

Rolling Stone

NOVEMBER 2018
ISSUE 1321

THE
HOT
ISSUE
2018

— STARRING —

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Kravitz*

— PLUS —

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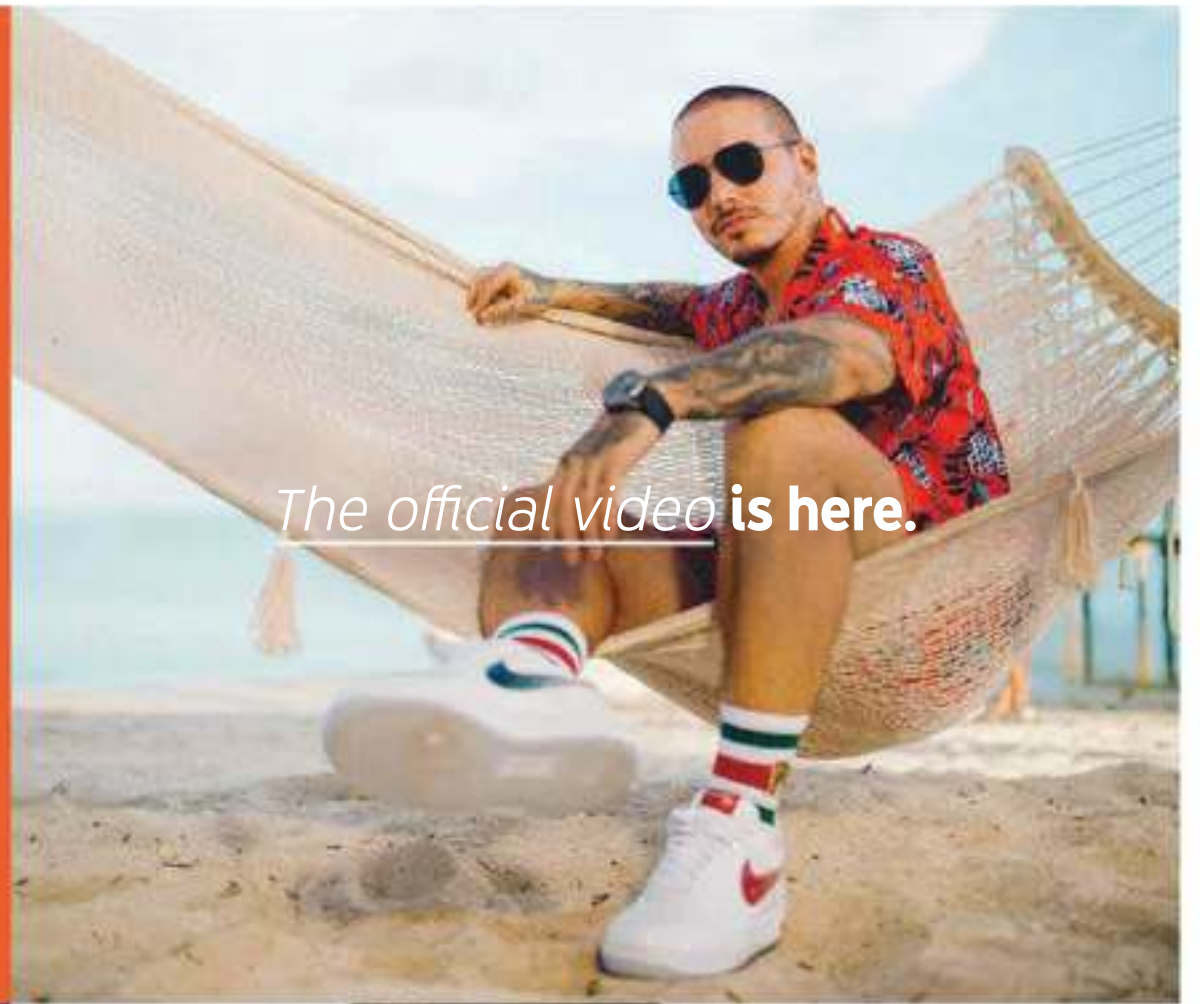
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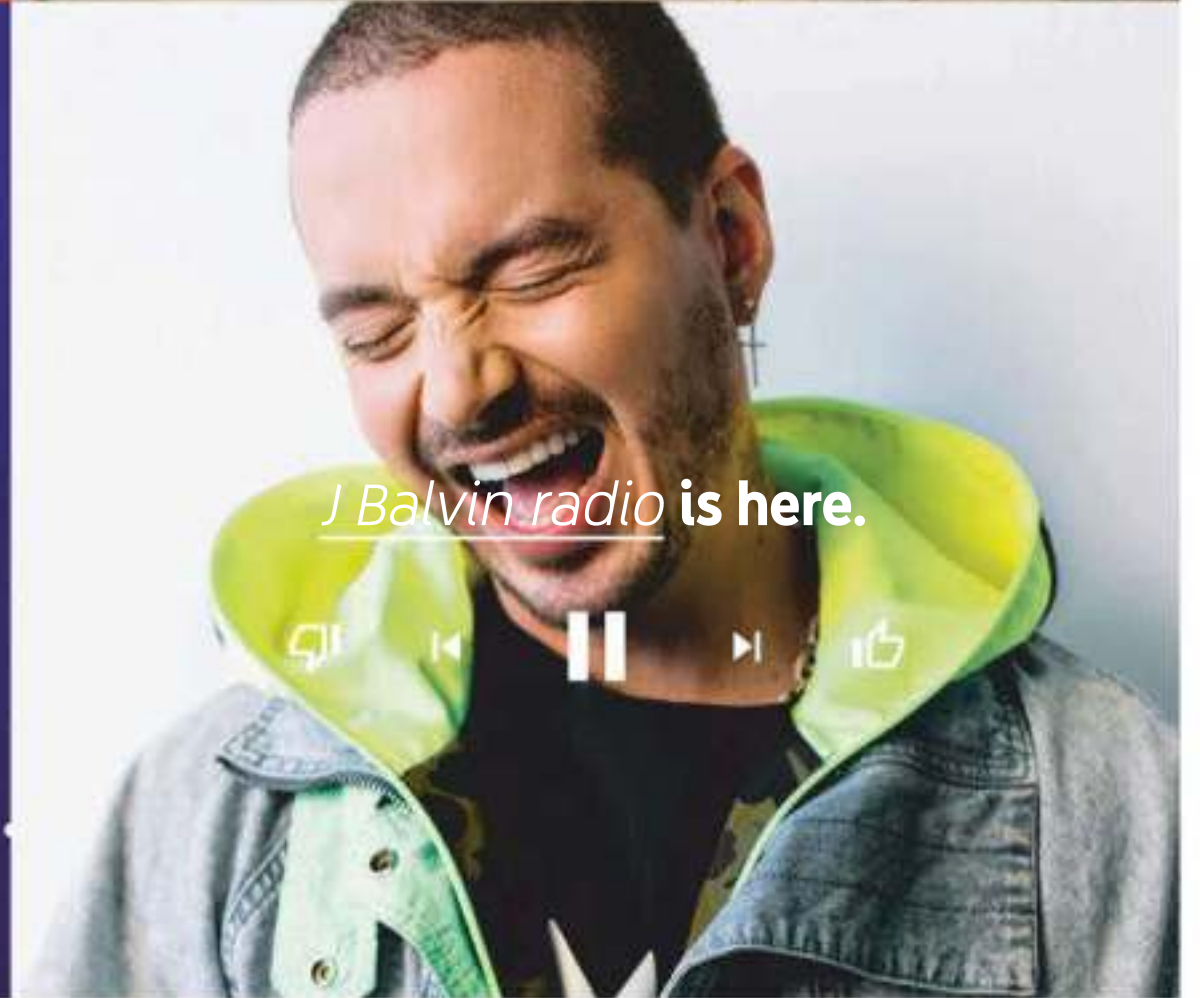
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By Alex Morris



ISSUE 1321
'ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS'

St. Vincent: Keeping Austin Loud

◀ "Let's fight the power!" screamed Annie Clark of St. Vincent at the Austin City Limits festival on October 6th, protesting the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh. With Metallica playing a set nearby, Clark offered the metal gods stiff competition, stalking the stage like a superstar and mixing guitar fireworks with art-pop hooks. "No matter how much insane shit is going on," she said, "there's always a reason to dance."

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On the Cover
Zoë Kravitz, photographed in New York on September 4th, 2018, by Zoey Grossman.
Hair by Nikki Nelms. Nails by Casey Herman for the Wall Group. Makeup by Nina Park at Forward Artists. Styling by Andrew Mukamal at Streeters.

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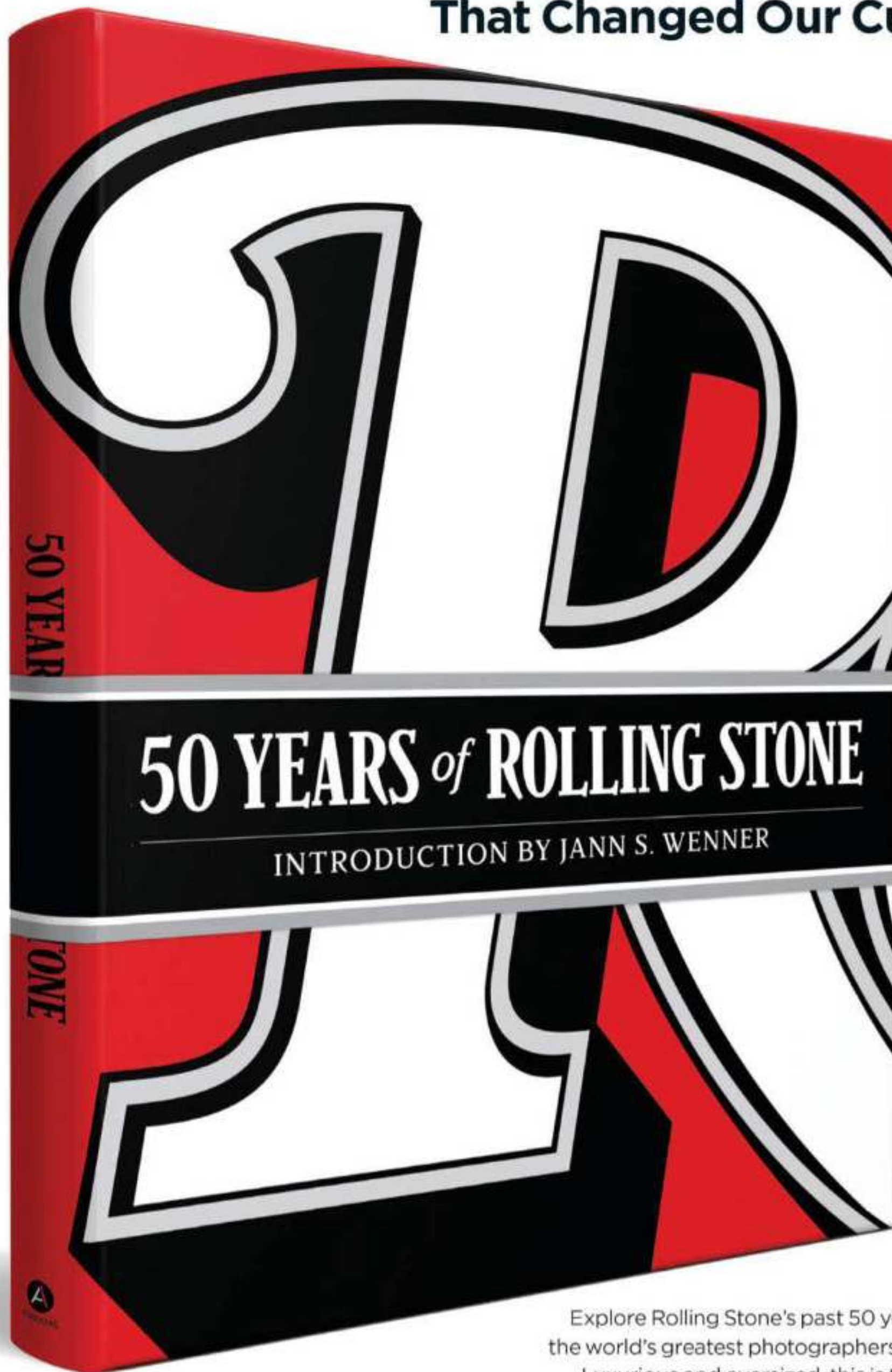
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Editor's Letter

"I'm afraid of lots of things. But when it comes to actually being really scared, I have a strange bravery."
—FLORENCE WELCH

RS Politics: 2020 Starts Now



ROLLING STONE'S first serious venture into national politics was a bold one: sending Hunter S. Thompson to cover the rancorous 1972 presidential race between a deeply flawed Republican incumbent with sinking approval ratings, Richard Nixon, and a left-wing Democrat, George McGovern, whom the magazine energetically endorsed but who never had much of a chance.

In one of his scathing dispatches, Thompson wrote, "The whole framework of the presidency is getting out of hand. It's come to the point where you almost can't run unless you can cause people to salivate and whip on each other with big sticks. You almost have to be a rock star to get the kind of fever you need to survive in American politics."

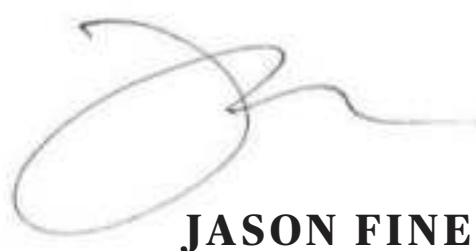
Thompson's take on Nixon was perhaps hyperbolic but also prescient, essentially predicting Donald Trump's game plan 44 years later. As senior writer Matt Taibbi points out, there are other parallels emerging between 1972 and today. "You have a profoundly unpopular Republican president and a fractured Democratic Party," he says. "There's a real possibility of a kind of insurgent Democratic movement taking over."

Still, as Taibbi writes in this issue ("Trump's Chances in 2020 Are Better Than You Think"), it would be a mistake to underestimate Trump, who fires up his Republican base in much the same way Nixon did. "In a time of extreme cynicism and existential gloom," Taibbi writes, "Trump is a doomsday cult, giving voters permission to unleash their inner monster."

With the midterms now in the rearview and the 2020 campaign ramping up, ROLLING STONE'S politics team is covering national issues and events more intensively than we ever have before – making sense of the anxious tick-tock of daily news and digging into deeper pieces of reporting and analysis on issues that go under-reported in the mainstream media. In this issue, Phoebe Neidl and Andrea Marks survey the toll so far of Trump's disastrous environmental policies ("Trump's Toxic Agenda"), and Tessa Stuart reports on how the Department of Health and Human Services has been taken over by a small group of right-wing Christians, whose policies endanger women's – and particularly immigrants' – reproductive rights ("The Health Department's Christian Crusade").

For the first time since William Greider ran the national-affairs desk in the Nineties, we have a full-time Washington, D.C., bureau chief, Andy Kroll, directing our reporting in the capital. And politics editor John Hendrickson has made our website's political coverage essential daily reading. (Sign up for our daily politics newsletter at RollingStone.com/politics to keep up.)

"What's happening with the Trump administration is unprecedented and scary," says Kroll. "But in other ways, it's invigorating. The work we're doing, the work ROLLING STONE has always done, has never been more important."



JASON FINE
EDITOR

ON THE COVER

Zoë Kravitz Follows Her Mom's Lead

The daughter of Lisa Bonet and Lenny Kravitz joins 'Rolling Stone' family

IN MAY 1988, ZOË Kravitz's mom, the actress Lisa Bonet, appeared on the cover of ROLLING STONE'S annual Hot Issue. At the time, the former star of *The*

homage to her mom's iconic photos. "Technically," says Zoë, "this is my second cover."

Matthew Rolston, a friend of Bonet who has shot more than 100 RS covers, provided the original images. "She had a wildness to her that was very attractive," he recalls. He loves that 30 years later, Zoë's cover "is very much full circle."

Interestingly, the nude Bonet photo appeared inside the 1988 issue, not on the cover — the magazine instead chose an image of Bonet draped in a white shirt, a total surprise to her. "I think she was bummed," Kravitz says. "For me, it's about doing the thing that my mom had intended to do. That feels cool."

In the accompanying

"Young Mick Jagger. Aretha Franklin. When somebody allows themselves to be who they are unapologetically, that's really hot," says Kravitz.

interview, Bonet was asked to define what hot means to her. So we asked Kravitz to do the same. "To me, 'hot' means someone who's vibrant and confident," she says. "Young Mick Jagger. Aretha Franklin. When somebody allows themselves to be who they are unapologetically, that's really hot."

We read Kravitz her mom's answer: "To me, hot means uncompromising. It means nonconforming, not afraid."

"Wow, we're the same!" says Kravitz. "She instilled that in me, I guess." She smiles. "That's so cool."

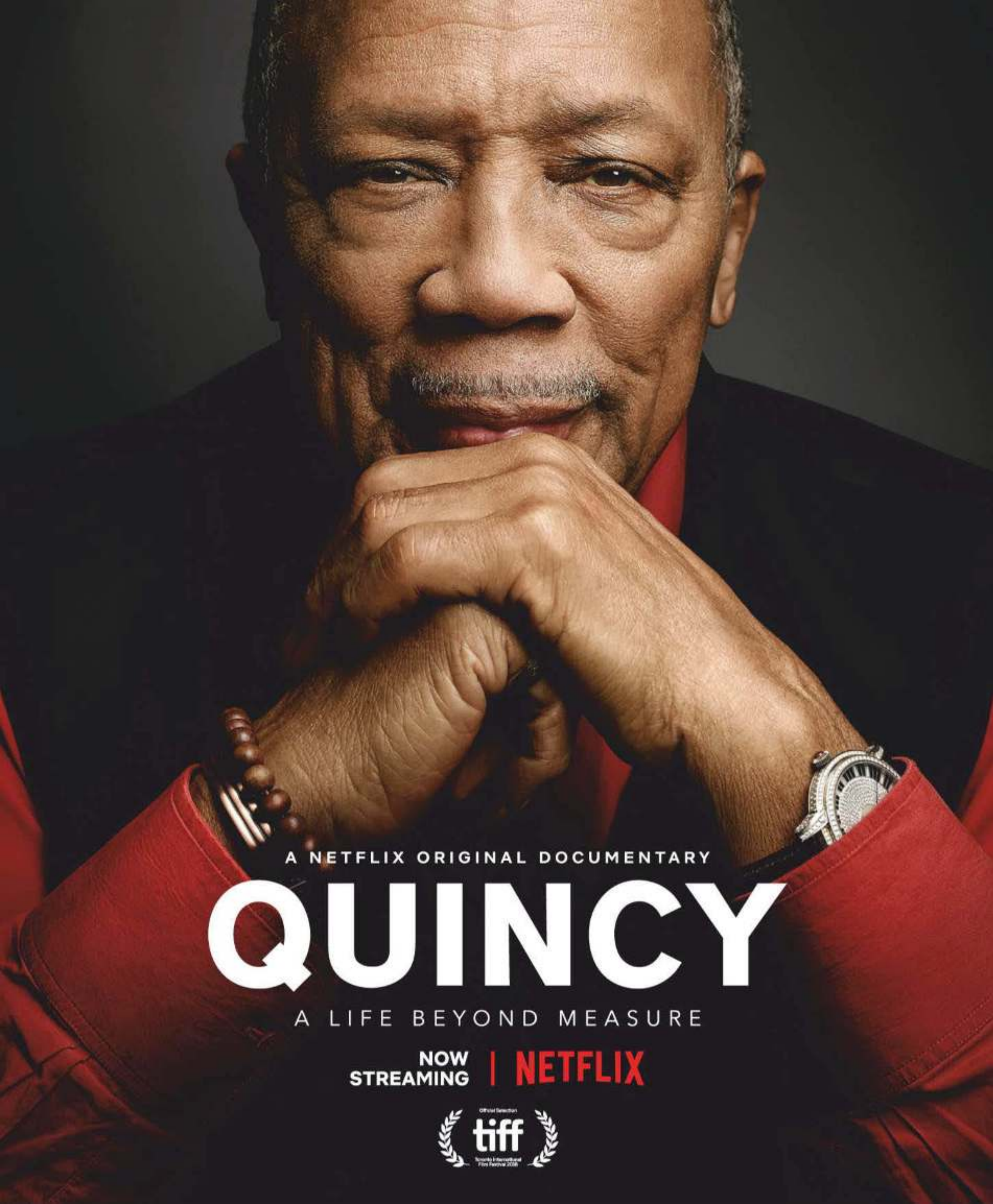


Lisa Bonet,
1988



Zoë Kravitz,
2018

Cosby Show was two months pregnant with Zoë. (Her dad, Lenny, graced the cover in November 1995.) So it seemed natural for us to put Zoë, now 29 and starring in *Big Little Lies*, on this year's Hot Issue cover, with an image shot by talented photographer Zoey Grossman that pays



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“Legendary, inspirational and one of a kind. These are the three things that come to mind when I think of Aretha Franklin.”

—Jeff Swanson, Everett, WA



After the Hurricane

Jeff Goodell presents an onslaught of facts confirming that, one year later, the U.S. government still doesn't give a shit about Puerto Rico ["The Perfect Storm," RS 1320]. Every American should read this article and then immediately call their congressperson and demand Puerto Rican representation and a comprehensive relief package. This is a tragedy that is so easy for Americans to forget.

—Sara Derr, Brooklyn



The West Coast's House Fight

As much as the prospect of flipping Congress in favor of the Democratic Party excites me, it also makes me nervous ["The Battle for California," RS 1320]. I don't want liberals to have a false sense of security, because that's what happened in 2016. I think that the Democrats' weakness has always been mobilization, especially during midterms. So there's still a lot of work to be done, because as candidate Ammar Campa-Najjar pointed out in Tim Dickinson's piece, Republicans are going through something too and you better believe that they will be voting accordingly.

—Serena Elkaim, Los Angeles

Honoring the Queen

When Aretha Franklin passed away in August, after battling pancreatic cancer, contributing editor Mikal Gilmore wrote a definitive tribute to Franklin that spanned her life, from her traumatic formative years to her reign as the greatest singer of all time ["The Queen," RS 1320]. Veteran critic and Paul Simon biographer Robert Hilburn tweeted in praise of Gilmore's work, saying, "Mikal Gilmore's series of appreciations in ROLLING STONE about the importance of various legendary artists represents some of the finest writing ever about pop music.... Latest example: his cover story

on Aretha Franklin." Another reader, Benjamin M., called it "a beautiful reflection on Aretha's life." Readers like Shirley Estes wrote in about Franklin's career and her lasting legacy, "May we always give Aretha honor for the creative masterpiece of her career but also for a life well lived." Others, like Michael Sprouse, went so far as to frame the cover (shot in January 1961 by Hank Parker) "because the Aretha Franklin tribute looks so much better on my wall than on the coffee table." But Robert Cavalier, like so many others, wrote in just to say "Thank you, Lady Soul!"



@bedgood_terri: seems like all transcendent artists, like Aretha, are complex. Ultimately, we are left with their art and that's all that counts.

SPOTLIGHT

North Carolina's Hog-Manure Apocalypse



Carolina ["A Crap Deal for Duplin County," RS 1309/1310]. "Poor people are literally getting shit on," as the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network said back in March. Now, weeks after the storm, the nightmare scenario of massive floods of pig waste has come true. It's high past time to regulate factory farms.

After Hurricane Florence, the worst rainstorm in East Coast history, many North Carolina hog farms were underwater. Nearly 10 million hogs are being raised in the state, and the top-five hog-producing counties alone create 15.5 million tons of manure annually. And now, at least five open-air hog-waste lagoons have sustained structural damage, 17 were flooded by nearby rivers, and 21 overflowed, potentially exposing locals to contaminants like salmonella and E. coli. A few months prior, reporter Doug Bock Clark warned ROLLING STONE readers of this impending catastrophe when he investigated how China had outsourced pork production to North

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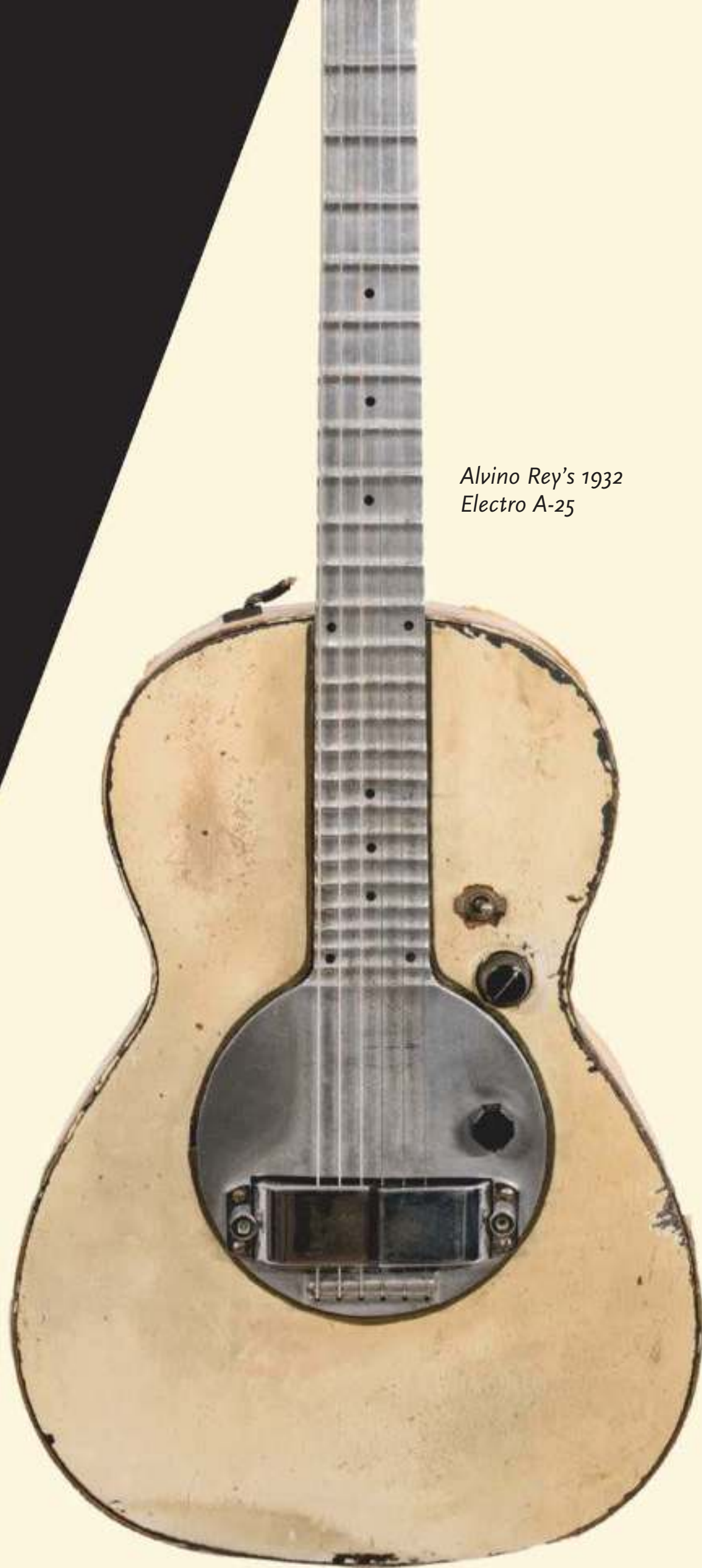


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The Crazy Train's Last Stop

OZZY OSBOURNE'S pre-show routine is a little quieter than it used to be: First he does vocal warm-ups, then he prays. "I say a few words to my higher power, which, if you want to call him God, I don't care," he says in his dressing room at PPL Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on opening night of his North American tour. "If something goes wrong, it was his decision, not mine."

The stakes are greater this time, since the former Black Sabbath singer and reality-TV star declared that this world tour will be his last. Its

name, No More Tours II, references his No More Tours farewell run in the early Nineties. Back then, Ozzy had been diagnosed with "a little bit of" multiple sclerosis. "Sharon said, 'A little bit of MS? That's like saying I'm a little bit pregnant,'" he recalls. It turned out he had been misdiagnosed — he actually had a treatable form of Parkinson's ("I'm OK now," he says). Three years later, Ozzy was back out on his Retirement Sucks tour.

Ozzy stresses that he isn't "stopping completely.... If I go on the road, I'll just do

America and go home, or do Europe and go home. In essence, what I'm trying to do is slow my lifestyle down to a more comfortable way of living." But he shows no signs of slowing down when he hits the stage a few minutes later, howling "Crazy Train" and Black Sabbath's biggest hits, and dousing the audience with multiple buckets of water. For him the reason he's still performing is not complicated: "I literally can't do anything else," he says with a laugh. "I'm no good at anything else." KORY GROW

Osbourne backstage in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in August



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The Mix

WHAT'S NEW, WHAT'S NEXT, WHAT'S NUTS

Kane Brown's New Nashville Rules

The singer never thought he'd fit into country. Now he's making music that might change it



FROM THE VAULT

INSIDE DYLAN'S CONFESSIONAL CLASSIC

Blood on the Tracks has always been one of Bob Dylan's most mysterious albums. He recorded the classic LP in New York, but then, for reasons he's never explained, scrapped half of it and went back home to Minnesota to keep working, even though advance copies had been shipped out (everyone from Mick Jagger to Dylan's brother David have been credited with convincing Dylan the original recordings weren't up to par). A new box set, *More Blood, More Tracks: The Bootleg Series Vol. 14*, offers a window into those original New York sessions, showing exactly how his most confessional songs came together during just six days in 1974. These never-heard recordings reveal that he originally laid down the songs acoustically by himself. On the box set, raw, achingly tender renditions of "You're a Big Girl Now" and "Simple Twist of Fate," rival their finished counterparts. Producer Phil Ramone would eventually speed the songs up and add echo for the final album. *More Blood, More Tracks* strips all those modifications away, allowing the songs to finally be heard as they were when Dylan (right, in 1974) first put them down on tape. "There are some records that you love so much, that you listen to so many times, that you think you never want to hear them again," says a source close to the Dylan camp. "But hearing it this way gives you a chance to listen to *Blood on the Tracks* again for the first time." Dylan still has plenty in the vaults for upcoming Bootleg Series editions. Future releases may spotlight his coffeehouse days and 1997's *Time Out of Mind*. Says the source, "We'll only stop doing them once we stop finding things that excite us." **ANDY GREENE**



→ KANE BROWN

IN THE REGIMENTED world of country music — where would-be stars pass through a Music Row boot camp of nights spent working out their material at open mics and days spent peddling songs to publishers — Kane Brown, 25, thinks of himself as an outcast. He's biracial, and he came up hard in Tennessee and northern Georgia, living with his single mom in a car at one point and moving so often he attended five different high schools. "I got bullied so much growing up for being a different color in a majority-white school," he says. "I remember being chased through the woods being called the n-word. I was in middle school. The first thing that came to my mind was, 'They're gonna kill me.'"

Early in Brown's career, because he is a person of color with a neck tat and an eyebrow piercing, people often assumed he was a rapper. But his outsider feeling isn't just a matter of race. Brown mastered social media before guitar, shooting country covers on his phone, posting them on Facebook and rack-

FAST FACTS

HOOP DREAMS Brown almost went to the University of Tennessee on a basketball scholarship but didn't have the marks to make the team. "I had to get my grade average up, 'cause I hated school. I'm so ADD."

TATTOO YOU If not for his tattoos, he says, he would have enlisted in the Army. "They told me I'd have to have my tattoos removed before I could go in. I was like, 'Uh, no.'"

ing up big numbers. Going from social media sensation to major-label artist has been commonplace in pop for more than a decade, but skipping the Nashville boot camp got Brown tagged as a country Justin Bieber. "Nobody's really done it in country music like that before," he says, shrugging off the negativity. As he explained in "Learning" — a song from his 2016 self-titled debut album that addressed everything from a brutal beating at age six from a stepdad for wetting the bed to the racism he'd experienced at school to losing friends to guns and overdoses — bitterness is something he's worked hard to let go of.

Brown has a distinctive low register that's more like a twanged-out Eddie Vedder than Johnny Cash. He grew up with country, but gravitated toward R&B in his teens. As he finished high school he found him-

BARRY FEINSTEIN



BREAKING THROUGH

The Guitar Heroes Winning the War on Bro Country

Brothers Osborne are scoring hits – and speaking their minds on gun violence and racism

TWO YEARS AGO, when Brothers Osborne beat out Florida Georgia Line to win Vocal Duo of the Year at the Country Music Awards, many Nashville scene-watchers saw it as a hugely pivotal moment. FGL had defined the slick “bro country” sound that had ruled radio for years. Brothers Osborne hearkened back to a tougher, rootsier side of country. Underdog realness took home the hardware.

“All genres of music get to be repetitious after a while,” says the bearded John Osborne, 36, sitting next to his younger brother in an East Nashville cocktail bar. “And sometimes a bomb needs to be detonated.”

On November 14th, the Brothers are up for their third consecutive Best Vocal Duo CMA. Along with artists like Ashley McBryde and Chris Stapleton, they’re part of an old-school, guitar-driven movement that’s reshaping country. The band’s 2018 LP, *Port Saint Joe*, balances ragers like the six-minute “Shoot Me Straight” with singer-songwriter-style moments such as the delicate



John (left) and TJ Osborne

ballad “I Don’t Remember Me (Before You).” “We can’t be anything other than ourselves,” says TJ, 33.

That isn’t just bluster. The Osbornes, who grew up in Deale, Maryland, are proud blue-collar guys – their mom was a hairdresser, their dad a self-employed plumber. Despite scoring a Number Four hit with the song “Stay a Little Longer,” they haven’t fallen into rock-star spending habits; when John decided to splurge on a “new” car, he bought a Kia at Carmax.

The working-class sensibility extends to their politics as well. Unlike many stars in play-

it-safe Nashville, the Osbornes are not afraid to speak their minds on issues like racial injustice and gun violence, and the video for “Shoot Me Straight” lampoons Trump’s Space Force initiative. “People act like we don’t already know that it stands to hurt us,” says John. “But we’re still choosing to say something.”

