

Rolling Stone



Issue 1152 >> March 15, 2012 >> \$4.99
rollingstone.com

**WHAT'S
NEXT FOR
ADELE**

SKRILLEX
THE HYPERACTIVE
MISFIT WHO RULES
THE DANCE FLOOR

**WILL
FERRELL**
COMEDY'S LEAST-
TROUBLED GENIUS

**THE BIG
FRACKING
BUBBLE**

THE SCAM BEHIND
THE GAS BOOM

The Diva and
Her Dark Side

**WHITNEY
HOUSTON**



BAND of BUDS

TEAM AMERICA

TAKES HOME THE TITLE

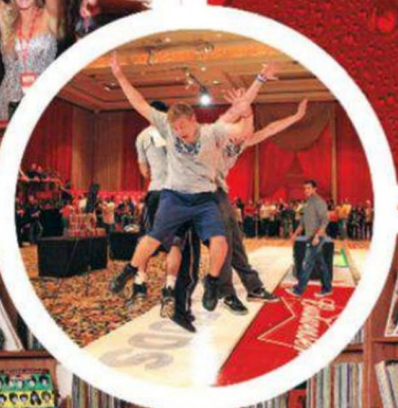




SEMI-FINALIST: THE FOUR HORNSMEN, HOUSTON, TX



SEMI-FINALIST: INTOXICATING VIXENS, CHICAGO, IL



"It's been one amazing ride"

- Team America
Bowling Green, KY, Band of Buds 2011 Champions



BAND OF BUDS 2011 CHAMPIONS: TEAM AMERICA, BOWLING GREEN, KY

Budweiser issued a challenge to America, and Team America answered the call.

After a six-month search for the best crew of friends in the country, **Brandon, Josh, Will** and **Chris** stood head and shoulders above the rest, and took home the Band of Buds crown.

The search was extensive. Thousands of crews entered at BandofBuds.com and completed all sorts of insane challenges designed to put their friendship to the test. They converted their friends into fans, lobbied for votes, had unreal adventures and shared it all with the world.

In the end, 25 crews made the cut to compete in the finals, held in the only city crazy enough to host a competition of this magnitude, Sin City itself, Las Vegas.

For four days and nights the crews battled their way through larger-than-life challenges, from the tables, to the track, to the VIP suites. In the end, Team America held off a strong, last-minute charge from the Four Hornsmen, and took home the title, \$100,000 cold hard cash and got their friendship validated, commemorated and celebrated with a photo shoot by *Rolling Stone* photographer, Danny Christensen.

We raise a Budweiser to you, Team America.

U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!



