the kidnappings. Kubaisi leafed through them without much hope. "You cannot predict with these groups," he said. "They are so irrational." Yet he paused upon seeing the Padnos flyer. "I think we can help on this one," he said. Alone among the five hostages, Padnos was being held by Jabhat al-Nusra, an Al Qaeda affiliate that had broken away from ISIS in February, 2014. The two factions had been battling each other since then. Qatar maintained influence with al-Nusra; however, sending an operative into Aleppo was extremely dangerous, and the three-day deadline for Padnos had passed. "I was fearful, thinking we had to act fast or they would kill him," Kubaisi recalls. He told Bradley, "I will do it—for the mother."

Last June, one of the remaining European hostages, Daniel Rye Ottosen, a Danish photographer, was freed. The Danish government refused to pay a ransom, but the family reportedly



Carl and Marsha Mueller, the parents of Kayla, who was kidnapped while doing relief work in Syria. Carl Mueller felt that Qatari

scraped together three and a half million euros. Ottosen's captors allowed him to carry letters from the other hostages, except Foley. In the final months of captivity, Foley and Ottosen had been chained together, and Ottosen secretly memorized a note from Foley to his family. One of his first calls after being freed was to recite the letter to Diane Foley.

"I remember going to the mall with Dad, a very long bike ride with Mom," the letter begins. "Dreams of family and friends take me away and happiness fills my heart." Foley downplays the abuse, saying that he has "weak and strong days." He adds, "We are so grateful when anyone is freed, but of course yearn for our own freedom." He mentions each of his

three brothers and his sister, Katie, expressing hope that he will attend her wedding one day. "Grammy, please take your medicine," he writes. "Stay strong, because I am going to need your help to reclaim my life."

Diane and a few of the other parents talked to some of the freed European hostages. The Europeans were guarded



officials—who offered to negotiate for her return—were more helpful than U.S. officials.

in those conversations, but they spoke frankly to Barfi and Bradley, and in interviews that they later gave to the press. They said that among their guards was a group of British Muslims, whom the captives called the Beatles. The ones they called George and John were especially sadistic. The Beatles paid particular attention to Foley, because he and John

Cantlie had tried to escape. Foley had made it out of his cell, but when Cantlie couldn't break free of his chains Foley surrendered. "I couldn't leave John on his own," he told the others. They were beaten savagely, and waterboarded on one occasion. Later, Foley incurred the guards' anger because he requested extra rations and more frequent trips to the

toilets for the weakest captives. He gave his mattress to another prisoner and slept on the stone floor. He never complained about abuse. "They didn't like the fact he would not submit," Didier François, the French hostage, told me. Foley was a pillar of the group, François said. "He tried to establish some balance of forces with the guards—some breathing space."

Foley organized informal lectures. Kassig told stories about hunting and fishing with his father. François described covering the war in Chechnya. Cantlie explained how to pilot a plane. Foley lectured on American literature and his captivity in Libya. The others depended on Foley to keep their spirits buoyed. "This guy, he was a man," Nicolas Hénin, another French hostage, later told *L'Express*. "He remained upright, dignified." He added, "When I see his mother's reaction, I recognize her son. They are made of the same metal."

On August 7, 2014, President Obama authorized limited air strikes on ISIS, in order to relieve the Yazidis and block the jihadi advance on Erbil. "Earlier this week, one Iraqi in the area cried to the world, 'There is no one coming to help,'" Obama said, in a televised address. "Well, today America is coming to help."

Five days later, the Foley family received an awkwardly spelled e-mail, asking, "HOW LONG WITH THE HSEEP FOLLOW THE BLIND SHEPPARD?" It was addressed to "the American government and their sheep-like citizens," and it continued:

You were given many chances to negotiate the release of your people via cash transactions as other governments have accepted. . . . however you proved very quickly to us that this is NOT what you are interested in. . . .

Now you return to bomb the Muslims of Iraq once again, this time resorting to Arial attacks and "proxy armies," all the while cowardly shying away from a face-to-face confrontation!

Today our swords are unsheathed towards you, GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS ALIKE! AND WE WILL NOT STOP UNTILL WE QUENCH OUR THIRST FOR YOUR BLOOD. . . .

The first of which being the blood of the American citizen, James Foley!

A week later, Diane got a call from a distraught reporter from the Associated Press. "She was sobbing," Diane recalls. "She asked if I had seen the Internet." The

reporter wouldn't elaborate. But within a short time the theatrically staged execution of Diane Foley's son was all over the news. No one called her from the F.B.I. or the State Department. She contacted her primary F.B.I. agent, but he didn't respond. The Foleys' parish priest, however, rushed to their house. "I'll never forget it," Father Paul Gousse told the magazine *St. Anthony Messenger*. "Diane came and hugged me and said, 'Father, please pray for me that I don't become bitter. I don't want to hate.'"

When Nancy Curtis heard about Foley, she collapsed onto the kitchen floor. For the first time since the ordeal began, her spirit was broken. The Bradleys were at their house in the South of France when the phone rang. He was incredulous. "I had never thought that ISIS would kill Jim," he admits. "The next morning, the implications hit me. For the first time in eighteen months, our search for Jim was over. And we had failed Jim's family."

Bradley called April Goble, in Chicago, and told her of Foley's death. She went outside and sat under a tree. She called Diane, who kept saying that her son was now free. Meanwhile, dozens of Goble's and Foley's friends went to Goble's house. It got so crowded that some people slept on the roof that night.

The next day, the Foleys got a call from the President. He was vacationing on Martha's Vineyard. Diane remarked that Jim had campaigned for Obama. "He expected you to come get him," she said.

"Well, we tried," Obama replied. The President was sharing a secret: the U.S. military had launched a raid to rescue the hostages the previous month, on July 4th. The F.B.I. had finally been able to interview two of the freed journalists, who provided detailed descriptions of the industrial building where they and twenty-one other foreigners had been imprisoned. U.S. officials determined that the building was outside Raqqa—now the capital of the Islamic State. Evidently, the rescue team had arrived three days too late. There was a firefight, in which two ISIS members were killed and an Amer-

ican soldier was shot in the leg. But it was all for naught: no prisoners remained at the facility.

The video of Foley's execution begins with Obama making his announcement of air strikes against ISIS. Then Foley is seen on his knees in a stretch of desert, wearing an orange jumpsuit that billows in the breeze. His head is shaved. He looks strong and not frightened. He reads out a statement denouncing the American bombing campaign, saying that his death certificate was signed that day. Then a masked figure in black brandishes a knife. "We're no longer a part of an insurgency," he says, in a North London accent. "We are an Islamic army and a state that has been accepted by a large number of Muslims worldwide. So,

effectively, any aggression toward the Islamic State is an aggression toward Muslims." He grabs Foley's head and slashes his neck. The next shot is of Foley's bloody head resting on his back, against his handcuffed wrists, his plastic sandals askew in the sand. Then the executioner is shown with another kneeling hostage, dressed in orange with his head shaved. The executioner points the knife at the camera: "The life of this American citizen, Obama, depends on your next decision."

It is Steven Sotloff.

A VICTORY AND A DEFEAT

Ghanem al-Kubaisi had sent an operative into Syria to see what it would take to free Theo Padnos. The operative talked his way into an extremist base but was accused of spying. Jihadis threatened to kill him, but he persuaded them that he really was an emissary from the Qatari government, which had taken an active interest in the life of this one American.

The Qataris had repeatedly been told that the U.S. doesn't pay ransoms to terrorists, but it was unclear how else Padnos could be saved. The All-Girl Team wondered why it was the American government's business if Padnos's family arranged for another government to rescue him. But, under U.S. law, conspiring to enrich an Al Qaeda affiliate such as al-Nusra was consid-

ered material support of terrorism. Kubaisi understood the constraints, and he is vague about what he proposed, saying only that he exercised influence on al-Nusra through other rebel groups in the area. That might be construed as a ransom payment, which is one reason that the language of terrorism diplomacy is muffled and ambiguous. In any case, al-Nusra had many reasons to placate Qatar, one of the Gulf's strategic powers.

On August 24th, Bradley received a thumbs-up emoji from Kubaisi. "Done," he texted.

Ali Soufan had arranged for the handoff to take place in the Golan Heights, on the Israeli border, but the F.B.I. and a dozen American officials were mistakenly waiting on the Jordanian border. Bradley had to call and redirect them. As Padnos was being driven toward the demilitarized zone, the F.B.I. team was driving all night to get in place to receive him.

The terrorists dropped Padnos off at a U.N. observation post. A doctor examined his brutalized body. Then Padnos crossed into Israel, where the American officials had just arrived. Nancy's favorite F.B.I. agent was with them. The agent patted Padnos's shoulder and said, "It's O.K. to cry."

American officials drove him to a seaside hotel in Tel Aviv, where he called Nancy: "Mom, I'm in this five-star hotel! And I'm drinking a beer! And there are women here!" It was his first phone call in two years.

The F.B.I. agent instructed him to stay in his room. The moment she left, Padnos headed out to the beach. The Mediterranean was gorgeous. There was a paddleball court and a jogging trail. Padnos strolled down to a youth hostel. Two Canadian guys were sitting outside, and they looked friendly. Padnos impulsively walked up to them and said that he'd just been freed by Al Qaeda. They offered him a drink. The next morning, the F.B.I. agent found Padnos with his new friends passed out on the floor of his hotel room.

There was little time for Bradley's team to celebrate Padnos's release. The shock of the Foley video lingered. The parents of Foley, Padnos, and Sotloff were besieged by the press. The



word was out that there were other hostages, but only a few journalists knew their names. Bradley asked Emily Lenzner, the communications director of Atlantic Media, to try to keep imperiling details out of the press. Lenzner had to plug one hole after another. She dissuaded a Washington *Post* reporter from running a story; Ed Kassig says that the reporter told him, “I’m going to publish. This is too big for you.” A Miami television station interviewed some of Sotloff’s friends, and one of them innocently commented on how much Sotloff’s Jewish faith had meant to him. After Lenzner intervened, the reference was snipped from the story. But the wall of secrecy was breaking down. The *Times* reported that an American woman was among the ISIS hostages. Editors at *The Atlantic*—a few floors below Bradley’s office at the Watergate—wondered how they should cover a major news event involving their employer.

Bradley summoned the Sotloffs, the Kassigs, and the Muellers to Washington, in the hope of devising a new strategy. They arrived on Sunday, August 24th—the day of Padnos’s release. It felt ominous to see their circle of families abruptly diminished, one by death and the other by freedom. Bradley wanted his involvement to remain secret, so they met in the conference room of a law firm.

Bradley introduced the families to Nasser Weddady, an activist who was born in Mauritania and grew up in Syria. Bradley described him as a social-media specialist. Weddady proposed that the three mothers make a video, beseeching Baghdadi to spare their children. “The fact that the government and the families have remained silent for so long has allowed ISIS to totally control the process and to dehumanize the hostages,” he contended. “My idea is to reverse that trend.”

The mothers decided against a joint video. Instead, they would each make one. Sotloff had been placed next on ISIS’s kill list, so Shirley Sotloff would release her video at once. Paula Kassig and Marsha Mueller would film similar appeals but wait to release them.

Weddady was soon at odds with Barak Barfi over the tone and the content of Shirley’s statement. Barfi urged

her to cover her hair, but Weddady thought it was patronizing and smacked of Orientalism. Barfi had combed through the Koran and Islamic history, trying to find useful precedents for a hostage release. Passages in the Koran discussed prisoners of war, but their meaning was ambiguous. In 624 A.D., the Prophet Muhammad captured seventy prisoners during the Battle of Badr. His closest advisers debated ransoming or killing them. Two were executed. Other prisoners were released, including one who was not a Muslim: the husband of the Prophet’s daughter Zainab. After she sent a necklace to her father, he granted clemency to her husband. “The necklace was symbolic, of course,” Weddady observes. But if the story were cited in a video “it could be misconstrued as if we were inviting a ransom—and that was a no-go zone.”

The more that Barfi argued for including theological references and historical parallels, the angrier Weddady became. He and Barfi had differing conceptions of the video’s audience. Barfi was addressing ISIS’s leadership; Weddady was aiming his message at the Muslim world, in order to undermine ISIS’s authority and appeal. “What I was saying was not being understood,” he recalls. And yet he could appreciate Barfi’s desperation. They were Sotloff’s only hope.

Shirley was numb. The other mothers tried to support her, but they also struggled to maintain their composure. Ed Kassig and Carl Mueller were com-

miserating with Art Sotloff. They talked about how painful it had been to keep the abductions a secret. Art remarked that, once Steven’s name was out, his friends rushed to support him. Ed and Carl almost envied him.

Marsha Mueller retreated into writing in her journal. She told Weddady that she hoped to give it to Kayla one day, so she would know what had happened in her absence. This detail struck him with unexpected emotional force. The scale of the tragedy in Syria and Iraq was so vast, and this was just a piece of it. Millions of people had been displaced, and hundreds of thousands were dead, and yet the children of these parents had willingly placed their lives in jeopardy. “They went on their own into one of the most dangerous places in the world with the intention of helping the weak and downtrodden, who were being crushed by dictatorship and terrorism,” Weddady told me. “That’s why I see them as heroes.”

While Weddady and Barfi fought about Shirley’s script, Noor Azar—the former Syrian diplomat on Bradley’s team—helped Paula Kassig create hers. The Kassigs wanted the captors to know that their son lamented the suffering of Syrians and wished to help them achieve freedom. Ed talked about how the Kassigs came from a long line of teachers. As a nurse, Paula planned to characterize her son as a caretaker. Azar told them that their approach was all wrong. ISIS doesn’t care about freedom, she said. The militants think it’s a Western notion that

BUTTON-DOWN COLLARS OF THE WORKPLACE



UNBUTTONED:
LAID-BACK,
EASYGOING



BUTTONED DOWN:
NEAT, GOES BY THE
BOOK



DO NOT STEAL
THIS GUY'S PEN

CAS



"I was a weirdo in this town before anyone even heard of Comic Con."

has been imposed on the Muslim world. They wouldn't be moved by the family's humanitarian legacy. And ISIS was filled with foreign fighters who opposed many Syrian insurgent groups. The whole idea of nationality was anathema to them. Azar persuaded the Kassigs to highlight Peter's spirituality.

Meanwhile, Shirley was struggling. "I was still in a movie that had gone bad," she said. She read one script after another into the camera, but her emotional affect was wooden. She had trouble pronouncing some names and stumbled over Koranic references. She invoked Baghdadi's authority as the caliph to grant Steven amnesty, "and to follow the example set by the Rashidun Caliphs, who I have learned were the most just Muslim rulers, under whom People of the Book, like Steve, were protected." Weddady bridled at this language. "Putting a Jewish woman on TV lecturing to Muslims about Islam is a disaster," he contended. The video struck him as academic and labored, and Shirley appeared hypnotized. Bradley agreed that it should be reshot the next day.