Recently, the duo headlined a fundraiser for Tennessee’s Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Karl Dean. But they also note that their partisan leanings aren’t set in stone. “It’s not about picking sides to us,” says TJ. “It’s about right and wrong.” JOSEPH HUDAK

self connecting to an emerging wave of pop-friendly country – Florida Georgia Line, Sam Hunt, Thomas Rhett – that blended elements of hip-hop, dance pop, R&B and rock. When he was in 11th grade, a co-worker at Lowe’s overheard Brown singing Chris Young’s “Gettin’ You Home” and pushed him to perform it at a school talent show. He won. Now Brown opens for Young on tour, and his debut album included a Young duet. That album also spawned two hits: “What Ifs” and “Heaven,” both of which edge into power-ballad territory. His feature on a remix of Camila Cabello’s “Never Be the Same” helped push that song into the Top 10 and opened up new audiences for both artists.

Brown might be well poised for mainstream stardom, but he’s responding with a second album that

blends more traditional sounds into his mix. In part, that’s the result of a trip to Texas that saw Brown trading songs with local artists. “I was playing ‘What Ifs’ and two fiddle players jumped in on it and just made me fall in love,” he says. He started putting fiddle and steel guitar – instruments he feels “are going extinct” – on his tracks. “It’s new-school with old-school country,” he says. “It’s an experiment.”

So much so that the album is titled *Experiment*. Brown came up with a carefully crafted balance of “stuff that guys like to listen to, with solos that they wish they could play” (such as the swampy guitar thumper “Baby Come Back to Me”) and songs that would appeal to the ladies. (“I guess because I’m getting married right now, we have so many love songs on there,” says Brown, who’s planning a fall wedding.)

He also made sure the album had “both songs you could play on country radio and then some songs that were gonna stream well.” Among the latter is “American Bad Dream,” which opens with a verse about school shootings. Brown was at the Route 91 festival in Las Vegas last year, but left minutes before the start of the shooting that would take 58 lives.

When he started out, Brown knew he was struggling for acceptance in Nashville. Now he’s in a position to take more artistic chances, and he feels like he’s brought nontraditional listeners, like himself, further into the music. “If you come to my shows, there’s all kinds of different races, all kinds of different people. Now, I feel accepted. I still feel like an outcast on the inside, but it doesn’t bother me anymore, at all. It kind of feels cool.” JOE LEVY

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EXHIBITION

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND'S POP-ART PARTY

In 1966, the Velvets played a fabled run at Andy Warhol's club the Dom in downtown New York. Now, just around the corner is the Velvet Underground Experience, a huge exhibit with rare films, photos and multimedia spaces, including a "greenhouse" where you can step inside the Banana Album cover. There are letters from a young Lou Reed about New York ("so many sad, sick people and I have a knack for meeting them") and meeting bandmate John Cale ("a starving viola player"). Co-curator Christian Fevret hopes the exhibit shows young artists "how it's important to go beyond the boundaries." **WILL HERMES**



The Velvet Underground making the film *Venus in Furs* in 1965

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND EXPERIENCE
718 Broadway
New York
Oct. 10-Dec. 30

TREND WATCH

The Music-Film Gold Rush

A Star Is Born is now a major Oscar contender. But it's not the only serious music movie hitting theaters. From pop's *Black Swan* to a grunge drama, here's a guide to the most-buzzed-about.

TIM GRIERSON



Von Lux
DECEMBER



Teen Spirit
TBD, 2019



Her Smell
TBD, 2019

The Story	NATALIE PORTMAN plays Celeste, who became famous as a teenager when she wrote a song about a school shooting she survived. Fourteen years later, she's a superstar who's lost touch with reality.	Violet (ELLE FANNING), a daughter of a Polish immigrant, enters a TV singing show, becoming a surprise contender. "I was nervous," said Fanning. "I watched videos of Taylor Swift as part of my homework."	Becky Something (ELISA-BETH MOSS), a demanding, abusive frontwoman for a 1990s grunge band, drags everyone down into her personal hell of ego and addiction.
Inspired By	Portman's character has been compared to Top 40 A-listers like Lady Gaga and Katy Perry, but director Brady Corbet isn't naming any names. 	Director Max Minghella says Violet is similar to DUA LIPA : "She's from Kosovo, moved to London. There's a duality to her heritage." 	Director Alex Ross Perry studied a doc on L7 (singer Donita Sparks, right). 
Who Wrote the Songs	The director needed someone capable of writing fictional hits from the Nineties on. He found SIA . "It was effortless," he says of her process. 	Fanning sings past hits by Robyn, Ellie Goulding and others; Jack Antonoff produced a new song too. "You have to have a song every 10 minutes, and those songs have to drive the narrative forward," says Minghella.	Two rising punks — Alicia Bognanno of Nashville's Bully and Anika Pyle of Philadelphia's Katie Ellen — wrote songs for the movie. "I wanted women to come in and create something believable and catchy," says Perry.



ON TOUR

INSIDE DRAKE'S NEW DRONE DANCE CREW

Drake's Aubrey and the Three Migos Tour is full of dazzling moments, none so impressive as when 88 tiny, brightly lit objects rush onstage and flutter through the air like gravity-defying backup dancers. In fact, those are miniature drones, created by Zurich's Verity Studios. The devices, which weigh less than a slice of bread, follow preset choreography based on Drake's dance moves. "Our drone choreographers... worked with Drake's creative team to come up with various concepts," like "drone tornadoes," said Raffaello D'Andrea, Verity's founder. But if the tech is new, the concept isn't. "Pink Floyd had a flying pig," says veteran stage designer LeRoy Bennett. "It still allows for the focus to be on the artist: You want it simple, strong and bold." **AMY X. WANG**

FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: ADAM RITCHIE; VERITY STUDIOS; NEON; PARISSA TAGHIZADEH; BOW + ARROW ENTERTAINMENT; RICH FURY/GETTY IMAGES; STEVE EICHNER/WIREIMAGE; ROY ROCHLIN/FILMMAGIC



FIVE SONGS THAT INSPIRED ME

By Graham Nash

The former CSNY singer released a career-retrospective box set, *Over the Years...*, earlier this summer. He launches a U.S. tour in March.

GENE VINCENT

"Be-Bop-A-Lula"

This is the first record I ever owned. I traded my school lunch for it on 78. It's beautifully performed.

THE EVERLY BROTHERS

"So Sad"

When it comes to harmonies, you just can't beat genetics. I got to sing three-part harmony with them on this song in 1992. It was fabulous.

THE BEATLES

"Tomorrow Never Knows"

As a musician, hearing this song was like a giant door opening. I was like, "Wow, you can do anything. You don't have to stick to a regimen of how to write songs."

THE BEACH BOYS

"God Only Knows"

This is the best song ever written. Brian Wilson is a genius, and this touches my heart. Carl Wilson sings beautifully. Magic.

CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH

"Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" When Stephen Stills first played me this song, I wondered what planet he was from.



1. Lana Del Rey

"Venice Bitch"

Nine minutes of sad, sweet, woozily epic California dreaming that evokes fading summers, getting high and "Crimson and Clover." It's got us psyched for her next LP, which reportedly will have the too-good-to-be-true title *Norman Fucking Rockwell*.

2. Jeff Tweedy

"Some Birds"

Wilco just announced they're taking a hiatus. The predictably classy reason: Their drummer's wife got a Fulbright scholarship to study in Finland. In the meantime, Tweedy has a fine solo LP coming out, full of cozy, introspective tunes like this one.

3. Trending Tropics

(feat. Wiso G)

"Elintelne"

A Dominican-Puerto Rican duo take Latin pop, hip-hop and African rock and slam them all together beautifully on this addictive hyperspeed

jam. It's like eight hours of partying collapsed into a three-minute sprint.

4. Pip Blom

"Come Home"

Blom is a 22-year-old Amsterdammer with a Kurt Cobain-like talent for saying a lot with a little. On this great punk single, she destroys someone who thinks they've figured her out ("I think it's quite amusing"), as glowering guitars back her up.

5. Becky Warren

"We're All We Got"

A country-rock vision of coal-country disaffection ripped from everyday life: "Mama wouldn't let Daddy use the good towels on account of that black dust," Warren sings. It's the gritty pride in her voice that makes the song hit so hard.

6. Brockhampton

"Weight"

Fourteen-member hip-hop crew unfurl their bright, bold coming-of-age honesty: "Every time she took her bra off, my dick would get soft," leader Kevin Abstract sings on the gorgeously afflicted centerpiece of their new LP, *Iridescence*.

7. Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper

"Shallow"

The *A Star Is Born* soundtrack has given us a power ballad for the ages. Cooper is decent as a ragged country strummer, but Gaga's powerhouse vocal is what kills; she sounds like she's trying to swallow a stadium whole.

8. Bad Moves

"Spirit FM"

There's something profound in this catchy punk rager about being saved from a religious upbringing by rock & roll

— maybe because they make an old theme seem new via pure passion.

9. Pistol Annies

"Best Years of My Life"

The great Nashville trio deliver a grueling song about midlife depression. "I picked a good day for a recreational Percocet," Ashley Monroe sings. It gets darker from there, like *Blood on the Tracks* via *The Real Housewives of Nashville*.

10. Lil Uzi Vert

"New Patek"

The rapper who gave us the emo-rap banger "XO Tour Llif3" brags about the diamonds on his tentacles over cloudbursts of harps and pianos. Uzi brings it like he's lounging in a luxury box as big as heaven itself.



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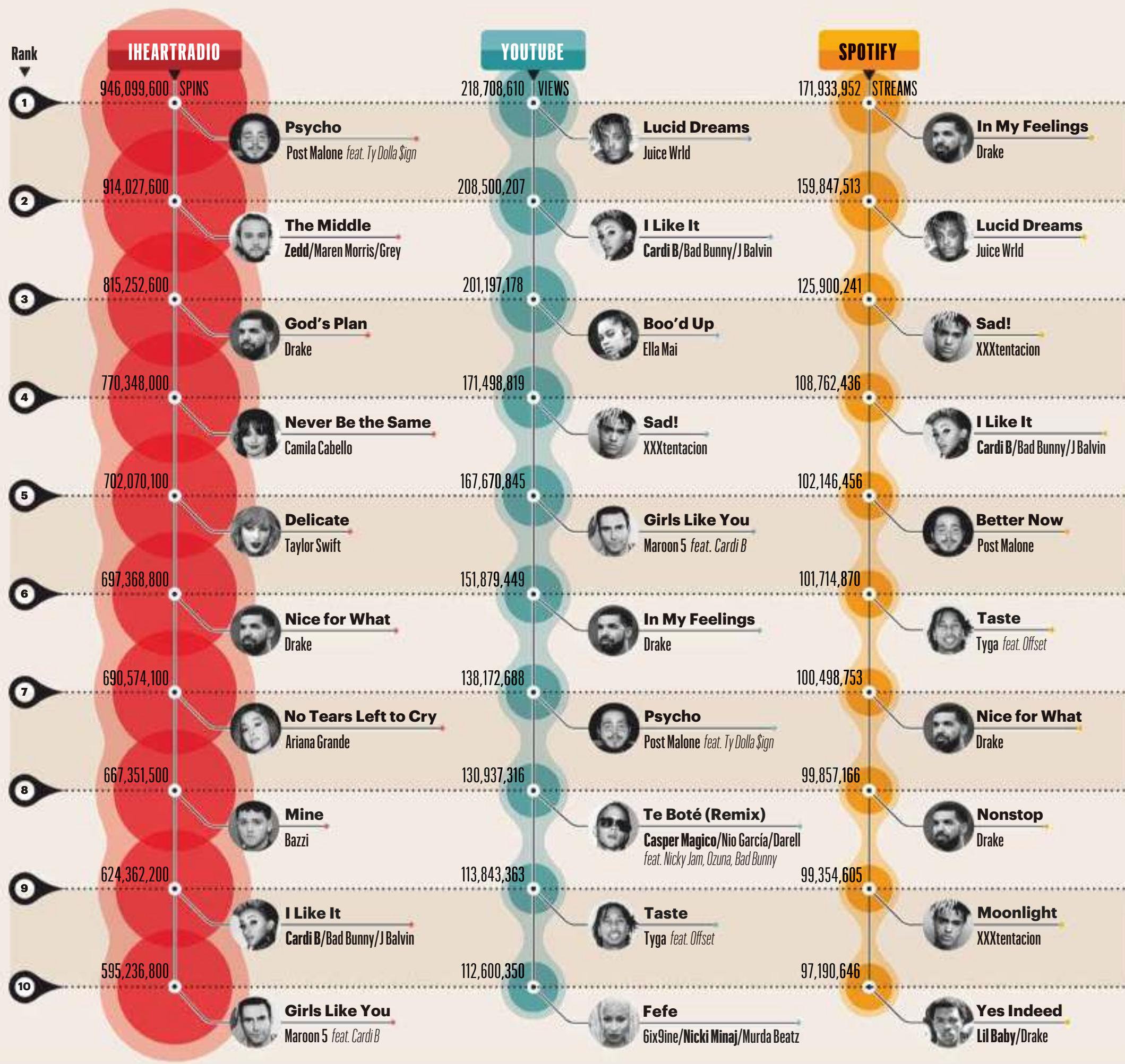


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What Was Summer's Biggest Song?

IT USED TO BE EASY to crown a song of the summer each year, back when major labels and radio programmers called the shots. But what was the biggest summer song of 2018? Thanks to the dizzying buffet of ways that fans find music today, it's harder to name a winner. From May through August, radio stations in the U.S. blasted crowd-pleasers like Post Malone's "Psycho" and Taylor Swift's "Delicate"; over on streaming services, fresher tracks from Juice Wrld and Ella Mai reigned supreme. Much of that difference comes down to the fact that on-demand streaming has a young audience that bumps promising hits to the top very quickly. The AM-FM radio market is bigger and broader – 93 per-

cent of adults tune in at least once a week, according to Nielsen. "The mass audience isn't always in sync with streaming trends, which are driven by a smaller segment of active consumers," says iHeartMedia chief programming officer Tom Poleman. That's why there's little overlap on the charts below, which rank the top songs played this summer on iHeartRadio, YouTube and Spotify (the biggest radio, video-sharing and music-streaming companies in the U.S., respectively). Drake's "In My Feelings" was a huge phenomenon, for instance, with 171,933,952 U.S. Spotify streams. But if listening to the radio in your car is the main way you consume music, you might never have heard it. AMY X. WANG





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IT'S TWO days before she dives back into an eight-month world tour, and Florence Welch is buzzing with excitement. This morning, she went to a museum exhibit in Vancouver about the history of the cabin in North America. "I grew up with a *Little House on the Prairie* fetish," the English singer, 32, explains with a laugh. "I was obsessed. I lived in South London, so there were no prairies." Welch is much more lighthearted in conversation than she is in song. On the latest Florence and the Machine album, *High as Hope*, she sings about fighting depression, doing Ecstasy and living through an eating disorder. "I'm quite an anxious person," she says. "I'm afraid of lots of things. But when it comes to actually being really scared, I have a strange bravery."

You recently got a tattoo that says "Always Lonely." How come? Is that how you feel?

I was supersad [when I got it]. Mixing *High as Hope* was a really lonely time in my life. I was in New York, and I had just gone through a breakup — one of those sad ones where it's not very dramatic. I was thinking, "Are you perpetuating your own loneliness?" The closest relationship I've had for my whole life is with my music. Also, I guess, I thought it was funny.

What's your biggest fear?

I'm afraid of flying. There have been so many kind stewardesses who have held my hand during turbulence, and I had to write them letters just to say thank you. And I can be a bit agoraphobic when I get back from tour. When you allow yourself to be that vulnerable in front of so many people, just walking out on the street becomes this extreme thing you can't handle. I can get a bit edgy about going out, which makes me a superfun person to date [laughs].

What's the worst experience you've had with an obsessed fan?

I've had kids come to my house, but they're always



Q&A

Florence Welch

The English pop singer on getting sober, embracing loneliness, and why she worships Patti Smith

By KORY GROW

really sweet and wearing a Florence shirt and a fringed jacket. They want to talk about art history or whatever. I try to explain, "I appreciate the passion, but I need a safe space to sit and write and think."

You've said that you go into a trance when you're onstage. How do you break that state?

I hurt myself at Coachella [in 2015] because I suddenly became self-conscious. I had just taken my shirt off in

front of a zillion people, and suddenly it was the Adam and Eve thing: "Oh, my God, I'm not supposed to do that!" So I threw myself off the stage in a way that hurt me because I was back in the physical world.

How about when you're writing songs? How do you get in that mental space?

A lot of it happens on the move, because I travel so much. It's a strange kind of delicious longing feeling. It's sad, but it's not unpleasant.

It's surrendering to your own aloneness for a bit and seeing what comes with that.

On the new song "Hunger," you sing about your experience with an eating disorder: "At 17, I started to starve myself." Was that a hard song to write?

It was something I couldn't talk about for a long time. I thought I would take it to the grave. My sister was like, "You haven't even spoken about this with Mom, and you've put it in a pop song?"

What's wrong with you?"

So I did sit down and talk it through with my mom. It opened up a lot of stuff that was good in the end. But it's funny, with English people, you have the talk and then everyone carries on.

Have you conquered that disorder?

I have a healthy relationship with my body now, but it took me a long time. And it stays with you in weird ways. If you've been denying yourself nourishment in some way, you also have a tendency to deny yourself emotional nourishment. I'm still trying to figure out what the fuck that means for me.

You've been sober for four years. What made you stop drinking?

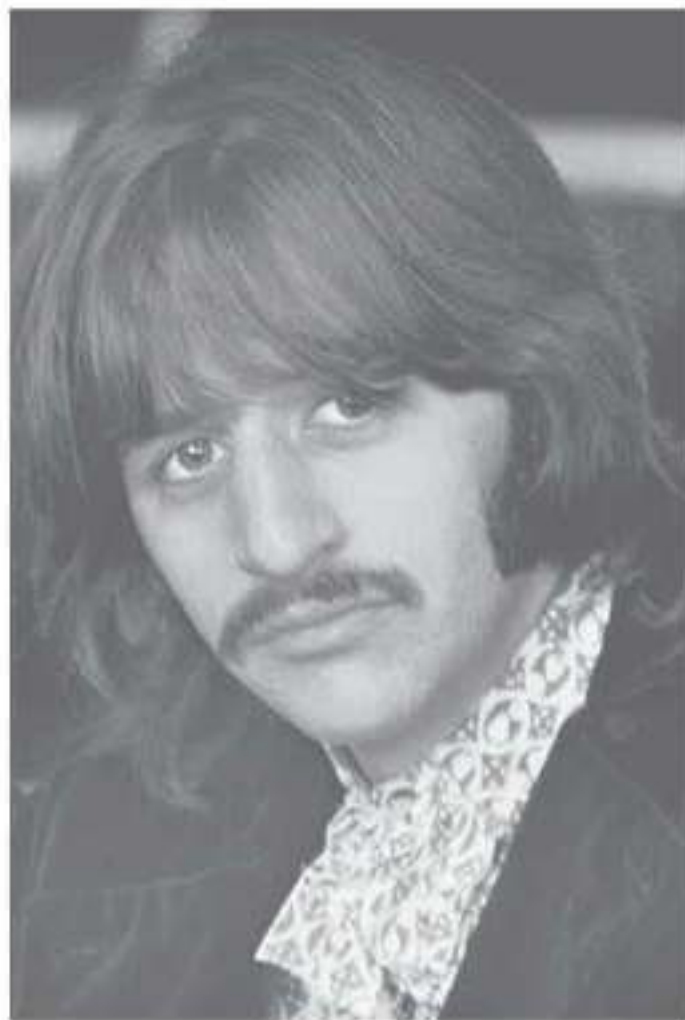
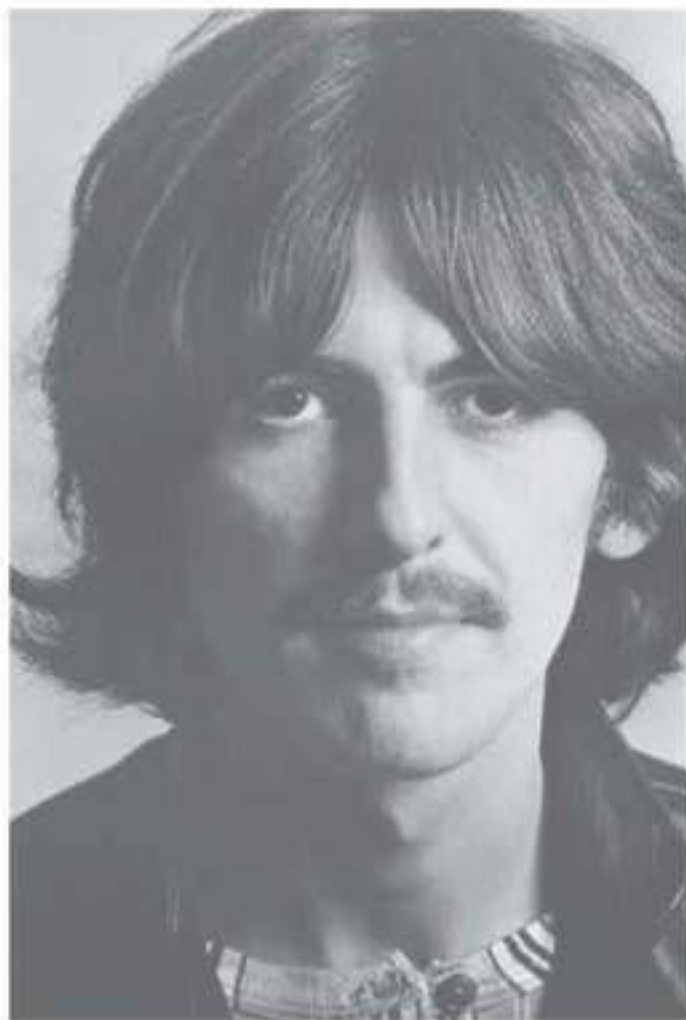
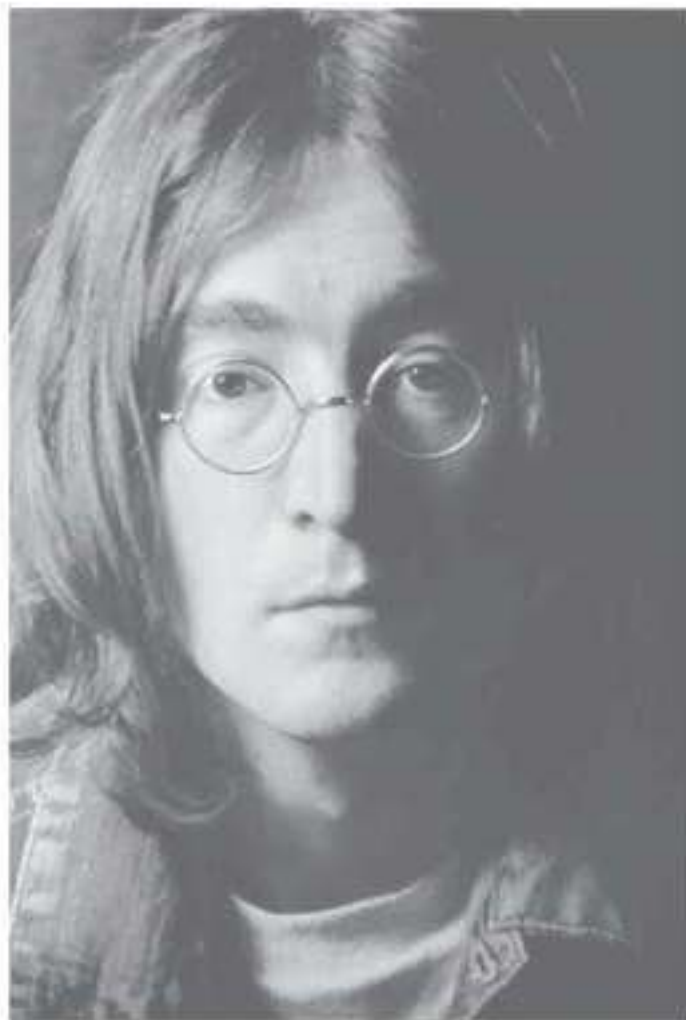
Being an extreme drinker was a huge part of my identity. When I stopped, there was this sense that I was letting some ghost of rock history down, but I just couldn't cope anymore. It was monumental. It wasn't like, "I want to be healthy, and I need a change of pace." It was like, "I'm going to die. I need to stop." I could have maybe carried on physically, but psychologically, drinking and drugs made me really depressed.

What's your biggest indulgence these days?

Vintage clothes and books. And I drink so much coffee. Do you do the thing where you go to people's houses and secretly, silently judge them on their book choices? I have such a fear of somebody doing that to me, so I keep mine really well-curated.

You have a song on your new album called "Patricia," dedicated to Patti Smith. What does she mean to you?

I was thinking about how to live creatively without chaos. Her writing was like a blueprint. She seems to bring such reverence to the act of living that I find so inspiring. I bumped into her at a restaurant in New York — I knew that she loves that restaurant, so that's why I go there. She has this luminous beauty, like an angel. I felt so shy, like the kid who came to my house one time. It was magical. 🌟



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PROFILE

Life After Fleetwood Mac

Lindsey Buckingham on getting fired from his band – and his solo plans

By DAVID FRICKE

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM and his wife, Kristen, were at home in Los Angeles on January 28th, watching the Grammy Awards ceremony on television, when the phone rang. Fleetwood Mac’s manager Irving Azoff was calling with a message for Buckingham from Stevie Nicks. The gist of it, Buckingham says, quoting Azoff: “Stevie never wants to be on a stage with you again.”

Two nights earlier, the most popular and enduring lineup of Fleetwood Mac – Nicks, Buckingham, singer-keyboard player Christine McVie, bassist John McVie and drummer Mick Fleetwood – performed in New York at a MusiCares benefit show honoring the group. “We rehearsed for two days, and everything was great,” Buckingham claims. “We were getting along great.”

But on the phone, Azoff had a list of things that, as Buckingham puts it, “Stevie took issue with” that evening, including the guitarist’s outburst just before the band’s set over the intro music – the studio recording of Nicks’ “Rhiannon” – and the way he “smirked” during Nicks’ thank-you speech. Buckingham concedes the first point. “It wasn’t about it being ‘Rhiannon,’” he says. “It just undermined the impact of our entrance. That’s me being very specific about the right and wrong way to do something.”

As for smirking, “The irony is that we have this standing joke that Stevie, when she talks, goes on a long time,” Buckingham says. “I may or may not have smirked. But I



Buckingham in L.A., September

look over and Christine and Mick are doing the waltz behind her as a joke.”

At the end of that call, Buckingham assumed Nicks was quitting Fleetwood Mac. He wrote an e-mail to Fleetwood assuring the drummer that the group could continue. There was no reply. A couple of days later, Buckingham says, “I called Irving and said, ‘This feels funny. Is Stevie leaving the band, or am I getting kicked out?’” Azoff told the guitarist he was “getting ousted” and that Nicks gave the rest of the band “an ultimatum: Either you go or she’s gonna go.”

Asked if those were Azoff’s exact words, Buckingham responds, “Pretty much. I don’t remember his exact words, but that was the message.” In April, Fleetwood Mac announced a major North American tour with two new guitarists: Neil Finn, formerly of Crowded House, and Mike Campbell, from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Azoff and the other members of Fleetwood Mac declined to comment for this story on Buckingham’s account of his dismissal. But in April, Fleetwood – who co-founded the group

“I don’t think there was just cause to be fired. All of us have worn on each other’s psyches at times. That’s the history of the group.”

in 1967 with original guitarist Peter Green – told ROLLING STONE that the band hit an “impasse” with Buckingham. “This was not a happy situation for us in terms of the logistics of a functioning band.” The drummer did not elaborate but said, “We made a decision that we could not go on with him.”

Nicks – Buckingham’s romantic and musical partner when the two joined the Mac in 1975 – cited a disagreement over tour plans, saying Buckingham wanted too much time off for solo work. But, she added, “Our relationship has always been volatile. We were never married, but we might as well have been. Some couples get divorced after 40 years. They break their kids’ hearts and destroy everyone around them because it’s just hard.”

Buckingham confirms that, at a band meeting in late 2017 – shortly after a series of shows with Christine to promote their project, Lindsey Buckingham/Christine McVie – he asked for “three or four months extra” to do solo dates. There was “stonewalling,” he claims. “I left the meeting because there was nothing else to talk about.”

But he insists that Fleetwood Mac always “came first. And I don’t think there was ever anything that was just cause to be fired. We have all done things that were not constructive. All of us have worn on each other’s psyches at times. That’s the history of the group.”

It is a warm late-summer morning, and Buckingham, who turned 69 on October 3rd, is sitting on the patio behind his house in a hilly neighborhood in West Los Angeles, giving his version – on the record for the first time – of his exit from Fleetwood Mac. Later in the day, he will rehearse with his own band for a fall tour to promote *Solo Anthology: The Best of Lindsey Buckingham*,

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a compilation drawn from records he has made outside the Mac since the early Eighties. The guitarist had completed a new solo album, tentatively called *Blue Light*, when he was cut loose. It will come out next year.

“Am I heartbroken about not doing another tour with Fleetwood Mac? No,” Buckingham says, “because I can see that there are many other areas to look into.” But, he goes on, “The one thing that does bother me and breaks my heart is we spent 43 years always finding a way to rise above our personal differences and our difficulties to pursue and articulate a higher truth. That is our legacy. That is what the songs are about. This is not the way you end something like this.”

Buckingham says he tried to contact Nicks, without success. On February 28th, a month after first writing to Fleetwood, Buckingham sent the drummer another e-mail expressing those sentiments and his frustration with the band’s “radio silence.” There was no response. Since their last show together, at MusiCares, Buckingham has not spoken to any of his former bandmates.

ON SEPTEMBER 5th, Fleetwood Mac’s new lineup made its television debut on *Ellen*. Buckingham did not watch it. His wife did. “I was just sad,” Kristen says. “I was thinking, ‘How did they get here?’” Kristen and Lindsey met in 1996, not long before the guitarist — who quit Fleetwood Mac in 1987 — rejoined, leading to the 1997 live reunion album, *The Dance*. “Even though we didn’t see them very often,” Kristen says of the other members, “it was still a family of sorts.” The Buckingham’s three children “called them aunts and uncles.”

It is still a small world. But it has become awkward. The husband of Lindsey’s niece is a drum technician on Fleetwood Mac’s road crew. Buckingham’s advice to him: “Mick is still a great guy. Don’t be anything other than a centered, grounded person

for him. Do your job well.” Also, John McVie and the Buckingham’s are neighbors. The bassist’s home is “literally 300 yards from here,” the guitarist says, pointing through his house to the other side of the street.

Kristen recently ran into John’s wife, Julie, at a local nail salon. “My heart sank a bit,” Kristen says. “She said hello. I asked about her daughter — it was neutral ground.” But when Julie mentioned the tour, “She must have seen my face: ‘Oh, how is Lindsey doing?’ I didn’t want to sugarcoat it. I just said, ‘You know, not great.’”

“I had a visceral reaction to it for a long time,” Buckingham says, “completely hurt. I’d be fine for a while, and then it would come back.” He was also “disappointed” in what he calls “the disproportion in what happened and anything you can put on me in terms of behavior and the scale of what went on.”

Buckingham is not the first



member of Fleetwood Mac to be fired. Guitarist Danny Kirwan was canned by Fleetwood in 1972 for alcoholism and violent behavior. (Kirwan died in June.) In 1973, singer Bob Weston got his pink slip after he had an affair with Fleetwood’s then-wife. Buckingham, in turn, has a long-standing reputation as a hard case, uncompromising and quick to ignite. He took over Fleetwood Mac’s musical direction after the megaplatinum sales of the group’s 1977 album, *Rumours*, pushing for the New Wave risk of 1979’s *Tusk*. After that record’s muted success, the guitarist made his first solo album, 1981’s *Law and Order*, be-



Four Rare Gems From Buckingham’s ‘Solo Anthology’

1. “Ride This Road”

One of two new songs on *Solo Anthology*, this rolling ballad about choice and consequences now sounds eerily prescient.

2. “D.W. Suite”

The closing track on 1984’s *Go Insane* was a complex, earnest homage — an art song, with tolling bells and soaring harmonies — to late Beach Boy Dennis Wilson.

3. “Doing What I Can”

This rich, frantic summation of solo life, on 1992’s *Out of the Cradle*, updates the nerve and gallop of “Tusk” with an airtight-pop sound.

4. “Down on Rodeo”

If this space-country ballad on 2006’s *Under the Skin* sounds like a Mac outtake, it’s because of the rhythm section here: McVie and Fleetwood. **D.F.**

in a few days.) Buckingham is also focused on the details in the music, singing with his eyes shut tight in concentration and looking intently at his guitar as he picks the Bach-like introduction of “Don’t Look Down,” from 1992’s *Out of the Cradle*. Buckingham is literally a solo artist in that he records mostly at home, singing and playing virtually all of the parts, and he is an obvious perfectionist in rehearsal as he stops songs to resolve the timing of a part or the volume in his monitors. It is easy to see how, in a historically dysfunctional setting like Fleetwood Mac, that kind of intensity could spill over into dissension and stalemate.

Ironically, when Buckingham starts his solo tour in early October, in Portland, Oregon, it is within days of the new Fleetwood Mac’s opening night, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The latter are playing arenas into next spring. Buckingham is appearing in theaters such as New York’s Town Hall. “That’s the story of my solo work: You lose nine-tenths of the listeners,” Buckingham concedes. The set list he rehearses in Burbank includes songs that he could be playing with Fleetwood Mac right now: “Big Love,” “Tusk,” “Go Your Own Way.” But the encores are from solo albums. One, from 2008’s *Gift of Screws*, is called “Treason.”

“It is not my place or intent to open that door,” Buckingham says of his former band. “I’ve done my best to reach out to them.” He has not “technically closed the book on anything. Nor would I. But I am not planning that anything will change from what it is now.”

Buckingham knows there will be moments on his solo tour, backstage, when well-meaning fans will hand him a copy of *Rumours* to sign. And “that’s OK,” he says. “Somebody handing me *Rumours* has no effect on anything more than it ever would have. It is just an affirmation that we’ve done our job right.” **R**

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"You leave the theater feeling like you've struck it rich."

