

Rolling Stone

50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Issue 1289
June 15, 2017
\$6.99

AL FRANKEN

Hanging With the Senate's Happy Warrior

CHRIS CORNELL

1964-2017

U2: INSIDE THE 'JOSHUA TREE' TOUR

THE LAST WORD: BILLY JOEL

FLEET FOXES

HALSEY

ELVIS COSTELLO

10 BEST TV SHOWS TO WATCH THIS SUMMER

'OK COMPUTER'

RADIOHEAD & THEIR DARK MASTERPIECE

Get the amazing iPhone 7 on a plan you'll love.



iPhone 7

At Cricket Wireless, you can get iPhone 7 with an easy-to-love plan that starts at just \$30 per month. Plus, you don't have to worry about any annual contracts.

Stop by a Cricket Wireless store today
or visit cricketwireless.com/iphone.

Activ./upgrade (up to \$25/line) & add'l fees (including up to a \$3 customer assistance fee) & restr's may apply. Terms, features & restr's subject to change w/o notice. 4G LTE coverage not avail. everywhere. See store for details. © 2017 Cricket Wireless LLC. All rights reserved.



cricket
wireless

RS 1289

“All the News That Fits”

FEATURES

Genius and Paranoia

Radiohead look back at the making of their prescient masterpiece, *OK Computer*.

By ANDY GREENE34

Chris Cornell, 1964-2017

He was a grunge god and one of rock's most powerful singers. He channeled his dark side into his songs, until it got the better of him.

By DAVID FRICKE 40

Al Franken: The Happy Warrior

How the former *Saturday Night Live* star rediscovered his sense of humor in the United States Senate.

By MARK BINELLI 46

ROCK & ROLL

Music's Scary New Reality

After the bombing at the Manchester Arena, fans and the industry face tough questions 13

U2 Reinvent 'The Joshua Tree'

The band's tour combines tech breakthroughs with classic songs. But don't expect Bono to talk about Trump ...16

DEPARTMENTS

Letters..... 8 | Records.....55

Playlist.....10 | Movies 60

ON THE COVER Thom Yorke of Radiohead, photographed in New York in 1997 by **Danny Clinch**.

RAW POWER
Chris Cornell in 1989.
Page 40

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Jann S. Wenner

MANAGING EDITOR: Jason Fine
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR: Sean Woods
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITORS: Christian Hoard, Alison Weinfash
SENIOR WRITERS: David Fricke, Andy Greene, Brian Hiatt, Peter Travers
SENIOR EDITORS: Patrick Doyle, Rob Fischer, Thomas Walsh
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Hannah Murphy
ASSISTANT EDITORS: Rick Carp, Jason Maxey, Phoebe Neidl
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Ally Lewis
ASSISTANT TO THE MANAGING EDITOR: Ellen Nelson
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Matthieu Aikins, Mark Binelli, David Browne, Rich Cohen, Jonathan Cott, Cameron Crowe, Anthony DeCurtis, Tim Dickinson, Jon Dolan, Raoul Duke (Sports), Josh Eells, Mikal Gilmore, Jeff Goodell, Vanessa Grigoriadis, Erik Hedegaard, Will Hermes, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Steve Knopper, David Kushner, Greil Marcus, Alex Morris, Charles Perry, Janet Reitman, Stephen Rodrick, Rob Sheffield, Paul Solotaroff, Ralph Steadman (Gardening), Neil Strauss, Matt Taibbi, Touré, Jonah Weiner, Christopher R. Weingarten, David Wild

DESIGN DIRECTOR: Joseph Hutchinson
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Jodi Peckman
ART DIRECTORS: Matthew Cooley, Mark Maltas
PHOTO DEPARTMENT: Sacha Lecca (Deputy Photo Ed.), Griffin Lotz (Assoc. Photo Ed.), Sandford Griffin (Finance Mgr.)

HEAD OF DIGITAL: Gus Wenner

ROLLINGSTONE.COM EDITORIAL: Jerry Portwood (Editorial Dir.), Justin Ravitz (Executive Ed.), Jason Diamond, Suzy Exposito, Ahmed Fakhri, David Fear, Jon Freeman, Elisabeth Garber-Paul, Sarah Grant, Kory Grow, Joseph Hudak, Lauren Kelley, Rochelle Morton, Jason Newman, Hank Shteamer, Brittany Spanos, Tessa Stuart
SOCIAL MEDIA: Shara Sprecher, Alexa Pipia
DIGITAL CREATIVE STUDIO: Scott Peltz (Dir.), LaurieAnn Wojnowski (Senior Prod.), Sarah Allison, Adam Bernstein, George Chapman, Alberto Innella, Megan McBride, Taryn Wood-Norris, Billy Woodward
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIGITAL OPERATIONS: Alvin Ling

CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER: Michael H. Provus
HEAD OF SALES: Jay Gallagher
HEAD OF DIGITAL SALES: Matthew Habib
HEAD OF MARKETING: Kerri Mackay
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Jessica Grill
NEW YORK: Craig Mura, Tim Murray, Danika Parente, John Stark
MIDWEST: Adam Anderson, Lori Friesner, Brian Szjeika
WEST COAST: Kurt DeMars, Tiffany Keele Grana, Nina Sasson
SOUTHWEST: Adam Knippa, Ellen Lewis, Michael Stafford
SOUTHEAST: Christine Costello, Peter Zuckerman
NATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR: Mitch Herskowitz
MARKETING/ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT: Gina Abatangelo, Emma Greenberg, Sara Katzki, Kimberley Kopp, Gabe Newman, Ashley Rix, Kerry Ryan
ANALYTICS AND RESEARCH: Katie O'Mealia
PUBLICITY: Kathryn Brenner

CIRCULATION: Elyse Kossin, Amy Fisher
MANUFACTURING: Chris Marcantonio

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: Timothy Walsh
GENERAL COUNSEL: Natalie Krodel
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR: Victoria Kirtley Shannon
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LICENSING: Maureen Lambert
CONTROLLER: Karen Reed

Wenner Media
CHAIRMAN: Jann S. Wenner
VICE PRESIDENTS: Timothy Walsh, Jane Wenner
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Joseph Hutchinson

Rolling Stone International
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Meng Ru Kuok
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER: Ivan Chen
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: Tom Callahan

MAIN OFFICES: 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298; 212-484-1616

NATIONAL MUSIC ADVERTISING: 441 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017; 212-490-1715

DIRECT-RESPONSE ADVERTISING: 212-484-3492

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES: 800-283-1549

REGIONAL OFFICES

333 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1105, Chicago, IL 60601; 312-782-2366

5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 345, Los Angeles, CA 90036; 323-930-3300

Lewis Stafford Co., 5000 Quorum Dr., Suite 545, Dallas, TX 75254; 972-960-2889

Z Media, 1666 Kennedy Causeway, Suite 602, Miami Beach, FL 33141; 305-532-5566

Copyright © 2017 by Rolling Stone LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Rolling Stone® is a registered trademark of Rolling Stone LLC. Printed in the United States of America.

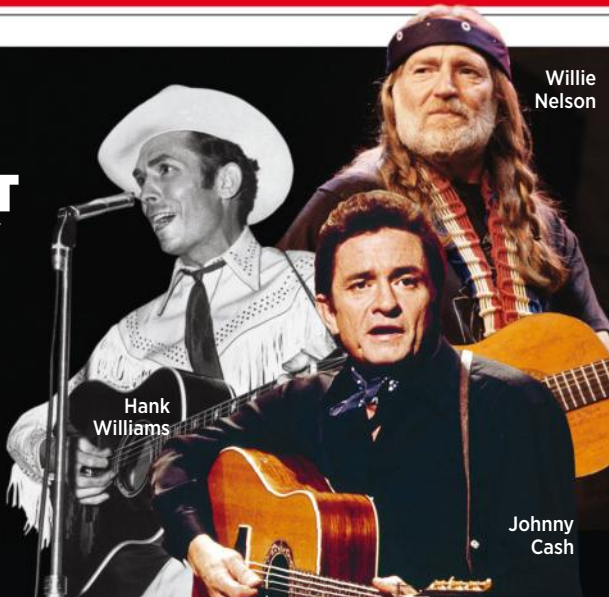
RALPH J. GLEASON 1917-1975
HUNTER S. THOMPSON 1937-2005

ROLLING STONE is printed on 100 percent carbon-neutral paper.

FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/ABC/GETTY IMAGES; EBERT ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; 2: VAN REDIN/HBO; LINDSEY BYRNES; JEFFREY MAYER/PICTORIAL PRESS, LTD./ALAMY

MUSIC
100 GREATEST COUNTRY ARTISTS

From the Red-Headed Stranger to the Man in Black, ROLLING STONE pays tribute to country's vital voices with a ranking of the genre's most celebrated performers.



MUSIC
'PURPLE RAIN' TOUR REVISITED

Members of the Revolution, including Brown Mark, Doctor Fink and Bobby Z, look back on Prince's epic 1984 road show.



TV
THE GREAT CARRIE COON

How the dogged Minnesota cop on *Fargo* (and the grieving mother on *The Leftovers*) became TV's 2017 MVP.



CULTURE
SEX BOTS OF THE FUTURE

ROLLING STONE visits the RealDolls factory, where life-size sex dolls are getting a 21st-century makeover.

'MUSIC NOW' PODCAST

In our latest podcast, we remember the late Chris Cornell, and share exclusive audio from the Soundgarden and Audioslave lead singer's in-depth, revealing ROLLING STONE interviews with Kory Grow and Andy Greene. Rolling Stone Music Now also airs live on Fridays at 1 p.m. ET on the SiriusXM Volume channel.

ALL THIS AND MORE AT ROLLINGSTONE.COM/PODCAST

Cornell

POLITICS
MATT TAIBBI
 RollingStone.com/taibbi

CULTURE
ROB SHEFFIELD
 RollingStone.com/sheffield

MOVIES
PETER TRAVERS
 RollingStone.com/travers

ROCK & ROLL
DAVID FRICKE
 RollingStone.com/fricke

TO EXPLORE OUR ARCHIVES, VISIT ROLLINGSTONE.COM/COVERWALL

FOLLOW US ON

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published 22 times per year, of which four are double issues, for a total of 26 issues per annual term (the number of issues in an annual term is subject to change at any time), by Wenner Media LLC, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 2017 by ROLLING STONE LLC, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration No. R125041855. International Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 450553. The subscription price is \$39.96 for one year. The Canadian subscription price is \$52.00 for one year, including GST, payable in advance. Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes and returns to P.O. Box 69, Malton CFC, Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3B5. The foreign subscription price is \$80.00 for one year, payable in advance. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post publication agreement #40683192. Postmaster: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE Customer Service, P.O. Box 62230, Tampa, FL 33662-2930. From time to time, ROLLING STONE may share subscriber information with reputable business partners. For further information about our privacy practices or to opt out of such sharing, please see ROLLING STONE's privacy policy at <http://www.rollingstone.com/services/privacy-policy>. You may also write to us at 1290 Avenue of the Americas, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10104. Please include your full name, complete mailing address and the name of the magazine title to which you subscribe.

Setting the gold standard
for silver tequila.

#AShotWorthTaking



A
SHOT
WORTH
TAKING

100% PURO AGAVE TEQUILA

Correspondence

Love Letters
& Advice



Rock's Road Back

NICE WRITE-UP OF A BRILLIANT MAN ["Rock in a Hard Place," RS 1287]. The first great cracking of our mature lives, divorce, is quite a wake-up. Chris Rock will adapt and advance. I like him. He's tough and thoughtful, a rare combination.

Leslie Piper, via the Internet

DIVORCE IS A NIGHTMARE. It's strangely therapeutic to see it happening to someone else – not because you want that celebrity to be miserable, but because you can empathize with them. Welcome to the "rebuilding and recovery" phase, CR. Sounds like you're doing the right thing for your kids, and yourself – you'll emerge from this stronger.

Sensei, via the Internet

CHRIS ROCK IS ONE OF THE most creative and hilarious guys on the planet. His humor has always been based on a truth and self-reflection so lacking in most of today's comedians.

Bill, via the Internet

DISSING HIS WIFE (FOR NO apparent reason); constantly whining about how marriage ties you down; cheating like crazy and being dismissive of those women is not how someone who truly likes women would act.

Deering24, via the Internet

Continental Melting

In RS 1287, Jeff Goodell wrote about the accelerating melt of Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica, which could contribute to rising sea levels by as much as 10 to 13 feet in the next century ["The Doomsday Glacier"]. Readers responded.

A VERY SOBERING BIT OF writing. As long as fossil fuels remain artificially "cheap," nobody can stop their use. Carbon pricing is the mandatory next action.

*Peter Joseph
Via the Internet*

IF KNUT CHRISTIANSON would stop blowing up dynamite into this glacier, maybe it would stop breaking up and we wouldn't have to worry about it melting and drowning all of us!

*Edward Scally
St. Louis*

WE NEED TO STOP subsidizing construction in low-lying areas. Locating new construction outside the future flood plain would create an amazing transformation of cities and populations in 20 to 50 years.

Jim, via the Internet



I WAS ON THE NATHANIEL B. Palmer research vessel when the Larsen B ice shelf cut loose. You could have landed 747s on all four corners of that chunk of ice – and they wouldn't see each other on approach.

*Dean Klein
Via the Internet*

THIS ISN'T ABOUT A SCAM or politics. It's about physics. To clarify, physics "is the natural science that involves the study of matter and its motion and behavior through space and time, along with related concepts such as energy and force."

*Socalledbob
Via the Internet*

Unfit Presidency

KUDOS TO MATT TAIBBI FOR this excellent summary of the first 100 days of the presidency ["The War in the White House," RS 1287]. Somebody better prepare these right-wing snowflakes for the ugly reality. They won't be able to hide behind their wall as the nation spirals into the abyss.

TheAbyss, via the Internet

THE TRUMP SUPERFANS ARE utterly blind to their guy's incompetence and childishness, as evidenced by the fact that 96 percent of them in a new poll

don't regret their vote, even after a bottomless well of blunders.

Chris S., via the Internet

I BELIEVED TRUMP. I EXPECTED no-nonsense, small-town values that would lead to a fair deal for working men and their families. The record, sadly, is clear: He lies, breaks promises and still brags of his leadership skills. I'm very worried.

James Warren, via the Internet

All Love for Haim

JONAH WEINER GIVES AN honest telling of all things Haim ["Sisters in Arms," RS

1287], and it's refreshing to read how Este, Danielle and Alana have stayed grounded. They write and play what they feel, which is fine by me.

Ron Morrison, Bourbonnais, IL

Unreleased Prince

PRINCE (LIKE MANY OTHER iconic recording artists) had good reasons not to release everything ["The Prince Vault Opens," RS 1287]. Why tamper with his legacy, other than for a quick cash grab for the estate?

*Madisontruth
Via the Internet*

Songs of Stapleton

LORD HAVE MERCY, "FROM A Room: Volume 1" is fire ["The Outlaw Soul of Chris Stapleton," RS 1287]. "Either Way" and "I Was Wrong" are killers. So looking forward to *Volume 2*.

Jolene234, via the Internet

Kendrick's Genius

KENDRICK LAMAR IS A PRODUCT of rap's evolution over the past 25 years ["Kendrick Lamar in Classic-Rap Beast Mode," RS 1287]. He combines all that came before him and also brings his own unique flavor to the mix. He is in a class of his own.

Peter, via the Internet

THIS IS KANYE'S "LIFE OF Pablo" all over again. Critics are too scared to admit that *Damn* is not all that. It is worthy of four stars, but not in the same league as *good kid, m.A.A.d city* and *To Pimp a Butterfly*.

Trev, via the Internet

Contact Us

LETTERS TO ROLLING STONE, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. Letters become the property of ROLLING STONE and may be edited for publication.

E-MAIL letters@rollingstone.com
SUBSCRIBER SERVICES Go to RollingStone.com/customer-service

•Subscribe •Renew •Cancel •Missing Issues
•Give a Gift •Pay Bill •Change of Address



SATISFACTION IN SECONDS™

HEAT IT UP. EAT IT UP.



The Playlist

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW

1. The National "The System Only Dreams in Total Darkness"

The beloved Brooklyn indie-rock crew usually goes for refined gloom. But the first song we've heard from its forthcoming new LP (due late summer) is straight-up aggro, right down to Aaron Dessner's searing guitar solo.



2. Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit "If We Were Vampires"

A powerful meditation on love and mortality from one of the best alt-country artists around – with his wife, singer-songwriter Amanda Shires, adding vocals.

3. Beach House "Chariot"

The dream-pop duo have a new B-sides set coming out. Judging by this elegiac gusher, they've got some great leftovers.

4. Selena Gomez "Bad Liar"

This bubbly jam lifts its groove from Talking Heads' 1977 classic "Psycho Killer," adding a cool, creepy edge to lyrics about a lover you can't keep out of your mind no matter how you try.



5. Broken Social Scene "Hug of Thunder"

Feist already put out an excellent LP this year. Now she's back with her old band, singing about the "oxymoron of our lives" on a song that starts shy but gets U2-huge.

6. Courtney Barnett "How to Boil an Egg"

Last year, Barnett gave us an awesome song about ramen. This raggedly catchy egg-prep tune is even more proof that she could build a killer song out of *any* subject.



7. Vince Staples "Big Fish"

New music from Staples is cause for hip-hop fans to rejoice. But his latest is truly special – an ecstatic ode to music's power to transcend struggle.



MY LIST



Marty Stuart

Great Rock & Roll Western Songs

The Nashville singer-songwriter just released *Way Out West*, a tribute to California's influence on country music.

The Ventures "Out of Limits"

There's a real connection between a garage-rock instrumental like this and the world of country music, like Merle Haggard and the Strangers. The twang is the common denominator.

Richard Bennett "Riviera"

Richard rescued Nashville from the urban-cowboy bullshit. You could make an entire movie out of this song. It's beautiful.

The Byrds "Chestnut Mare"

I play Clarence White's actual guitar, which is the central guitar on this record. This song is cinematic, always one of my favorites.

Marty Robbins "El Paso"

This song tied the West with the East, the North and the South. It had no barriers. It's a stunning piece of writing. There's not a stray word.

Sons of the Pioneers "Cool Water"

The harmony structure here was divinely ordered, in my mind. It sounds like angels singing in the desert. As good as it gets.



The all new PLAYBASE

TV, movies and music sound better.

Listen Better at sonos.com

SONOS
The Home Sound System



© Apple Corps Limited

REMIXED : REPACKAGED

DIGITAL : 1CD : 2CD DELUXE : 2LP
4CD/BLU-RAY/DVD SUPER DELUXE VERSION
Includes 33 unreleased tracks + new Stereo and 5.1 Mixes



www.thebeatles.com
#SgtPepper



Rock & Roll

Music's Scary New Reality

After Manchester, fans and the industry face tough questions

BY STEVE KNOPPER

THERE HAVE BEEN deadlier incidents – at Paris' Bataclan theater, where three gunmen killed 90 fans at an Eagles of Death Metal concert in 2015, and at Orlando's Pulse nightclub, where a shooter killed 49 last year. But the May 22nd bombing at an Ariana Grande concert at England's Manchester

DANCING IN THE DARK
Grande in Sweden, days before a bombing killed 22 at her Manchester concert

“It will have an impact on sales for certain shows,” says David T. Viecelli, agent for Arcade Fire and St. Vincent. “Parents making decisions will be more frightened for their kids’ safety than adults would be for their own.”

Arena was a new kind of horror. The attack was shocking both for its apparent targeting of young people, and for the ease with which it was carried out: By detonating his device in a foyer area just outside the venue, the 22-year-old bomber found a way to circumvent security at a major arena. “My first thought is, ‘How do they let this guy in a venue?’ Because everybody has cracked down on security,” says Bob McLynn, manager of Lorde, Sia and Fall Out Boy. “But this is a different thing.”

The attack happened just as the summer concert season was kicking off, presenting a new dilemma for a music industry already struggling with the issue of concert safety. “It will have an impact on sales for certain shows,” says David T. Viecelli, agent for Arcade Fire, St. Vincent and others. “Because parents making decisions will be more frightened for their kids’ safety than other adults would be for their own.”

The Bataclan incident ushered in a new era of event security, making dogs, metal detectors and heavy guard presence a way of life. “Just a few years ago, people objected strenuously to being patted down,” says Steven A. Adelman, vice president of the security firm Event Safety Alliance. “People just accept that now.”

Going forward, fans may have to expect almost Orwellian levels of security outside major venues. Chris Robinette, CEO of Prevent Advisors, which serves as a security consultant for 26 arenas, including Madison Square Garden and the L.A. Forum, sees Manchester as a “paradigm shift” in how sites will think about staying safe. “We have to harden the outer core,” he says. This means expanding security far outside of venues, including invisible anti-drone technology, and highly sensitive “Vapor Wake” dogs, which can smell explosives up to 10 minutes after they have left an area. “It’s no longer just the venue,” says Robinette. “Facilities need to start thinking, ‘It’s not just inside my gate and the bowl. It’s the parking lots, it’s the foyers.’” (This kind of monitoring was successful at Paris’ Stade de France soccer stadium, where in 2015 heavy perimeter security prevented a bomber from getting close.) Robinette



MOURNING PERIOD Top: A fan outside Manchester Arena. Above: Thousands attended a vigil at Manchester’s town hall.

adds that his major venues will also be working closer with the FBI to monitor social media: “There’s intelligence now that came out that four hours prior to the attack, an ISIS-related tweet said, ‘We have more,’ and it was attributed in Manchester. How do we actively look at people who are suggesting becoming bad actors?”