That night, Bradley invited the families and his team to his house for din-

ner. The Kassigs were exhausted and declined. On Embassy Row, the mood was much darkened from the May night when the dogwoods were in bloom. Sensing this, Bradley opened the floor to any idea, however crazy. Azar proposed urging the Syrian regime to do a prisoner swap with ISIS. Bradley worried that Assad would demand something in return—something that Bradley couldn't deliver, such as spare parts for airplanes. Nor did he believe that the American government would grant such a concession.

Bradley was always hard to read, even by his staff. Aretae Wyler, Bradley's general counsel, thought that the video idea was a "Hail Mary pass," but her boss seemed determined to keep pessimism from overwhelming the process. We can't just sit around and do nothing, he said. Throughout dinner, he sketched possible action plans on a legal pad. Weddady would go to Egypt to enlist the aid of some radical sheikhs. Bradley would go to Kurdistan and meet with its head of intelligence. He would ask the King of Jordan for help. He would return to Qatar. He even aired the notion of hiring a private army to attempt a rescue.

Shirley injected a note of hope. She kept saying, "I know Steve's alive, he's going to survive, I just know it." She said that he got his strength from her parents, who had survived Auschwitz.

The next morning, the Muellers were close to panic. Without revealing Kayla's name, Brian Ross, of ABC, had reported the details of her capture. Other journalists who had kept quiet about Kayla were angry with Emily Lenzner, because they believed, falsely, that she had cooperated with Ross. She begged the reporters to restrain themselves: the lives of three Americans were still on the line.

Bradley's team was cracking under the tension. As Weddady and Barfi shouted at each other over Shirley's script, Wyler took Weddady's laptop, sat on the floor beside Shirley, and quietly coached her to deliver the speech.

"I am sending this message to you, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Quraishi al-Husayni, the caliph of the Islamic State," Shirley says in the final version. Her hair is uncovered. Her fatigue is evident, but she delivers the message potently:

My son Steven is in your hands. Steven is a journalist who travelled to the Middle East to cover the suffering of Muslims at the hand of tyrants. Steven is a loyal and generous son, brother, and grandson. He is an honorable man and has always tried to help the weak.

We have not seen Steven for over a year and we miss him very much. We want to see him home safe and sound, and to hug him.

Since Steven's capture, I have learned a lot about Islam. I've learned that Islam teaches that no individual should be held responsible for the sins of others. Steven has no control over the actions of the U.S. government. He is an innocent journalist.

I've also learned that you, the caliph, can grant amnesty. I ask you to please release my child. . . .

I want what every mother wants—to live to see her children's children. I plead with you to grant me this.

Shirley's video was released on August 27th, and was instantly picked up by news organizations, especially Arabic satellite stations. As expected, ISIS followers on social media derided her plea, calling her Sheikha Shirley, but many other Muslims reacted with sympathy. Still, the overwhelming reaction that Weddady had hoped for did not happen. ISIS's grisly video had made a far bigger impact: the shot of Foley kneeling in the sand before his execution

was indelible. The intent of the killing was to prod the U.S. into open war with the Islamic State, a challenge that many Americans now welcomed. In 2013, Americans heavily opposed air strikes in Syria. Now a majority was in favor—an immediate, measurable consequence of the killing. ISIS saw conflict with America as the best way to rally Muslims to its side in the war of civilizations it sought to provoke. For the families of the remaining hostages, there was another omen of their waning hopes: after Foley’s execution, a Reuters poll found that sixty-two per cent of Americans opposed paying ransoms for hostages.

Six days after Shirley’s video appeared, Art Sotloff was heading out to drop off dry cleaning when a bulletin flashed on his phone: “Second American Hostage Killed.” No one had called him. He returned home to tell Shirley. At the same time, Wyler went into Bradley’s office and told him. He stared, ashen-faced, at his computer. He and Katherine flew to Miami to sit shivah with the Sotloffs.

“THE PUREST STRAIN OF EVIL”

After this devastating blow, Bradley decided that his team needed a lift. He invited Theo Padnos to dinner, so that the team members could meet one of the people they had worked so hard to rescue. Each of the meals in the Bradleys’ pale-yellow room had marked another milestone in the hostage saga. Padnos talked about beatings, solitary confinement, exposure to cold; his captors even buried him alive for half an hour. One assault left him disoriented for days. When he first returned home, he ate and slept little, and wanted to be mainly in the company of women and children. His family worried about him: his thoughts could get scattered, his emotions swinging from elation to fits of weeping.

Padnos recalled that, after ISIS split from al-Nusra, in the spring of 2014, his guards frequently joked about selling him to their rivals, who, they warned, were far more extreme. Several ISIS commanders were placed in adjoining cells.

“Would you ever kill a journalist?” Padnos asked a captured ISIS commander. Never, he responded. He then prom-

ised that the current battles would expand, culminating in the global victory of Islam.

At the dinner, Bradley asked Padnos what he had learned about evil. Bradley had been dwelling on this question. He remarked that the jihadis in Syria embodied “the purest strain of evil and malice and violence I have ever seen in my life.”

“No, David, it’s not like that,” Padnos said. Many of the young people guarding him had acted on principle when they “rejected the West.” But they had become part of a dangerously adolescent jihadi culture. Padnos had watched children playing with grenades. If someone was making tea, a kid might place a bullet on the burner, causing it to explode. For twenty of the twenty-two months he was held, Padnos saw women only three times—and always for just a few seconds. The fighters were as isolated from women as he was. Even the married men seemed uninterested in being with their wives. And yet they all wanted to marry American women, dropping hints that Padnos might hook them up.

Toward the end of his confinement, Padnos was taken to a villa. On a television, Al Jazeera was airing an image of a man in an orange jumpsuit in the desert. Text on the screen identified him as an American hostage. It was Foley. Until then, Padnos hadn’t known that other Americans were being held. His captors handed him the remote, but when he changed the channel there was Foley again.

After Sotloff was murdered, the black-clad killer, now universally known as Jihadi John, presented the next victim. David Haines, a British citizen, had spent sixteen years as an aid worker. He had been working for a humanitarian group in a Syrian refugee camp when he was kidnapped, with an Italian colleague, in March, 2013. Until the European hostages were ransomed that spring, Bradley’s team was unaware that there were more British hostages than John Cantlie. Like the U.S., the United Kingdom forbids ransom payments, and the Foreign Office had barred the families from discussing the abductions.

Haines was beheaded, and an execution video was released on September 13, 2014.

Another British man, a cabdriver named Alan Henning, who had spent his savings on buying a used ambulance to help Syrian refugees, was placed next in line. Peter Kassig was still not named. Until David Haines was killed, the executions had been ordered by nationality. Bradley took hope from this violation of protocol: perhaps there was still time to bargain for Kassig’s life.

A few days later, the Kassigs and the Muellers returned to Washington, to meet Obama. The President had just announced that the bombing campaign against ISIS was expanding into parts of Syria. He knew that the families were angry. Art Sotloff had refused to accept a condolence call from him. At the White House, Obama expressed his sympathy to the two remaining hostage families. But they felt he didn’t offer any indication that the government could help. “He said if one of his daughters were taken he would do everything he could to get her home,” Carl Mueller says. “Marsha took that to mean that we should go out and get the money. I didn’t think that at all. The government continued to block our efforts.”

There was a rumor that Qatar had paid a ransom to al-Nusra for Padnos; Bradley was concerned that he not be accused of soliciting funds for terrorists. Before flying to London to see Ghanem al-Kubaisi, he took his legal counsel to the U.S. Treasury to consult with David Cohen, the under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence. Cohen told Bradley to remind the Qataris that ransoms could not be paid.

In September, 2014, ISIS made a surprising adjustment in its propaganda campaign, releasing the first of a series of videos in which John Cantlie offers news commentary on behalf of the Islamic State. In the first video, Cantlie wears the orange jumpsuit that signals his likely execution. “I want to take this opportunity to convey some facts that you can verify,” he says, striking a tone of reasonableness. He sits at a wooden desk against a black background, as on “Charlie Rose.” He notes that he was captured two years earlier. “Many things have changed, including the expansion of the Islamic State to include large areas of eastern Syria and western Iraq,” he observes. He says that, in subsequent

videos, he will explain the motivations of the Islamic State, and how Western media outlets—"the very organizations I used to work for"—distort the truth.

It was macabre to watch a man under threat of death attesting to the legitimacy of his captors' goals; the video itself was a form of psychological torture. The apparent goal of the Cantlie videos was to divide Western opinion and, perhaps, to appeal to Muslims offended by the slaughter of hostages. Indeed, Cantlie soon developed a fan base on social media.

On October 3rd, Henning's death was confirmed, and this time Kassig was named as the next to die. Ed and Paula had seen reporters camped out on the Sotloffs' lawn for the deathwatch. They established two safe houses, and filled their car with enough food and water to last a week. But an odd thing happened. Journalist friends of Peter's from the Turkish border began arriving in Indianapolis to help. "They spent the entire day at our dining-room table, shooting e-mails, every one of them doing everything they could to bring Peter home," Ed recalls. Jodi Perras—a former A.P. reporter who taught Sunday school with Paula—volunteered to be their spokesperson. "We were watching social media," Perras recalls. "The theme ISIS was trying to push was 'Here's an Army Ranger who fought in Iraq and deserves to die.' And we were pushing the counter-narrative of a humanitarian who was helping the Syrian people and who, in fact, had converted to Islam."

Peter Kassig had been interested in Islam long before his capture. He had read the Koran while working in Palestinian camps in Lebanon. On a trip into Syria to supply Deir ez-Zor, he spent hours discussing religion with a sheikh, and when he returned he told friends that he had stopped drinking. He fasted during Ramadan. After his capture, a Syrian cellmate taught him how to pray, and he adopted the name Abdul Rahman, which means "servant of the merciful God."

Indianapolis has a large Muslim population, including Syrian exiles. The Islamic Society of North America has its headquarters nearby. A friend called Ed and Paula and asked if they would meet some local Syrians who had gathered at

an interfaith center. Ed and Paula said yes. As Paula was looking at the building directory for the room number, Ed heard the sound of weeping. "It's this way," he said.

The Muslims were moved by Peter's commitment to Syria, and they and the Muslim organizations joined the campaign to pressure ISIS to spare Peter's life, holding prayer vigils in universities and mosques. Paula and Ed made their own video. "I'm a schoolteacher, and my wife is a nurse who works with refugees," Ed says into the camera, with Paula sitting beside him, her hair covered. "Our son is Abdul Rahman, formerly known as Peter." Muslims who had worked with Peter in Syria added testimonials. More surprisingly, an Al Qaeda commander tweeted that Peter had saved his life at a Syrian field hospital, performing "a successful surgical operation" while "under bombardment" from the Assad regime. The commander called Peter a "humanitarian activist." Jodi Perras kept up a stream of videos, tweets, and testimonials from Kassig's friends and Muslim supporters. She felt that she was personally waging the war on terror through her MacBook Air.

Two days after Peter's name was revealed, the Kassigs released a letter that he'd written. One of the freed European hostages had given it to them. "I figured it was time to say a few things that need saying before I have to go," Peter writes. He says that he is underweight but not starved. "I'm a tough kid and still young so that helps." He had cried a lot in his first few months, "but a little less now":

They tell us you have abandoned us and/or don't care but of course we know you are doing everything you can and more. Don't worry Dad, if I do go down, I won't go thinking anything but what I know to be true. That you and mom love me more than the moon & the stars.

I am obviously pretty scared to die but the hardest part is not knowing, wondering, hoping, and wondering if I should even hope at all. . . . If I do die, I figure that at least you and I can seek refuge and comfort in knowing that I went out as a result of trying to alleviate suffering and helping those in need.

He added that he prayed every day, although he was in a "dogmatically complicated situation here." The Europeans who were incarcerated with Kassig attest to his genuine faith, but ISIS follows

an apocalyptic creed that challenges the beliefs of even orthodox Muslims.

Stanley Cohen, a New York attorney who has defended members of terrorist groups, including some in Hamas and Hezbollah, read Kassig's letter. According to the *Guardian*, Cohen enlisted several radical Islamists to try to persuade ISIS to free Kassig, by arguing that doing so could prompt the release of Muslim prisoners in Guantánamo. Cohen persuaded a Palestinian living in Jordan, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who is revered among jihadis, to join his effort, but before Maqdisi could act the Jordanian government arrested him for promoting terrorist organizations.

The executions had been taking place every two weeks, but for six weeks there was a pause. Finally, on November 16th, a new ISIS video appeared. Its theatrics are markedly different from those of previous execution videos. The ceremony begins with the simultaneous beheading of about twenty hostages, many of them Syrian Air Force pilots. Then, in a separate scene, Jihadi John appears with Peter Kassig's head at his feet. There is no body. "Here we are, burying the first American crusader in Dabiq, eagerly waiting for the remainder of your armies to arrive," Jihadi John says. Dabiq, a town in northern Syria, is where ISIS followers believe that an apocalyptic battle between Muslims and Christians will take place.

After the video aired, there was speculation that Kassig had died in a bombing, or had been shot. (He appeared to have a wound above one eye.) He apparently did not make a statement denouncing American policy. Former Army Rangers wondered if Kassig was honoring their creed, which concludes, "Under no circumstances will I ever embarrass my country."

Another significant detail of this video is that neither John Cantlie nor Kayla Mueller is named as the next victim.

The first memorial service for Peter was held at the Al Huda mosque, outside Indianapolis. An imam from Damascus led the prayers. "There were people from almost every continent," Ed recalls. Among them were many of Peter's friends, who then showed up at the Kassigs' home that night. Ed remains especially grateful for that display of solidarity: "We had people sleeping in our camper, we had people draped across couches, on the floor. At about three in



Nancy Curtis and her son, Theo Padnos. Three cousins joined her effort to save Theo. The group was called the All-Girl Team.

the morning, they made a circle and everybody went around and told Peter's story. And I really got to know my son, the man, that night."

As expected, President Obama called with condolences. He was on Air Force One, returning from Asia, and his voice sounded tired. Ed told him, "You've got one last chance to make this right. Save Kayla."

ENDGAME

The two Syrians who were working on David Bradley's team had to bear the additional emotional weight of watching their homeland being destroyed. They had felt helpless about the Syrian conflict until Bradley had infused them with an entrepreneurial spirit and a sense of possibility. "At last, I could do something," Nasser Weddady said. Bradley sent him to Istanbul, where he recruited a tribal sheikh who had influence in Syria. Bradley then flew to Istanbul himself to meet the sheikh; that's where he was when he got the news of Kassig's murder.

Noor Azar, the former Syrian diplomat, was born in Raqqa, and still has relatives there. She had also been excited when she joined Bradley's team; at the same time, she was shocked by the U.S. government's inaction. Syrians grow up knowing that their government doesn't value their lives, she says, but their image of the U.S. is formed by countless movies of Americans being rescued by the police or the F.B.I. or the Army. "When did it happen that the policy became more important than the actual U.S. citizen?" she asks. "Or was it always a myth?"