SEMI-FINALIST: WOLPACK AND JIMI, BOISE, ID



SEMI-FINALIST: PUMP HOUSE, ST. LOUIS, MO



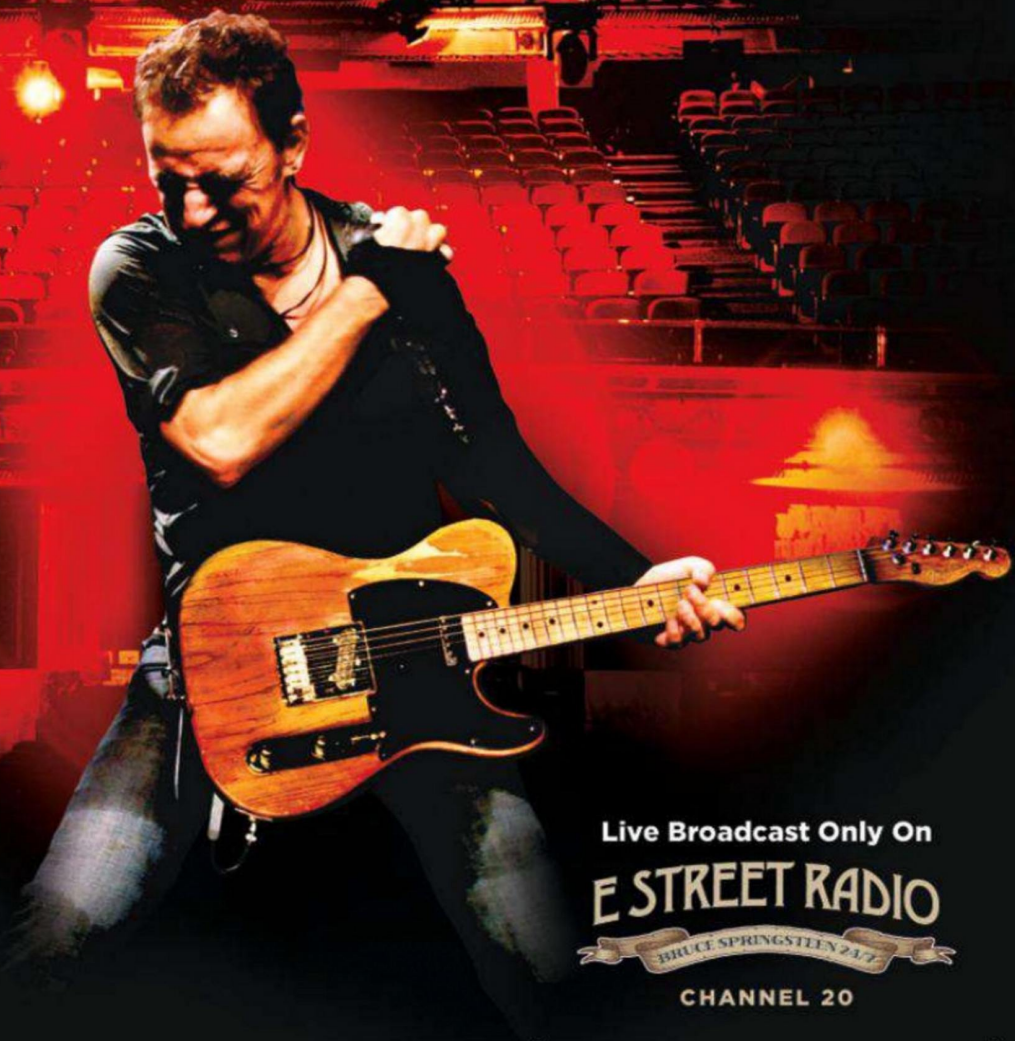
SEMI-FINALIST: 80'S BABIES, CHICAGO, IL

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SATELLITE RADIO
WITH A SPECIAL CONCERT EVENT ONLY FOR SIRIUSXM

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND THE E STREET BAND

03.09.12

APOLLO THEATER NYC
LIVE CONCERT



NEW ALBUM
WRECKING BALL
OUT MARCH 6TH

Live Broadcast Only On
E STREET RADIO
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN 24/7
CHANNEL 20

Siriusxm
SATELLITE RADIO

RS1152

"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"

Sweet Home D.C.

"The White House people said the shows feel a little stuffy sometimes," says Mick Jagger. That wasn't a problem when he, B.B. King, Buddy Guy and other all-stars took over the East Room last month for a celebration of the blues. "It's a weird trajectory, going from being a 12-year-old blues fan in suburban England to this," says Jagger. "You could write a book about it." Read the full story on page 14.

CONTENTS

ROLLING STONE | MARCH 15, 2012

FEATURES

Whitney Houston: The Diva and Her Demons

Houston went from gospel-singing sweetheart to pop superstar to tabloid target – and then it all ended in a Los Angeles hotel room one Saturday afternoon. Inside the singer's meteoric rise, chaotic life and tragic final days. *By* DAVID BROWNE 30

Skrillex: Ace of Bass

Eight wild nights and busy days in the life of Skrillex, electronic-music superstar. *By* NEIL STRAUSS 38

The Beautifully Empty Mind of Will Ferrell

The anxiety-free joy ride of the nicest guy in Hollywood. *By* ERIK HEDEGAARD 44

The Fracking Scam

It's toxic – and it's driven by a right-wing billionaire who profits more from flipping land than drilling for gas. Is this energy boom another bubble founded on hot air? *By* JEFF GOODELL 48

RS Fashion: 'Game of Thrones' Edition

The cast of the hit HBO series rocks this spring's hottest looks. 56

ROCK & ROLL

Springsteen Blasts Back

Bruce on his furious new album and big tour plans 13

Adele's Next Move

After Grammy-night domination, will she finally get back to touring? 13

Rock History Comes Alive in Cleveland

A first look at the Hall of Fame's huge new library 17

On the Charts: Gotye

Meet the Australian singer behind sleeper hit "Somebody That I Used to Know" 18

In the Studio: Norah Jones and Danger Mouse

Singer mines heartbreak on LP with studio ace 20

Q&A: Kelly Clarkson

On Super Bowl jitters and Whitney's greatness 24

DEPARTMENTS

TELEVISION

The Reality Candidate

Game Change exposes Sarah Palin as our first *Real Housewives* candidate. **PLUS:** *Spartacus: Vengeance* 26