Many smaller venues cannot afford that technology. David Yorio, a managing director at Citadel Security Agency, which has worked New York shows for decades, is advising facilities to collaborate with local police to avoid clusters of people entering or exiting sites at the same time,

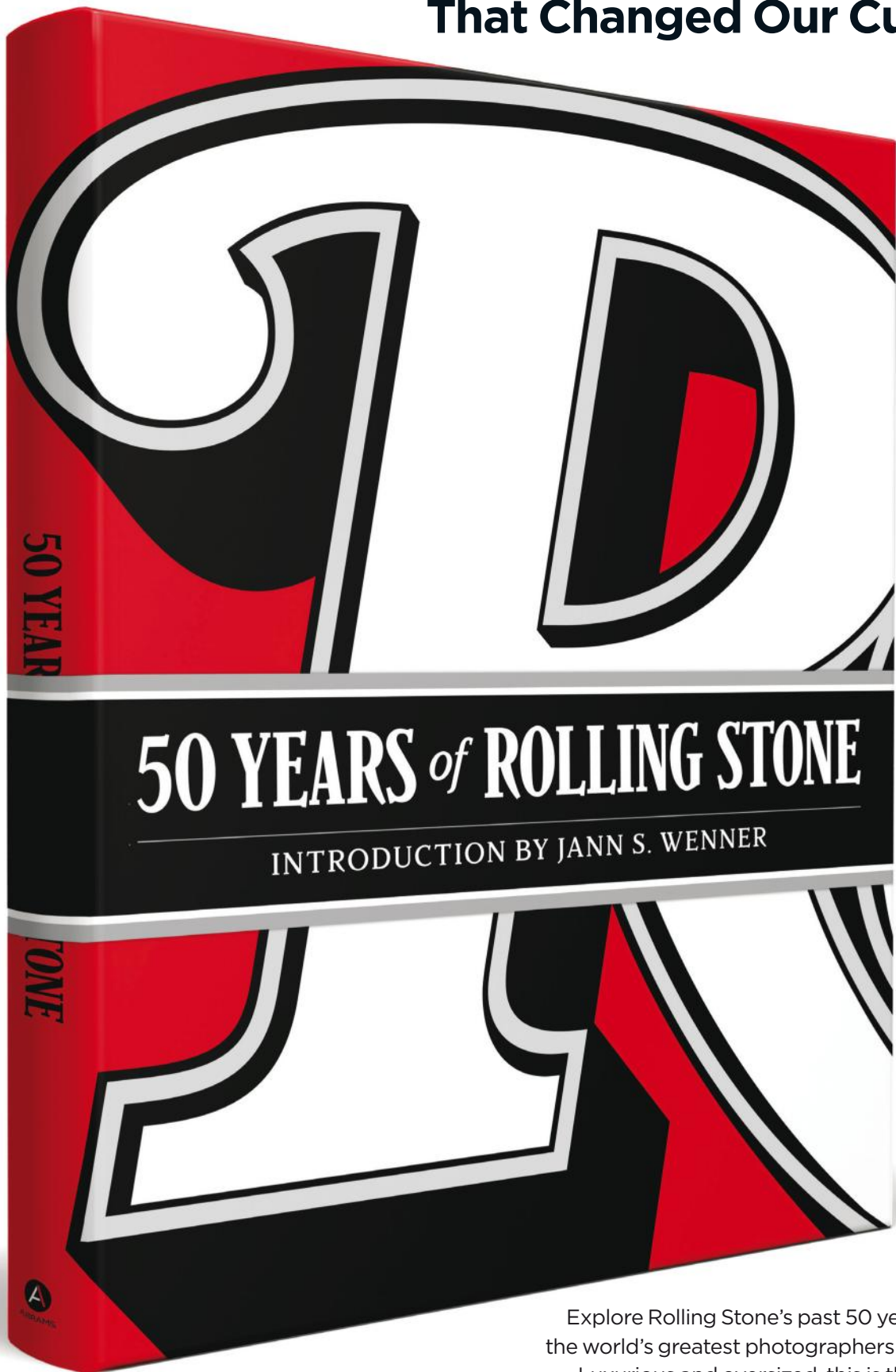
and to provide more security dogs. “It’s naive to say, ‘Well, they’re 10 feet away from the venue, they’re not my responsibility,’” Yorio says. Other industry experts are skeptical about big changes. “The only way to prevent the threat is to make it illegal for humans to be within 100 feet of each other,” says Viecelli. David Schwester, a promoter for outdoor events like Isle of Wight, says music festivals are especially hard to police: “These concertgoers come with camping gear and huge bags. Checking everything is not logistically possible. Festivalgoers will have to concede they are taking a risk and make a decision for themselves.”

After Manchester, artists and fans have struggled with how to move forward. Grande described herself as “broken” and suspended her tour for two weeks. On Twitter, Ed Sheeran fans weighed whether to attend his upcoming concert at London’s O2 Arena. Justin Bieber fans besieged his manager Scooter Braun (who also manages Grande), asking him to cancel Bieber’s European tour. “Not going to happen,” Braun said. “We will never let evil stop us from living our life with joy.”

For many of Grande’s young fans, it was their first concert, and a chance to celebrate an artist they see as an icon of female empowerment. “Ariana’s all about love and joy – that’s why there were so many children and parents there,” says Ellie Clayton, an 18-year-old Manchester attendee. “We went from a room with so much love to... the mood instantly dropped.” Nick Hayward, a 46-year-old father whose daughter was inside, remains shaken from seeing parents calling children’s names as crowds exited. “I’ll still go to concerts – it’s not going to stop me,” he adds. Others aren’t as certain. “Fair play to the parents saying they want their children to fight back,” says Craig Miller, whose wife and 11-year-old daughter, Elisha, attended the show. “But Elisha will not be going to a concert again. It is not worth the risk. She is far too precious. And Elisha has been in such a state since, I don’t think she’d want to go again herself.”

Additional reporting by Sian Hewitt and John Vilanova

The Music, Politics and People That Changed Our Culture



Explore Rolling Stone's past 50 years through
the world's greatest photographers and writers.
Luxurious and oversized, this is the definitive
look into the magazine's fascinating history.

AVAILABLE NOW WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD

 **ABRAMS**
The Art of Books

U2 Reinvent 'The Joshua Tree'

The band's new live show combines classic songs and tech breakthroughs. But don't expect Bono to talk about Trump

BY ANDY GREENE

BONO HAD A LOT ON his mind before U2 kicked off the *Joshua Tree* 2017 tour. There were logistical questions, like whether it was a good idea to spend the first 25 minutes on a tiny B stage with no video screens, or whether there were too many obscure songs. But his biggest worry centered on the idea of the tour itself: "It's so not us to throw ourselves a birthday party," he says. "We didn't know if we could pull off a tour that honors *The Joshua Tree* without it being nostalgic – that's an oxymoron."

But shortly into opening night on May 12th at Vancouver's BC Place Stadium, Bono stopped worrying. The group tore through the 1987 opus – which made U2 one of the world's biggest bands – with an innovative production that spoke to the politics of today, from the refugee crisis to women's issues. "People weren't taking out their phones, which was amazing," Bono says. "I was really relieved when I walked out and the band and everyone else was like, 'Wow, that was great!'"

The show begins with drummer Larry Mullen Jr. walking onto the tiny, tree-shaped second stage, banging out the thunderous intro to "Sunday Bloody Sunday" before he's joined by his bandmates. It's the beginning of a mini-set of pre-*Joshua Tree* songs played in the order they were released. The minimalism makes what comes next even more impressive: On the main stage, the band kicks off "Where the Streets Have No Name" under an enormous 8K-resolution IMAG screen that features the highest-definition images ever seen at a stadium concert. U2 reunited with photographer-filmmaker Anton Corbijn, asking him to return to the California des-



RUNNING TO STAND STILL

Bono onstage in Seattle in May. Left: With the Edge in 1987.


ert where he shot the original *Joshua Tree* cover and film 11 new short films that bring the album's imagery to life. "You can't believe the [actual] Joshua tree is not there," Bono says. "You feel like you could touch it."

In rehearsals, U2 wondered how the crowd would react to lesser-known songs like "Red Hill Mining Town," which they'd never played live. That song turned out to be a highlight: Accompanied by a virtual military band onscreen, Bono nailed the ballad's difficult, soaring high notes. Playing guitar these days is another story, harder for him after a bicycling accident in 2014 that nearly shattered his left arm.

"The band certainly doesn't miss my playing, and I can just play at home," he says. "I don't think it's necessary."

There were other surprises: Last year Bono railed against Donald Trump onstage, but he's decided to stop mentioning him explicitly. "It's very important that people who voted for Donald Trump feel welcome at our show. I think they have been hoodwinked, but I understand, and I would not dismiss the reasons why some people voted for him." The band addresses politics in other ways: "Ultraviolet Light (My Way)" features images of trailblazing women from Rosa Parks to Lena Dunham. "The whole third act is about showing that the future belongs to women," says Bono. There's also a moving film about a teenage girl at a refugee camp in Jordan. "Sometimes when we're playing it I have to turn away from the film – I can't sing." The band ends with "The Little Things That Give You Away," a ballad from *Songs of Experience*, the long-awaited follow-up to 2014's *Songs of Innocence* that Bono says is finally almost finished. "I thought it was done last year. The problem is we

have 15 songs [that need to] get down to 12. We have some proper fuck-off songs." They've reportedly worked with producers including Danger Mouse, Paul Epworth and Ryan Tedder. They also reunited with Steve Lillywhite, who helmed their first three albums. "I'm very proud of the songs on *Songs of Innocence*, but the production should have been more raw," says Bono. "Steve is the best guy for recording us in the studio with the band playing live."

Might the successful *Joshua Tree* 2017 tour lead to an *Achtung Baby* 30th-anniversary tour in 2021? "I haven't thought about that," says Bono with a laugh. "But then again, if you'd asked me five years ago about a *Joshua Tree* one, I would have laughed at you. Instead of Zoo TV we'll have to call it Zoo.com." 

reset.
it tastes like
a piña colada
with zero regrets
in the morning.

new
reset



drink outside the lines

Fleet Foxes' New Harmony

Robin Pecknold made two highly influential folk-rock albums and then disappeared. Now, he's back with an adventurous new sound

BY JONAH WEINER

ROBIN PECKNOLD ADMIRES THE beautiful old sign affixed to a building in Los Angeles' Chinatown: BLACK DRAGON WU-SHU KUNG FU SOCIETY. "This is an artist space now," the Fleet Foxes frontman says on an early-May afternoon. Last year, Pecknold, who lives in New York, fantasized about turning it into his new musical headquarters, but it wasn't to be. "I tried to move out here," he says. "I had an apartment lined up, then it went to somebody else." It was "just


dimensional," he says. "There was no reason to milk it." He moved from Portland to Manhattan and enrolled at Columbia. "I had kind of an identity crisis," he says.

In June, after a six-year pause, Fleet Foxes will return with an excellent third album, *Crack-Up*. Pecknold is in L.A. to hang with friends and see his brother Sean, a visual artist who has his own studio close to the Black Dragon. At Columbia, Robin majored in English literature, but he says music was never far from his mind: "My pa-

departure wasn't amicable - Pecknold has said their relationship "deteriorated" years before Tillman finally quit, adding, "It probably should have happened sooner."

Last July, a spark finally struck. Pecknold and guitarist Skyler Skjelset booked studio time in rural Washington. One demo was "a sad-sack ballad," Pecknold says. Another was boisterous. "I was just like, 'What if we put those two songs together, with a hard cut? Cut the sad one off, like the band is kicking me off the stage.' The process of producing and editing became really fun." The song turned into "I Am All That I Need/Arroyo Seco/Thumbprint Scar," which opens the LP. Pecknold decided *Crack-Up* would be full of such internal contradictions and dramatic leaps - the title comes from a 1936 essay by F. Scott Fitzgerald in which he declares, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time." Pecknold ran with that, constructing lyrics around homophones ("heatless"/"heedless") and devising "competing polyrhythms, where there's, say, a four pattern on one instrument and a three pattern on the other." Fitzgerald's essay also touches on depression, which Pecknold says resonated too. "I can't say I know what clinical depression is. I've been dissatisfied in my life. I think I've made myself sad because I wanted to be. But there's stuff where he describes a break, a psychic loosening, and I recognized that. I think it was all the touring, powering through that, and realizing that it took a deeper toll than I thought."

This connected to strains in the band. "As I get older, I have more empathy for people," Pecknold says. "We're kind of an extended family, and people have their needs and eccentricities. I think less about what's bothering me and more about 'how is this person feeling?'"

Down the block, we pop into an art exhibit related to the Black Panthers. A small drawing catches Pecknold's eye: Hundreds of black dots surround two stick figures. The piece is titled "The Ring" - the artist is Muhammad Ali. "Holy shit," Pecknold says. He takes out his phone to snap a picture, and the shutter sound reverberates loudly across the gallery. People whip their heads at us. "Ugh," Pecknold says. "Total kook move." 



DÉJÀ VU Fleet Foxes' multi-instrumentalist Morgan Henderson, keyboardist Casey Wescott, Pecknold, bassist Christian Wargo and Skjelset (from left) in February

some sketchy real-estate shit." Pecknold, 31, spent a month crashing here and there before he hit "undo" and returned East. "That was kind of a disappointing trip," he says.

If the years since Fleet Foxes put out their stellar self-titled 2008 debut have proved anything, it's that Pecknold is ready to uproot himself and veer into unknown terrain. That influential LP, full of skyscraping riffs and gospel-steeped harmonies, updated Laurel Canyon rock for the new millennium and helped usher in a folk-rock wave.

Then, in 2012, after selling hundreds of thousands of albums and touring huge venues for their second LP, *Helplessness Blues*, Pecknold put the band on hold. "I felt one-

pers were always like, "The role of music in *Ulysses*." Between coursework, he got into surfing, practicing in the Rockaways. "I'd drive out in the middle of February to learn without other people there," he says. In surf culture, the term for an embarrassing novice is a "kook": "You don't want to be a kook. It took me two years of just eating shit. I'm still pretty bad at it, but I think it's good to be bad at things - it's good to be humbled."

He also tried writing songs, but "things were out of alignment." Meanwhile, the band's onetime drummer, Josh Tillman, got famous as Father John Misty. When I ask Pecknold if he likes Tillman's stuff, he replies, "I haven't listened to it. Like, intentionally. I've heard it in passing." Tillman's



APOLOGIES ARE
FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

**BOLD.
CHOICE.**

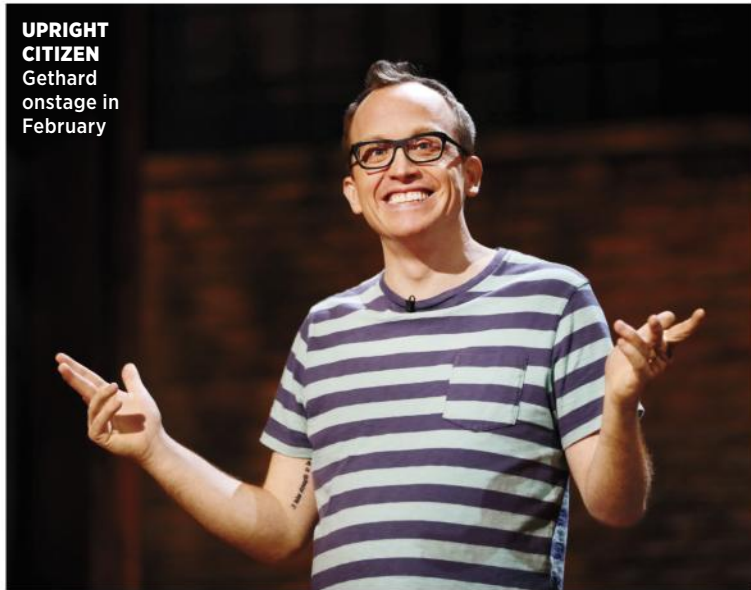
Winston[®]



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

Winston[®] is a registered trademark of ITG Brands, LLC.
©2017 ITG Brands, LLC.
winstoncigarettes.com

**UPRIGHT
CITIZEN**
Gethard
onstage in
February



Seriously Dark Comedy

Chris Gethard was known for oddball stunts. But he broke through talking about alcoholism and suicide

OVER THE COURSE OF HIS STRANGE comedy career, Chris Gethard has hitchhiked to Bonnaroo for a Web series and dangled himself over a pellet-gun-toting audience while dressed as a duck. But no experience could have prepared him for *Career Suicide*, his new HBO comedy special. In it, the Jersey comic discusses his history with anxiety, alcoholism and depression. He details a suicide attempt at age 21, in which he tried to get hit by a truck but wound up crashing his car on someone's lawn. "I think I overestimated my ability to handle discussing it onstage," Gethard said one

afternoon last winter. "The material has kind of weighed down on me a bit." Judd Apatow produced the HBO version of *Career Suicide*, which Gethard workshopped as a one-man show off-Broadway. "When you see the final version, you don't realize how difficult it is to tell those stories in an entertaining, truthful way," Apatow says. "It's a very special piece."

The show is Gethard's first bit of mainstream acceptance after a career as an oddball outsider. For years, he was a favorite at New York's Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, where he invented characters like Gallagher

Three, a lost sibling of the fruit-smashing Gallagher brothers. Things were going great, until he started having panic attacks backstage. "A crowd laughing was a short-term fix for a very long-term problem," he says.

Gethard entered therapy and left UCB to start an early-Letterman-style TV show that aired on a New York public-access station. It

was a cult hit, and Gethard snagged guests like Diddy, who offered useless relationship advice to teens, and Jon Hamm, who took part in a sumo-wrestling match. (The show will begin airing on TruTV in August.) A conversation with comic Mike Birbiglia, who cast Gethard in his

2016 movie, *Don't Think Twice*, convinced him to explore his mental-health issues onstage. "I thought it was too dark," Gethard says. *Career Suicide* has made Gethard a poster boy for depression, so much so that it's been difficult for him to keep up with notes from fans sharing their stories. "A lot of comedians are gonna go, 'Oh, that's pretentious bullshit.' And they're right. I'm very lucky that I live in a culture where comedy can be pretentious bullshit."

PATRICK DOYLE

"A lot of comics are gonna think it's pretentious bullshit," Gethard says of his new special.

The Best Stand-up TV Right Now

From Tracy Morgan's comeback to a 'Daily Show' star's observational opus

Tracy Morgan

STAYING ALIVE *Netflix*

Morgan's highway crash and recovery are the subjects of his special. But this is no therapy session: The accident is a jumping-off point for jokes about physical therapy, Caitlyn Jenner and the settlement that allowed him to move into a new neighborhood: "I forgave who hit me. But I'll tell you who is mad at him: all my white neighbors."



Norm Macdonald

HITLER'S DOG, GOSSIP & TRICKERY *Netflix*



Macdonald riffs on why he's terrified of Germany ("Who did they choose to go to war with? The world! It was actually close!"). He also examines the meaning of the phrase "What

happens in Vegas stays in Vegas." "It's very simple," he says. "You can have sex with a prostitute, and she will not tell your wife."

Sarah Silverman

A SPECK OF DUST *Netflix*

Silverman keeps finding ways to nuance her adorably raunchy persona, veering into personal revelations — "I have a new dog, Mary. I rescued her. Or I like to think she rescued me. I don't know which is the less-cunty way of putting it."



Al Madrigal

SHRIMPIN' AIN'T EASY *Showtime*

The *Daily Show* alum spins comedy gold out of Yelp reviews and Trump. At one point, he speculates Mexicans might be shitting in cilantro for revenge.

CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CRAIG BLANKENHORN/HBO; BRENT N. CLARKE/INVISION/AP IMAGES; MICHAEL TRAN/FILMMAGIC; EVAN AGOSTINI/INVISION/AP IMAGES; MAARTEN DE BOER/GETTY IMAGES PORTRAIT

I JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH

Listen to tens of millions of songs with Amazon Music Unlimited.
Start your 30-day free trial at www.amazon.com/unlimited

Prime members save \$40/year over Spotify Premium and Apple Music with annual plan. Automatically renews; cancel anytime.

The logo for Amazon Music Unlimited, featuring the word "music" in blue lowercase letters, the word "unlimited" in black lowercase letters, and the Amazon smile logo (a blue arrow) positioned below "music".



ELVIS COSTELLO HASN'T RE-leased a new album in nearly four years, and he's feeling pretty good about "stepping off that train." He had time to finish his superb memoir, 2015's *Unfaithful Music and Disappearing Ink*, and is deep into work on a potential Broadway musical based on *A Face in the Crowd*, the 1957 film about a drunk who becomes a TV star and then a dangerous demagogue. And now Costello and the Imposters are prepping for more U.S. dates on a tour built around 1982's *Imperial Bedroom*, the album where he calmed the Attractions' carnival clatter into an intricate studio triumph that, until now, he'd struggled to reproduce live. All that, and there may be new music on its way. "Keep an eye out," says Costello, who's enjoying the freedom of working without a record contract. "You never know when the next thing is going to appear."

You're working on a musical about an American demagogue in the age of Trump – how is that playing out for you?

There are people at the heads of television companies who need to examine themselves for their part in creating the brand, and that's what *A Face in the Crowd* is about. That's the only point of comparison, really. Budd Schulberg's original short story and play is a parable not about a demagogue so much as about the power of television to *create* a demagogue. So it would still be a good story if there were a different president when opening night comes.

What's it like to write for characters?

They're like all songs, really – they're simultaneously your last will and testament, and something that you created to tantalize other people. They're not always written in your own blood – they can be written in other people's, I suppose. But you have to develop them sufficiently, so it can be the best version of it every night. A song like "Allison" that I've sung for 40 years – some nights it comes to life in my head, and some nights it falls apart. That's a very different set of agreements than you have with the theater, I think.

Onstage, you blamed the complex vocal arrangements on *Imperial Bedroom* on a "bag of weed." True?

I was making a joke. Drinking was really, in those days, more my way of taking myself out of the picture. And I decided to have a clear head for that record, so naturally I did go and get myself a bag of weed [laughs] to offset that. I definitely had some crazy idea that I didn't want to be one man emoting in the spotlight. So I sang in a

Q&A



Elvis Costello

The songwriter on composing a musical about a demagogue and reviving his 1982 masterpiece, 'Imperial Bedroom'

BY BRIAN HIATT

more dispassionate way, and I tracked my voice up in harmonies – and it just sounded like 12 of me. I have a very odd voice. But I made up these theories – and this is where the weed may have come in a little bit – that if I handed over, halfway through a line, to a vocal group of me, that somehow it would make it less self-absorbed.

What influenced the general change in your singing in the early Eighties?


I was very smitten with Chrissie Hynde's singing, and I wanted to have some of the warmth she had in her voice, even when she was singing really tough songs. And that connected to people I loved, like Dusty Springfield, who had a more pronounced vibrato – and lots of singers from the 1960s who sang with a warmer sound than we approached songs with in '77.

"Almost Blue" is your most covered song. How consciously were you writing a standard?

I was absolutely besotted with that type of blue ballad, the minor-key ballad. It has quite a debt to [the 1931 standard] "The Thrill Is Gone." It's unusual in the sense that it starts on the title line – but [Cole Porter's] "From This Moment On" opens with the title line, and that's a good song. At the time, those kind of ballads were most of what I listened to – Miles [Davis] and Sinatra and Billie Holiday records. **You had a sense you were washed up on the U.K. charts around the time of *Imperial Bedroom*, right?**

You catch your breath and go, "Ah, was that our time? What do we do now?" And what we did was we made a record that couldn't possibly get on the radio, and actually relished that. We actually went the other way. It was a sort of like, "Fuck you, we'll just do this now." Not to the audience, but to the record companies and radio that don't really want you around. You know what most of those people are doing now? They're either retired or running a carpet warehouse or something. We're still playing.

Your last album was *Wise Up Ghost and Other Songs*, with the Roots. How do you see that one now?

It was amazing that it happened the way it did, with no real conversation ahead of time. We just literally started playing. I really love the title track and "Cinco Minutos." We have a ferocious live album in the can, with "Ghost Town," by the Specials, and "Found Out," by John Lennon. There was a thought of following it with a live release – until the record companies started crunching the numbers. They have their limits for invention. 



PROVEN FASTER & STRONGER

ON TOUGH PAIN THAN
TYLENOL® RAPID RELEASE GELS.

Advil
LIQUI-GELS® MAKE PAIN A DISTANT MEMORY.

