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ALISON Wonderland

DEJ LOAF

SAY Lou Lou

KRIS Kristofferson

GIORGIO MORODER

TURN IT UP! IT'S CHARLI XCX



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58 CHARLI XCX BOTTOMS UP WITH BRITAIN'S SEXIEST BAD GIRL **64 CONOR McGREGOR** THE TRASH-TALKING UFC CONTENDER TAKES A STYLISH DETOUR ON THE HIGH SEAS **72 MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO** SIZING UP THE SUPERFIGHT THAT WILL SAVE BOXING **A1 YOU ONLY LIVE UNTZ** THREE DAYS OF MUSIC AND MAYHEM ABOARD THE ULTIMATE EDM CRUISE **B1 THE CHILDREN'S LIBERATION ARMY** INSIDE THE VIGILANTE CREW WORKING TO END CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING **78 DEJ LOAF** DETROIT'S "SHY" GIRL RAPPER STEPS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT **80 SAY LOU LOU** THE SEDUCTIVE POP DUO DOUBLES DOWN **86 RAE SREMMURD** CLOSE CALLS AND CANNONBALLS WITH THE "NO FLEX" BROTHERS

> **On the Cover** photographed by Tetsu Kubota styled by Wayne Gross

Hair, Bénédicte Cazau-Beyret at ArtList; makeup, Pep Gay at Streeters; manicure, Line Irene Aasland at Thief Spa.

THE MECHANICAL REVOLUTION OF SWATCH





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THE NOISE ISSUE



IT HAPPENS WITH ENOUGH regularity that I should be better equipped to deal with it: an awkward silence and the pressure to think of something, anything, to fill it. But then, small talk is not my strong suit. Now social media has added even more pressure to generate crafty one-liners, all while trying to digest a constant stream of pings from friends and followers.

Amid so much noise, I often find myself fantasizing about the opposite: silence. The world's most quiet room, the "Anechoic Test Chamber" created by Orfield Laboratories in Minneapolis, is said to be so devoid of sound, most people can last only 20 minutes in there before being driven mad by the gurgling of their own organs. That sounds like heaven to me. The closest I came was a couple of years ago, when I traveled to the mountains in Peru just outside Cusco to live with a shaman for several weeks while adhering to a vow of silence. I also surrendered my biggest noisemaker, my iPhone. It was the hardest thing I have ever done–an interesting experiment that revealed just how much noise I tend to create for myself. The first three days were the hardest. I paced nervously around my mountain hovel as my thoughts raced and raced. But then something shifted. Rather than driving me mad, the quiet became a worthy companion, and for once, I could hear myself think.

As important as that experience was, it was remarkably easy to fall back into old habits once I returned to my life in the city. Noise is often our best defense against ourselves, against the whispered truths we may not always be willing to hear. But noise has another appeal–it's just so much damn fun.

In this issue, we set out to celebrate the culture's best noisemakers, from our chart-topping cover girl, Charli XCX (PAGE 58), whom we caught up with during her European tour, to rappers Rae Sremmurd (PAGE 86)–throwing their very first house party at their new digs in L.A.

We also offer advice (PAGE 36) on crafting the perfect make-out playlist (pro tip: save the Sting tracks for brunch) and sit down with Spotify's artist in residence, D.A. Wallach (PAGE 32), to talk about the streaming service that's transforming the music industry, to the consternation of some artists. We take a look at some never-beforeseen artwork from Kurt Cobain's private archive (PAGE 22) and check in with our other favorite music acts, from Detroit rap star Dej Loaf (PAGE 78) and Bombino, the father of desert blues (PAGE 27), to the psychedelic indie rocker Tame Impala (PAGE 40), the rapper Heems, who offers up his own lyrical take on noise (PAGE 12), and dream-pop twins Say Lou Lou (PAGE 80). Meanwhile, this month's Informer is a comprehensive guide to the rock T-shirt, with cameos from Chloë Sevigny and Ty Dolla \$ign, among others (PAGE 93).

Of course, nothing will make more noise this month than the fight of the century–Mayweather versus Pacquiao–and our comprehensive tale of the tape takes stock of the fighters, the strategies, and the numbers in exhaustive detail (PAGE 72).

It's a noisy issue, and we've turned it up to 11. That said, if you prefer some peace and quiet, I can recommend a sleepy little spot in Minneapolis or a hut in Peru where you can hear a pin drop.

Silence is truly golden, but once in a while you still have to wonder: Turn down for what?

Editor in Chief KATE LANPHEAR

IN HOLLYWOOD, THE NEXT STEP IS JUST THE BEGINNING.



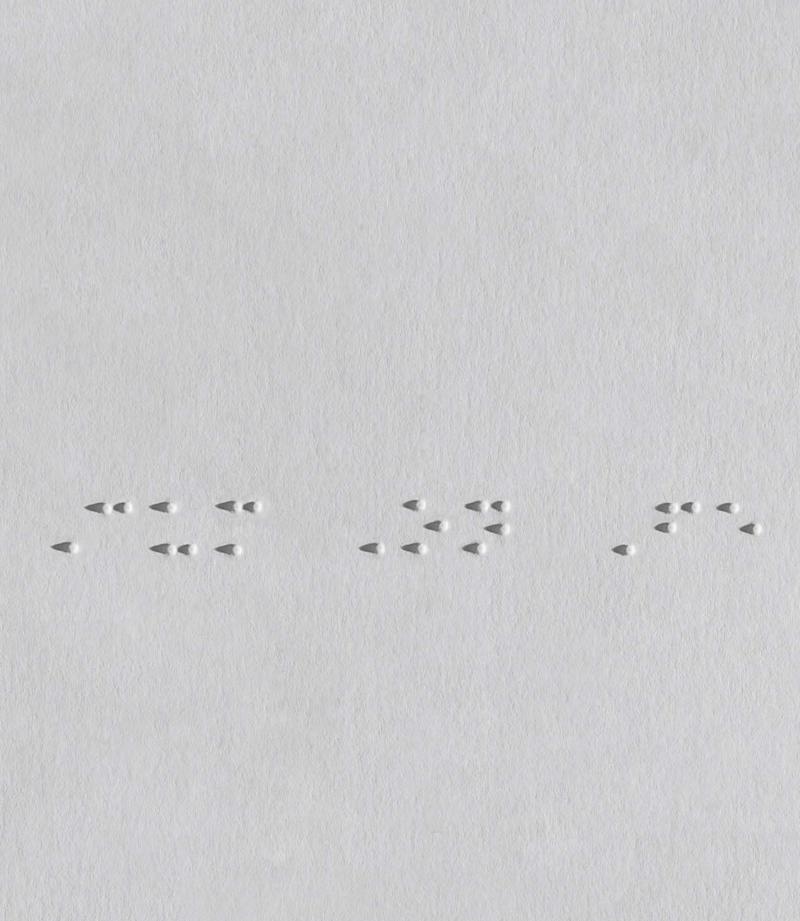


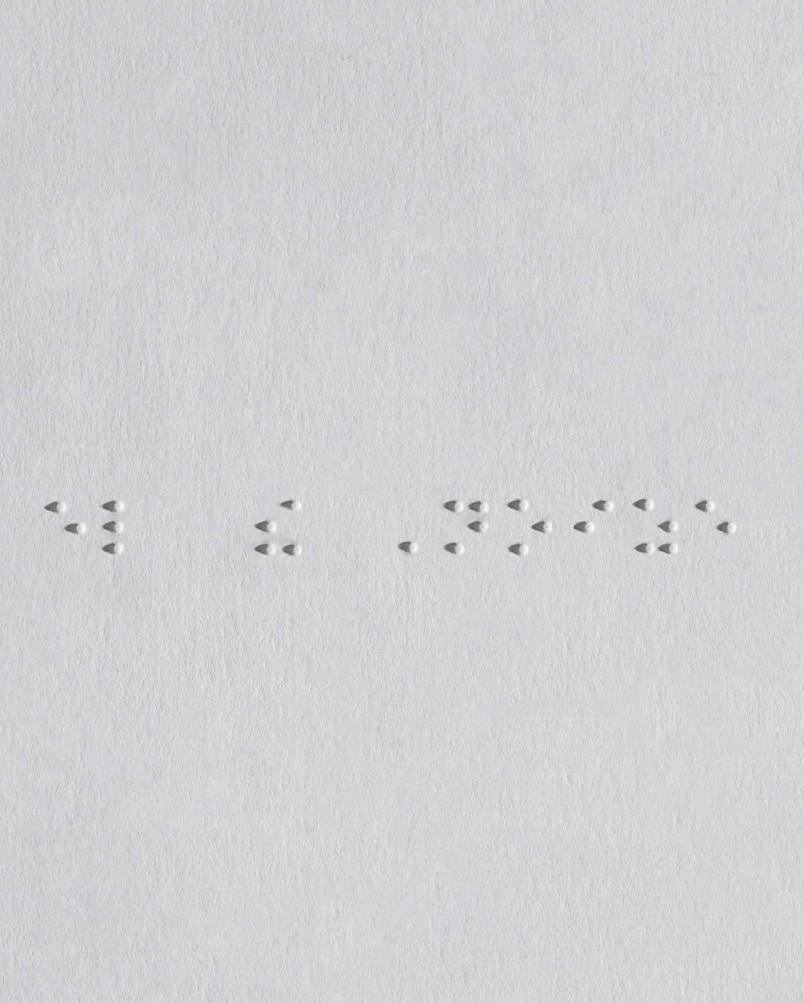
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OLD LADY holding purse tight shout shut off that racket / But that racket happen to be me rapping out my tax bracket / I told her one man's noise is another man's symphony / And one man's trash lid another man's timpani / Couldn't afford guitars, we took the sounds that we wanted / To speak on how we felt unwanted. They say we wanton / But it don't warrant them wanting us with arrest warrants / They say our music is stupid cause it don't sound like Warrant? / Who decides what's wanted and what's unwanted sound / In rap, we take what's around us to make art that's found / Like the leftovers and waste that they cooked up with soul / They would take all these noises they'd mold, they'd control / We'd hear all this shouting, 'bout our hubbub and hullabaloo / Gullible you, boys make noise, buffed toys, a hell of a crew / Now they clamor for the clamor when it bring the glitz and glamour / Cameras flashing with the fashion in the club they getting hammered / And that commotion turned the wheels of capitalism into motion / Our noise on top of charts, in ad campaigns to sell lotion / So I keep my pants sagging and I don't turn my noise down / Because that noise is the voice of the brown sounds in my towns.

Heems' debut album, Eat Pray Thug, *is out now*.

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IT GIRL

<u>ALICE</u> Unchained

DOWN UNDER DJ ALISON WONDERLAND IS COACHELLA'S UNSTOPPABLE GOLDEN GIRL. "IT'S JUST A DJ NAME. PEOPLE ALWAYS WANT ME TO GIVE THEM SOME BULLSHIT ANSWER ABOUT LOVING DISNEY."

ALEX SCHOLLER, AN AUSTRALIAN DJ, was getting steady work playing graveyard shifts in Sydney nightclubs—often to just a handful of patrons—when a promoter called her with a proposition. He had a prime-time slot to offer, but only if she came up with a stage name to go on the poster. She had five minutes.

With that, Scholler–who kicks off her first major U.S. tour at Coachella 2015 and whom Diplo recently called one of the best DJs Down Under–stepped through the looking glass and became Alison Wonderland. "It's just a DJ name. People always want me to give them some bullshit answer about loving Disney," she says with a laugh.

EDM is now the most lucrative musical genre in the world. But if Wonderland is eyeing that \$400,000 headliner gig at Hakkasan, she doesn't let on. Last year she declined to do a regular tour, opting instead to throw a series of secret warehouse parties around Australia. "In three days, I sold 10,000 tickets," she recalls. "And then the fact that all these people actually showed up was the craziest thing to me."

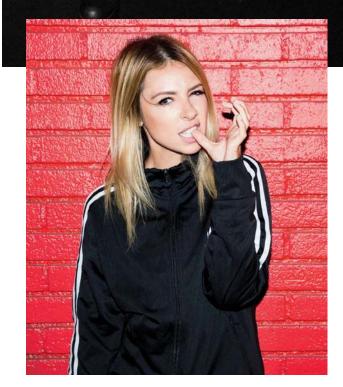
She's not just being coy: A few years ago, Wonderland walked away from a promising career as a cellist in a symphony orchestra, turning to EDM as a bedroom hobby, a way to get her "music fix" while she figured out her next step. Becoming a globe-trotting electro-pop party monster wasn't part of the plan, but her ascent from the bedroom to the big stage was quicker than most. "When I'm interested in something, I tend to hyperfocus on it," she says.

If Wonderland's debut album, *Run*, which dropped in April, bears any traces of her background as a classically trained musician, they're impossible to detect with an untrained ear. But her ability to structure a song that can make a person's face melt right off their skull is all too evident.

As for her influences, she cites OutKast, Beastie Boys, and James Murphy. "DJ-wise, I don't really have any," she says, "but I always go back to DJ AM and his Elton mixes. The music is so intelligent and eclectic–you always get surprised by where he takes you."

This being the year Wonderland goes global, there will certainly be no shortage of surprises to come. **–ADAM LINEHAN**

Wonderland mans the decks at Villa Nightclub in Australia.





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#getyourmilesin" skechersGOrun.com MEL TILLIS AND I were good friends during my first few years in Nashville. One night in 1965, I went to his home already pretty tanked and rang the doorbell. Just as his wife opened the door, I dropped and shattered a fifth of vodka all over the front porch. (I don't remember the brand, but it was definitely whatever was cheapest at the time.) I can't imagine why, but she wouldn't let Mel go out with me that evening.

I decided I would drive up to Fort Campbell and see my old Army company before they flew off to Vietnam. On the way, I blew a tire and rolled my car and ended up hanging upside down, wheels up and still turning, when a police car arrived.

I was pretty sure I was OK, but I thought it would be funny to give them a scare, so I stayed as still and as quiet as I could as they cautiously approached, and I heard one of them say the driver couldn't possibly have survived that one. Just as they were peering in and sizing up the situation, I yelled as loud as I could, "Get me out of here!"

They about had heart attacks and were so relieved that they didn't that they offered me a ride to the Army base. I got there just in time to board the plane to Vietnam and say hello and let everyone know that I might as well go with them, since I had just totaled my car and had nothing left to lose.

That got a few claps; then the commanding officer came and told

MY FAVORITE DRINK NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

AS THE U.S. STUMBLED INTO VIETNAM, FORMER ARMY CAPTAIN TURNED OUTLAW COUNTRY SINGER KRIS KRISTOFFERSON ALMOST BECAME A CASUALTY OF HIS OWN RENEGADE SPIRIT.





WE NEVER SLEEP

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SHE GOT GAME

THE NEW GENERATION OF JERSEY CHASERS IS TAKING THE GAME TO SOCIAL MEDIA–AND LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD.

by KAYLEEN SCHAEFER

IN THE EIGHTIES, the "Showtime" Los Angeles Lakers were as well known for their off-court conquests as their on-court dominance. Players had their pick of the groupies swarming the Forum. Only a small percentage of this massive fangirl population ever found their way to Magic Johnson's house, the setting for scenes of debauchery worthy of Caligula. The ones who did had to pass a three-part test.

"First, they had to be gorgeous," writes Jeff Pearlman, an expert on all things Los Angeles and all things basketball, in his book *Showtime*. "Second, they had to be promiscuously dressed. Third, they had to be willing to...do things."

The culture of professional sports has changed in the intervening years, and the breed of dedicated sports fan known as the "jersey chaser" has changed with it. The modern sexually aggressive superfan is, more often than not, famous in her own right on Instagram, which has become the hunting ground for women and athletes alike. The successful members of this sorority, who get tickets, free flights, and hotel rooms courtesy of point guards and cornerbacks, communicate with would-be conquests publicly–sometimes very publicly–using a visual shorthand that offers plausible deniability while maximizing exposure. The difference between the women who wanted Magic and the women who want Paul George can be boiled down to one thing: control. The right of conquest now rests with the fans.

According to Charles Gardner, who has managed NBA-loving models for years, women can communicate their openness to new experiences with what they show and what they don't. If an Instagram account features pictures of airline tickets, bikini-bottom portraits, and shots from the front row, as well as an e-mail address up top, but doesn't show selfies with makeup artists or photographers, players can infer that a girl has been "flown out" before.

"I'm a booking agent for a lot of girls, and what will happen is that players—well, their agents—will get the e-mail off their Instagram account and ask if a girl is available for a party or an event," Gardner says. If the girl is both available and single, she may soon find herself checking into a luxury suite.

This may strike some as unseemly, but it's an open invitation to have sex with rich men who work out a lot-not an unappealing notion.

"Have I seriously dated an athlete? No," says a thirtysomething social worker who lives in Los Angeles. "But," she adds teasingly, "I've gone out on dates and spent time with them." The social worker says she's not interested in a long-term romance. Seeing athletes on the side gives her a way to decompress. "Instagram has made it a lot easier," she says. "There's a steady stream of guys in my in-box."

A veteran sports publicist, who requested anonymity for the sake of her career, estimates that 80 percent of NBA players use social media to find women. As she points out, the app makes it easy for athletes to pursue their extracurriculars by simply scrolling through their phone. No more lingering at the club. It's like Seamless for sex partners.

Social media also gives women a way to protect themselves—a public forum—and a measure of leverage. Ladies who feel wronged by men with sneaker deals can deliver a crushing economic blow with the click of a mouse. Screen-shotted text messages have a tendency to leak when relationships sour. Intimate pictures appear online.

"Women do have more power now because they can put these guys on blast," the sports publicist explains.

Meanwhile, online forums allow jersey chasers to air their dirty laundry without anyone seeing the name on the tag. When one NBA player's supposed lack of chivalry disappointed an amorous fan, she took to BallerAlert.com to complain. "He treated me as if I courted him like some nightclub hooker!" she wrote. "After a year of talking, and this? Hell, I would've charged a tad bit more and got my money in the beginning if I would've known he was going to treat me like a prostitute."

It is taken as gospel that players and their girlfriends pore over sites like Bossip, Talk-Sports, and Baller Wives, which take a forensic approach to players' social media accounts and serve as confessionals for postcoital relations. Anonymous comments become accepted wisdom in a hurry, meaning the player probably had an awkward chat with his girlfriend. It's hard to tell fact from fan fiction.

Because players are, for reasons personal and professional, allergic to this type of publicity, it often makes more sense for them to date within an existing pool of loosely affiliated women. *Basketball Wives* star Draya Michele is famous for having dated enough NBA players to field a team. Players go out with each other's exes, because made women have demonstrated an ability to be discreet.

That said, those who make the rounds do tend to raise eyebrows. "I can be like, 'Dang, I just saw your girl with him, and now she's at a club with *him*, and she's at the club with *him*'-and this is just in a week," says a Las Vegas-based model who's currently dating a high-profile athlete.

"I CAN BE LIKE.

SAW YOUR GIRL

AT A CLUB WITH HIM.

AND SHE'S AT THE

CLUB WITH HIM'-

AND THIS IS JUST

IN A WEEK."

'DANG, I JUST

AND NOW SHE'S

WITH HIM.

"I see that type of stuff."

The new crop of jersey chasers has become so central to NBA culture that players school rookies to make sure they don't overdo it. "We do a really good job of just laying it out there with advice when it comes to women and partying," says Andre Iguodala of the Golden State Warriors. "You can have fun, but just make sure you know that this is a job and this is a business."