RANDOM NOTES

Axl's Private Party

Guns N' Roses play a star-studded gig in New York; Rihanna rides the tube 28

RECORD REVIEWS

Bruce Springsteen

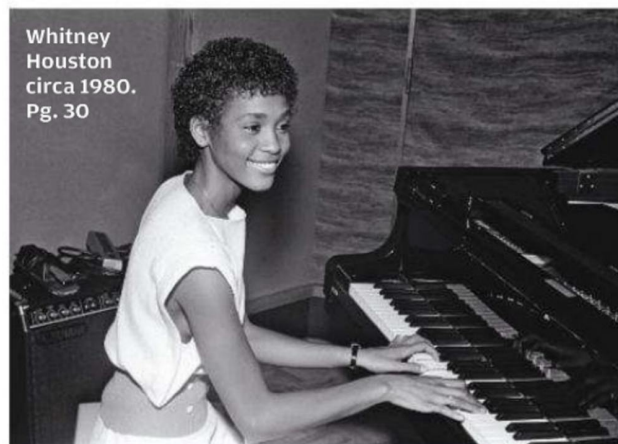
Springsteen addresses a broken nation on his darkest album ever. **PLUS:** Andrew Bird, Arcade Fire, fun. 63

MOVIES

Meet the Crazy Parents

Friends With Kids is a wryly perceptive comedy about couples and kids 68

ON THE COVER Whitney Houston photographed in 1992, by Michel Comte, Corbis Outline.



Whitney Houston circa 1980. Pg. 30



Will Ferrell puts his breast foot forward. Pg. 44



Skrillex drops the bass at the Tabernacle in Atlanta. Pg. 38



BANANAREPUBLIC.COM 1888 BRSTYLE MAD MEN® IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF LIONS GATE TELEVISION INC.

THE LIMITED EDITION

BANANA REPUBLIC

MAD MEN[®]
COLLECTION

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Jann S. Wenner

MANAGING EDITOR: Will Dana
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Eric Bates
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITORS: Nathan Brackett
John Dioso
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITORS: Jonathan Ringer
Sean Woods
SENIOR WRITERS: David Fricke, Brian Hiatt, Peter Travers
SENIOR EDITORS: Christian Hoard, Coco McPherson
Thomas Walsh
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Monica Herrera, Sarene Leeds
Phoebe St. John, Simon Vozick-Levinson
ASSISTANT EDITORS: Erika Berlin, Meredith Clark
Patrick Doyle, Jessica Machado, Toni Rumore
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Ally Lewis
EDITORIAL STAFF: Alison Weinfash
ROLLINGSTONE.COM: Sean Villafranca (Art Dir.)
Mike Spinnella (Dir., Industry Relations)
Evie Nagy (Managing Ed.), Julian Brookes (Politics Ed.)
Gaylord Fields (Ed.), Erica Futterman, Andy Greene
Matthew Perpetua (Assoc. Eds.), Todd Bernard
Megan Conway, Julie Holder, Griffin Lotz
EDITOR AT LARGE: Jason Fine
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Mark Binelli, David Browne
Rich Cohen, Jonathan Cott, Anthony DeCurtis
Tim Dickinson, Raoul Duke (Sports), Gavin Edwards
Josh Eells, Jenny Eliscu, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, Mikal Gilmore
Jeff Gordinier, Vanessa Grigoriadis, Michael Hastings
Erik Hedegard, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Steve Knopper
David Kushner, Guy Lawson, Greil Marcus, Charles Perry
Janet Reitman, Austin Scaggs, Jeff Sharlet
Rob Sheffield, Paul Solotaroff, Ralph Steadman (Gardening)
Neil Strauss, Matt Taibbi, Touré, Ben Wallace-Wells
Jonah Weiner, David Wild

DESIGN DIRECTOR: Joseph Hutchinson
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Jodi Peckman
ART DEPARTMENT: Steven Charny (Sr. Art Dir.)
Matthew Cooley (Deputy Art Dir.)
Elizabeth Oh (Assoc. Art Dir.)
PHOTO DEPARTMENT: Deborah Dragon (Deputy Photo Ed.)
Sacha Lecca (Sr. Photo Ed.), Sonja Gill (Assoc. Photo Ed.)
Sandford Griffin (Finance Mgr.)
ART AND PHOTO ASSISTANT: Jackie Lee