Although Azar never met Jim Foley, she looked at so many photographs and videos of him that she felt she had come to know him. His brutal death hit her hard. She went to two therapists. Despite having migraines, she kept coming into the office to work on the other hostage cases. But she was afraid to look at a picture of Kayla.

Azar tried to find Kayla's jailers, who were assumed to be women. Through Skype and Facebook, she narrowed her search to five female Europeans. She even got in touch with one of their husbands, who gave her permission to talk to his wife. When Azar relayed her findings to the F.B.I., the bureau told her to stop her investigation. "Contact with ISIS is break-

ing the law," she was told. Azar felt doubly threatened, because her visa status in the U.S. was uncertain. Though the F.B.I. claimed to be pursuing its own inquiry, Azar was doubtful that it could succeed. "I don't think they have a woman who has the accent of Raqqa," she told me.

The Bradley team always held out more hope for Kayla than for the others. It helped that she was a woman, and her ransom demand—five million euros, plus prisoners—was relatively low, closer to what the European governments had reportedly paid. The Muellers solicited private donations, but they were rebuffed by wealthy people who, like Bradley, feared being prosecuted. "They would always say they were so sorry," Marsha says. Bradley was secretly considering paying the ransom himself, provided that the prisoner demand could be dropped. "If it were my child, I would pay, whether it was against the law or not," he said. "But, since it was not my child, I decided it was not my place. It was a sixty-forty decision."

There had been a threat, in July, that Kayla would be killed in thirty days if the ransom wasn't paid. But August 14th, her birthday, passed with her still alive. The tone of the demands for Kayla softened. "We feel they really did want to release Kayla," Carl says. Yet the captors' demands expanded to include both the release of a female Al Qaeda prisoner held in the U.S. and a halt to the bombing of ISIS positions. The F.B.I. crafted replies to each message that Carl and Marsha received. "They were writing the communications, and we'd just hit 'send,'" Carl says. The agency focussed on lowering the expectations of the captors, and never made a proper counter-offer.

Meanwhile, in Qatar, Ghanem al-Kubaisi summoned one of his operatives in Syria. He wanted a message passed to ISIS: "We hear you're going to kill Kayla. Before you do, let us know. We might be interested." Kubaisi heard back that the hostage-takers did not yet intend to kill her.

According to several freed hostages, Kayla was not tortured or sexually abused. Didier François, the French journalist, sometimes heard Kayla asking her jailers for fruit or sanitary napkins. The male hostages wondered who she was. At one point, they heard a guard say that she was Muslim, and Kayla corrected him.

The guard was impressed. "She's stronger than you," the guard told another prisoner. "She doesn't pretend."

In October, 2014, a Yazidi girl in her mid-teens turned up at a U.S. Special Operations command center in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to *Foreign Policy*, she had been taken as a slave by Abu Sayyaf, a senior ISIS commander, along with two women—one of them Kayla Mueller. The Yazidi girl had escaped, but she told American interrogators that Kayla had stayed behind to take care of the other hostage, who was older and may have been wounded by shrapnel. The girl knew Kayla well enough to describe a tattoo of an owl feather that Kayla had on her torso.

Two months later, Navy SEALs attempted to rescue two hostages—an American photojournalist, Luke Somers, and a South African teacher, Pierre Korkie—in Yemen, where Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was holding them. During the raid, the captors killed both hostages. President Obama said that he authorized the raid because the captors had threatened to kill Somers within seventy-two hours; the South African, however, had been ransomed and was about to be freed. Carl and Marsha Mueller had previously told the White House that they supported a raid to save Kayla, but now they stressed that they wished to be consulted before such an attempt. "We had David and his team—we had people in Qatar and London and here working on things," Carl says. "We didn't want to have a plan in place and then have Kayla killed."

Bradley had been working his diplomatic contacts, and one day he got a call from the chief of staff for Qatar's foreign minister, claiming good news: "Kayla has converted and is married. She is happily living with a family and doesn't want to come home."

"You don't believe that, do you?" Bradley said. He couldn't imagine that Kayla would not want to see her parents.

"Is that what you'd like me to communicate to the foreign minister?" the chief of staff asked.

"Exactly."

But there were rumors from other sources that Kayla was indeed married. The F.B.I. told Bradley's team that she had been seen living in a "home-type

environment.” This intelligence had apparently come from the Yazidi teen-ager.

Kubaisi and Ali Soufan suspected that the story of Kayla’s marriage was a negotiating tactic—a way out for ISIS, which could say, “We don’t have her. Go talk to her husband.” It might also provide the U.S. government or private individuals with a way to dodge the ransom problem.

Suddenly, an opportunity arose. In December, 2014, news broke that Lebanese authorities had arrested Baghdad’s alleged former wife and one of his children, who were trying to slip into Syria using false identification. There was a discussion of a prisoner exchange involving captured Lebanese soldiers. Soufan flew to Doha, where he and Kubaisi discussed the possibility of adding Kayla’s name to the list of prisoners to be swapped. Then Soufan told Bradley that the Muellers should come to Qatar right away.

Carl and Marsha packed their best clothes, called their son to pick up their dog, and rushed to the Phoenix airport. They arrived in Qatar nearly twenty hours later, shortly before midnight. Several government officials were waiting for them, along with Soufan, whom they hadn’t met before. They all got into Mercedes sedans and drove into Doha. The whole city seemed to be under construction. Carl felt that he was in the twenty-second century.

Soufan had not explained what prompted his summons, and the opportunity to do so had already passed: that day, the Qatari foreign minister had cancelled talks after one of the Lebanese soldiers was killed by jihadis. But Soufan felt that Carl and Marsha could still take advantage of being in Qatar. He introduced them to Kubaisi, who wept as he heard Kayla’s story and learned of her humanitarian deeds. “It was very emotional for me,” he admits. Privately, he hoped that—even with the complication of the ransom prohibition—he would one day escort Kayla home.

The Muellers were staying in a five-star hotel jammed with people attending a convention of political and economic figures. The next morning, when Carl went downstairs for breakfast, he was seized with paranoia. Everywhere he turned were Arabs in traditional dress. “I was beside myself,” he says. “Who

were these people? Were they going to kidnap me? We went back to the room and tried to take a nap.”

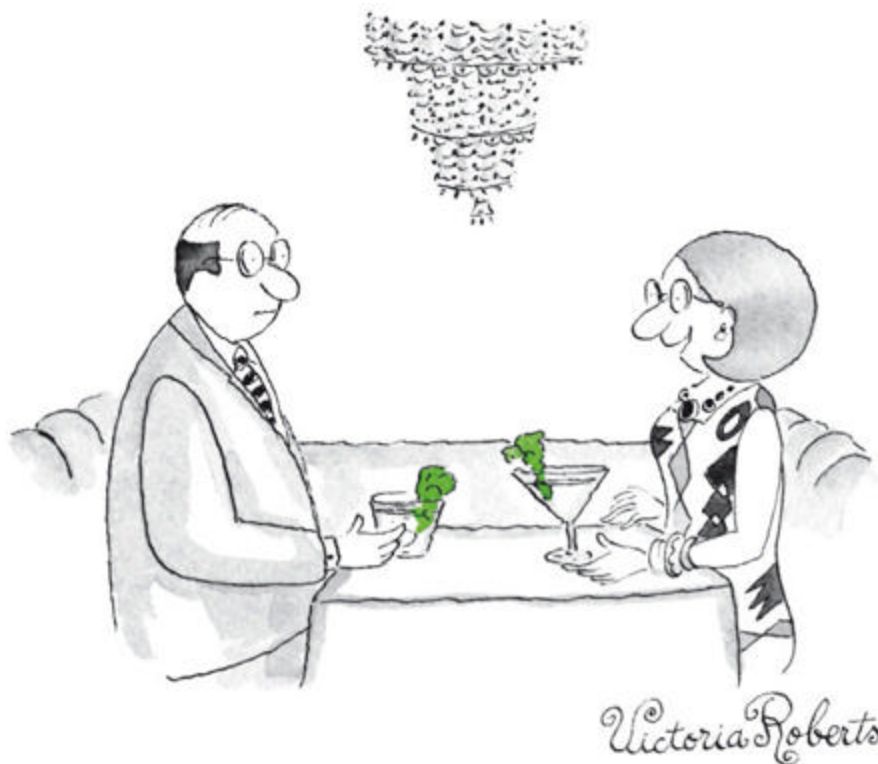
That morning, the Muellers met with Kubaisi’s deputy director, Abdullah al-Assiri. The Qataris seemed puzzled by America’s reluctance to pay ransoms. “I don’t know anything about this,” Carl said. “I’m an auto-body man.” Assiri took Carl to his cousin’s house to show off an impressive car collection, and talked about drag racing, a passion of Carl’s. Assiri persuaded Carl and Marsha to stay a few more days, to get to know the country. They were moved to another five-star hotel. Carl noticed the Lamborghinis and the Aston-Martins parked outside. “It impressed on me the kind of people we were in with,” he says. When they entered their immense suite, the television displayed a message: “Welcome! General al-Kubaisi.” Carl finally felt that the government was taking care of him—only it wasn’t his government.

Wars are a beacon to idealists and adventurers and thugs, but also to a kind of tourist, who is drawn to conflict for obscure personal reasons. Experienced reporters usually keep their distance from such people, because their naiveté not only gets them in trouble; it

can get others killed. Such a tragic chain of events began in the summer of 2014, when Haruna Yukawa, a forty-two-year-old Japanese citizen who called himself a security consultant, crossed the Syrian border.

The first person he put in jeopardy was a man he deeply admired, Kenji Goto, a Japanese journalist and pacifist. They had met in Syria in the spring of 2014, when Yukawa passed through a camp of the Free Syrian Army, where Goto was reporting. That August, Yukawa was taken into captivity by ISIS. Goto apparently felt obliged to try to free his inexperienced countryman. The two Japanese turned up again in January, 2015, kneeling at the feet of Jihadi John, who demanded two hundred million dollars within seventy-two hours. It was the same amount that Japan’s Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, had pledged in the fight against ISIS. When the deadline expired, Yukawa was beheaded.

On a video, Goto read a statement saying that ISIS wanted to exchange him for an Iraqi woman, Sajida Mubarak Atrous al-Rishawi, who had participated in the 2005 hotel suicide bombings in Amman, which killed more than fifty people. (Rishawi’s suicide belt failed to detonate.) It is one of the most



“There’s kale in every dish here, but you don’t even taste it.”



"You should be aware that we already have a strong in-house candidate."

notorious terrorist events in Jordan's history. The swap didn't happen. Goto was killed.

There was a hostage the Jordanians were willing to exchange for Rishawi, however: Moaz al-Kasasbeh, a pilot in the Jordanian Air Force, whose F-16 had crashed near Raqqa on Christmas Eve. The Jordanians asked for proof of life before initiating an exchange. ISIS could not provide it. On February 3rd, the group released a video of Kasasbeh being burned alive inside a cage. Rishawi was hanged in revenge the next day.

These deaths were a prelude to one more.

When Carl Mueller got the news, he called the sheriff. The local police had already made plans, in the event of Kayla's death, to seal off the road that leads to the Muellers' house, in the red granite hills outside Prescott.

On February 6, 2015, ISIS tweeted that Kayla had been killed in a bombing by the Jordanian Air Force. The U.S. and Jordanian governments denied this, although the building where she was supposedly killed—a weapons-storage facility—had been struck by coalition aircraft. Carl and Marsha asked Kayla's captors to provide proof of her death. ISIS sent them several photographs of her corpse. The captors called Kayla "our sister."

It was two days after the hanging of

Rishawi, in Jordan, and most people on Bradley's team suspected that Kayla had actually been murdered in reprisal. Carl and Marsha agreed. (Lisa Monaco, the homeland-security adviser, suggested to me that Kayla had died in a bombing of unknown provenance. "We have no information that it was one of ours," she said. "Nor was there any information to support the claims that it was a Jordanian plane.")

"You must share the same deep sadness and sense of defeat that Kayla's execution brings to me," Bradley wrote to his team. "While there was Kayla still to save, it was possible to look forward after Jim, then Steve, then Peter's death. But, now, it's hard to look any direction but back, at the string of defeats and unending pain created at the hands of ISIS. I don't have anything good to say here. It feels like evil won."

On Jim Foley's birthday, October 18th—two months after he was killed—a memorial service was held at his church, in New Hampshire. Theo Padnos attended, and afterward he asked Katherine Bradley, "Why did your husband save me?" She responded, "Because Jim Foley wrote a second thank-you letter."

Recently, Marsha Mueller's sisters came to Arizona for a visit. They went into Kayla's room. In the closet, there is a trunk filled with dozens of diaries. Carl has been slowly going through them.

When Marsha placed something on one of the closet shelves, a bag fell down. It contained Kayla's ponytail, which she had left for Marsha to give to Locks of Love.

The Foleys sent the Sotloffs a magnolia sapling, which Art planted in his back yard, next to a towering palm tree that he and Steven had grown from a coconut when Steven was a boy. Sometimes, Art sits beside the magnolia and has conversations with Steven. "Why'd you do that?" he asks. One night, he thought that he heard Shirley listening to television. She was online, watching Steven's execution. Art said, "They don't really show it." Shirley responded, "You see his neck, you see his foot move."

Ed Kassig told me, "I have friends who say we'll get back to doing stuff the way we used to do. That's gone. Now we're looking for a new normal, and where that will be, frankly, I don't know."

According to the F.B.I., hundreds of Americans are kidnapped abroad every year. Currently, thirty-one Americans are being held overseas, a number that includes those taken by drug cartels and other criminal elements. Joshua Boyle and Caitlin Coleman, a married couple, disappeared in Afghanistan in 2012 and are presumed to be held by the Haqqani network. Austin Tice, a photojournalist from Houston, went missing in Syria in August, 2012, several months before Jim Foley was taken. There may be others, but the White House refuses to specify how many Americans are being held by foreign terrorist organizations.

Political kidnappings pose a dilemma for U.S. Presidents. Americans in captivity can, in a sense, hold the entire country hostage. Jimmy Carter's Presidency was destroyed by the Iranian hostage crisis. Ronald Reagan was personally invested in the plight of American families who had relatives held in Lebanon, and members of his Administration authorized the secret sale of arms to Iran, leading to the Iran-Contra scandal. Since then, Administrations have kept Presidents from getting too close to such situations. Obama's predicament was particularly delicate: he had the choice of protecting thousands of Yazidis and Kurds at the risk of a few American lives. It was a gamble

that he lost, although it might not have made any difference for Foley, Sotloff, and Kassig.

After the Americans were executed, the U.S. government initiated a policy review, led by the White House and coordinated by Lieutenant General Benet Sacolick, the director for strategic operational planning at the National Counterterrorism Center.

Sacolick commanded the Delta Force during the second Iraq War. One of his jobs was rescuing hostages. “We never had one killed,” he says. His personal view is: “If I ever get taken, I want those guys to rescue me.” As an Army man, he adds, “It’s got to be the Green Berets.”