That said, many of the women have business goals of their own. Some have leveraged their moment in the spotlight to land reality shows and swimwear lines. And courtside seats aren't easy to come by. ■



NOISE

STRANGE MAGIC

FOR THE CURRENT QUEENS OF POP ECCENTRICITY-SIA, FKA TWIGS, AND BJÖRK-THE ARTSY-ODDBALL ROUTINE IS MORE THAN JUST A STYLE. IT'S A STRATEGY.

"I'M SENSITIVE AND Get Easily Upset and insulted."

have been playing the "weird" card since well before Lady Gaga donned her meat dress (Stevie Nicks and Kate Bush come to mind), and for good reason! It forces listeners to move beyond the sex appeal of the typical pop chanteuse and actually hear the songs. Here's how three of our current favorites stack up.-CHRIS WILSON

WOMEN IN the music industry

"I'M A FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD. IN THE SHAPE OF A GIRL."

BJÖRK Björk Gudmundsdóttir

SIGNATURE SONG "Human Behavior," Michel Gondry-directed video featured giant teddy bears

ADORABLY ODD MOMENT Too many to count, but wearing a stuffed swan to the 2011 Oscars is definitely up there

COOL COLLABORATORS Nurtured careers of Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq and Finnish multimedia artist Heidi Kilpeläinen

VOCAL STYLE

Can soar from Icelandic baby talk to celestial bellow capable of grinding eardrums into dried fish

EXTRA CREDIT

Released "Stonemilker" on Oculus Rift; subject of retrospective at NYC's MoMA through June 7

SIA Sia Kate Isobelle Furler

"LONELINESS IS SELF-INDULGENT. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO WHEN YOU'RE ALONE."

SIGNATURE SONG "Chandelier," electropop anthem turned monster YouTube smash

ADORABLY ODD MOMENT Appeared on the cover of *Billboard* with a paper bag over her head

COOL COLLABORATORS Wrote and produced for Rihanna, Beyoncé, Britney, and Christina; sang on Kanye's "Wolves"; cast Shia LaBeouf in bizarre "Elastic Heart" video

VOCAL STYLE

Rihanna-esque pop chops with stunningly expressive, twooctave-plus diva range

EXTRA CREDIT

Supporter of the Beagle Freedom Project; owns a three-legged mutt named Lick Lick Science

FKA TWIGS

signature song "Two Weeks," skittering, sultry, space-age slow jam

ADORABLY ODD MOMENT

Revealed she was dubbed "twigs" because of how loudly her joints cracked when she danced

COOL COLLABORATORS Recorded with R&B duo Inc and produced rapper Lucki Eck\$; backup dancer for Kylie Minogue, Ed Sheeran, and Jessie J

VOCAL STYLE

Ethereal bedroom whisper erupts into orgasmic, alt-R&Bweirdness

EXTRA CREDIT

Directed a video for a London dance crew called Wet Wipez; romantically linked to *Twilight* dude Robert Pattinson

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LOST AND Found

KURT COBAIN

NEVER REALLY LIKED EXPLAINING HIMSELF. BUT WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED LOOK AT THE WORK HE LEFT BEHIND (INCLUDING SOME ON THESE PAGES), A NEW DOCUMENTARY FINALLY DOES THE JOB.





KURT COBAIN WAS

famously aloof in interviews, a revered generational spokesman who was always trying to weasel out of the job. Since his death 21 years ago, the questions have only deepened. Which is what makes the new documentary Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck, premiering on HBO May 4, such a revelation. Director Brett Morgen was granted unfettered access to Cobain's archives, including home movies, 200 hours of unreleased music and audio recordings, 4,000 pages of writings, and a stunning collection of personal artwork, and used it to create a portrait of Cobain that's more human-and more tragic-than we previously understood. "Just when we realize how much more there was to him, it's over," Morgen says. "That's the sadness of this experience: This is the last of it."

You tell a lot of Kurt's story through his artwork. It's amazing how versatile he was. From the moment he was able to hold a paintbrush, he was creating. And he never stopped creating. Unlike most artists who work in one or two different media, Kurt worked in music, spoken word, sculpture, painting, mixed-media collages, oral soundscapes. He pretty much worked with anything he would get his hands on. His work is like an autobiography. The film contains many home movies taken during Kurt's decline into heroin addiction. Did you worry it could be too much?

Over the past 20 years, there's been a romanticism of Kurt's heroin use, because the public wasn't confronted with the darker face of it. This film demystifies that image. But the question came up, would he want people to see this? My feeling was, we weren't trying to put Kurt on a pedestal, and we weren't trying to throw him on the ground and kick dirt on him. We were trying to look him in the eye.

This is the first time the Cobain family has participated in a documentary. Why now? Once Frances [Cobain's daughter with Courtney Lovel came on board, everybody wanted to participate to support her. After I screened the film for her the first time, we embraced and she said, "Thank you; you just gave me two hours with my father that I never had." My guess is that a lot of children whose parents commit suicide might tend to blame themselves, so to a certain extent, the film might have a liberating effect. What you realize is, Kurt's

problems predated fatherhood and predated Courtney and predated his heroin use and predated fame.

Why do you think Kurt's mystique remains so strong? Kurt was able to articulate his feelings of angst and his specific life experiences better than just about anyone of my generation. But he was in the public eye for only a very brief period of time, beginning with the launch of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in '91 and ending in April of '94. And for a large part of those years, he was on retreat. The public had very limited access to Kurt.

He hated giving interviews and discouraged reporters from trying to understand him. Would he be annoyed that we're all still doing it? It was annoying to him to have to explain his work. But if nobody was asking, he would have been equally troubled. That was part of Kurt's challenge in life. We came across several journal entries that suggest an invitation to explore. One that we show in the film says, "When you wake up, please read my diary. Look through my things, and figure me out." I can't help but think that if he didn't want people to see his stuff, he might have discarded it. -JASON FEIFER

A pair of works painted by Cobain. Since his death, they've been kept in a storage facility along with the rest of his artwork.

> MY FEELING WAS, WE WEREN'T TRYING TO PUT KURT ON A PEDESTAL, AND WE WEREN'T TRYING TO THROW HIM ON THE GROUND AND KICK DIRT ON HIM.

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LIONS OF **THE DESERT**

HOW A MUD-BRICK **OUTPOST IN THE CENTER OF THE SAHARA** KICKED OFF A ROCK 'N' ROLL **RENAISSANCE.**

by ETHAN E. ROCKE

IN 2014, THE PENTAGON announced plans to build a drone base in the middle of the Sahara to bolster its surveillance capabilities in West Africa. The site: an ancient marketplace town called Agadez in the nation of Niger. Over the past decade, West Africa has become a hotbed for jihadist groups, including Boko Haram and Al Qaeda. Known as the gateway to the Sahara, Agadez is the final stopping point before West Africa gives way to one of the biggest terrorist havens in the world.

Agadez isn't necessarily a dream assignment for the U.S. military personnel and government contractors who will soon be arriving there. It's a ramshackle town in one of the poorest countries on Earth, accessible only by long, badly maintained roads, many of them riddled with land mines left over from past military conflicts. The city's population is heavily composed of ethnic Tuaregs, a fiercely independent nomadic people with a long history of armed rebellion. But what it lacks in infrastructure and security, the next American outpost in Africa makes up for with something completely unexpected: a legendary indie rock scene.

mbino, whose ance encounter a guitar in the y '90s brought to the desert

Saharan nomad, Tuareg guitar music-or desert blues, as it's often called-is fluid, energetic, and raw. "It's like a snake eating itself," says Jim James of My Morning Jacket, who, like the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach and members of TV on the Radio, has developed an intense fascination with desert blues. "So much pop music is verse-chorus-verse, and this isn't. Just when you think it's not going to change, it changes right under your nose." Meanwhile, for the people of the Saharaespecially the Tuareg-desert blues and politics are fully intertwined.

A blend of '60s-era rock 'n' roll and the musical traditions of the

Since the early 1960s, they have been locked in an often bloody

take the risk, so I fled." After a fragile peace agreement was signed in 2009, Bombino re-emerged a local folk hero. And with the war over, foreign interest in Tuareg guitar music went global.

Bombino says. "But I also heard

they were killed because they were musicians. I didn't want to

His success, meanwhile, has inspired a surge of young Tuareg guitarists in Agadez. "Evervone wants to be a star; that's kind of the dream there," says Christopher Kirkley, a Portland, Oregon, filmmaker who recently produced a Tuareg remake of the Prince movie Purple Rain. (Because there is no word for *purple* in the native language Tamasheq, the film's title translates into English as "Rain the Color of Blue with a Little Red in It.") The film stars an up-and-coming Tuareg guitarist named Mdou Moctar as the motorcycle-riding musician seeking fame in the "city where guitars are king." It's got everything: an epic guitar battle with a rival, a pious Muslim father who burns his son's guitar to

save his soul, and a budding romance in the desert.

For all the success of the town's music, Agadez's future remains uncertain. As foreign money and personnel begin flooding in, the musicians of Agadez, most of whom support themselves by playing local weddings, may find their careers bolstered by both a renewed sense of security and a more affluent Western audience. But not everybody is optimistic. "No one can control the desert," Bombino says. "That is why the terrorists like it there. Violence in Africa–there is always a business behind it." ■

THE PRIDE

Bombino and his band

in Agadez where his first album was recorded.

Inset: Bombino (right) and

Auerbach in Nashville.

practice at the house

Meet the other titans of desert blues.

MDOU MOCTAR Wielding a lefthanded Fender, and often using heavy vocal distortion, the motorcycle-riding star of Rain the Color of Blue with a Little Red in It is currently pushing desert blues in an even more psychedelic direction. His 2013 album, Afelane, became a viral success both in and out of Africa by being shared over mobile phones.

GROUP INERANE Hailing from northern Niger, Group Inerane is most notable for its dueling-guitar riffs and '60s-era psychedelic sound. One of its two guitarists, Adi Mohamed, was killed by government soldiers near Agadez during a 2010 uprising.

TINARIWEN

Founded in the early 1980s, this Malibased music collective pioneered Tuareg guitar music. Most of the group's members fought on the front lines during one or more of the rebellions. Their 2011 album, Tassili, recorded in the Algerian desert and featuring TV on the Radio and Nels Cline of Wilco, won a Grammy for Best World Music Album.



struggle against a succession of postcolonial governments. And increasingly, music has become one of the most effective tools of their struggle. "During the revolutions, the guitar became a way of telling truth to power," says Bombino, the spiritual figurehead of Tuareg guitar music, whose chart-topping 2013 album, *Nomad*, was produced by Auerbach in a Nashville studio,

and whose next U.S. tour kicks off this month. "So this is a powerful weapon, but for me it's a weapon of peace."

When Omara "Bombino" Moctar was 10 years old, he and his family fled their home in a Tuareg encampment near Agadez. The year was 1990, and a pan-national Tuareg guerrilla campaign was in full swing, triggering a brutal response from the Niger government that left hundreds of civilians dead. While living with relatives in Algeria, Bombino happened upon a guitar and some videotapes of Jimi Hendrix and Dire Straits, and he taught himself to play.

By 2007, Bombino had been back in Niger for nearly a decade, living and working in Agadez, where he'd helped establish its music scene against a sepia backdrop of camel caravans and mud-brick dwellings. That year a dispute over mineral rights ignited yet another rebellion. This time, as the guerrillas drove into battle, the music of Bombino could be heard blasting from their tape decks.

Before long, the Tuareg were banned from playing guitar altogether. And when rumors spread that two Agadez musicians had been executed by government soldiers, panic ensued. "I heard they were killed because they had become entertainers for the rebels,"



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MONSTERS OF ROCK

AS MAD MAX: FURY ROAD COMES ROARING INTO THEATERS, A DERANGED CADRE OF MOTORHEADS IS DOING BATTLE IN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT FOR REAL.

THERE'S NO LOGICAL reason to race in the Nitto King of the Hammers. It is very long (215 miles this year). You have only 14 hours. The course runs through the most pitiless basin and over the gnarliest rock piles in California's outer Mojave. It is the Old Testament meets California "hoon," as the new breed of gearheads is known. And racing in it feels like being in a plane crash that lasts half a day. Even if you win, the \$25,000 purse barely covers the cost.

"This is not a race for dilettantes," says Emily Miller, desert racing legend. "This is a kick in the balls. There is no room for error. One mistake and you're done, or you're in a whole lot of pain."

Desert racing has a long and filthy tradition of failure, death, and doom. The almost two-week, multistage Dakar Rally, which now takes place in South America, is the most extreme, expensive, and brutal example of the form. The Baja 1000 is similarly taxing, though it takes the average driver around 20 hours to complete.

The King of the Hammers is a different beast, a crucible of mental and physical endurance made for the average man (and average budget) that combines flat-out desert racing with the meticulous, highstakes, and very slow art of motoring over boulder-strewn mountains. The race cars are called Ultra4s, purpose-built for 120-mph sprints and high-gear rock-crawling.

"It takes a very precise mind to finish this race," Miller says. "It also helps if you're a little crazy." –**MIKE GUY**





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THE EVENTS WERE BILLED as closed-door, no-media-allowed conversations between artists and Spotify. It was a delicate pairing, the industry equivalent of the Iran nuclear talks or emergency couples therapy, and so it began with the creation of a safe space: In three cities–New York, Nashville, and Los Angeles–the artists would gather in a room by themselves and talk for 30 minutes about streaming. Then the doors would open, and Spotify execs would be allowed in.

And that's roughly when the shouting started, much of it at D.A. Wallach, the guy tasked with playing peacemaker between corporate and creative.

"There are certainly conversations I have that begin with people hating me," Wallach says today. Those events were in October, in collaboration with the British artists advocacy group Featured Artists Coalition. But he's been hated elsewhere. And he's developed a LeBron James-level ability to wave away his detractors.

After all, he knows exactly where they're coming from. Wallach is a musician himself. He fronted a band called Chester French and is now a solo act. His job title at Spotify is artist in residence. And his actual job is to meet with artists and say, essentially, "I am one of you. And I want to help you love Spotify the way I love Spotify."

Imagine it: You are a full-time musician, fearing for your livelihood. Napster convinced a generation of music fans that your recordings had

CALIFORNIA STREAMIN'

NOISE

AS THE SUBSCRIPTION MUSIC SERVICE SPOTIFY DEFENDS ITS BUSINESS MODEL TO INDUSTRY NAYSAYERS, THE COMPANY'S ARTIST IN RESIDENCE, D.A. WALLACH, IS THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE.

> by SANJIV BHATTACHARYA

> > Wallach doing what he does: juggling.

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no monetary value, and by the time it was functionally sued out of existence, CD sales were tanking. Then iTunes demolished the very concept of the album, turning songs into individual commodities. Then Spotify came along and made it easy for anyone to hear your music for free. People lost interest in these \$1.29 files, and, on the high end, Spotify now offers to pay \$0.0084 cents for each time someone plays your song. And if you think that's a raw deal, some guy named D.A. Wallach, with a corporate day job and a gleaming Tesla, calls you up and says he's just like you and everyone's going to be OK.

You think to yourself: Who does this guy think he is?

And then, an even more disorienting question: What if he's right?

"I HAVE A TOTAL REVULSION for corporate life," Wallach says when we meet. Does he have an office at Spotify HQ? No, he mostly comes in for meetings. Does he wear suits to work? Hell, no–he's currently wearing lime-green sneakers and a pink T-shirt, looking like Shaun White's nerdy, art-teacher brother. That said, he turned 30 in March. And he is waving his flag of rock 'n' roll independence in a very corporate-looking Spotify conference room, with a publicist sitting nearby.

Twelve years ago, Wallach was a Harvard freshman desperate to join a band. Some guys were assembling one, so he auditioned to be the drummer. He lost out to Damien Chazelle, who went on to write and direct *Whiplash*. But the band anointed him their singer, and they called themselves Chester French. They recorded an EP, then took to the streets of Cambridge, selling it for \$5.

This was fun, but it was no way to make a living. So Wallach began worming his way through the layers of the industry, seeking a way in. He reached out to a Web designer for Kanye West and managed to get some MP3s into West's hands. He contacted a *Mix* magazine writer who had recently interviewed Pharrell Williams' engineer. He made his way through to Jermaine Dupri. It was a ludicrous effort, the work of a kid with blind ambition and lots of hustle. But, funny thing: Within weeks, all three of these men offered Chester French a deal. A bidding war ensued. The band picked Pharrell's label, Star Trak, an imprint of Interscope. By 2007, their music was playing in an episode of *Entourage*.

Around that same time, Wallach spotted another opportunity: Jimmy Iovine, Interscope's then-CEO, was looking to get more involved in the digital sphere, and Wallach happened to know Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg from their days at Harvard. "We weren't super close," Wallach says, "but we had lunch a couple of times." Good enough. He arranged a meeting between the two executives, with him as facilitator, at Facebook's headquarters.

It was a "really weird meeting," he says, without elaborating. No matter: While there, he got chatting with Dave Morin, who at the time

managed some of Facebook's biggest projects. (He has since gone on to found the social network Path.) They stayed in touch, and two years later, Morin gave Wallach his first look at Spotify. At the time, the service was a curiosity out of Sweden, and the only Americans who had access to it were industry insiders like Morin. Wallach was intrigued, and a year of eager networking followed, until he finagled a sushi dinner in Los Angeles with Spotify's cofounders, Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon.

"My skepticism was, how are you guys going to make money off this?" Wallach says.

Spotify is eager to discuss





this. The service has two main revenue streams: ads heard by its currently 45 million nonpaying users, and monthly fees paid by its 15 million members. Nearly 70 percent of this revenue goes to the owners of the music, typically labels. Spotify pays based on a complex equation and doesn't like describing it as a per-stream fee, but it works out to between \$0.006 and \$0.0084 for each play. Spotify says that can net about \$76,000 a month for a "breakthrough indie album" and \$425,000 for a global hit.

Moreover, unlike CDs, streams continue to generate income as long as fans keep on hitting play. So why all the fuss? Why do musicians like Taylor Swift and Thom Yorke openly bash Spotify? Why did Jimmy Buffett stand up at a *Vanity Fair* conference last fall and ask Ek when he'd be giving musicians a raise? The crowd laughed, but Buffett didn't. He wants a raise.

Streaming is killing off music sales and replacing it with smaller payments, these artists say. Spotify deflects blame for this onto the labels, which set artists' individual royalty rates. That indie album may have earned \$76,000 on Spotify, but the artist received just a piece of the total. Critics say that's because Spotify earned a piece too.

During that sushi dinner, though, Wallach saw Spotify's angle: The larger Spotify gets, the more money it funnels to artists and, perhaps more important, by making music more widely available, it's helping create more music fans with more eclectic tastes. "I felt an almost missionary zeal," he says. So Ek connected him with Sean Parker, the guy who created Napster, and who is now a Spotify investor and serves on its board. Before long, the kid from Chester French had a job. He would keep doing what he does best–hustling, connecting, and being persuasive.

And he would do it for Spotify.

TODAY WALLACH RUNS a 10-member artist-services team, scattered throughout New York, London, L.A., and Berlin. The job has its ups and downs. Some artists are very receptive. He said he was particularly happy after meeting with the producer Dave Stewart, formerly of the Eurythmics, who used to bash Spotify in the press but has now turned into an ally. Other meetings are tense. Some social situations are, too. He doesn't let it get to him because he feels certain he's on the right side. "They're not yelling at me because Spotify's business model doesn't make sense. What they're screaming about is that it's really hard for them to make money right now."