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ROGEREBERT.COM

"Ben Dickey is incredible.
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"An experience that opens your ears,
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VARIETY



A FILM BY ETHAN HAWKE

BLAZE

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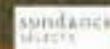
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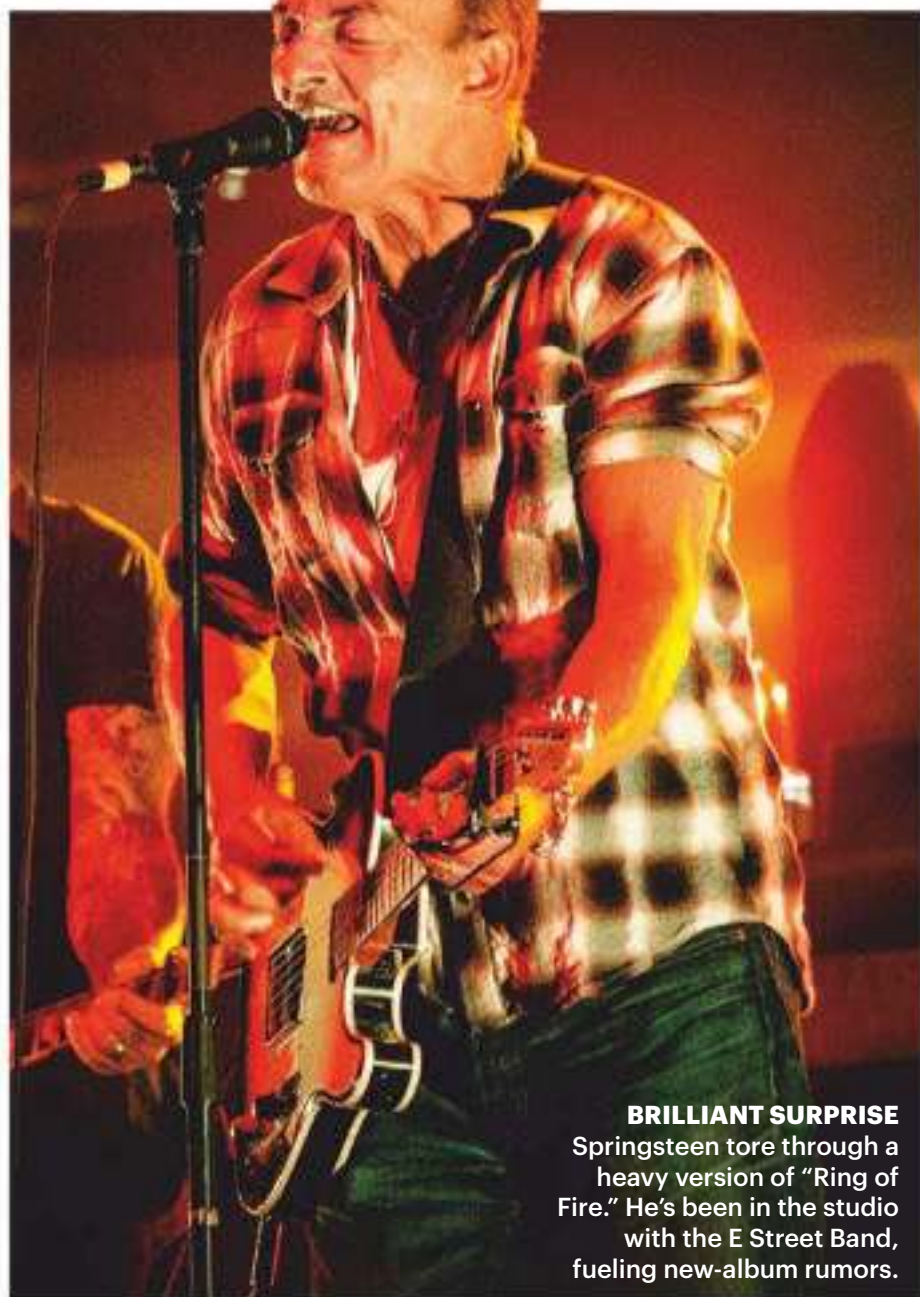


Random Notes



Foos Double Down

Last year, Foo Fighters relaunched the long-defunct Seventies fest CalJam with guests like Rick Astley and Joe Perry. This year, the Foos raised the stakes, bringing along more than 20 other acts from Iggy Pop to Garbage, and playing a set of their own hits in reverse chronological order. The night capped with Dave Grohl inviting Krist Novoselic, Joan Jett and Deer Tick's John McCauley for a set of Nirvana classics. The Foos hit the road again in February. ➔



BRILLIANT SURPRISE
Springsteen tore through a heavy version of "Ring of Fire." He's been in the studio with the E Street Band, fueling new-album rumors.



BOTTOMS UP
Local Jersey heroes the Front Bottoms played for a devoted crowd. "The sun is setting — we're all feeling good," said frontman Brian Sella.

Somewhere in the Swamps of Jersey

Sea.Hear.Now has become one of America's coolest festivals, bringing surf competitions, art galleries and left-field artists to Asbury Park, New Jersey. This year included Brandi Carlile, Jack Johnson, Blondie, Social Distortion and a surprise local guest: "He was just kind of sitting around, doing nothing," Social Distortion's Mike Ness told the crowd before Bruce Springsteen walked out for a three-song set.



ATOMIC BLONDE
Blondie, coming up on their 45th year as a band, rocked the main stage. Debbie Harry wore a cape that read "Stop fucking the planet."



GONE SURFIN'
Dani Miller of noise punks Surfbort took a dive during the band's show at New York's Brooklyn Steel.



BETO AND LEFTY
Willie Nelson threw a massive rally for Senate candidate Beto O'Rourke in Austin, which drew 55,000. "He's been to every county in Texas, and knocked on every door," says Nelson. "And it looks like it may have paid off a little bit."

BUSK YOURSELF

Justin Bieber surprised tourists outside London's Buckingham Palace when he showed up and sang a few songs, including Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car." At one point, he pointed to his fiancée, Hailey Baldwin. "I love you, babe," he said. "That girl right there is the love of my life."



GAMBINO'S GOODBYE
Childish Gambino performed new songs in Las Vegas. "If you bought a ticket," he said recently, "that means you bought a ticket to the last Childish Gambino tour ever."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GRIFFIN LOTZ; 3; RICK KERN/WIREIMAGE; RICH FURY/GETTY IMAGES; RICKY VIGIL W/GC IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; SACHA LECCA



PUSSY RIOT
The all-female Seattle group Thunderpussy brought huge riffs and hypnotic hooks to the Fools' fest. "Go see Thunderpussy live," says Pearl Jam's Mike McCready. "You will believe too."



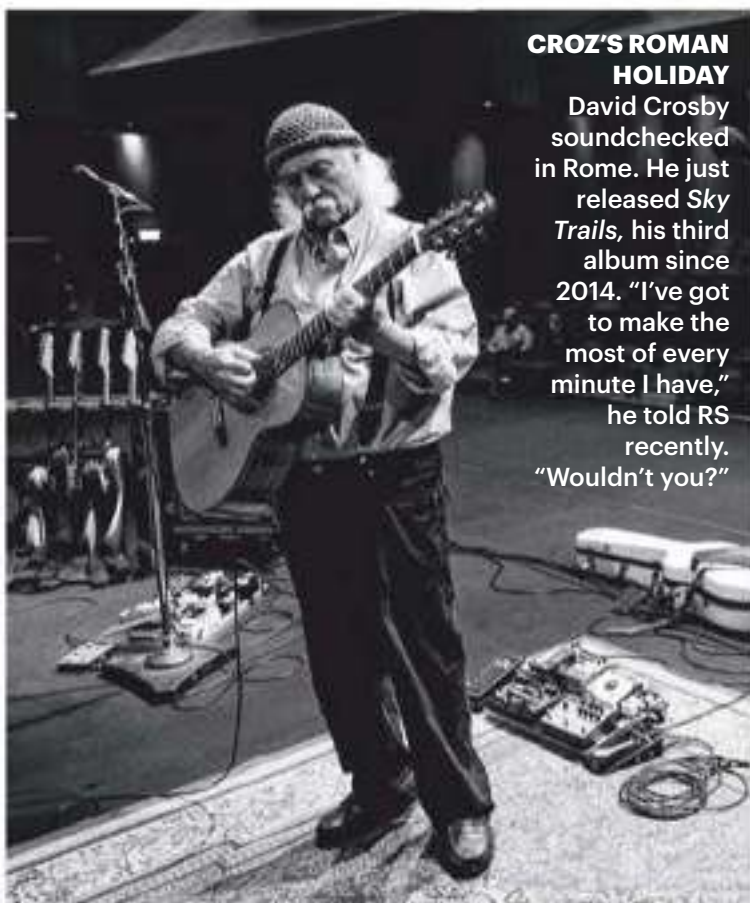
PLEASE MR. POSTMAN At San Diego's KAABOO fest, Post Malone paid tribute to Mac Miller, and showed off his new haircut. "Had two bigass dreads," he wrote recently. "Please don't stop listening to my music."

Iggy's Fun House

Iggy Pop tore through classics at CalJam with his Post Pop Depression band. Iggy — who just released an excellent, wild electronic EP — recently said he has no plans to stop going shirtless live: "There's no age, and the public can kiss my sweet ass, bare."



RISE OF THE PHOENIX
After an intimate summer club tour, Phoenix led a massive singalong at Austin City Limits in Texas. The band recently started a new album in Brazil.



CROZ'S ROMAN HOLIDAY
David Crosby soundchecked in Rome. He just released *Sky Trails*, his third album since 2014. "I've got to make the most of every minute I have," he told RS recently. "Wouldn't you?"

RANDOM QUOTE

"I am the Kanye West Kanye West thinks he is/When he shoves your ass off the stage/I am the real Kanye West."

—Leonard Cohen's just-released 2015 poem "Kanye West Is Not Picasso"



LIZZO LIFTS OFF A few years ago, Prince discovered local Minnesota hip-hop MC Lizzo and recruited her for his 2014 LP *Plectrumelectrum*. Now, she's working on her first album and ruling festivals like Las Vegas' Life Is Beautiful with her funky live show. "What you're about to see is all body positivity and self-love," she said onstage.

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National Affairs

The Health Department's Christian Crusade

The religious right has infiltrated the office of Health and Human Services, and reproductive rights are the first target

By TESSA STUART



IT WAS DUSK on a Friday in March 2017, and the women's health clinic in San Antonio was near empty, while a nurse sat finishing some end-of-the-week paperwork and the phone rang. The man on the other end of the line introduced himself as Dr. Meyerstein with the Office of Refugee Resettlement in Washington, D.C., the agency charged with the temporary care of children who are apprehended while crossing the border alone.

Earlier that day, the clinic had given a 17-year-old girl the first dose of a medication abortion — a regimen that requires two sets of pills to be taken at least 24 but no more than 48 hours apart. Meyerstein wanted to know what would happen if the girl didn't take her second dose.

The nurse knew the patient he was asking about: petite, shy, brown hair and a face that looked younger than the age on her chart. A chaperone from the government-funded shelter where she was being held accompanied her to the appointment.

The clinic had rules protecting patient privacy, the nurse said, but she offered some general information about the risks any patient would face if she didn't take the rest of her pills: deadly infection; serious, prolonged bleeding; and the possibility of birth defects if the pregnancy progressed.

If he wanted more information about the risks, she said, he could find it on the FDA's website. She hung up the phone, but Meyerstein called a second time. And a third. Increasingly frantic, he told her that questions were being asked about the safety and legality of the treatment the girl had received that day.

His inquiries struck the nurse as strange for someone who claimed to have a medical degree. Medication abortions are extremely common in the United States, and safe: Fewer than one-quarter of one percent of patients experience any kind of major compli-

cation. As for the legality, the patient had obtained a judge's approval, as Texas law requires any underage girl without her parent's permission to do before making an appointment.

When she got home, the nurse Googled to see if a Dr. Shaanan Meyerstein even existed at ORR, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services. As long as she'd worked at the clinic it had been a target of anti-abortion activists, and it occurred to her that this man might be one of them, just pretending to work for the government.

She wasn't entirely wrong. Meyerstein was a civil servant who had worked for ORR's unaccompanied-minor program since the Obama administration, but depositions and internal documents show he was acting on orders from a tight group of pro-life crusaders recently installed in the top ranks of the Department of Health and Human Services: Maggie Wynne, counselor to the secretary of HHS; Matt Bowman, a lawyer in their Office of the General Counsel; and Scott Lloyd, the man recently tapped to helm ORR.

Late into the night, the officials were huddling about how to handle the situation down in San Antonio. They began drafting a directive that would radically re-imagine the role of incoming ORR director Lloyd, granting him unprecedented power over the pregnant, underage girls who ended up in the agency's custody — including the power to make "all medical decisions for the unaccompanied alien child in place of the child's parents." (HHS declined to make any of the individuals involved in this story available for interviews.)

The girl, meanwhile, remained unaware of any of this. Staff members at her shelter had been told to withhold her second set of pills, but no one mentioned that her pregnancy — and, with it, the contours of the rest of her life — was being debated by a handful of bureaucrats based in a beige, Brutalist office building 1,600 miles away.

READERS' POLL

Do you think ICE should be abolished?

72%
Yes

28%
No

Go to Rolling Stone.com for next issue's poll.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM — at least since 2016, when candidate Donald Trump bluntly declared his intention to appoint justices who would overturn *Roe v. Wade* — has held that the gravest threat to reproductive freedom in the United States would come, eventually, from the Supreme Court. But while the focus has been on the judicial branch, officials in the executive have been quietly writing the constitutionally protected right to an abortion out of federal rules and grant guidelines. Today, the ability of low-income women to secure an abortion is poised to disappear even before the next challenge to *Roe* lands before the court — and for immigrant girls in ORR custody it may no longer exist at all.

The Department of Health and Human Services is a sprawling agency with a trillion-dollar budget and nearly a dozen operating divisions, including the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health and the government-run health programs Medicare and Medicaid. It has a hand in everything from funding preschool programs and regulating vitamins to identifying Superfund sites and monitoring Ebola outbreaks.

During the Obama administration, no area of the federal government was more reviled by the religious right than HHS. Viewed by religious Republicans as the primary staging ground for the administration's assaults on "faith" and "freedom," HHS was assailed for implementing rules that expanded hospital visitation rights to same-sex couples, protected transgender patients from discrimination and required employers to offer birth-control coverage.

It was a coup, then, when Trump installed pious orthopedic surgeon Tom Price as secretary, who, with the help of the office of Vice President Mike Pence, began stocking the department with an army of culture-war veterans plucked from the country's most radical religious organizations — the archconservative Family Research Council, the anti-

FROM LEFT: JEWEL SAMAD/AP/GETTY IMAGES; SKY CINEMA/SHUTTERSTOCK; ULRICH BAUMGARTEN/GETTY IMAGES; TAMARA BECKWITH/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; INFOWARS; STEVE PETTEWAY/SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES; NATIONAL ENQUIRER; REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

TIMELINE THE LONG VIEW: TRUMP'S TOP CONSPIRACY THEORIES

MARCH 2011



BIRTHING LIES
"Somebody told me," Trump says of Obama's birth certificate, "it might [say] 'Muslim.'"

NOV. 2012



CLIMATE HOAX
"The concept of **Global warming** was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive," Trump tweets.

SEPT. 2014



ANTI-VAXXER
"I am being proven right about **massive vaccinations** — the doctors lied," Trump tweets, though the theory has been completely debunked.

OCT. 2015



9/11 TRUTHER
Trump says Bush had "advance notice" of **9/11** but didn't stop it.

DEC.



INFO BROS
"Your reputation is amazing. I will not let you down," Trump tells Alex Jones, host of **InfoWars**, 9/11 truther and Sandy Hook denier.

FEB. 2016



FOUL PLAY?
Trump flirts with the theory that Justice **Antonin Scalia was murdered**: "They say they found a pillow on his face, which is a pretty unusual place to find a pillow."

MAY



NEW JFK THEORY
After a picture surfaces of Ted Cruz's father, Rafael, with Lee Harvey Oswald, Trump suggests Rafael was connected to the **JFK assassination**.

MAY



CLINTON CLASH
Trump says the suicide of Bill Clinton aide **Vince Foster** was "very fishy," boosting conspiracy theories that he was murdered. Foster "knew everything," Trump says.

abortion Susan B. Anthony List, Americans United for Life, and the National Abstinence Education Association among them. By the time Price was forced to step down over a spending scandal last September, HHS had already been transformed into what the Family Research Council called “a virtual promise-keeping factory” for Christian conservatives.

As Shannon Royce, an alum of the Family Research Council and current head of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at HHS, told a gathering of evangelicals in January, Trump’s HHS “is absolutely a pro-life team, across the spectrum, and that is playing out in many ways.” The “team” has found ways to codify its agenda in corners as disparate as the annual budget for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where the words “fetus” and “transgender” were banned, to the Administration for Community Living, which eliminated questions about sexual orientation from a survey of seniors and people living with disabilities. Royce herself was particularly proud of wedging into HHS’ strategic plan a sentence that redefines life as starting at the moment of conception.

Many of the changes are small enough to go unnoticed in a ream of government paperwork but are nevertheless far-reaching: Strike a few words from a single grant, for instance, and suddenly government-funded shelters are no longer required to provide information about emergency contraception or abortion to victims of sexual assault and sex trafficking. Or tinker with eligibility requirements for Title X – a program that provides family-planning services to 4 million Americans – and suddenly not just access to abortion, but birth control and routine medical care for low-income women across the country are in jeopardy.

HHS touted more boldly, in January, the creation of a new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division inside its Office of Civil Rights to defend doctors who refuse to serve gay and transgender individuals. “It’s perverse – it



CULTURE WARRIORS
Pence and former HHS Secretary Price, who stepped down in 2017 amid a spending scandal. Under Trump, HHS has been called a “virtual promise-keeping factory” for Christian conservatives.

takes a department that was supposed to protect against discrimination and turns it on its head,” says Jocelyn Samuels, a director of OCR under the Obama administration. In relatively short order, Trump’s HHS has also managed to roll back Obama’s employer birth-control mandate, withdraw a separate rule that prevented states from punishing family-planning clinics that offer abortion services, and revise a rule prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

“We were expecting gender identity and birth control,” says Kevin Griffis, assistant secretary for public affairs at HHS under Obama, now VP of communications at Planned Parenthood. “We weren’t expecting religion seeping into the Office of Refugee Resettlement.”

THE NURSE IN San Antonio woke the following morning to an e-mail from an employee at the girl’s shelter: Top officials at HHS had a specific list of questions for her and they were demanding answers in writing. Their questions posed in the e-mail centered on the dubious practice

of administering the hormone progesterone to “reverse” the effects of mifepristone, the first dose of a medication abortion. The practice, widely discredited as junk science, is nonetheless popular with anti-abortion activists who have promoted it as an option for women who may regret their decision immediately after beginning the process.

The girl in question, though, hadn’t expressed any regret, and she wasn’t involved in the officials’ discussions about injecting her with hormones, a staff member at the shelter told the nurse. But HHS officials seemed to decide the girl’s opinion wasn’t all that relevant, and spelled out as

much in the memo dispatched to ORR field staff, directing them to take the girl to a local emergency room. “If steps can be taken to preserve the life of the... unborn child, those steps should be taken,” it read.

It’s not unusual for girls to arrive at an ORR shelter already pregnant, many as a result of their journey. According to a 2010 Amnesty International estimate, six in 10 female migrants are sexually assaulted at some point during their crossing.

Under the Obama administration, requests for abortion were only elevated to the director’s office if there was a question of funding. (Under the Hyde Amendment, the federal government can pay for abortions only in cases of rape, incest or if the life of the mother is at risk.) Most cases, says Bob Carey, ORR director under Obama, were treated no differently than any other emergency medical procedure, like, say, an appendectomy.

“The point,” Carey says, “wasn’t that we – or the director – had the right to authorize an abortion, rather that you were authorizing, as appropriate, the use of federal funds.”

TOP: AP IMAGES/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK. BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: MARK MAKELA/GETTY IMAGES; WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES; EVAN VUCCI/AP IMAGES/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD/THE WHITE HOUSE; NBC NEWS; RICARDO ARDUENGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; TOM WILLIAMS/CQ ROLL CALL/GETTY IMAGES

NOV.



FRAUD!

Trump claims he would have won the **popular vote** if “millions of people” hadn’t voted illegally. His own voting commission would never find evidence of it.

MARCH 2017



SPY GAMES

Trump says he had his **“wires tapped”** by Obama in Trump Tower before the election: “Terrible!... This is McCarthyism!”

NOV.



PARANOID STATE

Trump first refers to the **“deep state”** on Twitter, a supposed shadowy network of agents controlling the government and working to delegitimize his presidency.

AUG. 2018



MR. Q GOES TO WASHINGTON

Trump poses for an Oval Office photo with Michael Lebron, a prominent peddler of the **QAnon** conspiracy theory, which posits Trump is secretly working to break up a deep-state cabal of Dem pedophile rings.

AUG.



FAKE NEWS

Trump claims Lester Holt “got caught fudging” the interview where Trump admitted he fired FBI Director James Comey over the **Russia** investigation.

SEPT.



DEATH TOLL

Trump denies that nearly 3,000 people died in Puerto Rico because of **Hurricane Maria**: “This was done by the Democrats to make me look as bad as possible.”

OCT.



SUPREME LIES

Trump says women protesting **Brett Kavanaugh** were “paid professionals only looking to make Senators look bad” — paid for by “Soros and others,” of course.

Scott Lloyd sees it differently. He believes every abortion should be subject to his personal authorization.

Unlike Carey, who had a decade and a half of experience managing large-scale refugee operations before he was tapped to helm the agency, Lloyd had virtually none. His résumé lists early stints as a humor columnist at a newspaper in New Jersey and as a middle-school teacher in Brooklyn before he joined the legal team at George W. Bush's HHS, where he helped craft a rule to protect doctors with religious objections to contraception and abortion. He later landed on the policy team of the Knights of Columbus, where, his résumé says, he was the "architect of [a] late-term abortion restriction that is law in six states and is a bill in U.S. House and Senate."

The 39-year-old father of six has held strong views on abortion since at least law school, where he wrote an emotional personal essay, first reported by *Mother Jones*, arguing that legalized abortion was by some measures worse than the Holocaust: "The Jews who died in the Holocaust had a chance to laugh, play, sing, dance, learn and love each other," Lloyd wrote. "The victims of abortion do not."

Before Lloyd was even sworn in as the head of the ORR, he ordered an accounting of all pregnant girls in the office's custody. Internal e-mails show an ORR staffer had to cross-reference reports looking for indications of a possible pregnancy and call each shelter to verify the information before coming up with a tally of 38 girls in 18 shelters. On a weekly basis, Lloyd received a spreadsheet listing every pregnant underage girl, her location and number of weeks gestation.

In some of his first e-mails to staff, Lloyd declared that absolutely no action – no medical appointments, no meetings with lawyers, no options counseling – would take place without his approval. Lloyd has admitted to personally counseling girls in ORR care about their decisions: "If it's necessary for me to deliver that message in person, that's fine," he told a Catholic news network last fall.

He's also insisted efforts must be made to alert a girl's parents in her home country, according to internal e-mails, even when she's warned her family might react violently to the news. He's instructed that girls be given medically unnecessary ultrasounds, and in one case he ordered staff to read a graphic description of an abortion to a girl who asked to terminate.

He ordered shelter staff to read to one young pregnant girl a letter from a family – strangers to the girl and to Lloyd himself, who admitted they were not vetted in any way – that offered to adopt her child if the girl kept it. He even encouraged one young girl to carry what Trump might call an "anchor baby" to term – advising her that if she kept her child, it would be an American citizen.

"Even when he's not personally meeting with minors, he is finding new ways to inject himself into their decision-making process," says Brigitte Amiri, an ACLU lawyer who's suing HHS over ORR's abortion policy. "That right

there is just a stunning abuse of power and imposition of ideology – his own personal religious ideological opposition to abortion – on these young people."

During Lloyd's tenure, the number of days an unaccompanied child spends in ORR detention has nearly doubled and the number of kids in custody is at an all-time high. "Sponsors [are] reluctant to come forward for fear that they're going to be arrested," says Carey, the former ORR director, "even if they have legal status... because there are instances where you have people who do have legal status who are being detained." With Trump's strict new immigration policies in place, officials are reportedly gaming out scenarios that imagine the number of unaccompanied minors in their care doubling from 12,000 to more than 25,000 before the end of the year, and hundreds of million of dollars have been diverted from other HHS programs to pay for it.

As this crisis has been unfolding on his watch, Lloyd has been micromanaging preg-



nant minors – in his own words, a "tiny fraction" of the population ORR serves. But he has not approved a single abortion. Not even for a young rape victim who threatened to kill herself if she was forced to remain pregnant. "It will not undo or erase the memory of the violence that was committed against her, and it may further traumatize her," Lloyd wrote in his official memo denying her the procedure, annotated with links to pro-life literature he said he found on the Internet. "I am convinced that assisting with an abortion in this case is not in her best interest."

LAST MARCH, WHEN Lloyd and his colleagues were exploring ways to stop the abortion underway in San Antonio, someone in the Office of General Counsel must have realized how legally dubious their actions were. After an ad hoc legal team, tipped off by the nurse, sprung into action, knocking on a judge's door at 9 p.m. on a Saturday seeking an emergency order – and after the girl was taken to the hospital and subjected to a medically unnecessary pelvic exam

MISSION STATEMENT

Since it was created in 1975, ORR has been tasked with providing financial assistance, language classes and job placement for millions of immigrants. In Obama's last year, it helped settle 84,994 people from 78 countries.

– HHS lawyers finally allowed her to take her second dose and complete her abortion.

The girl was released to a sponsor not long after, but her case forged the template for how ORR would respond to abortion requests that followed. Lloyd would go on to fight another girl's abortion in court for weeks. The legal battle went all the way to the D.C. Circuit, where, in October 2017, a three-judge panel led by Brett Kavanaugh ruled that the girl, 15 weeks pregnant in a state where abortions are illegal after 20 weeks, should have to wait until she was placed with a sponsor to make a decision.

The government, Kavanaugh wrote, had a vested interest in "favoring fetal life, protecting the best interests of a minor, and refraining from facilitating abortion." Shortly after, Trump added Kavanaugh's name to a list of potential Supreme Court nominees.

"The idea that [Lloyd] could conclude that an abortion, which is constitutionally protected in the U.S., was contrary to the best interest of everyone – every unaccompanied minor in his custody – was horrifying," says New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood, who led a group of 19 state attorneys general who filed an amicus brief supporting the girl's right to access. And the fact that Kavanaugh could see merit in the argument, she added, was an ominous sign for reproductive rights nationwide – at the time, no one knew how ominous.

When Amiri, the ACLU lawyer, took on the case last fall, it seemed open-and-shut. She believed a court would quickly recognize the government's mistake, grant the girl her abortion, and Amiri would move on to her next case. Instead, as the fight has stretched on for months, the ground has shifted beneath her.

Kavanaugh's decision was overturned by the full court, and the girl's abortion was granted. But that ruling was specific to her case – the fight over the policy hammered out that night in March, which dictated no abortions could be performed without Lloyd's authorization, continues.

Since March of this year, there has been a court order in place barring ORR from operating under the policy. But on September 26th, lawyers for HHS were back before another three-judge panel on the D.C. Circuit Court, challenging the court order. (An HHS representative said the department couldn't answer specific questions due to the pending litigation.)

It will likely be weeks or months before the court returns a decision. Whatever the outcome, it will almost certainly be appealed to the Supreme Court, where it will test the new conservative majority's willingness to erode bedrock reproductive rights that have existed since the 1970s.

"It's a very simple case," says Amiri. "You can't ban abortion. For anyone." Or at least you couldn't before. Now, with dozens of Trump appointees' hands on the levers of power inside HHS, and two of them firmly seated on the Supreme Court, anything is possible. And as Roger Severino, head of HHS's Office of Civil Rights, told the National Right to Life convention in June, "We're just getting started."

TRUE BELIEVER
ORR Director Lloyd has sought unprecedented control over the medical decisions of the pregnant minors in the department's custody.



OPINION

Trump's Chances in 2020 Are Better Than You Think



MATT TAIBBI

WHEN I FIRST heard Donald Trump on the campaign trail, I thought, “What a joke!”

When I last heard Donald Trump on the campaign trail, I thought, “How long will it take for my children to learn Icelandic?”

I underestimated Donald Trump once. I’ll never do it again.

Even if Congress gets hit by a blue tidal wave, don’t think that has any bearing on the 2020 presidential run, which horrifyingly will begin right after the midterms. Campaign-trail reporters like myself (at least, those of us who don’t do the smart thing and off ourselves before the race starts) would do well to remember the mistake we made in 2015-2016.

Last time, Beltway prognosticators kept selling reporters like me on lines such as, “The math is impossible, he can’t win” – and our generational, WMD-level error was in buying it, instead of trusting what we were seeing on the campaign trail.

In a media business geared toward reassuring demographics, audiences are now being deluged with stories about Trump’s vulnerabilities, leaving the impression that his disastrous presidency has fatally wounded him as a politician. We’ve been treated to a succession of wish-fulfillment exercises disguised as news features – a stream of “last days of the Trump administration” pieces reappearing

across two years of scandals. These have created the expectation that not only will Trump not be re-elected, he may be dragged out of the White House at any moment. But such cheery stories run counter to reality. By any rational standard, Trump in the past two years has in fact made huge political gains.

Trump began his 2016 run as a sideshow conspiracist, a human rimshot the papers turned to for comic relief. Today, he commands virtually the entire electorate within his own party.

He regularly pulls between 85 and 90 percent of Republican support, which is right where George W. Bush was heading into the 2004 race. Retaining above 85 percent of your own party’s voters is a characteristic shared by the past four incumbents to win re-election: Obama, Bush, Clinton and Reagan. Trump probably has 60 million or so Republican votes in his pocket. Worse, he can use the vast powers of the presidency to polish the turd of his re-election argument. If an *Access Hollywood* tape or six pops up, Trump can just bomb Reunion Island to change the subject.

Trump’s base doesn’t care that he has betrayed most all of his key campaign promises. He pledged to “drain the swamp” and savaged Ted Cruz and Hillary Clinton for being tools of Goldman Sachs, then packed his White House with Goldmanites minutes after election. His tax cut is a grotesque handout to the plutocrat class to which he claimed to be a traitor. And if there’s a person out there who’s sick of all the winning, even Fox News hasn’t found him yet.

TRUMP’S PARTY

Trump regularly pulls between 85 and 90 percent of his party’s support, which is on par with the past four incumbents who won re-election.

But Trump has actually tried to do lots of the insane things he promised he would. That he’s made a cock-up of these efforts will be irrelevant. He promised a monstrous Muslim Ban and got it. He pulled out of the Paris Agreement, striking a blow on behalf of the tens of millions of Americans who vehemently oppose both science and France. Then there are his steel tariffs, the policy equivalent of stumbling out of a bar after 14 shots of Jägermeister and reaching for your car keys. Will they accomplish anything except chaos? Hell, no. But chaos is what Trump voters asked for.

The press has steadfastly refused to understand this aspect of Trump’s pitch. The subtext of his run wasn’t about making America great again. It was LET’S FUCK SHIT UP. If Obama voters understood “change” as a genuine call to idealism, Trump voters understood it as a chair through a plate-glass window, to start looting.

In a time of extreme cynicism and existential gloom, Trump is a doomsday cult, giving voters permission to unleash their inner monster. What makes this dangerous is that the appeal isn’t limited to racists. It extends to anyone who’s pissed off about anything. Trump is the match to burn it all down.

While candidate Trump’s 2015-2016 act was almost 100 percent paranoia – a typical news cycle involved Trump claiming that the press essentially went back in time, just to spite him, and hid evidence of Muslims mass-celebrating 9/11 – current-day Trump has a team of real federal investigators crawling up his hindpipe, sneering journos cheering them on, and Congress perhaps months away from impeachment. He will use this to make an argument about an unprecedented conspiracy of elites to remove him from office. Uncharacteristically for him, this won’t even be complete bullshit, adding fuel to his wreck-the-system message.

Trump hasn’t delivered on his border-wall promise, but it’s leaked out that he’s proposed a Trans-Saharan barrier to Spanish leaders – to keep Africans out! A Great Wall of Whiteness surrounding North America and Europe is classic Trump: objectively insane but rhetorically powerful.

The propensity for such diabolical ideas to regularly tumble out of Trump’s mental sphincter (while Democrats keep making lifeless appeals to concepts like “electability”) is a huge reason not to discount even the wounded version of him that we’ve seen since his election. Modern elections are more about narrative than fact, and Trump remains a ratings bonanza whose instinct for seizing the lowest common denominator has, if anything, expanded in office.

Trump’s win was a million-to-one shot. He was walloped in the popular vote and won key Rust Belt states by paper-thin margins. But he was aided by delusions of the pundit class, which kept confusing their objective impressions of Trump with actual electoral weakness.

We should have learned the opposite. The more of a joke he looks to us, the better he’s probably doing out there. God help us if we make the same mistake again. 

Trump's Toxic Agenda

The administration is on an insane fossil-fuel bender – hastening catastrophic climate change and gambling with our health By PHOEBE NEIDL and ANDREA MARKS

Gutting Fuel Standards

The hit on gas mileage is Trump's most dangerous rollback yet

→ Donald Trump is promising every American a *less*-efficient car, so they can spend more money at the gas pump, breathe in more air pollution and cook the globe quicker with carbon emissions. "This is one of the single most damaging rollbacks attacking climate and clean-air safeguards in American history," says Vickie Patton, general counsel at the Environmental Defense Fund. Standards set in 2012 by Barack Obama would have doubled gas mileage by 2025, but Trump is freezing those improvements (a decision even automakers like Ford and Honda have spoken out against). Plus, he's trying to strip California of its legal right to set its own standards, which have historically functioned as a national benchmark. The administration's own analysis of the rollback predicts the planet will warm a catastrophic 4 degrees Celsius by 2100, but argues not much can be done to stop it, so why bother trying. Controlling transportation emissions – the largest man-made source of carbon dioxide in the U.S. – would be a good start. According to the research firm Rhodium Group, this rollback could mean an annual carbon increase greater than the *combined*



emissions of 82 percent of the countries on Earth.