PUBLISHER: Matt Mastrangelo
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Michael H. Provis
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, MARKETING: Joyce Parente
CREATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR: Robert Hanewich
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Erik Yates
ADVERTISING BUSINESS DIRECTOR: Danika Parente
NEW YORK: Marie La France, Lora Logan, Cindy Mata Gross
Craig Mura
CHICAGO: Joe Hoffer (Dir.), Adam Anderson
DETROIT: Brian Green (Dir.)
LOS ANGELES: Diane Clements, Kurt DeMars
NORTHWEST: Stephanie Coughlan, Gretel Schneider
SOUTHWEST: Adam Knippa, Ellen Lewis, Michael Stafford
SOUTHEAST: Christine Murphy, Peter Zuckerman
NATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR: Mitch Herskowitz
DIRECT RESPONSE ADVERTISING: Justine Henderson
MARKETING: Artie Athas, David Aussenberg
Ryan Bair, Breanna Murphy

CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER: David Kang
HEAD OF CONTENT: Bill Crandall
DIGITAL SALES: Brian McFarland (Dir.), Kelly Jahnes
Matthew Habib (Los Angeles), Nina Keinberger (Chicago)
DIGITAL OPERATIONS: Elaine Chang, Daniel Shearer (Exec.
Dirs.), Pete DiRenzo (Dir.), Melissa Olund (Managing Ed.)
PUBLICITY: Mark Neschis (Dir.)
CIRCULATION: Michael Porché, John Reese (Dirs.)
Mee-Vin Mak
MANUFACTURING: Patrick Bryan, Kevin Jones
Enid Silverman (Drs.), Luke Orefice (Assoc. Dir.)
Jessica Horowitz, Nina Pearlman (Mgns.)
EDITORIAL OPERATIONS: John Dragonetti (Dir.)
Eleni Tzinakos, Therese Hurter, Henry Groszkinsky

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER: John A. Gruber
VICE PRESIDENT, TAX AND FINANCE: Timothy Walsh
GENERAL COUNSEL: Dana Rosen
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR: Amy Burak
RECRUITER: Shari Rosen
INTERNATIONAL LICENSING DIRECTOR: Maureen Lambert
CORPORATE RESEARCH DIRECTOR: Amy Cooper

Wenner Media
CHAIRMAN: Jann S. Wenner
VICE PRESIDENTS: Victoria Lasdon Rose, Timothy Walsh
Jane Wenner

MAIN OFFICES
1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298
212-484-1616
NATIONAL MUSIC ADVERTISING: 441 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10017; 212-490-1715
DIRECT-RESPONSE ADVERTISING: 212-484-3418
REGIONAL OFFICES
333 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1105, Chicago, IL 60601
312-782-2366
755 West Big Beaver Rd., Suite 450, Troy, MI 48064;
248-743-1020
5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 345, Los Angeles, CA 90036
323-930-3300
Responsible Media, 277 Linden St., Suite 205
Wellesley, MA 02482; 781-235-2429
Lewis Stafford Co., 5000 Quorum Dr., Suite 545
Dallas, TX 75254; 972-960-2889
Z Media, 1666 Kennedy Causeway, Suite 602
Miami Beach, FL 33141; 305-532-5566
Angelo Careddu, Oberon Media, Via Andegari 18
20121 Milano, Italy; 011-3902-874-543

Copyright © 2012 by Rolling Stone LLC. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is
prohibited. Rolling Stone® is a registered trademark of
Rolling Stone LLC. Printed in the United States of America.