Later this year, Wallach will add to his credentials as an artist in residence: He will release his first solo album. Not that he's giving up his day job. "My music is not supremely popular on Spotify," he admits with a grin. But it will be there, available for all. ■

PROMOTION









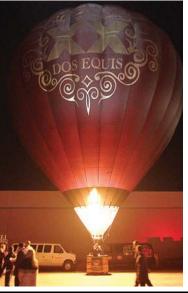


The Maxim Party was the place to be during the Big Game weekend as Maxim celebrated in style at a private Scottsdale, AZ airport hangar with 1,500+ guests, beautiful models and top celebrities in attendance.

Guests enjoyed music from DJ Vice, and a special live performance from Ludacris kept the crowd going all night long. Stars such as Paul McCartney, Chris Evans, Anna Faris, Chris Pratt, Chase Crawford, AnnaLynne McCord, Kellan Lutz, Macklemore, Nina Dobrev and Nick Cannon filled the room making the 2015 Maxim Party one to remember!

















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HOT TRACKS

WHY BUILDING THE PERFECT SEX PLAYLIST CAN BRING MORE THAN JUST BEATS TO YOUR BEDROOM.

by LIZZY GOODMAN

CREATING THE PROPER MUSICAL accompaniment for a romantic evening is every bit as critical as washing the sheets. The wrong songs could send your potential bedmate trooping out into the night, while a well-considered playlist can help set just the right vibe. You don't want to be the guy cluelessly streaming free Spotify or Pandora, getting assaulted by mood-ruining ads for a local community college or the new Imagine Dragons album every 10 minutes, do you? Herewith, some essential rules for constructing the ultimate "sexxxy" playlist:

"For me, it's a lot of Frank Ocean, the Knife, Zola Jesus, the Nationalbasically, the same songs you'd play if you suffer from chronic depression," says comedian Whitney Cummings. "The hardest part is naming it so it's not just called 'Sex Mix' on your computer." For Channing Tatum, who has been widely linked to a bump-and-grind-y You-Tube collection, "2014 Sex Songs Mix Bedroom Magic," it's likely Chris Brown, Ludacris, and Trey Songz. And for Katy Perry, it's all about the classics: "Marvin Gaye and Jeff Buckley," she has said, adding that she's also addicted to the raunchy bedroom throb of the Weeknd's "Often."

"That song is entirely about getting head from a dude," raves Sarah Lewitinn, also known as Ultragrrrl, a New York City music director for Aritzia. "Basically, the Weeknd is the new Prince, the new R. Kelly. You really can't go wrong."

One of the advantages of living in a society where someone, somewhere, is always listening, is that we no longer have to wonder how our between-the-sheets playlists compare to everyone else's; that's what Spotify is for. The streaming giant recently revealed the tracks most commonly included in its 2.5 million user-created sex playlists. "Intro," the moody instrumental by the XX, claimed the number one spot. ("They should just rename that band XXX," cracks Cummings.) Also in the top 10 were songs by Coldplay, Chet Faker, and Hozier. "That's disturbing," says Melissa, a 24-year-old fashion buyer. "I don't want someone thrusting into me while Hozier sings, 'Take me to church.' It's just not right."

The "right" mix generally depends on the woman in question. "If a guy just went for it and put on Beyoncé's album, I'd ride him like a surfboard," enthuses Melissa, while Lewitinn views that particular choice as sending a questionable signal about a man's orientation. Genevieve, 25, who works in retail, prefers to have sex "while listening to something gangsta–J. Cole, Too \$hort, Rick Ross, Mac Dre, Ja Rule. I could do that for the rest of my life and be totally content." She still feels a special invigoration whenever she hears the Wu-Tang Clan, as it brings back fond, multiorgasmic memories of an afternoon spent vigorously copulating to three albums' worth of the Wu. But such old-school boom-bappery doesn't do it for Cummings: "Most rap is a

pretty big no-no for me, because it's all about bitches and hos. Also, obviously you want me to go at a speed that is going to hurt my back."

Hey, you can't please everyone! Fortunately, there's basic agreement on sex-playlist guidelines:

<u>Plan for two distinct phases.</u> The ideal playlist accounts for foreplay *and* the main event. Kick it off with something "soothing and vibe-y," Melissa advises. Think Drake or Kendrick Lamar. "Then, as things heat up, it gets more sensual, more bass-y." (Hint: That's when you segue to the new D'Angelo album.)

Don't play anything too distracting. "The music should be a complement, not a distraction," Lewitinn says. This means no songs with a lot of nostalgic significance. "You don't want halfway through sex for me to be like, 'Oh, shit! This was my jam!'" Cummings says. "No Montell Jordan's 'This Is How We Do It.' One time a guy put on Spotify with me and 'No Diggity' came on, and I could not stop laughing, because in high school that was my anthem."

<u>Maintain a steady rhythm.</u> "Keep it all generally the same tempo," Cummings says. "If you jump right from Beck to Nine Inch Nails, I'm going to feel pressure to change *our* tempo."

Don't make your playlist too long. Thirty to 45 minutes is fine, unless you're aiming for some kind of Sting-style tantric-sex marathon (even if you are, never play Sting's solo albums during sex; it's a scientific fact that your penis will recede back into your body). "Just to be safe, the last 10 minutes should be a little more subtle. I'm way more worried about an intense song ruining my after-sex relaxation than a slower song coming on in the middle of having sex, because I probably won't notice that anyway," Melissa adds.

Don't skip music in favor of ill-considered background TV. "One time I had sex with a guy while *Family Guy* was on, and they were singing that song 'You Have Full-Blown AIDS," recalls Lewitinn. "Not cool."

Bottom line: Just pay attention. If she's not feeling that LCD Soundsystem remix or Notorious B.I.G. mash-up for whatever reason, just grab your phone off the nightstand and skip it.

"It's a lot like the feeling-out process in an MMA fight: Does she want to keep this standing up, or take it to the ground?" muses Nick, a 35-year-old writer who enjoys a formidable track record in the bedroom.

"When it comes time to push play and go at it, there's not a chance your mix will exactly match the act itself. But you're still getting laid, right? If anyone ever stopped banging you and blamed the mix–I hate to break it to you, dude, but it probably wasn't the mix."

Cummings agrees. "After all, if you rely *too* much on music, maybe you just need to get better at sex." ■

"IF A GUY JUST WENT FOR IT AND PUT ON BEYONCÉ'S ALBUM, I'D RIDE HIM LIKE A SURFBOARD," SAYS MELISSA, 24.



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LONE STAR

AS TAME IMPALA'S PSYCHEDELIC INDIE ROCK PREPARES FOR ITS MAJOR-LABEL MOMENT, MUSICAL MASTERMIND KEVIN PARKER KEEPS A TIGHT GRIP ON THE REINS.

by JENNY ELISCU



ON A RECENT WEDNESDAY AROUND 5 A.M., as he sat alone in a New York recording studio, putting the finishing touches on the new Tame Impala album, Kevin Parker had one of those moments–the ones when he can't help wondering, *Why do I put myself through this?*

After 36 hours in transit from his home studio in Perth, Australia, Parker had landed in New York and gone straight back to work. He'd been spending every spare moment for the past couple of years recording Tame Impala's third LP, and now he felt as if he might crumble just before the finish line. "I always have these extreme thoughts at the end of an album," he tells me over mimosas in Los Angeles just two days later. "In those times, I'm like, *I'm not doing this alone again.*"

You could call Parker a control freak, but the 29-year-old prefers the term *control enthusiast*. For the new album–due out this summer– Parker not only wrote, performed, and produced all the parts for all the songs entirely on his own but is also mixing it himself. "I felt like, this way the album is even more my heart and soul, my blood, sweat, and tears," he explains. "I don't want to say it's a control thing, that I need to be controlling every fraction of the sound, but I suppose that's a part of it, too. I guess it just comes from obsession."

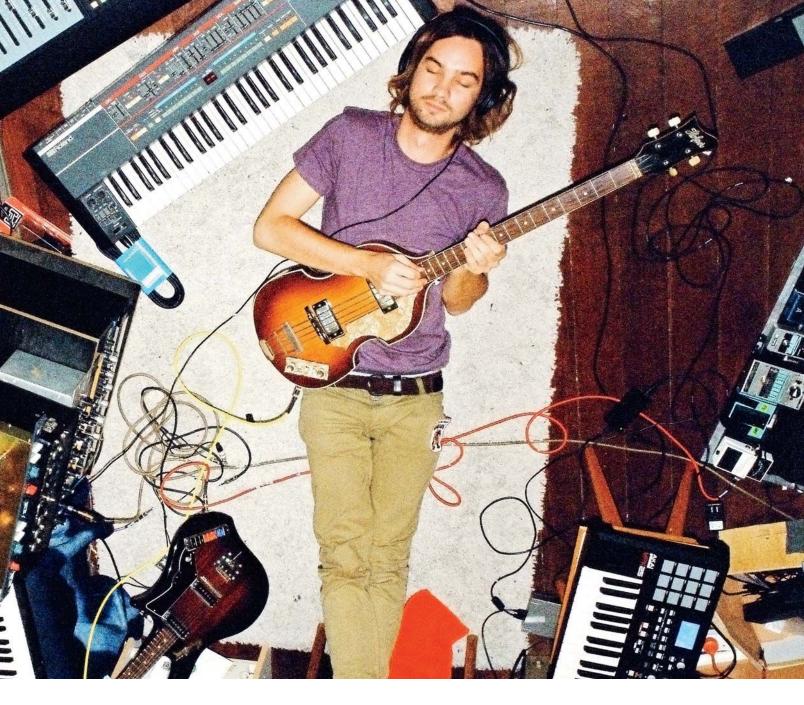
It's funny to think of the artist behind some of the most sonically blissed-out psychedelic rock of the past decade sweating the details. But Parker is one of those awesome musical masterminds with a highly precise vision, an overflowing bounty of idiosyncratic ideas, and the talents required to execute all of it, entirely on his own. (File under "Rock Polymaths," along with Jack White, My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields, the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson, and Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan.) In concert, Tame Impala is a five-piece, but the records have always been all Parker's. And, though the Australian band has a well-deserved reputation for delivering incredible live performances, the two genrebusting albums they've released so far–2010's *Innerspeaker* and 2012's *Lonerism*–are what have made Tame Impala one of the most critically



and commercially beloved indie rock acts of the current decade.

This next record, *Currents*, which is the band's major-label debut (for Interscope Records), promises to help Tame Impala gain a massive new audience of fans. The songs that are already finished–like the recently premiered eight-minute space jam "Let It Happen"–have an even more palpable '70s feel, with groovy, sinuous bass lines that lend them a greater sonic heft. "I want this album to be more hard-hitting," Parker says. "I've never heard Tame Impala in places where there's a dance floor. I wanted it to be something you could turn up really loud in your car and have it hit you in your chest."

Parker started figuring out ways to make his own kind of noise at a young age. Over drinks, he shows me a photo on his phone that his mom recently sent him: six-year-old Kevin, sitting in his backyard with a row of different-size glasses and mason jars he'd arranged to make an improvised xylophone. At 11, he fell in love with drums and built his own kit. "The bucket from my toys was the kick drum, and the snare was a rubber drum pad my friend gave me," he says. "Then I got one of Mum's drink trays, put a hole in it, and turned it upside down, and that was the cymbal. I made a pedal for the kick drum out of the trailer from a toy truck, and the stopper from my Rollerblade



was the mallet. I used it until my mum felt sorry for me and brought me a real kit. And then I practiced all day, every day." His parents had divorced when Parker was a toddler, and while he practiced drums at his mom's house, he learned to play guitar at his dad's: "He showed me chords, and I'd play rhythm parts while he played lead."

A couple of years later, he started writing his own songs. Parker is a solitary dude by nature (hence *Lonerism*), and he says that in his early teens, songwriting seemed to help him connect with other people in a way that felt more natural. "I've never been a very socially engaging person," he says, though one-on-one he's quite relatable. "When I was younger, I felt like I didn't really have much effect on people. I wasn't able to get kids to like me or get chicks to think I was interesting. So I guess I grew up with this desire to affect people. For me, that's a big part of what songwriting is: the ability to get inside someone's head and move them."

But, as dedicated as Parker was to writing and performing music, he says that learning to record is what truly ignited his obsession. At around age 16, he got his hands on an old computer with a program that allowed him to make crude multitrack recordings. "I was experimenting with sounds in a way where I didn't even know what I was doing," he says. "I put my microphone through a wah-wah pedal, like, *What is that? That sounds crazy!*"

Parker has a considerably better setup nowadays. The home he owns in Perth includes a two-room studio where he recorded the new album. There's also a room he turned into a lighting studio, because he has now taken on the responsibility of creating Tame Impala's live light shows—as if he didn't have enough to do already. "You could have a lighting person who understands the music," he reasons, "but they could never understand it as intimately as someone on the stage, as someone playing the music, someone who wrote and produced it."

Tonight, Parker will fly back to Perth and finish work on the album's last two tracks. A few days after that, he'll turn around and jet back to Los Angeles to rehearse with the rest of his band for their upcoming appearance at the Coachella Festival, and a subsequent series of shows. He and his girlfriend have been talking about settling in L.A. for a while, but Parker remains ambivalent about it. "I don't care where I live, to be honest," he says. "But now that I've almost finished the album, I just wanna experience the world again."

<u>DR. DISCO</u>

GIORGIO MORODER, THE MUSICAL WIZARD BEHIND SOME OF DISCO'S MOST ENDURING HITS, TAKES ANOTHER TWIRL ON THE DANCE FLOOR. **THE HAIR WAS FEATHERED**, bodysuits were tight, and dance floors were packed. The soundtrack? Giorgio Moroder. The heavily mustachioed Italian producer and recording artist was one of the chief architects of disco and techno, crafting several lascivious superhits for Donna Summer, along with the timeless Blondie classic "Call Me." He also designed a luxury sports car, collected a few Academy Awards and Grammys, and made a spectacular deejaying debut–at age 73. Moroder's forthcoming album features Britney Spears, Kylie Minogue, Sia, and Charli XCX. Here, a half century of Giorgio. – GABRIELLA PAELLA



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GET YOUR EDGETM MMA fighter Urijah Faber has the edge

MMA fighter Urijah Faber has the edg in his quest for the title

On his edge: I'm willing to put in the work to reap the reward. I feel that confidence, hard work and a positive attitude are big parts of success. Thinking big and believing that anything is possible is essential.

On motivation: My motivation comes from freedom. I like to be able to make my own schedule, call my own shots and live the life I want on my own terms.

On training: Training is a lifestyle for me. I stay ready at all times. Being fatigued and a little beat up is normal everyday life.

On passion: Whenever I do something that I am passionate about, I put my all into it. To me it never really seems like work. I am not afraid to push past my own limits.

On competition: I feel like winning and losing doesn't define me. I like to try and enjoy the process and put in my all.

On success: I feel like the more success I have, the more I am able to share the wealth, motivate people and help the people I love. "I'M WILLING TO PUT IN THE WORK TO REAP THE REWARD. I FEEL THAT CONFIDENCE, HARD WORK AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ARE BIG PARTS OF SUCCESS."



WHATARE YOU GETTING READY FOR? Whatever your day has in store for you, start it off with Edge® Shave gel. It creates a layer of lubricating molecules that helps your razor give you a close shave with less irritation.



Scion of Parisian cool ALAIN FABIEN DELON rocks the season's finest designer denim.

MOODY BLUES



This page:

(left) Blazer, T-shirt, and pants, Michael Kors. Watch, Timex (worn throughout). (above) Jacket, Diesel Black Gold.

Opposite page: Suit and shirt, Polo Ralph Lauren. Loafers, Prada.

DRESS BLUES

Donning a denim suit doesn't have to evoke the dreaded "Canadian tuxedo," a denimon-denim disaster that has unfairly plagued our neighbors up north for decades. In truth, not only is the blue jean blazer roughing up the runways of Paris and Milan but it doesn't require fussy tailoring and has an undeniably rakish appeal. Consider it a "jean jacket" fit for the boardroom and the bar. --CHRIS WILSON



This page: (above) Blazer and jacket, Burberry Prorsum. (right) Shirt and jeans, Tom Ford.

Opposite page: (*left*) Trench, shirt, and jeans, Kenzo. (*right*) Vest, T-shirt, and jeans, Dior Homme. Loafers, Prada.



BLUE AND BOLD

Here's a fashion-forward way to avoid the denim blues: Mix up your favorite jeans with some stylish signature pieces. Whether it's the perfect Western shirt, a well-worn denim vest, or even a trench coat that looks like something Bowie would have worn on the streets of 1970s Berlin, denim is all about exuding confidence and cool. -c.w.

louche, film noirish air, 21-year-old Alain Fabien Delon carries more than a strong, Gauloise-scented whiff of his father, the legendary French actor Alain Delon. He's thin and lanky, thanks to equally impressive DNA passed down from his mother, the Dutch model Rosalie van Breemen. Vogue Hommes International, which featured the model and actor on the magazine's fall/winter 2013 cover, likened him to a "young leopard." The same quality lent credibility to his role in the seductive sex comedy You and the Night, as a teen who deftly seduces a woman twice his age while partaking in a Parisian orgy. As for style, Delon sees it as "a tool one can use to express himself without saying a word." Here, he does just that in the season's

WITH HIS HAUNTED eyes and

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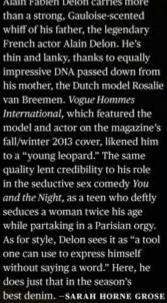
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GROOMING,



1. The Clear Winner

Most speakers are engineered to stand out; the <u>ClearViewAudio Clio</u> is designed to disappear. The bulk of the Bluetooth speaker's body is composed of a 1-mm-thick wall of acrylic glass that not only blends in with any surroundings but also acts as an audio transducer, spreading waves in all directions. The result is bright, clean, room-filling sound, all from a source that doesn't need to be seen to be heard. **\$349; clearviewaudio.com**

BASS DESIRES

From a portable speaker so tough it can survive a run-in with an F-150 to a masterful modern hi-fi setup, we bring you the season's best sound systems. by SETH PORGES

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MODEL SUBMISSIONS

As the home of the hottest girls in the world, Maxim is always looking for fresh faces. If you think you have what it takes to be featured in the magazine, on Maxim.com or a model at our Maxim events, send us your photos for a chance to be considered.

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MOVABLE Beats

BRING THE NOISE ANYWHERE WITH ONE OF THESE PORTABLE BLUETOOTH SPEAKERS.

I. The Party Starter

Shaped like a tennis ball can, the 9-inch-tall <u>UE Megaboom</u> serves up 360 degrees of enough big, punchy sound to fill a pool party or a suite at the Bellagio. Its rubberlike exterior shrugs off spills, splashes, and stains; up to 20 hours of battery life means the speaker will keep pace with the rowdiest festivities. **\$300; ultimateears.com**

II. The Refined Companion

See the honeycomb shell around the edge of the <u>Bowers & Wilkins</u> <u>T7</u>? More than a striking design element, it provides extra structural integrity and squashes the audio-scarring vibration that often plagues small speakers. Good thing: The 8-inch noisemaker houses two 50-mm drivers that crank out 18 hours of warm, balanced sound. *\$350; bowerswilkins.com*

III. The Anything-Proof Powerhouse

Drop it, dunk it—hell, drive over it: The <u>Fugoo Tough XL</u> is built to survive nearly any abuse. Better suited to a truck bed than a briefcase, the 14-inch-long, 4-lb. speaker, shelled in fiberreinforced resin and fortified by an aluminum cage, delivers 100 decibels of noise bolstered by eight acoustic drivers. **\$330; fugoo.com**





HEAVY HITTERS

SINGLE SPEAKERS THAT PACK THE SONIC PUNCH OF MUCH LARGER SYSTEMS.