For the policy review, two dozen American hostage families were interviewed about their experiences with the government. Recently, a proposal went to the White House for Obama’s approval. It envisions the creation of a “hostage recovery fusion cell,” initially led by the F.B.I., with deputies from State and Defense. These officials would report to a new division of the National Security Council: the hostage-response group. The goal is to fold the expertise of various agencies into a single government unit that will be represented at a high level in the White House. “What we saw in our review was that our hostage policy and the mechanisms in government for engaging with the families were constructed for a different era,” Lisa Monaco told me. Third-party efforts, like that of Bradley’s team, will have a greater voice, and efforts will be made to share information more freely. “Nothing is going to be satisfactory to parents unless they get their kids back,” Monaco says. “But we gotta do better.”

The no-ransom policy was never up for review. “The U.S. government will not pay ransoms or make concessions, but it’s not going to abandon families when they make private, independent decisions about engaging or negotiating with hostage-takers,” Monaco said. “What guides us is a focus on the families’ safety and security—are they in jeopardy, are they going to be defrauded?”

I asked Ben Rhodes, the deputy national-security adviser, what he thought the government’s responsibility was when Americans are kidnapped abroad. “We have two obligations,” he said. “One is

we warn our citizens beforehand about places where they may face greater risk. We also have a responsibility to any American citizen to do what we can to get them home.”

Whatever diplomacy the State Department engaged in, it was ineffectual, although Secretary John Kerry made numerous calls, some of them at Bradley’s request. Bradley’s team, along with the journalists on the Turkish border, repeatedly produced leads that the F.B.I. failed to pursue. When Padnos came home, he was surprised to discover that his iPhone, which had been confiscated by his captors, could still be digitally monitored. He could track the phone’s location through various apps that were being used. Jim Foley had also carried an iPhone; April Goble had given it to him. A year after his kidnapping, she asked an F.B.I. agent if he was following the phone. “Have you got the serial number?” he asked. Even without using the Find My iPhone app, intelligence agencies can locate mobile phones, and can eavesdrop on conversations while the phones are turned off.

The July, 2014, raid on the Raqqa facility may have been a masterpiece of coordination, as General Sacolick called it, but it came too late. The intelligence community was slow to contribute drones and other tools that might have helped the military act more quickly. (The White House told the *Wall Street Journal* that the military’s sole request for drone surveillance came just before the Raqqa raid.) The government’s greatest failure, however, was its handling of five American families under extraordinary duress. Bradley’s team did not succeed in bringing four of those children home, but it did give the families hope and comfort.

Bradley has been trying to learn from his experience. When hostages are taken, U.S. government officials often consider the families and their advocates a distraction; yet such people frequently have resources and networks at hand, and they bring a commitment that is unequalled. “Washington might benefit from positively encouraging this public-private partnership,” Bradley says. “The majesty of the American government—plus all its protocols and procedures—can make for slow going. Whereas the

rest of us can pick up the phone to call, say, a just-released Italian hostage, the government must labor through diplomatic channels. I don’t envy them.”

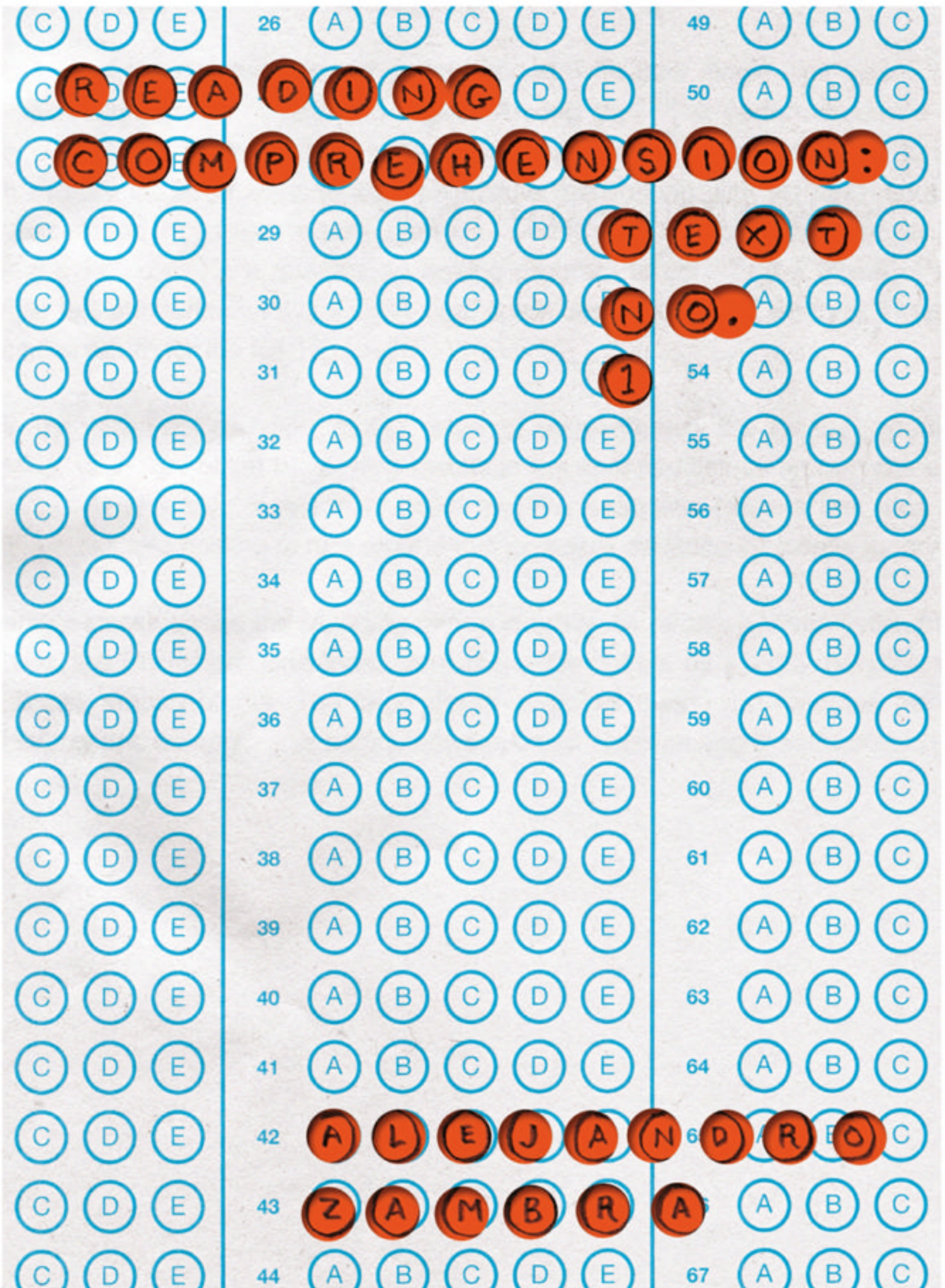
On May 16th, seven months after learning of Kayla Mueller’s presence in the Abu Sayyaf household, the Delta Force conducted a raid that killed Abu Sayyaf and about a dozen fighters. The raiders also captured Abu Sayyaf’s wife, Umm Sayyaf. American intelligence believes that she was selling female captives as slaves.

Marsha and Carl Mueller think that the U.S. government was leading them on by asking them to send so many e-mails to Kayla’s captors. “What is so hard for us is that we had a way to get her home through negotiation, but it was used to stall in hopes of finding these people and getting them,” Marsha says. After Kayla’s death, representatives from the F.B.I. and the State Department asked the Muellers to sanction a reward for information leading to the capture of Kayla’s kidnappers. The reward would be between five million and seven million dollars—about the same as the ransom demand. Carl and Marsha declined.

Theo Padnos sometimes feels burdened by the fact that he remains alive. He is still in touch with his captors, who he thinks might have been able to intercede with ISIS to free the other hostages. Often, when he was in captivity, he imagined being in a bicycle race in which he’d dropped out of the pack, forcing him to finish on his own. “Which brings me to Kayla Mueller,” he wrote, in a blog post. “She seems to have been in a mood similar to mine during her captivity. I’m sure she also spent a lot of time in private, telepathic conversations with her family.” Padnos quoted from her letter:

None of us could have known it would be this long but know I am also fighting from my side in the ways I am able + I have a lot of fight left inside of me. I am not breaking down + I will not give in no matter how long it takes.

“I’m gonna stop for a moment and talk to you directly, Kayla,” Padnos wrote. “If you happen to be reading this, which I think is just maybe possible, I want to tell you: I’m so sorry we let you down. I just cannot imagine how we could have done this. Sweetheart, take care of yourself. O.K.?” ♦



After so many study guides, so many practice tests and proficiency and achievement tests, it would have been impossible for us not to learn something, but we forgot everything almost right away and, I'm afraid, for good. The thing that we did learn, and to perfection—the thing that we would remember for the rest of our lives—was how to copy on tests. Here I could easily ad-lib an homage to the cheat sheet, all the test material reproduced in tiny but legible script on a minuscule bus ticket. But that admirable workmanship would have been worth very little if we hadn't also had the all-important skill and audacity when the crucial moment came: the instant the teacher lowered his guard and the ten or twenty golden seconds began.

At our school in particular, which in theory was the strictest in Chile, it turned out that copying was fairly easy, since many of the tests were multiple choice. We still had years to go before taking the Academic Aptitude Test and applying to university, but our teachers wanted to familiarize us right away with multiple-choice exercises, and although they designed up to four different versions of every test, we always found a way to pass information along. We didn't have to write anything or form opinions or develop any ideas of our own; all we had to do was play the game and guess the trick. Of course we studied, sometimes a lot, but it was never enough. I guess the idea was to lower our morale. Even if we did nothing but study, we knew that there would always be two or three impossible questions. We didn't complain. We got the message: cheating was just part of the deal.

I think that, thanks to our cheating, we were able to let go of some of our individualism and become a community. It's sad to put it like that, but copying gave us solidarity. Every once in a while we suffered from guilt, from the feeling that we were frauds—especially when we looked ahead to the future—but our indolence and defiance prevailed.

We didn't have to take religion—the grade didn't affect our averages—but getting out of it was a long bureaucratic process, and Mr. Segovia's classes were really fun. He'd go on and on in an endless soliloquy about any subject but religion; his favorite, in fact, was sex, and the teachers at our school he wanted to

have it with. Every class we'd do a quick round of confessions: each of us had to disclose a sin, and after listening to all forty-five—which ranged from *I kept the change* to *I want to grab my neighbor's tits* and *I jacked off during recess*, always a classic—the teacher would tell us that none of our sins were unforgivable.

I think it was Cordero who confessed one day that he had copied someone's answers in math, and since Segovia didn't react we all contributed variations of the same: *I copied on the Spanish test, on the science test, on the P.E. test* (laughter), and so on. Segovia, suppressing a smile, said that he forgave us, but that we had to make sure we didn't get caught, because that would really be unforgivable. Suddenly, though, he became serious. "If you are all so dishonest at twelve," he said, "at forty you're going to be worse than the Covarrubias twins." We asked him who the Covarrubias twins were, and he looked as if he were going to tell us, but then he thought better of it. We kept at him, but he didn't want to explain. Later, we asked other teachers and even the guidance counsellor, but no one wanted to tell us the story. The reasons were diffuse: it was a secret, a delicate subject, possibly something that would damage the school's impeccable reputation. We soon forgot the matter, in any case.

Five years later, it was 1993 and we were seniors. One day, when Cordero, Parraguez, little Carlos, and I were playing hooky, we ran into Mr. Segovia coming out of the Tarapacá pool hall. He wasn't a teacher anymore; he was a Metro conductor now, and it was his day off. He treated us to Coca-Colas, and ordered a shot of pisco for himself, though it was early to start drinking. It was then that he finally told us the story of the Covarrubias twins.

Covarrubias family tradition dictated that the firstborn son should be named Luis Antonio, but when Covarrubias senior found out that twins were on the way he decided to divide his name between them. During their first years of life, Luis and Antonio Covarrubias enjoyed—or suffered through—the excessively equal treatment that parents tend to give to twins: the same haircut, the same clothes, the same class in the same school.

When the twins were ten years old, Covarrubias senior installed a partition

in their room, and he sawed cleanly through the old bunk bed to make two identical single beds. The idea was to give the twins a certain amount of privacy, but the change wasn't all that significant, because they still talked through the partition every night before falling asleep. They inhabited different hemispheres now, but it was a small planet.

When the twins were twelve they entered the National Institute, and that was their first real separation. Since the seven hundred and twenty incoming seventh graders were distributed randomly, the twins were placed in different classes for the first time ever. They felt pretty lost in that school, which was so huge and impersonal, but they were strong and determined to persevere in their new lives. Despite the relentless avalanche of looks and stupid jokes from their classmates ("I think I'm seeing double!"), they always met at lunch to eat together.

At the end of seventh grade, they had to choose between fine art and music; they both chose art, in the hope that they'd be placed together, but they were out of luck. At the end of eighth grade, when they had to choose between French and English, they planned to go with French, which, as the minority choice, would practically insure that they'd be in the same class. But, after a sermon from Covarrubias senior about the importance of knowing English in today's savage and competitive world, they gave in. Things went no better for them in their freshman and sophomore years, when students were grouped based on ranking, even though they both had good grades.

For their junior year, the twins chose a humanities focus, and finally they were together: in Class 3-F. Being classmates again after four years apart was fun and strange. Their physical similarity was still extraordinary, although acne had been cruel to Luis's face, and Antonio was showing signs of wanting to stand out: his hair was long, or what passed for long back then, and the layer of gel that plastered it back gave him a less conventional appearance than his brother's. Luis kept the classic cut, military style, his hair two fingers above his shirt collar, as the regulations stipulated. Antonio also wore wider pants and, defying the rules, often went to school in black tennis shoes instead of dress shoes.

The twins sat together during the first

months of the school year. They protected and helped each other, though when they fought they seemed to hate each other, which, of course, is the most natural thing in the world: there are moments when we hate ourselves, and if we have someone in front of us who is almost exactly like us our hate is inevitably directed toward that person. But around the middle of the year, for no obvious reason, their fights became harsher, and, at the same time, Antonio lost all interest in his studies. Luis's life, on the other hand, continued along its orderly path. He kept his record spotless, and his grades were very good; in fact, he was first in his class that year. Incredibly, his brother was last and would have to repeat the grade, and that was how the twins' paths diverged again.

There was only one school counselor for more than four thousand students, but he took an interest in the twins' case and called their parents in for a meeting. He offered the theory, not necessarily true, that Antonio had been driven by an unconscious desire (the counselor explained to them, quickly and accurately, exactly what the unconscious was) not to be in the same class as his brother.

Luis sailed through his senior year with excellent grades, and he got outstanding scores on all the university entrance tests, especially History of Chile and Social Studies, on which he nearly got the highest score in the nation. He entered the University of Chile to study law, on a full scholarship.