Trump's Gift to Coal Plants

Striking blows to both the Paris Agreement and clean power

→ The 76 regulations and counting that Trump is rolling back read like a wish list for the coal industry. Chief among them is the dismantling of Obama's Clean Power Plan, the first set of federal

limits ever placed on pollution from coal- and gas-fired power plants. Its goal was to reduce the energy grid's carbon emissions 32 percent below 2005 levels, and it was the linchpin to meeting our commitment to the Paris Agreement, the pact signed by every other country in the world to control global temperature rise. Obama's plan was also projected to prevent as many as 90,000 child asthma attacks a year, while Trump's could release 12

times as much carbon, and may cause 1,400 premature deaths a year due to pollution. A leaked internal memo shows Trump is considering another drastic measure: requiring power-grid operators to use coal and nuclear power plants – as opposed to cleaner natural gas or renewables – meaning consumers would be spending *more* money on *dirtier* power. "It's insanity," says Pat Gallagher, legal director of the Sierra Club. "The Trump administration is

▲ AMERICA FOR SALE

Rules are being rolled back, and they're also not being enforced: In his first year, Trump sought 63 percent less in fines from polluters than Obama did.

not just rolling back Obama rules, they're basically trying to crush marketplace opposition in favor of their cronies."

Unleashing Greenhouse Gases

Superpollutant emissions get deregulated

→ They don't get as much attention as carbon dioxide, but both methane and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) dwarf CO₂'s heat-trapping ability. And methane leaks from oil and gas operators have become the second-largest source of industrial greenhouse-gas emissions in the U.S. But Trump is trying to kill regulations that forced operators to reduce the leaks, a rollback that could mean 380,000 more tons of pollution, the equivalent of 2.6 million cars. The EPA is also trying to roll back regulations on HFCs (emitted from air conditioners, refrigerators and aerosols). The "super-pollutant" is so powerful, however, that without a worldwide phase-down it could cause a half-degree Celsius of warming by 2100 – enough to single-handedly torpedo the Paris Agreement. And then there's the corruption: Former EPA head Scott Pruitt was lobbied about HFCs by J. Steven Hart, whose wife Pruitt rented a Capitol Hill condo from at a third of the market rate.

American Gaslandia

Opening up protected lands and monuments for the fuel industry

➔ In the blitz toward “energy dominance,” Trump has not only been tearing down regulations but also feverishly exploring for more fossil fuels. In 2017, the government offered 11.9 million acres of public land for oil and gas leasing, a 500 percent increase from the year before. In August, Trump offered the largest oil-and-gas-lease auction ever, for 77 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico. “It’s all up for grabs, and this administration insists on grabbing it,” says Nada Culver of the Wilderness Society.

Trump also has his eye on land not yet available for grabbing: He ordered reviews of 27 national monuments and 11 marine sanctuaries, and already shrank monuments in Utah by some 2 million acres. “Their playbook is to remove any restrictions on public lands that may interfere with the oil and gas industry,” says Gallagher of the Sierra Club, who also notes there’s been “a bonanza

of pipeline development.” Just after his inauguration, Trump approved the fiercely protested Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines. Both would spell disaster if they leaked. The Keystone, for example, runs over the Ogallala aquifer, the largest expanse of freshwater on the continent.

Poisoning the Air

Deadly mercury levels could quadruple

➔ The Trump administration is reconsidering a 2011 pollution control on mercury and other toxins emitted from coal plants. Mercury is particularly dangerous for pregnant women and can damage fetal brain health. The regulation has successfully reduced emissions of the pollutant by 70 percent, and it could prevent as many as 11,000 premature deaths from heart and lung disease annually. Meanwhile, the EPA has already weakened enforcement: EPA assistant administrator Bill Wehrum – a longtime lawyer for chemical and oil companies – issued a



HEALTH HAZARD

“Actions are being taken with reckless disregard for human suffering,” says the EDF’s Patton. One Harvard study estimates combined air-pollution rollbacks could mean at least 80,000 more deaths per decade.

guidance making it easier for plants to turn off their pollution controls, which, according to one study, could more than quadruple the output of toxins and disproportionately impact the poor. “That’s true of most Trump rollbacks,” says Gallagher, “because they favor heavy industries,” which are closer to disadvantaged communities.

Polluting Waterways

Coal waste dumped into our streams

➔ When mountaintops are blown up to mine coal, the debris that falls into the valleys

below is laden with toxic heavy metals like arsenic and lead, which seep into streams. One of Trump’s first actions in office was to sign the repeal of a law that held coal-mining companies accountable for the polluted waterways. The toxins are being tied to learning disabilities, kidney stones, tooth loss, cancer and, according to one lawsuit, “unremitting diarrhea.” The health impacts are woefully understudied, however, and likely to remain that way: The administration also canceled funding for a major study on the health risks of mountaintop-removal mining. Even more troubling, Trump is working to reverse a crucial 2015 change to the Clean Water Act that would expand federal protection to an estimated 2 million miles of streams and 20 million acres of wetlands, which contribute to the drinking water of 117 million Americans.

Endangering Wildlife

Putting oil and gas above at-risk species

➔ Since 1973, the Endangered Species Act has been one of the crowning achievements of the environmental movement, with a 90

percent success rate in protecting roughly 1,600 species, including the bald eagle. But Trump has proposed a raft of rule changes that could gut the statute’s effectiveness and clear the way for yet more drilling and mining. “Extractive industries and this push for energy dominance have just pushed every other consideration aside,” says Bob Dreher of the nonprofit Defenders of Wildlife. Plus, the administration is gearing up to look for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. “They risk killing polar bear cubs, interfering with caribou migration,” says Gallagher of the Sierra Club. “It’s the saddest juxtaposition of our natural heritage versus Trump’s insane oil and gas frenzy.”

Suppressing Science

A backdoor attack on pollution standards

➔ Tearing up regulations is a little easier if you can toss out the science they’re based on. The EPA has proposed mandating that only scientific studies with “publicly available” data can be used in drafting regulations. It sounds innocuous, but it could suppress a wide swath of research – anything containing the confidential medical information of participants – including landmark peer-reviewed studies that undergird a range of regulations on air and water pollutants, as well as chemicals and pesticides. These studies “have long been the target of a fringe set of actors in industry,” says Patton of the Environmental Defense Fund. “Those fringe forces have found their voices in the Trump administration.”





THE
HOT LIST
2018

AMERICA



NEW WOMAN

Zoe Kravitz grew up a flower child in the canyons of L.A. with her actress mom
and a jet-set teen in Miami with her rock-star dad. But she's making her own way to the top

BY JOSH EELLS | PHOTOGRAPH BY ZOHEY GROSSMAN





UNDAY afternoon in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and the neighborhood is being its Williamsburgiest self. Outside a gentrified coffee shop under the grimy elevated J-M-Z tracks, a jaywalking Hasidic man darts into the street, making a dude with dreadlocks in an SUV pump his brakes. Inside the cafe, three white twentysomethings are brainstorming about starting the hashtag #stopkillingpeople when a woman in line overhears them and says she loves it. “Oh, thanks!” one says. “We’re trying to figure out ways to promote our music video!”

“Noooooooo,” says Zoë Kravitz when told of this exchange a few minutes later. “Were they serious?” She hangs her head. “Aw, man.”

Kravitz, 29, has lived in Williamsburg for 10 years, and she enjoys the same pastime as many of its residents: complaining about how much cooler it used to be. “There’s a fuckin’ Apple Store,” she says. “Which used to be my bagel spot!” A few years ago, she fled the neighborhood’s increasingly moneyed epicenter (“I didn’t want to live in an ugly new condo around a bunch of investment bankers”) for its relatively grittier southern parts. “It’s totally different down here,” she says. “These people aren’t going anywhere.”

Kravitz orders a latte with an extra shot and says she woke up “mere moments ago.” (It’s 1:06 p.m.) She just got back from London, and now her internal clock is all screwed up. Yesterday she slept until 4 p.m., rolling out of bed to catch *Mean Girls* on Broadway with her new pal and *Big Little Lies* co-star Reese Witherspoon. Afterward, they grabbed dinner, then Kravitz stayed up until 5 a.m. binge-watching *Friends* on Netflix. “I love *Friends* so deeply,” she says. “Obviously it’s a bummer when you look back and everyone is white. But it’s like chicken soup.” Sometimes she’ll watch so many in a row that Netflix interrupts to ask if she’s still there. “And then a single tear rolls down my cheek,” she says, laughing, “and I click ‘continue.’”

Kravitz is stylish in black Adidas Sambas, a long white slip and a vintage Nirvana T-shirt that’s a cou-

ple of years younger than she is. Braids fall loosely around her shoulders, and her forearms are adorned with dozens of delicate tattoos – an eagle, a feather, a snake, a mermaid. Her fingers and ears are spangled with gold, and on her left hand there’s a painful-looking scar she got last fall in London, while filming *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, the Harry Potter spinoff due out this month. “I was making tea with one of those electric kettles, and I didn’t lock the top,” she says, wincing. She takes out her phone and pulls up a photo of a blister the size of a tangerine. “The thing about third-degree burns...” she says – which is never how you want to begin a sentence.

It’s a warm, sunny afternoon, so we decide to take a stroll over the Williamsburg Bridge into Manhattan. Kravitz grew up in L.A., but she prefers New York – the energy, the spontaneity, the randomness. A hundred feet above the East River, trains rumble by and cyclists whiz past. A few pedestrians do double takes, but no one stops her.

Maybe it’s because she grew up near the spotlight, but Kravitz seems happy in the sweet spot of fame, successful but relatively anonymous. Though lately she’s landing more high-profile roles (e.g., *Beasts*, where she appears as the wizard Leta Lestrange), she has no burning ambitions to be an A-list star. “I’m still doing lots of supporting parts, and I’m in no rush,” she says. “I’m getting better, and I wasn’t ready to be working with the kind of people I’m working with now. So I’m happy with the pace of the ride.”

Onscreen, Kravitz can sometimes come across as aloof or intimidating, but in person she’s funny and endearingly chill. “There’s this Kravitz family thing where people think we’re really cool and serious, which always makes me laugh – because we’re some of the goofiest people in the world,” she says. She loves burritos and cuddling rescue dogs on the street (“Look at that nose!”), does a killer impression of Bane with underpants on her head, and spent six summers in a row getting filthy in the desert at Burning Man. “I was a serious Burner, man!” she says. “It really opened me up – just meeting strangers, experiencing that creativity, letting your guard down.”

A pause. “And obviously the Ecstasy helped.”

IF YOU KNOW only one thing about Zoë Kravitz, it’s probably that Lenny is her dad. And if you know one more, it’s probably that her mom is former *Cosby Show* actress Lisa Bonet. Lenny and Bonet met backstage at a New Edition concert in 1985 and were immediate soulmates: two artsy half-black/half-Jewish kids – what were the odds? She was the beautiful breakout star on the biggest show on TV; he was the son of an actress (*The Jeffersons*’ Roxie Roker) and an aspiring rocker who went by the name Romeo Blue. They eloped to Vegas on Bonet’s 20th birthday. Within months, she was pregnant.

“They were not planning to have a baby,” Kravitz says. “Total surprise. I have to confirm if this is true, but my dad told me she may have thrown a hair dryer at him.” (Says Lenny, “It wasn’t a hair dryer. It was the pregnancy test.”)

At the time, Lenny was still a year away from releasing his first album, but Bonet was as successful as she’d ever been, starring in her own sitcom, the *Cosby* spinoff *A Different World*. “I’m sure they had a conversation of ‘What do you want to do?’” Zoë says. “But for whatever reason, she decided to keep me.”

(“It really wasn’t a question,” says Bonet. “I don’t remember ever thinking, ‘I can’t do this.’”)

When Bill Cosby, creator of *A Different World*, heard Bonet was pregnant, he reportedly was very upset. (Bonet says she doesn’t remember, but she does call him “Mr. Righteous,” which kind of says all you need to know.) Bonet was written off her own show, and when she came back to *The Cosby Show* a few months later, she appeared in a limited number of episodes before eventually leaving for good. “Her and him never got along,” Kravitz says. “Whether he was attracted to her, or he resented her having a mind of her own, she always got a weird vibe from him. A dark vibe.” She says she recently found a photo of herself on set as a baby, with Cosby holding her. “It’s actually a really disturbing picture,” she says. “His face is not a sweet face at all. It’s kind of creepy.”

In the end, mom and daughter say it was all for the best. “She always tells me I saved her life,” Zoë says. “She didn’t intend on being famous, but then she became this sensation, and she was so young and really private. So moving away, being with her child – she really responds well to stillness and privacy.”

Lenny and Bonet split up when Zoë was two. She has no memories of them together. She lived with her mom in L.A.’s Topanga Canyon, a hippie-ish enclave where they had chickens and two dogs, one of them a half-wolf named Dusk. There were a few showbiz people around – one of Bonet’s best friends, Marisa Tomei, is Zoë’s godmother – but it was by no means a Hollywood childhood. Kravitz went to a

Waldorf school in the Valley under the name Zoë Moon. They had a TV, but it wasn’t hooked up – once a week, she got to pick out a movie from the video store.

She didn’t see her dad much – maybe a couple of times a year. “He wasn’t *absent*,” she says. “But he was working a lot. I didn’t feel abandoned or anything. But when you’re that age, and someone comes and goes, it feels like Santa Claus or something – it’s this event. Looking back, it’s hard: My mom gave up everything for me, and I kind of took that for granted; and then my dad gets to stroll into town,

and he’s the hero. I look back and really feel for her in that situation.”

When Kravitz was 11, Lenny floated the idea of her coming to live with him for a while. “I think it was really hard for my mom,” she says. “But it was also important to her that I knew him, because she and her father aren’t close at all.” So Kravitz moved across the country to Miami, where Lenny was living at the time. “That was a massive change,” she says. “Going from this really quiet house in Topanga, just me and my mom, to my dad’s life, which was very busy – lots of people, lots of assistants.”

This was Peak Lenny, right after the time of “Fly Away” and the *Austin Powers* soundtrack. “He’d pick

“Burning Man really opened me up – meeting strangers, letting your guard down. And obviously the Ecstasy helped.”

Contributing editor JOSH EELLS wrote the *Eric Church* cover story in August.



me up, and the entire school would flock to the parking lot,” Kravitz says. “And he wasn’t being subtle: He’d show up in a sports car and leather pants and a netted shirt. Like, ‘Dude, can you just be low-key a little bit?’” she says with a laugh. “Just a shirt that I can’t see your nipples through would be so dope.”

Kravitz remembers Mick Jagger hanging around. Once she woke up to find Ashton Kutcher in her kitchen making omelets. A little later, Lenny was secretly engaged to Nicole Kidman, and sometimes Kidman would take Zoë to the movies. “She was nice, she was cool,” says Kravitz, still sounding unsure what to make of the whole thing. “But yeah... that

happened.” (Now, of course, Kidman is her co-star on *Big Little Lies*. “It was funny to be on set with her,” Kravitz says. “Like, ‘Remember when you were engaged to my dad?’”)

Not to pass judgment, but it’s possible Lenny wasn’t always the strictest father. At one point they moved to New York briefly, and Zoë enrolled in school. “But then winter hit, and my dad was like, ‘It’s so cold! Let’s go to the Bahamas for a week!’ So we went and just didn’t come back. I fully didn’t go to school for a month.” Weren’t they getting calls from the school? “Probably!” she says. “I think he just didn’t feel like dealing with it. We were staying

with cousins, and I remember they had a VHS of that movie *Houseguest*, starring Sinbad. I literally just watched *Houseguest* for a month. I don’t know, dude. It was weird.”

(“The sun was going down early, and Zoë started to look really pasty and dry,” explains Lenny. “I just felt like it wasn’t healthy. So I took her to the sun.” In any case, he says, “She turned out OK.”)

But Kravitz says her dad was doing his best. Once he let her sit with the Spice Girls at an awards show, which she loved. A few years later he arranged for her to meet Britney Spears, thinking she’d be equally thrilled. “But I was like” – Kravitz adopts a bratty tween-girl voice – “‘I don’t like Britney Spears! I like punk music!’” She laughs. “Poor guy.”

BONET SAYS she always knew Zoë would be a performer. As a teenager, she’d spend hours in her room, memorizing lyrics from her favorite CDs: Weezer, No Doubt, Green Day. “She’s a Sagittarius, so she’s always had that charm and swagger,” Bonet says. “I assumed music was going to be the direction she went in.”

Her dad thought the opposite. “She grew up around it, and she seemed so indifferent,” Lenny says. “She did not want to be a part of that world. I thought she’d go to school and be a doctor or lawyer.”

When she got to high school, though, Kravitz started gravitating toward acting. By this time she’d persuaded her dad to escape Miami (“No disrespect to Miami,” she says, “but girls dressing in sexy clothes at 14, not a lot of art or depth – I definitely felt like an outcast”) and give New York another shot. She joined the drama club and did some plays: Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* and *Grease* (she played Rizzo). She also did her share of Upper East Side teen partying – drinking forties, smoking weed. When her parents, both herbalists themselves, found out, her mom sat her down. “‘It’s cool, just don’t lie,’” Kravitz recalls her mom saying before giving her a joint.

At first her parents made a rule that she couldn’t act professionally until she finished high school. “You only get one childhood,” says Bonet, who started on *The Cosby Show* when she was just 16. “My intention was to nurture and protect that for as long as possible.” But then when Zoë was 15, Lenny helped her get an agent. “Her father made a decision swifter than I would have,” Bonet says. Says Lenny, “I thought she’d been exposed to so much of this world that there wasn’t too much talking to be done. I trusted her and thought she was prepared to handle herself gracefully.”

Kravitz’s first big break came in 2011, with *X-Men: First Class*, which she filmed when she was 21, alongside other up-and-coming stars like Jennifer Lawrence (who became a friend) and Michael Fassbender (who became her boyfriend). Soon she was appearing in blockbusters like *Mad Max: Fury Road* (“Such a masterpiece, I still can’t believe I’m in that movie”) and the *Divergent* franchise, which starred her friend and *Big Little Lies* castmate Shailene Woodley. (“I’m totally her little sidekick,” Kravitz says, “but it was good for the time.”)

Kravitz is the first to admit she had a leg up thanks to her parents. But she also says she’s worked really hard. “There was a whole period from 21 to 25 when I’d audition for tons of stuff, and I wouldn’t get hard-





ly any of it," she says. "There's kind of a group of girls that they go to, and I was not on that list."

"She didn't want help," says her dad. "I did nothing except get her an agent – after that, it's down to your work. Somebody may be interested for five minutes: 'Oh, it's the daughter of...' But nobody cares who your mom or dad is if you can't do the job."

It wasn't always easy for a young woman of color, even second-generation Hollywood royalty. Kravitz says filmmakers often told her they wanted "a more girl-next-door look" or someone "more all-American." ("I was born in America," she says.) Last year she was Skyping with some directors about a movie that featured couples of various races, and they said they liked her for the woman married to the black guy. "I was like, 'OK – but I could play any of the women,'" she says. "Black people don't have to be married to other black people." A lot of times it's just white people not understanding why what they say is offensive."

She wishes more films and shows would talk about race. "I tried to get a little more of that put into *Big Little Lies*" – a show with *Friends*-worthy numbers of black people. "It didn't work out," she says. "But I wish they'd had Reese's character say, 'His hot black wife.' That's real! But people are scared to go there. If we're making art and trying to dissect the human condition, let's really do that."

She also says she's been sexually harassed on set. "I won't name names, because I don't want to ruin anyone's life," she says. "But I definitely worked with a director who made me very uncomfortable. I was young – maybe 19 or 20 – and we were on location, staying at the same hotel. And it was full-on: 'Can I come inside your room?' Just totally inappropriate. And then he'd do things like come to the makeup trailer and touch my hair. Or say, 'Let me see your costume – turn around?' It's just never OK for someone to do that. Especially when they're in a position of power."

Notably, the two projects she's proudest of – *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Big Little Lies* – feature ensembles of strong women fighting back against shitty men. In *Lies*, Kravitz plays Bonnie, the sexy yoga instructor and younger second wife of Witherspoon's character's ex-husband. In the first season, she's mostly a foil, without much interiority. "There's more about her in the book, and I was a little bummed we weren't going to get to explore that," Kravitz says. But while she can't divulge plot details for Season Two, she says there's definitely more to Bonnie this time around. "They're not using her to tell someone else's story," she says. "She has her own story."

WE'RE NEARLY ACROSS the bridge when Kravitz gets a call from her boyfriend, actor Karl Glusman. "Hi, baby!" she says. "How'd it go? That's dope! I want to hear all about it. Can I call you in a few? OK. I love you." She hangs up and smiles. "Karl had a good audition."

We stop at an ice cream shop, where she orders vegan mint-chocolate-chip in a cone. At which point

I notice, for the first time, the huge diamond on her left ring finger. "Oh yeah, I'm engaged," she says, so casually I assume she's joking. "No, I'm engaged!" she repeats. "I haven't told anyone yet – I mean, I haven't told the world. I wanted to keep it private."

Kravitz and Glusman, 30, met two years ago, at a bar with some mutual friends. It wasn't technically a setup, but it totally was. Glusman, who had a crush on Kravitz from afar, was initially too nervous to talk to her, but at the end of the night, as he was leaving, she hung around outside pretending to be on her phone, then invited him back to her place for an afterparty with friends. They made out ("It was cute!"), he moved in soon after, and they've been together ever since. "I can be my weirdest self around him," Kravitz says. "It's so relaxing to be around someone where you can be a hundred percent how you feel."

They'd been together for about a year and a half when, last February, Glusman popped the question. He'd planned to surprise her when she was in Paris, but when work interfered, he wound up proposing in their living room instead. "I was in sweatpants," recalls Kravitz. "I think I was a little drunk." Glusman lit some candles and put on Nina Simone (her favorite), then laid down and started hugging her. "I

could feel his heart beating so fast – I was like, 'Baby, are you OK?' I was actually worried about him!" Glusman dropped to one knee, and Kravitz said, "Yes, stretch! Stretch to calm your heart down!"

But then he pulled out a box, and inside was the ring: the exact one she'd been fantasizing about. "He nailed it," she says. "And I love that it wasn't this elaborate plan in Paris. It was at home, in sweatpants."

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, Kravitz answers her front door in pajama pants and a baggy *Sopranos* T-shirt. Her apartment is amazing: high wood-beam ceilings, a private courtyard, a rooftop terrace, a projector for movie nights. The walls are decorated with black-and-white photos of her mom and Frida Kahlo, and hanging near the bar is a picture of Martin Luther King Jr. Kravitz says when friends are over and they've had a few drinks, sometimes they'll stand under it and declaim, "I have a drink!" "So stupid," she says, laughing, then adding, "Much respect to MLK." (Lest you worry Kravitz lacks proper reverence for Dr. King, she and her dad also have matching FREE AT LAST tattoos.)

Kravitz found this place three years ago while browsing real estate online. "It was totally out of my price range," she says. "But I fell in love." She put in an offer, and another buyer offered the same. But when she took a tour of the place, she noticed the owners' daughter's bedroom was covered with *Divergent* posters. "I was like, 'Finally, this movie's gonna do something for me!'" Kravitz recalls. "I never, ever do this, but I said, 'Look, I see your kid likes this thing. I'm in these movies. Your kid can come to the premiere, I'll have everyone sign books – whatever you want.'" She got the apartment.

Kravitz pours herself a coffee and lights some incense, then sinks into a huge white sectional. The thing she's most excited to discuss is her next project: a reboot of *High Fidelity* as a series on Disney's new streaming service, launching next year. She plays the lead, John Cusack's role in the film, an emotionally stunted record-store clerk struggling in life and love.

"I always related to that character," Kravitz says. "Just this neurotic mess of a person who can't get out of her own way. It's ironic to me that in a lot of stories men are the complicated, layered characters, when I think women are the *most* complicated and the *most* layered. We're supposed to be perfect and take care of everyone, but sometimes we fall apart and we're a big ol' mess. If you don't see that, you wonder, 'Am I the only one who's a fuckin' mess?'"

Kravitz is psyched for the show for many reasons, but the fact that she's the star is the least among them. "I get to produce, write, direct an episode," she says. "And I'm a genuine music nerd, so I'm excited to introduce older music to younger people." She's also excited to do comedy, which she's always wanted to try more of. "It's checking a lot of boxes."

In December, Kravitz will turn 30. She can't wait. "Your twenties are fun," she says, "but they're such a mess! Making mistakes, not knowing what you want, being a little bit of an asshole. I'm excited for my thirties, because I have a better sense of who I am and what my intention is with art and how to execute it. I'm sure I'll make more mistakes," she adds. "But that's OK. We're all beautiful messes."

Between her birthday milestone, her work and her upcoming marriage, Kravitz is at an inflection point, both personally and professionally. "It's a lot of growing up at one time," she says. "It's scary, in a good way." She's been talking to her mom about the wedding a little bit – Bonet just got remarried herself last year, to her longtime partner, actor Jason Momoa (a.k.a. Aquaman), with whom she has two kids, Lola, 11, and Nakoa-Wolf, 9. (Kravitz has a long, hilarious story about the first time she met Momoa – who calls her, adorably, Zozobear – in high school, when he tagged along to drink forties with her and her friends.) She talks to her dad almost every day, too. "If I don't hear from him, I start to wonder what's going on," Kravitz says. "He just loves to chat."

As if on cue, a few minutes later her phone rings. "Hi, Dad!" she says.

"Hey, Babylove!" says Lenny.

"How are you? Are you at 30 Rock?" she asks. Lenny sounds anxious. "What do you mean?" she asks. "We can't at all?"

It turns out Lenny is a guest on *Jimmy Fallon* tonight, and coincidentally, so is Reese Witherspoon. So Fallon asked Zoë to stop by too, to play a game of Lip Sync Charades – Fallon and Witherspoon vs. the Kravitzes. Improbably, Lenny has never played charades, so last night he came over and Zoë taught him how to play – two syllables, first word, sounds like, etc. But now he's at the studio, and they're using all different rules, and he's kind of freaking out.

"He's like, 'I learned all these things, and now I can't do them! What do I do?'" says Zoë. "Such a dad fear."

But on the phone, she's reassuring. "Don't worry. We'll figure it out in the dressing room."

Lenny starts to protest. "It's OK," she says and smiles. "We'll figure it out." 

"I worked with a director who made me very uncomfortable. I was young, 19 or 20, and it was full-on: 'Can I come inside your room?'"





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**THE
HOT LIST
2018**

HOT RAPPER

VALEE

The soft-spoken Chicago lyricist behind streaming hits like 'Womp Womp' and 'Miami' is changing the sound of hip-hop in 2018, one unpredictable verse at a time

HOT RAPPER VALEE

▶ VALEE — THE CHICAGO RAPPER who became a star this year after signing with Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music — isn't the most popular newcomer in hip-hop. (That's likely Juice WRLD, his Chicago compatriot and sudden Top 10 hitmaker.) Valee's style, though, is the year's most influential by far. Peers, rivals and listeners have all responded to his strangely soothing way of rapping — his verses sound quiet on the surface, but they conceal complex flows and consistently surprising wordplay. "Some people say on Twitter that I'm whispering," he says. "I'm just laid-back and not too loud, and kind of shy."

A few years ago, Valee — who's now 30, an old head in contemporary rap terms — was making his living customizing cars. If he wanted to throw bigger wheels on his own car, he'd figure out how to do it, then do the same for others in his neighborhood who admired his ride. "Every time I would drive my car, I would have to have music to play," Valee says. "That's kind of the only reason I kept up to date on music." Soon, he tried making some music himself with a cheap microphone and a laptop. Since he was recording in an apartment, he kept the volume down ("I couldn't be too loud"). He didn't have much of a plan for his career, but that didn't stop him. "I like putting my all into everything," he says. "Whether it's rewrapping a couch or whatever, I think about it a lot — a lot — then I do it. And it always turns out good."

By last year, Valee had a local following that won him a meeting with Kanye's label reps. "It seemed like they already knew about the music and who I was," he says. "I guess it just kept coming up." This spring and summer, he racked up millions of Spotify streams for his *GOOD Job, You Found Me* EP; his one-off duet with Jeremih, "Womp Womp," released in July, is even bigger (8.8 million streams and counting). Yet his biggest impact has arguably been on other musicians. Abrasive SoundCloud-rap noisemakers like Lil Pump and Tekashi 6ix9ine, who were screaming into the mic just a few months ago, are now rapping more softly and attempting dense, unpredictable verses like Valee's. More established acts like Nicki Minaj and Tyler, the Creator have begun following his lead too. "It happened fast," Valee says. But he's not too worried about his copycats. "There's probably someone that can do it well, but I haven't heard it yet," he adds. "I like the fact that I hear it imitated. They won't say anything clever enough. That makes it OK." **BRENDAN KLINKENBERG**

HOT LOOK

Sleaze It Up With Dirtbag Chic

In 2018, stoner culture is huge, glamour feels dull, and it seems everyone just wants to be comfortable. The result? Stars looking like grimy skater dropouts. "It's like a pared-down version of normcore," says Kat Typaldos, a New York stylist who's worked with Future and Sky Ferreira. "It does reflect a bigger picture — they're rejecting formality. I can't imagine this lasting longer than a year." Here are four celebs who've given their own spins on Dirtbag Chic. **JERRY PORTWOOD**

JONAH HILL

The actor and *Mid90s* director often rocked tie-dyed shirts this summer. "We associate tie-dye with Deadheads and Phish fans," says Typaldos. "But you put a weird chunky sneaker, and it doesn't confine you to a certain movement. Maybe it's the Internet — subcultures are being brought to the forefront."

PETE DAVIDSON

The *SNL* star proves an iconic skater tee always works when worn with confidence. "I don't even see it as being sleazy," Typaldos says. "I think it's a sexiness, an 'I don't give a fuck-ness.' Trends are an acceptance and a rejection of what people think is cool. And this feels like the Nineties are still going strong. It's going back to a level of irony."



CARA DELEVINGNE

Off the runway, the queer icon challenges traditionally feminine fashion. "Cara started her career as a model, and she took on diverse aesthetic personas," Typaldos points out. "It's interesting how she's translated her 'off-duty' look. We are in an anarchistic place creatively, but things are curated even within this structure."

JUSTIN BIEBER

He's shed his pretty-boy days with items like slouchy sweats and roached-out sneakers. Says Typaldos, "Even if it looks like anti-fashion, it's still fashion. It reminds me of Spicoli in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ROBERT KAMAU/GC IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; GOTHAM/GC IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; MARC PIASECKI/GC IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; JOHN SHEENE/ACE PICTURES/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

HOT SURPRISE GODFATHER

JOHN MAYER

A decade ago, his career seemed over. Now he's influencing a new school of hitmakers



▶ WHEN ED SHEERAN was recording “How Would You Feel (Paean),” a ballad on his multiplatinum 2017 album, ÷, he knew something was missing. “I did a really terrible guitar solo, and I was like, ‘I bet John Mayer could do this better,’” Sheeran said. “So I e-mailed him, and he did it a lot better.” Mayer has become a mentor and key influence on a new generation of pop crooners in recent years, including Shawn Mendes (who asked Mayer to produce and play on his song “Like to Be You” and calls him “the best guitar player in the world” and “the god of music”) and English newcomer James Bay, both of whom are clearly influenced by Mayer’s bluesy guitar playing, sensitive singer-songwriter balladry and pop savvy.

This sort of comeback didn’t seem likely a decade ago. Back then, Mayer’s hits had dried up and he’d torpedoed his career with a series of offensive interviews. (Plus, he couldn’t tour because of vocal-cord issues.) He responded by recording several contrite, soul-searching albums, and in 2015, he stepped into Jerry Garcia’s shoes in Dead and Company, winning over skeptical Deadheads. Younger acts, meanwhile, had slowly begun embracing his influence around the time he played on Frank Ocean’s *Channel Orange* in 2012 – but the real turning point has come in the past year, as Sheeran, Mendes and other Top 40 stars have championed him. “I didn’t see it coming,” Mayer recently told *ROLLING STONE*. “I looked up to Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan. So there’s a contract to make the new guys feel accepted.” **PATRICK DOYLE**

HOT NEWS SOURCE DANIEL DALE’S TWITTER



Politics Twitter long ago devolved into the Landfill for Bad Takes. But in 2018, the trash-fire fumes have been particularly hard to escape. Cutting sensibly through the morass is mild-mannered Canadian newspaper reporter Daniel Dale (@ddale8), presently the D.C. correspondent for the *Toronto Star*. Rather than hurl invective at the ever-changing Twitter heap, Dale taps out transcriptions of Donald Trump’s daily absurdity. He allows the president’s words to exist wholly on their own without commentary or judgment. And when not speedily relaying the news of the day, Dale fact-checks the president’s lies in real time, speaking truth to power with nothing but his thumbs. Dale was well-prepared for America’s WWE-style politics: He previously covered the rise and fall of former crack-smoking Toronto Mayor Rob Ford before heading south to Swampy D.C. for the Trump Show. **JOHN HENDRICKSON**

Stormy Daniels speaking to reporters in April



HOT POLITICAL FORCE

Sex Workers

▶ NOT LONG AGO, most porn stars, escorts, strippers and cam-girls wouldn’t feel comfortable entering the political scuffle. But thanks to a confluence of factors – including Stormy Daniels, arguably the world’s most famous sex worker, making herself a symbol of the anti-Trump resistance – the sex-work community has become America’s newest niche political bloc.

The movement has taken hold, says community organizer Lola Balcon, in part as a result of long-term de-stigmatization efforts, including Amnesty International’s 2016 recommendation to decriminalize sex work. But it wasn’t until last spring’s passage of SESTA-FOSTA

– a bill presented as an anti-trafficking effort but that broadly criminalized sex work online – that workers truly began to organize, forming coalitions to oppose the bill, with a goal of decriminalizing sex work.

In New York, congressional candidate Julia Salazar won a Democratic nomination in part by including in her platform the decriminalization of sex work. In San Francisco, a sex workers’ collective is challenging the constitutionality of California’s prostitution and solicitation law. In Washington, D.C., sex workers have been canvassing to reintroduce a bill aimed at decriminalization, calling for the creation of a task force composed of sex-worker rights organizations.