I. The Tiny Titan

The palm-size <u>Mass Fidelity</u> <u>Core</u> creates a room-saturating audio that seems as though it's coming from a family of speakers. The secret: It pushes out several sound waves that intersect and create the illusion of multiple sources. In addition, the speaker boasts Bluetooth connectivity, a 12-hour battery life, and analog and optical inputs. **\$449; massfidelity.com**

II. The Ace of Bass

Like your streaming music with a thick, juicy low end? The <u>Denon</u> <u>Heos 7</u>'s seven speakers deliver a feel-it-in-your-skin bass that would make Pharrell turn his head. It's also one of the first on the market to implement the new Google Cast standard, which makes it easy to stream songs from different audio apps on your phone, tablet, and laptop. **\$600; denon.com**

III. The Hi-Fi Stunner

A sculptural, 29-lb. block of aluminum sitting on a glass base, the <u>Naim Mu-so</u> is stuffed with six amps and drivers that throw out 450 watts of some of the cleanest audio we've heard from an all-in-one system. Fusing retro hi-fi class with bleedingedge digital details, it handles everything from home theater to modern streaming. *\$1,500; naimaudio.com*

PREFERRED

MAY 2015 | EVENTS | PROMOTION | TRENDING NOW

MAXIM + BLOOMINGDALE'S MEN'S DENIM DAYS

bloomingdales

Maxim and Bloomingdale's celebrated Men's Denim Days with an intimate concert hosted by Maxim's Fashion Director, Wayne Gross. DJ Jazzy held shopper's attention as American Authors took the stage for a live musical performance, captivating the energetic crowd as they browsed the denim section with their hit single, *Best Day of My Life*.



LANDMARKS LIVE IN CONCERT

LANDMARKS LIVE In Concert is an artist driven concert series for television that is as much about landmarks, as it is the music and the musicians who perform in the series.





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Join Maxim and Oris to celebrate 100 women that have defined the word "hot" in every aspect of their lives. The Maxim Hot 100 in Los Angeles will be the most talked about party of the summer and we know you want to be there.

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THIS MAXIM LIFE

A monthly guide to living the Maxim man's life



THE SMARTPHONE

LG G Flex2

LG is making noise with the release of the innovative new LG G Flex2. The curved body form of this stylish new device is conveniently shaped to fit the curve of your hand and angle of your face. It is as beautiful to hold as it is to behold. From the sleek profile to the intuitive rear key, it's unique from every angle.



THE FIGHT

Mayweather vs. Pacquiao

The wait is over. Witness one of the most anticipated sporting events in recent history as pound for pound king Floyd Mayweather puts his legacy on the line to face eight-division world champion Manny Pacquiao. Saturday, May 2, live on Pay-Per-View.

THE ACCESSORY

Swatch Black Energy

Swatch's new Black Energy is a contemporary piece that has a cool flair proving to be just as functional as it is dynamic and eye-catching. It's a sleek, sporty ambassador and the face of Swatch's latest, lightest collection: Irony XLite.





THE ULTIMATE NOISEMAKER: VICE

The sound of take-off is a recurring theme with noisemaker, international DJ and entrepreneur Vice. From taking off at JFK after flying in for 14 hours or blasts of cryo-gusts of air on stage in Vegas, one thing is certain, Vice never stops making noise. On any given day he can be found performing in an international party city, in his studio recording or releasing tracks with the biggest talent in the music world.

Vice's dedication to DJing started at age 12 and the only passion earlier was his love for sneakers. In 2008, Vice opened the sneaker boutique, CRSVR with a flagship store at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas and a 2nd store in Santa Barbara, CA. He believes that fashion and making statements can be an experience, "it all starts with the shoes you are wearing." A perfect mix of making noise through music, jet-setting and getting work done in style.



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HE FIRST THREE TIMES, I didn't mention it, but at this point it's worth bringing up. "You know you've slapped me four times during this interview," I tell Charli XCX. "No, I haven't," she protests, rolling her eyes. I start to recite the incidents back at her, counting on my fingers and then giving up after two. Both of us arrived here needing a drink, and now we've had more than I can count. The specifics have gotten blurry.

It's 1 A.M. in Oslo's city center, and we're at Kulturhuset, a rowdy bar filled with Norwegian hipsters, their beards dangling perilously close to their pints of pale ale. "Oh, whatever, they were more like facepalms anyway," she says, as the next round arrives. Sam, her buddy from home whom she's made her assistant, refreshes us every 20 minutes or so.

Charli's a British singer (and a British drinker) who became globally famous in the most American way imaginable: writing and singing the school-bully hook of Iggy Azalea's "Fancy." The video, in which Charli had a supporting role, was a scene-for-scene re-creation of the Valley girl classic *Clueless*: an orgy of cheerleaders, house parties, and red cups. Since then her videos have touched on other archetypes of American-youth cinema: She's a trashy mess in the video for "Doing It," a prom-ruining alpha bitch in "Break the Rules," and the world's gnarliest cheerleader in her latest video, for "Famous."

She grew up wanting to be "the bad kind of cheerleader, the one who smokes behind the bleachers" and is now obsessed with the forgotten pop misfits of her youth: Avril Lavigne, t.A.T.u., Hilary Duff (for whom Charli wrote the *Billboard* top 10 hit "Boom Clap," recording it herself only because Duff's people said it "wasn't cool enough"). In person, she's seemingly devoid of ego. She's tactile and relentlessly honest, and she never breaks eye contact. If she wants to say something off the record, she doesn't go, "Hey, this is off the record." She goes, "Literally, you have to swear on your life. *Swear on your life*. If you put this in, I will literally hate you forever and ever and I will ruin your life. *Do you swear? Promise?*"

Not that she holds a lot back. An exchange about our respective hotelroom habits shifts easily to porn. "It's not like I arrive in a new hotel room and immediately open up RedTube," she says. "But I will if I need to." Nearly all her stories involve big nights out and bodily functions. There's the feces she found on the floor of her Mexico hotel room and spent an hour photographing. The night she got so drunk with a member of cutesy boy band 5 Seconds of Summer, she had to cancel her flight. The long, hungover appearance on live British TV, during which she kept a bucket under the table to barf in and napped on a sofa between segments. Just a few nights ago, she was out late and then got straight on the bus to travel to the next stop of the Katy Perry tour, for which she's the opener. "I woke up in the night and I was in the middle of a 17-hour ride," she recalls. "I was just like, I can't be bothered to go downstairs, so I picked up my designer handbag and thought, Let's just go for this. I threw up in it three times." Which is not to say she's entirely reckless. She wisely declines to name the luxury brand, explaining, "They'd just gifted it to me."

This is her life, a series of extravagances and wince-inducing repercussions. But ask about *her*, the woman named Charlotte Emma Aitchison, and the exuberance quickly fades. Charli repeatedly insists that she's a "pessimist," a "cynic," that she's "always bored." And she means it. "I'm just not very good at being happy all the time," she says. "I feel like an outsider because I'm not always trying to put my game face on. I don't even *have* a game face." You could have fooled me. From all appearances, we are having fun–joking, laughing, getting utterly plastered. But as the night goes on, I begin to get the sense that there's nothing Charli XCX, a 22-yearold with the world at her feet, fears more than genuine contentment.

I'D NEVER MET CHARLI before, but I used to see her around. When I was a teenager in London, a group of eager promoters managed briefly to circumvent the authorities and stage a series of wild bacchanals in warehouses on the outskirts of the city. These so-called "all-age" parties (there was never anyone a day older than 18 there) were wild, out-of-control raves full of drugs and underage sex. Think *Lord of the Flies* but with girls and ketamine and nobody named Piggy.

In between DJ sets, live performers would come on, including a memorable 15-year-old girl who was usually wearing three clashing vintage outfits and hippie face paint, with wild black hair. Her songs were about club kids who thought they were all that (in other words, her audience). Sample lyric: "We've got our neons on and our glow sticks out, trying to fight it out to see who's more individual." That was Charli.

"My parents would actually drop me off at those raves," she says. "I remember one time my mum came to pick me up at, like, 5 A.M., and some guy threw up all over her shoes. But I loved it. I was like, 'Mum, when I grow up I want to live in a warehouse.'"

That era created the city's youngest celebrities. There were 14-yearolds on the covers of London fashion magazines, mostly just because they were such hard-core partyers. Charli was a part of the first generation of teenagers to start developing their personal brands while still in homeroom. When she was 18, she attended one of the world's most exclusive art schools, the Slade, but she hated having to explain her weird ideas and love of Britney Spears. She was a doer, not an analyzer. So she focused on writing music, for herself and for others. Charli spent half an hour in her hotel room writing "I Love It," but as soon as it was

"IT'S NOT

in a new hotel

open up RedTube.

like I arrive

room and

immediately

But I will if

I need to."

finished, she knew she didn't want it. She gave it to Icona Pop, and when the song blew up, Charli, then 20, heard her vocal was still on the record. What followed was a series of internal industry wranglings that led to the soon-to-be global hit being rereleased as "Icona Pop featuring Charli XCX." More hits followed.

Now she is here—at this bar, at seemingly every bar—promoting her album *Sucker* and apparently enjoying the spoils. But she insists otherwise. "I'm not going to lie and say everything's amazing, because sometimes it's really fucking tough," she says. "I'm not good at being a picture-perfect pop star, happy all the time. If I'm having a bad day, I can't pretend. I'm always a bit unhappy, (CONT. ON P. 98) Dress, Dolce & Gabbana. Ring, BaubleBar.



DEADLIEST CATCH CONOR MCGREGOR, UFC'S FISTED FAST FEAT TAKES DETO THE C COAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT WYATT STYLED BY WAYNE GROSS



This page: (*top*) Jacket and jeans, Marc by Marc Jacobs. Sweater, Gant. Beanie, Asos. Bracelets and ring (worn throughout), Scosha. Watch, Tudor. (*bottom*) Trench, sweater, and jeans, Prada. Watch, Tudor. **Opposite page:** Jacket and sweater, Nautica. Jeans, AG Jeans. Watch, Tudor.

Previous page: Trench, Dsquared². Sweater, Bally. Pants, Ermenegildo Zegna Couture. Beanie, Binge Knitting. Shoes, Marc by Marc Jacobs.

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CONNOR MCGREGOR knows how to make a statement. Just two years and five fights into his UFC career, the Irish featherweight has gone from relative unknown to the most electrifying character in the sport. Yes, the 26-year-old is a brutal, efficient fighter with an eclectic array of techniques and a knack for knockouts (15 of his 17 wins come from TKOs, including four of his five UFC wins). But his meteoric rise owes as much to his mouth as to his fists, knees, and feet: McGregor is a sneering, trash-spewing, over-the-top showman more akin to a top-card professional wrestler than a cage fighter. Often outfitted in three-piece suits, he riles up fans with crazed monologues, taunts fighters mid-match with a wagged finger, and boldly predicts how long it'll take him to incapacitate opponents (usually two minutes, but even if foes don't tap, that's about the time McGregor "sees their eyes dim," as he puts it).

"What can I say? I'm a talker," he says.

His unique brand of bombast has earned him the title of the Emerald Isle's most googled athlete, not to mention a freshly inked Reebok contract, a worldwide legion of crazed, flag-waving supporters, and, in July, a title shot against featherweight champion José Aldo at UFC 189.

"My success isn't a result of arrogance—it's a result of belief," says the 145-pounder, whose lean frame and wild-eyed stare make him look like some long-ago warrior who drinks ale from the skulls of conquered kings. "My belief is what brought me here; it's my most powerful ally. I knew I'd be in the UFC since I started my career."

Born in Crumlin, a scrappy suburb of Dublin, McGregor, who, despite his antics, is stoic and poised away from the cage, says he's always had an "insatiable curiosity for combat." As a boy, he bounced from gym to gym, learning everything from capoeira to muay Thai. After a stint as a plumber, McGregor pursued MMA full-time and eventually made his way to the European circuit, where he earned the nickname "Notorious" as well as the lightweight and featherweight belts. He joined UFC in 2013 and was quickly recognized for his skills in both combat and scene-stealing.

"I have the greatest job in the world," McGregor says. "I get paid loads of cash for beating the crap out of people. And I'm very good at it."

He'll need that mind-set when he fights José Aldo. The Brazilian has defended the belt seven times and hasn't lost a match since 2005.

"He has nothing that worries me," says McGregor, adding, with a smirk, "He'll be done two minutes into the second round." –*Matt Berical*



This page: (*top*) Trench, Gucci. Sweater, Tommy Hilfiger. Pants, Burberry Brit. Boots, Red Wing Heritage. (*right*) Sweater and knit, Ermenegildo Zegna Couture.

Opposite page: Trench, sweater, and pants, Burberry Prorsum. Beanie, Binge Knitting. Watch, Tudor. Boots, Red Wing Heritage.







This page: Sweater and pants, Bottega Veneta. T-shirt, Canali at Bloomingdale's. Beanie, Binge Knitting. Watch, Citizen.

Opposite page: Jacket, 7 For All Mankind at Bloomingdale's. Jacket, Giorgio Armani. Sweater, Bally. Jeans, AG Jeans. Beanie, Asos. Watch, Tudor.





ILLUSTRATED BY SIMON PRADES

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THE FIGHT OF THE CENTURY

FINALLY!

POUND FOR POUND, punch for punch, this is it—the only superfight that truly matters. Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather have been dancing around this historic matchup for more than half a decade, somehow avoiding it through the prime of their careers, and now, as both slide into their late-30s decline, each finds himself facing his biggest challenge yet: the other guy. At long last, the two greatest fighters of their era will meet to unify their welterweight titles on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, as well as to determine, once and for all, boxing's ultimate alpha dog. And in addition to establishing which of the planet's two most popular pugilists reigns supreme, this epochal clash will be the richest fight in history by far, raking in an estimated \$500 million when all revenue streams are finally tallied, and clocking an expected four million pay-perview buys, almost double the current record. Both Showtime and HBO–longtime rivals themselves—will telecast the proceedings.

More than just ridiculously lucrative and impossibly hyped, MayPac is a perfect study in violent contrasts. Mayweather's defensive supremacy will finally collide with Pacquiao's furious offense. Everyone will remember where they were when Mayweather outboxed Pacquiao, or when Pacquiao punched that precious "O" off Mayweather's record. Whatever happens, we'll likely enjoy 12 of the most eagerly anticipated rounds of boxing the world has ever seen–if the contenders go the distance as expected. And if it ends in a surprise knockout? Well, the unrelenting hell storm of #MayPac tweets and Instagram posts will melt iPhones around the globe.

The fighters are perfect opposites: In one corner, we have Pacquiao, a Jesus-loving Filipino congressman as sweetly earnest as he is brutal, as fleet-footed as he is dangerous, and as committed to causing pain as his opponent is wedded to avoiding punishment. In the other, we've got Mayweather, the world's highest-paid athlete, a beyond-brash showman who calls himself "the Best Ever," who dances around his opponents, taunting them to fall flat, which they inevitably do. It's the soft-spoken family man who shelled out \$3 million to build a megachurch and runs a scholarship program for orphans in his impoverished homeland versus the trash-talking ex-con who doesn't care if you love him or hate him—so long as you're contributing to his net worth.

MayPac has been dubbed the Super Bowl of boxing-but it's so much more than that. After all, the Super Bowl happens every year. This is the fight of the century. It is not only the most monied fight ever; it will also be the biggest in terms of global interest, thanks to the multitude of media platforms that will amplify this clash of the titans beyond avoidance. MayPac is a thunderous rumble crossing continents and cultures, not to mention cable channels and social platforms that didn't exist in 1975, when Ali and Frazier culminated their bloody trilogy with the "Thrilla in Manila," perhaps boxing's last true superfight.

There are naysayers who claim MayPac is five years too late, delayed for such a ludicrous length of time by well-documented squabbles over purse splits, blood-testing, and, many boxing observers believe, Mayweather's reluctance to face Pacquiao during his fearsome prime. But can you blame him? Before Pac's shocking 2012 knockout loss to Juan Manuel Márquez, he was savagely laying waste to elite boxers including De La Hoya, Miguel Cotto, and Antonio Margarito.

Mayweather and Pacquiao's legacies are so inexorably intertwined, they couldn't possibly end their careers without fighting each other. They are forever tethered, shadowing each other by fighting the same opponents, all while avoiding the one defining matchup that really counted. But even if they rolled into the ring in wheelchairs, the world would still watch this supreme spectacle. Some things are just meant to be.

The MayPac fight comes as boxing is poised for a serious resurrection. Thanks to Mayweather adviser Al Haymon's "Premier Boxing Champions" series, the sport is back on free TV, offering marquee matchups in prime time. But those lesser bouts are merely an appetizer to the most hotly anticipated PPV punch-up ever, an epic contest that stands to capture the imaginations of hard-core boxing fans and curious rubberneckers alike. Will Pacquiao prevail because of his unorthodox southpaw style, all-action assaults, and fast feet? Or will Mayweather claim yet another victory with his masterful boxing skills, mind-boggling ring IQ, and impenetrable defense?

My money's on "Money"–but whatever happens, let's just hope we don't wait another five years for the rematch. **–JAIME LOWE**

BY THE NUMBERS THE DOLLARS AND SENSE BEHIND THE RICHEST PRIZEFIGHT IN BOXING HISTORY.



Estimated

pay-per-view buys-at \$90 to \$100 a popfor MayPac, nearly doubling the current record of 2.4 million for Mayweather vs. De La Hoya in 2007



| FLOYD MAYWEATHER Age: 38 Hometown: Grand Rapids, Michigan Record: 47-0 | VS. | MANNY PACQUIAO Age: 36 Hometown: Kibawe, Philippines Record: 57-5-2 |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Five-division champion, held titles from super featherweight (130 pounds) to light middleweight (154) | WORLD Championships | First and only eight-division champion, held titles from flyweight (112 pounds) to light middleweight (154) |
| "Money" "T.B.E." (The Best Ever) "Pretty Boy" | NICKNAMES | "PAC-MAN" "THE FIGHTING PRIDE OF THE PHILIPPINES" "THE NATION'S FIST" |
| Lil Wayne performed the live debut of "Believe Me" while walking Mayweather to his first fight with Marcos Maidana | BEST MUSICAL Ring Walk | Pacquiao recorded a song called "Lalaban Ako para sa Pilipino" ("I Am Going to Fight for Filipinos") to play on May 2 |
| HIT AND DON'T Get Hit: Superb Defense, Masterful Counterpunching, Sharpshooter's Accuracy | FIGHTING Style | ALWAYS BE ATTACKING: Explosive Combinations, Blinding Hand Speed, Fast Footwork |
| Being the world's highest- paid athlete, collecting supercars, posting lavish pics from inside his "Big Boy Mansion" | HOBBIES Outside the Ring | Player-coach of Kia Carnival's Philippine Basketball Association team. Karaoke fanatic. Jimmy Kimmel guest. |
| JUSTIN BIEBER | CELEBRITY Superfan | MARK WAHLBERG |
| Gleefully posted video on Instagram of Pacquiao's knockout loss to Juan Manuel Márquez | MEMORABLE DISS | Responded to Mayweather's taunts by using hashtag #FloydRhymesWithAvoid |
| Played Himself in Kevin Hart Vehicle Think Like A Man Too | ACTING GIGS | STARRED IN A FILIPINO Sitcom Called Show me da Manny |
| Revels in "Money" persona: a flamboyant, boastful, WWE-style villain. Served two months in jail in 2012 for misdemeanor battery. | GOOD VS. EVIL Polarity | Filipino congressman and national icon. Devout Christian and humanitarian. Married to wife Jinkee since 2000. |
| "THEY THINK THEY'RE GOOD. I KNOW I'M <i>GREAT.</i> " | BADASS Quote | "BOXING IS NOT About Your Feelings. It's About Performance." |



TRUNK SHOW HARLEM DESIGNER <u>DAPPER</u> <u>DAN</u> REVEALS HOW HE HELPS MAYWEATHER ASSAULT FASHION SENSIBILITIES.