Use as directed. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

© Pfizer 2017

50th

ANNIVERSARY

FLASHBACK

The Man in White

From the real lives of astronauts to 'The Bonfire of the Vanities,' Tom Wolfe's work with 'Rolling Stone' broke new ground and shaped both the writer and the magazine

IN THE MID-1960S, THE ACID TESTS THROWN BY KEN Kesey and his Merry Pranksters were the white-hot center of the psychedelic revolution: dusk-to-dawn parties, usually in the Bay Area, that brought together freaks and Hells Angels, offered free LSD in plastic tubs and sometimes featured live accompaniment by the Grateful Dead. One night in 1966, Kesey and his followers found an unlikely figure in their midst: a genteel, Virginia-born former newspaper reporter in a three-piece suit. The book that Tom Wolfe would write about Kesey and his orbit, 1968's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, became the first great account of the Sixties counterculture. It also helped redefine journalism, thanks to a wild-eyed, fast-paced style that dropped readers right inside the action. "Not even the hip world in New York," Wolfe wrote of one of Kesey's legendary bus trips, "was quite ready for the phenomenon of a bunch of people roaring across the continental U.S.A. in a bus covered with swirling Day-Glo mandalas aiming movie cameras and microphones at every freaking thing in this whole freaking country while Neal Cassady wheeled the bus around the high curves like Super Hud..."

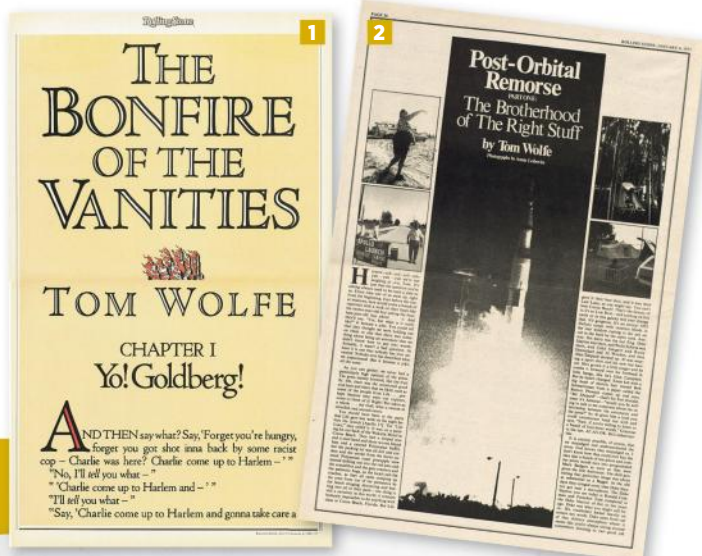
By that point, Wolfe was one of the most important magazine writers in America, and his work — which read less like conventional nonfiction and more like a novel you couldn't put down — helped establish an emerging form known as New Journalism. Among the many who'd ingested *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* was ROLLING STONE editor and publisher Jann S. Wenner. "I'd been to some of those Acid Tests and was bowled over by how accurate and well-reported the book was and how he was able to penetrate that crazy world," Wenner recalls. In 1969, the ambitious young editor reached out to Wolfe to see if he'd be willing to write for ROLLING STONE.

The magazine was only two years old; getting a writer like Wolfe would be a coup. But Wolfe, it turned out, was a fan of ROLLING STONE. "At a time when everyone was saying you had to compete with television and write short," Wolfe remembers, "Jann just let it run if it was good." Wenner and Wolfe began exchanging letters. "I have been enjoying ROLLING STONE very much," Wolfe wrote to Wenner at one point. "I'm proud of you," he added. It was the start of a decades-long relationship with the magazine that would take Wolfe's career and his work to new heights.

After a few initial story ideas (including a Jimi Hendrix profile) didn't pan out, Wenner suggested that Wolfe cover the 1972 launch of Apollo 17, the last crewed moon landing. Since most of what had

Wolfe's World

(1) The first three chapters of Wolfe's *Bonfire* ran in a single 1984 issue, much to the author's surprise. (2) The first installment of Wolfe's series on astronauts. (3) A letter to Jann Wenner, 1972.



Dear Captain Jann,
 Here, as I promised, I have
 in the esoteric glow of yester-moon
 are the dreaded NEW YORKER stories
 I wrote in 1965. This wonderful
 eye-DICER was the best that the
 ROLL-YO-OWN
 DUPLICATING SERVICE could come up with
 I hope you'll get a smile or two
 out of all this. For some odd
 reason the page size I like best
 is the SHAWN & THE COKE BOTTLE
 page at the beginning of the
 second article.
 I have been enjoying ROLLING
 STONE very much, although I hate to
 see you supporting McGovern
 that way. I am dreadfully & in
 J. Wolfe

been reported on the lives of astronauts had been carefully coordinated and whitewashed by NASA public relations, their world was a great untold story. Wolfe embedded himself with the astronauts. Most hadn't heard of *ROLLING STONE*, except for the slightly hip Scott Carpenter, but Wolfe's doggedness and genuine curiosity opened doors. "It's the greatest impulse in journalism, just to ask people what's going on in a certain situation," says Wolfe.

Wolfe's space odyssey became a four-part series called "Post-Orbital Remorse"; its first installment, "The Brotherhood of the Right Stuff," came out in January 1973. Wolfe wrote in the collective personae of the astronauts explaining their wild-side story: "God knows how [the press] misjudged us. I don't know how they could ever buy the idea that a bunch of test pilots and combat pilots would turn into programmed Merit Badgers as soon as they were given the title Astronaut." Even Wolfe's manuscripts were works of art. His drafts came with his own crisp handwritten edits, and he'd sometimes add comments in playful thought bubbles.

"Post-Orbital Remorse" earned raves, even from the astronauts themselves. In a letter to Wolfe sent to the *RS* office, Carpenter wrote, "The whole thing was excellent. I can't imagine how you did it." When *The Right Stuff*, the book version of the series, appeared in 1979, it also included a subtle homage to *ROLLING STONE*: The depiction of Chuck Yeager's attempt to break the sound barrier was inspired by the work of Hunter S. Thompson, whom Wolfe calls "the Mark Twain of the 20th century."

Published in 1974, Wolfe's "Funky Chic" turned a critical eye on the counterculture, which had latched on to what Wolfe called "Late Army Surplus" fashion – jeans, ponchos, work shirts – to prove it was in sync with the downtrodden: "I never talked to a group of black militants, or Latin militants, for that matter, who didn't eventually comment derisively about the poor-boy outfits their middle-class white student allies insisted on wearing or the way they tried to use black street argot, all the mans and cats and babies and brothers and baddests..."

Wolfe's next *ROLLING STONE* adventure would be his most daring yet: a novel about contemporary, chaotic, racially divided New York along the lines of Thackeray's *Vanities Fair*. To ensure he'd finish it, Wolfe wanted to publish it in serialized form in a magazine, like Dickens and Thackeray a century before. *Esquire* turned down the idea, but Wenner was intrigued and agreed to publish a chapter of at least 5,500 words in each issue for more than a year.

The Bonfire of the Vanities was a sharply satirical tale of writer Sherman McCoy, his hit-and-run calamity, a distorted media feeding frenzy and a wobbly judicial system. To ensure he had a cush-

ion, Wolfe handed in the first three chapters at once, but the magazine published all three in *RS* 426/427 (July 19–August 2, 1984). "I opened the first issue and, oh, my God," Wolfe recalls. "Jann wanted to make a big splash." Wolfe was forced to scramble. "I remember the stress of the moment," he says. "It's all in your hands and there's nothing anyone else can do for you."

To meet his deadlines, Wolfe sometimes worked out of *ROLLING STONE*'s office on Fifth Avenue. He would be among the last to leave on production nights, as he tweaked the chapters, in which it was clear Wolfe was more than capable of incorporating his keen New Journalism approach into fiction. Describing one character's taxi ride, he wrote, "There was a sliding plastic security window between her and the driver, half

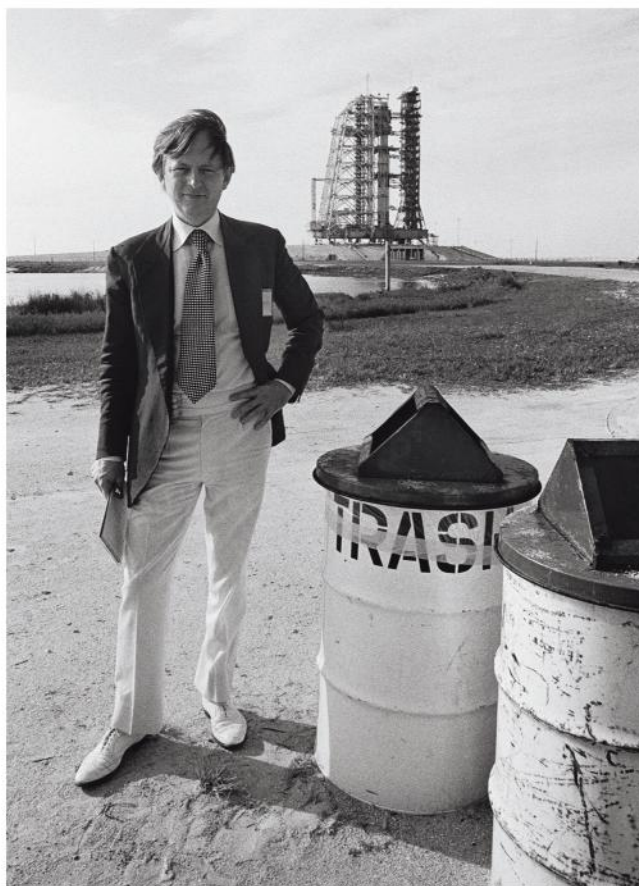
open, grossly scratched, and cloudy as a cataract. It was like sitting in an egg carton." The serialization was unlike anything in magazines at the time. But Wolfe, ever the perfectionist, wasn't completely satisfied and rewrote parts of *Bonfire* for the 1987 book version, in which McCoy became a bond salesman.

Wolfe brought that same diligence to his most recent work for the magazine, "Ambush at Fort Bragg," which ran in two parts in 1996. The novella eviscerated the cut-throat world of TV news-magazines and the lengths to which they would go for a "scoop," legit or not. As always, Wolfe bore down on his work: "Round three...of my battle with the chapter about the Whitney," he wrote to Wenner in November 1995. "I think perhaps this one works." The magazine published excerpts from two of Wolfe's post-*Bonfire* novels. 1998's *A Man in Full* (which Wenner helped edit) wove an equally character-rich, dark-side-of-America tale of corporate chicanery and racial tension in modern Georgia. Published in 2004 and also

excerpted in *ROLLING STONE*, *I Am Charlotte Simmons* was Wolfe's scorched-dorm depiction of elite college life through the eyes of a freshman from Appalachia; not surprisingly, Wolfe spent time at colleges – "undercover," he joked, meaning without his trademark white suit – to ensure an accurate portrait of frat life.

Wolfe made his mark with *ROLLING STONE* in other ways: He was the first person to tell Wenner about a new style of music emerging from the Bronx called hip-hop. But his contributions secured the magazine's reputation as a home to groundbreaking journalism. As Wolfe reflects, "When you think about it, [the idea that] a magazine based on, of all things, rock music would come up with such a wealth of terrific journalism is quite an accomplishment. Jann was always willing to do irrational things in the name of magazine journalism. It really paid off."

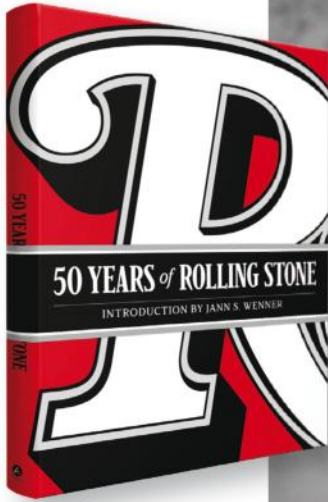
DAVID BROWNE



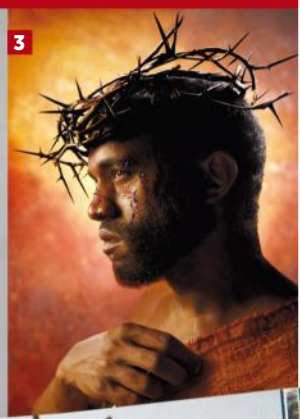
ROCKET MAN Reporting "Post-Orbital Remorse" in 1972. One of the astronauts later said that "the whole [series] was excellent."

The Story of 'Rolling Stone'

FROM INTERVIEWING THE BEATLES to taking on Trump, ROLLING STONE has been a dominant voice in music, culture and politics. Now, a new book, *50 Years of Rolling Stone*, presents journalism and photography from throughout the magazine's history, including iconic portraits of John Lennon, Bob Dylan and Kurt Cobain, among many others, and classic reporting on events like Watergate and the 2008 financial crisis. Presented chronologically, the coffee-table volume offers a unique history of our times – or as ROLLING STONE founder and publisher Jann S. Wenner writes in an introduction, “a true and accurate and passionate account of a generation of Americans.”



(1) The Beastie Boys, 1998; Britney Spears, 1999. (2) Mick Jagger, 1987. (3) Kanye West as Jesus, 2006. (4) Patti Smith, 1978; Bob Marley, 1976.



BEASTIE BOYS: MARK SELIGER; BRITNEY SPEARS: KANYE WEST/
 © DAVID LACHAPPELLE STUDIO INC.; MICK JAGGER: HERB RITTS/
 TRUNK ARCHIVE; PATTI SMITH, BOB MARLEY: ANNIE LIEBOVITZ



Skittles®

GUARD THE RAINBOW, TASTE THE RAINBOW®



NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Begins Noon (ET) 2/15/17 & ends 11:59:59 PM (ET) 6/15/17. Only 50 US/DC residents, age 18+. To enter, purchase any size package SKITTLES® (Original/Wild Berry), STARBURST® (Original), JUICY FRUIT® (Original/Starburst Strawberry) or M&M'S® (1.14–1.74 oz./30–42 oz.) package by 11:59:59 PM (ET) 6/15/17 & upload photo of receipt at movie.skittles.com by 11:59 PM (ET) 6/22/17. \$9/\$12 prize based on pkg purch. To enter w/out purchase, prizing, odds & add'l terms, see Official Rules at movie.skittles.com. Void where prohib. Sponsor: Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company. ©2017 Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company. Skittles and all affiliated designs are trademarks of the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company or its affiliates. © 2017 MARVEL

A NEW DRAMA SERIES FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **JIM CARREY**

i'm Dying up here

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN EASY LAUGH



©2017 Showtime Networks Inc. All rights reserved. SHOWTIME and related marks are registered trademarks of Showtime Networks Inc. To avoid being charged, cancel your subscription soon the end of the 7-day free trial.

series premiere **JUNE 4 • SUN 10PM** **SHOWTIME**®



NOW STREAMING > START YOUR FREE TRIAL

GETSHOWTIME.COM

The Season's Peak

David Lynch's fantastically trippy opus returns – plus 'Game of Thrones' and eight more binge-worthy shows for summer

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

Twin Peaks

May 21st, SHOWTIME

"I am dead – and yet I live," Laura Palmer says in the *Twin Peaks* revival, basically speaking for David Lynch's whole fictional world. The legend of *Twin Peaks* has grown over the years, to the point where its return is a major cultural phenomenon. Trying to sum up this murder mystery is like trying to serve damn good coffee out of a soup strainer, but that's part of the WTF appeal. Lynch and co-creator Mark Frost revisit the rainy logging town in the Pacific Northwest where Kyle MacLachlan's noble FBI agent, Dale Cooper, showed up to find out who killed high school danger girl Palmer.

Twin Peaks: The Return has what you could describe as a plot, but it unfolds like a random sequence of hallucinatory images, mostly involving sadistic violence. It begins with Agent Cooper, 25 years later, still stranded in the alternate universe known as the Black Lodge. Meanwhile, his evil doppelgänger is out there making trouble in a leather jacket and Elvis pompadour, implicated in a string of gruesome murders – including a South Dakota librarian, whose head is transplanted onto a dead man's body. As Cooper travels through multiple worlds, he sees some familiar faces from



TWIN PEAKS
MacLachlan's been waiting 25 years for a good cup of coffee.

the old series – Sheryl Lee appears as the ghost of Palmer – and new ones like Michael Cera and Naomi Watts.

The new *Twin Peaks* has the "dreaminess" of the original, with Lynch directing all 18 hours of it himself.

There's something touching about the way he rounds up the old gang: Sheryl Fenn, Mädchen Amick and the "Log Lady," Catherine Coulson, though she died in 2015, shortly after filming. It also features footage from the original series in which Palmer tells Cooper, "I'll see you again in 25 years." It's amazing to watch her prediction come true.

Snowfall July 5th, FX

John Singleton created this gritty drama about the Eighties crack epidemic, set in

South Central L.A. Damson Idris is Franklin Saint, a kid who gets swept up in the drug trade. (Singleton is not subtle with names – not since he cast Janet Jackson as a girl called Justice who writes poetry in *Poetic Justice*.) Saint went to a fancy school in the Valley, but he's back in the hood, working at a convenience store and dealing weed to his rich prep-school friends. He soon meets high rollers who have new plans for him. There's a CIA agent with a connection to the Nicaraguan Contras; there's a Mexican wrestler who collects debts for the Mob. Their stories intertwine with a new drug, crack cocaine – cheap, quick and deadly. But none of them know how crack will transform the world.

G.L.O.W. June 23rd, NETFLIX

Alison Brie plays a floundering actress who goes to a cattle call for her strangest audition ever: Marc

Maron is recruiting for a new league, the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling. "Sorry – are you hiring actors to play wrestlers?" she asks. "Or are we the wrestlers?" He replies, "Yes." The latest from *Orange Is the New Black*'s Jenji Kohan, *G.L.O.W.* is a surprisingly affectionate, deft account of a weird real-life Eighties pop-culture moment – *G.L.O.W.* was once a low-budget TV staple. Brie is impressive as the prissy ice princess who toughens up as she starts to thrive on the violence (and the employment). And Maron is hilarious as the hard-boiled director who only lowers himself to this gig because he's failed at his true calling: directing sci-fi soft-porn horror flicks. He's like Tom Hanks in *A League of Their Own*, with less alcohol and a lot more lines snorted off his framed portrait of Ron and Nancy.

The Gong Show

June 22nd, ABC

The summer's most bizarre contender – and the crowning chapter in the completely nonsensical third act of Mike Myers' career. It's a reboot of



SNOWFALL
Singleton returns to the hood.



G.L.O.W.
Brie (left) gets the smackdown.

the trash-classic 1970s game show. The late great Chuck Barris hosted the original, as a freewheeling mess of amateur singers, magicians and the Unknown Comic, who told god-awful jokes wearing a paper bag over his head, took the stage. In this version, Myers hosts in character – playing a 72-year-old London comedian, Tommy Maitland, who appeared in forgotten flicks like *From Russia, Luv*. The new *Gong Show* features celeb judges like Elizabeth Banks, Joel McHale and Andy Samberg – not to mention Dana Carvey.

I'm Dying Up Here

June 4th, SHOWTIME

Welcome to the bloody business of hustling for laughs. The Showtime drama *I'm Dying Up Here*, executive-produced by Jim Carrey, chronicles the Seventies L.A. stand-up comedy racket. It's set in a Hollywood full of small-time jokers, gangsters and losers, the scene that gave us David Letterman and Jay Leno. These guys (and they're almost all guys) keep coming back to the seedy clubs, learning their craft the hard way, dreaming of turning into the next big thing. Melissa Leo is fearsome as the comedy-club matriarch, and the rest of the cast is full of familiar faces, if not names – standouts include Clark Duke (*Hot Tub Time Machine*) and Ari Graynor (*The Sopranos*) – with a clever Seventies rock soundtrack. (Best-ever use of the J. Geils Band's



ODD JOB?
Myers hosts *The Gong Show*.



GAME OF THRONES
Will the Lannisters pay their debts?

“Whammer Jammer.”) The comedians keep their guard up only to be at their most vulnerable onstage, fending off hecklers (“What are you doing here? The hooker in the trunk isn't gonna bury herself”), bullies (“Tell me, sir – is there a Mrs. Drunken Shithead at home?”) and – worst of all – silent faces. But they put off the end of the night as long as possible. When one of them announces, “Closing time – your soul-crushing existences await you,” the punchline is that the comedians, unlike the audience, have no escape.

Orphan Black

June 10th, BBC AMERICA

After four years, *Orphan Black* ups the crazy for the final season. Tatiana Maslany wraps an amazing turn playing multiple roles as a posse of clones on the run. She's still just a jump ahead of the Neolutionist bad guys, who claim the clones are their property. As one of them says menacingly, early in the new season, “You don't know how far we're willing to go.” And P.T. Westmoreland, the madman who founded Neolution 170 years ago, is still alive – and still dangerous.

Gypsy

June 30th, NETFLIX

Naomi Watts plays a Manhattan therapist who veers off the rails. She seems to have a placid life with her rich husband, played by Billy Crudup, and their young daughter. Like any idealistic shrink, she tells clients, “I'm not your friend – I'm your therapist.” But the more she listens to strangers tell their stories about sex, drugs and violence, the more she itches to walk on the wild side. And with *Fifty Shades of Grey* director Sam Taylor-Johnson on board, Watts finds the other side of the mirror too seductive to resist. The thriller gets a boost from its theme song, a reworking of the Stevie Nicks classic.

Orange Is the New Black

June 9th, NETFLIX

Litchfield is burning – *Orange Is the New Black* picks up right where the top-notch fourth season left off, in the middle of a prison riot sparked by the heart-shattering death of a most beloved inmate, Samira Wiley's Poussey. The new

season plays out in the three days following the riot, as the women of Litchfield rise up to take over the prison. Yet they still have no way to protect themselves from one another.

Game of Thrones

July 16th, HBO

It's the most anticipated TV event of the year: the return of *Game of Thrones*. The white raven has landed in Winterfell, which means it's official: Winter is here. Cersei Lannister sits on the Iron Throne. Jaime arrived home just in time to see his sister/lover take over as queen, before the ashes of their last remaining child were even cold. Daenerys set sail with Tyrion, and Jon Snow reigned as King in the North – all ready to make their next move. This season is the tightest yet – seven episodes instead of

the usual 10. With George R.R. Martin's books in the rearview, *GoT* heads in new directions, adding Jim Broadbent and some guy named Ed Sheeran to the cast.



GYPSY
Watts (right) gets personal.