The twins were never as distant from each other as they were during Luis's first months in college. Antonio was jealous when he saw his brother leaving for the university, free now of his uniform, while he was still stuck in high school. Some mornings their schedules coincided, but thanks to a tacit and elegant agreement—some version, perhaps, of the famous twin telepathy—they never boarded the same bus.

They avoided each other, barely greeting each other, though they knew that their estrangement couldn't last forever. One night, when Luis was already in his second semester of law, Antonio started talking to him again through the partition. "How's college?" he asked.

"In what sense?"

"The girls," Antonio clarified.

"Oh, there are some really hot girls,"

Luis replied, trying not to sound boastful.

"Yeah, I know there are girls, but how do you do it?"

"How do we do what?" said Luis, who, deep down, knew exactly what his brother was asking.

"How do you fart with girls around?"

"Well, you just have to hold it in," Luis answered.

They spent that night, as they had when they were children, talking and laughing while they competed with their farts and their burps, and from then on they were once again inseparable. They kept up the illusion of independence, especially from Monday to Friday, but on weekends they always went out together, matched each other drink for drink, and played tricks switching places, taking advantage of the fact that, thanks to Luis's newly long hair and now clear skin, their physical resemblance was almost absolute again.

Antonio's academic performance had improved a great deal, but he still wasn't a model student and toward the end of his senior year he began to get anxious. Though he felt prepared for the aptitude test, he wasn't sure that he would be able to score high enough to study law at the University of Chile, like his brother. The idea was Antonio's, naturally, but Luis accepted right away, without blackmail or conditions, and without an ounce of fear, since at no point did he consider it possible that they would be found out. In December of that year, Luis Covarrubias registered, presenting his brother Antonio's I.D. card, to take the test for the second time, and he gave it his all. He tried so hard that he got even better scores than he had the year before: in fact, he received the nation's highest score on the Social Studies test.

But none of us have twin brothers," Cordero said that afternoon, when Segovia finished his story. It may have been drizzling or raining, I don't remember, but I know that the teacher was wearing a blue raincoat. He got up to buy cigarettes, and when he came back to our table he stayed on his feet, maybe to reestablish a protocol that had been lost: the teacher stands, the students sit. "You'll still come out ahead," he told us. "You all don't know how privileged you are."

"Because we go to the National Institute?" I asked.

He puffed anxiously on his cigarette, perhaps already somewhat drunk, and he

was silent for so long that it was no longer necessary to answer me, but then an answer came. "The National Institute is rotten, but the world is rotten," he said. "They prepared you for this, for a world where everyone fucks everyone over. You'll do well on the test, very well, don't worry: you all weren't educated; you were trained." It sounded aggressive, but there was no contempt in his tone, or, at least, none directed at us.

We were quiet; it was late by then, almost nighttime. He sat down, looking absorbed, thoughtful. "I didn't get a high score," he said, when it seemed that there wouldn't be any more words. "I was the best in my class, in my whole school. I never cheated on an exam, but I bombed the aptitude test, so I had to study religious pedagogy. I didn't even believe in God."

I asked him if now, as a Metro conductor, he earned more money. "Twice as much," he replied. I asked him if he believed in God now, and he answered that yes, now more than ever, he believed in God. I never forgot, I'll never forget his gesture then: with a lit cigarette between his index and middle fingers, he looked at the back of his hand as if searching for his veins, and then he turned it over, as if to make sure that his life, head, and heart lines were still there.

We said goodbye as if we were or had once been friends. He went into the cinema, and we headed down Bulnes toward Parque Almagro to smoke a few joints.

I never heard anything more about Segovia. Sometimes, in the Metro, when I get into the first car, I look toward the conductor's booth and imagine that our teacher is in there, pressing buttons and yawning. As for the Covarrubias twins, they've gained a certain amount of fame, and, as I understand it, they never separated again. They became identical lawyers; I hear that it's hard to tell which is the more brilliant and which the more corrupt. They have a firm in Vitacura, and they charge the same rate. They charge what such good service is worth: a lot.

QUESTIONS:

1. According to the text, the Covarrubias twins' experience in their new school:

(A) Marked their final break with the values that their parents had instilled in them.

(B) Was traumatic, because it forced them to make rash decisions and separated them for good.

(C) Gradually shaped them into individuals who would be useful in Chilean society.

(D) Transformed two good and supportive brothers into unscrupulous sons of bitches.

(E) Marked the start of a difficult period, from which they emerged stronger and ready to compete in this ruthless and materialistic world.

2. The best title for this story would be:

(A) "How to Train Your Twin"

(B) "To Sir, with Love"

(C) "Me and My Shadow"

(D) "Against Lawyers"

(E) "Against Twin Lawyers"

3. Regarding multiple-choice tests, the author affirms that:

I. They were in standard use at that particular school in order to prepare students for the university entrance exams.

II. It was easier to cheat on those tests, any way you looked at it.

III. They did not require you to develop your own thinking.

IV. With multiple-choice tests, the teachers didn't have to make themselves sick in the head by grading all weekend.

V. The correct choice is almost always D.

(A) I and II

(B) I, III, and V

(C) II and V

(D) I, II, and III

(E) I, II, and IV

4. The fact that Mr. Luis Antonio Covarrubias divided his name between his twin sons indicates that he was:

(A) Innovative

(B) Ingenious

(C) Unbiased

(D) Masonic

(E) Moronic

5. One can infer from the text that the teachers at the school:

(A) Were mediocre and cruel, because they adhered unquestioningly to a rotten educational model.



"From nine until one, you'll be getting nothing done. From one until five, you'll be asking yourself how that was possible."

(B) Were cruel and severe: they liked to torture the students by overloading them with homework.

(C) Were deadened by sadness, because they got paid shit.

(D) Were cruel and severe, because they were sad. Everyone was sad back then.

(E) My bench mate marked C, so I'm going to mark C as well.

6. From this text, one understands that:

(A) The students copied on tests because they lived under a dictatorship, and that justified everything.

(B) Copying on tests isn't so bad as long as you're smart about it.

(C) Copying on tests is part of the learning process for any human being.

(D) The students with the worst scores on the university entrance exams often become religion teachers.

(E) Religion teachers are fun, but they don't necessarily believe in God.

7. The purpose of this story is:

(A) To suggest a possible work opportunity for Chilean students who perform well academically but are poor (there aren't many, but they do exist): they could take tests for students who are lazy and rich.

(B) To expose security problems in the administration of the university entrance exams, and also to promote a business venture related to biometric readings, or some other system for definitively verifying the identity of students.

(C) To promote an expensive law firm. And to entertain.

(D) To legitimate the experience of a generation that could be summed up as "a band of cheaters." And to entertain.

(E) To erase the wounds of the past.

8. Which of Mr. Segovia's following statements is, in your opinion, true?

(A) You all weren't educated; you were trained.

(B) You all weren't educated; you were trained.

(C) You all weren't educated; you were trained.

(D) You all weren't educated; you were trained.

(E) You all weren't educated; you were trained. ♦

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

NEWYORKER.COM

Alejandro Zambra on this week's fiction.

THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

JUNE, MOON, TUNE

What is this thing called love?

BY ADAM GOPNIK

On a freezing noon hour in April, people gather in Central Park, as they do each year, to read and listen to Shakespeare's sonnets, complete, out loud, and in sequence. Together, the readers narrate, episodically, one of the strangest love stories on record. First, the poet urges a handsome young man to get married and have sex with a woman not from love or even lust, the woman remaining unnamed and unpictured, but, weirdly, from a selfish desire to make more kids as good-looking as he is. Then the poet confesses that he is in love with the young man, while trying to convince himself that good looks have a good moral effect in the world. The next set is all about the poet wanting desperately to have sex with a dark-haired woman—but then, having done it, the poet feels so insanely guilty about it that he doesn't enjoy it anymore, or enjoys it only as he is actually doing it, while before and after he feels awful. There is a lot of obscure traveling back and forth, and exchanging of gifts, which tends to confirm a sense that the poet is of lesser social station than the one written to, or about. Then he sighs and shrugs, and makes a few puns about Eros. Not only is the story strange; it is also told in a language that, though lucid line by line, seems in each poem ambiguous to the point of murk. The poetic conceits tend to get cancelled even as they're introduced: the poet can't say that his mistress's eyes are like the sun without saying that they aren't. Among the enigmas, lines of an

unreal, fairy-tale beauty emerge: "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes"; "I summon up remembrance of things past"; "That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows/whereon the stars in secret influence comment"; "Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul/Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

"Love songs, nothing but love songs," the old FM station used to advertise, and stern indie-minded music lovers sneered as they went by toward... other love songs, sung by indie-minded singers. The love song, whether from Shakespeare or his lessers, is to the currency of our feelings what the dollar bill is to our economy, the dining-room table to our family life—the necessary, inevitable thing. Exactly because everything is a love song, we sigh at another one, even as we prepare to sing it. There's a story in which the great grump George S. Kaufman, hearing the first, satirical words of the Gershwins' "They All Laughed" ("They all laughed at Christopher Columbus/When he said the world was round;/They all laughed when Edison recorded sound"), hoped against hope that this one, please, was *not* a love song. Then the Ira Gershwin lyric made its way to the inevitable turnaround ("They laughed at me wanting you"), and Kaufman sighed and surrendered. They all are.

The usual path of art-to-people is from particular experience to universal recognition—I saw a rose! Now you've seen it, too—but love poems and songs

must honor a sense of singularity. What we feel for Daisy or Darren may be what everyone feels for his or her own Daisy or Darren. But what we feel *about* what we feel for Daisy is all our own. Though repetition and stereotype might seem to be the bane of the formalized love song, Ted Gioia's new book, "Love Songs: The Hidden History" (Oxford), shows that the flow of them never ceases, and insists that, properly heard, each love song sings its time. Gioia's book runs from Sappho's lyrics on Lesbos to hip-hop in the South Bronx. He invites the critic's cliché "wonderfully erudite," and earns it, not to mention the even cheaper critical term "provocative," though he earns that, too. He makes you think. Often, what he makes you think is that he's wrong, but you have had to think your way through to that conclusion.

Beneath the great love songs, he tells us, are not great singular loves but great social lurches. They happen when continents collide and sexual orders are subverted—the great age of the troubadours, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for instance, reflects both the hybrid vigor that arose after the Muslim conquest of Iberia and a (rare) moment when women's desire got heard. Eleanor of Aquitaine may or may not have played a central role in promoting the cult of courtly love and its songs, but she exemplifies the period; in the early Middle Ages, Gioia tells us, women were known to be the "main propagators of European love songs." The male troubadours, in his view, provide another instance of "men assuming a dominant position in a musical field after women had made the visionary—and often transgressive—first steps." For him, it is a paradigm instance. "Hound Dog" will always have been sung by brave Big Mama Thornton until the Elvis of the age gets his tongue around it—and then, all the way out in Liverpool, John Lennon hears it, misunderstands it in some fruitful way, and the process of subversion and sanitizing starts again.

Gioia's book covers a tremendous amount of ground and gives you something to remember on almost every page. Who can forget the cautious troubadour singing of his patron's wife, "For her body is beautiful and pleasing and



Sonnets and songs about love capture the real commonality of the experience while flattering our sense of its singularity.



white beneath her clothes. I say this only on the basis of my imagination,” along with many other small human and lyrical oddities? Still, Gioia casts a cold, unexcitable eye on matters that might better be seen with a warmer and more excitable one. And he has a weakness for the “beneath the sweet surface lies something subversive and squalid” school of popular-music criticism. At one moment, he quotes songs created by female slaves and asks sternly if the situation of slaves singing songs for their Muslim masters is “really so different from the current day when the love songs we hear on the radio or in concert are performed for pay and not as a reward for our individual charms and lovemaking skills.” Elsewhere, he writes that Frank Sinatra “added new levels of irony, sometimes outright cynicism, to the emotional immediacy of the torch singers, and the end result was something new: a performance that delivered the inner meaning of the lyric while also offer-

ing an arch commentary on it.” But having fun with an emotion is not at all the same thing as *making* fun of it. Sinatra is the master of that difference.

Gioia, on some level, knows better. About the explosion of courtly-love numbers in the eleventh century and after, he writes, “We do well to remember that gems and nuggets sometimes appear on the surface. . . . If our study of the history of love songs so far has taught us anything, it should be that the romantic and erotic imagination constantly seeks to express itself in music, and does not require external justification.” But the external justifications keep coming, and the best love songs, he’s inclined to think, mock rather than serve the conventional ideas of affection and attraction.

Constantly searching sentimental literature for unsentimental or “subversive” instances seems a perverse occupation, like scanning a nursery for ugly babies. The interesting question about babies is what makes them so cute, and

the interesting question about love songs is why so many of them have such an unreasonable hold on our imagination. “Yesterday” is the most covered song ever written, and would not have been better if it were more realistically disabused about *why* she had to go. He doesn’t know; she wouldn’t say. That’s the love song. Sentiment, after all, is just the grumpy guy’s word for love.

Or is love just the sentimentalist’s word for sex? This is what makes the fascination with Shakespeare’s sonnets so understandable. Of all the great love lyrics, Shakespeare’s sonnets are the most relentlessly mysterious and even mystical in expression, and the most entirely carnal and physical in foundation. We want them to be all about love and keep finding that they are all about sex.

They are also, perhaps for that reason, the most often argued-over sequence of love poems in any language. We know that they were being circulated in manuscript when Shakespeare was a youngish man—Francis Meres, in 1598, refers to the poet’s “sugred sonnets among his private friends.” But who put them together; what prompted Thomas Thorpe to publish them, in 1609; whether the publication had the poet’s approval: these are all conundrums.

In a new book, “Ideas of Order: A Close Reading of Shakespeare’s Sonnets” (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), Neil Rudenstine, a former president of Harvard and a scholar of Renaissance literature, argues that Shakespeare assembled the sonnets not higgledy-piggledy, as they may appear, but in calm and deliberate order, and that a larger pattern can be described in the sequence. One should always be wary of a book by a scholar insisting that there is a pattern where before none has been seen, since scholars have an overwhelmingly strong confirmation bias in favor of patterns—finding patterns is what scholars *do*. The great art historian Leo Steinberg found the “line of fate” in the Sistine Chapel, which skewered figures from separate scenes into occult sentences, with the same excitement with which Percival Lowell had once found canals on the surface of Mars. These were illusory—but, more important,

irrelevant. Interpretation is the teasing out into articulate words of a complicated sensation or experience. It's not often the discovery of some other, completely different experience that the surface of the work was hiding.