Daniel Day, better known as Harlem's legendary Dapper Dan, has dressed everyone from LL Cool J to Mike Tyson-in addition to a multitude of gangsters, hustlers, and wannabe ballers-in his flamboyantly designed duds. His favorite client? Floyd Mayweather, who typically commissions Day's trunks before every fight. The results have redefined ringwear as we know it.

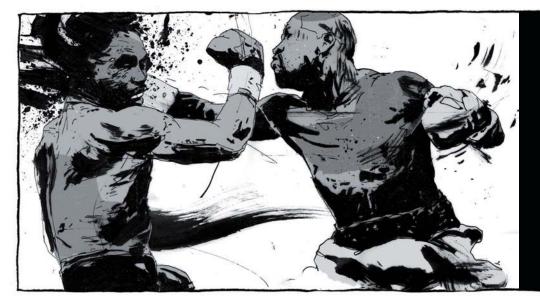
Describe Floyd's ring style. Floyd likes very extravagantlooking material, like skins—reptile, leather, alligator, and exotic fur. He has to have the most expensive trunks, more expensive than anyone. So he comes to me, but I can't say how much they cost.

Is he involved with the design? Floyd always knows what he wants. He's very meticulous and involved. Once he figures it out, he knows exactly what it should look like. We have to go out of town to get the red gator, the yellow gator. Of course, he always calls at the last minute...

Which trunks were your favorite? The black-and-red leather ones I made for the first Maidana fight. I had to make sure they were flexible and he was happy with them as he moved. You want the trunks to move with him, not on their own.

GRAPHIC VIOLENCE ESPN BOXING ANALYST AND WORLD-CLASS TRAINER <u>TEDDY ATLAS</u> ON EACH FIGHTER'S PATH TO VICTORY.





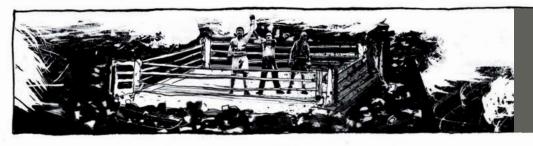
MAYWEATHER HOW HE CAN WIN

Mayweather can win by counterpunching-turning defense into offense. He's a defensive fighter who takes advantage of his opponent's mistakes. **Mayweather will look** to counterpunch Pacquiao with timed, lead rights when Pacquiao gets reckless with his aggression. Mayweather will step back and create a gap, enticing Pacquiao to come in. He can capitalize on those gaps with right hands.

PACQUIAO HOW HE CAN WIN

Pacquiao is coming to the dance with what got him there-hand speed, combination punching, and quick feet. He'll counterpunch the counterpuncher. Give a little feint so Mayweather throws his right too early, and then counter with his left, the power hand for a southpaw. Mayweather can get intoxicated with his defensive skills and can go on the defensive for too long. Pacquiao can get to him in those moments.





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and the second

MUSIC FANATICS...UNTOLD SHOTS OF TEQUILA...AND MILES CRUISE AND TRIES NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT. BY MAX RIVLIN-NADLER

Y BOBBY BRUDERLE

DAY1

IT'S EITHER THE 10-foot waves, the four shots of tequila, or the shifting tempos of "Heartbreak in Motion" by Australian DJ Anna Lunoe–or maybe it's all of the above–but I'm feeling a little dizzy as the MSC *Divina* steams toward the Bahamas on an overcast evening in late February. Make that very dizzy.

Adding to the effect is the

presence of a guy in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle costume bouncing up and down next to me. He's holding a sign featuring a picture of Michelle Tanner, the *Full House* munchkin played by the Olsen twins. The Ninja Turtle has printed a word bubble by her mouth: I WANT TO PARTY, she's saying, followed by something else she supposedly wants to do, of which Uncle Jesse definitely would not approve.

As Lunoe builds on the beat, the surging mass of revelers disgorges two young women onto the stage. They begin to undress. A moment later, one drops to her knees, places her head in her friend's crotch, and goes to town.

I glance at the man on my left, who seems not to have noticed the half-naked women having sex with each other a few feet away. He's dressed as a giant penis. His costume appears homemade, and the massive head has deflated so much it blocks his vision.

As for me, I'm a long way from home. My nine-to-five desk job is but a distant memory. So are my lease, my beloved girlfriend, and my CSA membership. At a moment in my life when I'm supposed to be taking on the responsibilities of a mature adult, I have instead run headlong in the opposite direction: booking a ticket for a 60-hour party that takes me straight to the frenetically pounding heart of the EDM movement.

This is the fifth iteration of Holy Ship!, a sea-borne party that brings together the biggest acts in electronic dance music—the fastest growing genre in the United States—packs them into a cruise ship with 4,000 of their most ardent fans, and looses them upon the Gulf Stream. After setting sail from the Port of Miami, the ship is beset by a storm, making for a clumsy and somewhat nauseating first evening as the giant vessel pitches from side to side. Not that the weather is dampening anyone's spirits. Here, anything is possible. You can drink all the booze you want and stumble back to your cabin without a care (just steer clear of the balconies). You can get stoned and sate your munchies with an endless buffet. And you never, ever have to stop listening to dance music. In fact, it's piped in through the ship's PA system, so you don't really have a choice. Energy starting to fade? There's a solution for that, too, not that we'd advise it. MOLLY LIVES HERE! reads the none-too-subtle advertisement taped to more than one berth door.

Conceived in 2012 by HARD Events founder Gary Richards (who deejays under the name Destructo), Holy Ship! has gone from a concert at sea to a full-on floating cultural phenomenon, described as "Burning Man on a boat." Instead of the DIY structures, tribes, and psychedelics of its desert counterpart, Holy Ship! has a big-ass ocean liner, a hard-core group of devotees–known as "ShipFam"–and, despite an official ban on drugs, seemingly enough stimulants smuggled aboard by guests to keep the 1986 Mets playing through December.

"It's become sort of like a religious cult," Fatboy Slim, a.k.a. Norman Cook, tells me. He was on the first-ever Holy Ship! and is one of the headliners this time around. (The lineup also includes Skrillex, Baauer, DJ Snake, and Ty Dolla \$ign.) "Everyone is devoted to the total hilarity and stupidity of it all."

"Holy shiippp!" a girl named Kat, who has the room next to mine and is wearing only a bikini top and cutoff jeans, screams into the brisk night. She leans over the railing and takes in the dark sea. *"We're* finally fucking here!"

Only hours before, Kat and I had been drinking in my cabin, watching the sun set over the Miami skyline while she took hit after hit from her vape pen, which was filled with hash oil. Hailing from Philadelphia, the 23-year-old works at her parents' furniture-liquidation business. She told me she had been looking forward to the cruise all year. "This is where I live, man."

At the moment, however, Kat is looking a little green, having started the evening with multiple shots of tequila. She shares a menthol cigarette with me as her friend Sam talks about his life back home as a DJ known as Alien Fuel. "But here, I'm not a DJ. I'm just a fan, y'know?"

I excuse myself, stepping into the corridor. A man dressed in full Middle Eastern formalwear, including a kaffiyeh, all of which happens to be dyed neon green, is banging on a cabin door, having gotten locked out of his room. I ask him what inspired his costume, seeing as how most of the get-ups-like the dozen sharks, Power Rangers, and giant penguin I've seen in just the past half hour alone– have a much sillier vibe.

"I'm from Dubai, mate," he tells me. "This is how I normally dress."

I head for the La Luna lounge on the ship's Apollo deck. The space boasts a grand piano and features an unobstructed view of a glass elevator. As I sit drinking whiskey, I watch an impromptu show as one elevator passenger after another flashes the crowd: a breast here, a dick there, an ass or two. One person has meticulously shaved all of her body hair, generating awe and then applause from the assembled. Meanwhile, in front of the bar, a girl in a bathing suit is writhing on her back, her curly dark hair fanned out behind her, considering whether to accept her friends' suggestion that she "butt-chug" a shot of tequila (which, for the uninitiated, is exactly what it sounds like). I duck out before the matter is resolved.

Outside of the Black & White club, one of the four venues on the ship, a man dressed as a banana is having a hard time standing up.

"I got this," he says to no one in particular, leaning against a pillar.

The main event of the evening is the Skrillex show, which takes place in a massive theater more typically devoted to Broadwaystyle spectaculars.

At 4 A.M., a sound resembling that of a jackhammer mating with a disco ball blasts from the speakers: This is Skrillex. The theater is packed. Everyone from all the other stages has converged on this single space. Now 27, he still has the look of an angry adolescent—and a petulant attitude to match, constantly berating us for not making enough noise. Before long, though, he gives us what everyone has come for—his patented "drop," where he cuts off the bass and then turns the music up really loud. The concussive force of the drop removes any resistance the listener might have to dancing. In fact, the body instinctively be-

gins to move, perhaps as a defense against the audio barrage it's sustaining. Skrillex jumps up and down on the stage, unsatisfied with the effect.

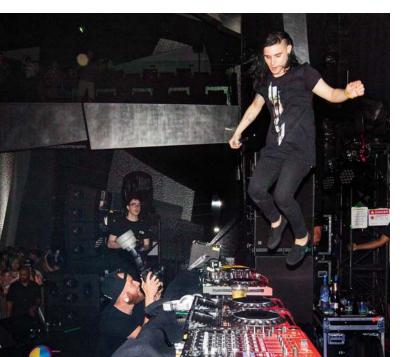
"Make some motherfuckin' noise!" Skrillex screams, and everyone does-even the banana, who has made a miraculous recovery. He's not hard to spot, gyrating on the dance floor, thrusting his hips at nothing in particular. After one final plea that we make some noise, Skrillex brings the set to a close, and everyone heads to breakfast.

Not me, though. Instead, I attempt to get some fleeting sleep as the boat makes its way across a rocky sea, the constant thump of bass worming its way into my uneasy dreams.

"EVERYONE is devoted to the total hilarity and stupidity of it all," Fatboy Slim tells me.

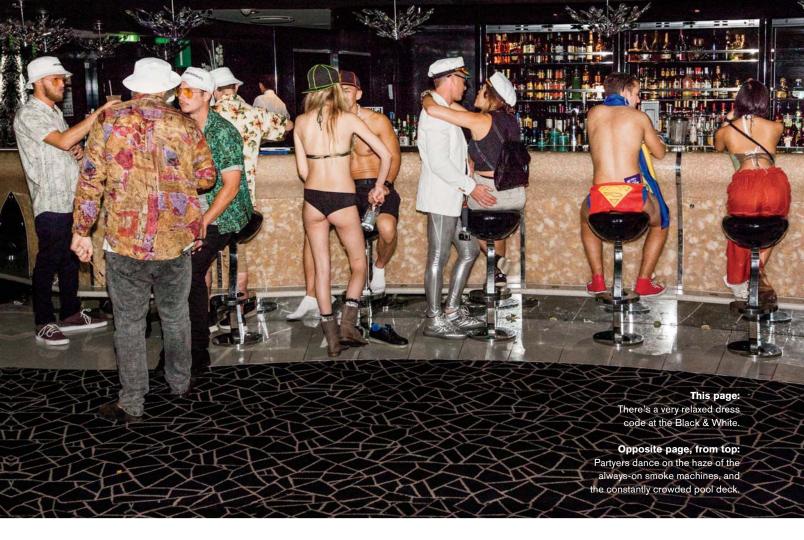
Clockwise from top: Vanessa Giovacchini of Posso showers the Sunrise Sermon crowd with Champagne. Two attendees share a kiss, and Skrillex pumps up the crowd.

Previous spread: Fatboy Slim amps up the Holy Ship! hordes.





H



DAY2

A FEW HOURS LATER, I myself make the journey to the buffet. Today's theme is Mardi Gras, and by the time I've gotten my French toast and eggs, I am covered in beads. Most everyone seems to be ordering Champagne bottle service to go along with breakfast–everyone except for a single couple. They look a little out of place. For one thing, they're over

30. Well over 30. For another, they're wearing nonironic fanny packs.

I later learn they are Nebraskan–contest winners who arrived to take a free cruise and wound up in what must have seemed like the seventh circle of hell. The other revelers take pity on them, however, approaching the couple with friendly smiles and doing their best to make them feel welcome.

"See, this is what ShipFam is all about," Emily Morin later tells me earnestly. "Once you're on the boat, you're all connected, no matter what." Morin is the unofficial leader of ShipFam, the cadre of Holy Ship! devotees who attend the cruise every year. "I had to borrow money from my dad for that first cruise," she confides. "I might have told him a few white lies about exactly what the money was for, though." In order to make time for this year's cruise, Morin quit her job as a phlebotomist.

She's not the only medical professional on board. In a hot tub on the pool deck, a man in sunglasses tells me that he brought along more than 30 IV bags to help his buddies stay hydrated. "I'm an EMT, so I can just get them back in working condition, no problem."

It hasn't done much good for the friend sitting beside him, though, who sports a black eye.

"Yeah, man," the friend explains. "The second he put the needle into

my arm, I completely passed out. I bashed my head right into the wall."

He's not alone. The number of injured passengers is climbing. I start to spot casts I hadn't noticed before, and arms dangling limply in slings. The unstoppable force of partying has evidently met a few immovable objects. At one point, a girl loses consciousness in the pool and slips under water. She's quickly plucked onto the deck by Holy Ship! employees, placed in a wheelchair, and taken to the infirmary.

Eventually I make my way to the artists' deck upstairs, where the DJs have access to a VIP buffet, a pool, and a hot tub. The area is calm, orderly, and sedate. This is where

WOULD

THINK

strange if

don't suck."

this was all

the people sucked,

but the people

the beautiful people are.

Sitting there sipping a fruit cocktail, I gaze out onto the pool deck below, where the rabble stretch their battered bodies in repose, their ill-considered tattoos glistening in the sun. I wonder about the life decisions I've made. How hard would it be to earn millions making music– or, to be technical, cuing up other people's music and pressing play? Of course, it would help to be six feet tall and Swedish, but you can't win 'em all.

I reluctantly leave the artists' deck. It's time for the "robe ceremony," where the true religious nature of the Holy Ship! experience is manifest. In a lounge stocked with beer and pizza, I find a collection of





passengers all wearing large blue bathrobes. This is the "OG ShipFam," a group of true diehards who have been on every single cruise, now welcoming new adherents to their ranks (after relaxing the entry requirements).

I pull aside a man with bushy hair and sunglasses. He calls himself Broshi. "I will never miss one," he vows. I ask him how he pays for the annual trip, which sets him back a few grand each year. "I'm a process server," he says, "like the dude from *Pineapple Express*."

Another OG ShipFam member, Alli Meers, met her boyfriend on a previous cruise. "We connected from the start," she says. "This is our first Holy Ship! as an official couple, so we're pretty excited."

The OGs gather onstage for a photo, their blue robes fluttering.

Every ShipFam member I speak with testifies to how much they owe to the cruise, and just how amazing Destructo is. Their eyes seem to light up when discussing him. He's shown up at fans' birthday parties on the mainland, signed every body part imaginable, and generally gone out of his way to make everyone feel welcome. As odd as it sounds, given the drunk Power Rangers walking around, the spirit of the event is very heartfelt and genuine. "I would think this was all strange if the people sucked, but the people don't suck," Vanessa Giovacchini, one half of the female DJ group Posso, tells me in the ship's cafeteria. "So I'm down with the cult. People are positive here–they're open, happy, and grateful."

I catch up with Destructo himself as he finishes up his first set of the evening. Fans swarm him as he leaves the stage, showering him with gifts: shoes with his name embroidered on the heels, a shirt, paintings.

"People ask my office for my shoe size," he says. "It's crazy."

Now on the wrong side of 40, Destructo has been in the game long enough to see electronic dance music go from a ridiculed niche to one of the most popular genres in the world. Up in his room, the Sophia Loren suite, there are pictures of Loren everywhere. In fact, the *Divina* is dedicated to the Italian actress. Destructo cozies up to one of the photos and pretends to tickle Loren's bountiful armpit hair. In a few hours, he will ascend to the stage again as dawn breaks over the Atlantic, doing a set he calls "the Sunrise Sermon," a tradition dating back to his early years as a DJ in Los Angeles in the '90s. Noticing that people dancing at weekend warehouse parties seemed eager to keep the party going after the music stopped at four, he secured a space near some of the larger venues. "My two buddies and I dressed up like priests, and pretty soon we had a line around the block at six in the morning."

As another night of music and consumption gets under way, I notice that while the attendees look increasingly frazzled, the ship itself has remained immaculate. A small army of workers is constantly tending to it, cleaning the soiled pools, mending the ruined handrails, and disinfecting the various reeking puddles of unknown origin with which guests have decorated the hallways.

I ask a crew member if this is his least favorite voyage of the year.

"Not really," he tells me. "I love the energy. The main problem is that nobody ever wants to get off the ship when it's all over. We have to pretty much kick them off."

The sky is lightening as Destructo launches into the second hour of his marathon sermon set. I find myself standing with around 30 of the guest DJs, who have crowded the stage behind him. For them, it's just another stop on a whirlwind circuit of never-ending parties. For me, it's beginning to feel like something more. Though not a big EDM fan, I'm starting to understand why no one ever wants to leave. It's not that I really want to quit my job. And I do miss my girlfriend. But I am beginning to see the beauty of the thing. A good EDM set feels like it should last forever. A perpetual pounding, racing along with one's own heartbeat. A few days on the Holy Ship! feel like a glimpse of a brave new eternity–frightening but perfect–in which our robot overlords keep the beat going long after our worn-out bodies have reached their lonely mortal ports.

Or maybe I'm overthinking it. "I'm not trying to have any kind of message or statement," Destructo tells me. "I'm just trying to get people to escape the real world and be able to have a good time for those three days, or whatever, and just forget about all the bullshit in the world."



THE SUN RISES on yet another turbulent morning at sea. In the dining hall, I spot the couple from Nebraska, dejectedly picking at their cereal and fruit. The day's planned beach excursion has been canceled on account of rough surf, and we'll be confined to the ship.

Most of the voyagers look exhausted, albeit still incredibly energetic-perhaps due to a "use

it or lose it" mentality among those who've brought along various substances that can't legally be brought back through customs.

As the Miami skyline comes into view, I find myself longing for land. No doubt some of my fellow shipgoers feel the same. In the half-light of a winter morning, the world will return to them with an alarming clarity. Their heads will be throbbing and filled with strange visions. Their bodies will ache for a surface that isn't shifting beneath them. And their wallets will be lighter—in some cases, much lighter, depending on the size of the bar tabs they'll reckon with before disembarking.

And so we find ourselves, like shipwrecked sailors, stepping onto terra firma, gasping for air, our benders complete, our hangovers just beginning. I sit on the curb and take a last look at the other weary and distressed partyers, in turn dozing off, dry heaving, or just staring at cell phones now blinking back to life. One by one, they stumble off, seeming rudderless. Eventually, I stand up and hail a cab. It's time to go home.