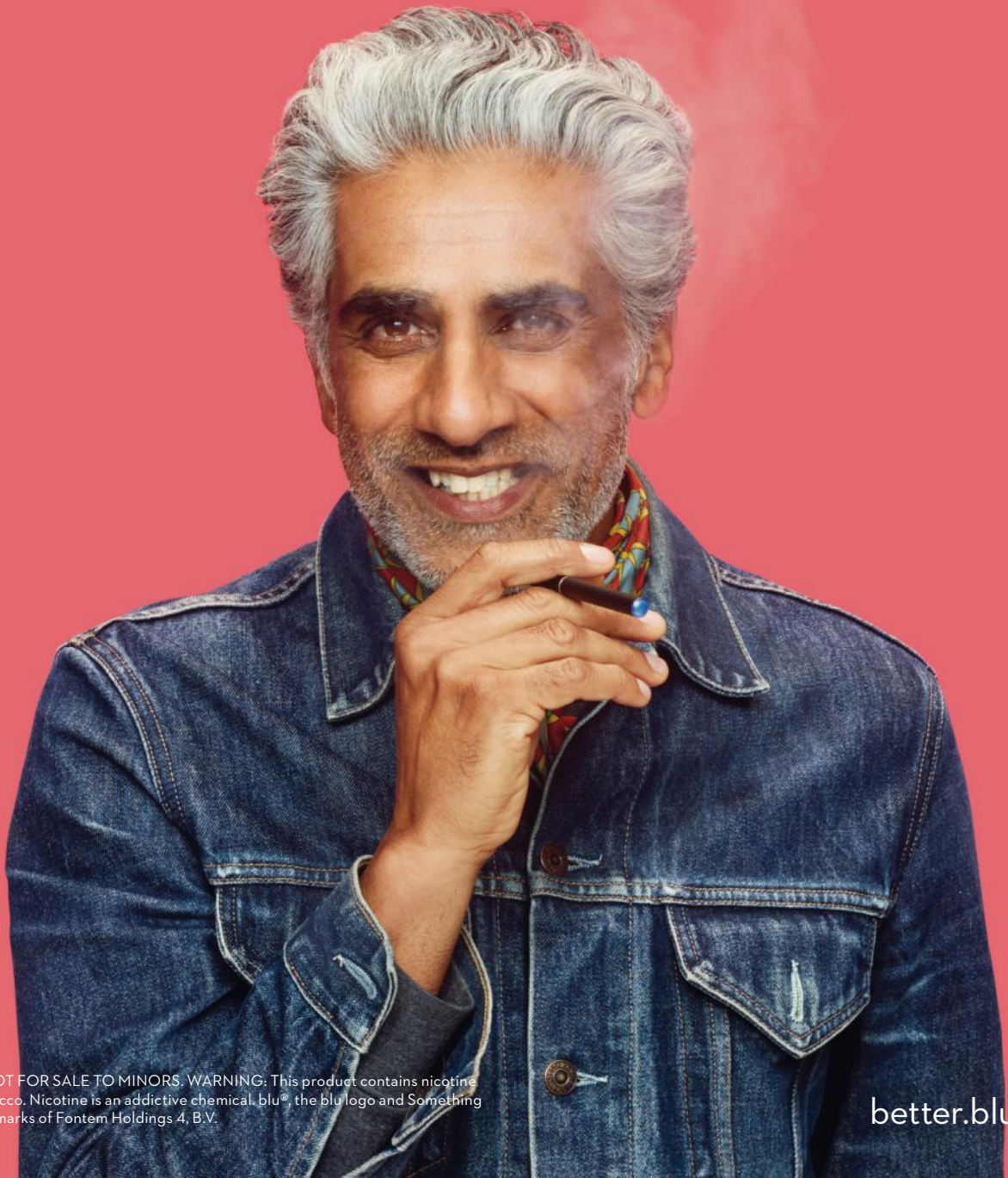
The Defenders

August 18th, NETFLIX

Marvel's newest all-star team is here: whiskey-swilling detective Jessica Jones, her Hell's Kitchen neighbor Daredevil, Harlem's bulletproof black messiah Luke Cage, plus a Richie Rich martial-arts kid called Iron Fist. Well, three out of four ain't bad. Krysten Ritter's Jones and Mike Colter's Cage have a stoic sense of grief, and Charlie Cox plays it mellow as Daredevil. But letting Finn Jones' lame Iron Fist in this squad is like putting Sammy Hagar in the Traveling Wilburys. Thankfully, the great Sigourney Weaver makes an elegantly sinister supervillain.

IMPORTANT:
Contains flavor

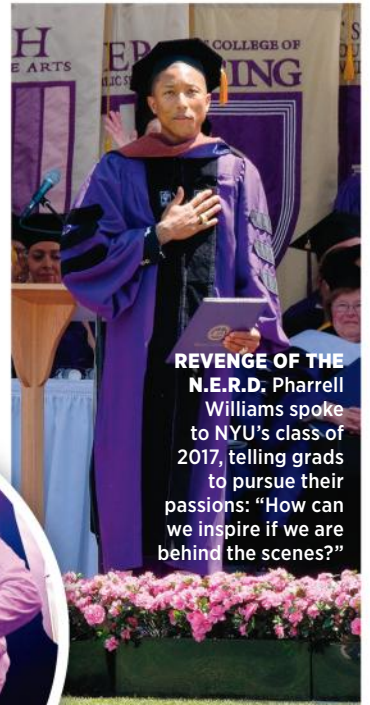
 | SOMETHING
BETTER
BETTER TASTING • MORE SATISFYING



RandomNotes



BLUES SCHOLAR Lucinda Williams scored an honorary degree from the Berklee College of Music. "It's the truest honor of all!" she said.



REVENGE OF THE N.E.R.D. Pharrell Williams spoke to NYU's class of 2017, telling grads to pursue their passions: "How can we inspire if we are behind the scenes?"

When Harry Met Stevie

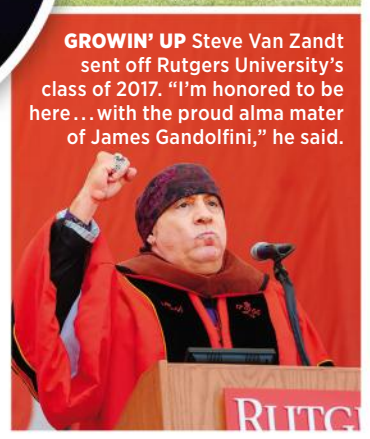
Harry Styles' new solo album is the work of a true Seventies soft-rock superfan. So it was no surprise to see Styles visibly choked up when Stevie Nicks joined him onstage at L.A.'s Troubadour to perform a moving "Landslide." "It's pretty hard to not fall in love with Harry Styles," says Nicks. "I feel that we will be good friends for a long time."



EDM phenom DJ Marshmello (right) rocked the Boom Boom Tent.

Surf's Up for Yachty

Lil Yachty told the crowd to get "turned up" at Alabama's Hangout Festival before launching himself into the audience. He just released his summery debut album, *Teenage Emotions*.

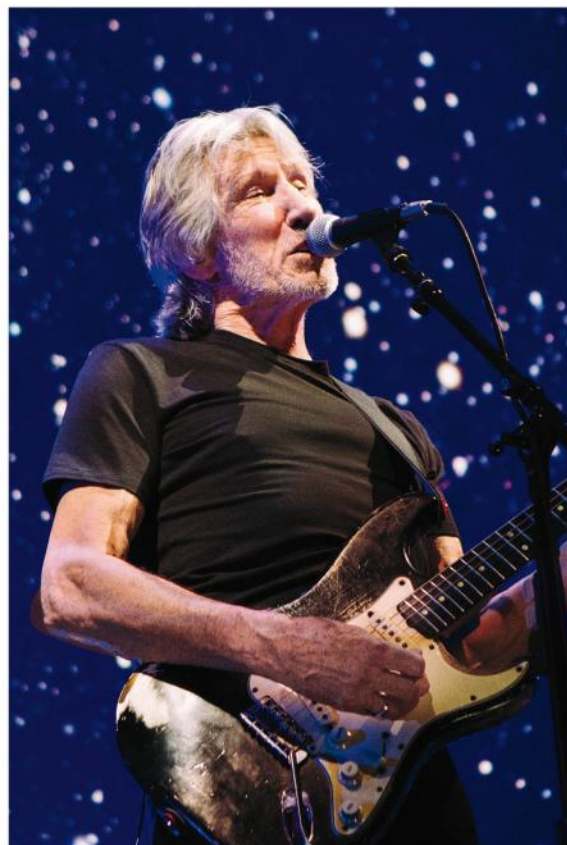


GROWIN' UP Steve Van Zandt sent off Rutgers University's class of 2017. "I'm honored to be here... with the proud alma mater of James Gandolfini," he said.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JACQUELINE VERDUGO; PAUL MAROTTA/GETTY IMAGES; DIA D'ASUPEL/GETTY IMAGES; BOBBY BANK/WIREIMAGE; MATT WINKELMEYER/GETTY IMAGES FOR HANGOUT MUSIC FESTIVAL; FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES FOR HANGOUT MUSIC FESTIVAL



BUMP UP THE JAM
Beyoncé hosted the “Carter Push Party,” a baby shower in L.A. attended by Serena Williams, Solange and Kelly Rowland. “Fun, fun, fun,” said Beyoncé’s mom, Tina.



Welcome to Roger Waters’ New Machine

Waters promised a politically charged spectacle for his new Us + Them Tour, and he didn’t disappoint. His rehearsal gig at New Jersey’s Meadowlands Arena featured images of President Donald Trump in a Klan hood and in a dress. “I don’t know how this will go down in Kansas City,” Waters says.

RATTLE AND MOM

Tom Morello and his badass 93-year-old mom, Mary, attended the L.A. stop on U2’s *Joshua Tree* tour. “I’ve always been Bono’s second-favorite Morello,” Tom joked.



SUGAR DADDY

Adam Levine celebrated Mother’s Day in L.A. with his daughter, Dusty Rose.



WILD STYLE

Drake brought his dad, Dennis Graham, to the *Billboard Music Awards* in Las Vegas, where the rapper won a record 13 statues. “Look at my dad – lookin’ all sharp,” said Drake.



DAIRY QUEENS

Katy Perry took her mom, Mary Hudson, to L.A.’s Museum of Ice Cream. Perry also recently addressed her longtime beef with Taylor Swift: “She started it.... I’m ready for that B.S. to be done.”

RADIOHEAD'S RADIOHEAD'S GENIUS GENIUS & DADA- & PUNK- NOVA NOVA

Radiohead look back at the making of their prescient masterpiece, 'OK Computer'

BY ANDY GREENE

THOM YORKE HAS FOUR WORDS OF BLUNT ADVICE FOR his younger, twitchier self, that paranoid twentysomething humanoid who made his band's turn-of-the-millennium masterpieces. "Lighten the fuck up," Yorke says, laughing hard. Radiohead's frontman, who turned 48 in October, is long past his days of hiding in tour buses and venting pain and fear into spiral notebooks. Now, he dances onstage and DJ's in clubs.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNY CLINCH





**HIGH
AND DRY**
Radiohead
in New
York, 1997

At the moment, he's sitting in Little Dom's Italian restaurant in the Los Feliz neighborhood of his adopted hometown of Los Angeles, wearing a bleached denim jacket with the collar popped up, a thin white T-shirt and what appear to be leather pants. His long hair is pulled back into a tiny, tight bun; he has a stylish gray beard. Little Dom's is one of his favorite spots – he was here the night before for dinner – but now it's midafternoon, and the restaurant has opened early just for him. He orders an English breakfast tea, and later an espresso. In his hand is an iPhone with a sticker on the back that sums up his response to nearly every conceivable query: **FUCK WHAT YOU HEARD.**

He just wrapped up a U.S. tour with Radiohead, playing to roughly 90,000 people at Coachella's second weekend. That performance was uneventful – unlike a week earlier, when the sound system went completely dead twice, midshow. Faced with a similar incident at Glastonbury in 1997, Yorke stormed offstage, “ready to kill,” at the end of the show. But this time he was able to laugh it off, mostly. “I'd love to tell you a joke, lighten the mood, something like that,” he told the crowd. “But this is Radiohead, so fuck it.” (Still, he says, “It was literally like one of those recurring nightmares – you're playing your guts out and you realize no one can hear you.”)

Yorke has spent a lot of time confronting his old nightmares – and his old self – recently. It's the 20th anniversary of the band's breakthrough album, *OK Computer*, and he's been poring over his old journals, sketchbooks and demos from the era for inclusion on a deluxe edition of the LP. “It's been really, really, really mental going through it,” says Yorke. “Going back into where my head was at – it's really bonkers.” The stacks of paper – which include handwritten lyrics on hotel stationery, instructions for the use of an inhaler (“Try very hard not to panic”) and drawings of airplanes, helicopters, cars, escalators and other modes of transport – reveal the innermost thoughts of a 27-year-old who was beginning to crack after living on a tour bus for four years in a row. “I was basically catatonic,” Yorke says. “The claustrophobia – just having no sense of reality at all.”

To most listeners, lyrics about nasty car accidents, airplane crashes, paranoid an-

droids and alien abductions, not to mention a sinister-sounding robot declaring that man was little more than “a pig in a cage on antibiotics,” tapped into a general sense of unease about the oncoming 21st century – and the frightening, exponentially accelerating rate of technological innovations, as beepers became cellphones and computers became vessels for news and pornography. “I was getting into the sense of information overload,” says Yorke. “Which is ironic, really, since it's so much worse now.” The lyrics also drew on Yorke's personal demons – the struggles of being in a rock band that never gave itself a moment of rest, but also deeper insecurities dating back to his childhood.

Released in the spring of 1997 – a time when music was fragmenting into a thicket of subgenres and the relevance of guitar rock seemed to be fading (guitarist Jonny Greenwood recalls thinking that “bands are already old hat”) – *OK Computer* was the last masterpiece of the alt-rock movement, and a reminder that there's still

room for rock bands to carry on the late-Beatles mission of using the studio to create grand artistic statements with heretofore unheard sounds. “It was the album where they threw everything out the window,” says Yorke's friend Michael Stipe. “They reimagined and decontextualized what it was to be a band. It was a yearning, emotive, grounded urge to create something real.”

“We had a lot of self-confidence and stupidity,” says bassist Colin Greenwood. “Stupidity is the wrong word. Lack of experience. When you're 24 or 25, you don't know how wrong this could go because you think you can do anything. And it's fantastic!”

OK Computer transformed Radiohead from a cult British act into the most important rock band on the planet. But in classic Nineties fashion, its success only left Yorke more adrift. “Back then,” Yorke recalls, “the person I saw in the mirror kept saying, ‘You're shit. Everything you do is shit. Don't do that. It's shit.’” For a minute there, he lost himself.

JONNY STILL FEELS SORRY FOR all of those young Alanis Morissette fans. Morissette, who adored Radiohead's second album, 1995's anthemic, guitar-heavy *The Bends* (“I loved every bass line, every keyboard note, every beautiful note hit by Thom,” she says now), had invited Radiohead to open on her *Jagged Little Pill* tour, where they faced antsy, indif-

ferent kids who wanted them to get off the stage so they could hear “Ironic.” “My main memory of that tour,” says Jonny, “is playing interminable hand-organ solos to an audience full of quietly despairing teenage girls.”

But they used amphitheater stages as an unlikely rehearsal spot for *OK Computer*, trying out complex unreleased tunes full of despair and longing – “Karma Police,” “Let Down,” “Paranoid Android” – in broad daylight. “We were well adept at playing to people that didn't give a rat's ass about us,” says Yorke. “I used to quite enjoy it. People are sitting down to their chicken dinners. We were trying to get them to choke on the bones.”

It was just one more run of shows, four years into a brutal cycle that began in 1992, when the band of high school friends (Yorke, drummer Phil Selway, bassist Colin and guitarists Ed O'Brien and Jonny) from Oxford, England, scored a freak worldwide hit with “Creep,” an anthem of self-loathing that threatened to turn them into just another 1990s one-hit wonder – no different than Marcy Playground and Spacehog. And they were all too aware of big British bands, like the Stone Roses, who were never willing to put in the roadwork to break through in the U.S.

So Radiohead crammed into an American Eagle bus (complete with the incongruous airbrushed image on its side of a stallion running on a beach) and hit every corner of America in support of *The Bends*. In 1995 alone, they played 177 shows, part of a near-suicidal run of touring and recording between 1993 and 1998, with only one month off. For most of the band, those were glorious years. “Some of my greatest memories of the band were on that bus going through America,” says O'Brien. “We'd play cards or watch movies. I remember going through the Rocky Mountains and listening to Glen Campbell.”

At one point in 1996, the band was killing time in the bus by listening to an audio version of Douglas Adams' classic 1979 sci-fi-comedy novel, *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Midway through the book, a spaceship computer says it's incapable of fending off incoming missiles. “OK, computer,” responds galactic president Zaphod Beeblebrox, “I want full manual control now.”

Yorke scribbled down the phrase – which marked the point in the narrative when humans saved themselves by reclaiming control from machines – in his bulging notebook of lyrics. Much would be made about the references to the dehumanizing effects of technology sprinkled throughout his new songs, but Yorke insists it was the nonstop travel that was really on his mind: If anything, the dislocation he was feeling from “living in orbit”

RADIOHEAD ENJOYED OPENING FOR ALANIS MORISSETTE: “THE CROWD WAS EATING CHICKEN DINNERS,” SAYS YORKE. “WE WERE TRYING TO GET THEM TO CHOKE.”

This is senior writer ANDY GREENE'S first cover story for ROLLING STONE.



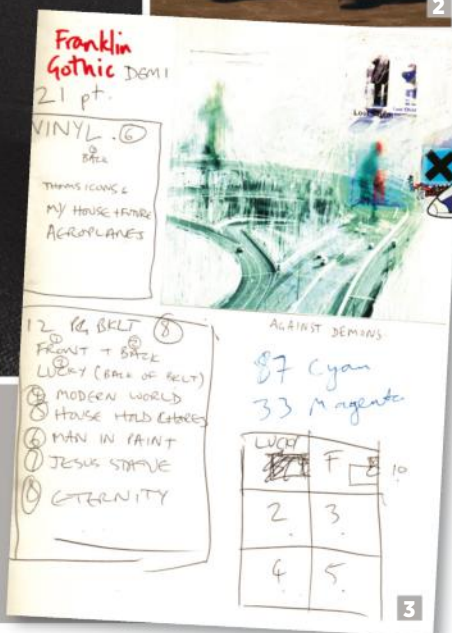
1

Computer Blue

(1) Yorke backstage in England, 1995. Radiohead played 177 shows that year. (2) With friend Michael Stipe in 1998. (3) Yorke's *OK Computer* sketchbook.



2



3

helped him tap into the smartphone-adjudged ethos of a future age.

"The paranoia I felt at the time was much more related to how people related to each other," he says. "But I was using the terminology of technology to express it. Everything I was writing was actually a way of trying to reconnect with other human beings when you're always in transit. That's what I had to write about because that's what was going on, which in itself instilled a kind of loneliness and disconnection."

Some of the tech-y lyrics, Yorke concedes, were just signs of his inner nerd emerging. "The whole album is really fucking geeky," he says. "I was kind of a geek when I was a kid, unashamedly so. Then I'm in this rock band famous for drinking tea and never socializing, where the truth is somewhat different." Yorke doesn't elaborate, though he certainly was doing some drinking in those days. But Selway argues that their reputation was well-earned. "The image of Radiohead on the road is

a monastery on wheels," he says. "For the most part, it was."

As tours started blurring into one another, Yorke struggled with phobias – he once spoke of picturing Radiohead's tour bus plunging off a cliff. "Our family almost had a terrible [car] accident," he says. "My dad used to talk to me a lot about it. I think he was trying to instill the idea that anything could happen at any moment and you're not in control of it, which led to a slight paranoia, maybe justified." His hatred of cars was tied into his general disdain for a society where, he once said, "people get up too early to leave houses where they don't want to live, to drive to jobs where they don't want to be, in one of the most dangerous forms of transport on Earth. I've never gotten used to that."

Yorke came by his alienation naturally. He was born with his left eye shut, and he endured five surgeries before his sixth birthday to open it up. Doctors botched one of the later ones, forcing him to wear an eye patch for a year and leaving him

with a permanent droop. His father's spotty employment as a supplier of chemical-engineering equipment caused the family to move around a lot, and the new kid with an unusual eye was an easy target for bullies. "There's a pervading sense of loneliness I've had since the day I was born," he said in 1995. "Maybe a lot of other people feel the same way, but I'm not about to run up and down the street asking everybody if they're as lonely as I am."

ST. CATHERINE'S COURT SITS ON 10 acres of land about 112 miles west of London in the sleepy town of Bath, England. The nine-bedroom Elizabethan manor house was built by a monk in 950 A.D. and expanded over the next thousand years until it was one of the U.K.'s most architecturally stunning private residences. "I still dream about it at night," says a former owner, actress Jane Seymour (a.k.a. Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman), who rented it to bands like the Cure, who recorded their 1996 LP *Wild Mood Swings* in the enormous ballroom at the center of the house. "It has four-second reverberation," says Seymour. "When John Barry, the composer, was there, he said, 'Don't furnish that room. You have no idea how precious it is as an empty space.'"

It was an appropriately grand location for Radiohead to record *OK Computer*. The pre-Napster record business was still swimming in money, and the steady sales of *The Bends* in England, coupled with growing critical buzz in America, persuaded EMI to give Radiohead a big budget. "They were like, 'Do what you want and we'll totally back you,'" says Yorke. "It was exciting."

Radiohead spent a total of six weeks living and working at St. Catherine's Court, where they quickly became acquainted with a key bit of lore about the property: It may be haunted. King Henry VIII's illegitimate daughter Ethelreda Malte supposedly died in one of the bedrooms in 1599, and never left. Jonny wound up sleeping in the nursery, "surrounded by creepy broken dolls and rocking horses," he says. "People were always hearing sounds."

Yorke had it the worst. "Ghosts would talk to me while I was asleep," he says, with a curious hint of amusement. "There was one point where I got up in the morning after a night of hearing voices and decided I had to cut my hair." He attempted to give himself a spontaneous crew cut with "the little scissors on a penknife." It didn't go well. "I cut myself a few times. It got messy. I came downstairs and everyone was like, 'Uh, are you all right?' I was like, 'What's wrong?' Phil very gently took me downstairs and shaved it all off."

But the more lasting supernatural phenomenon was the music the band was mak-

ing. "It was a time of magic," says O'Brien. "I really believe the stars were in alignment. It all sort of just came into focus." They were drawing inspiration from a disparate list of some of the greatest albums ever made: the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On* and especially Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, a tour-bus favorite. "In some ways we were really conceited," says Jonny, "and we would listen to a record like *Bitches Brew* and be so heavily influenced that we wanted to do it. And it didn't bother us that none of us had or played or even wanted to have any trumpet. And yet we had the kind of arrogance to go, 'Yeah, we can kind of go for that.'"

They were entirely dismissive of the prevailing guitar-rock trend back home – even before Oasis' Gallagher brothers started disparaging the well-educated Radiohead as "students." "To us, Brit pop was just a 1960s revival," says Jonny. "It just leads to pastiche. It's you wishing it was another era. But as soon as you go down that route, you might as well be a Dixieland jazz band, really." Yorke is more direct. "The whole Brit pop thing made me fucking angry," he says. "I hated it. It was backwards-looking, and I didn't want any part of it."