“I’ve never seen sex workers begin organizing in the way they did following SESTA-FOSTA,” says activist Siouxsie Q. “Enough was enough.” **JENNIFER SWANN**

FROM LEFT: DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR/GETTY IMAGES; JISTONE/SHUTTERSTOCK



HOT "DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'"

Toto's David Paich (left) and Jeff Porcaro circa 1983

TOTO'S 'AFRICA'

Nothing sums up 2018 better than the fact that this cheesed-out Eighties nonsense song has become our new unofficial anthem

▶ TOTO'S "AFRICA" IS RIDICULOUS by definition: an Eighties ode to Africa, by a bunch of L.A. studio-session dudes. But something about "Africa" speaks to our moment. Like "Don't Stop Believin'" a decade ago, it's a mega-cheese classic with a bizarrely popular afterlife. Its fans in 2018 run the gamut from dank-meme enthusiasts to moms to tone-deaf karaoke singers screaming "I bless the rains down in Africa!" – not to mention Weezer, who scored their first Hot 100 hit in years after covering it in response to a fan petition. Love it or hate it, you've probably heard "Africa" today. You'll hear it tomorrow. This damn song follows you everywhere, like the sound of wild dogs crying out in the night. Back in February 1983, when "Africa" hit Number One, it replaced "Down Under," Men at Work's tribute to Australia – the only time in pop history that two continents have slugged it out on the charts. But while "Down Under" is a real song about a real place, "Africa" is about feeling homesick for nowhere. The only thing the singer knows about Africa is that it has to be better than the nightmare where he's trapped now. Could you ask for a better summary of modern alienation than a yacht-rock song about the desert? **ROB SHEFFIELD**

HOT STREAMING SOUND

Quiet Storm, Reborn



▶ GET READY FOR an extra-smooth night: Quiet Storm – the slow, satiny brand of Eighties R&B that produced stars like Luther Vandross (left), Freddie Jackson and Anita Baker – is making a comeback. But it's not happening on the radio. Leisurely grooves by Daniel Caesar, Sabrina Claudio, H.E.R. and more are reaching millions via streaming services, where their pillow-y singles blend perfectly into down-tempo playlists (H.E.R. has more than a billion streams to date, even though she's never had a major hit). "Playlists present this music to a new audience," says veteran radio programmer Dave Dickinson. "It's wrapping an old package in new paper." **ELIAS LEIGHT**



HOT FUTURE OF POP LAGOS, NIGERIA

When music producer Mr. Eazi was growing up in Lagos, Nigeria, in the early 2000s, his friends played 50 Cent and Sisqó at parties. These days, the jams he hears coming out of the clubs in Lagos are mostly homegrown. "People are shooting, like, four videos a day," he says. "There are more radio stations. It's a great time." Eazi is part of a wave of Nigerian artists that includes singer-songwriter Wizkid (who collaborated on Drake's 2016 global smash "One Dance") and magnetic performer Davido (whose "Fall" has 88 million YouTube views); they've created a sound that fuses local styles like Afrobeat and highlife with hip-hop and dancehall. And the world is taking notice: Regional-music revenues will grow from \$56 million in 2015 to \$88 million next year, and the local live-music scene is exploding. "Africa is the future," says WurlD, who signed with the newly opened Universal Music Nigeria. "It's growing really fast." **STEVE KNOPPER**

HOT SUPERVILLAIN

Samuel L. Jackson's Mr. Glass

The characters of 'Unbreakable' return, 18 years later, in 'Glass'

▶ M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN totally M. Night Shyamalan'd Samuel L. Jackson with the ending of his 2016 comeback hit, *Split*. Shyamalan told Jackson he needed to set up a screening to see the film, adding, "Call me when it's over." *Split*'s final moments offer one of Shyamalan's best twists ever (spoiler alert!), when Bruce Willis pops up as his proto-superhero character from 2000's *Unbreakable*, thus revealing that *Split*'s multiple-personality monster (James McAvoy) exists in the same universe as that movie – which, of course, also starred Jackson as Elijah Price, a.k.a. the brittle-boned, big-brained villain, Mr. Glass. Jackson has known since 2000 that Shyamalan intended *Unbreakable* as the first film in a trilogy, but had no idea that *Split* was the secret second entry – or that Shyamalan was finally planning to make the third part, *Glass*, due in theaters January 18th. "He made me wait long enough!" says Jackson, who was always fond of the character. "It's not something people usually allow me to do. People don't hire me to be quiet, so that was a great thing." Meanwhile, the famously intense Shyamalan has mellowed, according to Jackson. "He used to literally tell us, 'No, don't blink!'" **BRIAN HIATT**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE; JESSICA KOURKOUNI/UNIVERSAL PICTURES; JOHN GOOCH/SHUTTERSTOCK

HOT ACTOR

The 'Lodge 49' star with SoCal good looks and goofy vibe is ready to go fight Nazi zombies

▶ TAKE ONE LOOK at Wyatt Russell – shaggy blond hair, SoCal hipster beard – and you can see why folks consider him a stoner heart-throb. “What I want to do,” the 32-year-old actor says, “is find roles with the same magic you feel when you’re high. It’s there even when you’re not stoned.” It’s why the Hollywood royalty – he’s the son of Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell – has such an affinity for Dud, his amiable ex-surfer who joins a secret society on AMC’s dramedy *Lodge 49* (and who doesn’t toké up, “though you’d think that he did”). Having originally blown off acting for playing pro hockey in Europe until getting sidelined by an injury, Russell eventually realized that “I didn’t have to be Jeff Spicoli or the Dude. I could do my own thing.” Now he can be the leading man on a quirky TV show one minute and do a soldiers-vs.-Nazi-zombies blockbuster like this fall’s *Overlord* the next. “It’s a popcorn-and-soda movie that gets pretty twisted,” Russell giddily says about the secretive J.J. Abrams-produced horror movie. “Like, *very* fucked up.” **DAVID FEAR**



WYATT RUSSELL



Phony Ppl in Brooklyn
(clockwise from bottom
left): Aja Grant, Elbee
Thrie, Elijah Rawk, Bari
Bass, Matthew Byas

HOT SOUL POWER

PHONY PPL

A stylistically daring R&B/art-rock group emerges from a Crown Heights basement

▶ “I WAS IN TROUBLE,” singer Elbee Thrie says, recalling the day that his R&B band, Phony Ppl, was born in 2008. It was Thrie’s 16th birthday, and he’d been grounded. So he invited some friends over from his Crown Heights, Brooklyn, neighborhood. “We recorded our first song, made it up right there,” Thrie says. “Then the next song happened, and the one after that. We didn’t realize how diverse everything was. We just embraced it.”

For the next decade, through varying lineups, Phony Ppl gigged around town, studied at New York music schools, and did sideman work with artists such as Theophilus London and Gene Ween. The group – now a solid bond of Thrie, guitarist Elijah Rawk, drummer Matthew Byas, keyboard player Aja Grant and his brother, bassist Bari Bass – also made five digital-only albums; 2015’s *Yesterday’s Tomorrow* was a Top 10 hit on iTunes’ R&B chart. “All the time we’ve spent on music,” says Rawk, “we could have been doing something else. You don’t even realize how long it’s been after a while.”

Phony Ppl – all age 26 except Bass, who is 27 – are ready for the world with *mō’zā-ik*, their first physical release. The album is a commercially assured flow of progressive soul and art-rock reach, from the seductive hip-hop of “Before

You Get a Boyfriend” to “Think Your Mind,” which has the home-demo feel of early-Seventies Paul McCartney. “Move Her Mind” suggests Stevie Wonder running a Steely Dan session; “Way Too Far” sounds like Radiohead conspiring with Sly Stone.

“People ask, ‘How did you kick that McCartney thing?’” Byas says. “We knew that from when we were young.” Aja’s parents named him after the 1977 Steely Dan LP. Thrie’s father is a mixing engineer, and Byas’ dad, as Jazzy Jay, was a pioneering hip-hop DJ. Early on, Phony Ppl

“We’d get high and jam for mad long.”

—Aja Grant, on the band’s early studio sessions

rehearsed in Byas’ father’s basement studio. “We’d get high and jam for mad long,” Grant recalls, until the senior Byas came down with some homework. “He’d say, ‘Everybody stop,’ and put on Mandrill.”

Phony Ppl have begun touring in earnest, including recent gigs backing Kali Uchis. “When life put me in front of this band, I was on this cliff – either I walk back or I jump,” Thrie says. “And I was not going to walk back.” DAVID FRICKE

STYLING BY RYAN DAVIS. RAWK: JEANS BY 3 X 1. BASS: VEST BY FAITH CONNECTION, PANTS BY KENZO. SHOES BY CONVERSE. THRIE: SWEATER AND SHOES BY KENZO, PANTS BY CHARLES JEFFREY. BYAS: SWEATER AND SHOES BY KENZO, PANTS BY CHARLES JEFFREY. GRANT: SWEATER AND SHOES BY KENZO, PANTS BY CHARLES JEFFREY. OFF-WHITE AT BARNEY’S NEW YORK, PANTS BY KSUBI.

HOT CRACKPOTS

QANON

The latest in political quackery doesn't just create an alternate reality using existing conspiracy theories – it ties them all together

▶ WERE IT A government plot – a dazzling scheme to keep the public stupid – QAnon would be a great achievement in the otherwise relatively undistinguished history of the CIA. Alas, it is not. Like most things these days, if it seems like 4D chess, it's probably just stupid.

So it is with Q, the anonymous executive-branch staffer who is said to be leaking “breadcrumbs” across the bowels of the Internet, illuminating a vast subterranean effort to expose Donald Trump's

In one version of the story, Q is actually JFK, who faked his own death to join Trump's secret evil-crushing team. The covert cabal has supposedly arrested Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Podesta and the corpse of John McCain, all of whom are said to be wearing ankle bracelets.

Someone is making great sport of this, and whoever it is has a sense of humor, if not a conscience. The goofball graphics of Q's “drops” make for perfect Internet-age performance art. The “crumbs” are disseminated mainly by meme and tweet, and designed to travel on a spearlike trajectory straight into the brains of the modern media consumer. The secret sauce is the sheer quantity of connections. QAnon doesn't just borrow from conspiracy theories – it ties all of them together.

It would be hilarious were it less believed. QAnon has already gobbled the front line of not-smart right-wing celebrities, from Roseanne to future president Curt Schilling. Naturally, Trump himself has already taken the step of posing for a photo op with Q movementists, which doesn't necessarily mean he believes it, but still portends something quite dark.

Q videos at one point cited Trump's real campaign-trail rhetoric promising to clean

out the “failed and corrupt political establishment” as the backdrop for the movement, so QAnon believers may now give him credit for fulfilling real promises, through the secret-but-unrevealed arrests of key conspirators. Because Q says the prez is clandestinely battling a combination of DARPA, Queen Elizabeth II and Draco-reptilian liberals, his failure to deliver on promises ending campaign-finance corruption and taking on Goldman Sachs will be a little less obvious. If you've been wondering how election-year political rhetoric could get dumber than 2016's, Q is a preview. **MATT TAIBBI**



A Trump rally in Pennsylvania in August

QAnon has gobbled the front line of not-smart right-wing celebrities.

enemies for everything from pedophilia to killing Princess Diana to causing Hurricane Katrina. It's a thrilling fantasy that takes the rightist paranoia of *The*

Turner Diaries and mixes it with the gore of *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Killer* and the doomsday religiosity of Heaven's Gate.

The QAnon legend assigns every terrible thing in history to a blue-state plot. Liberals killed JFK Jr. to make way for the Clintons, shot Reagan, murdered Seth Rich, organized lots of kid-buggering operations (Pizzagate was just the tip of the iceberg), pulled off the Las Vegas massacre and allied themselves with an array of villains, from Julian Assange to JonBenet Ramsey's killer. Into this mass rave of evil comes Donald Trump, a fat Christ sent down from right-winger heaven to clean the temples.

HOT COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Resistance Profiteers

Some people look at #Resistance and see a movement confronting the authoritarianism of the Trump regime. Others see a mass of easy marks. These resistance profiteers harnessed anti-Trump momentum to target progressives with more money than sense. **TIM DICKINSON**



SCOTT DWORKIN

Dworkin markets himself as a Resistance leader, and his Democratic Coalition Against Trump has raised nearly \$388,000 from small-dollar donors. But the Super PAC's spending is lining Dworkin's pockets: It paid \$174,000 to his Bulldog Finance Group. And it's disclosed just one expenditure on behalf of a Democrat: \$2,350 for Sen. Doug Jones in Alabama.



PETER STRZOK

Strzok, a former FBI agent, is nobody's victim. He brought discredit to the FBI using his work phone to talk shit about candidate Trump to his mistress — while he was working the Russia investigation. After he was fired for cause, Strzok launched a GoFundMe page, where he turned mutual antipathy toward Trump into gold, raising more than \$460,000 for his personal stash.



AMY SISKIND

Siskind became a Resistance darling by tweeting a journal of Trump's creeping authoritarianism, then turning it into a bestselling book, *The List*. But Siskind spent two decades on Wall Street as a vulture capitalist, a self-declared “pioneer in the distressed-debt trading market.” More mysterious still, Siskind touted Sarah Palin for 2012 as “fresh, open-minded, a centrist.”

HOT BLUESMAN KINGFISH

Blues prodigy Christone “Kingfish” Ingram, 19, grew up in Clarksdale, Mississippi, 10 minutes away from the crossroads where Robert Johnson supposedly did business with Beelzebub. Ingram swears he hasn't done the same (“Nah, I didn't do any of that,” he says with a laugh) — he took classes at the Delta Blues Museum instead. And as his appearance on Netflix's *Luke Cage* made clear, Ingram is the most exciting young blues guitarist in years, with a sound that encompasses B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix and even Prince. After a jam session, Buddy Guy personally paid for Ingram to record his upcoming LP. “This is our culture, man,” says Ingram. “It's part of our history just as much as jazz and rap. I want to show people there's nothing wrong with being young and liking blues.” **BRIAN HIATT**





HOT IRL WESTWORLD

A sex-doll brothel in Paris

DOLL BROTHELS

Sex dolls can cost thousands of dollars, but an hour with one is surprisingly affordable

IN A NONDESCRIPT bedroom in Toronto, Erika is being prepped to meet her first john. Before her appointment, an attendant washes her, dresses her in a white tank top and black thong, and puts her into position on her back. One last touch: a spray of perfume. Every

time the john smells it, he'll think of her.

Erika, of course, is a \$120-an-hour sex doll. At Aura Dolls, and in similar brothels — from Russia to Canada and soon the U.S. — the “world’s oldest profession” is being reborn, without the sticking point of anti-prostitution laws.

“The main thing is that our customers won’t have to feel ashamed of trying their sexual fantasies,” says Aura Dolls marketing director Claire Lee. Others might like the novelty, or feel that sex with an inanimate object doesn’t qualify as cheating.

But Justin Lehmler, a fellow at the Kinsey

Institute, says that while the brothels might flourish, he doubts they’ll replace traditional ones. “Most [people] fantasize about having emotional needs met through sexual activity,” he says. “So when you’re talking about sex with dolls, it just can’t fulfill their needs.” BREENA KERR

HOT NINETIES-ROCK STRATEGY

Fulfilling Fans’ Wildest Dreams

Every night on tour this summer, Weezer re-created their 1994 “Buddy Holly” video in loving detail, from the *Happy Days* set to Rivers Cuomo’s cardigan and tie. They’re just the latest Gen X band to double down on giving nostalgic fans what they want. Green Day seem to be plotting a *Dookie* 25th-anniversary tour; even Smashing Pumpkins finally brought back James Iha and stopped playing post-2000 songs. Why flog a new album when you can bask in all that applause? ANDY GREENE



Cuomo

HOT FAKE NASA SPACE FORCE

Space Force began as a joke. “I was not really serious,” President Trump said. “Then I said, ‘What a great idea.’” After Trump announced it in front of the National Space Council, Vice President Mike Pence laid out a detailed plan, calling for “an elite group of joint war-fighters specializing in the domain of space.” He estimated a 2020 liftoff. Cartoonish logo prototypes circulated. “Space Force all the way!” Trump tweeted.



Though Space Force may sound like the ramblings of a giant toddler, Earth’s orbit does have the potential to become a dangerous theater for war — China and Russia have been maneuvering beyond the atmosphere, where satellites control everything from surveillance to bank transactions.

Yet despite the White House’s rhetoric, establishing a Space Force would amount to little more than a bureaucratic reorganization. As retired NASA astronaut Mark Kelly tweeted, “The Air Force does this already. What’s next, we move submarines to the 7th branch and call it the ‘under-the-sea force?’” RYAN BORT



HOT MESS AWARD SHOWS

It’s a great American tradition: the Hollywood award show. Red carpets! Limos! Ridiculous couture and even more ridiculous speeches! So what went wrong? It’s a TV ritual that has reached a crisis point, in terms of ratings and relevance — which is why the Oscars almost added a Best Popular Film category. So it’s time to rescue this lovable lunatic of a tradition. Stop the boring trend of drafting the network’s late-night guy to host. Let the stars flaunt it. Give out fewer awards and let the performers perform. Let the bananas-osity of the moment happen. After all, the glitzy award show is an American ritual that tells the sordid truth about ourselves. We need as many of those as we can hold on to in these crazy times. ROB SHEFFIELD



HOT JULIA CHILD

Before *Bong Appétit* started filming, co-host Vanessa Lavorato says she tried to slowly build up her tolerance to edibles. In the end, all her hard work didn't matter. "You can't hide it," she says. "You're just really high on camera."

WEED CHEFS

They've established themselves in legalized states. Now they're coming to your screens

▶ THERE'S SOMETHING deeply satisfying about getting high and drooling over images of a gorgeous, marijuana-infused dinner – and a new crop of shows offer a look into how these intoxicating feasts are made.

Take *Viceland's Bong Appétit*, one of only three in-studio shows nominated last year for a James Beard award, a top honor in the cooking world. The first two seasons featured lessons in how to infuse fats and oils with marijuana, culminating in a giggle-ridden dinner party.

For its third season – now led by former Cypress Hill rapper B-Real – the show is shifting to a competition model, but the goal of normalizing edibles remains the same. "I think the more cannabis there is on different platforms, it takes away the stigma," says chef Vanessa Lavorato.

Netflix's *Cooking on High* didn't receive the same critical acclaim but introduced the world to some of the industry's best chefs, such as Andrea Drummer, who specializes in spiked Creole cuisine.

Yet for now, the public's appetite for shows about weed chefs – just like its appetite for weed – may be outpacing the people making decisions. "Most of the TV people say, 'We love the concept, we're not ready,'" says Portland restaurant co-owner Leather Storrs, who has been pitching a *No Reservations*-style show about cannabis cuisine.

L.A.-based chef Brandin LaShea, on the other hand, found luck with startup Prohbt for the series *Pot Pie*, which will feature infused dishes next

season. "Having a digital platform is the new wave," says LaShea. "I have freedom that I don't think I'd have at a large network."

And yet because of dosing issues, haute-pot dinner parties can feel like a gimmick – someone is always too high, or not high enough. Perhaps that's why it's more entertaining to watch the making of a full weed meal than to consume one. "If I wasn't on the show, it's not how I would choose to be high," says Lavorato. "I would just smoke."

AMANDA CHICAGO LEWIS

HOT GEAR WELCOME TO THE WEED BOUTIQUE

From freebasing superconcentrated THC to rolling up weed in papers that cost more than the pot itself, there's a plethora of new ways to consume. Here are a few of the most 2018 ways of getting high. No experience necessary.

Smart Rigs PUFFCO PEAK

For years, if you wanted to try a dab – a waxy form of THC – you'd need an elaborate setup, but the latest trend is a digital model like the Puffco Peak. Watch out, though – even for an experienced stoner, one big puff could leave you staring at a wall for hours.



Cartridge Vapes G PEN GIO

Vape pens were already the star of legal weed, but a new class of flat, cartridge-based options makes getting stoned even more discreet – check out the white edition of Grenco Science's G Pen Gio, which could easily be passed off as a pregnancy test.



Luxury Papers DEVAMBEZ

Founded in 1826, Devambez is known for custom letterhead for Europe's royal houses and limited-edition art catalogs for Picasso and Rodin. So of course, now it makes rolling papers.



HOT COOKWARE

Make Your Own Edibles

▶ COOKING EDIBLES AT HOME has always been a challenge. By the time you're done, the house smells like skunk, oil is splashed across the stove, and the brownies taste like burnt grass. But a new generation of appliances is changing that. For one, there's the ◀ **LEVO II (\$349.99)**, which resembles a polished espresso maker. Drop in some ground bud, leave it for 45 minutes to toast – a process called decarboxylation, which releases the cannabinoids – then pour in the oil of your choice for a surprisingly weed-free flavor. If that's too much machine, the **ARDENT NOVA DECARBOXYLATOR (\$210)** is an efficient, smell-free method of activating weed for consumption. After it's done, you can infuse it in oil or – for a quicker lift – just sprinkle it on your food. ELISABETH GARBBER-PAUL



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JONPAUL DOUGLASS; PUFFCO; GIO; DEVAMBEZ; LEVO



HOT COMEBACK

ROBYN

Hits like ‘Dancing on My Own’ made her one of the most influential pop artists of the 2010s, but she had to recalibrate her own heart before she could return

▶ “SOMETIMES IT’S NECESSARY to not function,” says Robyn in the most functional, Scandinavian way possible: quiet and measured and with the soothing tone of some sort of woodland creature emerging after a long, restorative sleep from a cave of mystical wonders. In fact, it’s been four years since Robyn stopped touring for her beloved 2010 *Body Talk* trilogy, four long years in which her legend has lived on, out of step with her actual self. “When I was challenged before, I would go into this mode where I was pushing through the challenges and getting off on that liberated feeling of being able to explore desperation and passion and frustration and all that.” In recent years, she says, “I was getting bored of that. I was looking for some deeper understanding of myself.”

That Robyn could ever have had a question as to whom she is may come as a surprise to those who’ve come to see her as 21st-century feminism incarnate – a woman in full, thrilling command of her essential weirdness. It wasn’t just her lovelorn lyrics or her synth-sweetened hooks; it was her way

of presenting them just as she pleased, dressed as a bonbon or with a planet on her head, thank you very much. Hits like “Dancing on My Own” – whose cultural influence likely exceeds even its 112 million Spotify streams – made Robyn the rare star who transcends pop while also somehow exalting it, and artists up to and including Taylor Swift took note.

As Robyn explains on a call from London, however, her career has long been a question of how much of the world’s expectations to take in, and how much to keep out for the sake of her own inner freak. Born Robin Carlsson in Stockholm in 1979, she spent her early childhood touring Europe with her parents’ experimental-theater troupe. “It’s definitely a challenge when you’re little to be exposed to a lot of different environments,” she says. “‘Lonely’ is too strong a word. But I didn’t have many I could share that with.”

That perspective stuck with her after she was discovered at age 14 and turned by force of marketing will (and the skill of superproducer Max Martin) into the international pop sensation behind 1996’s “Show Me Love.” Being in a studio with “mainly just older men” put her again in a familiar, out-of-place role. “I was the visitor,” she says. “It wasn’t a bad experience at all, but it wasn’t a natural environment for me.”

By the time a teenage Robyn was playing the Apollo and opening for Tina Turner in Sweden, she was more than aware of the limits of her major-label career, “how little nuance was allowed.” She wanted to write songs about an abortion she’d had; they wanted her to be the Swedish Britney Spears. After a breakdown in a hotel room in Chicago, Robyn cut ties with Jive Records and walked away from pop.

When she started making music again, it was under her own label, Konichiwa, and with collaborators of her choosing: Swedish musician Klas Åhlund and the duo the Knife. With more freedom, more control and “more time to figure things out in a less pressured way,” she began “reimagining what pop music could be. I didn’t know, of course, if anyone would agree.” They did, with increasingly rapturous responses to *Robyn*, released here in 2007, and the triumph of *Body Talk*.

Success has a way of encouraging one to “push through” challenges instead of addressing them. By 2014, reeling from the death of a friend and the end of a relationship, she felt disingenuous continuing to make music in this vein. “I happened to find myself in a very vulnerable place. And I decided to explore it and not fight it, but just go with it and shut down and isolate myself a little bit.”

She traveled to Ibiza and New York and L.A. She took classes on digital music production. And she did psychoanalysis three or four times a week. For about a year, she worked alone, on both herself and her music. “Sometimes I felt like it was just about trying to get back to a place where I enjoyed things again. It became very practical: Like, OK, what do I do to feel good about music again?” She learned to dance samba. She learned that grief can be transformative. She learned not to have any plan.

Eventually, she learned, again, to see herself from the inside out rather than from the outside in. If a unifying theme of her past albums has been the euphoria of heartbreak – manic, defiant and powerfully emotive – she says that *Honey*, her new album, is softer, more redemptive. There’s sadness, but it’s contained by the fight against it. “Lack of connection is really painful for human beings, but it’s also maybe a way of having space to hear yourself more,” she says as our conversation draws to a close. We can all relate to how impossible it is to relate, “and that’s what music can do,” she continues. “It can give you this space where you can hear someone else talk about

their feelings, and you can put words on your own feelings that way. That’s, I guess, where real connection can happen.” ALEX MORRIS

“It became very practical: Like, OK, what do I do to feel good about music again?”



HOT SCENE-STEALER

ANNA JACOBY-HERON

With Hulu's space-travel series 'The First,' the 22-year-old upstart launches her career into the stratosphere

AS SEAN PENN'S wayward teenage daughter in *The First*, the new Hulu series about a team of astronauts trying to visit Mars, Anna Jacoby-Heron has a knack for fucking up onscreen. Whether spiraling into artistic mania or shooting up at a backyard party, she's utter calamity couched in calm. "I would leave the really heavy scenes so nervous and unsure of how I came off, because I didn't really remember what I was thinking or how I was feeling," she says now. "I'd kind of just black out."

Growing up in Silver Lake, Jacoby-Heron was by her own admission a "crazy kid" who had a "pretty tumultuous relationship" with her single mom. ("I was very not into authority," she says.) Her years at the L.A. County High School for the Arts were less about class and "a lot about, like, going to views. We used to hike up hills that overlooked the city, and we'd just chill and smoke a joint."

She found the script for *The First* "fucking incredible" – and relatable "in terms of dealing with a father who's absent." But the audition process was "the longest I've ever had." When she finally found out she'd gotten the role – following "a very chill conversation" with Penn over breakfast in Beverly Hills – Jacoby-Heron was celebrating her birthday in Palm Springs with two friends. "To be honest, I was a little drunk," she says with a laugh. "The next morning, we got a note slipped under our door from our neighbors, and they were like, 'Hey! Heard the commotion. Congrats on your new job!'" ALEX MORRIS

HOT LATE-NIGHT GAME-CHANGER

Terence Nance

The 'Random Acts of Flyness' creator wants to expand your mind

TERENCE NANCE'S FANTASTIC HBO late-night series, *Random Acts of Flyness*, is unclassifiable. At points it resembles sketch comedy: One episode includes Nance rocking a Steve Jobs-style turtleneck as he debuts an app made for the procurement of reparations payments, called Bitch Better Have My Money. But Nance, 36, acknowledges that such moments of "traditional satire" are "essentially bait" to lead viewers to more challenging fare: dips into poignant surrealism (a sustained group hug among young black men); separate montages of footage featuring black street dancers and black victims of police brutality; and candid documentary material (interviews with trans people of color). "It's gonna get uncomfortable," Nance says of the show, which was picked up for a second season just after its August debut. "That's the goal: It guides you on a consciousness shift." JONAH WEINER



BOTTOM: BRAD OGBONNA/'THE NEW YORK TIMES'/REDUX



HOT BOOM

YEAR OF THE DOC

In a world where reality is more WTF than fiction, true-life tales offer all the entertainment we need – and then some

▶ IN HARD TIMES, we're told, people don't go to movies and TV for reality; they go to escape it. That may explain the rise of the Marvel, DC and *Star Wars* empires, but now that the real world is dominated by a reality-TV supervillain who spouts more lies than Emperor Palpatine, a rebel alliance of nonfiction is rising up, pulling the once-dusty genre of documentaries off the PBS sidelines and thrusting it front and center. "I suspect it's because we all need a little fucking context," says veteran documentary producer Marilyn Ness of the genre's explosive growth. "People are craving clarity."

The boom has made hits of series like *Wild Wild Country*, *The Keepers* and *O.J.: Made in America*. And while only 28 documentaries have made more than \$10 million in theaters, three of them were released this year: *Three Identical Strangers*, about triplets separated at birth, and the Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Mister Rogers biographical films. Next up, the genre will take on everyone from Harvey Weinstein to A-Rod, Chelsea Manning and Trump's personal Sith Lord, former chief strategist Steve Bannon. Then there's Michael Moore, whose dissection of Trump's rise, *Fahrenheit 11/9*, some are calling his most trenchant work in years. The style is even turning edgy with line-blurring films like *Bisbee '17*, in which modern-day subjects re-enact their town's troubled past. "As the market puts more money into documentaries, filmmakers are getting the money to be more creative," says Ness. "Docs don't have to be the dry toast they once were." **LOGAN HILL**

HOT 'STAR TREK' SAVIOR JEAN-LUC PICARD

We know barely anything about the next *Star Trek* series, except that it stars Patrick Stewart, going back into interstellar duty as Capt. Jean-Luc Picard. And that's enough. The question of who's the greatest *Enterprise* commander has divided geeks forever, but it's got real cultural resonance these days because Picard is the leader we need right now. Cerebral. Unflappable. Rational. With an eye on the Prime Directive and a steady hand on the wheel. In other words, he's everything our current commander in chief *isn't*. His greatest Federation rival, Sixties hambone William Shatner's James T. Kirk, has a lot of pluses — his intensity, his courage, his loyalty, his Tribble tolerance. But he's also a total loose cannon. Picard is the captain you can trust. He keeps a cool head, even when he's sipping his tea (Earl Grey, hot). Now more than ever: Make it so. **ROB SHEFFIELD**



HOT BAND

THE BETHS

How a bunch of Kiwi jazz students formed a killer indie-rock group

▶ WHEN ELIZABETH Stokes was growing up in Auckland, New Zealand, the first band she played in was a folk duo called Teacups. "The first song I wrote was a wizard rock song about Harry Potter," she recalls, "with predictions about what would happen in the last book." But Stokes' tea-folk/wizard-rock days are long behind her. Now, she just plays rock-rock, fronting the year's best breakout indie band, the Beths. "We were like, 'Let's make a loud guitar project, where we play fast guitar songs,'" she says. "'Only bangers.'" The band's excellent debut, *Future Me Hates Me*, is full of her crisp, confessional songs, recalling Nineties heroes like Weezer and the Breeders, as well as the Beatles, especially in their euphoric group vocals. All four members of the Beths studied jazz in college (Stokes' last job was teaching trumpet to kids), and they've found the choice to rock out uniquely liberating. "You can't take yourself too seriously when you're playing rock music," says guitarist Jonathan Pearce, who is Stokes' boyfriend. "Occasionally, one of Liz's songs will be about me," he adds. "And it feels pretty great." **JON DOLAN**

"You can't take yourself too seriously when you're playing rock music."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MASON FAIREY; CBS/GETTY IMAGES; IMAGES IN ILLUSTRATION BY THE FRED ROGERS COMPANY, NETFLIX; ROB CRANDALL; SHUTTERSTOCK; VICKI L. MILLER/SHUTTERSTOCK; GURUXX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Stone and Lanthimos

HOT DIRECTOR YORGOS LANTHIMOS

Say you wanted to make a prestige film about political power plays in Queen Anne's court. Who would you hire to direct it? Most people wouldn't answer, "The guy who made a movie about love-lorn folks turning into lobsters" — but thanks to Yorgos Lanthimos, *The Favourite* has become one of this fall's most buzzed-about movies. Set in the 18th century and starring Emma Stone, Rachel Weisz and *Broadchurch*'s Olivia Colman, it's full of backstabbing royalty, bizarre love triangles and a duck race filmed in slow motion. And it's about to turn this 45-year-old Greek filmmaker into the most out-there auteur to go from art house to A list since David Lynch. "I wanted to make something that was not just another period drama, to combine history with modern elements," he says.

Lanthimos is known for his 2009 breakthrough family drama, *Dogtooth* — and for pushing Colin Farrell (*The Lobster*) and Nicole Kidman (*The Killing of a Sacred Deer*) to uncharted WTF territory. Along the way, he earned a reputation and some famous fans, including Stone ("I thought he was going to be a psychopath," she admitted).

Given free rein to reinterpret the true story of love and war, Lanthimos was quick to hoist his freak flag. He cites a dance sequence, set at a costume ball, in which Weisz and Joe Alwyn break into moves that seem to combine Russian folk music and hip-hop. Lanthimos' warped take on the period-piece drama has already sparked a lot of Oscar talk. "I've developed a taste of my own," he says, chuckling. "And maybe it is weird. But I think people secretly want weird." **DAVID FEAR**

HOT INCUBATOR

ROCK CAMPS

These schools of rock have taught thousands of young women. And with Snail Mail and Soccer Mommy breaking out, they're starting to produce bona fide stars



Left: Lindsey Jordan of Snail Mail attended Summer Girls Rock Camp in Tennessee, starting as a 10-year-old. Below: A student gets instruction at Brooklyn's Willie Mae rock camp.

Snail Mail's Lindsey Jordan, 19, started out at a now-defunct rock camp at age seven, becoming wildly competitive with "boys who wrote me off because I was a girl." She learned to shred through stuff she hated — Dream Theater, Eric Johnson's "Cliffs of Dover" — to prove herself, an exercise she rather regrets.

exercise she rather regrets.

Soccer Mommy's Sophie Allison, 21, went to Summer Girls Rock Camp in Tennessee, starting at age 10. "I loved it," says Allison, who learned to play drums and arrange songs. "My first year, I was in bands with 17-year-olds."

Jordan has one regret: "I wish I'd known about Girls Rock Camp. I think

that would have given me a lot of confidence and infrastructure to be a well-functioning adult." **BRIAN HIATT**

IF YOU BUILD it, they will, apparently, rock.

Even as guitar-based rock faded in the mainstream, an educational infrastructure teaching kids how to play it has flourished. Options range from the for-profit School of Rock chain (which existed prior to the Jack Black movie)

to dozens of rock summer camps across the country, a lot of them aimed at girls — Tegan and Sara, Haim and many others have raised money for the Girls Rock Camp Foundation.

It probably shouldn't be surprising that all that schooling has begun

producing actual rock stars: Two of 2018's hottest indie acts, Soccer Mommy and Snail Mail, are rock-camp veterans.