RATION ARNV

HELPING PUT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKERS OUT A VIGILANTE POSSE OF UTAH DADS AND **EX-COMMANDOS TRAVELS THE WORLD OF BUSINESS. BY NINA BURLEIGH**





The trap is set: Operation Underground Railroad rented this vacation house in the Dominican Republic for a staged sex party. **HE COLOMBIAN PIMPS** could hardly believe their good luck. Tim, the grinning, beer-soaked American dude in the baseball cap who'd been partying with other gringo buddies around Cartagena for a couple of weeks, was about to cut them in on the biggest deal of their lives. Tim worked advance for a super-rich American businessman who had a taste for underage girls. He wanted to invest millions of dollars to build an island brothel off the coast of Cartagena, and he needed to stock it with children. The pimps were happy to oblige, and after weeks of negotiations, they had arranged to meet the businessman himself–bringing along a show of good faith: two motorboats full of underage prospects for him to sample.

Everyone convened at a picnic table on the beach, and Tim made the introductions to the businessman and his associates. Girls, some as young as 12, and a few boys were unloaded from the boats, inspected, and sent to a nearby rented mansion to wait for the Americans.

Before the deal was completed, two boatloads of Colombian agents in blue uniforms pulled up and surrounded the men, throwing them facedown in the sand and cuffing the whole group.

Eventually, the agents separated the American buyers and the Colombian pimps, carting off the nationals for booking. They then quietly released the buyers, whose true goal, as it happened, was not to purchase children for sex at all. The entire transaction was a sting, captured on surveillance video by tiny shirt-button cameras. The Americans would never be seen in that region of Colombia again–at least until the next sting–and in the months to come, the Colombian authorities would take full credit for the bust.

For Tim Ballard, the affable Norte Americano in the baseball cap and Tevas, the sting was just another day at work. The 39-year-old Sunday-school teacher and father of six has spent the past year regularly getting cuffed and thrown on the ground in some of the world's poorest, flyspecked backwaters, his way of helping to end the scourge of child sex trafficking.

The Colombian pimps never knew that the guy with whom they had been negotiating about virgins-for-hire had actually filled his beer bottles with water, after sprinkling the beer all over his clothes to make him smell like a drinker. Ballard's lips have never touched liquor, and he says they never will.

The bust was Ballard's biggest sting so far, one of three simultaneous operations in different parts of the country that liberated 123 kids and took down 15 pimps in all. The cast of characters included prominent Utah businessmen, ex-CIA agents and former Navy SEALs, and the attorney general of Utah, Sean Reyes, playing the wealthy abuser's translator.

"DADDY!" The shrieking joy of a four-year-old greets Tim Ballard when he opens the door to his modest, beige, five-bedroom home in the exurbs to the west of Salt Lake City.

On a recent afternoon, two preschool towheads perched at the kitchen table, finger painting. Four more extremely photogenic kids, up to age 14, trooped in from the basement, where they were doing homework. Their mother, Katherine Ballard, had just baked bread. The loaves cooled on the spotless counter beneath a plaque that reads, "Be Grateful Be Smart Be Clean Be True Be Humble Be Prayerful."

The only atypical note was the massive world map, eight by ten feet, on which the kids track their dad's location when he's off on a sting.

As a former CIA agent and then Homeland Security undercover

operative and special agent, Ballard spent 11 years investigating child trafficking and pedophile rings in the United States. By December 2013, he was so upset at what he was witnessing, and so frustrated by the restrictions placed on him by the exigencies of government and diplomacy, that he quit altogether and founded his own private, not-for-profit rescue team, which he dubbed Operation Underground Railroad (OUR).

The group has attracted donors from Utah's wealthy business elite, including Heidi Miller (whose family owns the NBA's Utah Jazz). One of Mitt Romney's sons sits on its board of governors. So does kidnap survivor Elizabeth Smart, whose father, Ed, is the organization's director of prevention and rehabilitation.

Many, though not all, of Ballard's colleagues are Mormons. Like him, they stand in a circle, bow their heads, and even fast before each operation. Ballard says some of the most spiritual moments of his life have occurred "while I'm sitting across a table from these bad guys and saying things I would never say, holding a fake beer in my hand and negotiating a sale of children. I know the Lord is with me and my team. [We] feel that light and that spirit in those moments of complete darkness."

Since founding Operation Underground Railroad in January 2014, he has run sting operations in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the United States, rescuing 265 children from traffickers, and dismantling several trafficking organizations entirely. Now the group is expanding to Southeast Asia, including Thailand, where sex tourism and organized pedophilia have long thrived.

In addition to the children who have been saved, Ballard believes the real measure of the organization's success is in the deterrent effect. When he returned to Cartagena undercover after the last large operation, traffickers informed him that they no longer sell children because "these Americans came down two months ago, had a big party, and everyone's scared to sell kids now."

Furthermore, Ballard never takes credit for the arrests-the local police do, which he believes encourages them to redouble their future efforts. And he tries to leave behind expertise and software developed by the U.S. government for tracking pedophiles and trafficking networks. "The countries don't have these tools, and that's devastating for me," Ballard says. "There is, like, one digital forensic expert per country. But the U.K., Canada, and the U.S. have the tools, and we want to bring the technologies to the foreign partners."

Since he quit his government job in 2013 and moved to Utah, Ballard has operated out of a spartan suite of rooms in a loft office donated to him by a Salt Lake City financial services firm. On a January morning, as L.A. hipsters descended on the town for the Sundance Film Festival, Ballard showed up

"I KNOW HOW CRAPPY <u>it is to wait</u> <u>and wait to be</u> <u>rescued</u>," Elizabeth Smart tells *Maxim*. "It's devastating." in a white shirt and black suit. He's trim, from regular CrossFit sessions, and has bright blue eyes that well up as he talks about certain kids he's met. Sitting at the large wooden table where he and his team plan their operations, he explained how he got into the dirty business of battling pedophilia.

A graduate of BYU and a fervent Mormon, Ballard has written a few alternative history books. *The American Covenant* (2011) argues that America's founding fathers were guided by the Old Testament. A later title advances a theory– never before espoused by conventional historians–that Abraham Lincoln may have been influenced by the Book of Mormon.

Ballard grew up in Southern California, the second of six chil-

ANATOMY OF A STING

SCENES FROM A RECENT BUST IN PUERTO PLATA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.











5. MARCH 10, 11:32 P.M.





1. From a resort in Puerto Plata, Ballard checks his phone for updates. His two scouts are at bars, meeting with contacts who have promised to provide them with underage girls for a party. 2. Sex workers, many younger than 18, will be picked up here tomorrow for the supposed party. Ballard's team has rented a house for the occasion. 3. Undercover cameras and microphones await installation



in the sting house. **4.** Ballard's team counts their money; it's what they'll use to pay the sex traffickers. **5.** It's the night before the sting. Meanwhile, sex workers hang out in town, waiting for tourists. **6.** In the morning, \$100 bills are laid out on a bed so their serial numbers can be recorded. **7.** The sex traffickers have arrived, money has exchanged hands, and the Transnational Criminal



Investigative Unit—a group of local police officers working with the U.S. embassy rushes in and throws everyone onto the floor. 8. More law enforcement officers arrive. 9. Both the sex traffickers and Ballard's undercover team are led away in handcuffs. Once the criminals are out of sight, Ballard and his team will be set free. dren (his father was in real estate, and his mother taught piano). "I always wanted to be a special agent," he says. "But I never thought about child crime."

That all changed in the early 'OOS. Ballard was working for the Department of Homeland Security on the Calexico border when his boss offered him an assignment handling child-sex-trafficking cases. This is the only assignment, Ballard says, that federal agents are allowed to decline, because it can be so traumatic. His boss said he chose Ballard because he thought his strong religious faith would make him resilient enough to withstand the ugliness.

His instinct was to spurn the offer. Katherine agreed. They had three children then, and neither thought they could stomach the experience.

But by morning, they had changed their minds.

"We decided we needed to do it *because* we have kids," Ballard says. He reeled off the statistics: There are 27 million slaves in the world; 10 million of them are sex slaves, and 2 million of those are children.

"So, those are numbers," he says. "But it's different when you hold one of them in your arms." Ballard's first major case came early in July 2006. A customs official at the Calexico border got a bad feeling about a car driven by a 62-year-old California contractor named Earl Buchanan with a five-year-old boy on his lap.

A search turned up a pedophiliac videotape—starring Buchanan himself. "The agent popped in the cassette, and here was the guy, sexually abusing a boy," Ballard says. Ballard was dispatched to interrogate Buchanan and talk to the child. "We went upstairs, and I met the kid," Ballard recalls, eyes tearing up. "He jumps into my arms, and he's holding onto me tightly—so tight. And he said, in English, 'I don't belong here.' I just started sobbing. I broke down."

From there, Ballard says, "the story gets worse." He eventually learned Buchanan was a wealthy contractor who rented a row of slum houses to Mexican migrants, many illegal, allowing them to live rent-free if they let their children stay with him on weekends. Investigators believe the boy and his sister were among a dozen kids Buchanan was abusing.

After working the case for 48 hours straight, "I come home, walk in the door, and collapse," he recalls. "I sobbed like a baby. I said, 'I cannot do this. This is way too heavy. I have kids this age. I will have nightmares.'"

Ballard stuck with it, though, and wound up working in child trafficking for seven more years. But eventually, he became frustrated by the requirement that every case have a U.S. connection—an American sex buyer.

"IT'S REALLY HARD to find that guy," he says. "The easier way is to find the kids. I would tell my boss, 'Please send me to Colombia and I will find kids,' but they required an American nexus."

In 2012, he began thinking about founding a nonprofit. It wasn't an easy decision, leaving a career with a pension and guaranteed income. "I was in a fetal position every night. It came down to, I believe I will have a meeting with my maker someday. And I don't want to have to say I could have saved some kids and didn't. That meeting would not go over well."

Finally, he gave up his badge– and almost immediately, his project took off. He snared a couple of recruits from the government, including a CIA agent who also specialized in human trafficking while working with the State Department, and a few ex-Navy SEALs. **THE CAST** of characters included prominent businessmen, ex-CIA and Navy SEALs, and Utah's attorney general. He appeared on Glenn Beck's radio show and walked away with almost a million dollars in donations from Beck's fans. Meanwhile, the appearances caught the eye of Gerald R. Molen, an Academy Award-winning producer of *Schindler's List*, who got behind a project to make a film about Ballard's exploits. The documentary, called *The Abolitionists*, is due out later this year.

Elizabeth Smart signed on and participated in a sting on a pedophile in Southern California. "I know how crappy it is to wait and wait to be rescued," she said in a phone interview with *Maxim*. "It's devastating. Seeing them rescue actual children, not just talk about it, is so exciting. It's an enormous undertaking."

One Utah businessman, who like many of Ballard's colleagues asked not to be named in order to maintain his anonymity for future stings, found himself called in last October to act as a wealthy pedophile in Cartagena. The 42-year-old father of three recalled the experience of coming "face-to-face with some of the most evil people on the planet," as he put it. "Halfway through the meeting, [the main pimp] leans over and says, 'I have a gift for you. This is Lady.'" She was 12. "He started talking about the horrible things I could do to this girl."

As he talked about watching the girl's hand shake, he began to cry. He says his faith kept him from breaking character to comfort her. "This isn't an LDS charity," he emphasized, referring to the Church of Latterday Saints, "but I believe a higher power is as disgusted as we are that these horrendous people are out there. When I'm 85 years old, I will be able to say I built a billion-dollar company, and I will be able to say I helped rescue 50 kid sex slaves. Which one do you think matters?"

While civilians sign on as volunteers, Ballard also assembled a team of former law enforcement and military professionals to lead the stings with him. They, too, talk about a higher mission. One afternoon in the conference room of the Salt Lake City office, an ex-Navy SEAL fresh from two tours in Afghanistan and one in Iraq sat across from Ballard, while Dutch Turley, another former SEAL, and an ex-CIA officer were conferenced in from Texas. The four men were going over plans to set up a sting in Central America and to search for remote child-labor camps in a Caribbean nation they asked not to be named.

Ballard held up a white eraser board, on which he scrawled a complicated map and plan of attack. Turley, an Iraq war veteran who is now OUR's VP of rescue operations, arranged for some private helicopters to take the group into remote forested areas, where authorities believe children are housed to work on farms.

The ex-CIA officer admitted that he, too, left the government because he felt limited by regulations. "Governments are like aircraft carriers—not easy to maneuver," he explained. "We're like Jet Skis. We see a problem area, get on a plane, and go. We work with countries that are known for corruption and inefficiency, but we give them this high-quality evidence so they can make ironclad cases. And the locals get to take credit for it."

Even the hardened ex-spook says he needed advance preparation for the emotional aspect of the sting. "They brought in the girls, and the trafficker said, 'This one is 11 and has zero kilometers on her.' She was the age of my oldest daughter, and I just wanted to punch the guy."

The other Navy SEAL also says the stings are both emotional and therapeutic for him. "My last deployment, we lost six guys. I sleep so much better now knowing I am part of something that is morally unambiguous."

Ballard claims the same moral fervor that inspired America's 19thcentury abolitionists. "I chose the name Underground Railroad because it harks back to slavery," he says. "When we talk about slavery in the South, we ask, How did it happen when so many knew it was wrong? Well, it was because they didn't look. They didn't want to look. And the same thing is happening now. Human slavery is going on all the time, but we don't want to engage because it is so dark.

"I understand," he adds. "I was like that, too."

Nina Burleigh is national politics correspondent for Newsweek *and author* of The Fatal Gift of Beauty.

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DEJ LOAF, D ABOUT NEW **OST TALKED-**KS AGGER.

IN THE BROKEN-DOWN BASEMENT of Saint Andrew's Hall, the historic Detroit music venue that's rumbled with the reverb of everyone from Iggy Pop to Eminem, a group of 20 or so rappers, their posses, and various scenesters are taking drags of cigar-size blunts, counting stacks of cash, and chatting as a showcase gets started upstairs. Young Thug and Travis Scott, arguably two of the hottest young stars in hip-hop, are here. So is Bryan "Birdman" Williams, the high-rolling cofounder of Cash Money Records. But the only one anybody seems to care about is Dej Loaf, a shorthaired, five-foot-nothing 24-year-old wearing a white track jacket with the words SELF MADE emblazoned on the back. She began the evening standing alone in a corner but was soon beckoned to the center, where, one by one, nearly every person asked to snap a selfie or share a word.

"It's tough to have the world watching you," Dej confessed earlier. And yet the casual cool with which she mingles among the hip-hop Cosa Nostra makes it obvious she's growing accustomed to the spotlight.

Dej, born Deja Trimble, has been one of the most talked-about new talents in hip-hop ever since 2014's *\$ell Sole* mixtape. The self-described shy girl made a lot of noise with the tightly wound collection, especially the single "Try Me," a melodic, threatening number that quickly became a de facto street anthem. Drake and Wiz Khalifa shouted it out, as did Nicki Minaj, with whom she'll be touring this summer. The masses caught on, and soon Dej was lighting up Soundcloud, drawing comparisons to every-one from Lil' Kim to Lauryn Hill, and signing with Columbia.

"I don't feel like I've made it yet," she says as we sit in her recording studio a few hours prior to the showcase. "You've got to keep it going. People, their attention span is like..." Her soft, gauzy voice rises slightly, and she flails her arms to the sky. "People are never satisfied."

Collective Studios, where Dej records, occupies two sides of an industrial block. She spends most of her hours there, crafting hooks, sharpening lyrics. It sits on the west side of Detroit, clear across the city from the eastside projects where she grew up, a childhood that was rough even by Detroit's standards. Dej's father was murdered when she was four, and she and her two brothers lived with her drug-dealing grandmother. "It was just a different lifestyle," she says. "We had literally nothing. I saw a lot of stuff at an early age."

As a child, Dej was cripplingly introverted. But music always spoke to

her. "Even if it wasn't good, I always found a CD and just played it," Dej says, recalling how she'd sit on her father's lap, rapping along with 2pac and E-40. Latrice Hudson, Dej's mother, noticed her daughter's ear. "There was never a moment when she wasn't doing something with it," she says. "Dej was motivated with music more than anything."

Dej wrote lyrics and beats all throughout high school. It was during her time at Saginaw Valley State University that she started to work on what would become her debut mixtape, 2012's *Just Do It.* "I was just feeling myself more, finding out who I was," she says. The album's confessional style was born of the transition to adulthood. "It was the ups and downs," she says. "Just not having a lot going for yourself."

Dej began traveling back to Detroit and immersing herself in the underground scene. Eventually, she built up the courage to perform.

"It was like, OK, I get it. I'm who I am now," she says.

"When I saw her perform for the first time, it was kind of like the first time I heard Lil' Kim rap," says Big Soj, Dej's engineer and musical confidant. "She commanded attention."

Dej admits that those who knew her would never believe that shy girl was now performing in front of thousands, threatening to "leave a bitch nigga head in pasta." But it's all part of her persona.

"When she's performing, that's a performance," her mother says, laughing. "She's still the same quiet, shy person."

Minutes after taking a break from the crowd and idling in a back stairwell, Dej is onstage with Young Thug. Her limbs start bouncing in sync to the beat, and she radiates confidence. "Hey, let a nigga try me in this motherfucker!" she yells to the packed house. She's happy, smiling behind gold-rimmed Cartier glasses.

The glasses are important; they're a Detroit status symbol. "Growing up, if you had a pair, you were doing something," she says. Dej hasn't splurged on much: an MCM pink backpack, a 300S for her mom. As a woman who, when working as a janitor, was once forced to scrub floors with a toothbrush, Dej knows it could soon disappear.

"You never get used to this," she says after her set.

We continue talking, and she returns to her demure self before a man interrupts. "I'm sorry, but they're yelling. They want you back."

The young star smiles, turns, and strides back upstairs. ■



SA

MIRANDA AND ELEKTRA **KILBEY GREW UP** IN SWEDEN AND AUSTRALIA. NOW THE IDENTICAL TWIN POPSTERS KNOWN AS <u>SAY LOU</u> LOU ARE TAKING THEIR SEDUCTIVE **DOUBLE ACT** GLOBAL. BY SARAH HORNE GROSE IDENTICAL 23-YEAR-OLD TWINS MIRANDA AND ELEKTRA KILBEY, THE AIRY POP DUO SAY LOU LOU, SKIPPED OUT ON COLLEGE JUST A FEW YEARS AGO TO EXPLORE THEIR MUSICAL LEANINGS IN LONDON AND SILVER LAKE.

KNOWN FOR THEIR BREATHY VOCALS AND POLISHED GROOVES, THE PAIR WERE WEANED ON ROCK. MOM KARIN JANSSON WAS IN THE PUNK BAND PINK CHAMPAGNE; DAD IS STEVE KILBEY OF THE CHURCH. THIS SPRING, THEY DO THEIR PARENTS PROUD AS THEIR FIRST ALBUM, *LUCID DREAMING,* DROPS STATESIDE. WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE

DUO ON TOUR IN STOCKHOLM TO TALK ART, FAME, AND FREEING THE FEMALE NIPPLE. JUST DON'T ASK THEM WHICH ONE'S THE NAUGHTY TWIN.

Previous spread: (On Miranda) Dress, H&M. Bracelet and ring, Catbird. Earrings, Miranda's own (worn throughout). (On Elektra) Romper, Fortnight.

Opposite page:

(On Miranda) Chemise, Calvin Klein. (On Elektra) Top, the Kooples. Necklace, BaubleBar (worn throughout). MIRANDA: I was named after Miranda from *The Tempest*. It's Latin for "worth admiring"—not that I'm claiming it suits me! ELEKTRA: My name is less beautiful and more aggressive, after the character from the Greek tragedy. Elektra kills her mother, so it's quite a heavy name. Miranda had the sweeter name and perhaps the sweeter personality.