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

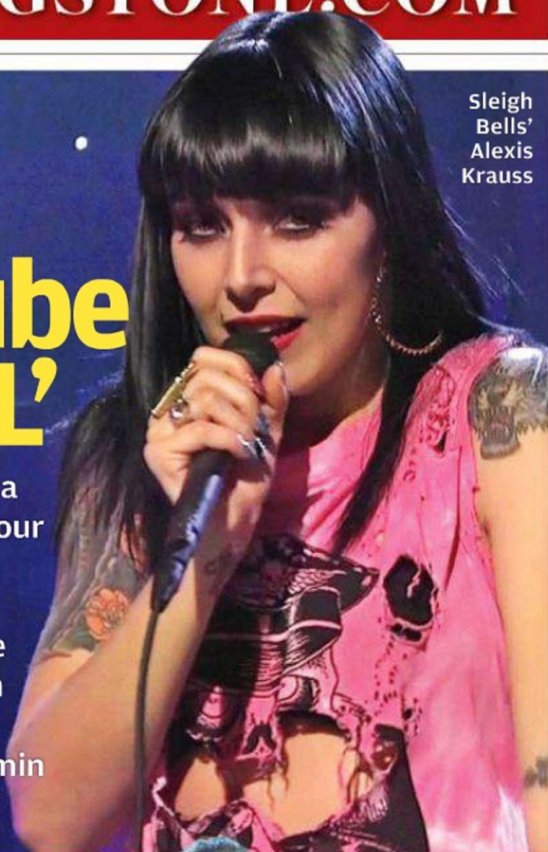
ROLLING STONE is printed on 100 percent
carbon-neutral paper.

INDUSTRY

From YouTube to 'SNL'

The days of needing a gold album before your band got on *SNL* are over: Read how the music-business hype machine works, with recent *SNL* guests Sleigh Bells and Karmin as case studies.

Sleigh
Bells'
Alexis
Krauss



Springsteen's World Tour: Complete Coverage

TOURS Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band will rock the Apollo Theater in New York on March 9th. We'll have a report from the show, plus videos and interviews with the band members from the road over the course of the year.



Springsteen
and Steve
Van Zandt

Live at RS: Andrew Bird, Of Montreal

VIDEO

One-man-band Bird plays tracks from his new album, *Break It Yourself*; Of Montreal tackle new tunes.

Of Montreal

Bird

POLITICS
MATT TAIBBI
rollingstone.com/taibbi

MOVIES
PETER TRAVERS
rollingstone.com/travers

ROCK & ROLL
DAVID FRICKE
rollingstone.com/fricke

FOLLOW US ON

CORNING
Gorilla® Glass

Tough

just got
Better.

NEW
Corning® Gorilla® Glass 2

The damage resistance you demand, at a thinness that will astound you.

FOR

- Slimmer & sleeker devices
- Brighter images
- Greater touch sensitivity

Corning Gorilla Glass 2 is as tough and scratch-resistant as ever to withstand the unexpected abuses of everyday life. But now it's thinner to enable superior device performance and a more sophisticated user experience. Look for it on the world's coolest smartphones, tablets, and PCs.

Learn more at CorningGorillaGlass.com

Correspondence

{ Love Letters & Advice }



Voice of America

I WAS SO THRILLED TO SEE *The Voice* on your cover ["Three Men and a Diva," RS 1150]. The truly talented judges are giving hopeful artists more than a chance – they've created a place where there isn't just unconditional acceptance but also encouragement.

Brittany Frederick
Via the Internet

BRIAN HIATT'S ARTICLE showed that the *Voice* judges are the perfect role models for up-and-coming stars. They have different personalities but can come together to connect because of a mutual passion for music. That passion is what makes *The Voice* television's "most exciting music show."

Geena Martorana, Fairfield, NJ

I WAS SO EXCITED TO SEE *The Voice* on the cover, and I tore through the article, eating

up the behind-the-scenes details relayed by each coach. But then something strange happened: The article ended before we got any insight into Blake Shelton. I know I am not alone when I say he is a fan favorite.

Sky Robinson, Columbia, MO

ETTA JAMES PASSES AND YOU put *The Voice* on the cover? Who will be remembered for their musical contributions more – James or the nasally singer from Maroon 5?

Jonathan DeRosa
Wilmington, NC

Heartland Hate

SABRINA RUBIN ERDELY'S "School of Hate" [RS 1150] is the most moving piece I have ever read in RS. I went to a Catholic high school and dealt with constant harassment because people believed I was gay. Your article captured what that felt like for me, and for so many others.

M.P. Gallen, Pittsburgh

THE HARROWING "SCHOOL OF Hate" made me think back and wonder, how many times had I mocked kids in school who may have been gay? How many times later on, in my years as a teacher, was I indifferent toward this same bigotry I witnessed at school? It was the safe move. Even though I have long since opened my eyes, I still feel regret, embarrassment and shame – as should every intol-

erant member of that Minnesota community. We deserve it. We were cowards.

Dan Renaud, East Greenbush, NY

AS A THERAPIST TO ADOLESCENTS, I was horrified to read "School of Hate." There is no excuse, no explanation for why any of our children should be subjected to such treatment. What an outrage that so many in power remain so ignorant.