HOT BEATS

The Global Groove Exchange

AFRICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND THE U.S. HAVE been carrying on a musical conversation for ages: 1980s Miami bass music, for instance, helped spark the explosion of Atlanta trap and Brazilian baile funk in the early 2000s. But lately, thanks to cheap recording technology and the global reach of YouTube, those feedback loops are happening at warp speed. Baile funk is now converging with South African house and the lithe Nigerian style Afrobeats, while dancehall and reggaeton have moved back into sync with each other, as heard on hits by Jamai-

ca's Popcaan, Colombia's Karol G and more. "The music spreads really fast," says João Brasil, a Brazilian rapper and producer. "It's much bigger than 10 years ago." With styles bolstering one another and blurring together, it's an exciting moment for listeners around the world, even if rigid U.S. industry conventions mean that you won't hear much of it on the radio. "The biggest shift that's happening now," says Lisbon-based DJ Branko, "is that what for years was the dominant American pop-music style suddenly is not that cool anymore." **ELIAS LEIGHT**

FROM LEFT: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA; ANDRE CHUNG/THE WASHINGTON POST; GETTY IMAGES; ALEX MATZKE



HOT BIG-SCREEN BREAKOUT

CYNTHIA ERIVO

The London-born actress has conquered Broadway – now, with four films under her belt, she’s coming for Hollywood, too

▶ CYNTHIA ERIVO DOESN’T have time for self-doubt or fretful navel-gazing. Neither does Belle, the hairdresser-turned-getaway-driver Erivo plays in Steve McQueen’s rollicking new heist film, *Widows*. A single mom who runs on instinct and street smarts, Belle is all fight, no flight. That is by design. “I wanted to make sure you didn’t see her as weak,” says Erivo, a compact five-foot-tall dynamo whose Instagrammed workouts could put an Olympic gymnast to shame. “Belle could run and hide, but that’s not what she does. That’s not what I do.” That ferocity is a quality McQueen noted instantly when he met Erivo backstage at *The Color Purple*, for which she won a 2016 Tony Award. (She also has a Grammy and an Emmy, putting her one statuette away from an EGOT.) He cast her on the spot. “There is nothing she can’t do,” says McQueen, who calls Erivo the next Barbra Streisand. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Erivo, 31, has trained for this moment. Still, that it would arrive in a deluge of high-profile roles – she starred opposite Jeff Bridges in October’s *Bad Times at the El Royale*, wrapped the sci-fi drama *Needle in a Timestack* and is currently filming a Harriet Tubman biopic – was a shock even to her. It’s a scenario that could easily spur a hint of impostor syndrome, but Erivo is too focused, or simply too busy, to wrestle with insecurity. “If I wasn’t supposed to be here, I wouldn’t be,” she says. “I’m supposed to be here. So let’s do the work and keep going.” **MARIA FONTOURA**



HOT INDUSTRY CHER MUSICALS!

This summer, Cher helped redefine the jukebox musical with *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*. She followed it up with her own album of ABBA covers. And given the ways of Hollywood, this can only mean more, a lot more. Here are three other solid-gold pitches for her. Call us, Cher! **ROB SHEFFIELD**

MAGGIE MAY All You Did Was Wreck My Bed

Cher sings the Rod Stewart hits, in a movie where she lounges around a Greek island dangling a number of young suitors — Timothée Chalamet could be “Hot Legs,” Lucas Hedges could be “Baby Jane.” She serenades them with “Tonight’s the Night” and “Do Ya Think I’m Sexy,” while her disapproving daughter, Meryl Streep, sings “Some Guys Have All the Luck.”



GOLD DUST WOMAN Never Break the Chains

Cher plays a shawl-wearing, gypsy-booted Malibu rock goddess who spends 50 years breaking up with her hippie-guitarist boyfriend. (Live, Cher sings “I Got You Babe” to a Sonny Bono projection, so she’s an old hand at this kind of thing — the projection could play Lindsey Buckingham.)



MANEATER Watch Out, Boy, She’ll Chew You Up

The star sings her way through the Hall and Oates songbook in a villa in the Tuscan countryside, looking after her boy-crazy granddaughter, Ariana Grande (they sing “You Make My Dreams”), and chasing summer fling Colin Firth, duetting on “I Can’t Go for That (No Can Do).” Christine Baranski brings down the house with her sassy rendition of “Kiss on My List.”



Steve Perry

Still Believes

The Journey frontman disappeared for 20 years – then heartbreak led him back to music

By Andy Greene | *Photograph by Erik Tanner*

IT'S A MONDAY AFTERNOON in August, and Steve Perry is cheerfully belting out the Backstreet Boys' "As Long As You Love Me." Perry is visiting a buddy at his house in San Francisco, and the singer – who grew up on Sam Cooke, Otis Redding and the Kingston Trio, and doesn't listen to much current pop – is giving an example of a relatively modern song that caught his ear. "I love songs like this," he says of the tune, a Max Martin-penned ballad from 1997. "I'm a sappy guy." ¶ It's somewhat surprising to hear Perry, 69, sing a hit by a boy band a generation behind him. What's *really* surprising, though, is that Perry is singing at all. Virtually nobody has seen him do this since he parted ways with his band, Journey, 20 years ago. Perry and Journey became famous in the Seventies and Eighties for big, soaring, arena-rock hits about devotion, passion and seizing the moment, some of them a little sappy indeed, all of them driven by Perry's skyscraping vocals, which exerted a massive influence on generations of wasted karaoke warriors. In the process, Journey



basically invented the power ballad. Critics often dismissed the band as cheeseballs, but that wasn't fair; songs like "Faithfully" and "Lights" stand up as beautiful and plainspoken showcases for Perry's remarkable voice. "We certainly were part of pioneering [the power ballad]," Perry says. "I didn't care what the critics thought about the band. I really didn't. All I knew is every night we would get at least one to two encores. That was my critical review for me every night."

Perry left Journey in 1987, but he never had sustained success as a solo artist. After the commercial failure of his second solo album, he got back together with his former bandmates in the mid-Nineties. They made a comeback album, scored a radio hit with the romantic ballad "When You Love a Woman" and earned a Grammy nomination. Irving Azoff, who had just made the Eagles a fortune for their reunion album, was brought in to manage the band. The future looked bright.

Everything changed when Perry took a long hike in Hawaii and felt a horrible pain in his hip as he reached the top of a mountain. He was just in his mid-forties but discovered he had a degenerative bone condition that would require hip-replacement surgery. Terrified at that prospect, Perry experimented with alternative treatments that did little to address the problem.

Eventually, Perry's bandmates started getting restless. "They wanted me to make a decision on the surgery," Perry says. "But I didn't feel it was a group decision. Then I was told on the phone that they needed to know when I was gonna do it 'cause they had checked out some new singers." Perry begged them to reconsider, but then postponed the date of his big surgery. "I said to them, 'Do what you need to do, but don't call it Journey,'" he says. "If you fracture the stone, I don't know how I could come back to it."

They didn't listen. Journey found a Perry sound-alike named Steve Augeri and launched a tour that continues to this day. In 2008, Arnel Pineda — a Filipino singer they found on YouTube — took over on vocals, and the group began selling as many tickets as it did in its Eighties heyday, quite possibly thanks to Pineda's uncanny ability to sound more or less exactly like Perry, whom he grew up worshipping. Understandably, Perry is a little uneasy talking about all of this, but he's never made any attempt to reunite with his former mates. He showed up for Journey's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2017 and made an acceptance speech, though he didn't perform with the band. "What they do is none of my business," he says. "When I walked away from it, I did not go to any of the shows, nor did I listen to any of it."

While his former bandmates were making millions on the road, Perry was doing, well, not all that much. He rode around aimlessly on his motorcycle and moved from the Bay Area to San Diego, though he routinely flew back for San Francisco Giants games. Perry lived off his royalties (he says he care-

fully tucked away money from his Journey days) and avoided the spotlight, rarely giving interviews and politely turning away fans who begged for a photo. Basically, he became the J.D. Salinger of arena rock. "I didn't sing in those years," he says. "I didn't write music. I must have gained 50 or 60 pounds. I got a butch haircut. I just said, 'I'm going to just become a plump kid in my hometown again.' I'd already lived the dream of dreams and didn't know how I could come close to being anything like what I was before."

Rumors about Perry began to pile up. "They say I'm a recluse with long nails saving my urine in jars and living on an island with a morphine drip," he says. "They think I'm in a hospital somewhere with cancer. And they say I can't sing anymore."

That last one stings the most, and as he sings the Backstreet Boys song it's clear it's not true. Perry's voice is certainly deeper than in his Journey days, when his upper register could rival any rock singer's, but it's still unmistakably Steve Perry: rich, raspy, expressive and overflowing with the sort of pulsating emotion that caused even Journey's fiercest critics to compare him to his idol, Sam Cooke.

Perry hasn't lost his voice, but he has lost a lot over the years: his grandparents, who had helped raise him in rural Northern California after his mom and dad split; both of his parents; and his stepfather, who gave Perry work in his construction business to help him make ends meet in the pre-Journey days. "You want to know what I did after I left the band?" he says. "I visited my mom's grave a lot."

Loneliness could creep in quickly. "One time I parked my car in front of the house I was raised in," Perry says. "It was raining like crazy, the wipers were going and I was facing the house where I was raised, with my grandfather's house to the right. I just started crying like a baby. I cried for the times we could have had together. I cried for the times that I took for granted. And they were all gone, and here I am, an only child, just missing them all. I used to think that if I became a performer and everybody loved me, that I wouldn't

have to go through these things. But guess what? There's nowhere to run. If you're alive, you have to walk through this eventually."

All of the loss may explain why the frontman who radiated such passion in his Journey days no longer felt much like singing. There was another big loss to come, but this one would lead him back to music, and, eventually, to his new solo album, *Traces*. It's a story about devotion, tragedy and a promise to a dying loved one. It's so intense and heartfelt, it could be a Journey song.

MUCH OF WHAT happened to Perry in the past decade can be traced back to his most famous song. Perry wrote "Don't Stop Believin'" with Journey keyboardist Jonathan Cain and guitarist Neal Schon in 1981. The title phrase came from Cain's father, something he'd say to encourage his son to keep going when he was a young musician eking out an existence in L.A.

Cain said he drew inspiration from characters he knew in the Sunset Strip rock scene of the early

1970s: These were the "streetlight people living just to find emotion" of the song's lyrics. Perry has a different memory. "Jonathan and I scrawled out the lyrics about things that I had seen in Detroit one night after a show, looking way down to the street and seeing the streetlights light the streets," he says. "I couldn't see the lights, but could just see the glow of the lights facing down from about the 10th floor. I see people walking around at two, three in the morning. I thought, 'Wow, streetlight people. That's so cool.'" (He and Cain do agree on one thing: There's no such place as South Detroit. They just needed an extra syllable before "Detroit" and weren't familiar with the city's geography.)

"Don't Stop Believin'" hit Number Nine in 1981, though by the turn of the millennium, it was just one of Journey's many hits, not even important enough to be mentioned by name in the band's *Behind the Music* episode. But the song had one very important fan. Today, Patty Jenkins is one of the hottest directors in Hollywood, thanks to the *Wonder Woman* franchise. Back in 2003, though, she was just a fledgling filmmaker who needed the perfect song for a scene in her low-budget movie *Monster*, about the life of serial killer Aileen Wuornos. During a key scene early in the film, Wuornos (played by Charlize Theron) roller-skates with her girlfriend. Jenkins figured that "Don't Stop Believin'" would be the ideal song to punctuate the moment with a sense of unbridled optimism (before things went very, very bad, that is).

Jenkins had one big hurdle to getting "Don't Stop Believin'" in her movie: persuading Perry to let her use the song. "Everyone told us the worst things about Steve," says Jenkins. "They said he had disappeared, said no to everything, would never say yes and was all about the money." Still, she sent him a rough cut of the scene along with her phone number. Much to her shock, he called her the next day and raved about the clip. "He gave us the song for practically nothing," she says. "He just laughed at the rumors [I had heard]. The truth was, he said no to everything because he didn't want the money. People weren't understanding the song, and he didn't want it to be sold out in that way."

Monster became a surprise hit and won Theron a Best Actress Oscar. It also helped kick off the amazing second life of "Don't Stop Believin'." All of a sudden, the song was everywhere: On TV (*Glee* used it six different times), on Broadway (it was the closing number in the musical *Rock of Ages*), and even in the clubhouse of the 2005 Chicago White Sox, who made "Don't Stop Believin'" their unofficial anthem on the way to winning the World Series. The song's renaissance went into overdrive when *The Sopranos* used it in the show's last-ever scene, in 2007.

There was something weirdly profound in the song's sudden universal popularity: This slightly goofy Eighties anthem seemed to hit all of America in an emotional sweet spot that went way beyond mere "ironic" nostalgia, wiping out cultural barriers in an avalanche of cheesy optimism. It's no wonder people literally sang it in the streets the night of Barack Obama's election. The tune Perry was happy to sell for next to nothing had become the new national anthem. "It's amazing to me," says Perry. "All of my songs are like children to me. Once you send them out to the world you hope they're strong enough to survive out there. All of them got the same attention, but the world decides which ones become the 'Don't Stop Believin's,' not me."

Senior writer ANDY GREENE wrote about Mike Campbell of the Heartbreakers in October.



Streetlight People

Above: Journey in 1979 (Schon, Steve Smith, Perry, Ross Valory and Gregg Rolie, from left). “I didn’t care what the critics thought about the band,” Perry says. “All I knew is every night we would get at least one to two encores.” Right: Perry with Nash in 2011. “She made me the luckiest man in the world,” Perry says.



For Perry, the song’s rebirth was important in another way. He and Jenkins became friends while she was working on *Monster*, and with plenty of spare time on his hands in the following years, Perry liked to lounge around the director’s editing suite and watch her work. One day in 2011, she was editing a Lifetime movie about breast-cancer patients when Perry saw a face on the screen that caught his eye. It was Kellie Nash, a Los Angeles psychologist. She was two decades Perry’s junior, and she was battling breast cancer. “I went, ‘Whoa, whoa, whoa, can you spool back to... stop right there... Who’s that?’” Perry remembers. “Her smile killed me. I felt like I knew her somehow, and I never met her before.”

Perry asked for her e-mail address, but Jenkins said he should understand her condition before reaching out. Nash’s cancer had spread to her lungs and her bones. There was no exact timetable for how long she had left, but the prognosis was grim. “At that moment I had the opportunity to send no e-mail, pull back, no harm, no foul,” he says. “It

just would all die at that moment. I would just go back to my safe life. Instead, I said, ‘Send the e-mail.’”

It placed him in a vulnerable position. “I didn’t want to go through another loss,” he says. “I was trying to continue moving through life on my own. But there was a simple gorgeousness about her that was just stunning.”

They met up at a restaurant near Nash’s house and talked for six hours. Before

long, they were living together. For a few months, it was bliss. “Then one horrible day she said she was having headaches,” Perry says. “We got an MRI, and then later the oncologist called the house and said she had brain metastases. She fell apart right there in front of me, screaming and crying. It was the most difficult day in my life because she just melted in my arms in fear.”

Perry and Nash moved to New York so she could have access to an experimental treatment in the Bronx. His favorite time of day came in the evening, when he held Nash as she tried to fall asleep. One evening, she turned toward him with something very serious on her mind. “She said, ‘If something ever happens to me, I want you to make one promise,’” he recalls. “‘Promise me you won’t go back into isolation. If you do, I fear this would all be for naught.’” She urged him to make music again.

Nash died on December 14th, 2012. “Ever since I was a kid, and especially since I became successful in the music industry, I just wanted people to love

me,” Perry says. “I never knew when someone did for real. I always had a reluctance to believe it. I think it comes out of my youth when my parents split up, but something inside me always had doubts.

“But let me tell you how I know. When you’re in love with someone like Kellie Nash and she looks you right in the eyes and says, ‘I love you.’ That’s how you know. She made me the luckiest man in the world.”

What Perry really wants to talk about – the reason he’s willing to sit down and revisit these parts of his life – is *Traces*. It’s the result of five years of work (though there was an extended break in the middle for another hip-replacement surgery). He cut it at his home studio without any record label paying the bills or making him sweat out a deadline. The songs, many of them ballads, reflect on love, loss and the difficult moments in between. Some are directly about Nash, like “October in New York,” where he looks back at their final weeks together, while others are character-driven. The sound is a little more subdued than classic Journey: elegant, tasteful, soulfully autumnal. (Backstreet Boys aside, he avoids modern pop and has a particular aversion to drum machines; when a Top 40 station comes on one day over lunch, he insists on bolting from the restaurant to talk outside.)

Perry’s collaborators were delighted to find out he still had his voice. “When I first heard his demos, I was like, ‘Wow, there’s the voice!’” says guitarist Thom Flowers, a co-producer on the album. “But then in the studio, I got to see it myself. He likes to record in the control room, so we’d both put headphones on and he’d be two feet away from me. Without any warm-up, it just came out of him. It reminded me of watching a thoroughbred horse work.”

Perry almost couldn’t believe it himself when work on the album wrapped. “I told some friends of mine that I actually did something I said I’d never do again,” he says. “I made that commitment to Kellie and then a commitment to myself to actually complete it.”

“I always hoped that he would do this one day,” says Jenkins. “All along he’d been playing me these stunning tracks. I was always like, ‘Steve! What the hell? That’s a masterpiece!’ Hearing him give this to the world again is so moving.”

PERRY MAY BE willing to sit down for a series of extensive interviews, but there’s still an aura of mystery surrounding him. For example, his buddy Steve, whose home Perry is visiting. Steve – tall, kind, bald – lives in Mill Valley, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the Bay Area. After answering the door, he offers us coffee. There are photos on the wall of this Steve fellow with the pope. “He’s just a friend of mine,” says Perry, refusing to say anything about him. “An old friend of mine. Keep him anonymous.”

Perry says he’s had a number of serious relationships in his life, but besides Nash and his 1980s girlfriend Sherrie Swafford (immortal- [Cont. on 96]

Queen of Pain

Claire Foy, Emmy-winning star of 'The Crown,' digs deep to play inner turmoil like no one else

BY SARA VILKOMERSON

THERE'S THIS THING about Claire Foy's face: It is constantly changing, highs and lows passing over it like a fast-moving storm. With a wordless glance she projects, instantly, the emotional temperature of the character she is playing. It's a quality that makes Foy, 34, one of the most compelling actresses of her generation. Perhaps it can be traced back to childhood: At 13 years old, Foy, who was born in Stockport, England, and raised in Buckinghamshire, was afflicted with juvenile arthritis. At age 17, doctors discovered a benign tumor behind her eye. "From a very young age I had the experience of your body failing you in some way," she says. "It's haunted me my entire life, but at the same time it's a blessing because you learn to be glad to be alive. Pain gives you an awful lot of understanding of what people are going through all the time."

Foy has a high, tinkly laugh that she deploys often over tea in Manhattan in early October. The other patrons are pretending not to notice the celebrity in their midst. Or, more likely, they haven't connected that this leather-pants-clad gamine — who cheerfully says things like, "You don't want to make a massive tit of yourself!" — is the same stoic Queen Elizabeth she portrayed on the Netflix series *The Crown*. It was her Emmy-winning work on that show that caught director Damien Chazelle's eye while he was casting the Neil Armstrong biopic *First Man*. "She has that Meryl Streep thing," says Chazelle. "She's a true chameleon."

In *First Man*, which examines Armstrong's life during the race to put a man on the moon, Foy plays the astronaut's

wife, Janet. It could've been a token standby-your-spaceman role. But instead it's Foy's Janet who brings the film back to Earth, making the action in the Armstrong kitchen — where she and Neil (Ryan Gosling) are not famous figures but parents struggling with the unspeakable grief of losing a child — every bit as intense as the dizzying spectacle of space travel. Foy, who is already garnering Oscar buzz, spent hours listening to audio of Janet (who passed away in June) and worked with two dialogue coaches to flatten her English accent into an appropriate Midwestern twang. Chazelle says that with every take, Foy would astound. "We'd finish and I'd be so into it I'd be breathless. My cinematographer would have tears in his eyes. Claire would just snap back into her British accent and go, 'Oh no, that was rubbish, I apologize.'"

Now, Foy shape-shifts into the dragon-tattooed vigilante Lisbeth Salander for *The Girl in the Spider's Web* (out November 9th). She leaped at the chance to take on a more physical role ("I kneed a lot of bollocks") and to revel in Lisbeth's antisocial behavior. "She's deeply flawed," says Foy. "She works outside the way society believes she should: She'll have sex with whom-ever and whenever she wants." It's a far cry from Buckingham Palace. "For me, it's playing the queen of England that's the huge stretch," says Foy. "I veer much more toward the Lisbeth end of the spectrum."

But when it comes to her personal life, Foy is fiercely guarded. As talk briefly turns to her three-and-a-half-year-old daughter (with the actor Stephen Moore Campbell, from whom Foy separated earlier this year), she politely shuts it down. She's happier to discuss what's next. "I want to shock myself and everyone else at the same time. Maybe I'll just keep doing more and more mental parts," she says, smiling at the idea. "And people will start to go, 'What's wrong with her?'"

FOY RULES

"I don't want an easy time when I'm acting," Foy has said.



Why Can't Allyson Get Ahead?

ALLYSON COSTELLO STARED at the two lines on her pregnancy test and knew – immediately and beyond a shadow of a doubt – that she would get an abortion. She was 21 years old. She was on the pill, taking it religiously every morning. And it had been only a few months since she'd received a Facebook message from Andy, the first boyfriend she'd ever had, back in middle school, but now virtually a stranger. She learned that he was currently living way out in the country somewhere in Kentucky, that it was beautiful there, but also lonely. She had just gone through a breakup herself and could relate to the loneliness. They started writing, then they started talking. Eventually, he asked if she would fly up from Florida to visit. ¶ At the time, Allyson wasn't looking to change her life. She had an associate's degree and was working on her bachelor's. She and a roommate rented a small but well-kept apartment in downtown Orlando, walking distance to Allyson's school and her job at Starbucks and any number of places to meet up with friends. ¶ They'd bought nice furniture; they'd outfitted the kitchen. "It was so desirable," she tells me.

The U.S. economy is growing, but for workers, it's longer hours, lower pay and almost no security. What happened to the American dream?

By Alex Morris

Photographs by
ROSE MARIE CROMWELL



Allyson Costello
with her son, Atlas

“Anybody would have wanted to live there.” At Starbucks, Allyson made around \$9 an hour, plus her share of the tip jar. It wasn’t a fortune, but it was more than minimum wage, and with only herself to take care of, she could make it stretch pretty far. She even had savings, a small cushion to fall back on. She was proud of her grown-up way of life.

With her blue-collar background, she says, she’d long aspired to something more than the lifestyle provided by her mother’s bartending job and her father’s job in construction. “I didn’t want to live paycheck to paycheck and struggling,” she explains. “I wanted something better than that.” And she thought she knew how to get it. “I knew nothing would be given to me. I mean, when you come from a family that doesn’t have a whole lot of money and everyone you know comes from families who don’t have a lot of money, pretty much the only way you’re going to get out of that is if you get an education,” she says. She’d taken AP classes in high school and often held down two jobs – the one at Starbucks and another at a day care center – as she worked her way through college, studying early-childhood education and pediatric nutrition. She loved kids, but having one so young had not been part of the plan.

Yet there she was, in a bathroom in Andy’s house, staring at those two stark lines. It had been only a couple of months since that first visit to Kentucky, when he’d wooed her with mountain views and dinners out, and she had agreed to start dating him again. “I buried the pregnancy test under all the trash, freaked out, lost my mind for a bit in the bathroom, and then gathered myself up,” she says. After telling Andy that they were expecting, “I straight up was like, ‘I’m going to get an abortion. You gotta be cool with that. That’s gonna happen no matter what.’” The only two clinics in Kentucky that performed abortions had waitlists so long Allyson wasn’t sure she would make the cutoff, but she found a Planned Parenthood in Ohio that would take her in four weeks. By then, “He went from ‘I totally support your decision’ to ‘Well, we’ve got time, let’s just talk some options’ to ‘Hey, we would be a really great family, and we’re going to raise him this way and have a white picket fence and always love each other, and it’s going to be great.’”

And it worked: Allyson eventually came around to the idea of having a child. “Part of the reason why is that Andy and I talked and were like, ‘Well, we’re doing so much better than most people our age. We have savings. We own our house. We have two cars, we have college degrees. We live a good life.’ So it really did, at the time, seem like we had everything that we needed to be prepared and financially stable.” Plus, Allyson wanted to be a mom. She thought she’d make a good one. She had no way of knowing that from that exact moment, she’d begun her slow and steady descent into abject poverty.

Take a long view of the American economy right now, and it appears to be doing just fine. Unemployment is down, and household incomes are up – trends that have been mostly trucking along since the early days of Obama’s presidency when the coun-

Contributing editor ALEX MORRIS wrote the cover story about Camila Cabello in June.

try began its recovery from the Great Recession. But zoom in at the household level, and it’s a far more complicated, and often bleaker, picture. In the Federal Reserve’s most recent annual Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making (SHED), more than one-fifth of adults are behind on their bills, more than one-fourth skipped necessary medical care in 2017 because they were unable to pay for it, and four out of 10 responded that if they needed to come up with \$400 unexpectedly, they would only be able to do so by selling something or borrowing the money. Which means that millions of American families are only one unexpected event away from financial catastrophe. One blown transmission. One broken leg. One positive pregnancy test.

Allyson’s particular catastrophe rolled out in stages. After moving to Kentucky, she continued her education with online classes from the University of Central Florida and had gotten Starbucks to transfer her job to a local shop, but she was making less there than she had been in Orlando. As her due date approached and she looked into the cost of the two day cares in the small town where she worked, she realized how little sense it would make to pay that price. “I had stressed a lot that I wanted to keep working, even after the baby was born,” she says. “When we first decided, ‘OK, we’re gonna do this,’ I was like, ‘I still want my independence, I want my own money.’ But as time went on, we decided that it just wasn’t worth it with child care costs.” Andy made \$12-\$13 an hour working full-time in the book-printing department of Amazon, while Allyson made about \$8.50 an hour working 25 to 30 hours a week. Between the two of them, they earned too much money to qualify for subsidized child care, which meant that almost all of Allyson’s income would have gone toward paying someone else to be with her child. “When we did the math, I would have been taking home \$50 a week, or something ridiculous.”

But the decision to stay home was financially fraught, too. According to Lily Batchelder, the Obama administration’s deputy director of the White House National Economic Council, “Child care is a huge reason why people fall into poverty.” The latest Pew Research Center analysis of such trends found that, after decades of decline, the proportion of stay-at-home mothers rose from 23 percent in 1999 to 29 percent in 2012. More pointedly, a growing share (six percent in 2012 versus one percent in 2000) reported they were not home voluntarily, but rather because they could not find a job, or at least one that could cover child care. Thirty-four percent of stay-at-home mothers (versus 12 percent of working ones) are living in poverty. That’s more than double the number who were living in poverty in 1970.

In fact, according to Alissa Quart, author of *Squeezed: Why Our Families Can’t Afford America*, child care is one of a handful of factors that, taken together, have made middle-class life roughly 30 percent more expensive than it used to be. “It has nothing to do with inflation,” Quart says. “I

mean, food is actually not that much more. It’s rent. It’s real estate. It’s day care. It’s education.” In other words, it’s the quality-of-life markers that define our conception of what it means to be in the middle class. Or, at least, what it meant to be middle class for the bulk of the 20th century when, for a unique moment in history, income gaps narrowed and the middle class as we know it was born. “Middle class has gone from being a stable category that was almost too stable, like a prison that people once tried to escape in the Sixties, to something that people can’t even get in to,” says Quart. “You have the man in the gray flannel suit and all these mythos around the commuter train and the humdrum stable life of two cars and a house and a pension. And now you’d be lucky to have any of those. You’d be lucky to be humdrum.”

Yet it has stuck with us, this humdrum idea of what could or should be possible. A 2017 study by Northwestern Mutual found that 70 percent of Americans consider themselves to be middle class, though only 50 percent actually are. According to the Pew Research Center, which defines the American middle class as those earning two-thirds to twice the median household income (or between about \$52,200 and \$156,500 for a family of four in 2016), the number of people in that group has been consistently on the decline since the Eighties. Increasingly, people find themselves in the working class or, more specifically, a member of the working poor – those living in poverty even though they are working. Meanwhile, our government’s idea of what constitutes poverty – \$25,100 a year for a family of four – is calculated using an outdated model that was developed in the Sixties (before having a cellphone, for instance, was necessary for gaining employment). However you do the math, none of those middle-class markers – owning a home, having good medical care, sending your kids to college – are as attainable as they once were, which, according to Quart, explains why so many who aspire to the middle class are “living really unstable lives” while being “often only one generation away from a working-class parent that was more stable than they are.”

The numbers make it easy to see why. In 1960, the annual average health care costs in America were just \$146 per person; in 2016, that figure had risen to \$10,348. Over the past few decades, the cost of attending a four-year public college has risen more than 200 percent, which helps explain why Americans now have \$1.4 trillion of student-loan debt. The median home value also rose dramatically, from around \$3,000 in 1940 (or around \$30,000 in inflation-adjusted terms) to more than \$200,000 today. And for those who can’t afford to own, renting is problematic as well: A 2017 report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition determined that there is now literally nowhere in America where a minimum-wage worker can afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment.

Meanwhile, as costs have risen, the relative amount of money that many American workers earn has gone down. From the early Seven-

“I thought you went to school, you got a job, and there you are – you built a life,” says Allyson. “But that’s not how it works at all. I was losing money by working.”



COMING UP SHORT

Thirty-four percent of stay-at-home moms are living in poverty, more than double the number in 1970. “I wear shoes with holes in them, I’ve sold my dead grandmother’s jewelry, I’ve donated plasma,” says Allyson. “I’ve gone without deodorant for a week, without tampons. When you have no income, those things become expensive.”

ties until 2017, productivity (the amount of goods and services created in an hour of work) has grown by almost 77 percent, but the inflation-adjusted amount workers are paid for that productivity has only grown by about 12 percent (by way of comparison, from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, compensation rose by about 90 percent). Increased productivity expands the economy, driving certain prices up, which means that the cost of living has been rising faster than incomes for more than 40 years. “That’s kind of all you need to know,” says Jared Bernstein, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “It’s not so much that people are worse off as much as that they haven’t kept up.”

Though certainly, they’ve tried. Much of the (paltry) growth in household income over the past 40 years has occurred because – often out of necessity – people are simply working more. What Bernstein has seen is that “families have had to work hard-

er, work longer hours, spend more time in the job market, send more people to work in order to keep from falling behind.” At least there are more people to send: It is a cruel twist of fate that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 opened employment avenues to minorities and women less than a decade before the solid, middle-class jobs they could finally attain started to become less solid and middle class. Those new workers helped expand productivity but brought home less pay – as, of course, they still do – than their white, male counterparts. “Comparing factors such as incomes, the black middle class was always weaker than the white middle class,” says economist Steven Pitts, associate chair at the UC Berkeley Labor Center. “A newly hired black worker would probably say, ‘Yes, my job at U.S. Steel pays more than my sharecropping job did, but because I’m black, I’m stuck in a job that’s shitty as hell and can’t advance to a better one.’”

As for women, it’s not as if they all entered the job force from lives of leisure, and it’s not as if the work they did before disappeared. Since two incomes are now basically required for attaining a middle-class way of life, as Columbia University historian Alice Kessler-Harris explains in *Women Have Always Worked*, women are working outside the home while still doing 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men, according to a 2018 report from the United Nations. The amount of unpaid care work has been estimated to be worth about \$3 trillion annually. Without it, America’s economy would grind to a halt.

Allyson’s son, Atlas, was born in 2015, on an early-October afternoon that she describes as “literally perfect, sweater weather, when the grass is green and long and there’s sunflowers everywhere. I thought he

was literally the most beautiful newborn I'd ever seen in my entire life." He was a happy baby, and Allyson took to new motherhood with an ease that surprised her. While she was expecting, she'd connected with some friends on Facebook to bond over the difficulties of pregnancy, but after Atlas was born, "we kind of grew apart because they were going through a lot of things that I wasn't. I didn't have anything to contribute to those conversations. It was just so easy."

What was becoming less easy, however, was her relationship with Andy. He worked nights and slept during the day, so she'd roam around the big, old house with only a newborn as company. "It was so lonely," she says. "Honestly, we just weren't compatible. I was unhappy, and he just wouldn't talk about it at all."

Not working, she was also steadily making her way through the \$9,000 she'd had from her Starbucks savings and from selling her furniture when she moved to Kentucky. By the time she and Andy called it quits and she bought a one-way ticket back to Florida, she was down to basically nothing. "I had a 10-month-old, one suitcase worth of stuff, \$70, two packs of diapers and a week's worth of wipes." Though she'd been helping pay the property taxes, the house belonged to Andy, purchased a few years back with money from a scooter-accident settlement (the type of "lucky break" that may now be someone's best chance at financial gain). The cars belonged to him too. He had offered to go with her to the child-support office in Kentucky, but the breakup was contentious enough that Allyson just wanted to get away. She figured it could all get sorted out later, not realizing how much harder the process would be once she crossed state lines. (Andy declined to comment for this article.)

Back in Orlando, she moved in with a friend of a friend who had a spare room she could rent for almost nothing, applied for child support, and found that she qualified for the maximum amount of assistance that Florida allowed (about \$350 a month), which she figured would tide her over until she could secure subsidized child care and find a job. When she went to apply for that subsidized child care, however, she learned that before you could even qualify, the state required two consecutive pay stubs to prove you worked at least 20 hours a week. Which meant that in order to work, she needed child care, but in order to get child care, she needed to work. Essentially, she was screwed.

So are many others. "As much as we talk about motherhood and fatherhood and apple pie and all that stuff, it's just a system that is so rigged against parents and the values that we hold as a country that the adults be self-supporting, that the children be given the best early beginnings," says Ellen Galinsky, president and co-founder of the Families and Work Institute. "In a sense, your ZIP code is destiny. And each state, depending on its economic health and the values of its governing bodies, supports child care to a greater or lesser degree. I could live literally across the block from someone in a different state and have a completely different system" — a bureaucratic morass that owes its complexity in part to the conflicting societal belief that, as Galinsky puts it, "we should make people who take welfare work, but good mothers will be at home."

Desperately, Allyson tried to figure out how to do both. When her stepmother agreed to watch Atlas in the evenings after she got home from her own job, Al-



THE BENEFIT GAP

"I was working 15 hours a week at minimum wage, and they cut my benefits," says Allyson, who moved back in with her mother in Florida (left). Her work at Starbucks meant she made too much money for adequate help from social services but not enough to pay the bills. "How does that even make sense?" she asks.

lyson approached Starbucks about picking up some evening shifts and was hired again. But with her child care constraints and the limited shifts they could give her ("Two of the girls I most often worked with also had kids and could only work evenings on very specific days," she says), it was clear that she would not be able to work the 20 hours a week needed to get the child care subsidy.