We both have a lot of dark and light inside of us. We're kind of like a roller coaster: slightly bipolar. We can be quite nice or quite standoffish.

People think we're colder than we are when they've only seen us in photos. I guess that's because our aesthetic is quote "stylized." But we're very chatty; we can be silly and hyper. And the next second, yes, I suppose a bit reserved.

Our creative relationship is 50-50. It's fantastic because we have each other, we know each other, we're really in sync. But we also get really annoved with each other. In terms of the creative, we're very effective, but in terms of spending a lot of time on the road...it can get tough. We annov each other. We have our own flats. Miranda has a lot of decorative porcelain cats, paintings, and flowers and stuff everywhere; I like keeping it more sparse.

There's not "stuff everywhere"! It's just more colorful.

Sydney and Stockholm, where we grew up, are so different in their mood and temperature, and that's kind of a current that runs through our music. Australia is laid-back and playful. Stockholm is more polished. A lot of perfect pop music comes out of Sweden, but we like to undercut it with something imperfect.

Our parents are musicians, so we knew from a young age that if we were going to pursue something cultural, it was going to be music. We listened to a lot of Kate Bush and David Bowie, and they kind of stuck with us. We've had similar tastes our whole lives. There's always some sort of surrealism, a dark side, a '70s decadence in what we like. When we write songs, if there are upbeat lyrics, there's a melancholy feel to it. And if the song is more upbeat, we go a little off with the lyrics.

I would call it dream pop. I have a hard time explaining it in any other way. But I would add *noir* at the end. It's ethereal pop.

In terms of fashion, we see clothes more as costume, like a performance artist might. We've been sticking to the '70s as our inspiration.

Everything seemed possible then, from free love to female liberation. That era had something we won't have again. Our video for "Games for Girls" captures some of that, playing around in a carefree manner about the female body. It was a commentary about being in control of who you are and your body–putting the control in the hands of women. If you want to be nude, you have the right to do it on your own terms.

We aren't afraid to be political. It's feminist, but in a playful way, like [the social movement] Free the Nipple. Why should a woman's nipple be sexualized when a man's is not? There are so many misconceptions about female artists. People sometimes imagine that we couldn't possibly be doing everything on our own. Someone must be writing our music for us, say, or calling the shots behind the scenes. In reality we've wrangled every single thing.

The moments when we've felt like "Wow, we've made it" are the moments when we are onstage performing in front of a huge number of people. You slip into a character. But we're very self-critical, so we haven't really had those moments of "This is it." We always want to get better.



"WE'RE KIND OF like a roller coaster: slightly bipolar."

"WE CAN BE silly, and the next second a bit reserved."

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This page: Dress, RedValentino. Rings, Catbird.

Opposite page: Romper, Asos. Bracelet and ring, Catbird.



BY LEON NEYFAKH

CKING IT POOLSIDE WITH RAE SREMMURD, THE MISSISSIPPI-RAISED BROTHERS BEHIND THE YEAR'S MOST INFECTIOUS PARTY RAP.

C



HEY USED TO PARTY at the Motel 6 in Tupelo, Mississippi– rent out a room, invite every girl they could think of, and stay all weekend. The idea was that Swae Lee and Slim Jxmmi would be the only guys, but of course other dudes always showed up. Among them was a kid named Jay who went to a different high school, who would grab the room next door whenever he heard Swae and Jxmmi were having a party. Jay recalls wandering over, seeing the two brothers, and thinking, *Yall are so cool*.

Swae and Jxmmi, whose real names are Khalif Brown and Aaquil Brown, *were* cool. They were members of what was essentially a boy band, and one of their songs, "Party Animal," had become a local hit. That was how Jay became aware of them: He heard "Party Animal" playing at the neighborhood skating rink and thought, *Oh, my God. Whoever made this song is going to be so famous one day.*

Jay is remembering this while standing next to a pool, looking out over the hills of Studio City, California, on what feels like one of the first summer days of the year. Swae Lee and Slim Jxmmi are here, too. This house–this mansion–is where they live now, along with Mike WiLL Made-It, the producer and label owner who gave them their big break, and Jay, their official DJ.

Swae is 21 and Jxmmi is 23. As a duo, they call themselves Rae Sremmurd. It is not a great name, and most people, when they see it for the first time, have no idea that it's pronounced "Ray Shrimmert" or that it's an anagram of Mike WiLL's record label, Ear Drummer Records.

It hasn't mattered. Despite the handicap, Rae Sremmurd has put out three of the most memorable and creative singles of the past year, including the party anthem "No Flex Zone" and the plaintive "No Type." When they released their all-killer-no-filler debut album, *SremmLife*, in January, it went straight to No. 1 on Billboard's R&B/hip-hop chart.

As the band fought off comparisons to Kriss Kross that implied they'd be a one-hit wonder, *SremmLife* cemented their reputation as reliable purveyors of viral-ready catchphrases, surprising melodies, and an exuberant, occasionally squeaky style of rapping that makes them sound much younger than they are. In just under a year, they have become one of the most universally beloved young acts in pop.

And today, on a Saturday afternoon in mid-March, about two weeks after moving to this mansion outside L.A. from Atlanta, they are doing pretty much exactly what you'd want them to do: throwing a massive pool party.

"Tonight is gonna be, like–*man*," Swae says, shaking his head with preemptive disbelief. He is around five and a half feet tall, skinny, and dressed in a white fitted tee and Adidas track pants. His mop of nail-thin dreads is tied up in a Dr. Seuss-ish man-bun above his head.

It will be the "break-in party," he says—the beginning not only of summer but of a new era in the lives of Rae Sremmurd. In some ways, it will be similar to the Motel 6 parties. But in other ways, it will be different.

MIKE WILL, 26, is playing *NBA2K* against a friend in the TV room, talking about all the festivals his boys are performing at this summer. Last year, he marvels, they were at Coachella, walking around playing "No Flex Zone" on a portable Bluetooth boom box and giving out sampler CDs. This year, they've got real hits.

Mari Davies, Rae Sremmurd's agent, notices a couple of \$20 bills on the floor by Mike WiLL's feet. "So, what, instead of playing dice, guys play video games now?" she says. "OK."

























Out in the kitchen, Swae and Jxmmi have joined their first 15 or so guests around a countertop, which is covered with trays of raw chicken wings, bags of hamburger and hot dog buns, and a variety of family-size condiments. When a guest pours out Patrón shots in little plastic shot glasses, there's an awkward silence as we wait for someone to volunteer a toast. Finally, Slim Jxmmi comes through. "To condoms!" he proclaims. "To paychecks! To the radios playing all across this great nation!"

After a moment Jxmmi and Swae go outside, where someone has rolled a preposterously large blunt and "No Flex Zone" is blasting as part of a mix that also includes the new Drake mixtape, a lot of Young Thug, and most of *SremmLife*.

Jxmmi's talking to Swae about maybe jumping into the pool. It's 5:30 P.M. and enough people are starting to show up that there's a bouncer at the gate down below. You can see a line of guys already starting to form while girls walk in two by two up the winding and deceptively steep driveway. Some of them are wearing bikinis; most sport cutoff jean shorts and long hair, and a good number of them have the air of hot babysitters. Swae and Jxmmi don't know where to look first.

What's the most surprising thing about living in L.A. so far? I ask, and Jxmmi has an answer right away. "All the bitches love us." But wait, I say. Weren't you kind of expecting that? "Nah. Nah," he says. "I thought they would like us. They *love* us."

With that, he runs off to talk to some girls, while Swae sticks around and answers questions. "This is actually cool: I'm doing an interview in front of all these girls!" he says. "They're like, 'Damn, he's important."

Swae tells me he and his brother just got back from South Africa, where they headlined a Johannesburg hip-hop festival. Being on the plane for more than 14 hours was tough, he says; he got through it by reading a book about how to control an audience. He declined to fly first-class because the tickets cost \$15,000, "and I didn't want to spend that on a seat. We wanted to be smart: save our money and sit in the back." Did he learn anything from the book? "I mean, it's stuff we already knew," he says. "I always just like to see the words, 'cause... I feel like I've been out of high school forever. So I just read to keep my mind going."

He graduated only about three years ago, but it makes sense that it feels a lot longer to him, given that three years ago he was living his old life, working at a factory where he made pillows and beds. That life included a stretch of homelessness, after Swae and Jxmmi's mom kicked them out and they had to crash in an abandoned house with no heat or gas. They made the best of it and threw a lot of parties. But they were still homeless. Escaping to Atlanta, where they got to devote themselves 100 percent to recording music for the first time in their lives, was phase one of their master plan. Setting up shop in L.A. is phase two.

"My last night in Atlanta, I was with some girls," Swae says, when I ask him what he did to mark the occasion of leaving the South. "I just told them, 'I'm about to take this journey. I'm about to go hard. I'm about to live my life.' And then I just dipped."

Moments later Jxmmi dives from the balcony into the pool and everyone cheers; back on the deck, he starts dancing–soaking wet–as if he's onstage. The official Rae Sremmurd Twitter account, meanwhile, has announced that there's a party on, and strange women are direct-messaging Jay for the address while the crowd outside the gate grows larger. There's a rumor that Miley Cyrus might be coming through later. The party has started, and the state of mind that Swae and Jxmmi call Sremm life–be who you are, live how you want, don't let anyone judge you–is taking hold.

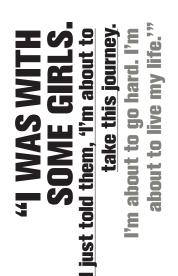
THE KITCHEN COUNTER has been converted into a beer-pong table, except instead of beer, people are playing with shots of Jack Daniels. There are girls here that Swae Lee and Jxmmi have never seen before, and others, like the one they met at a wings spot near the beach, with whom they have only a glancing acquaintance. "There's beautiful girls everywhere," Swae Lee says, his eyes shining. "I'm loving these girls."

No one's dancing, really, but I'm told that's just L.A., a place where people prefer to have fun by standing around and looking at each other. There are girls on their phones, dangling their feet in the pool, but no one's full-on swimming, and the two free spirits who asked Mike WiLL if they could skinny-dip opted against it, despite his encouragement. "Everybody's still acting scared," Swae says. "They don't understand. They can do whatever they want."

Mike WiLL says he's looking for his security guard so that he can "order a rerack," meaning kick some of the guys out to improve the male-to-female ratio. Swae Lee wants to get rid of one dude in particular, who is being aggressive and "cuffing his girlfriend"–watching her like a hawk and not letting her out of his sight even though, in Swae's estimation, she clearly wants to be with someone else. Swae looks sincerely disgusted when he points the guy out to me, and seeing the expression on his normally smiling face makes me think of his verse on "This Could Be Us," the fizzy centerpiece of *SremmLife*, which ends with him declaring that "killin' someone's vibe should be a fuckin' crime."

Mike WiLL, in his role as CEO of Ear Drummer Records, seems to see his job as protecting and nurturing Rae Sremmurd's vibe. When he met Swae and Ixmmi in Atlanta, he had recently gone from working with street rappers like Future and Gucci Mane to being a brand-name producer for the likes of Rihanna and Miley Cyrus. (He is credited with giving Cyrus the sound she wanted for her album Bangerz.) But when he met Rae Sremmurd, he realized what he really wanted to do was build something from the ground up.

After "No Flex Zone" started getting played on the radio last spring, Mike WiLL thought the move for Rae Sremmurd was to put out an EP. "I just wanted that



to be the hottest CD of the summertime-the thing everyone was talking about," he tells me.

But then "No Flex Zone" kept getting bigger and bigger, outperforming all reasonable expectations. "Our radio department was like, 'Hold on, wait, don't put out nothing else. Let's just work this record,'" he says.

They waited till the end of August. Then, just as people were starting to wonder whether the "No Flex" boys had been a mere flash in the pan, Mike WiLL pressed the button on single number two. The dreamy "No Type" became even bigger than its predecessor. A few days after it was released, Mike WiLL was at the after-party for the Drake and Lil Wayne show in Atlanta, and Wayne demanded that the DJ play "No Type" three times back-to-back.

It's hard to process the fact that Mike, who has a deep voice and weighs maybe 200 pounds, is basically around the same age as the two young boys whom he has staked his career on. "They're like my Kobe and Shaq," he says. "They're like Kobe and Shaq, and I'm Phil Jackson."

Mike looks up at the sky and sees a police helicopter floating there with its spotlights on. "Ghetto bird," he says, knowingly.

It doesn't take long for everyone at the party to find out there are cops circling the mansion in a chopper. But while the atmosphere definitely shifts when the music is turned off, there's no panic or exodus, at least not right away. Instead, a bunch of people on the balcony raise their middle fingers as high as they can and yell "*Sremm life!*" Swae Lee, meanwhile, laughs every time the spotlight hits him; he seems to think the situation is hilarious, and he's Snapchatting videos of it to people so they can see what they're missing. "We're having a crazy party!" he says, giddily. "The cops came to our party! In a helicopter!"

The helicopter circles for what feels like half an hour, and the longer it stays up there, the more it commits the ultimate Rae Sremmurd crime of killing everyone's vibe. A sense of dismay settles in–it's only nine o'clock, after all. "It's not like this is ISIS," someone says bitterly.

Just then word rings out that the cops have arrived at the front gate, and Swae and Jxmmi's little brother, who was, until recently, enlisted in the Marines, thunders through the living room with an announcement: "If you ain't 21, you gotta leave!"

Still, it's not till Rae Sremmurd's manager, Migo, cups his hands around his mouth and alerts the room that cars are being towed that things really screech to a halt. "Come on," one girl says as she grabs her friend's wrist. "We're leaving. Now."

Soon it's just the inner circle, and the video game is back on.

I ask Jxmmi if he misses anything about Tupelo.

"No. Not shit," he says, shaking his head. "I don't miss anything."

THE PLAN FOR LATER is to go to club 1 OAK in West Hollywood, but that won't be till midnight. For now, as the house quiets down, Mike WiLL is ordering Indian food while Jay leads a cleaning mission that will require picking up paper plates piled high with chicken bones and the remains of patties, empty packs of cigarillos, and half-finished cans of Lime-a-Ritas. Swae Lee and Jxmmi are in the kitchen making themselves peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. When he finishes his, Swae puts tin foil on the jar of peanut butter, and after making sure that Jxmmi doesn't want any more, places it in a cupboard. He then pours himself a Solo cup of milk.

Mike WiLL tells me that having a party like that is not just a distraction from or a reward for Rae Sremmurd's hard work. It's work, too, in the sense that the memories they create as they begin their new L.A. lives are going to be source material for whatever music they make next. "They might have had a conversation with a girl in there that they'll never forget," he says. "And when the helicopters were going over the house, sparking light on the house and shit? That's a moment, bro. You can put that in a song."

Leon Neyfakh is a staff writer at Slate. His book The Next Next Level will be published in July.

DON'T BE ANTISOCIAL FOLLOW MAXIM EVERYWHERE



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INFORMER.



Introduction by ANN POWERS

A ROCK 'N' ROLL T-SHIRT isn't just a piece of cotton underwear made fashionable through the magic of screen printing. It's a declaration of loyalty, of belonging. It's a way of saying "This is me" to every stranger who walks by. Sometimes it's a wink, sometimes a middle finger, sometimes an invitation. The shirt is the symbol of an attitude. And an attitude, rendered in ink on fabric, can long outlast the cultural moment that gave it life. It can survive countless tumbles in the dryer. Which is why when you run across a shirt you owned years before– adorned with the Dead's skull-and-roses logo or the words **RIDE THE LIGHTNING**–in a vintage store, \$300 might

ROCK T-Shirts actually seem like a fair price. This isn't just a shirt you're buying, after all. It's a work of art, a piece of history, and a statement of identity all at once.

Then again, it's never too late to start anew, with a shirt fresh off a merch stand (or out of the back of a van, depending on the band). It will need some breaking in, but it's surely more rock 'n' roll than flashing an Amex and playing catch-up on the secondary market. Besides, T-shirts are a pillar of the economics of rock, especially now that recordings, reduced to easily shared code, don't bring in as much cash as they once did. Buying a T-shirt is often the best way to ensure that an artist can continue to make music.

A T-shirt is an investment, financial and emotional. It shows support in a way that no amount of streaming ever can, because simple selfassertion is the essence of the rock T-shirt: It's the sartorial equivalent of screaming along with a chorus or throwing your hands in the air. These wearable texts contain history that's highly personal. At the same time, certain T-shirt images-Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon pyramid, the Sex Pistols one with NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS in black and the band's name in pink-speak of a time and tone so clearly that even people who haven't heard those bands' music have some idea of what it sounds like.

As a conveyor of messages, the T-shirt can't be improved. It is iconography on a chest, a kind of armor. Choosing Nirvana over Taylor Swift–or vice versa–makes a powerful and unmistakable statement. But perhaps most important is the way a T-shirt draws others in. Its wearer both stands out from the crowd and belongs to something bigger. The shirt is a beacon. Compatriots are drawn toward the wearer, all bound by the communal rebel spirit of rock.

We are one, they all say. We own this.

AUTHENTICITY CHECKLIST

The surest signs of vintage legitimacy, according to James Applegath, founder of the online vintage retailer Defunkd.

BRAND ON THE TAG



These are the most common brands of their times. And if you see a Gildan tag, be cautious: The low-priced brand is beloved by 2000s bands...and bootleggers.



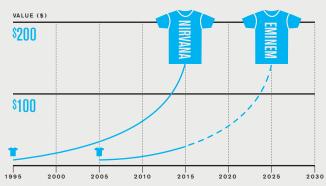
These are the defining characteristics of vintage shirts—low quality and few sizes. And after decades of washing, it should fit like a medium or small.



If a vintage shirt is multicolored, it was made with many layers of paint. And check the image's edges: Old screen prints are made of tiny dots, unlike modern square pixels.

HOLD ON TO YOUR SHIRT

Your old Eminem fandom is about to pay off.



In 2005, a used Nirvana shirt went for \$1. By 2007, values were climbing. Now the same shirt goes for \$200 and up. "Nostalgia seems to have a 10- to 15-year sweet spot," says Applegath. That's why he's currently stockpiling 2000s-era shirts from the likes of Eminem, the White Stripes, Destiny's Child, and Mary J Blige. In a few years, he—and you, if you still own them—will be primed to cash in.

THE GREATEST COLLECTOR'S SECRET



These facilities sort tons of used, donated clothing before selling in bulk to recyclers and resellers. But vintage buyers often come to buy select shirts or by the pound-even though most rag houses and buyers won't admit it. "People protect them as part of their creative assets," says Jessica Humphrey, founder of Victory Press, who has shopped at many. To get in: Find someone who's been, ask for an intro, and offer to pay the rag house for entry.