Rudenshine, in search of his pattern—roughly, that the sonnets deliberately develop, as with a musical theme, the poet's friendship with that noble youth, from buoyant affection and loyalty to disappointment and disenchantment, and that each of these emotions depends, to be properly apprehended, on our knowledge of the ones just past—has no time for the old biographical questions that entangle the sonnets. Who *is* that mysterious Mr. W.H. to whom Thomas Thorpe, or perhaps Shakespeare himself, dedicates the sonnets? Who is the Youth? Is the dark lady actually the poet Emilia Lanier, as the eccentric British scholar A. L. Rowse insisted (an identification that led to the discovery of Lanier as a poet of real merit, to the point that the feminist critics who revere her hesitate to mention the Shakespeare connection, for fear of Yoko-izing her)? And who's the rival poet? Marlowe is the likeliest candidate, but his gayness raises complicated questions.

A favorite scholarly idea is that these questions mistake Shakespeare's real purpose, which was to invent a group of characters in order to play with Petrarchan conventions. Yet nobody writes poems like the one beginning "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame" as a desk exercise. A working poet like Shakespeare is usually too busy to have sabbaticals for scholarly inquiry into verse types and genre blendings. The pressure of immediate experience is felt on every page and in every poem of the 1609 book. The muddle of metaphors that the poet often wades into is proof of this—he starts in one direction, finds his experience checking it, makes a turn, and, with a sighing rhyme, ends the poem. The old-fashioned critics who saw the sonnets as a journal of responses to a set of bewildering circumstances in the poet's life were surely more right than not. (And Shakespeare is *playing* Shakespeare, making up a voice fit for a poet talking to himself. It's particularly clear that it is Shakespeare, the middle-class

player from a small provincial town, who is doing the thinking; the anxiety about social status—most evident in the poem that begins "Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there./ And made myself a motley to the view,/ Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear"—is that of someone who once worried that he had sold out, exactly as a successful Hollywood screenwriter might have, half a century ago.)

The argument that Shakespeare participated in Thorpe's publication of the sonnets has become newly fashionable: we are told that Thorpe was far from being a pirate, that the manuscript seems closely proofed, etc. In order to justify the claim to pattern and order in the sonnet sequence, one has to accept some version of this belief. Yet the existence of Sonnet 145 in the series is strong counter-evidence, almost a smoking gun. Written in octosyllabics, very clearly juvenilia or apprentice work, it ends with a labored, flattering pun on the maiden name of Shakespeare's long-suffering wife, Anne Hathaway. (A provincial woman whose husband is off in London having it on with dark ladies and beautiful youths suffers, and for long.) Whether or not it is Shakespeare's first surviving poem, as some have argued, it is certainly a very early (and very bad) one. It is hard to imagine it as anything but an early poem to his first love, which somehow slipped in among the poet's other lyric



poems. This is the kind of thing that happens when poems circulate among friends in manuscript. Clinton Heylin, the Dylanologist and amateur scholar, has pointed out that they are very much like the Dylan bootlegs that circulated for years, with the singer's implicit toleration, if not his explicit endorsement. (The homoerotic themes are sufficiently conventionalized as to be inoffensive, the tributes of a devoted friend.)

And if Rudenshine is not entirely

persuasive in asking us to experience the tracings of a pattern, he is certainly right in asking us to see an inflation in effects, best witnessed in cumulative sequence. The sonnets are about sex in all its dimensions: sex as infatuation, sex as *baleful* infatuation (the poet always wanting out while, so to speak, wanting in), sex as recreation, sex as social hostage, sex as exhausting pleasure, sex as revenge, imagined sex and real sex. In the Shakespeare sonnets, sex turns out to be a varied enough activity to cover for a lot of talk about love.

Yet the dumb fact of lust is placed inside a girdle of allusions and alliterations. The music of the sonnets is rooted in Shakespeare's underrated mastery of repetition and its effects in turning sense to incantation, the second appearance of a word pointing toward something slightly different from the first, and making both words seem magical, as in the beautiful beginning of Sonnet 8: "Music to hear, why hears't thou music sadly? / Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy." Again and again (and again), Shakespeare finds in one word twice more than double the flavor.

The marriage of lulling sounds and lustful subject is, on the whole, the marriage that pop music makes. Fittingly, an entire Web site has blossomed solely to paraphrase contemporary love songs in Shakespearean sonnet garb. Conducted by one Erik Didriksen, who will be publishing a collection of these parodies this fall, the site Pop Sonnets benefits from Didriksen's perfect reproduction of the Jacobean typography and spelling. Still, one gets the idea by reading the rewrite of Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off":

My reputation's sown with rumors'
threads:
it's said that I carouse, am void of wit,
and have amassed more beaus than
Hydra's heads
yet cannot make a single one commit.

Which works its way around to:

For just as bakers must their loaves create
and thespians put on their fictive acts,
the ones who live in scorn shall
always hate
I'll from my shoulders shake their vile
attacks.

Significantly, the better the song, the more joyful the Bardic paraphrase,

as in this parody of the Beatles' famous anthem:

O, there are tasks impossible to bring
to resolution by a person's choice
the hymns that only cherubim can sing
cannot be sounded by a mortal voice....
To live—to care—to thine own self be
true—
all noble occupations done with ease
—if thou art guided by the simple creed
that love is all thy life doth truly need.

The jokes are delicious, but they are not on Britney Spears or Taylor Swift. Nor is the joke really on Shakespeare, whose language turns out to adapt so readily to shallow pop emotions. The joke is really on love, which has so often been this amalgam of low desire and high diction, even though the height of the diction may change with the centuries. We *always* wrap sex in sounds, raw appetite in rhythmic adjectives—wrapping Britney in the Bard is just a smart way of exposing the workings of the gimmick. As the critic William Empson wisely remarked, what Shakespeare continually shows is that life is essentially inadequate to the human spirit. Our truths are too meagre and mammal to rise to our hopes of what life ought to be. Love, especially, is inadequate to the human idea of it, but a good lover must avoid saying so. That's why he makes up songs.

Can love, and its songs, go on forever? "The special intensities of romantic love probably flourish most against a background of publicly supported conventions," the philosopher Bernard Williams wrote, in the nineteen-eighties. Without a set of contraries to rub up against, he meant, love is just a hookup. We always underestimate the degree of prohibition that love provokes. At a time when hooking up with boys becomes banal for teen-age girls, they sing of kissing other girls. Or the pursuit of teen-age monogamy becomes a story. (One young couple I know held on for four years, and officially broke up on the verge of college, not in a heat of misunderstanding but because it seemed wise: a royal divorce in the old dispensation—you give up attachment for long-range purposes of state, like Napoleon regretfully giving up Josephine.) In a circumstance where most of the old social barriers to sex are gone, new ones will necessarily emerge, some of them harsher-seeming to older eyes.

Of such things are new songs made. The comedian Aziz Ansari's book, "Modern Romance" (Penguin Press), is an attempt to map the barriers to love in a time of almost no taboos at all. For Ansari, whose book was written in collaboration with the N.Y.U. sociologist Eric Klinenberg—Klinenberg supplying the data, Ansari the jokes—those barriers are mostly technological. Love wends its way through a field of hostile gadgets, like a stream through competitive dams. The book's jokes depend to an astonishing degree on romantic snafus on Facebook and Twitter and Snapchat, as a similar book in the seventies would have turned to singles bars and singles clubs.

As a consequence, perhaps, Ansari's book seems short on *scenes*, funny extended romantic exchanges. Almost nothing happens in it. His love stuff is, to take a fair comparison, less detailed and surprising than that of the comedian Paul Reiser, who, twenty years ago, wrote a book about coupledness in the same kind of tone. When Reiser described how every couple cultivates a few funny stories to offer in informal competition with other people's funny stories—and how, as often as not, the only one left listening at the end is your partner, who has heard the story a million times before—some small, previously unseen piece of social comedy was netted and kept. Ansari, by contrast, favors "bits," rather than longer sketches: texting is a way of flirting; it has never been so easy to connect with the opposite sex as it is now, yet adultery has never been so easily detected—the pile of e-mails, texts, and "like"s leaves a trail. And so on.

Ansari does have a startling truth to brood on: he is the child of an arranged marriage—his parents both immigrated from Tamil Nadu—and a successful arranged marriage, at that. Yet this seems surprisingly unencumbering, easily accepted and written past. The trials of the second-generation immigrant can seem quickly alleviated in love these days. The full weight of shtetl life fell on Portnoy every time he pulled on his zipper—and Portnoy was a third-generation immigrant. Much the same was true of Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill every time they took a drink of whiskey, Irishness making itself felt even

unto the fourth generation and the last damp circle on the bar. But now the immigrant past can be cast off almost before it can surface. "Abie's Irish Rose," the star-crossed love of two ethnicities, would be harder to picture now, especially in the big cities and on college campuses. Sexual manners in the age of Tinder tend to ease, or eroticize, ethnicity. Ethnic identity is still important as an abstract artifact of "pride," but pride, which goeth before a fall, also goeth, so to speak, before a rise.

"All good love songs are sad," Paul McCartney, who knew, once told this reporter. The mystery is that while what we want is love fulfilled, what we actually feel most deeply about is love frustrated. The safest bet going is that we'll find scruples to complicate our passions, barriers to intensify our desires. When none present themselves, we invent them at the bedroom door, and find reasons to constrain passion even when it comes at us, smiling and unconstrained. Supplying such scruples for you is one of those modern subjects, as the essential loneliness of love is the real burden of its songs.

When we're young, we seek another to overrate; when we're older, we seek another to overrate us. Infatuation happens in midlife when we believe that someone is once again rating us at an inflated value rather than the discounted one of an older love, now aged. The other shows us ourselves in a forgotten light, as someone less dull than we thought we had become. We look at each other and love ourselves.

Another, lasting, kind of love—the permanent harmony that seems to have eluded Mr. and Mrs. Shakespeare as it eludes most of us—is difficult to name without making it sound weak in comparison. *Agape*, divine love; *caritas*, compassionate caring; empathy or lifelong engagement (though without Cupid to make it frisky love seems merely dutiful). Lasting love that is not simply habitual is found among the shards of the self-regarding mirror, after it is broken and we have to look around at life as it, so inadequately, is. What we may get in exchange is another pair of eyes to help us see the world with. We call that emotion by love, too, but perhaps it needs a better name, and a song or two of its own. ♦



haveKINDLE will TRAVEL

@ILLGANDER, MOROCCO | For me travel is about new sights, smells, and flavors. So when Amazon asked me to take the Kindle Paperwhite on my next trip, I went to the souk with *In Morocco* as my guide.

Follow more journeys on Instagram @AMAZONKINDLE



kindle

kindle

amazon

THE SYSTEM

A sprawling novel about the war on drugs.

BY LAURA MILLER



On September 6, 2006, a score of masked gunmen stormed into a night club in Uruapan, Michoacán, fired at the ceiling, and tossed five severed heads onto the white-tiled dance floor. Being *narcotraficantes*—members of one of the brutal drug cartels that effectively ruled large swaths of Mexico in the early years of this century—they also left a note. In towns along the border, boastful, taunting, and tendentious banners and placards, or *narcomantas*, were routinely hung up next to piles of corpses. This one read, “The Family doesn’t kill for money. It doesn’t kill women. It doesn’t kill innocent people, only those who

deserve to die. Know that this is divine justice.”

The assassins, or *sicarios*, as they’re called in Mexico, were members of La Familia Michoacana, a cartel that, despite its penchant for decapitation and torture, had pretensions to piety and a certain rough chivalry. (Years later, remnants of La Familia reorganized as a group calling itself the Knights Templar.) The syndicate’s temporal and spiritual head, Nazario Moreno González, wrote a “bible” of inspirational sayings and admonitions, which members of La Familia were expected to carry with them. Also required reading in the cartel was the book from which Moreno

González cribbed much of his pop philosophy, “Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man’s Soul,” a paean to muscular Christianity by John Eldredge, an American evangelical who lives in Colorado Springs.

Most crime novelists, especially those reaching for a momentous effect, are obliged to turbocharge their villains. The perpetrator of the locked-room mystery is supernaturally ingenious, the serial killer far more baroquely sadistic than his real-life counterparts, the Mob boss too comprehensively powerful to be believed. Mexico’s criminal cartels have never presented such a problem to Don Winslow, who has written two extensively researched sagas about the war on drugs: “The Power of the Dog,” in 2006, and now “The Cartel” (Knopf). If anything, Winslow has had to tone down the truth and insert some orienting genre formula into the horror and absurdity of actual events. Winslow left the bizarre tidbit about the evangelical self-help book out of “The Cartel,” although parts of the novel are told from the perspective of a member of La Familia, a Chicano runaway trained to kill by *sicarios* at age eleven and rendered half-feral by a fathomless series of traumas. He’s the one who, in “The Cartel,” removes the five heads from rival cartel members and has them spilled across the dance floor. But the narcos’ reverence for a Holy Roller version of Robert Bly’s “Iron John” must have seemed just too weird to play. (As was, presumably, the 2011 contretemps between another cartel, Los Zetas, and the hacker collective Anonymous—a preposterous movie premise inexplicably graduated to reality.)

“The Cartel,” Winslow’s sixteenth novel, takes place between 2004 and 2012, mostly in Mexico. The point of view skitters among a half-dozen or so characters—all narcos, apart from the novel’s ostensible hero, D.E.A. agent Arturo (Art) Keller—as each pursues his or her own interests through a byzantine web of allegiances, double crosses, devious stratagems, vendettas, and regime changes. The cartels that were mere trafficking gangs in “The Power of the Dog” have become, Keller thinks, “little states and the bosses politicians sending other men to war.” Some of those men are putatively public servants,

Don Winslow’s long, ambitious saga is set largely among clashing Mexican cartels.

but graft has so comprehensively penetrated the state that at one point the drug wars take the surreal form of local police fighting their federal counterparts, each side on the payroll of a different cartel. The view that the novel affords is panoramic, and the carnage—drawn from life, or, more precisely, death—is numbing; in 2010, Ciudad Juárez saw an average of 8.5 killings per day, making it the murder capital of the world.

All of Winslow's novels have been crime fiction, but their stylistic range betrays a restive sensibility. An early series featured the often comic and occasionally globe-trotting adventures of the private detective Neal Carey. Then Winslow, who typically works on two books at once, began bouncing around from the sober epic mode of "The Power of the Dog" to a series of genial mysteries solved by the San Diego surfer-detective Boone Daniels and a pair of sleek thrillers, "Savages" and its prequel, "The Kings of Cool," which trip giddily from toasted Southern California patois to Baja California nightmare. "Savages" (adapted for the screen by Oliver Stone, in 2012), with a languidly stuttering prose style that practically giggles at itself, cemented Winslow's reputation. It's the story of two young Laguna Beach partners in pot cultivation—Ben, a talented botanist who's into Buddhism and alternative energy, and Chon, a former Navy SEAL who takes a dark view of just about everything—and their shared girlfriend, O, a quipping beach bunny with a taste for acronyms. According to O, her mother, nicknamed Paqu (Passive Aggressive Queen of the Universe), hated having given birth to her:

"She popped me and bought a treadmill on the way home from the hospital."

Yah, yah, yah, because Paqu is totally SOC R&B.