Nigel Godrich, a young engineer who had recorded *The Bends*, was, for the first time, on board as producer in all but name (he would take that title on every subsequent Radiohead album, as well as with artists from Beck to Paul McCartney), and as the sole engineer. Godrich was at least as fearless and ambitious as the band, and he saw greatness in Radiohead. "They were the band of my dreams," he says. "There were no constraints. This was not Neanderthal rock & roll. It was very high-level thinking, conceptual, moving forwards in terms of sonics, and beautiful songs. It was a perfect thing. Lots of people, lots of ideas, and we all could pull in the same direction."

Radiohead were collectively hostile to Seventies progressive rock ("I didn't even like Pink Floyd," says O'Brien), but that didn't stop them from reinventing prog from scratch on *OK Computer*, particularly on the six-and-a-half-minute "Paranoid Android" – which Yorke famously described as a cross between "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Happiness Is a Warm Gun." "The problem with prog stuff," says Jonny, "is it sounds like it really has been thought about. And it's exhausting as a result. All those records were very pastoral, and they're preaching about unicorns and dinosaurs."

On other tracks, Radiohead began to move away from live playing altogether – they based album opener "Airbag" around a distorted loop of Selway's drums. Yorke ended up pushing the boundaries even further on the haunting "Karma Police." One night he and Godrich were having a pint when the singer confessed he didn't like the

second half of the song. Without any other members of the band present, they took samples and loops and created a new bed of music with Yorke's vocals on top, climaxing in a swirl of noise that was almost the electronic equivalent of "A Day in the Life."

"It was the first time we did anything like that," says Godrich. "Just us in the studio, and a forerunner of a lot of things to come, good and bad." It was a new way of working that would lead directly to the electronic excursions of *Kid A* and beyond – as well as to solo albums and intraband conflicts.

On "Fitter Happier," Yorke yielded lead vocals to a Macintosh LC II that read text in a flat, emotionless tone, replete with mispronunciations. He fed a string of advice both practical ("No more microwave dinners and saturated fats") and disturbing ("No killing moths or putting boiling water on the ants") into it and found the result nicely underscored the album's themes.

The LP ends with the mournful "The Tourist," with its repeated line "Hey, man, slow down." "Everything was about speed when I wrote those songs," Yorke says. "I had a sense of looking out a window at things moving so fast I could barely see. One morning in Germany I was feeling particularly paranoid because I hadn't slept well. I walked out to find something to eat, but I couldn't find anything, and this fucking dog was barking at me. I'm staring at this dog, and everyone else is carrying on. That's where 'hey, man, slow down' comes from. It sounds like it's all about technology and stuff, but it's not."

In the end, their record label's investment didn't quite yield the follow-up to *The Bends* that the corporation expected. "They thought the album was going to be chockablock with radio-tastic singles," said their manager Chris Hufford, who recalled hearing the word "disappointed." "I said, 'Forget the bloody singles, just listen. . . . You'll realize what an amazing piece of work it is.'"

Critics and fans did, instantly, and the album went on to go double-platinum in the U.S. Radiohead had reached a level that most bands never approach – but their members weren't sure what to make of the acclaim. "You don't quite believe it," says O'Brien. "But I felt like we'd made a really great record." Adds Selway, "There was an element of sitting there with your fingers in your ears, trying to block some of it out. Maybe we were slightly wary of it after the response that 'Creep' had. It all comes a bit double-edged, really."

AS THE "OK COMPUTER" TOUR began, Radiohead allowed filmmaker Grant Gee to start capturing their world, armed only with a Sony PC-100 handheld camera. In May 1997, he began shooting a film that he would eventually give the ironic title *Meeting People Is Easy*, as the bandmates gathered at a hotel in Barcelona to subject themselves to promotional interviews for three straight days. "It might not have bothered people with thick skin," says Gee, "but I got the sense they were thin-skinned."

Yorke, especially. "I did have fun sometimes," the singer insists. "But the public side of it, and the way people talked to me, even on the street, I could not fucking handle it. David Bowie was able to use these personas that would fuck with his relationship with the fans. He did it all in a very finessed, elegant way. I did not."

Yorke's exhaustion finally got the best of him in November 1997, as the tour hit an arena in Birmingham, England. "I walked out of soundcheck, disappeared, lost the security and then was trying to get out of the building," says Yorke. After wandering

for a while, he ended up on a train filled with Radiohead fans on their way to the show. "There was nowhere to go, so I hid on the train. And that was the nearest I came to trying to escape."

Yorke may have been starting to lose it, but his bandmates kept him from the edge. "Personally speaking," says O'Brien, "and to my own suffering, I spent a lot of time looking out for Thom. It was all about making sure he was able to get through the gig. I had to be there for him like a brother." And other friends forced Yorke to do normal stuff like hitting the pub, even as Stipe eased him into the world of celebrity by tricking him into dinners with the likes of U2.

Somewhere along the line, Yorke developed perspective

– the time off that the band finally took between *OK Computer* and 2000's *Kid A* didn't hurt. "It's OK to be anxious about stuff," he says, again addressing younger Thom. "If you're choosing to do something as amazing as this, then at some point, right then, mate, you're gonna have to choose to just let things happen. Choose to get time for yourself, walk the fuck away when you can. This internal monologue going on is completely debilitating and completely unhealthy. You're not going crazy. You've just been doing this too long and you need to step away and learn to love

"IN SOME WAYS WE WERE REALLY CONCEITED," SAYS JONNY GREENWOOD. "WE WOULD LISTEN TO 'BITCHES BREW' AND GO, 'YEAH, WE CAN KIND OF GO FOR THAT.'"



why you love it and remember why you did it.' It took me a long time."

A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE SECOND weekend of Coachella in April, Radiohead are backstage at the Greek Theatre in Berkeley preparing to go on for one of the last shows of their tour. Yorke is waiting for his teenage kids to arrive, Colin is making arrangements with a road manager to visit an art museum in San Francisco the next morning, and Jonny is sitting alone in his dressing room thumbing through a paperback copy of the 1942 Evelyn Waugh novel *Put Out More Flags*.

Twenty years after *OK Computer*, Radiohead are still together, with their original lineup intact. Which doesn't mean there hasn't been serious turmoil. Yorke

acknowledges he made it tough for the band when he shifted directions for *Kid A*. "The others didn't know what to contribute," he says. "When you're working with a synthesizer, it's like there's no connection. You're not in a room with other people. I made everyone's life almost impossible."

But the endless evolution that began with *OK Computer* has secured Radiohead's cross-generational place as one of the 21st century's most forward-looking bands. Their journey has taken them to the point that Jonny, for one, objects not only to the descriptor "rock" but also the word "band" – and, for that matter, the idea that he's a "guitarist." Jonny sees Radiohead as "just kind of an arrangement to form songs using whatever technology

suits the song. And that technology can be a cello or it can be a laptop. It's all sort of machinery when looked at in the right way. That's how I think of it."

Right now, they're on tour in support of their ninth album, 2016's *A Moon Shaped Pool*, which they surprise-released last May, without any press and with little promotion. "We weren't in a position to really talk about it when it came out," says O'Brien, picking his words carefully. "We didn't want to talk about it being quite hard to make. We were quite fragile, and we needed to find our feet." He pauses. "I don't want to talk about it anymore, if that's all right. I feel like the dust hasn't settled. It was a hard time."

He's delicately referring to the fact that Yorke has been enduring a tragedy that makes everything he went through in the Nineties seem trivial. His ex-wife, Rachel Owen, the mother of his two teenage children, passed away in December after a long battle with cancer. They had separated the prior year, but they'd been together for 23 years. Nobody outside of a tight circle of confidants even knew she was sick, but Yorke's sorrow seeps through nearly every song on *A Moon Shaped Pool*.

"There was a lot of difficult stuff going on at the time, and it was a tough time for us as people," says Yorke. "It was a miracle that that record got made at all."

Unlike for *OK Computer* – and most of the rest of the Radiohead catalog – the band came into the sessions with few fresh Yorke demos to flesh out. "There was no rehearsal," says O'Brien. "We just went straight into recording. A lot of the songs had been around a bit. The sound emerged as we recorded."

Fitter, Happier

Thom Yorke at Coachella. "I'm really enjoying myself on this tour," he says.

Somehow, though, the tour behind Radiohead's saddest album became a joyous experience. "I'm really enjoying myself," says Yorke. "It feels really liberating, which I don't often say."

Still, their plans after the tour ends in Tel Aviv in mid-July are up in the air. "I do wish we did more shows," says Colin. "And I wish that we spent more time in a room playing, working on stuff together. But this is how we've worked for a long time."

Colin might be surprised to hear that Yorke says he's willing to consider the idea of recording live as a band – for the first time since 1997. "I've always been extreme about resisting us being a drum-guitar-bass band," says Yorke. "But if that's what people want to try, I'm too old to be standing there with a hammer and saying, 'We must do this, we must do that!' I would like everyone to feel free." He smiles. "But, you know, it's not easy."

Chris Cornell

1964-2017

By David Fricke

THE LAST TIME Serj Tankian saw Chris Cornell, everything seemed great. On March 25th, the two friends – Tankian, the singer in the alternative-metal band System of a Down, and Cornell, the founding singer-guitarist of the pioneering Seattle grunge band Soundgarden – were guests at a star-studded 70th-birthday gala thrown by Elton John in L.A. “We had this long chat, sitting next to each other,” Tankian remembers. He and Cornell talked about composing for movies and the prospect of Cornell doing concerts with an orchestra. Tankian, about to go on the road with System of a Down, asked Cornell if he was tired of touring. “For myself, it’s fun but nothing new under the sun,” Tankian admits. Cornell “was just the opposite: ‘I’m really excited. I’m doing this tour with Soundgarden. I’ve got these other ideas.’ He had plans, man.”

Then on April 12th, Tankian and Cornell attended a red-carpet premiere in L.A. for

He was a
grunge god
and one
of rock’s most
powerful
singers. He
channeled his
dark side into
his songs –
until it finally
got the better
of him

The Promise, a historical drama about the Armenian genocide. Both men had recorded music for the film. “He was doing great, doing press – fighting the good fight” for the project, Tankian says. Cornell was “one of those guys,” he adds, who “tried to make everyone in the room feel comfortable with themselves. He was generous that way, with his emotions and time.”

Barely a month later, on May 17th, Soundgarden – Cornell, guitarist Kim Thayil, bassist Ben Shepherd and drummer Matt Cameron – played for 5,000 people at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. After the show, shortly past midnight, police officers responded to a call about an apparent suicide at the MGM Grand hotel and casino. They found Cornell in his room, on the bathroom floor, with an exercise band around his neck.

The singer, 52, was pronounced dead at the scene. In a statement issued on the afternoon of May 18th, the Wayne County

Photograph by MARK SELIGER



medical examiner's office confirmed Cornell's death as suicide by hanging. Tankian's response to the news: "Disbelief," he says, speaking just over 24 hours later. "I'm like, 'No fucking way.'"

There were certainly no warning signs on April 19th, when Cornell performed "The Promise," his theme song for the film, on *The Tonight Show* with Cameron, a string section and record producer Brendan O'Brien on guitar. Cornell and O'Brien had worked together in the studio since the mid-Nineties, when the latter mixed Soundgarden's 1994 multi-platinum breakthrough, *Superunknown*. O'Brien produced Cornell's latest solo album, 2015's *Higher Truth*, and had recently done sessions with Cornell for a potential record of cover versions.

"He didn't seem any different to me," O'Brien says of Cornell's mood at *The Tonight Show*. "I felt like we had a good time there. He was in good spirits." O'Brien notes that the volume on his guitar was mistakenly cranked up during the taping. "The next day I sent an e-mail: 'You sang great. Sorry about being so loud.' And he was, 'All great. Love you. No worries.'"

Guitarist Tom Morello played with Cornell between 2001 and 2007, when Cornell formed Audioslave with Morello, drummer Brad Wilk and bassist Tim Commerford, the instrumental backbone of Rage Against the Machine. Morello last saw Cornell on January 20th, when Audioslave reunited in L.A. at the Anti-Inaugural Ball, a protest concert held on the night of President Trump's inauguration.

Cornell was "shining" at that gig, Morello insists. "We hung out after the show – just laughed, took pictures. The last thing he said to me was, 'I had such a great time. I would love to do this again. You just let me know.' I was like, 'Yeah, let's figure it out!'"

"It's unbelievable," Morello says of Cornell's death. "I don't know what the phases of mourning are, but I'm in the first one. I still expect this to be some kind of mistake" – that Cornell will soon be in touch with a text or phone call "where it's 'I'm cool. I'm so sorry. That was a scare. Everything is going to be all right.'"

AT 7:06 P.M. on May 17th, after pulling into Detroit for Soundgarden's show, Cornell fired off a jubilant message on Twitter – "Finally back to Rock City!!!" – with a photo of the band's name on the Fox Theatre marquee. Four hours later, Cornell finished the encore as he frequently did, closing an epic version of "Slaves & Bulldozers," from Soundgarden's 1991 album, *Badmotorfinger*, with a bellowing-vocal flourish of Led Zeppelin's "In My Time of Dying."

The rest of the 20-song set list ran the full length of Cornell's progressive-metal legacy with Soundgarden, from the an-

gular-hardcore fury of their 1987 debut 45, "Hunted Down," to 2012's *King Animal*, the band's triumphant studio comeback after more than a decade's hiatus. Soundgarden also played nearly half of *Superunknown*, their bestselling album and – in the dark, psychedelic adventure and lacerating self-examination of the hits "Fell on Black Days" and "Black Hole Sun" – Cornell's personal quantum leap as a songwriter.

Cellphone footage from Cornell's final concert is troubling but inconclusive. In Detroit, his between-song raps veer from grateful to cryptic, including a bizarre reference to crosses burning on lawns. At times, his singing – at its best a dramatic tension of vintage rock-lord howl, bluesy melodic poise and seething, syrupy men-

“
Chris
laughed at the
whole rock-
god thing,”
says Cameron
Crowe. “I
never thought
he’d go all the
way into the
dark place.”

ace – sounds too far off the beat, lagging behind the band. And in that encore, Cornell punches the air with triumph – before turning his back to the crowd as he and Thayil face their guitar amps, unleashing a last firestorm of feedback.

After signing some autographs outside the Fox, Cornell went to his hotel room, where he spoke to his wife, Vicky, on the phone. "I noticed he was slurring his words; he was different," she said in a statement issued May 19th. "When he told me he may have taken an extra Ativan or two, I contacted security and asked that they check on him." Soundgarden bodyguard Martin Kirsten kicked in the hotel-room and bedroom doors – both were locked – and found Cornell "with blood running from his mouth and a red exercise band around [his] neck," according to a police report.

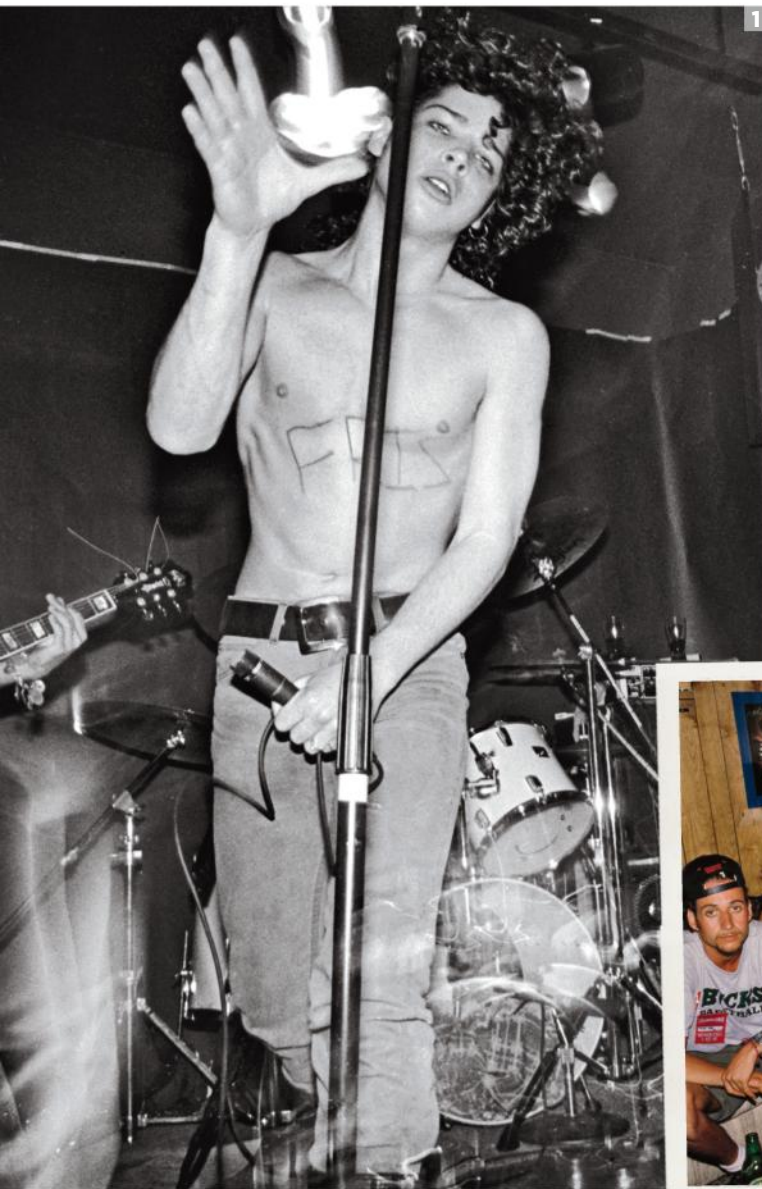
Cornell had a prescription for Ativan, an anxiety medication that has been used by recovering addicts. Adverse reactions, especially in higher doses, include drowsiness, mood swings, confusion and thoughts of suicide. In a 1994 *ROLLING STONE* interview, Cornell confessed to being "a daily drug user at 13" and quitting at 14. But there were subsequent battles with alcohol and substance abuse, which led Cornell to check himself into rehab in 2002. Tankian attests to Cornell's sobriety in recent weeks: At the Elton John party, Cornell joined in a champagne toast – raising his glass – but did not drink.

The surviving members of Soundgarden declined to speak for this story. A full autopsy and toxicology report had not been released as *ROLLING STONE* went to press. But in the May 19th statement, Vicky Cornell and family attorney Kirk Pasich disputed the verdict of suicide. Chris "may have taken more Ativan than recommended dosages," Pasich said. But, Vicky said, "I know that he loved our children" – the couple had a son and a daughter, Christopher and Toni – and "would not hurt them by intentionally taking his own life." Chris also had a daughter, Lily, from his previous marriage to former Soundgarden manager Susan Silver. They divorced in 2004.

Until that Wednesday in Detroit, Cornell was "the last guy in the world I thought that would happen to," says guitarist Jerry Cantrell of the Seattle band Alice in Chains, who lost their original singer, Layne Staley, to a drug overdose in 2002. "That's not the way that book was supposed to end. And it was not the way that book was going."

In and beyond Seattle, Cornell was a widely respected native son: an elder statesman and charter survivor of the city's pregrunge underground in the Eighties – he and Thayil started Soundgarden as a trio in 1984 – and its turbulent commercial boom in the wake of Nirvana's 1991 smash, *Nevermind*. Dave Grohl recalls being struck by the contrast between Soundgarden's roaring futurism and Cornell's thoughtful, soft-spoken manner off-stage the first time they met, at a party at Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic's house. "There was a bunch of the Seattle gang there," Grohl says, "and Chris just seemed so quiet and mellow compared to the rest of the maniacs."

But Cornell was frank and fearless in his songwriting, addressing the lessons in loss that repeatedly shook him and his hometown. In March 1990, Andrew Wood, the singer in Mother Love Bone and Cornell's former roommate, died of a heroin overdose. The death would continue to haunt Cornell through the years. He soon wrote a pair of thundering memorials to Wood, "Say Hello 2 Heaven" and "Reach Down," that became the cornerstone songs for



1 2



Seattle's Best

(1) Cornell, age 21. (2) Soundgarden in 1992. Cornell formed the band in 1984, long before grunge exploded. (3) In 1991, members of Soundgarden and Pearl Jam combined for Temple of the Dog. Cornell conceived the band as a tribute to his friend Andrew Wood, who had died of a heroin overdose.



3

1991's *Temple of the Dog*, a Top Five collaboration with members of the then-unknown Pearl Jam.

Wood also figured in "Like Suicide," a *Superunknown* track that took on more weight and healing with the 1994 suicide of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, a month after that album's release. "The emotional possibilities" on that record "were now emotional realities," Cornell said in 2013, looking back at his own interior war of feelings in songs such as "Let Me Drown" and "Limo Wreck." He described "Like Suicide" as "about all of these beautiful lives around us, twice as bright and half as long, careening into walls." But, Cornell went on, "after the funerals, we feel better about ourselves when we're able to get up the next day."

Cornell was candid, in interviews as well as his lyrics, about the allure of the abyss. Part of it, he once said, came from "growing up in the Northwest. You're al-

ways moving between the creepiness of everyday life and this natural beauty that surrounds you all the time." In a striking 1999 exchange with *ROLLING STONE*, Cornell admitted to a habit — "something I've done since I was a kid" — of opening windows and imagining what it would be like to jump. "But I never take it seriously," he added right away.

"I always felt like Chris had a lonely place inside of him that he went to creatively," says filmmaker and veteran *ROLLING STONE* writer Cameron Crowe, who gave Cornell a cameo as himself in *Singles*, Crowe's 1992 romantic drama set in the erupting Seattle scene. "Sometimes he laughed at the whole rock-god thing, like [in the Soundgarden song] 'Big Dumb Sex.' He had that thing: 'I know how to mock this.'

"I never thought Chris — given family and a certain sunniness, the humor and

soulfulness in the way he talked about his life privately — would go all the way into the dark place," Crowe says. "I thought he would access it, write about it and mock it too well."

Tankian points out that "The Promise," the last song Cornell released before his death, "is about survival — to survive and thrive.... I've seen people in a bad place. You wish they would find a way to the light and find peace with themselves." Cornell, Tankian insists, "wasn't that guy. He was gracious, standing in the light."

Until Detroit.

CORNELL WAS BORN Christopher John Boyle in Seattle on July 20th, 1964, the fourth of six children. His father, Ed, was a pharmacist; his mother, Karen, was an accountant. Chris dropped out of school at 14, after his parents' divorce (Cornell is Karen's maiden name), and worked in a

seafood warehouse and as a cook. Cornell also turned to music for release, starting on drums at 16. His first favorite band was the Beatles; Cornell later described the diversity of texture and attack on *Superunknown* as Soundgarden's "White Album period."

In the early Eighties, Cornell played in a covers band, the Shemps, that at different times included Thayil and founding Soundgarden bassist Hiro Yamamoto. "When I met Chris," Thayil said in 1992, "my first impression was that he was some guy who had just got out of the Navy or something. He had real short hair and was dressed real slick." Cornell also "had a great voice."