Allyson had been precariously employed before, with no set schedule and no guaranteed number of hours per week. But she'd never been so underemployed, working far less than she wanted or needed to be, and she'd never before had a dependent. The much-publicized benefits Starbucks offered — health insurance for employees who work an average of

20 hours a week or more, tuition assistance, fertility services, paying more than the minimum wage — suddenly paled in comparison to how little every hour's worth of work actually got her: 50 cents more than minimum wage when she'd started and a raise of 21 cents an hour every year after that. Even working full-time, she would have been making "nothing close to a living wage," she says. And yet she kept returning to Starbucks for a reason: The chain was widely considered a *generous* employer.

In fact, minimum wage has fallen so woefully behind the cost of living that more than 12 million American workers now also rely on public assistance to make ends meet — a state of affairs that Bernie Sanders has publicly decried as a way in which tax-

payer dollars subsidize rich corporations. “Minimum wage is now more than 25 percent below what it was in 1968, so that is pretty dramatically sick,” says Lawrence Mishel, a distinguished fellow at the Economic Policy Institute, a pro-labor think tank. And the minimum wage sets the parameters for so many hourly jobs, meaning that a large portion of the country’s take-home pay is being depressed far below a reasonable cost of living. “The defining characteristic of the last four decades has been wage stagnation, but I would call it wage suppression,” adds Mishel. “The fact that most people didn’t see much of a rise of their wages and benefits is not because the money wasn’t there because the economy was somehow in trouble. There was lots of income and wealth produced. It didn’t get to most people. Then, you have to ask the question ‘Why didn’t it?’”

Standard operating procedure is to point to automation, globalization and the inevitable, immutable changes of time as certain industries die out and are replaced by others. “But we’ve had automation for many, many decades,” says Mishel, “and for many of those decades we saw falling inequality, we saw rising wages for middle-class workers. Globalization may have something to do with this, but it’s not so clear to me that globalization and the way we did it was ordained by any deity.” Certainly, the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy has had an effect, since service work – scrubbing toilets, flipping burgers, running day cares rather than doing something that produces a tangible product – is somehow viewed as “lesser” and therefore commands a lower rate. But all of these explanations would make more sense if the economy overall were suffering. It isn’t. Only its workers are.

And that’s happened, not because of economic forces beyond our control, but rather because government and corporate choices have been made that prioritize the wealth of a few people over the welfare of the many. The perverse incentives of tying executive pay to the price of stock have transformed the American worker from a stakeholder into merely an expenditure, from someone whose cultivation and training benefit the company into a mere line item for the next quarter. “Something like 80 percent of officers admit that they would forgo an investment in their company that has long-term benefits if it meant missing that quarter’s earnings,” says Rick Wartzman, author of *The End of Loyalty: The Rise and Fall of Good Jobs in America*. “It’s disturbing stuff. And the effects are just profound.”

In the 1970s, S&P 500 companies typically used half of their profits to pay shareholders and the other half to reinvest in the company, through research and development or worker compensation and training. “Over the past 10 years,” Wartzman continues, “94 percent of profits for the S&P 500 have gone to benefit shareholders,” either directly or through stock buybacks, in which companies use their profits to buy their own stock, driving up its value – a practice that was

outlawed until 1982 because it was believed to be a form of market manipulation. Based on tallies of the first three quarters, J.P. Morgan projects that S&P 500 companies will spend \$800 billion on buybacks in 2018 – the highest number on record.

Such transformations of the way business is done have spawned the gig economy (gig workers might need a safety net, but aren’t legally entitled to one), undercut unions (11 percent of private workers were unionized in 2017 compared with 20 percent in 1983, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics), and led to the development of algorithms that can adjust workers’ hours in real time based on volume of business (great for a company that doesn’t want to pay people when there’s a lag in customers, but disastrous for workers like Allyson who need to plan for child care). When American Airlines announced in 2017 that it was raising its wages, its share price plummeted – rather than see this as a sign of the company’s health, the market saw it as a liability.

And in this American market, it is. As Jacob Hacker, Yale political scientist and author of *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream*, explains, “The transfer of risk and responsibility from the broad shoulders of government and corporations onto the fragile backs of American workers and their families” has been one of the defining factors of the past few generations. Job security is a thing of the past. Between 2003 and 2013, the cost of employer-provided health insurance rose by 73 percent, 93 percent of which was passed on to workers, even as deductibles more than doubled. And rather than a guaranteed pension, workers are now offered a riskier 401(k) that draws from their wages. Which means that even families who are doing OK feel like they aren’t. “The poor are, of course, the most disadvantaged,” says Hacker. “But the real transformation is the degree to which the constraints and risks that were once faced only by the working poor are being faced by people with once-thought solidly middle-class incomes.”

In fact, as economists Jonathan Murdoch and Rachel Schneider point out in *The Financial Diaries*, “The instability of families’ incomes has risen faster than the inequality of families’ incomes.” Almost 60 percent of American workers are now hourly rather than salaried. And, in 2015, the Pew Charitable Trust found that almost 50 percent of households saw their income rise or fall by 25 percent or more from one year to the next. These ups and downs could be weathered if Americans weren’t already living so close to the bone – squeezed by factors such as the high cost of child care and their own low wages – but as Schneider says, “Volatility requires a cushion, [and] so many people don’t have a cushion because they really need their full income just to cover the basic cost of living.” In fact, in 2017, 39 percent of Americans had less than \$1,000 saved, which means that gains in the market are largely not going to the middle class. Put more starkly: The top 10 percent of households own

84 percent of the country’s stocks – and this includes all stocks in retirement accounts.

Unfortunately, the government has not only enabled these changes, they’ve also enshrined them in policy. In addition to a miserly minimum wage, there are weaker unemployment benefits, more draconian rules about overtime, and a deterioration in labor standards like sick leave or family leave. And many welfare benefits are contingent on working a certain number of hours, as if this were under an employee’s control – meaning that people, like Allyson, who are underemployed are also at risk of losing whatever governmental help they may be receiving. “At this point, it’s kind of hard to deny that American political elites, and particularly Republican political elites, basically don’t believe there is any problem that can’t be addressed by cutting taxes and telling people that they should take more responsibility,” says Hacker.

Yet when Allyson took responsibility and called social services to tell them that she’d found work, she learned exactly what working would mean: She had landed in the benefit gap, where the social services lost by having a job are not sufficiently met by wages. “They told me immediately that I lost my Medicaid” – a bureaucratic error, actually, that took her months to figure out. “And they also cut my food stamps from \$357 to \$172 or something like that,” Allyson says. “Which was really significant. I was shocked. ‘But what do you mean? I just started. I’m working, like, 15 hours a week at basically minimum wage. How does that even make sense?’ And they were just like, ‘I don’t know what to tell you. After taxes, you should be making \$503 a month.’ And I was like, ‘Yeah? And?’” It was the first time Allyson realized how little she’d really have to live on. “I was crushed,” she says. Between that, bus fare to and from work, and the cost of prescription medicine she needed, “I was actually losing money at that point by working. It just was not... sustainable at all.”

“Where’s your nose?” asks Allyson. “Where’s your chin? Your knees? No, no, those are toes. Toes are cool too, but they’re not knees.” It’s bath time for Atlas, who is chubby and smiley and now almost two – an age at which it is very hard to understand why one cannot eat pink foam soap. “Don’t eat it! If you eat it, bath time is over,” warns Allyson as Atlas smears the soap all through his blond curls and giggles uncontrollably.

Allyson laughs too. She’s into attachment parenting (“all the peer-reviewed, high-quality research says that it just creates better people”) and approaches motherhood with admirable patience and humor.

It’s a sweet, homey scene – a mother bathing her child, getting him ready for bed – but the small room where Allyson and Atlas will be living is bare of furniture, apart from the Pack ’n Play where Atlas sleeps. A few suitcases and plastic hampers scattered about contain the bulk of her possessions. After months of crashing with a friend, tonight is the first night she will spend in her mother’s small St. Petersburg apartment since officially moving in.

Back in Orlando, she hadn’t been making enough at Starbucks to cover both her health care costs and her reduced welfare benefits, so it soon became clear that she would need to put \$200 to \$300 on credit cards every month just to get by, while the student loans she couldn’t pay ballooned [Cont. on 96]

“Minimum wage is now 25 percent below what it was in 1968,” says one economist. “The defining characteristic of the past four decades is wage suppression.”

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Reviews

Music

A DEEPER SHADE OF WHITE

A deluxe edition of the White Album dives into the Beatles' fraying late-Sixties drama

By DAVID FRICKE



The Beatles

The Beatles
(Super Deluxe)
APPLE/CAPITOL/UME

★★★★★

IN LATE May 1968, the Beatles convened at guitarist George Harrison's English country home with an extraordinary body of raw materials for their next album. The so-called Esher demos – 27 songs taped on Harrison's four-track machine – were at once stark and full, solo acoustic blueprints already outfitted with signature flourishes: double-tracked vocals; John Lennon's raindrop-arpeggio guitar in “Dear Prudence”; the future guitar solo in “Back in the U.S.S.R.,” hummed by Paul McCartney.

There was evidence too of tension and estrangement: Lennon's jagged rhythms

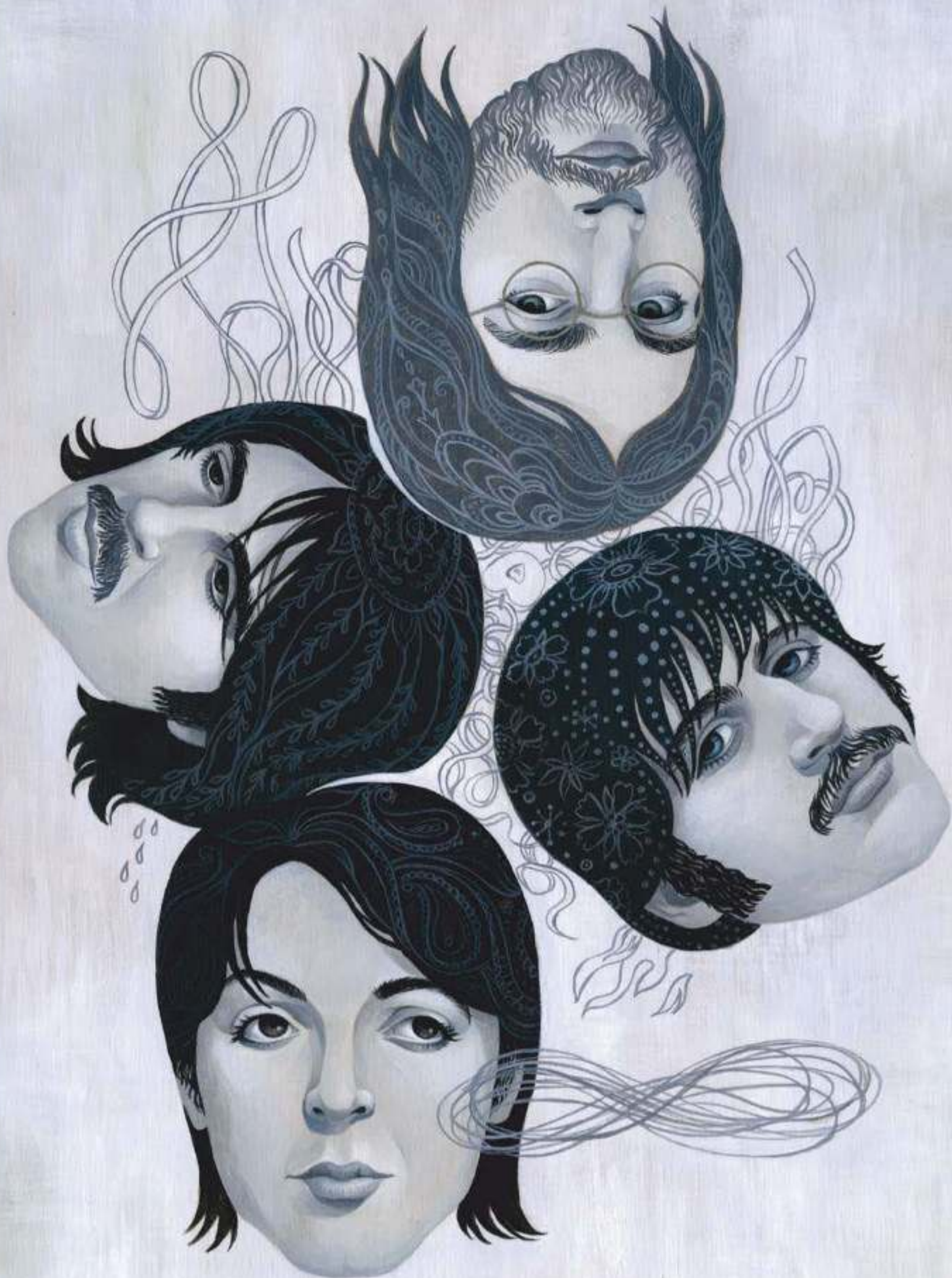


ILLUSTRATION BY
Jody Hewgill

→ THE BEATLES

and aggressive cynicism (“Revolution,” “Yer Blues”); McCartney’s determined optimism (“Blackbird”) and almost mutinous cheer (“Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”). In his Appalachian-ballad draft of “While My Guitar Gently Weeps,” Harrison pointedly censured his bandmates, singing, “The problems you sow are the troubles you’re reaping.” He dropped the line in the final version. His dismay in the song remained.

Those recordings, issued in full for the first time, are the dominant revelation in the 50th-anniversary expansion of *The Beatles*. At 30 tracks on two LPs and dubbed “the White Album” for its blank-canvas sleeve, it was the group’s longest, most eclectic and emotionally blunt record – an admission of frayed nerves and strained bonds in the zigzag of garage-roots rock, delicate balladry, proto-metal fury, country ham and radical experiment. The “Super Deluxe” edition has even more. In addition to the demos and a new remix of the album overseen by Giles Martin, son of the late producer George Martin, there are 50 tracks of the work in progress – outtakes and sketches, roads not taken and songs left behind – across the summer and fall of 1968.

This is an unprecedented view of the Beatles at the ground zero of songwriting, as well as the trials and conflict that charged that bounty – Lennon is exhausted to the point of begging (“I’m So Tired”). McCartney finds relief in corn (“Honey Pie”). Harrison is coming up strong but frustrated. His Esher songs “Circles” and “Not Guilty” would have to wait for solo albums released years later.

The outtakes vary in impact. A 12-minute “Helter Skelter” is not the noisefest I’d hoped for but a solid groove, McCartney leading a blues-jam Beatles. The differences in Lennon’s two takes of longing for his mother, “Julia,” are telling; his vocal falls more naturally over the guitar in the second pass. An alternate down-home “Good Night” is a marvelous shock, Ringo Starr’s homely vocal gilded with earthy harmonies closer to the Band. And do not fear for the original LP: Giles’ remix adds depth and detail without betraying the ’68 balance.

The Beatles is seen as the album on which they started to break up. But it was wisely titled – a self-portrait of the band at odds but pulling together behind each writer, playing as they always did: in service to the song. 

THE NEW KIDS OF CLASSIC ROCK

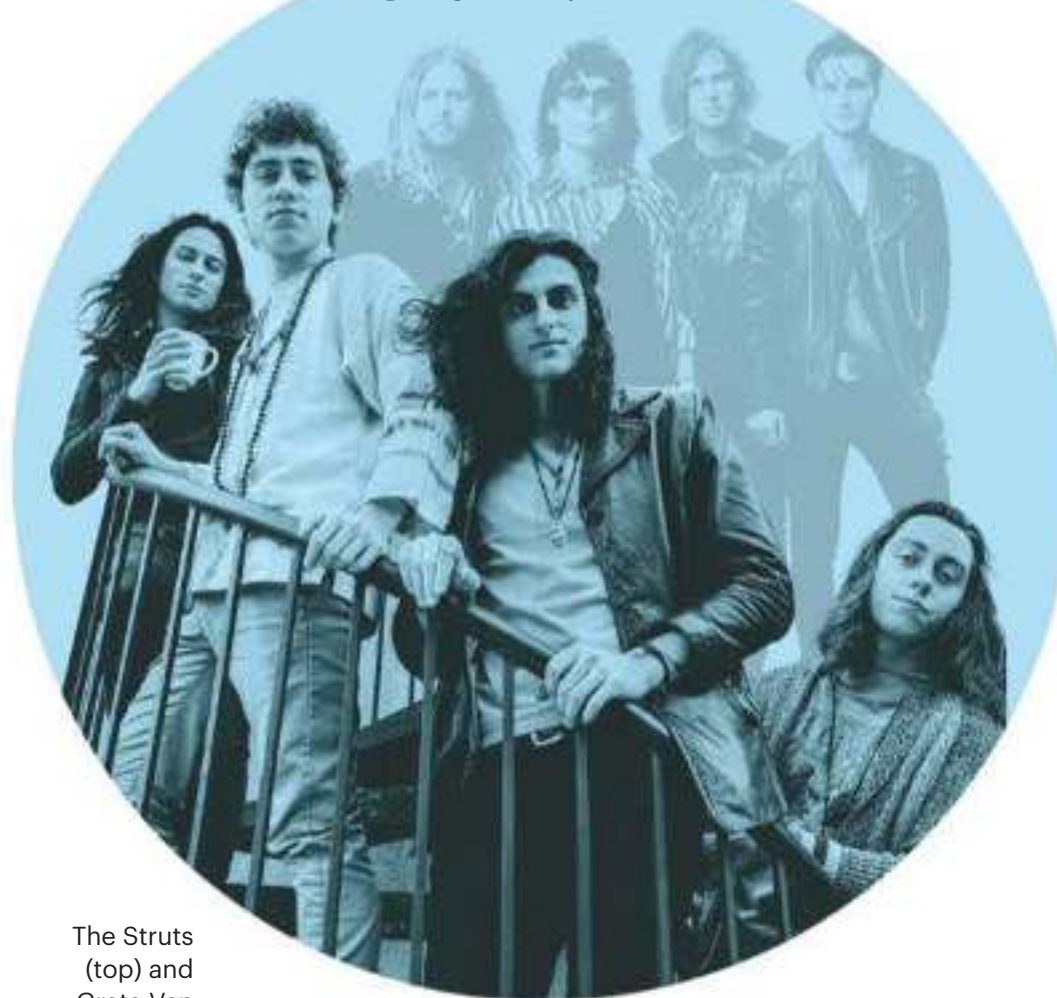
Two promising young bands revel in the reliable power of Seventies riffs By WILL HERMES

THESE two young bands are doing something vaguely startling in 2018: They play undiluted, largely unironic classic rock, defiantly fighting for a style of music that keeps getting written off as irrelevant, even as it never quite goes away.

were roughly kindergarten age when *School of Rock* premiered). But there’s also a charm to their guileless, retro-fetishist conviction. And dudes have chops. “Age of Man” is lighters-up prog-rock spirituality. “The Cold Wind” and “When the Curtain Falls”

“young and pretty” with “ain’t that a pity,” and “Anthem” asks, “Where is the music, tune to free the soul/A simple lyric to unite us all?” If they digest their influences, they might have an answer someday.

The Struts, hailing from the U.K., have a head start on the revivalist circuit: In 2014, they opened for the Stones in Paris, before even releasing their debut LP, *Everybody Wants*, a flash pot



The Struts (top) and Greta Van Fleet.

Greta Van Fleet seem like they leaped fully formed from the skull of a rock critic in 1975. Three brothers and a bud from Michigan, they come bearing shamelessly recycled Zeppelin-isms with a frontman who seems to have heard Rush’s *2112* a few times.

There’s an element of the ridiculous in this (they

flaunt the physical graffiti that got them noticed. The scream on “Lover Leaver” conjures the money-shot finale of “Whole Lotta Love,” although this ascends where Zep’s descends. Good lyrics could help push this beyond nostalgia. But the writing isn’t there yet. “You’re the One,” a come-back-to-me plea to an “evil” girl, rhymes

of musical-theater shtick, glam-rock camp and pop-punk snot. Their second LP advances the notion that maybe ignoring the past 30 or 40 years of pop trends isn’t the best approach. The writing-production firepower includes Lauren Christy (of hitmakers the Matrix) and Jon Levine (Dua Lipa, Rachel Platten). Frontman Luke Spiller slings one-liners like a rock & roll Henny Youngman (see “Primadonna Like Me”). He also gets schmaltzily sincere from time to time, as on “Ashes (Part 2),” a cross between *Bat Out of Hell* and Maroon 5. The would-be radio smash is “Body Talks,” over-the-top chant pop that’s winning on first listen, irritating soon after. It’s one part Bo Diddley, two parts Mötley Crüe, and if it fails to be more than the sum of its “whoo!”s, it’s still effective, and gets bonus points for a remix with Kesha, who beats ’em all at working classic rock into modern pop. At least the boys knew enough to put her on a throne in the video. 



Greta Van Fleet
Anthem of the Peaceful Army
★★★★☆



The Struts
Young & Dangerous
★★★★☆

BREAKING

Empress Of’s Catchy, Complex Avant-R&B

L.A. SINGER-SONGWRITER Lorely Rodriguez (who makes avant-R&B as Empress Of) starting getting attention in 2012, when she posted a series of amorphous, angelic minute-long songs on YouTube, each represented by a different color. Last year’s “Why Don’t You Come On,” a hit duet with Khalid, suggested poppier ambitions she makes good on with her new album, *Us*. The highlight is the effervescent, Eighties-indebted single, “When I’m With Him,” in which Empress Of delivers a missive from inside a loveless relationship. It’s the catchiest thing she’s done, without losing a hint of multihued artistry. **BRENDAN KLINKENBERG**



Empress Of

Quick Hits

Ten new albums you need to know about now



Robyn
Honey
Konichiwa



DISCO HEAVEN Her first album in eight years lets the healing grooves take over. Her reverence for classic disco and house is more explicit, the bliss more redemptive. It's like an awesome night of clubbing.



Various Artists
A Star Is Born
Interscope



STAR POWER A soundtrack worthy of the film's Oscar buzz; Lady Gaga's genre-hopping songs perfectly mirror her character's rise from earnest singer-songwriter to pop star to virtuosic legend.



Thom Yorke
Suspiria
XL



HAUNTED SUITE Yorke's film score for an Italian horror remake is 81 minutes of witching-hour instrumentals, strange noises — and, every so often, a heart-breakingly beautiful song.



Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
Live From the Ryman
Southeastern



LIVE FIRE A souvenir from Isbell's recent run at country's Mother Church. The 400 Unit shine hard, and everything serves the songs, which are among the finest of the past decade.



Jess Glynne
Always in Between
Atlantic U.K.



UPLIFTING SOUL On her second album, Brit-soul belter Glynne keeps it positive to the extreme. Her exuberant alto soars on the resolute electro-bop "I'll Be There" and the stripped-down "Thursday."



Swearin'
Fall Into the Sun
Merge



PUNK REDEMPTION Great Philly indie band (co-led by ace songwriter Allison Crutchfield) nails coming-of-age malaise, including the group's road from breaking up a few years back to heroic renewal.



Logic
YSIV
Def Jam



WEIGHTY RHYMES Chart-topping rapper's motivational optimism and Nineties-loving beats are fine, but scrappy wisdom like "My mind state is like a freight when I rhyme" come off kind of leaden.



Steve Perry
Traces
Fantasy



BACK AND BIG The power ballads on Perry's first LP since 1994 can't touch peak Journey (a few are pretty clunky), but his cheese-angel pipes are almost totally intact, and more soulful with age.



David Guetta
7
Atlantic



SAME OL' THUMP The French DJ-producer works with Lil Uzi Vert and J Balvin on his latest, and intriguingly records half the songs as Jack Back. But the results are pretty predictable EDM pop.



Disturbed
Evolution
Reprise



FLAT METAL Veterans of the early-'00s nu-metal boom, Disturbed are still at it, dropping crushers like the ragingly dumb "Savior of Nothing," a screed against social-justice warriors.



UPDATE

LATIN POP'S NEW LOOKS

Three artists create global mash-ups and make vintage sounds feel vibrant

PUERTO RICAN singer Ozuna is a reggaeton radical, embracing sounds from all over the pop landscape on *Aura*; "Ibiza" is a handsome collaboration with the bachata star Romeo Santos, and "Comentale" finds Ozuna harmonizing with the Senegalese-American singer Akon over a beat that hints at disco. While Ozuna creates hypercontem-



Ozuna
Aura
★★★★☆



Rosalía
Malamente
★★★★☆



Trending Tropics
Elintelné
★★★★☆

porary global pop, Rosalia, a Spanish singer trained in flamenco, channels a traditional sound through modern electronics. Her *El Mal Querer* mixes flamenco's hand-clap rhythms and pitch-manipulated vocals that trace ghostly lines, and "Bagdad" alludes to Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River." The Puerto Rican-Dominican duo Trending Tropics do it all at once; their latest scavenges choral music, hip-hop and African rock. The result is music that swerves between reverence and recklessness.

ELIAS LEIGHT

Gaga, Bradley Cooper





Roberts counsels James.

TV

A GRIPPING ‘HOMECOMING’

Julia Roberts proves to be as well-suited to the small screen as the big one in this suspenseful, time-shifting drama



ALAN SEPINWALL

‘HOMECOMING’ IS A hypnotic blend of old-school and new. It’s fronted by Julia Roberts, one of the last of the capital-M Movie Stars hailing from an era when the idea of doing a TV series would be unthinkable. It’s directed by *Mr. Robot* creator Sam Esmail, who makes half of each episode look like a loving Hitchcock pastiche and the other half like it was shot on an iPhone. Its story is adapted from a Gimlet Media podcast,

and it remains taut as part of the welcome new trend of half-hour dramas. Parts of it take place a few years from now, yet it’s startlingly low-tech. (Its chief sleuth, a clumsy Columbo-type civil servant played winningly by Shea Whigham, relies on paper files, a flashlight and a pair of collapsible reading glasses.) It is the future and the past all at once and a pleasure to watch throughout.

Roberts plays Heidi Bergman, who in the present is the put-together and friendly director of the Homecoming program, designed to treat veterans with PTSD, and some four years later is a rumpled waitress who doesn’t recall a lot about her old job. How did she get from one spot to the other? How much does she really remember? Did Heidi’s slick corporate boss, Colin (Bobby Can-

navale), do something to her? And what happened to her favorite patient, the charming Walter Cruz (Stephan James)? These mysteries and more unfold carefully and engagingly under the watch of Esmail and writers Micah Bloomberg and Eli Horowitz. Questions are answered just when they should be (not dragged along), and in ways that illuminate the characters rather than undercut them.

Homecoming

NETWORK	AMAZON
AIR DATE	November 2nd
STARRING	Julia Roberts Stephan James Bobby Cannavale Shea Whigham Sissy Spacek Dermot Mulroney

★★★★☆

Esmail gets Roberts to dial back her star wattage, though he deploys her famous smile strategically and potently. This is Julia Roberts, actress, first and foremost, and she gives a specific and modulated performance – two of them, really, since waitress Heidi seems so disconnected from therapist Heidi. (Even when *My Best Friend’s Wedding*’s Dermot Mulroney turns up as Heidi’s loser boyfriend, it feels like a relationship, not a reunion.) Roberts and James have abundant chemistry, which is crucial for a thriller built so much on two people just talking. The plot is intentionally slow to start, so the early episodes lean heavily on atmosphere and on how likable Heidi and Walter are together. Roberts and James more than deliver the latter, while Esmail is all over the former.

Esmail mostly sets aside the off-kilter framing of *Mr. Robot* for elegant and classical Hollywood compositions in the scenes at the Homecoming facility. Expect lots of complicated single takes and a soundtrack that samples a variety of vintage suspense movie scores. The future timeline is presented as a vertical video, with black bars on the right and left of the screen. This can be a periodic distraction, but the payoff that answers why those scenes look that way proves more than worth it.

The line between mediums has become blurred, but there are still ways that performances can be right for one and too big or small for another. Roberts meets *Homecoming* on the human level, right where it needs her to be. Even for the small screen, she’s a perfect fit.

STREAM THIS NOW

‘Quantum Leap’ Is the Cure for Our Existential Blues

STATE OF the world got you down? Step into the Eighties sci-fi drama *Quantum Leap* (Hulu), where a crusading nice guy (Scott Bakula) goes back in time to “put right what once went wrong.” The show is a testament to the power of empathy, as a privileged white man experiences life as a Sixties secretary, a black chauffeur in the Deep South, a young adult with special needs, even a NASA chimp. The improvements he makes to these lives are small in the grand scheme of things but crucial and powerful for all involved. Versatile and marvelously game, Bakula was a blast back then, as was Dean Stockwell playing his holographic sidekick. Today, they’re pure relief. **A.S.**



Bakula

WATCH LIST

What to stream, what to skip this month

SPY GAMES, REDUX

Little Drummer Girl

NETWORK AMC
AIR DATE November 19th, 9 p.m.
★★★★☆

AMC goes back to the “John Le Carré novel + beautiful international scenery + beautiful international actors” formula that proved so successful with *The Night Manager*. This time, *Lady Macbeth*’s Florence Pugh plays an actress lured by a reluctant Israeli spy (Alexander Skarsgård) and his pugnacious commander (Michael Shannon) into going undercover to help stop a Palestinian terror cell. Pugh is riveting as a young woman who’s not nearly as smart or fearless as she keeps telling the world. Shannon gets to play to both the loudest and quietest ends of his range, while Skarsgård again uses his stoic good looks to conceal and then reveal inner turmoil. All are great, but the secret weapon is Park Chan-Wook, who directs all six episodes. There’s already a house style to these productions, yet Chan-Wook conjures remarkable visual flourishes within it, whether through stunning scenery or the way the actress’s reality begins to fold in on her the more lies she has to tell. As with *The Night Manager* — and most Le Carré adaptations — the complicated plot is something it’s best not to think too hard about. But goodness, the show sure is lovely to look at.



Pugh and Skarsgård at the Acropolis

his best friend, Sandy Kominsky (Michael Douglas) — a legendary acting teacher who never had much of an acting career on his own — is much closer to the end of his life than the beginning. And that sinking feeling is impossible for either of them to ignore. This is Lorre in his best creative mode (see also *Mom*), where the darkness gives the punchlines weight, while the jokes provide



Arkin and Douglas

welcome respite from serious talk of loss (Norman is widowed), failing body parts (lots of prostate jokes) and the impending end of it all. His two Oscar-winning leads are in superb form. As Sandy, Douglas is vain and ridiculous, but just self-aware enough never to seem like a cartoon. And Arkin is simply spectacular, taking emotional moments to deeper levels and wringing extra laughs out of his wry, expertly timed delivery. It’s a show about old pros, made by old pros. Their bodies may not work like they used to, but their performances sure do.

GOLDEN GUYS

The Kominsky Method

NETWORK NETFLIX
AIR DATE November 16th
★★★★☆

“We are passengers on boats, slowly sinking,” Alan Arkin’s aging Hollywood agent Norman declares midway through *The Kominsky Method*, the sweet, sad and funny new show from sitcom titan Chuck Lorre (*The Big Bang Theory*). Norman, like

ON THE RUN

Escape at Dannemora

NETWORK SHOWTIME
AIR DATE November 18th, 10 p.m.
★★★★☆

Richard Matt and David Sweat’s 2015 upstate New York prison break was compared to *The Shawshank Redemption* because the duo cut through the walls of their cells and took a long tunnel to freedom. But if their methods were cinematic, their personalities — and that of Joyce “Tilly” Mitchell, the prison employee who helped them — were far from it. The seven-part *Escape at Dannemora* goes into intricate detail about how the convicted murderers seduced Tilly and busted out of jail, and director Ben Stiller has fun shooting in, around and under the Clinton Correctional Facility, where the real events took place. But the scripts repeat the same points about each thin lead character — Matt is an artist, Tilly resents her dumb but devoted husband — without digging nearly as deep as Matt and Sweat did to go AWOL. Fortunately, Stiller cast three fine actors in these roles: an intensely deglammed Patricia Arquette as Tilly, Paul Dano as Sweat and Benicio Del Toro as Matt, his twitchiness recalling Fenster from *The Usual Suspects*. They hold together a story that otherwise doesn’t warrant such lengthy examination. A.S.



Del Toro breaks free.

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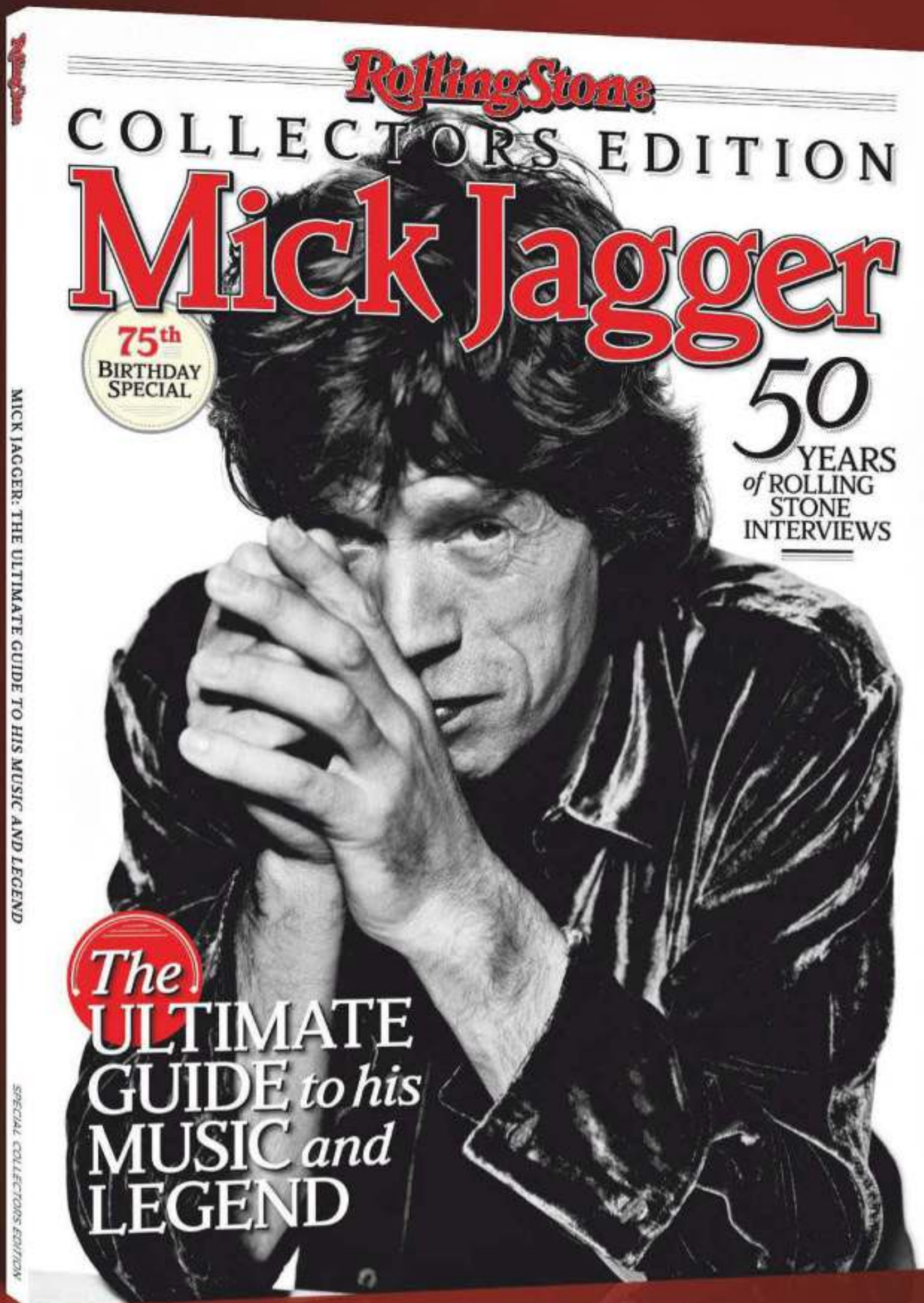


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Mortensen and Ali hit the road to Sixties bigotry.