South Orange County Rich and Beautiful. Blonde hair, blue eyes, chiseled nose, and BRMCB—Best Rack Money Can Buy (you have real boobs in the 949 you're, like, Amish)—the extra Lincoln wasn't going to sit well or long on *her* hips.

"Savages" and "The Kings of Cool" read like a tale spun out over a long afternoon by someone prone on a couch. "The Power of the Dog" and "The Cartel" seem like the work of another writer entirely—say, a guy with salt-and-pepper temples and an off-the-rack suit, hov-

ering over his bourbon on the next barstool. He's telling you everything you did and didn't want to know about what went on and still goes on south of the border in the feeding of North America's insatiable appetite for pot, heroin, cocaine, and meth. You can't be sure how much of it is true; Narcolandia is ballad country, a realm of legend and rumor. But none of it is a laughing matter.

Scratch that. Some of "The Power of the Dog" is funny. Winslow can do a comic mid-level Italian gangster as well as most guys. But that novel was written before the slaughter and chaos of the cartel wars reached hallucinatory proportions. Winslow's subject rose up and challenged him to a rematch. Los Zetas, regarded by many as the most fearsome manifestation of the cartels, isn't even mentioned in "The Power of the Dog"; in "The Cartel," the group gets a full history, from its inception, as the enforcement arm of the Gulf cartel, to its eventual takeover of drug-trafficking operations, and on to its more recent expansion into kidnapping, extortion, and the illegal siphoning and sale of oil and natural gas.

The narrative spine of "The Cartel" is carried over from "The Power of the Dog": Art Keller's long hunt for a Sinaloan drug lord named Adan Barrera. Barrera is locked up in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in San Diego by the end of "The Power of the Dog," but in "The Cartel" he gets himself transferred to a Mexican prison, where he engineers a life of relative luxury and, eventually, an escape. Keller, having destroyed his family and his personal life in his relentless pursuit of Barrera throughout the first novel, has retired to a monastery in New Mexico, where he keeps bees—the preferred late-life hobby of fictional detectives since Sherlock Holmes. Barrera has put a two-million-dollar bounty on Keller's head, forcing him on the lam and then, reluctantly, back into the D.E.A.

Thriller heroes tend to fall into two categories, each an idealized projection of the (male) reader's ego. The first is too good to be true: smarter, braver, and more competent than both the bad guys and the various institutional forces that interfere with his doing what he knows, unerringly, to be best. He's also potentially

attractive to women. The second is your basic cable-TV antihero, driven to deeds he deplores by the greater evils of the world, evils that he alone can fully comprehend. This leaves him haunted and alone, although just as potentially attractive to women. Winslow's heroes tend to dwell amid these conventions: Boone Daniels's sole flaw consists of being so laid-back that he cares more about good friends and doing the right thing than about money, power, or ambition—which is, as shortcomings go, equivalent to the "weaknesses" that candidates offer up in job interviews.

Keller is a brooder. His obsession with Barrera—triggered in "The Power of the Dog" when one of the drug lord's henchmen tortures his partner to death—has consumed his personality, providing him with the wrecked past so obligatory to his type. He likens himself to "Ahab chasing the great white whale," but his quest is operational rather than metaphysical; Keller makes the novel go. Winslow gives him a romance with an idealistic doctor, but when Keller tells another character that he reads the novels of Roberto Bolaño and Luis Urrea it's impossible to picture; surely he winks out of existence when his services are not required by the plot? Keller is not so much a character as a vector, a direction through the unspooling mess of corruption, betrayal, and butchery that harrowed Mexico between 2004 and 2012.

Barrera is also a familiar figure in some respects, a descendant of Mario Puzo's shrewd and courtly Don Corleone, whose prudence, honor, and decorum evoke admiration in spite of his deeds. (It also helps the image of such men that they rarely do their own wet work.) Much of "The Cartel" hews closely to the reported facts of Mexican cartel history. Sometimes Winslow changes little more than a few proper names. Barrera himself is clearly patterned on Joaquín (El Chapo) Guzmán Loera, the former head of the Sinaloa cartel and a man once deemed by the U.S. Treasury Department to be the most powerful drug trafficker in the world. Like Barrera, Guzmán escaped from a high-security prison; had a long-time mistress who became a cartel operative in her own right until she was murdered by Los Zetas; was involved in a shoot-out that killed a

Catholic archbishop (in “The Power of the Dog,” it’s a cardinal); and bribed officials to help him defeat rival cartels and escape captivity. Like Guzmán, Barrera patronizes restaurants by strolling in and having his men confiscate the other diners’ phones, locking the place down until he finishes eating. Afterward, he picks up everyone’s check.

But where Guzmán was something of a hick, barely literate for all his criminal genius, Barrera is suave and tasteful. He disdains the “gaudy, ostentatious displays” favored by the typical “nouveau-riche narcos,” such as diamond-encrusted firearms. In redecorating a family ranch to receive him after his prison break, Barrera opts for “the classic lines of old Sinaloa, while still making sure that the house revealed the proper level of wealth and power.” He would prefer not to live in a mansion, he tells his mistress, “but there are expectations.” Where Guzmán had a love life that was complex enough to fuel several telenovelas—a tangle of mistresses, wives, ex-wives, and short-term paid companions—Barrera spurns the squads of prostitutes deployed at every cartel bash and is a dignified serial monogamist until he agrees to a political marriage with the teen-age daughter of another narco. Above all, Barrera’s violence is always pragmatic. The true villain of “The Cartel,” Heriberto Ochoa, the original Zeta—loosely based on Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano—is a gran-

diose and bloodthirsty fiend whose followers massacre busloads of migrant workers on the slightest pretext. (Lazcano himself was rumored to feed his enemies to his pet lions and tigers.)

Much is made in “The Cartel” of how Keller’s ruthless fixation on Barrera turns him into a version of the very thing he hates. However true this formulation might be, it’s still a cliché. In truth, Keller isn’t particularly interesting, and Barrera is not much better, but they really don’t need to be. Supporting characters are Winslow’s forte, from Magda, the clever ex-beauty queen who parlays her affair with Barrera into full-fledged narco status, to Eddie Ruiz, a former Texas high-school football star whose placid life as a small-time dealer gets sucked into the nihilistic vortex of the clash between the Gulf cartel and Los Zetas. Best of all, in the middle of the novel Winslow turns his attention to a passel of journalists working in Ciudad Juárez when the cartels were at their peak, and it’s as if he’d opened a window and let in some air. These people—a nebbishy chronicler of Juárez’s street life, a skirt-chasing photographer, a scrappy female reporter who throws fun parties and does “a rather good imitation of the Chihuahua state governor”—feel conscripted from life, not films or books. “The Cartel” opens with a dedication listing the names of a hundred and thirty-one journalists who were “murdered or ‘disappeared’ in Mexico during the period covered in this

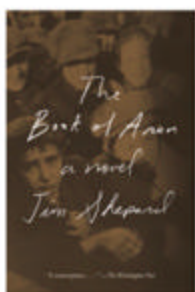
novel,” so you can tell where this is going.

If the two main characters of “The Cartel” are a little thin, they do their job, delivering the reader into the ongoing disaster that is the war on drugs. The appeal of “The Godfather” was, in part, procedural, as it explained how to conduct a hit or hunker down during a Mob battle, but Winslow’s cartel novels describe how impossible it seems to *stop* any of it, no matter how much you want to, and no matter how powerful you may be. The characters find themselves forming alliances with their bitterest enemies and betraying their friends in order to fend off consequences that are even worse. Barrera believes that he can’t leave the narco life (otherwise his rivals will assassinate his extended family), and Keller figures that if he doesn’t die in the saddle he’ll just end up hanging out in a Tucson condo until he gets “the bad biopsy,” a prospect he finds even more unbearable. The most fatalistic of the narcos pray to a skeletal saint, Santa Muerte, and boast of drinking human blood in her honor.

The machinery that has delivered all of Winslow’s characters to this place is a vast, interlocking system of competing national interests, ass-covering government agencies, delusional lawmakers, stupid policies, a short-sighted public, corrupt officials, and big business, the whole mass of it driven by the desire for money, power, and chemically induced ecstasy. This machinery has its own perverse majesty, despite Winslow’s well-founded outrage that it has been allowed to grind on and on and on. He has catalogued every part of it: how this piston pushed that crank to rotate this wheel—you don’t write crime fiction, after all, if you’re not fascinated by the operations of crime. Yet the cartel wars escalated from the usual criminal pursuit of self-interest into something extraordinary, something monstrous, a ghost in the machine whose precise origin cannot be traced. Keller calls it “pure evil,” and so does Eddie, who flips on his co-conspirators when things get too freaky. “Someone’s always going to be selling this shit,” he tells Keller. “It might as well be someone who doesn’t kill women and kids. If someone’s going to do it, you guys might as well let someone like *me* do it.” He has a point. ♦



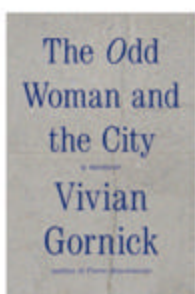
BRIEFLY NOTED



THE BOOK OF ARON, by *Jim Shepard* (Knopf). Set in the Warsaw ghetto, this haunting novel imagines the relationship between the influential pediatrician and educator Janusz Korczak and Aron, a boy perpetually at odds with the world around him. “I had figured out that most people didn’t understand me and that those who did wouldn’t help,” Aron tells us. His only friends are delinquents who teach him how to steal. Together, they begin a successful enterprise smuggling goods in and out of the ghetto. After Aron betrays one of them and is cast out of his home, Korczak takes him into his orphanage. Shepard, narrating from Aron’s point of view, employs a matter-of-fact voice that can describe horrific events with chilling precision.



THE LOVED ONES, by *Mary-Beth Hughes* (Grove Atlantic). This bracing novel follows a well-heeled family struggling to cope with the death of a child as they move from the Jersey Shore to London and back, in the late sixties and early seventies. The father is an executive for a cosmetics company run by men whose refined aesthetic sensibilities seem at odds with their moral depravity. As he cheats on his grieving wife, their daughter, on the verge of adolescence, endures a series of demeaning advances from similarly callous males. Hughes is preternaturally alert to subtleties of appearance, gesture, and sensory detail. A woman “held both elbows as if making a neat container of herself.”



THE ODD WOMAN AND THE CITY, by *Vivian Gornick* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). In this memoir, an influential feminist writer searches for contentment in lives lived unconventionally. Gornick, who wrote absorbingly about her mother in “Fierce Attachments,” approaches her subject in a series of sharply observed vignettes: about her mother, again; about the writers Constance Fenimore Woolson and Mary Britton Miller; about a close friend. She writes about literature—Coleridge, Eliot, and Wharton are touchstones—and about chance encounters on the street. These last furnish humanity, humor, and pathos, sometimes in the same interaction. The strangers Gornick meets become characters in her drama. Her revelation is that she, in turn, is a character in theirs.



SOMEWHERE BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE, by *James Hill* (Kehrer). However well a photograph may preserve a moment, it also conceals a complex narrative. Hill, a photojournalist who has covered events as diverse as bullfighting festivals in Madrid and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, presents a collection of his images, to comment on the “photographic life”—an unsettling existence filled with ghosts, confusion, and discomfort. A shot of Georgians escaping civil war recalls Hill’s encounter with a man left to die on the road; an Azeri woman mourning at her son’s grave leads Hill to confront voyeuristic shame; even photographs of his children are melancholic, invoking moments lost in time. Hill writes, “I am caught between the duty to remember and the desire to erase.”



Caribbean windjammers
12 to 30 Guests, fully crewed
Private charters available
All inclusive

877.772.4549
islandwindjammers.com



OUTSIDERS

The Ojai Music Festival.

BY ALEX ROSS



At first glance, it is a mystery how the prosperously rustic town of Ojai, California, came to host one of the world's great festivals of modern music. Tucked away in a lush valley at the edge of Los Padres National Forest, sixty-five miles northwest of Los Angeles, Ojai is not the sort of place where one would expect to find an aesthetic of musical experiment. Its crisp air, sycamore groves, and mountain views have long attracted millionaires, spiritual seekers, and bohemians. In the nineteen-twenties, the Indian guru Jiddu Krishnamurti and various personalities connected with the Theosophical movement took up residence in Ojai. More recently, the town has attracted a smat-

tering of Hollywood celebrities, who seem to pass through its streets unmolested.

Amid the self-discovery talks, spa treatments, and rounds of golf, the Ojai Music Festival has been raising a finely calibrated ruckus each spring since 1947. Stravinsky and Copland have presided over performances of their own works, and Pierre Boulez has served as music director on seven occasions. The jazz great Eric Dolphy once played Varèse's "Density 21.5"; Mauricio Kagel led his "Anagrama," for speaking, spluttering chorus. In 1999, when I first visited, a gang of Finns banged on discarded auto parts that were dangling from Ojai's ancient trees. (Most events in the festival

take place at the Libbey Bowl, in the town park.) At the most recent edition, under the aegis of the percussionist and conductor Steven Schick, there were shrieks of flute and clatterings of gong; two works involving stones that were knocked together; austere chamber programs of Bartók and Boulez; a concussive hour of Varèse; a recitation of Kurt Schwitters's Dada poem "Ursonate"; and a rendition of Morton Feldman's five-hour trio, "For Philip Guston," which began at 5 A.M. on a Sunday.

On second thought, no one should be surprised that such an institution took root in Southern California. The esoteric sects that proliferated in the state at the turn of the last century had myriad connections to modernism in the arts. The lineage of experimental composers who grew up on the West Coast or were based there for part of their careers—Henry Cowell, Harry Partch, John Cage, Lou Harrison, La Monte Young, James Tenney, and Pauline Oliveros, among others—is central to contemporary music history. And the mighty exodus of composers from Nazi-occupied Europe to Los Angeles, led by Schoenberg and Stravinsky, prepared the conditions in which the festival flowered.

To attend Ojai is to enter a happily topsy-turvy world where longtime patrons are as avid for new music as they are for classic repertory. Works are sometimes criticized for being *too* accessible; such was a not uncommon reaction to a piece performed at this year's festival, Michael Harrison's "Just Ancient Loops," in which the cellist Maya Beiser spun out soothingly euphonious lines. Conversely, after the clarinetist Joshua Rubin sailed through Boulez's coolly spastic "Dialogue de l'Ombre Double," a woman behind me exclaimed, "Now, *that's* real music!" She employed the tone of relief that one hears at Lincoln Center when Boulez gives way to Brahms. What is different about Ojai? It has to do, I think, simply with the power of consistency: the festival stuck to its mission, year after year, decade after decade, until, at some point, its ideal audience became the real one.