In 1984, the three started Soundgarden, minting a unique heavy metal that combined the hypersurreality of hardcore bands like Minutemen and Meat Puppets with the British post-punk existentialism of Wire and Joy Division. Shepherd, who became Soundgarden's bassist in 1990, was already a fan; he saw the original trio's second gig, opening for Hüsker Dü. "They didn't play the usual punk rock," he said in 2013. "And they weren't butt rock or heavy metal, the way people tried to label them later because they had long hair. To me, the music was black, blue and overcast with lightning." Cameron joined in 1986, after Cornell – who also played guitar and was emerging as the dominant songwriter – became Soundgarden's full-time frontman.

"Soundgarden took the riff rock I love and made it smart," Morello says, recalling that band's profound impact on the early sound and direction of Rage Against the Machine. "Cornell's dark, poetic intellect was not something you found in heavy metal."

Grohl vividly remembers the first time he saw Soundgarden live – before he immigrated to Seattle, at a Baltimore club in 1990. "It was as if all of our punk-rock and classic-rock dreams came true together," Grohl says. "Everybody, whether it was in Washington, D.C., or Washington state, looked up to Soundgarden as this force of nature."

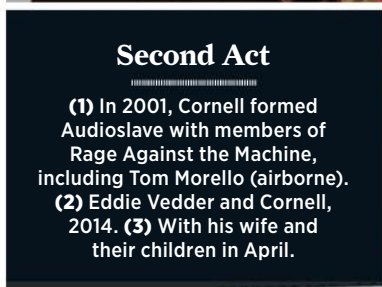
The first band to release a 45 with the iconic Sub Pop Records and the first act from the Seattle underground to snare a major-label deal, Soundgarden were "a beacon to follow," Cantrell says, for the local groups in their wake. "Our town's not that big. Everybody kept an eye on what those guys were doing. And it was inspiring." For a time, Alice in Chains shared management with Soundgarden. "We loaned each other money so our bands could tour," Cantrell explains. "We had the same T-shirt guy. It was all intimate shit."

Cornell, in particular, represented "a strong strain running through our whole town – he was always so honest, from the moment I met him," Cantrell says. "I share



Second Act

(1) In 2001, Cornell formed Audioslave with members of Rage Against the Machine, including Tom Morello (airborne). (2) Eddie Vedder and Cornell, 2014. (3) With his wife and their children in April.



a lot of the issues Chris communicated" in his songwriting. "And there's a power in sharing your weakness with the people who need to hear that, so they can consider, 'Fuck, that guy's dealing with it.' You don't feel so alone."

"Great art comes from generosity," Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard said last year,

recalling the genesis of Temple of the Dog. Gossard and Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament, who played in Mother Love Bone, were devastated by Wood's death. Cornell wrote the songs for Temple of the Dog "from as pure a place as you can find," Gossard continued. "And then he reached out, letting us in."

Gossard, Ament and Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McCready became Cornell's core band in Temple of the Dog with Soundgarden's Cameron. Cornell also took a paternal interest in Pearl Jam's singer, a recent San Diego emigré named Eddie Vedder. "Ed was super-shy back then – we were just getting to know him," McCready said in 2016. At one Temple of the Dog session, Cornell brought in a new song called "Hunger Strike." As he ran down the arrangement, Vedder jumped in, tak-

ing the lower melody against Cornell's soaring vocal.

"Suddenly, it was a real song," Cornell later remarked. "Hunger Strike" became Temple of the Dog's breakout single; it was also Vedder's first featured vocal on a record. "Chris' heart was big enough," McCready said, "to let him do it."

Soundgarden broke up in 1997, overwhelmed by internal tensions and private trials; Cameron soon joined Pearl Jam. Cornell later acknowledged that he was drinking heavily "to get through things in my personal life" (his first marriage was dissolving in acrimony) – and "a pioneer," he noted ruefully, in abusing OxyContin.

"It was the most difficult part of my life – I'm lucky I got through it," Cornell conceded in 2009. "I'm not sure if it was the best place for me," he added, referring to rehab. "But it worked."

"I SPENT THE last week and a half in a room with no windows, just doing Soundgarden demos," Cornell told me during an interview for *ROLLING STONE* in August 2015. "We're going to meet in four days and spend a week together. By the end of that week, we'll have a lot of stuff, a lot of ideas to work with."

That month, Cornell was also preparing for the release of his fifth solo album, *Higher Truth*, and fall concerts – the latest leg of his Songbook Tour, a one-man evening of new material, greatest hits, surprising covers and relaxed storytelling, launched in 2011. "Now, I kind of get Neil Young," he admitted. "He goes on tour with Crazy Horse, then he's out with Booker T. and the MG's. Then he's on tour by himself with seven guitars. It makes sense to me now. He's not trying to find out who he is."

Young is, I suggested, all of those things. "And all of those things," Cornell replied, "are me."

Thayil confirmed to *ROLLING STONE* last year that Soundgarden were still inching their way to a new studio album, their first since *King Animal*, while touring and pursuing a campaign of deluxe archival projects. Expanded editions of *Badmotorfinger* and Soundgarden's first full-length album, 1988's *Ultramega OK*, have come out in recent months. Cornell, on his own, had started recording the covers album with O'Brien. And Paul Buckmaster, who created the string arrangement for "The Promise," says that Cornell was "great in the studio" and "totally fascinated" with the process of recording with an

orchestra: "He'd never seen anything like this before." Buckmaster reveals that the 2016 session for the film song went so well that, in recent weeks, "there was even talk of me doing orchestrations" of Soundgarden material for live shows, possibly with the band.

In recent years, Cornell "seemed to be on a mission to work all the time," O'Brien says. "And I mean all the time. He always seemed to be doing something – and a lot of different things. Chris was also a guy," O'Brien adds, "who liked being someone



The Last Show

Onstage in Detroit, hours before his death. Soundgarden ended the show with "Slaves & Bulldozers," during which Cornell sang parts of Zeppelin's "In My Time of Dying."

who was on their game. He liked people to see him that way."

There were misfires. Cornell's 2009 album, *Scream*, made with the hip-hop producer Timbaland, was the singer's first Top 10 solo effort but was savaged in the press – and by some peers. "Seeing Chris do that record felt like a blow to me," says Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails. "I thought, 'He's above that, man. He's one of the 10 best vocalists of our time.'"

Reznor went public, blasting Cornell on Twitter – "which," the former says now, "I immediately regretted." Five years later, as Soundgarden and Nine Inch Nails were about to start a co-headlining tour, Reznor wrote Cornell an e-mail, apologizing for

that outburst. "He was very cool and generous about it – 'It's the past, fuck it. Let's go on.' The Chris I met on that tour was a gentleman that completely had his shit together."

Cornell lived at various times in Los Angeles, Paris and Miami. But he always had time for Seattle. In January 2015, Cornell was part of a small army of local heroes – including Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan and members of Pearl Jam – at the city's Benaroya Hall for a tribute concert to Mad Season, a short-lived mid-Nineties group fronted by Staley and McCready. Cornell personally asked Alice in Chains drummer Sean Kinney to join the show.

"I wasn't thinking I could be able to handle it," Kinney says, alluding to the continuing hurt of Staley's death. "But Chris really coaxed me to come out. I went as far as rocking the bongo," he notes, laughing. "And it was a beautiful thing. He told me how he had to get into it, how hard it was for him. And I just told him, 'Layne would have loved the shit out of it.'"


"I have a lot of experience with what's going on here," Kinney says of Cornell's passing. "Every time they write about your band from now on, it will always be there: 'X died.' I just go to the music and what's left. We're lucky that we have that."

"There's going to be people that are going to mythologize this – 'the grunge curse,'" Tankian says. "I wouldn't do that." Cornell "was 52 years old. He made it through the woods of whatever he was suffering with his life – his youth and later."

"He was open about being vulnerable," Crowe points out, "with a certain amount of pride that he had been able to make it through tough times. I never had a conversation with him where he said,

'I'm lost.' It was always, 'I had a tough period, but I'm having fun now.'"

Cornell "always had it, the same thing as when I saw Layne for the first time – the commitment to take that ride," Cantrell says. "There was something that I recognized and aspired to – to have your own voice and sound. Nobody else sounds like that guy. Nobody will."

"There is a space now and forever empty because of that," Cantrell says of Cornell's death. "It's never going to make sense. It's never going to feel right. And it's always going to hurt." 

Additional reporting by Kory Grow and Ashley Zlatopolsky

The Happy Warrior

How Al Franken
rediscovered his
sense of humor
in the U.S. Senate
By Mark Binelli

A SERIOUS MAN
Franken in his
Washington,
D.C., office



Last November, Al Franken had this great idea for a sketch.

Bits still come to him, unbidden, all of these years after *Saturday Night Live*. He doesn't do anything with them. At this stage in his life, as a U.S. senator representing his home state of Minnesota, passing along a freebie to one of his friends in show business would leave Franken with little control over the final outcome. ("Many a slip 'twixt cup and lip," as one of his favorite sayings goes.) Anyway, the idea for the bit came after Donald Trump's first post-election visit to the White House – that fleeting moment when, after meeting with Barack Obama, Trump seemed uncharacteristically humbled by the awesomeness of his new responsibility, and perhaps even spooked enough to lean on his predecessor for advice.

We open on an Oval Office set. You've got Alec Baldwin playing Trump, of course, and Jay Pharoah would come back as Obama, Will Ferrell as W., Darrell Hammond as Bill Clinton, Dana Carvey as Bush Sr. And the ex-presidents have gathered to spin Trump a fiction: that each of them had consulted extensively with the man he'd replaced. "I gotta tell you, George was *unbelievable*," Hammond's Clinton would say, wrapping his arm Bubba-ishly around Trump's shoulder. "I'd been governor for so long, but I did not know what I was doing when I got here. And here's George, I *beat* him, and every day he was the first person I talked to – for an hour! – and he was the last person I talked to before I went to bed. And I just could not have done that first term without him!"

Franken, who is laying out the sketch for me in Washington one afternoon in May, pauses to loose a nasal, honking laugh. Unlike our current president, Franken laughs often, and loudly, both at his own jokes and

at the jokes of others. "Yeah, that's how it's done," he continues in a hoarse Arkansas drawl. "*You listen to the last guy.*" Franken shakes his head wistfully. He'd actually considered submitting this one. "I think I didn't," he admits, "partly because I was kind of hoping that was Obama's play. That he'd go, like, 'I can call you every morning if you want!' I didn't want to ruin it."

Instead, Franken returned to the grim new reality of his current day job. He attended Trump's inauguration, which he describes in his admirably incautious new memoir, *Al Franken, Giant of the Senate*, as "perhaps the most depressing moment I've had since I entered politics, though that record has been repeatedly surpassed since January 20." That sentence was written *before* Trump's sacking of FBI Director James Comey, the appointment of former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel in the Russia investigation, and the outrageous, near-daily series of concurrent leaks, most swirling around what looks an awful lot like obstruction of justice by the president. The bewildering ineptitude of the alleged misdeeds felt nearly as shocking as the misdeeds themselves,

"You can't whine about something that's over," Franken says. "It is what it is.... And I think the Democratic base wants people to fight."

and simply keeping apace of the scandals can be exhausting, even for a sitting U.S. senator: Franken was commuting home from work one night when his driver told him the news about Comey. Franken said, "No! That's crazy!" He chuckles at the memory, then continues, "We have to have patience [with the special counsel], because this needs to be done right. But it feels like it's building, and like it has a life of its own."

In the foreword to *Giant of the Senate*, Franken describes his journey into politics as "the story of how, after spending a lifetime learning to be funny, I learned how not to be funny." In the latter half of the 1970s he was part of the freshman class

of *SNL*, where he very publicly inhaled ("I only did cocaine to stay awake to make sure nobody else did too much cocaine," Franken quipped in James Andrew Miller and Tom Shales' oral history *Live From New York*) and wrote jokes that, decontextualized, might not play in Lake Wobegon. One unaired *SNL* sketch opened on Franken's *actual* Jewish parents dressed in concentration-camp uniforms, with Franken and his writing partner, Tom Davis, standing by as Gestapo officers. (Franken's father, Joe Franken: "Alan, I'm sorry, we've had second thoughts about doing this." Franken, angrily shouting: "You said you wanted to be on the show, Dad!") Later, with books like *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot*, he helped shape the modern comedic voice of lefty dissent – pointed fact-checking as mocking entertainment – that would become de rigueur on shows like *The Daily Show* and its many spawn.

In the genteel halls of the Senate, Franken, understandably, made a point of tempering that voice. For fans of Franken the comedian, author and righteous liberal pundit, his muted political persona during his first term could feel disconcerting, like something of an overcorrection. He started to loosen up after his comfortable re-election in 2014, but it is the unfathomable rise of Trump that has finally given Franken a moment perfectly suited to his particular talents: The man with a sixth sense for bullshit taking on the da Vinci of bullshit artists. With C-SPAN as his new stage, Franken has weaponized the gifts that proved so useful for comedy – a sharp eye, a sharper tongue, the ability to tease out the essential absurdity of a given situation and deliver the goods with maximum impact – within the target-rich environment that is the Trump administration, simply by removing the punchlines.

"Often what makes a really good joke a really good joke," Franken writes in *Giant of the Senate*, "is that a number of ideas

• Go to RollingStone.com for a video interview with Al Franken.

• Contributing editor MARK BINELLI wrote about Michigan voters in January.

come together simultaneously.” When I ask him about his preparation for Senate hearings, he refers back to this passage, explaining that he’s after a similar “crystallization” of ideas in the brief number of minutes he’s allowed for questioning, by the end of which, ideally, “you go, ‘Oh, my goodness,’ and it’s really clear that either this person doesn’t know what they’re talking about or they aren’t being truthful.”

Progressives hungry for sharper left hooks have cheered Franken’s cathartic, prosecutorial interrogation technique, and to the surprise of his staff, and the senator himself, clips of Franken roughing up Trump nominees have gone viral. “I’ve

on standardized-test data (against the advice of his staff) and elicited one of the most damning moments of the hearing, as DeVos revealed the depth of her ignorance on basic education policy. At other times, Franken’s Midwest accent slows to a crawl, as he wonders, Columbo-style, if the distinguished occupant of the witness stand could just clear up a couple of tiny things for him, slowly turning up the heat until, without even being asked, Jeff Sessions is blurting out a mistruth. “I did not have communications with the Russians,” Sessions told Franken – a misstatement of fact that forced the attorney general to recuse himself from the investigation

would make us incredibly improbable candidates to ever win a Senate seat.”

Of course, neither Warren (married at 19, dropped out of college before earning a law degree as a young mother) nor Franken would stand a chance if the eligibility requirement of their “Least Likely to Succeed” contest was expanded to include the current resident of the White House. Could this be one of the reasons Trump’s moment has also become the junior senator from Minnesota’s? There’s no denying the pleasing symmetry at work here. Franken and Trump, a pair of outsiders, come to Washington from the world of entertainment – NBC, the two of them!

– both gifted performers with not-inconsequential levels of self-regard, but each also carrying a wildly different skill set: Trump that of the professional celebrity, winking at the audience, understanding better than anyone how to sell a highly scripted version of “reality,” the whole seriously-not-literally business, and Franken that of the satirist, calling out untruths and hypocrisy, ridiculing the powerful, making bullies small. “If I’m being honest,” Franken writes, looking back at his migration from comedy into progressive activism, “my favorite part was always busting liars.” In Trump, he’s found no better foil.

ONE OVERCAST morning in April, not far from downtown Minneapolis, Franken emerges from his modest brick townhouse wearing an official U.S. Senate windbreaker and carrying a suit jacket on a hanger. Franken has the squat build of a wrestler (which he once was, in high school), and his face, like the president’s, seems to have arranged itself around his mouth – in Franken’s case, not the mirthless pucker of a would-be king, but a joker’s toothy grin. When Franken laughs, his cheeks dimple extravagantly, and his eyes squint into a merry, knowing focus, searching out your own, to make sure you appreciate the joke as much as he does. It’s hard to imagine Trump ever doing anything similar, even in private, with his closest friends.

In the back seat of a black sport-utility vehicle, Franken flips open his briefing book. A little translucent wire connected to a hearing aid curls out from his ear like the hind leg of a mysterious burrowing insect. His first meeting is with the Minnesota Farmers Union, and for the next 20 minutes, Franken alternates between giving me an exhausting debriefing on the minutiae of ag policy and trying to call up a YouTube video of Jack Benny and Mel Blanc

always been tough in hearings,” Franken says, “but now we have an administration making some really bad appointments, so there’s a reason people are paying more attention.” His friend Mandy Grunwald, a veteran political consultant, once remarked after an especially ferocious grilling, “It’s not enough for you to kill these guys. You have to set them on fire.” When I remind Franken of the quote, he shrugs and says, “I put it in the book because I cop to it.” (“Maybe I wasn’t allowed to be funny anymore,” Franken writes. “But I could still let my id out once in a while by eviscerating some right-wing jerk.”)

POWER TO THE PEOPLE Franken at a Pride parade in downtown Minneapolis. “This reminds you of why you’re fucking doing this, you know?” he says of meeting with constituents. “The people are great.”

Franken, one should also note, possesses an impressive fluency in the minutest of policy details. “Many people love Al because he’s funny,” says Sen. Elizabeth Warren. “I love him because he’s wonky.” During the confirmation of Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Franken ventured deep into the weeds with a question

into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign.

“During the Sessions confirmation hearing, Franken was a hero to me,” says Sen. Cory Booker. “He’s like a bloodhound. Once he’s got a scent, he’s going to keep coming and coming and coming.” Franken himself tends to deflect when asked about his higher profile, insisting it mostly has to do with heightened public attention to Trump’s appointees and the Russia investigation. But at one point, he finally allows, “I tend to be good at these things. And I think the Democratic base wants people to fight this.”

“Did Franken tell you our running joke?” Warren asks me. “The day I’m sworn in, I’m all excited. And Al sits down next to me and says, ‘OK, which one of us is the least-probable United States senator?’ And since then we’ve had this running thing, back and forth, where we’ll point to different aspects of our lives that



on his smartphone. “Benny was all about timing and his personality more than anything,” he says. In the clip, Blanc, wearing a sombrero, plays a Mexican named Sy who answers all of Benny’s questions by saying, “Si.” “Now this, today, would never be allowed on TV,” Franken says.

I say it reminds me a bit of Abbott and Costello. “It’s not like Abbott and Costello at all, actually,” Franken says, shooting me a disapproving look, though it’s followed by another loud chortle. “Who’s on first?” is what you’re thinking of – but Benny was *sui generis*.” He adds, “Actually, Pat Roberts and I are big Jack Benny fans.” Roberts is a conservative Republican senator from Kansas. He and Franken trade old Benny lines when they bump into each other on the subway that runs beneath the Capitol. “You have to be 80 and a comedy fan to know what we’re doing,” Franken says.

By the time we arrive at the meeting hall in exurban Dakota County, it’s pouring. Someone from the building comes to Franken’s door holding a giant umbrella. He looks at me and says, “You’ll get a little wet. I’ll be fine.”

Inside, Franken takes questions from a roomful of farmers, mostly men, many of them senior citizens wearing plaid shirts. Franken speaks fluently about Canadian milk subsidies, crop insurance, ethanol support, potential changes in the farm bill, and Trump’s secretary of agriculture, Sonny Perdue, whom Franken, in a rare kind word for the president, considers an excellent choice. When it’s time for questions, a younger farmer stands. He’s wearing a green hoodie plastered with the words *I HATE BEING SEXY BUT I’M A FARMER SO I CAN’T HELP IT*. Franken remains inscrutable. As the man relays a lengthy, detailed anecdote illustrating the problems of agricultural overproduction, Franken listens intently, nodding. Finally, he says, “I get that about supply management.” Beat. “By the way, your sweatshirt really undercuts everything you’re saying. I can’t take you seriously.”

The crowd howls. Franken beams. He takes more questions, defending Obamacare, mocking the House Republicans’ replacement bill. When it’s time to wrap up, the host tells the crowd to pass along any other questions and Franken or his staff will get back to them. Franken leans toward the microphone and says, “It’ll be my staff.”

He spends the rest of the day meeting constituents who might be adversely affected by proposed Trump budget cuts. To a 100-year-old Meals on Wheels recipient, he says, “On behalf of the mediocre generation, I’d like to thank the greatest generation for saving the world,” and is delighted when, with perfect timing, she gives him a look and replies, “You’re welcome.” Then she asks if he’s planning to run for president. He says no, but that he may need her

to knock on doors for his 2020 Senate re-election campaign.

Back in the SUV, Franken says, “This kind of thing reminds you of why you’re fucking doing this, you know? People are great, and these programs make sense. And this should not be a partisan thing.”

Franken doesn’t soft-pedal how dire, in his view, the situation in Washington has become, but he’s been encouraged by the grassroots resistance. The GOP health-care bill might have squeaked through the House, Franken points out, but “by the end of the day, everyone in health care was against it. And only 17 percent of the American public overall is for it – which, by the way, is the exact same percentage of people who say they’ve personally seen a ghost.”

Later, he allows that an upside of Trump’s election is the way it has united

“Only 17 percent of the American public supports the GOP health-care bill – the same percentage of people who say they’ve seen a ghost.”

progressives. “I think it’s bringing us together,” Franken says, adding that “a colleague of mine, a Republican, was asked at an event, ‘Are Democrats angry?’ This was not long after the inauguration. And he said, ‘Democrats are angry. Republicans are angry and scared.’” Franken believes Republicans in Congress “are afraid of what Trump is doing and who Trump is and the way all of this is getting out of control, but also afraid of their base, which seems to be sticking with him. They don’t want to be primaryed, so they have a very odd row to hoe.” As for Democrats, he says, “You can’t whine about something that’s over, and this is what we’ve got right now. It would have been much better to win, to have been able to confirm Merrick Garland or somebody else – it would be a different world. But it is what it is. And I’m glad I’m here. I feel like it makes my being here that much more essential.”

En route to lunch, a Grateful Dead song comes on the radio. “Want to turn that up a little?” Franken calls up to the front seat. Actually, let me amend that: Grateful Dead songs have never *stopped* playing in

the SUV during our drives around Minnesota, because, per Franken mandate, and to the endless consternation of his staff, the satellite radio in his official vehicles is always tuned to SiriusXM’s 24/7 Dead channel. Franken, in a shameless Boomer Dad move, air-conducts to a symphonic, jammy section in the middle of a live version of “Terrapin Station,” at one point closing his eyes and pumping a fist. I mention that I’ve heard good things about a new Amazon documentary about the band. “I think I might be in it!” Franken says. “They interviewed me for it.”

Ed Shelleby, Franken’s communications director, perks up. “They interviewed you for what now?”

“A Grateful Dead documentary,” Franken says, warming to the opportunity to torture his staffer. “You must’ve approved that, Ed.” Then he pretends to recite from his interview, shifting into a stoned-guy voice: “Yeah, I used to take a lot of acid and go to the Dead. Once I went in a Portosan and Lesh’s bass was *unbelievable*, so I listened to the whole concert in the Portosan. And people were knocking on it, but I wouldn’t let them in because *the sound*.” Pause. “I think it might’ve been ‘cause I was tripping. But I’m not sure.” That’ll be in the doc. Don’t worry, Ed.

“What a fun time for everybody,” Shelleby mutters over his boss’s laughter.