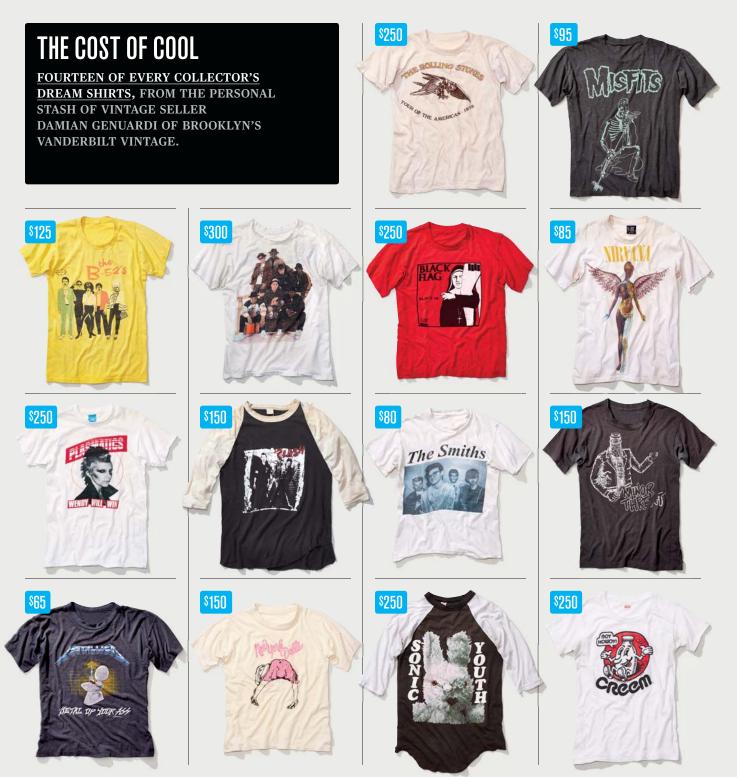
GREAT Moments in Shirts

1956 The first-ever rock shirt is believed to have been made by an Elvis fan club.



1973 An Aliman Brothers shirt sells so well, show promoter Bill Graham launches the first big music merch company





1973

Dee Dee Ramone (né Douglas Colvin) meets Arturo Vega, who'd become the **Ramones'** designer, T-shirt seller, and more.





1982 Maiden in Texas! Maiden in Japan! **Iron Maiden** popularizes a new sales idea: unique shirts for each leg of a tour.

1984 After the BBC bans Frankie Goes to Hollywood's song "Relax," this shirt blows up. FRANKIE SAY RELAX



BUT THERE ARE NO RULES ON HOW TO WEAR THEM...

THE RULES OF ROCK SHIRTS: A DEBATE

"I WEAR SHIRTS INSIDE OUT. MY FAVORITE IS N BELOVED VHS OR BETA SHIRT THERE IS SOMETH **G AR**(G A G - IIM JAMES LEAD SINGER OF MY MORNING JACKE



BEHIND THE MUSIC'S ART

Many great band shirts began as great band icons. Three artists tell their story.

THE ROLLING STONES



In 1969, Mick Jagger asked London's Royal College of Art for a student to make a logo for the

Stones' record label. "Jagger did not have a specific direction," says John Pasche, the then lucky student. "He showed me a picture of the Indian goddess Kali, which gave me the inspiration of using the lips and tongue. At our second meeting, I showed a few sketches on the theme and he chose the one that worked the best."

THE CRAMPS



Stephen Blickenstaff was a friend of the band's. "I always had a drawing or painting to give to

them whenever they performed in my area," he says. On Halloween of 1983, he drew lead singer Lux Interior as a zombie. "Lux and I both loved the old EC horror comics, and my illustration was heavily influenced by those." he says. "I had no idea it would be used for an album cover." But it was, for the band's Bad Music for Bad People.

THE DEAD KENNEDYS



Bandleader Jello Biafra called artist Winston Smith. asking for an emblem with the band's initials.

"I'd been scratching out possibilities for hours when I began staring at my left hand," Smith says. "When I was two. I stumbled and fell, and a broken glass sliced my hand open. It called for seven stitches. It suddenly dawned on me that the old scars make a perfect angular D and a jagged K. Voilà! Careless childhood accident equals notorious punk rock logo!"

1987 Photographer Glen F Friedman famously puts Chuck D and Flavor Flav in Minor Threat shirts



1990 Fugazi refuses to make shirts for itself. Boston merch company Just Say Rock fills the void with an instantclassic bootleg.



1992 Kurt Cobain routinely wears singer Daniel Johnston's shirt, prompting Atlantic Records to sign Johnston.

1993 Beavis and Butt-Head debut in AC/DC and Metallica logo shirts, which the bands hadn't been making. But they soon started.





THE ULTIMATE COLLECTOR

ISAC WALTER HAS WORN A DIFFERENT BAND SHIRT EACH DAY FOR ALMOST FOUR YEARS STRAIGHT.

How deep does your collection go?

I don't know. It's ridiculous. When I was working at MySpace, every day I'd wear a different shirt and people would say, "How many do you own?" Eventually I said, "I could literally wear a different shirt for 500 days." So I did. Then I did 1,000. Then 1,400. [He chronicles this on his site, MinorThread.com.] Now I don't know how to stop. I feel like at some point I'll just freak out and sell them all.

But you're still buying, right?

Yeah. Nobody's buying records anymore, and I want to support music. But I also set eBay alerts for bands I love. And I'm not afraid to go up to someone at a concert and say, "That shirt's awesome; I'll give you \$20 for it right now." Worst case is they say no, and you start a conversation with somebody who has a common interest with you.

Why did you develop such a connection to shirts?

It's kind of an analog social networking. When you're out someplace and someone looks at your shirt and says, "Oh, Green Day, sick, I love that record," that's how you connect to people. It's the cover of the book of who you are.

Do you have a favorite?

No. Every shirt is a memory or reflection of some time in my life, or maybe an album I loved or the era of music I loved. It's all about my relationship to that music.

But relationships with bands come and go. And when they go, all you're left with is some lame shirt.

That's what makes you interesting– your pitfalls, that you liked the band that might have been cheesy. I used to love Primus in the '90s. The music doesn't hold up, but I still have this *Frizzle Fry* shirt that I bought from that tour, and I'll wear it gladly, even though I'm slightly embarrassed. I'm totally proud to say I was there at that time, and I was into it, and I'm not going to lie.

Reporting by Anthony Pappalardo and Jason Feifer.

1998 Robbie in The

Wedding Singer, to his ex: "Please get out of my **Van Halen** T-shirt before you jinx the band and they break up."







2012 Licensed Slayer merch gets warm and fuzzy: LocoApe begins annual Slayer ironic Christmas sweaters.





(CONT. FROM P. 62) but that's just me. I like dwelling in my sadness."

Minutes later, though, she's telling me about buying a house in the English countryside that she's decked out like a "Miami '70s porn pad," with shag-carpet walls and low, backless sofas, "so it's like having beds everywhere." Even her room on the tour bus has a ceiling mirror. I just don't know what to do with the contradiction—this star who seizes opportunities, who seems to indulge in success, but keeps wanting to tell me that none of it makes her happy. I ask her to square the two. "Just because I might be bored doesn't mean I have to look boring," she responds. "I'd rather look fabulous, like I'm having a great time. There's nothing that says *boss* more than a belly chain and snakeskin trousers. My dad always used to encourage me to dress weird."

Charli pulls out her phone and shows me some pictures of her father, dressed in nine different patterns of tartan. I see the connection. Drinks keep coming; the interview has disintegrated. At one point she asks me what I think of the rock band Royal Blood, and lets me babble on about how they're the death of music. A few minutes later she introduces me to her friend Mike Kerr, Royal Blood's singer-bassist, then revels in the awkwardness. I take this as my cue to leave. "What's your number?" Charli says before I go. "Let's see how hungover we are tomorrow. If it's bad, you can come to my room and I'll show you how to order room service properly."

Room service, as she's told me a few times already, is her greatest joy on the road.

THE NEXT EVENING, Charli is lighting up an arena of 20,000 Katy Perry fans. Onstage, there's a giant red lollipop protruding into the rafters. Charli's doing oi-punk fist pumps. At one point she just collapses on the floor and keeps singing. She is a ball of raw energy, and a jolt to the tween girls here with *KP* painted on their foreheads. By the end, they squeal for a Charli encore.

I go backstage. Charli is slumped on an IKEA couch, but she's joking around, nothing but sunshine. She fared better than I did this morning; she just "boshed two paracetamol," she says, and was up at 7 A.M. to see a solar eclipse (but got stuck in the hotel elevator and missed it). Now that I've known her for a full 24 hours, I feel it's time to press her a bit. "Charli," I say, "maybe it's time to admit that you're actually enjoying this and relax a little." "But that's just who I am," she protests. "I have a business mind, I have a real drive–I want to have an empire. I want to have more of a legacy, and I think just because I wear what I wear, and am a pop star, doesn't mean I can't have that."

I yank a memory out of last night's haze: She had described herself as a control freak. "Power gets me off," she said. "I always want more than I have." And now Charli begins to make more sense. She doesn't dislike being a pop star; she's just afraid of what it represents. Being a pop star is like being the world's biggest marshmallow: You're soft and delicious and absolutely meaningless. A pop star is an unserious thing. That's why she's so keen to play up her downbeat side. It's her way of making clear that this role–no matter how well she inhabits it, or how much joy it secretly brings–does not define her. Charli is starting a publishing company and has begun managing other singers. She is also still a pop star opening up for Katy Perry.

But before I can propose my psychoanalysis, she starts telling me about the Grammys. She wants me to know how boring it was, how she couldn't get out of her seat because her scarf kept shedding, how she and Iggy didn't win. "It was so *dry*," she drawls.

Then she reconsiders: "Although I did get to drive around all day in a white Rolls-Royce with my friend's puppy, dressed in Moschino. Oh, and we did go to Sam Smith's after-party, and I spent 15 minutes with my tongue on his ice sculpture because I'd always wanted to get my tongue stuck on an ice sculpture. Then we rented a room at the Chateau Marmont..."

The story keeps going. I think what Charli is trying to say is: This is fun, for now. \blacksquare

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pp. 10-11: Corbis

p. 14: With turntable, Jack Lawrence/A Slice of Life; portrait, Peter Donaghy.

 p. 16: © Jim Marshall Photography LLC.
 p. 20: Björk, Jamie McCarthy/Wirelmage for the Webby Awards; Sia, © Hubert Boesl/dpa/ Corbis; FKA twigs, © Reimschuessel/Splash

News/Corbis. p. 22: Cobain, Charlie Hoselton/Retna Ltd. pp. 30-32: Nicole Dreon/courtesy of King of the

Hammers. **p. 37:** Vinyl, Getty Images; girl, Olivia Malone/ Trunk Archive.

pp. 40-41: Matt Sav.

p. 42: Moroder, GAB Archive/Redferns/Getty Images; turntables, Getty Images.

Initiation and the second s

p. 49: Trench, \$594, shirt, \$143, and jeans, \$180, Kenzo; select Kenzo stores. Vest, \$1,650, T-shirt, \$600, and jeans, \$710, Dior Homme: Dior Homme Stores or 800-929-DIOR. Loafers, price upon request, Prada; select Prada boutiques p. 65: Trench, \$1.850, Dsquared²: Dsquared² 402 West Broadway, NYC. Sweater, \$995, Bally; bally.com. Pants, \$1,100, Ermenegildo Zegna Couture; Ermenegildo Zegna boutiques. Beanie, \$90, Binge Knitting; bingeknitting.com. Shoes, \$1,195. Marc by Marc Jacobs: Marc by Marc Jacobs Men's, 382 Bleecker Street, NYC, p. 66: Jacket, \$268, jeans, \$198, Marc by Marc Jacobs; Marc by Marc Jacobs Men's, 382 Bleecker Street, NYC. Sweater, \$155, Gant Rugger; Gant Rugger Stores and gant.com. Beanie, \$15, asos; asos.com. Chain bracelet, \$120, ID bracelet, \$375, ring, \$180, Scosha; scosha.com, Watch, \$3,100, Tudor, tudorwatch .com. Trench, \$3,400, sweater, \$1,880, and jeans \$680, Prada; select Prada boutiques. Watch, \$3,100, Tudor; tudorwatch.com.

p. 67: Jacket, \$198, sweater, \$69.50, Nautica; nautica.com. Jeans, \$168, AG Jeans; agjeans.com. Watch, \$3,100, Tudor; tudorwatch.com. p. 68: Trench, \$2,700, Gucci; Gucci.com.

PLEASE SEE CROSSWORD ON PAGE 100.

Sweater, \$249, Tommy Hilfiger; similar styles, tommy.com. Pants, \$195, Burberry Brit; burberry .com. Boots, \$310, Red Wing Heritage; redwingheritage.com. Sweater, price upon request, knit, \$850, Ermenegildo Zegna Couture; select Ermenegildo Zegna boutiques. p. 69: Trench, \$3,795, and pants, \$795, Burberry Prorsum; burberry.com. Beanie, \$90, Binge Knitting; bingeknitting.com. Watch, \$3,100, Tudor; tudorwatch.com. Boots, \$310, Red Wing Heritage redwingheritage.com.

p. 70: Śweater, \$1,750, and pants, \$1,100, Bottega Veneta; Bottega Veneta boutiques or bottegaveneta.com. 7-shirt, \$1,040, Canali; Bloomingdale's. Beanie, \$90, Binge Knitting; bingeknitting.com. Watch, \$185, Citizen; citizenwatch.com.

p. 71: Jacket, \$328, 7 For All Mankind; Bloomingdale's. Jacket, \$3,495, Giorgio Armani; Giorgio Armani boutiques nationwide. Sweater, \$995, Bally; bally.com. Jeans, \$168, AG Jeans; agjeans.com. Beanie, \$15, asos; asos.com. Watch, \$3,100, Tudor; tudorwatch.com. p. 75: Trunks, counterclockwise from far left: Ed Mulholland/Golden Boy/Golden Boy via Getty Images, Al Bello/Getty Images, Isaac Brekken/ AP Photo, Tim LaBarge/AP Photo, Al Bello/ Getty Images, John Iacono/Sports Illustrated/ Getty Images.

p. 76: Atlas, Todd Maisel/NY Daily News via Getty Images.

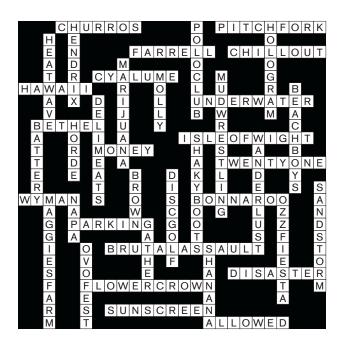
p. 78: Ryan Lowry.

p. 94: Elvis, Hulton Archive/Getty Images; Beatles, GAB Archive/Redferns/Getty Images; Allman Brothers Band, GAB Archive/Redferns/ Getty Images.

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p. 97: Walter, Emily Shur; *The Wedding Singer*, © Moviestore Collection Ltd/Alamy; Joy Division, © David Crausby/Alamy; Black T, Getty Images; Slayer, courtesy of Global Merchandise Service.



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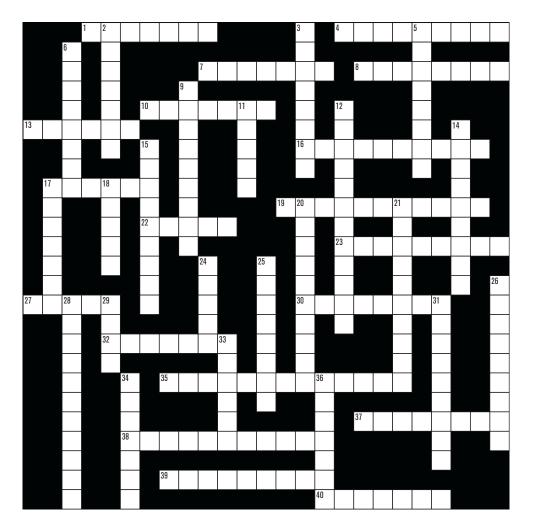
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ACROSS

- 1. Coachella's favorite food
- 4. Chicago indie rock revel
- 7. Jane says he invented Lollapalooza
- 8. Tent for bad trips
- **10.** Popular glow-stick brand
- **13.** Home of Ukulele Festival
- 16. Where Keys festival is held
- **17.** Woodstock location
- **19.** Parliament banned in 1970, revived in 2002
- 22. Shankar's Summer of Love reque\$t
- 23. Love Parade death toll

DOWN

27. Stone who missed the

Altamont copters

32. Festgoers' lament

35. Painful-sounding

Prague party

38. Mandatory female

39. Festgoer's best friend

40. Lilith Fair unofficial

topless policy

headgear

30. Named for Dr. John album

37. Woodstock '99, in a word

- 2. Longest Woodstock set
- 3. Coachella's home turf
- 5. Tupac on tour in 2012
- 6. Lollapalooza's 2005 nemesis
- Still illegal at Sasquatch!
 Blamed for fatal ODs at Electric Zoo
- at Electric 200 **12.** Bonnaroo athletic pursuit
- 14. Organized, ditched Monterey 1967
- **15.** Gaga Glastonbury rider request
- 17. "Lollapalooza Zombie" charge
- John Popper's jam-tastic '90s fest

- **20.** Newly minted country fest
- 21. MC Yogi gets
- onstage twice
- 24. Bad color for acid25. Electric Forest's
- nine-hole bonus **26.** Blinds you at
- Burning Man
- 28. Dylan's electric debut29. BottleRock's wino
- hometown **31.** Donde puedo oír
- "Loco Tren"
- **33.** Something that Vibes do**34.** "Canadian Coachella"
- 36. Woodstock doo-wop throwback
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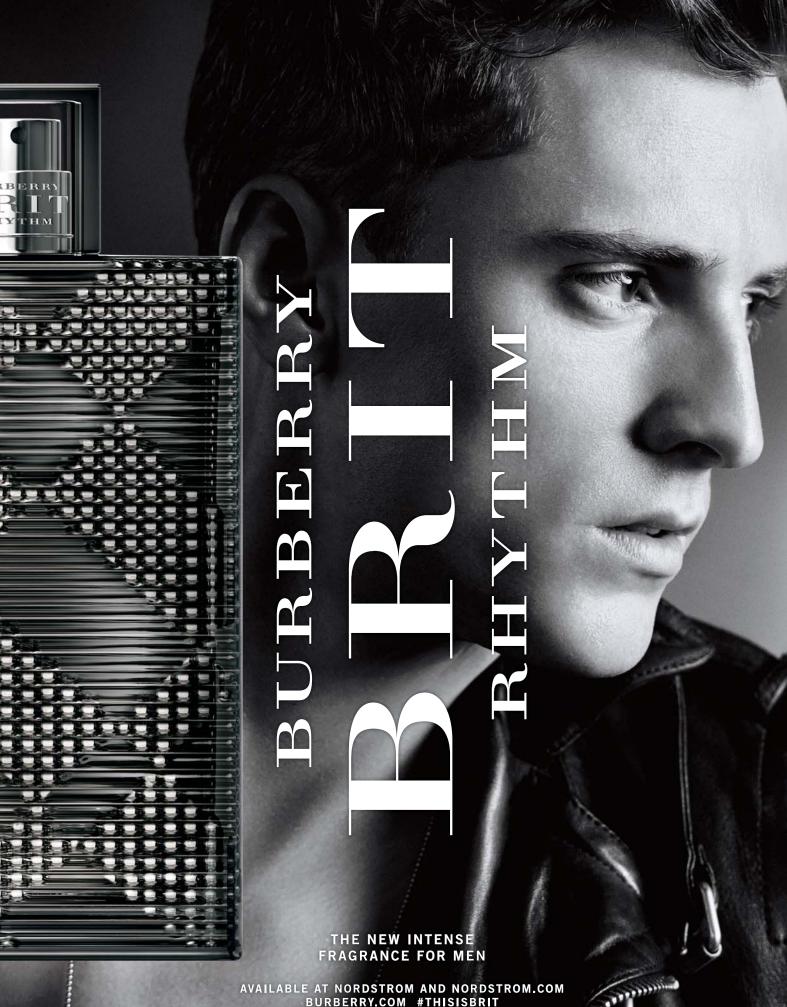
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