Ojai appoints a different music director each year. Dawn Upshaw, Leif Ove Andsnes, Mark Morris, and Jeremy Denk have participated in recent seasons, and Peter Sellars will unleash

The percussionist Steven Schick is one of the supreme living virtuosos.

his enthusiasms in 2016. Schick, who teaches at the University of California, San Diego, and also leads the La Jolla Symphony and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, is not as well known as the others, but in the contiguous worlds of percussion and new music he possesses quasi-legendary status. That he is committed to modern fare is a given; as he likes to say, he is older than his repertory, having been born in 1954, five years before Stockhausen wrote “Zyklus,” which is considered the first major work for solo percussion. Schick finds force and feeling in the allegedly cerebral world of the European avant-garde; at the same time, he brings rigor and focus to the American experimental and minimalist traditions. He is one of the supreme living virtuosos, not only of percussion but of any instrument.

At the heart of the 2015 festival, which unfolded from June 10th to June 14th, was a solo program by Schick, and its centerpiece was “Zyklus”—a masterfully ambiguous creation that combines precisely notated sections with more open-ended passages that leave considerable choice to the performer. Schick’s interpretation, which he has been honing for forty years, is a sinuous audiovisual ballet in which hard-hitting, rat-a-tat drum solos intermingle with subtle, whispery sounds, as of a tapped gong or a brushed gourd. Although Schick meticulously plans each performance, he gives the impression of engaging in intuitive action, as if no score existed and the music were all muscle memory. The distinction between idea and gesture was similarly blurry in his accounts of Xenakis’s percussion pieces “Rebonds” and “Psappha,” and it disappeared altogether in Vinko Globokar’s “?Corporel,” which calls for a semi-naked percussionist to make sounds with his or her amplified body, slapping hands against skin.

Members of the International Contemporary Ensemble, which has lately emerged as America’s foremost new-music group, joined Schick for the majority of the concerts, and they were willing collaborators in his quest for uninhibited instrumental theatre. The flutist Claire Chase, the co-founder of I.C.E., gave a free, impassioned rendition of “Density 21.5”—one that might have compared favorably with Dolphy’s, had

it been recorded. She also tore into Mario Diaz de León’s “Luciform,” which has a trace of heavy metal in its helter-skelter, electronically enhanced cadenzas. The cellist Katinka Kleijn donned a mask to perform Du Yun’s “San,” an opulent fantasy on the ancient Chinese piece “Guanling San.” In Rand Steiger’s “Template for Improvising Trumpeter and Ensemble,” Peter Evans, in jagged lightning streaks of notes, seemed to revive the fusion of modern jazz and composition prophesied by the great Gunther Schuller, who died on June 21st.

In all, there were eighteen concerts (I saw thirteen), featuring forty-seven composers, most of them living. “Sonic glut-tony,” Chase called it, and some Ojai veterans came away feeling overstuffed. As Saturday gave way to Sunday, the schedule became a bit mad: at midnight, at the Libbey Bowl, Schick finished conducting Copland’s “Appalachian Spring,” and just five hours later, in the Ojai Art Center, he stood before a vibraphone and played, alongside Chase and the pianist Sarah Rothenberg, the opening notes of “For Philip Guston.” A groggy group of sixty people were there at the beginning, and more than a hundred were present at the end. To listen to Feldman’s vast, hushed creation as the world outside moved from night to day was a singular experience, yet I felt a little bedraggled by the end of it: such music requires more mental space for contemplation. The superhuman Schick went on performing for the remainder of the day.

By conventional standards, Ojai is hardly an ideal concert environment. The amplification system at the Libbey Bowl is less than state-of-the-art; I had the impression, as the Calder Quartet played Bartók, that the group was delivering tonally refined and rhythmically vigorous accounts, yet the music kept wafting past my ears. Furthermore, distractions are constant, as airplanes, cars, birds, dogs, and children make themselves heard. Often, though, the ambient noise adds accidental beauties. Cawing crows provided an apt prelude to Bartók’s savage Third Quartet. The snoring sounds that Globokar notated in his “?Corporel” score were echoed by slumbering patrons at “Guston.” Songbirds softened the severities of Boulez’s “Improvisations sur Mallarmé,” as if Messi-

aen, Boulez’s bird-loving teacher, were providing commentary. (Schick placed Boulez’s two Mallarmé settings amid Ravel’s “Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé,” making the two composers seem like avatars of a single secretive spirit. Melissa Hughes proved a staggeringly flexible vocal soloist.)

In several of the festival’s most memorable moments, intrusions from the outside were deliberately staged. At a morning concert at the Besant Hill School—an institution whose founders include Krishnamurti and Aldous Huxley—I.C.E. presented Anna Thorvaldsdóttir’s “In the Light of Air,” for viola, cello, piano, harp, percussion, and electronics. The piece began in low light, with filament bulbs hanging from the ceiling. The instruments offered up a subdued, eerie fabric of timbres: ghostly glissandos on the viola and cello, fingertips and Super Balls brushing the strings of the harp and piano. In the course of four movements, this evanescent material acquired mass: droplets of melody and harmony precipitated from the air. Just before the end, darksome bitonal chords began crashing on the harp and piano, like the bell of a phantom cathedral. Suddenly, the wall at the back of the auditorium was rolled aside, ushering in the bright-gray light and chilly breeze of a cloudy Ojai morning. Nothing I witnessed in opera houses this past season was as dramatic.

Just as transcendent was the ending of John Luther Adams’s “Sila: The Breath of the World,” an hour-long work designed for the outdoors, in which strings, wind, brass, voices, and percussion generate incrementally shifting clouds of tones based on the natural harmonic series emanating from a low B-flat. The event took place in the park outside the Libbey Bowl. Listeners walked among the ensemble, their sonic perspective constantly changing. Amid the brass, the blendings of harmonics were grand and dire; amid the strings, they were ethereal, insubstantial. In the score’s final minutes, the musicians are asked to breathe aloud, and then to listen to sounds emanating from the space. From somewhere, I heard an intermittent high-pitched squeak and looked around for its source. In the distance, a child was swaying on a rusty swing. ♦

DOLL PARTS

"UnREAL" deconstructs "The Bachelor."

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM

The pilot for Lifetime's "UnREAL" culminates in an act of manipulation so skilled that the villains of "Dangerous Liaisons" might hiss in envy. Rachel (Shiri Appleby), a producer on a "The Bachelor"-like reality series, is struggling to extract an exit interview from Britney, who has been booted from the competition in the first round. But Britney won't give in: she's determined to deny the editors the requisite humiliating meltdown. "He's such a great guy—and I've had a lovely time on the show," she purrs, then drops the act, her eyes gone cold. "And I'm going to repeat that on loop until you let me go home."

"Stop rolling!" Rachel mutters, putting on a charade of her own, behaving as if she were so disgusted that she's about to quit. "Can someone get me a drink, please?" she screams—and within minutes she's got Britney downing shots and sharing girl talk. As the two women bond, Rachel inserts undermining jabs, using intel from Britney's psych file to throw her off. "From one slut to another!" Rachel says, raising a toast. "Did you just call me a slut?" Britney snaps, her mouth twisting with paranoia. Far away, in the control room, Rachel's boss, Quinn, smiles, watching the footage: "O.K. I can use that—I can use that."

Judging from the first four episodes of "UnREAL," a fictional series set behind the scenes of a show called "Everlasting," the job of a reality producer is, however the participants may justify it, a grifter's game. It's a profession for people whose personality dis-

orders make them adept at exploiting the personality disorders of others, who possess the compartmentalization skills of those shrinks who rubber-stamp torture techniques for the C.I.A. (Eating disorders? Daddy's death? An on-set date rape? It's all fodder for the story—or something to be covered up.) Like a slaughter-



On "UnREAL," the job of a reality producer is a grifter's game.

house exposé, "UnREAL" is designed as an audience intervention, forcing viewers to taste the cruelty in their reality-TV bacon. The fact that the show itself also tastes like bacon—at once sweet and salty, greasy and irresistible—is no accident.

"UnREAL" is hardly the first show to criticize reality TV—from the Brit-

ish version of "The Office" onward, the mockumentary sitcom has taken shots at the genre, even as it cannibalized the form. A few years back, the smart soap opera "The L.A. Complex" featured a plot arc in which a former teen star, Raquel (Jewel Staite), agrees to go on "Celebrity Halfway House" only to find herself backed into the "villain's edit." The science-fiction anthology series "Black Mirror" included several ugly fables about the genre; "The Comeback" was a tragicomedy about a middle-aged actress who was burned by the cameras. In varying ways, each of these shows captured something of the allure of reality fame, the impossibility of seeing oneself as others see us, until it's too late. Few people feel much sympathy for the pain of reality stars anymore, since the genre has been around for more than a decade. As a character in the great dirty comedy "Airplane!" once said, "They bought their tickets, they knew what they were getting into. I say, 'Let 'em crash.'"

"UnREAL" takes a fresh route into the subject matter by dramatizing the lives of the producers, especially Rachel, who, despite appearances, considers herself a feminist—she's the type who might watch "Everlasting," but from an ironic distance. Airing on Lifetime (the channel for women!), the show is, like the one it tweaks, a pink and glittery concoction, full of catfights and love triangles. Even better, it was co-created by someone who knows the score: Sarah Gertrude Shapiro, who was a producer on "The Bachelor" for nine seasons. A Sarah Lawrence-educated film student who worked first for the feminist producer Christine Vachon and later for the fashion photographer David LaChapelle, Shapiro took a classic paycheck gig when she moved to L.A., working on "High School Reunion," a terrible show that I may have watched all of. When that job ended, Shapiro discovered that she had been trapped

by her own naïveté: she was contractually obligated to work on “The Bachelor,” whether she liked it or not. According to interviews that she has given while publicizing “UNREAL,” she left the franchise—by fleeing to Portland—only after threatening to kill herself if she wasn’t released from her contract.

In collaboration with Marti Noxon, Shapiro created a biting portrait of a series that clearly resembles the one she helped oversee, in which dozens of women compete for a British hotel heir—although “UNREAL” may be lawsuit-proof, given that few people would want to claim that these characters were based on them. The details are juicy. In the control room, producers put up photographs of all the contestants, then tag them “Wifey,” “Crazy,” or “Desperate MILF.” They get cash bonuses for nailing down a villain, someone to edit into the “mean girl” slot. United by cynical camaraderie, the staff operate a bit like the guards on “Orange Is the New Black,” their conditions parallel to those of their charges. Like the contestants, the staff have signed onerous contracts; they have to work for days on end, sleep-deprived, in an isolated environment; they party and hook up to blow off steam. But the structure they work within normalizes cruelty, making them betray and abuse their charges while pretending to bond with them.

Rachel, in her schlubby jeans, unkempt topknot, and “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like” T-shirt, has styled herself to seem unthreatening, a best buddy hovering among the

gem-toned ball gowns, whispering bad advice. Between her and her “c” word of a boss Quinn (Constance Zimmer, her venality at eleven), the show could easily devolve into a mere cruel soap, its own guilty pleasure. But it makes one crucial move: it cultivates sympathy for the bachelorettes. Lounging on sofas, anxiously primping for the next fake party, the girls of “Everlasting” might be soft satirical targets, like the Kardashians. But, rather than portray them as dummies, all daddy issues and narcissism, “UNREAL” allows the women to be individuals, vulnerable and distinct. Then it shows how little control they have, no matter what they do. Some are romantics, suckers for true love; others are “players,” like Britney. Many of them sense, uneasily, why they were cast: the “Desperate MILF” knows that she’s too old; the virgin senses that her looks don’t match. But the show is a trap: regardless of what they do—go wild, be dignified, stay girlish, be honest, lie your head off—they all get crunched by the show’s misogynist algorithms.

One of the slyest subplots involves the show’s prefab ethnic uniformity. From the first episode, Quinn makes it clear that neither of the two black contestants on “Everlasting”—the Spelman graduate Shamiqua and the more “street” player Athena—can win. (“It is not my fault that America’s racist,” Quinn says, shrugging.) Behind the scenes, Jay, an ambitious gay black producer, who is aiming to win the “villain” financial bonus, offers the two women a private deal: if one of

them is willing to play the “black bitch” role, he’ll guide her into the Final Four. Athena bites. In a party scene, she trips a white “cowgirl” contestant, then tricks her into blurting out a sound bite that can be edited to seem bigoted. Shoving her competition, she plays the role that she knows is required to launch her own Omarosa-style brand. Then she gets cut anyway.

The producers have their own love triangles, some stronger than others: one plot involves Quinn, who is screwing her married, coke-snorting boss. As charismatic as Zimmer is, with her Rula Lenska rasp, a little of this toxic coupling goes a long way. But Rachel’s own slow romantic drift toward the Bachelor, a spoiled charmer who is there to plug his new chain, is at once smart and unnerving—even she isn’t immune to that sparkling ring.

I’d like to say that I’m not so easily hypnotized, but the truth is that it takes only five minutes of watching “The Bachelorette”—the gender-flipped version of “The Bachelor,” in which dozens of lunks vie for one Kaitlyn—for me to begin living my worst life. I give the characters cruel nicknames; I compose wisecracks for Twitter. It doesn’t help that I know, as we all do, that some proportion of the show is scripted—that simply helps us enjoy the humiliation without guilt. If “UNREAL,” in the tradition of the show that it mimics, is explicitly exaggerated, blown up like a David LaChapelle photo illustration, that’s part of its power. The distortions suggest how much of femininity is theatre, even in the real world. ♦

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2015 CONDÉ NAST. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

VOLUME XCI, NO. 19, July 6 & 13, 2015. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 23 & March 2, June 8 & 15, July 6 & 13, August 10 & 17, and December 21 & 28) 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; Beth Luskó, associate publisher advertising; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Fabio Bertoni, general counsel. Condé Nast: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, chief executive officer; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., president; 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 Beth Luskó at (212) 286-4454. 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.condenast.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.



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 Will McPhail, must be received by Sunday, July 12th. The finalists in the June 22nd contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 27th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit contest.newyorker.com.

THE WINNING CAPTION



THE FINALISTS

"Are you better off now than you were four innings ago?"
Shaina Rafal, Wilmington, Del.

"My position on the pitch is still evolving."
Adrian Doran, San Diego, Calif.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



Zoe Leonard: Analogue

Now on View

MOMA



The Museum of
Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
MoMA.org

The exhibition is made possible
by The Modern Women's Fund.

Zoe Leonard. *Analogue*.
1998–2009. Twelve chromogenic
color prints from 412 prints.
Analogue was made possible
through the Artist's Residency

program at the Wexner Center for
the Arts at The Ohio State
University, The Museum of Modern
Art, New York. Acquired through
the generosity of The Contemporary

Arts Council of The Museum of
Modern Art, the Fund for the
Twenty-First Century, The Modern
Women's Fund, and Carol Appel

"HAS THE POWER TO SET THE DAILY
AGENDA IN POLITICS, MEDIA AND
PUBLISHING"

-Politico

"ILLUMINATING
DEBATES ACROSS
PARTY LINES...
NO NAME CALLING
ALLOWED"

-Parade

"DESTINATION-VIEWING
FOR POLITICAL AND
CULTURAL NEWS JUNKIES"

-Wall Street Journal



morning joe

WEEKDAYS 6-9^{AM} ET

 msnbc