“They told me afterward, ‘This is great,’” Franken says. “We got a *senator* saying this stuff!”

FRANKEN GREW UP MIDDLE class in St. Louis Park, the Jewish suburb of Minneapolis immortalized by the Coen brothers, his rough contemporaries, in *A Serious Man*. Franken and his older brother, Owen, were nudged by their parents toward practical pursuits. “You boys are going to study math and science so we can beat the Soviets!” their father, Joe, who was a son of German Jewish immigrants and went to work at 16, told them. Owen studied physics at MIT, but upon graduating became a photojournalist. By the time Franken left Harvard in 1973, he and Davis, a buddy from high school, had already been writing comedy sketches for years. They loved Carson, Pryor, George Carlin, Woody Allen, the Smothers Brothers and, most of all, the dry comic duo Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding. They also loved acid and the Grateful Dead, and their own act would essentially build on the scaffolding of classic Bob and Ray routines – deadpan, leisurely paced character work, in which either member of the team might play the straight man or the clown – with a shaggier dope-smoker’s sensibility more reflective of their own generation. After college, the pair ended up in Los Angeles – along with Franken’s college sweetheart and future wife, Franni – where they did

sets at the Comedy Store and landed an agent, but otherwise, per Doug Hill and Jeff Weingrad's *Saturday Night: A Backstage History of "Saturday Night Live,"* were "so broke that during the holidays they played Santa Claus and Winnie-the-Pooh at the local Sears."

Then a packet of their writing landed on the desk of a 30-year-old television producer named Lorne Michaels, who was staffing a new late-night comedy show in New York. Franken and Davis, still in their early twenties, were hired as apprentice *SNL* writers for a joint salary of \$350 a week. One of their first appearances came during Episode Five, right after Abba performed "S.O.S." In the sketch, they played college students engaged in a mundane, presumably stoned conversation about a botched history midterm. What made the exchange funny – especially if you were also stoned – was that you never saw Franken or Davis: The entire screen was filled with the parallel mundanity of the excruciatingly slow game of Pong they were playing. (In case you ever wonder if the legendary amount of drugs consumed at *SNL* during those first seasons might be retrospectively overstated: "Pong" became a recurring sketch.)

Franken and Davis sketches also had a tendency to get messy. One of their most famous, in which Dan Aykroyd plays an accident-prone Julia Child, ends with the chef bleeding to death in her gore-splattered TV kitchen. In another routine, the pair get into a lovers' quarrel after Davis outs their relationship in front of Franken's wife and son – this is more amusing than it sounds, in part because they're both wearing nothing but sumo-wrestler thongs – after which, Franken screams, "I'm gonna make you feel sorry you did this," and shoots himself in the head.

In real life, Franken's humor could slip from edgy into borderline sadistic. When Gilda Radner threw a baby shower to celebrate the birth of Al and Franni's daughter, Franken showed up holding a swaddled doll and performed a wild pratfall, landing, full-force, on what everyone but Franni (in on the joke) thought was his newborn baby. "The scream that came out of these women," Davis told the authors of *Live From New York*. "To this day, I've never heard a more terrifying sound than all those women witnessing this baby being killed by its father. I'm telling you, Al did shit like that. I love him for it."

Franken had been politically engaged since high school, when he joined his older brother on the road with Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. He could also be "honest to a fault," as his friend Conan O'Brien says – speaking truth to power no matter how quixotic or self-defeating. When Franken got word Spiro Agnew had come to 30 Rock to do Tom Snyder's late-night show, he marched downstairs with a

SNL peers into Hollywood careers. Three years later, O'Brien was hired as a writer. "If you'd said to me back then, 'Someone on this writing staff is going to be a respected senator,' I don't think I'd have guessed Al," O'Brien acknowledges. "He's incredibly smart, but he's not a natural politician; he's not a smooth talker, he isn't out to charm people." Franken stuck around *SNL* until 1995, when the anchor slot at "Weekend

Update," a job he'd long coveted, was given to Norm Macdonald. "I think there was a feeling," Michaels offered in *Live From New York*, "that Al was too associated with the show – the 'old' show."

Franken had also garnered a prickly reputation. A 1995 *New York* article describes a blowup on cast member Janeane Garofalo, who made the rookie mistake of attempting to memorize her part and ended up flubbing a line in rehearsal. According to a witness, "Al went shithouse. 'Read the fucking cue cards!'" His breakout character during those years, the blow-dried, cardigan-clad self-help guru Stuart Smalley, refracted real-life pain: Franken's wife had gone to rehab for alcoholism – she'd been secretly drinking after a postpartum depression following the birth of their second child – and Franken based Smalley, in part, on certain 12-step types he'd encountered at Al-Anon meetings (where, he says, he began learning to control his own temper).

Davis also struggled with drug and alcohol abuse, and hated the Smalley character. Franken organized an intervention in the early Nineties. Davis refused treatment, and the pair underwent an acrimonious split. They eventually

reconciled, and after Davis died of cancer in 2012, Franken delivered a moving, tearful eulogy to his best friend on the Senate floor, ending with passages from one of Davis' final written works, an essay titled "The Dark Side of Death." ("I want to remind you that dead people are people, too.... We are all going to try it sometime. Fortunately for me, I've always enjoyed mystery and solitude.")

BEFORE HE HAPPENED UPON a profile of Minnesota Sen. Norm Coleman in 2003, Franken had never thought of running for political office. *Stuart Saves His Family*, an ill-conceived Smalley movie, bombed spectacularly in 1995, but Franken managed a nifty career reinvention a year later with *Rush Lim-*



Live From New York

Above: Franken (center) spent 15 years at *SNL*, with Lorne Michaels (left) and writing partner Tom Davis (right). "Franken's incredibly smart, but he's not a natural politician," says Conan O'Brien, a fellow *SNL* writer. Right: In 1971, with Franni, his college girlfriend and now wife of 41 years.



tape recorder, like a journalist conducting an interview, and berated Nixon's former vice president in his make-up chair (Michaels was not amused). In 1980, as Michaels contemplated leaving *SNL*, Franken – known at NBC as Michaels' preferred successor – savaged then-network president Fred Silverman on "Weekend Update." In the bit, Franken questioned why Silverman, a "total, unequivocal failure," had access to a company limousine while Franken did not, and called on viewers to write Silverman – "he's timid, indecisive and easily pressured!" – and demand the situation be rectified. Franken left the show at the end of the season.

When Michaels returned to *SNL* in 1985, he brought along Franken and Davis, who had spent the intervening years attempting, largely unsuccessfully, to follow their

baugh Is a Big Fat Idiot, a liberal salvo that mocked the hypocrisies (and physical appearance) of right-wingers like Limbaugh. The idea for the book came in 1994, after Franken hosted the White House Correspondents' Dinner. ("You were great," Steve Martin told him afterward. "That's what you should do!")

Coleman, a Republican, had won his seat after the incumbent progressive Democrat, Paul Wellstone, died in a plane crash with his wife and daughter less than two weeks before the election in November 2002. Wellstone and Franken were friends, having met in 1990 when Franken's 82-year-old father volunteered for Wellstone's campaign. Franken himself had hosted a campaign event for the senator only six weeks before his death, and was understandably incensed by a Coleman quote in the profile: "To be very blunt, and God watch over Paul's soul, I am a 99 percent improvement over Paul Wellstone."

Franken writes that the "germ of the idea to run" came right there, but quickly passed. He had a Harvard fellowship and a book deadline (for *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*, a Fox News broadcast that became a best-seller after the network unsuccessfully sued him for trademark infringement and which also led to a hilarious Book-Expo panel where Franken baited Bill O'Reilly into screaming, "Shut up! You had your 35 minutes! Shut up!"). Then Franken joined Air America, a progressive talk radio station launched during the Iraq War, as one of its marquee hosts. He called his show *The O'Franken Factor*.

The show's "explicit goal" was to prevent the re-election of George W. Bush, "a guy whom we already were pretty sure was one of the worst presidents in history," Franken writes in *Giant of the Senate*. "And we failed." Air America filed for bankruptcy two years later. At that point, Franken began reconsidering a Senate run. "I think I could accomplish a lot," he told a friend in late 2005. "What do I really have to risk?"

The friend, looking skeptical, replied, "Public opprobrium?"

Nearly a third of the book is devoted to Franken's first race, and it's a surprising page-turner. Sens. Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid both responded coolly to Franken's decision to enter the primary, and then-candidate Obama refused to campaign for Franken or even to allow him to

stand onstage at an Obama rally. Schumer, whom Franken had known since their student days at Harvard, told him, "We should have a 60 percent chance of winning this seat. You have about a 40 percent chance."

The state's Republicans attempted to paint Franken "as a short-tempered carpetbagger." When his career as a comedy writer came up, Franken trained himself to patiently reassure dubious Minnesotans he wouldn't prove a national embarrassment, but his every instinct made him want to explain why those old jokes were



The Franken Factor

Above: Franken protesting the order that banned citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S. Left: With Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

funny. Schumer tried to pressure him to apologize for a satirical article he wrote for *Playboy* called "Porn-O-Rama," which the GOP called "demeaning and degrading" to women. Franken balked, insisting that to apologize "felt like a betrayal of myself." (Franken even considered releasing his campaign's "self-oppo" report, i.e., all of the potentially offensive past jokes his staff had gathered to prepare for the Coleman onslaught, as a book.) "Imagine Louis C.K. having to apologize for his stuff," Franken tells me. "You don't apologize. It went against the core of my ethic as a comedian." Still, he allows, "There's no percentage in litigating humor. Humor uses irony, it uses hyperbole. Ambiguity is actually a tool. And none of those things look good in cold black-and-white. So I had to deal with it. It's like that old LBJ story, where he wanted

to accuse his opponent of having sex with a donkey. His staff says, 'What?' And he says, 'Well, I just want to hear him deny it!'" (Franken eventually expressed "regret that people have been legitimately offended by some of the things I've written.")

The final tally wound up so close – with Franken winning by a mere 312 votes – that the recount dragged on for months. He took the oath of office on July 7th, 2009. With senators from both parties skeptical of his presence – Republicans because he'd been such a flamboyant partisan critic,

Democrats because he might use his celebrity to showboat or hog the cameras – Franken's advisers counseled him to adopt the strategy of another high-profile senator, Hillary Clinton: "Be a workhorse, not a showhorse. Go to all your hearings. Come early, stay late. Do your homework. Don't do national press. Be accessible to your state media and to your constituents."

Like most comedians, it pains Franken to let a funny moment pass unjoked upon. "I could see him, almost through sheer force of will, sublimating his sense of humor," says O'Brien, who watched, impressed, the behavior of his friend once in office. Since Franken's reelection in 2014, O'Brien notes, "I wouldn't say he's letting his freak flag fly, but he is allowing his sense of humor to show a bit more." O'Brien chuckles, recalling an example: "At one hearing, he gavelled in the proceedings, and as he slams down the gavel, he does a comic take about being rattled by the sound. *Nyaaa!* And someone on his staff immediately texted, 'What are you doing?!' And he said, 'I'm doing Curly from the Three Stooges.'"

Discussing Trump's election in the book, Franken, groping for reasons to hope, points back to the 2004 re-election of George W.

Bush as another "dark time for progressives," in which "a Republican had won a presidential election despite things that to many of us seemed obviously disqualifying (in Bush's case it was Iraq and not his entire life story and personality)" – and yet, only two years later, Democrats swept the midterm elections, and two years after that came Obama (and Franken). "I still remember vividly how distraught I was after Bush got re-elected in 2004," Franken writes. "I also remember what came next."

THE DAY TRUMP FIRES JAMES Comey, the Anti-Defamation League holds its National Leadership Summit in Washington, and that morning, Franken turns up to address the group. Sen. John McCain is wrapping up his own

speech when he spots Franken in his peripheral vision. “Here comes one of the worst comedians I’ve ever seen,” McCain observes dryly, adding, over laughter from the crowd, “Since he’s here, I have a 45-minute statement concerning North Korea.” Then, turning serious, he says, “I’m sure you saw his statement yesterday.” McCain is referring to Franken’s strong words during a Senate Judiciary hearing the previous afternoon, when former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates testified on how she’d warned the Trump administration about the possible Russian compromise of former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn. “I’m very happy,” McCain continues, “to be serving beside him on this issue.”

When Franken steps to the podium, he calls McCain “one of the best gentile senators,” and from that point has the crowd in his hand. He tears into the Trump campaign for trafficking in anti-Semitic imagery – “*Protocols of the Elders of Zion* stuff” – and chokes up as he recounts a rural Minnesota high school graduation he attended in which the class speaker was of Somali descent and wearing a hijab. He also pushes back against a questioner who attacks the Obama administration’s Iran deal and, noting that the new ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, once called him a clown, points out, “There are people who revere clowns!”

After the speech, Franken returns to his office for a prep session on the confirmation hearing of Makan Delrahim, a former lobbyist (and Trump lawyer) who has been nominated to head the antitrust division of the Department of Justice. Franken reads possible questions drawn up by his staff aloud, editing on the fly: “Mr. Delrahim, without commenting on the pending transaction specifically, do you subscribe to the view that vertical mergers aren’t cause for concern by antitrust regulators...?” He’ll say no, right? So if he says no, then I’ll bring up this letter from AT&T [about a desired merger]. He’ll say he can’t comment, but that letter is bullshit, right?”

“We can add a line on that,” Leslie Hylton, a staff member, says.

“Don’t use bullshit,” Franken says.

And then Franken joins fellow Sens. Bernie Sanders and Tammy Baldwin to announce a jointly sponsored bill that would protect pensions. Sanders, more of a celebrity than Franken at this point, is signing autographs for excited members of the machinists union. “Hey, Al, how are ya?” Sanders says. When it’s Franken’s turn to speak, he reminds the crowd that he’s been a Writers Guild member since 1975, and even gets the senator from Vermont, glowering seriously behind him, to reddened and crack a slight smile when he says, “This is about the middle class. I know the president will be for this, because he talked about workers, so this will be right down his alley.”

In *Giant of the Senate*, Franken talks about using humor to bridge the divide with Republican legislators. Sen. Lindsey Graham is the funniest Republican, at least according to his colleague best-equipped to judge. Once, after sincerely complimenting a speech by Sen. Mitch McConnell, Franken added, “Mitch, I have to say, I really like your speeches better than aren’t in the service of evil,” to which the majority leader smiled and responded, “I like the evil ones better.” (When I say that exchange humanized McConnell for me, Franken mutters, “Yes, I was afraid that would happen.”)

Franken admits he found Trump funny during the first GOP debate – particularly his comeback to Megyn Kelly’s list of deplorable comments he’d made about women (“only Rosie O’Donnell”) – and remembers Hillary Clinton and her top aide, Huma Abedin, telling him they’d stop to watch Trump early in the primary because they found him “kind of entertaining.”

“Many people love Al because he’s funny,” says Franken’s colleague Sen. Elizabeth Warren. “I love him because he’s wonky.”

It didn’t take very long before the joke curdled. And now, approaching the five-month marker of the Trump presidency, the sheer scale of the catastrophe has yet to fully come into focus, though the daily pileup of incompetence, breathtaking ignorance and possible criminal activity has been effective in one regard, as an inadvertent distraction technique, shifting our eyes away from any number of disastrous policy decisions coming out of the White House. “Obviously, you can’t overemphasize the importance of the Russia story, but in the meantime, we’ve got things like health care moving very fast,” notes Franken, who sits on the Senate’s health committee. “That’s something we should be talking about, but it’s hard to get people’s attention.”

The possible obstruction of justice, the appointment of the special counsel, every offensive thing Trump’s said, the definitional absurdity of the words “President Donald Trump” – all of this makes a man like Al Franken, who less than a decade

ago might have worried that his history of drug use and off-color jokes could be disqualifying to voters, seem like a Jimmy Stewart character by comparison. His name turned up in a recent Public Policy Polling survey of potential Trump challengers in 2020, alongside only four other Democrats: Warren, Booker, Sanders and Joe Biden. (In their head-to-head, Franken and Trump tied at 43 percent, with 14 percent undecided and the pollsters noting Franken is not yet “universally well-known nationally.”)

While firmly rejecting any interest in running, Franken holds out hope for an electoral backlash against Trumpism in the midterms and beyond. “But right now,” he continues, “we’ve got too much happening at this moment to worry about ’18 or ’20.” Last week, the Congressional Budget Office scored the House Republicans’ health-care bill, estimating that 23 million Americans would lose their insurance over the next decade. Though the Senate version of the bill is currently being drafted by 13 (male) Republicans, Franken’s tentatively optimistic that a more bipartisan process might begin in the health committee, which is holding a hearing on a bill introduced by Franken that would lower prescription-drug prices. “Those are the things I can pay attention to now,” he says, “and as one of 48, I have an important role to play.”

Let’s end on another sketch. This one comes up when I ask Franken at what point he and Davis began writing about politics at *SNL*. It aired just over 40 years ago, in 1976, on the 19th episode of the first season: Carly Simon performed “You’re So Vain,” and then guest host Madeline Kahn, as Pat Nixon, is writing in her diary about “the stormy final days at the White House,” and we flash back to Dan Aykroyd as an inexplicably mustachioed Richard Nixon, talking to paintings of presidents past (“Well, Abe, you were lucky – they shot you”), being visited by his daughter and vacuous son-in-law (Gilda Radner and Chevy Chase), forcing John Belushi’s Kissinger to kneel and pray with him. “You’ll have to excuse me,” Belushi eventually says. “I’ve got to warn the Strategic Air Command to disobey all presidential orders.” He also tells the president to think of resignation not as a resignation but as a “humiliation with honor.”

Who knows? Maybe Franken will have the opportunity to update this sketch one day. At one point, one of his staffers calls it up on Hulu, and Franken, smiling, sits down to watch the ending.

“Abe,” Aykroyd’s Nixon asks the portrait, “why me, of all people?”

This time, Lincoln actually responds: “Because you’re such a dip.”

Franken turns to me, still smiling. “That was supposed to be ‘putz,’” he says, “but the censors wouldn’t allow it.”

The Complete Issue. Every Word. Every Photo.



Now Available on Mobile



Reviews

"When you start to feel the rush
Of crimson headache aching blush
And you surrender to the touch,
You'll know."

—HALSEY, "Heaven in Hiding"

The New Rebel Queen of Pop's Badlands

Halsey's second album is a sprawling breakup epic full of dystopian synth-pop realness



Halsey

Hopeless Fountain Kingdom
Astralwerks

★★★★

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

It makes sense that Halsey proclaims herself a "Marvel nerd," because she definitely nailed the origin story. Born in 1994, she blew up into an out-of-nowhere pop icon with her breakout hymn, "New Americana," speaking for a new generation of electro-anst youth: "High on legal marijuana/Raised on Biggie and Nirvana." Halsey keeps leveling up her pop-rebel game, with the sass of a confessed "fucked-up stoner kid" who grew up as suburban Jersey girl Ashley Nicolette Frangipane and renamed herself after a Bushwick L-train station. Bisexual, biracial, bipolar, but definitely not buying your next drink, she comes on like God's gift to hashtags, almost daring the straight world to keep underestimating her.

Halsey shows off all her wild musical ambitions on her bold second album, which consolidates all the [Cont. on 56]



Reviews

HALSEY

[Cont. from 55] strengths of her 2015 debut, *Badlands*. It's her sprawling science-fiction breakup tale, indulging her taste for widescreen melodrama – she even begins the album by reciting the prologue from *Romeo and Juliet*. Of course, in her hands it turns into the story of a restless young pop star who jets around the world, leaving shattered hearts in her wake, yet still can't find true love, admitting, "I have spent too many nights on dirty bathroom floors."

Halsey keeps the album moving, going for adult dystopian synth-pop realness and sounding more like Trent Reznor's "Closer" than that Chainsmokers hit she sang on – with flourishes of industrial clank and guitar grind in "100 Letters" ("I find myself alone at night unless I'm having sex"), "Heaven in Hiding" and

"Alone." Her Shakespeare-as-Depeche Mode concept holds up even as the tracks jump from one megaproducer to the next – Greg Kurstin to Benny Blanco to Lido.

Halsey duets with Migos' Quavo in "Lie," which presents both sides of a relationship gone off the rails. "Bad at Love" is a Kiss-worthy tour of beds she's wrecked around the world, from "Got a boy back home in Michigan/And he tastes like Jack when I'm kissing him" to "Got a girl with California eyes." Most daring of all, Halsey strips down musically to lean on her voice in the vulnerable piano ballad "Sorry," where she worries whether she'll ever like herself enough to let anyone get close to her. She's hardly the first twentysomething pop upstart to face this dilemma. But judging by *Hopeless Fountain Kingdom*, Halsey could go anywhere from here. **B+**



Bleachers

Gone Now RCA

★★★★½

The continuing story of an emo-pop tune machine

Jack Antonoff is a grown-up emo kid and a fully realized tune machine – an Elton John whose yellow-brick road always leads back to his sad bedroom. Bleachers' second LP exudes a kind of afflicted bliss, anthemic Eighties pop and R&B impressions built from the harried diaristic isolation that era's Top 40 only allowed in at the margins. Lorde co-writes and sings on the synth-pop gusher "Don't Take the Money," and Carly Rae Jepsen shows up on "Hate That You Know Me," part snappy electro-pop tune, part industrial angst spiral. **JON DOLAN**



Lil Yachty

Teenage Emotions Virgin/EMI

★★★★½

Meet the giddy teenage boss of "bubblegum trap"

Nineteen-year-old "bubblegum trap" sensation Lil Yachty brags that he's "never took a sip of beer." But he has an intoxicating flow, crooning notes he can't hit and enthusiastically rapping beyond the beat as he happily disregards traditional ideas of rhythm and melody. Rapping gleefully about looking at the stars, going back to high school to stunt on his teachers and having sex with his friends' moms, he opens hip-hop to the giddy and childlike – more like the naïf rock of Beat Happening than his Atlanta peers. **CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN**

IF YOU DON'T TELL THEM, WE WILL.



HUNGER BARS ARE BACK

Phoenix Party Like It's 1979

The French band radiates retro-rock sophistication

Phoenix *Ti Amo* Loyaute/Glassnote
★★★★½



The biggest and best French rock band ever has proved that you can still go pop on the strength of cagey songcraft and retro-rock sophistication. "Champagne or prosecco?" frontman Thomas Mars offers over a New Wave mirror-ball glide on the title track of Phoenix's sixth LP, before dropping references to the Buzzcocks, soft rock and that venerable old-school smoothie Beethoven.

Phoenix's 2013 LP *Bankrupt!* seemed to pull back a bit from the spit-polished bounce of their wondrous surprise hits "1901" and "Lisztomania." This time out, they're heavy into mellow Seventies sunshine, with major ELO/10cc/Steely Dan overtones. "J-Boy" is posh, pouty disco kicks impacted with lyrics that evoke a



sci-fi dystopian romance. And "Fior Di Latte" is sad-hearted yacht-soul splendor. Phoenix are at their most fun when they're writing in the margins of pop history: The glowing electro ballad "Loveline" is the AM-radio smash Kraftwerk never had, and "Telefono" suggests the Doobie Brothers as indie-pop Continentals. Even when you can't tell what Mars is singing about (i.e., a lot), the music radiates a suave majesty that feels universal.