Movies

'DRIVING MISS DAISY' IN REVERSE

Viggo Mortensen chauffeurs Mahershala Ali through the Deep South in 1962 in a comedy with a sting in its tale



PETER TRAVERS

FUNNY HOW crowd-pleasing movies bring out the snob in critics. (Think *The Blind Side*.) And now the hugely entertaining *Green Book* faces the hammer. It's another true story supposedly tainted because director Peter Farrelly is famed for the gross-out comedies he made with his brother Bobby (dump all you want on *Dumb & Dumber*, but *Kingpin* is immortal). Set in the Deep South in 1962, *Green Book* had the

nerve to win the People's Choice award at the Toronto Film Festival against artful contenders such as Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma*, Pawel Pawlikowski's *Cold War* and Barry Jenkins' *If Beale Street Could Talk*. How can a Farrelly film compete with that crowd? It can't. But on its own terms, this buddy dramedy delivers the heartfelt and hilarious goods, with two cherries on top in the form of Oscar-caliber performances from Viggo Mortensen and Mahershala Ali.

Ali plays Dr. Don Shirley, an African-American classical-trained pianist on a jazz-trio tour in a part of the country not prepared to embrace integration. In his search for a chauffeur, Don makes the curious choice of Frank Anthony Vallelonga, a.k.a. Tony Lip (Mortensen), a loudmouth Italian cliché temporarily off the Mob pay-

roll as a bouncer back in New Yawk. The film is "inspired" (that word!) by their real-life friendship.

They sure as hell don't get off to an amicable start, with Don sitting like a king in a chic apartment above Carnegie Hall. Tony tells his client that he's open-minded, claiming that "my wife and I had a couple coloreds over for drinks." (In an earlier scene, two black men working in Tony's home drink from glasses that he later trashes.) What follows is a twist on *Driving Miss Daisy*, as Don and Tony set off on an eight-week concert tour filled with dangerous obstacles. Driver and passenger have two things on their side: Tony's muscle and *The Negro Motorist Green-Book*, a travel guide

published from 1936 to 1966 to assist black travelers about where to stay and what to avoid in the Jim Crow South.

The script, by Farrelly, Brian Hayes Currie and Tony's son, Nick Vallelonga, is filled with a piercing gravity that deepens the comedy. In an impressive solo feature debut, Farrelly proves adept at juggling the script's shifting tones. There are easy laughs when Tony teaches Don about the wonders of fried chicken while the musician helps his driver write

letters home to his wife, Dolores (Linda Cardellini). There are also bruising glimpses into a time when racial profiling had the law on its side. *Green Book* is a movie about class as well as race. And Farrelly rightly refuses to paint a pretty picture.

Ali, a Best Supporting Actor Oscar winner for *Moonlight*, is superb at finding the buried rage in a refined artist challenging fellow Americans who never accepted the abolition of slavery. Sure, Tony roughs up white hypocrites who applaud Don onstage and then bar him from their restaurants. But don't mistake him for another white savior. Ali makes us see that Don is on his own when it comes to finding a place to belong. And the actor, who had help from a pianist double in the club scenes, is simply stupendous at showing Don alive in his art. Tony senses his genius, but is horrified that Don doesn't know Chubby Checker or Little Richard. "I'm blacker than you are," Tony snaps.

Mortensen is terrific, having beefed up by 30 pounds to play this bruiser with a Bronx honk and the dazed realization that his fists can't change a damn thing. The role is a game-changer for an actor whose dramatic chops are a given, with Academy nods for *Eastern Promises* and *Captain Fantastic*. But it's his flair for comedy that feels revelatory.

Green Book ends in a gush of Christmas-themed feel-good that will probably drive some folks nuts. But look closer and you'll see that Farrelly never forgets the shadows lurking outside the fierce but fragile connection that Don and Tony have forged over two mercurial months on the road.

Simplistic? Maybe. But in a time when our nation is more divided than ever, the movie offers the possibility of redemption. Thanks to the dream team of Mortensen and Ali, audiences will be cheering. And they'll be right.

Green Book

STARRING

Viggo Mortensen
Mahershala Ali
Linda Cardellini

DIRECTOR

Peter Farrelly

★★★★☆



Farrelly sets up a shot.



HE WILL ROCK YOU

Bohemian Rhapsody

STARRING
Rami Malek
DIRECTOR
Bryan Singer
★★★★☆

PUT RAMI MALEK high on the list for best film performances of 2018. As Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of the British band Queen, the *Mr. Robot* star performs miracles, catching the

look, strut and soul of Mercury, who died of complications from AIDS in 1991. Sadly, the film itself shows signs of a difficult birth. Sacha Baron Cohen was set to play Mercury before he left over creative differences. Director Bryan Singer (*X-Men*) was fired for not showing up on set (an uncredited Dexter Fletcher replaced him). So, yeah, *Bohemian Rhapsody* moves in fits and starts as we follow Mercury, born Farrokh Bulsara of Parsi descent, from baggage handler to co-founder of Queen with guitarist Brian May (Gwilym Lee) and drummer Roger Taylor (Ben Hardy). Shy offstage and struggling with his love for Mary Austin (Lucy Boynton) and his growing attraction to men, Mercury was secretive and conflicted. Except onstage. Malek, mixing his voice with vocals from Queen and singer Marc Martel, is pow personified, especially during the 1985 Live Aid concert that rocked the world with Mercury majesty. Screw the film's flaws, this you don't want to miss. **P.T.**

As Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of Queen, Malek shows all the right moves.

Davis and Debicki let off steam when an all-female heist hits a rough spot.

HEIST SOCIETY

Widows

STARRING
Viola Davis
Liam Neeson
DIRECTOR
Steve McQueen
★★★★★

THERE ARE heist movies, and then there are heist movies directed by Steve McQueen, the first black filmmaker to win the Oscar for Best Picture (*12 Years a Slave*). Is McQueen slumming? Hardly. In *Widows*,

about Chicago women out to finish a robbery that their dead husbands started, the director brings everything he has as an artist to this raw, resonant thriller. The screen damn near explodes as his genre caper suddenly encompasses a whole social strata (race, class, politics, gender). You're in for a hell of a ride.

The powerhouse Viola Davis, fire blazing in her eyes, stars as Veronica, the widow of Harry (Liam Neeson), whose team went up in flames. Now Veronica takes the lead, pulling in Linda (Michelle Rodriguez) and Alice (Elizabeth Debicki, a total delight) to help pay off a crime boss (Bryan Tyree Henry) who wants a \$2 million cut or else. Add Belle (a sensational Cynthia Erivo), a beautician/getaway driver, and it's all-systems-go. A pair of corrupt politicians, father (Robert Duvall) and son (Colin Farrell), get in their way, as does a sadistic enforcer, played to the nth degree of menace by *Get Out*'s Daniel Kaluuya. No matter. These ladies, empowered by their own awakening self-worth, are not to be messed with. And McQueen makes sure you show them respect while he fries your nerves to a frazzle. **P.T.**



Colman causes a royal pain.

ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

The Favourite

STARRING
Olivia Colman
Emma Stone
DIRECTOR
Yorgos Lanthimos
★★★★★

COSTUME epics are usually a bloody bore. Not *The Favourite*. It's a bawdy, brilliant triumph, directed by Yorgos Lanthimos with all the renegade deviltry he brought to *The Lobster*. Olivia Colman deserves

every acting prize on the planet for finding the comic-tragic core of Queen Anne. She's the monarch who ruled Great Britain in the early 18th century, mostly from her chambers. Gout has covered Anne's body in leaking sores, her mind is going, and she keeps 17 bunnies to replace the 17 children she birthed and lost. The monarch leaves the business of ruling to Lady Sarah (Rachel Weisz), who sleeps with the queen to make sure she'll finance England's war with the French. Enter Abigail (Emma Stone, flat-out fabulous), formerly of a noble family and now reduced to maid service until she works her way into the queen's good graces. Soon, a love triangle among the women has developed, which leads to political pole-positioning – and then to all-out war. Nicholas Hoult and Joe Alwyn do their best as the men in the mix. But it's #TimesUp for dudes. *The Favourite* belongs to its fierce, profanely funny ladies. Lanthimos' film is a creative dam-burst that's as profound as it is playful. Fasten your seat belts. **P.T.**



Beatty raps truth to power.

Berry

RECONSIDERED

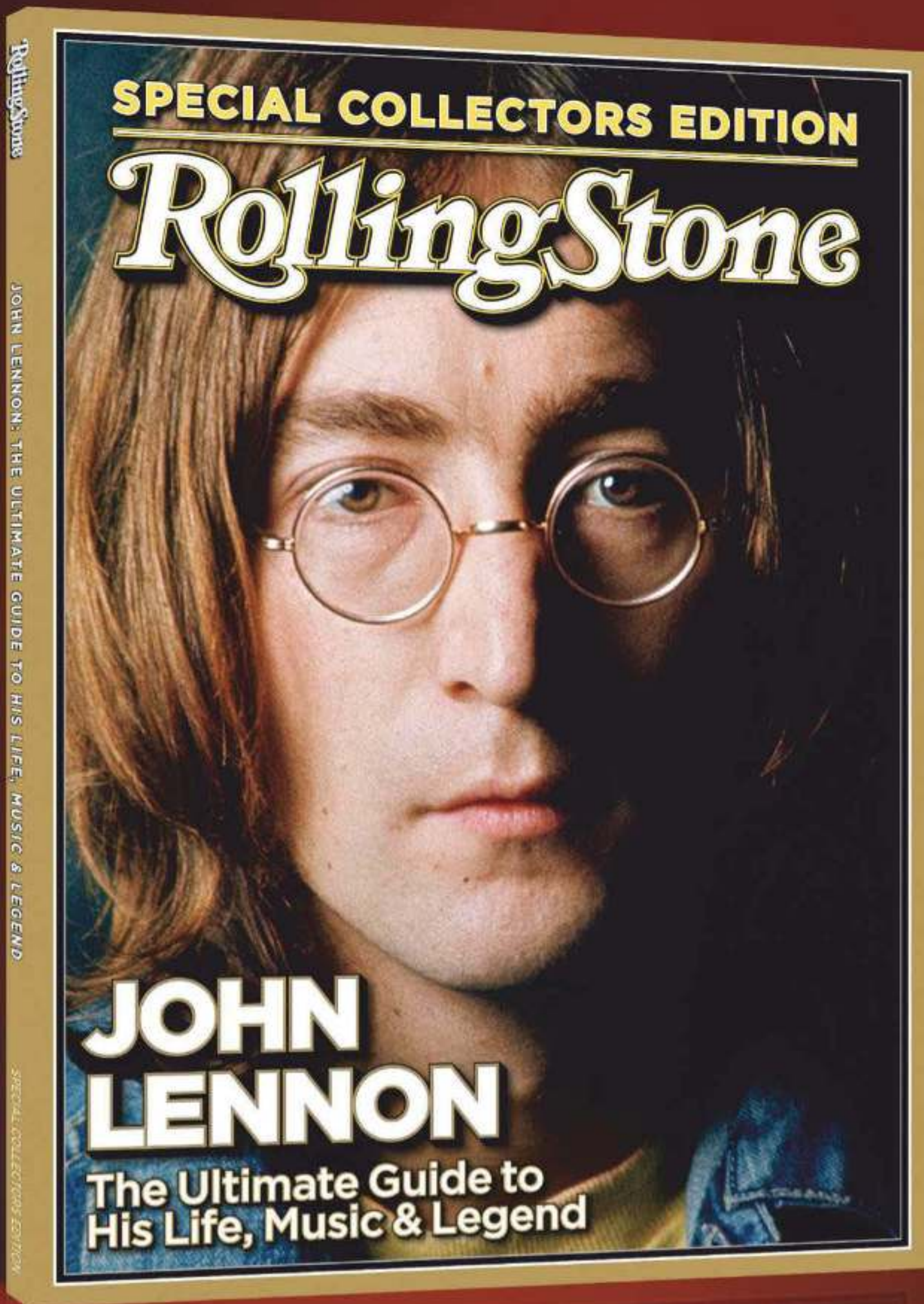
Make America Beatty Again: *Bulworth*

WHAT if a politician stopped being polite and started being real? Failing senator Jay Billington Bulworth – the name alone screams fat-cat privilege – is bottoming out. So why not tell the African-American community that, yes, they are totally getting the shaft? Or talk drain-the-swamp truth to corporate power? After a nervous breakdown and Halle Berry's hood tour guide, our man is dressing like a B-boy circa '98 and rhyming “pull the rug out” with “nappy dugout.” Guess whose poll numbers go up? Warren Beatty's satire grabs an idea – a quasi-racist political disruptor (albeit one who raps like he's Mitch McConnell spitting bars) takes on media fakery and self-serving status quo – and turns it into a caricature-cum-antidote designed to wake us out of our sound-bite-digesting stupor. It used to be a comedy. Now it's a cautionary tale. Don't forget to vote. **DAVID FEAR**

WATCH IT!

Bulworth
1998

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[Cont. from 77] ized in Perry's 1984 solo hit "Oh Sherrie"), he won't talk about any of them. Perry concedes that he has never been married and is currently single, but goes quiet when the subject of children comes up. (Internet sleuths theorize that a woman he's often photographed with named Shamila is his daughter. She bears a striking resemblance to him.) "I don't want to talk about [kids]," he says. "There's a private part of my life that I won't have if I talk about it."

I notice a gold pendant in the shape of a musical eighth-note around his neck. This gets him talking. "My mom gave it to me when I was 12," he says. "She always believed in me. I wore it for years and years, but hung it up in May of 1998, just after the band and I legally split and I had a complete contractual release from all my obligations to the band and label. I put it back on about 10 years ago."

As we spoke, Journey were hours away from taking the stage at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans – on a double bill with Def Leppard – one of 60 shows they played this summer. As they do every night, they'll dedicate "Lights" to Perry. It's a gesture of gratitude, and for good reason. When Perry joined Journey in 1977, none of the group's albums had sold well, and the band was pumping out anonymous jazz fusion. Perry changed everything. In him, Journey found a singer who not only wrote big, concise, catchy songs, but also belted them to the cheap seats. Without him, Journey might well have been a prog-rock footnote.

Perry claims to feel no bitterness toward anyone in the band, even though he's seen the members only twice, and briefly at that, in the past 20 years, and has rebuffed attempts to reconnect on a social level. Guitarist Neal Schon seems desperate for some sort of reconciliation and often tells interviewers he wants to create new music with Perry – not even necessarily for Journey. Schon has heard that Perry frequents his favorite coffee shop, and the guitarist hopes to run into the singer there. Pressed on this, Perry says he can't imagine working with Schon in any capacity or even re-establishing the friendship.

"I'm not sure that's possible without stirring up hopes of a reunion," he says. "Please listen to me. I left the band 31 fucking years ago, my friend. You can still love someone, but not want to work with them. And if they only love you because they want to work with you, that doesn't feel good to me."

When I bring up Cain's new memoir, *Don't Stop Believin'* – an innocuous, uncontroversial book where he looks back on his life and heaps endless praise onto his bandmates, past and present – a look of disgust comes across Perry's face. "I don't really care to read Jonathan's book," he says. "And I'd appreciate if you didn't tell me about it. I don't need to know. It's none of my business."

But his mind is also on the future. Plans are still unclear, but Perry wants to launch a tour of some sort to promote *Traces*. He says he'll sing the Journey hits again, meaning that "Faithfully," "Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)" and, yes, "Don't Stop Believin'" will come out of his mouth for the first time in nearly a quarter century. He clutches the eighth-note his mother gave him, the one he put back on around the time Nash came into his life, and tries to make sense of it all. "I'm not the only one that goes through life," he says with a deep sigh. "We're all going through it, and I'm tolerating it the best I can." 🍷

[Cont. from 85] from \$18,000 to \$22,000. When her cheap housing fell through, she knew her financial situation made it impossible to even look for another rental, but leaving Orlando for her hometown of St. Pete meant leaving her stepmother – who didn't have an extra room to offer her – and the free child care she had provided. More specifically, it meant giving up on any illusion she might have kept that she'd be able to pull ahead by working; in St. Pete, she knew she'd be living in poverty. Meanwhile, her application for child support and her application to have her welfare payments reinstated to their original amount – a change that she felt should have been as instantaneous as when the payments were reduced – both inched their way through the system.

Americans tend to view poverty as monolithic – the intractable state of a certain doomed set of people. But, in fact, according to U.S. Census data from 2011, roughly 25 percent of Americans experienced some poverty (two months or more) during that year, yet only 8.3 percent were poor the whole time. Indeed, the line between the lower-middle class and those living in poverty can be incredibly porous, and is growing even more so as the middle class becomes increasingly fragile. Which means that the monstrous bureaucratic hassle of the benefits system can keep people in poverty longer than they actually need to be. "It makes sense if you're going to be on the same benefit for a long time," explains Schneider. "But it's a very significant mismatch when half of the people who experience poverty don't experience it for very long."

Not that government assistance, as it's currently administered, offers much of a leg up anyway. Bill Clinton's welfare reform of the Nineties – when work requirements were affixed to many forms of cash assistance – was meant to incentivize work, doing away with Ronald Reagan's supposed "welfare queens." Yet that assumed work to be the antidote to poverty when, for many, it isn't. More than half of the nondisabled working-age adults living in poverty are actually employed. According to analyses done by sociologist and poverty expert Kathy Edin and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins, the only difference "welfare to work" has made for poor women was where they spent their time: Before welfare reform, they were home with their kids; after it, they were more likely to be in the workforce. Their economic situations remained unchanged because so much of the money they earned went to child care.

Nevertheless, since Trump took office, a top priority has been the rolling back of the safety net; the projected deficits caused by corporate tax breaks presumably justify raiding the welfare state. This past January, when the federal government told states that they could require Medicaid recipients to work, 12 states applied to do so, putting millions of people's Medicaid at risk. Trump's plan to restructure the federal agencies that oversee social policy may have seemed banal – a cleaning of house to go hand in hand with the purported draining of the swamp – but it was actually an attempt to enable cutbacks, shifting programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which already has work requirements, from the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture to that of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a "welfare" department. The farm bill passed by the House in June would make work requirements for SNAP even more stringent.

Still, Allyson wanted to be employed. Working made her feel productive and capable. "This sounds kind of crappy to say because I'm a bleeding-heart liberal and I think we should have way more government-assistance programs, but I would never want to be the kind of person who's living off the government when I had the option not to," she says. She was struck not only by the cruelty of the system, but also by its illogic. "I mean, obviously, there have to be some regulations. I get that. You can't just hand a hot commodity out to everyone for free. But I just feel like the people who don't have [consecutive] pay stubs are probably the people who need to go back to work the most. And to be in such a desperate position, and to just want so badly to go back to work?" She finds herself at a loss for words.

For the moment, it's quiet in her mom's tiny first-floor apartment. Atlas naps in his Pack 'n Play, and Allyson leads me out to the small screened-in porch, where the Florida air is thick and pungent. Storm clouds are gathering. She lowers herself into a lawn chair and sighs. Though she's long lost the baby weight, Allyson still wears her maternity jeans with their elasticized waistband. She can't remember the last time she bought something new for herself.

"He has never gone without, and he wouldn't," she says, as if making this statement true by force of sheer will. "But I have gone without for him. I wear shoes with holes in them, I've sold my dead grandmother's jewelry, I've donated plasma. I've gone without deodorant for a week, without tampons for months. When you have no income, those things become expensive. A \$3 box of tampons is a lot when it means that, if you spend that \$3 and your kid gets a diaper rash next week, you might not get to buy diaper-rash cream. So you just don't."

To the extent that they can, her mother and father have tried to help her, but money is tight all around. At present, Allyson is just grateful to have a free place to stay. She once thought she'd be able to leapfrog her parents in the American-class hierarchy, but now she envies their relative stability, the jobs they go to with consistency, the money they can count on every month. "I just knew," she says, "there was no way that I was going to get out of this situation unless I pretty much won the lottery."

IN THE END, it wasn't the lottery that gave Allyson another chance; it was Child Protective Services, which showed up after she'd posted to an online forum called "Breaking Mom," venting about the trials of raising a willful almost-two-year-old. "I joked that I was going to drop him off at the fire station," she says. "It was so obviously a joke." But someone – it isn't clear who – took the opportunity to call CPS, which then was required to investigate. "I really thought I was having a heart attack," Allyson says of that day. "I've never been that hysterical in my whole life. But basically, the caseworker said that he knew the call was malicious, Atlas was healthy and happy, and he was going to close the case immediately."

Still, the caseworker probed into Allyson's life enough to learn of her financial situation – and he saw a way out. "He explained to me that, even though he was closing my case that day, it actually takes 30 days to process and close fully, no matter what. During that time, your kid is considered at-risk, and when your child is considered at-risk, they want to do everything they can to fast-track them and you into a better situation." This meant being able to bypass the pay-stub requirement for subsidized child care. Thus one of the scariest things that ever hap-

pened to Allyson also turned out to be one of the best – a second chance to lift herself out of poverty.

All this conflicts with our national narrative about mobility, the story we tell ourselves about how to get ahead. If anything, Americans are optimists; we believe, despite so many signs to the contrary, that we control our own fates, that if we just work hard enough and long enough, things will turn out all right. The bootstrapper fairy tale is a nice one, but it obfuscates the truth: that the deck is currently stacked against the American worker.

Allyson knows that there are things she could have done differently. She could have ignored Andy’s messages. She could have gotten that abortion. But what haunts her now is all she did right, all the working and saving and studying and striving, all the times she was responsible. “I’m not a naive person,” she says. “Before I decided to keep Atlas, I ran through, in my head, a million and one ways that this could have gone. I knew there was a chance that Andy and I would break up. But I thought, no matter what, I will not be in this alone. I was more sure about that than I’ve ever been about anything in my whole life.”

Now, she’s not very sure of anything. “I thought you went to school, you got a job, and there you are – you built a life. That’s not how it works at all. That was hard to realize.” Also hard is the realization that her associate’s degree “might as well be a GED,” and the complicated way her experience makes her feel about being a parent. “I wouldn’t change it for the world,” she says, her voice breaking with emotion. “Atlas is the best thing that’s ever happened to me. But if I had thought that I was ever going to end up in this position, I wouldn’t have had a child. If I had known then what I know now? Absolutely not.”

What’s worn on her is not the day-to-day – where she can find simple joys – but the accumulation of days, the minutiae that becomes catastrophic (as when Atlas threw a shoe from the only pair he owned out of his stroller and Allyson couldn’t find it), the way this builds up to months and years of small catastrophes. According to Gallup, 31 percent of Americans living in poverty say that they have suffered from depression, compared with 15.8 percent of those who aren’t impoverished.

By far the hardest part of living in poverty for Allyson has been the way the psychology of it has bled into her experience of parenting. She can’t help but think back to those early-childhood classes about how crucially important these first few years are. She worries that Atlas is getting old enough to know that they’re struggling. “It’s a disconnect: I am stressed out because I want to do what’s best for him, but because I’m so stressed out, I’m not present for him. Like, I barely remember a lot of him in the past year. I spent almost every minute of every day with him, but I barely remember most of those times,” she says, her voice breaking as she fights back sobs. “I just really hope that I have all of this figured out for him before he notices. I don’t want to miss too much more.”

Maybe she won’t have to. In a few days, and with Atlas’ subsidized day care finally in place, Allyson will begin yet another stint with Starbucks. It’s still a precarious situation: She’ll need to take five different buses to drop off Atlas and then get to work on time, a herculean act of coordination vulnerable to one late bus. If she misses work or Atlas misses day care, her subsidy is at risk. But still, in today’s America, she knows this is her best shot, her current form of the American dream. For now, she’ll cling to it. 

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Required by Title 39, United States Code 3685) Date of Filing: October 1st, 2018. Title of Publication: ROLLING STONE. Publication Number: 491-250. Frequency of issue: Monthly (except biweekly Oct.-Dec. 2017). Annual Subscription Price: \$49.95. Location of known office of publication: 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104-0298. Location of the headquarters or General Business offices of the Publishers: Same as above. Publisher: Andrew Budkofsky, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104-0298.

Editor: Jason Fine, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104-0298. Managing Editor: Alison Weinflash, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104-0298. Owner: Rolling Stone, L.L.C., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104-0298. Known bondholders, mortgages, or other securities: None. Extent and nature of circulation: Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months: (A) Total number of copies printed (net press run): 1,249,979. (B) Paid circulation (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions: 961,427. (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions: 0. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: 25,844. (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 0. (C) Total paid distribution (sum of 15b [1], [2], [3], and [4]): 987,271. (D) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside County: 144,577. (E) Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: 144,577. (F) Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e): 1,131,848. (G) Copies not Distributed: 118,131. (H) Total (sum of 15f and 15g): 1,249,979. (16) (A) Paid Electronic Copies: 119,613. (B) Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 1,106,884. (C) Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 1,251,461.

Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: (A) Total number of copies (net press run): 822,365. (B) Paid circulation (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions: 574,549. (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions: 0. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: 28,600. (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 0. (C) Total paid distribution (sum of 15b [1], [2], [3], and [4]): 603,149. (D) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside County: 103,158. (E) Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: 103,158. (F) Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e): 706,307. (G) Copies not Distributed: 116,058. (H) Total (sum of 15f and 15g): 822,365. (16) (A) Paid Electronic Copies: 30,858. (B) Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 634,007. (C) Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 737,165. I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete. Richard M. Miller

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LIBERATOR
BEDROOM ADVENTURE GEAR

Rod Stewart

The singer on his heavy-drinking days with the Faces, his kids' Fortnite obsession, and how he gets his famous hair just right

You say on your new album that you can't even boil an egg. Is that true? Absolutely true, mate. In the Seventies, it was a different era. We used to have girlfriends we'd shack up with. And then you sort of get fed up with them and they'd leave, or you'd kick 'em out. Horrible, but then you realize, "Who's gonna cook me dinner? Who's gonna cook me breakfast?" I'm still absolutely hopeless. Nothing to be proud of. Shame on you, Stewart!

Stewart's 30th studio album, 'Blood Red Roses,' is out now.

What's the one bit of advice you wish you could give to yourself at age 20? Probably, "Cut back on the drinking." In the Faces, we drank a hell of a lot. It was almost like a competition, which one's gonna fall down first.

Do you ever think about what would have happened to your life if you didn't develop your singing voice? Well, that's the million-dollar question. When I started, it was all I wanted to do. The two things I could do is play soccer and sing. I got a chance at being a pro footballer. I did it because me dad wanted one of his sons to be a footballer. I was the last one, so I gave it a try, but I wasn't good enough, and it was about the time that I fell into music, so I don't know what I would have done, mate. Christ, that is a scary thought.

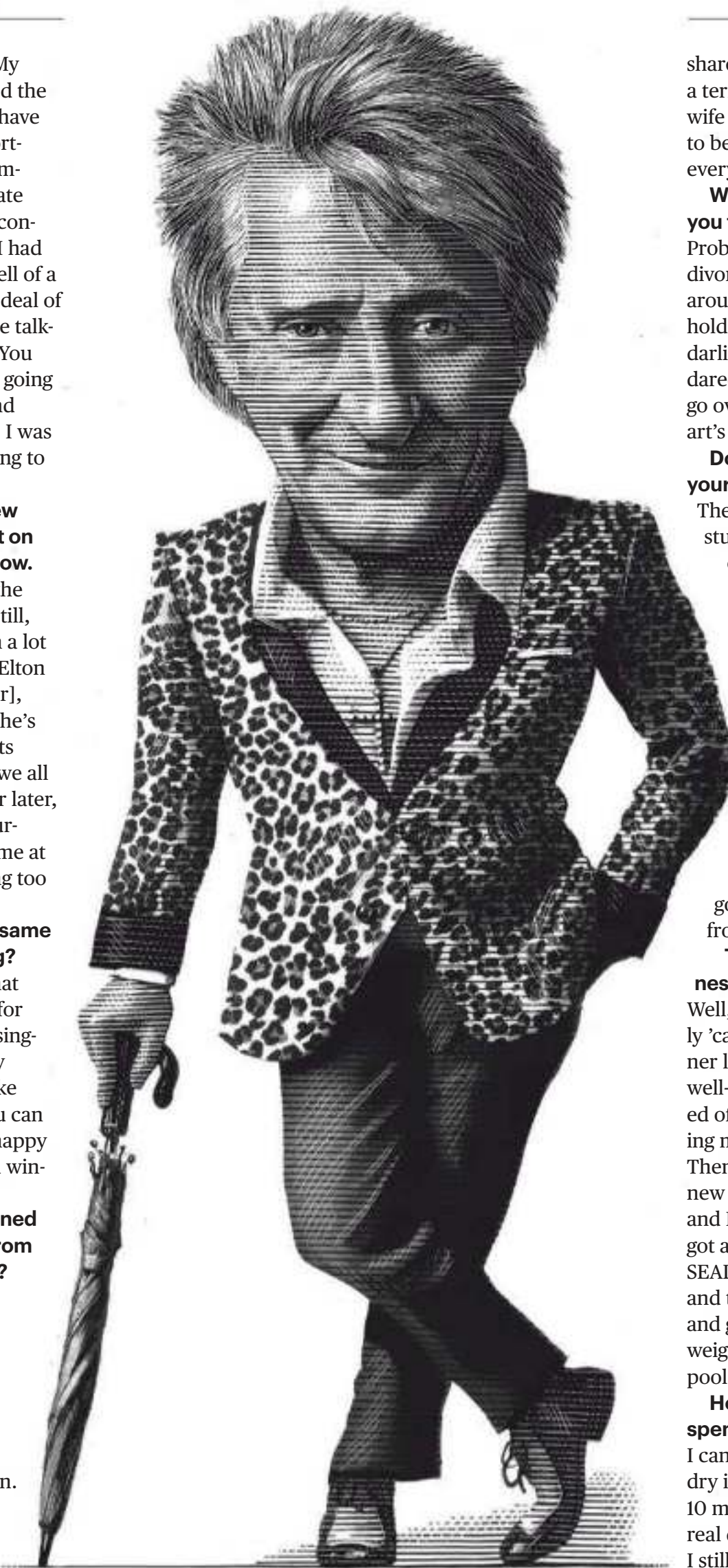
You've got two young boys. Do you think you're a better father in your seventies than you were in your thirties?

Oh, I should hope so. My God, if I haven't learned the trade now... Children have always been very important to me. But I had Kimberly and Sean in the late Seventies, when I was considerably in debt, and I had to go out and work a hell of a lot, so I missed a great deal of their growing up. We've talked about it. I've said, "You know, your dad wasn't going out, going to parties and shagging and drinking. I was working me ass off trying to get out of debt."

You're one of the few classic-rock icons not on a farewell tour right now. Yeah, and I'm also on the right side of the grass still, thank the Lord. I got in a lot of trouble for slagging Elton off [for his farewell tour], since he's already said he's gonna do more concerts after the 300. I mean, we all have to retire sooner or later, but it certainly is the furthest thing away from me at the moment. I'm having too much fun.

Do you still get the same thrill from performing? Even more so now. What a job I have. I get paid for getting on a stage and singing, sending everybody home happy. It's not like being a sportsman. You can send people home unhappy if you lose, but I'm in a win-win situation.

What have you learned about relationships from your three marriages? First of all, don't have your discussions when you've got a glass of wine and you're about to go to bed. Wait until the morning. I'm also a much better listener now than I've ever been. You should always talk about things, be able to listen and still



share romantic things. I'm a terrible old romantic. My wife and I, when the kids go to bed, have candlelit dinners every night. It's so lovely.

When in your life were you the least happy?

Probably going through my divorce from Rachel Hunter around 1999. But lo and behold, out of the sky came my darling wife, Penny. She was dared by one of her friends to go over and ask for Rod Stewart's autograph, and she did.

Do your young kids like your music?

The one likes a lot of the rap stuff, which is difficult because it's so many of the cussing words in there. The younger one likes Dad's music a bit, but they're both hung up on this Fortnite now. Jesus Christ, they are obsessed. "Dinner is on the table." "Dad, I'm just finishing the game!" I have to say, "If you don't do what you're told, I'm gonna cut the Internet off from the whole house."

Tell me about your fitness routine.

Well, today, I was let off lightly 'cause I had a band dinner last night, and we all got well-plastered. But I started off in my gym strengthening my legs for half an hour. Then I went straight to my new pool and did 12 lengths, and I'll start doing diving. I've got a trainer. It's like the Navy SEALs. He throws a weight in, and then I've got to go down and get it, swim back with the weight to the other side of the pool. It's very interesting.

How much time do you spend on your hair?

I can do my hair – wash it, dry it, get it standing up – in 10 minutes at the most. It's real quick. I'm also just lucky I still got it. ANDY GREENE



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