JON DOLAN



Justin Townes Earle

Kids in the Street New West

★★★★½

Alt-country heir breathes new ideas into rootsy nostalgia

Forming a trilogy with 2014's *Single Mothers* and 2015's *Absent Fathers*, J.T. Earle's latest teams him with Omaha indie-rock don Mike Mogis (Bright Eyes) for his rangiest set yet. "What's Goin' Wrong" is clarinet-spiked Texas-swing impressionism, and "15-25" is vintage New Orleans R&B gumbo. The LP always feels organic, never mannered. On the title track, acoustic guitar slices through a pedal steel reverb haze, as Earle waxes nostalgic for a childhood in the 1990s with a timelessness that could conjure the 1890s just as well.

WILL HERMES

YOU ARE THE WRAPPER OF WHAT YOU EAT.



HUNGER BARS ARE BACK

BACKSTAGE PASS

SPECIAL OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS



AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

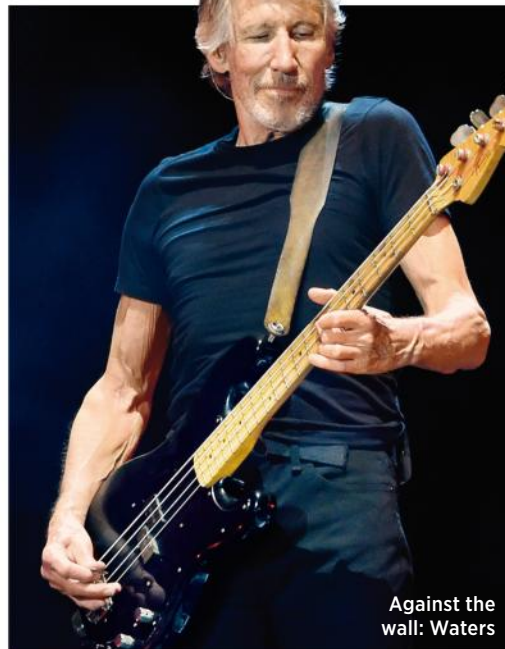
AUSTIN CITY LIMITS MUSIC FESTIVAL

This fall, ACL Festival is returning to beautiful Zilker Park in Austin, TX. The festival will span two weekends, October 6 - 8 and October 13 - 15.

With over 140 bands on 8 stages, including JAY Z, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Chance The Rapper, The Killers, Gorillaz, Martin Garrix, and The xx, it will be two weekends you won't want to miss.

**HEAD TO
WWW.ACLFEST.COM
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE FESTIVAL AND GRAB
YOUR TICKETS TODAY!**

Reviews



Against the wall: Waters

Roger Waters' Dark Side of America

The Pink Floyd visionary returns to mirror our modern dystopia

Roger Waters *Is This the Life We Really Want?* Columbia ★★★★★



"Picture a shithouse with no fucking drains/Picture a leader with no fucking brains," snarls Roger Waters near the start of his first proper rock LP in 25 years, unsubtle as a hammer between the eyes. But the grim charm of this set, a dystopian concept album that makes *The Wall* read like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, is precisely his off-the-leash ranting, a fitting response to our times.

The LP is not without humor. It opens with the old rock star imagining his first act as God: undoing the long-term effects of alcohol on his face (priorities, people!). Elsewhere, classic song allusions flicker sardonically ("Wish you were here in Guantánamo Bay!"). But it's a relentlessly dark image feed: drone warfare ("Déjà Vu"), forced parent-child separations ("The Last Refugee"), the gluttony of the American dream ("Broken Bones"). The music is quintessential post-*Dark Side of the Moon* Pink Floyd, but channeled by offspring: Producer Nigel Godrich brings prog-rock grandeur; multi-instrumentalist Jonathan Wilson does microdose psychedelia; Lucius provide alt-R&B backing vocals. It's precisely what a Trump-era Roger Waters album should be.

WILL HERMES



Black Lips

Satan's Graffiti or God's Art?

Vice Music



Veteran garage rockers make a sprawling anti-concept LP

These garage-rock vets have always idealized the Sixties at its scuzziest. But their eighth LP has bigger ambitions: Sean Lennon produced, and his mom, Yoko Ono, appears as a guest star, resulting in an 18-song suite with all the highbrow fixings (interludes, spoken-word bits, etc.). They bounce between genres with screwball zeal, but the anti-concept loopiness can be weird fun – from the Wild West psychobilly of "Occidental Front" to a mutant girl-group ballad "Crystal Night" to a cover of the Beatles' "It Won't Be Long" that imagines its crushed-out giddiness as woozy sitar-and-guitar slop dementia. **JON DOLAN**



Alt-J

Relaxer Canvasback/Atlantic



English art-rock crew throws a fun 21st-century Ren fair

What if Radiohead had used their Nineties digital prog to escape into the past rather than fight the future? That's the vibe of "3WW," the prettily mordant first track on Alt-J's third record, a glitch-y modern version of Fairport Convention's folk pastorales. The U.K. art rockers have a nice time messing with history – their "House of the Rising Sun" is a minimalist chamber rumble, with singer-guitarist Joe Newman adding his own poetry to the original. At times their idea-heavy songs can feel weighed down by cleverness (the Primus-y "Dead-crush"). But Alt-J can create a dark beauty that's like moonlight on an English moor. **J.D.**

**WORKS FOR YOU...
OR YOUR MONEY BACK!**



**LIBIDO-MAX for MEN
75 Count ONLY
SAVE \$3**

EXPIRES 09/30/17 MANUFACTURERS COUPON
Consumer: Redeemable at retail locations only. Not valid for online or mail-order purchases. Retailer: Kravin Naturals will reimburse you for the face value plus 8 cents handling provided it is redeemed by a consumer at the time of purchase on the brand specified. Coupons not properly redeemed will be void and void. Reproduction by any party by any means is expressly prohibited. Any other use constitutes fraud. Kravin Naturals reserves the right to deny reimbursement (due to misrepresentation activity) and/or request proof of purchase for coupon(s) submitted. Mail to: CMS Dept., 10663, Kravin Naturals, 15400 West Olive, Del Rio, TX 78841. Cash value: .001 cents. Void where taxed or restricted. ONE COUPON PER PURCHASE. Not valid for mail-order purchases. Retail only.

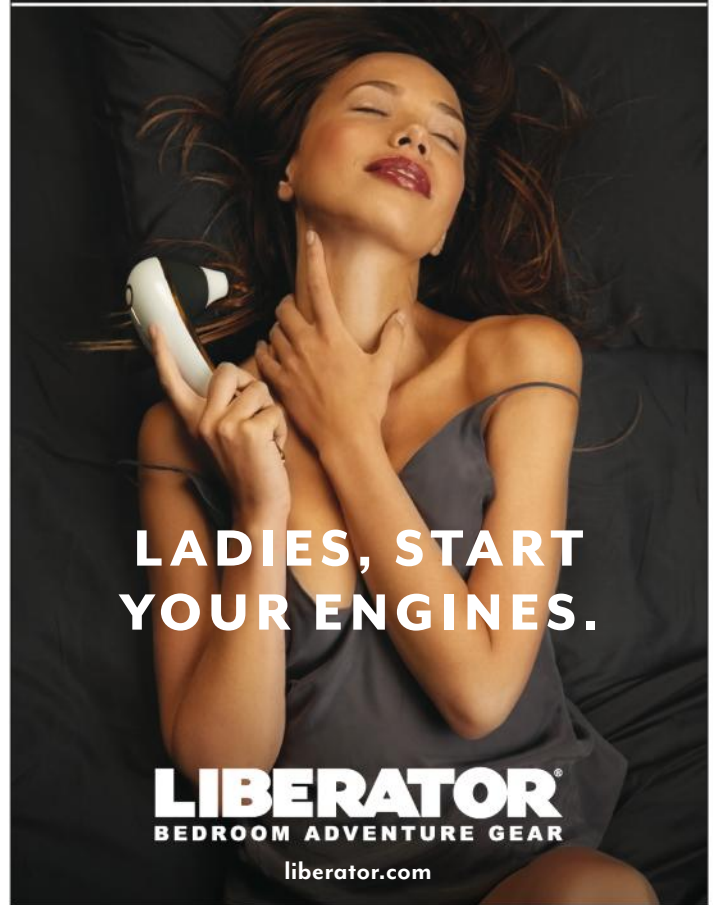


These statements have not been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Available for purchase with coupon in fine stores everywhere or online at:
www.appliednutrition.com
Enter Coupon Code: 012688



Who needs a vibrator when you have a WOMANIZER?



**LADIES, START
YOUR ENGINES.**

**LIBERATOR®
BEDROOM ADVENTURE GEAR**

liberator.com

**8 CIGARS
ONLY \$10***



FIRST-CLASS PREMIUM CIGAR SAMPLER

When it comes to cigars, no one even comes close to Cigars International and we're ready to prove it to ya with an outrageous intro offer: 8 premium handmade cigars for just \$10.* Go ahead, price shop this one and prepare to be stunned. When you're ready, we're here waiting with the world's largest selection of premium handmade cigars at the planet's lowest prices, delivered fast and fresh. That's our guarantee.

www.CigarsIntl.com/SA7034

You must enter the complete web address for special offer

1-888-244-2790 Mention code SA7034

Item #: SP-CA49-T

*Plus 2% s/h. PA residents add 6% tax - taxes on orders shipped outside of PA are the responsibility of the purchaser. Offer available to first-time purchasers. One per customer. Cigars International does not sell products to anyone under the age of 21. For more information see www.CigarsInternational.com/ageverify. Offer expires 8-15-17.

Includes 1 each of: Torano • HC • 5 Vegas • Cuba Libre
Jesus Fuego • La Perla Habana • Alec Bradley • Rocky Patel

UPGRADE NOW! \$5 UPGRADE
ADD A TRAVEL HUMIDOR

PERFECT FOR:

- Golf: worry about golf, not cigars.
- Fishing: airtight and it floats - perfect for fishing!
- Hunting: keep your cigars protected even in nature's toughest conditions.



**\$52
Value**

By Peter Travers

The Original Riot Girl

Wonder Woman

Gal Gadot, Chris Pine

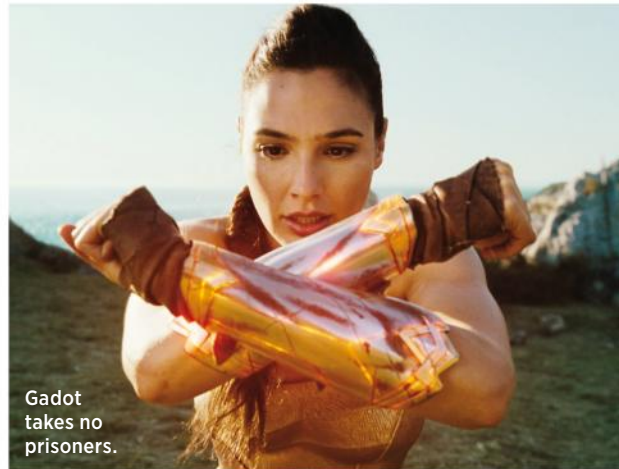
Directed by Patty Jenkins

★★½

AFTER 76 YEARS AS A TRAIL-blazer for DC Comics, Wonder Woman stars in her first film. What took so long? Dynamo Israeli actress Gal Gadot owns the role, her body-beautiful forged with feminist fire. She really is all that. The movie? Not so much. *Wonder Woman* is hobbled by a slogging origin story and action that only comes in fits and starts. Just when Gadot and director Patty Jenkins (*Monster*) are ready to kick ass, we get backstory.

Diana, the daughter of Queen Hippolyta (Connie Nielsen) and Zeus, grows up on the island of Themyscira, where Amazons are trained as warriors. Except for Diana. Mom wants her spared from war ideology. It's her aunt (Robin Wright) who trains the girl in secret. Dudes? Not in the picture, until Steve Trevor (Chris Pine), an American pilot, crash-lands nearby.

Then the battle starts? Nah. First Steve and Diana do the flirty thing (Pine does



Gadot takes no prisoners.

it charmingly). Steve promises to take her behind enemy lines. It's 1918, the height of World War I (forget that it's WW2 in the comics); Diana believes she only needs to kill Ares, the Greek god of war, to end the bloodshed. Don't look for clarity, it's a comic book.

So then the combat starts? Not yet. In London, Steve's secretary (Lucy Davis) gives Diana a makeover to try to pass her off as an Everywoman. But why bother? The film takes forever to unleash the Amazon and suffers for it.

Finally, the real action starts, with Wonder Woman racing through the front lines, her bracelets deflecting heavy artillery (improbable but mighty impressive). The stunts are showstopping, but they can't stop the subplots. Unlike Marvel films, where the dark stuff is mostly subtext, DC tends to smother high spirits in gloom. But Gadot, an ex-combat instructor in Israel, makes sure Diana runs her own game. Gadot is unstoppable and spectacular to see in action. Watch her fly. **C**

The General Goes Rogue

War Machine

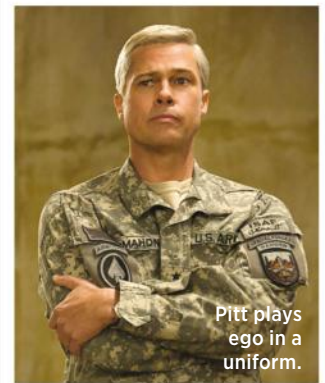
Brad Pitt

Directed by David Michôd

★★

IN "THE RUNAWAY GENERAL," a 2010 article by Michael Hastings in *ROLLING STONE*, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, talked shit about President Obama's war policy and got canned for it. But the core of Hastings' piece and of his book, *The Operators*, is the war machine and how it operates.

Now Hollywood and Netflix take a crack at it. Brad Pitt stars as the McChrystal charac-



Pitt plays ego in a uniform.

ter, here dubbed Gen. Glen McMahon for reasons best known to litigators. Pitt can be great in go-for-broke roles (*Inglourious Basterds*), but he pushes the general far into caricature. There are three dimensions to this ramrod, but Pitt and the script give us only one.

Writer-director David Michôd (*Animal Kingdom*) is aiming for *Strangelove* satire, but the too-blunt comedy defangs the film. As does the irritating voice-over from the *ROLLING STONE* reporter, played by Scoot McNairy, which breaks a cardinal rule of filmmaking: Show, don't tell. Somewhere along the way, *War Machine* forgot that world leaders and policy wonks don't mean a thing if they're not flesh and blood. **C**

'Pirates 5' Scrapes the Franchise Bottom

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales

Johnny Depp

Directed by Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg

★

IS THIS REALLY JUST THE fifth entry in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film franchise? It feels like the 50th. Except for series newcomer Javier Bardem, who brings fresh mischief to this paycheck party, *Dead Men Tell No Tales* has all the flavor of rotting leftovers.



Bardem leads dead pirates.

Johnny Depp's Capt. Jack Sparrow was a great comic creation back in 2003 (he earned an Oscar nomination for it),

but he's not refreshing the role, just repeating it. Bardem finds a twinkling menace in Salazar, the pirate king of the undead. But creative life departed this series long ago. Couple chaotic action with an incoherent script, and even the best actors go under. Still, the true victims are audiences forking over cash money for this bilge. They're essentially walking the plank. **C**



SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME IN THE BATHROOM?

If you're spending too much time in the bathroom, you're not alone. Your symptoms may be caused by a digestive condition called EPI, or exocrine pancreatic insufficiency. Even if you have just one of these symptoms, you could still have EPI.

- **Frequent diarrhea**
- **Unexplained weight loss**
- **Oily, foul-smelling stools that float**
- **Gas and bloating**
- **Stomach pain**

EPI is a manageable condition, so don't keep a lid on it.

Go to CouldItBeEPI.com, complete the symptom checker, and talk to your doctor about your symptoms. Find out if it could be EPI.



Billy Joel

On doubting himself, staying in touch with his ex-wives and what it's like to finally be cool

In the past few years, you've become a much bigger concert draw. What happened?

I don't like to think about why – because then you find out. I have a theory about any success I've had. I don't think I'm all that bad. I just think I'm *competent*. I know how to write. I know how to play. I know how to sing in key. I don't like my own voice.

Do you consider yourself a great songwriter?

I think I'm OK. Some of my songs are pretty damn good. Some stink out loud. I once tried to write a song in French, and I don't even speak French. I played it in France and asked a promoter why they didn't like it. He said they thought I was singing in Polish. About half of my songs are passable, but there's a bunch I would throw away.

Those songs are the soundtracks to people's lives!

I like the obscure stuff more than the hits. I never thought "Piano Man" would be a hit. "We Didn't Start the Fire" is essentially a novelty song.

What do you think as you're singing "Piano Man" on-stage?

"Oh, good, it's almost over!" I'm kidding. It's gratifying to hear an audience sing your words. But it's more about feeling than thinking onstage. I like communicating with the musicians. Sometimes we tune into the same thing without signaling each other. There's sort of a wizardry to it.

What's your favorite Billy Joel song?

"New York State of Mind," because, I guess, it became a standard. Sort of like Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust," or "Georgia on My Mind." It became one of those songs.

What advice do you give younger musicians?

Don't be afraid of mistakes, because the only original thing we ever do is make mistakes. You can be taught how to do something perfectly right, but only you can screw it up in your own inimitable way.

How do you relax?

Well, I got a little girl now. She's 20 months old. My favorite thing is just to hang out with her and see the wheels in her head spin: how she's viewing the world and what she's learning. That's my favorite way to relax.

Joel will be touring stadiums across the U.S. this summer.

What have you learned about fatherhood?

My favorite thing about my whole life is probably being a father. I didn't have a father, so it was very important to me to be a father and kind of compensate for what I didn't have.

Did you ever get caught up in fame and money?

I'd get caught up in work. I can't believe how hard I worked when I was younger. Sometimes it affected me as a human being. I set a high bar for myself, and if I didn't reach it, I would beat myself up, which probably is the reason I stopped writing songs.

Do ideas still come to you when you're sitting at the piano at home?

Every morning. I wake up every morning, I get out of bed and I got a song idea in my head. Not necessarily a song idea but either a melodic idea or a symphonic idea. I dream symphonies sometimes.

So I'm still writing music. I never stopped writing music. I just stopped writing songs.

Where does your drive come from?

I grew up listening to classical music. I read a quote from Neil Diamond: "I've forgiven myself for not being Beethoven." And I realized my issue was I haven't forgiven myself for not being Beethoven.

Bill O'Reilly once said he knew you in high school and called you a "hoodlum."

I think maybe to him I was. I didn't really know him, but we're from the same town and my gang used to hang out at the stores. But we were more lovers than we were fighters.

Do you consider yourself happy?

I'm a very contented man. I keep reading, "Oh, he suffers from depression." I don't. There's a couple of times I've gone on drinking binges when I was sad or upset. But it was always a short burst of sadness. I never stayed there.

Is it important to stay close to your ex-wives?

I don't carry hard feelings. I don't carry grudges. I get along with all my ex-wives. I'm kind of like Henry VIII. This is my fourth marriage – may the fourth be with me!

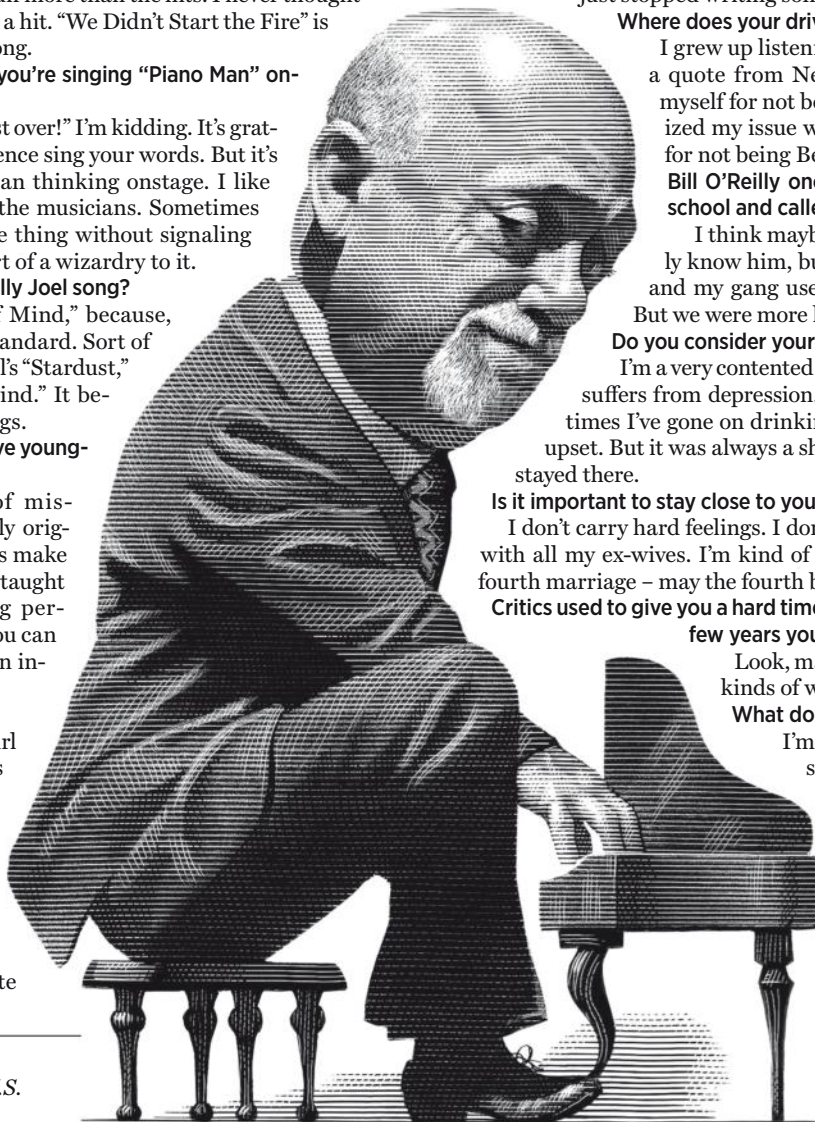
Critics used to give you a hard time. But it seems like in the past few years you've become cool.

Look, man, Trump is president, so all kinds of weird shit can happen.

What do you make of that?

I'm still flabbergasted. I try to stay out of politics. One of the biggest cheers of the night comes when we do "Piano Man" and I sing, "They know that it's me that they're coming to see to forget about life for a while," and the audience lets out this huge "ahhhh" and I say, "OK, yeah, don't forget that." We're more like court jesters than court philosophers.

INTERVIEW BY PATRICK DOYLE



Interview starts in 15 minutes



EXTREMELY CLOSE, EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE, ALWAYS FLEXIBLE.

Schick
XTREME3
FREE YOUR SKIN™



Nailing it now

THE ORIGINAL LIGHT BEER

Great taste, only 96 calories.



MILLER LITE. HOLD TRUE.