Michael Hayes
Winston-Salem, NC

I AM CANCELING MY SUBSCRIPTION TO ROLLING STONE. I am the superintendent of the

point in history, our gay students – want and deserve a safe place to learn. All of us should be working together to ensure that happens. Imagine my disappointment when a magazine I have loved could have helped in that effort.

Dennis L. Carlson
Via the Internet

I AM AN ANOKA-HENNEPIN teacher soon to retire. Been here well over 30 years. All of the pieces of this awful puzzle had been waiting for you to assemble them, and now that you did, those who put them in place don't like the picture it paints. Thank you, Sabrina. You gave some voice to the kids.

Christopher P. Sturzl
Via the Internet

Sabrina Rubin Erdely responds: Superintendent Carlson's hurt feelings don't change the facts: The school district enacted a policy that created an environment that

"Your article made me wonder how many times I had mocked kids in school who may have been gay."

Anoka-Hennepin school district. I cannot even begin to tell you how hurtful and hateful your article is to our district, our community and our 38,000 students. Ever since the first suicide occurred, we have worked very hard to keep all our students safe – particularly, our gay students. Because of your article, hate mail from across the country is flowing in to our staff, our school board and to me. Your article divides us further, rather than seeking the common ground we have worked so hard to find. All students – but particularly, at this

was not hospitable to gay students, and then refused to rethink the policy even in the midst of a suicide epidemic. We fully agree that gay students deserve a safe and equal place to learn. Now that Anoka-Hennepin recently rid itself of its so-called "neutrality" policy, perhaps the district can begin to be such a place.

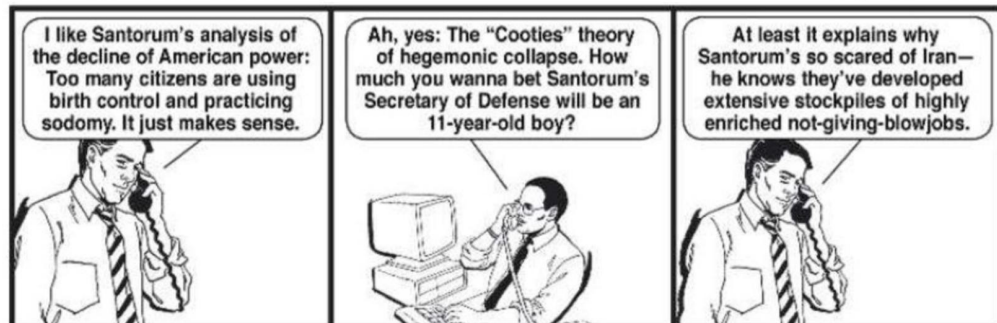
Last Laugh

PATRICE O'NEAL PROBABLY wouldn't care in the least about an RS article on him ["Death of a Stand-Up," RS 1150]. That's why he was so great. He was all about the truth. If it hurt your feelings? Oh, well, learn from it. The article made me smile. But Patrice always made me smile.

Anne Frazer, via the Internet

Get Your Vote On

By David Rees



Contact Us

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

E-MAIL letters@rollingstone.com

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES Go to rollingstone.com/customerservice
•Subscribe •Renew •Cancel •Missing Issues
•Give a Gift •Pay Bill •Change of Address

FROM THE DIRECTOR AND THE WRITER OF *RECOUNT*

JULIANNE
MOORE



WOODY
HARRELSON



ED
HARRIS



Politics would never be the same.

GAMECHANGE

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING BOOK

HBO FILMS PRESENTS A **PLAYTONE** PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVERYMAN PICTURES A JAY ROACH FILM JULIANNE MOORE WOODY HARRELSON ED HARRIS "GAME CHANGE"
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID RUBIN, CSA RICHARD HICKS, CSA PRODUCED BY EVYEN J. KLEAN DEVA ANDERSON WRITTEN BY THEODORE SHAPIRO DIRECTED BY LUCIA ZUCCHETTI, A.C.E. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL CORENBLOTH PRODUCED BY JIM DENAULT, ASC
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DANNY STRONG STEVEN SHARESHIAN PRODUCED BY AMY SAYRES EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TOM HANKS GARY GOETZMAN JAY ROACH BASED ON THE BOOK BY MARK HALPERIN AND JOHN HEILEMANN WRITTEN BY DANNY STRONG DIRECTED BY JAY ROACH

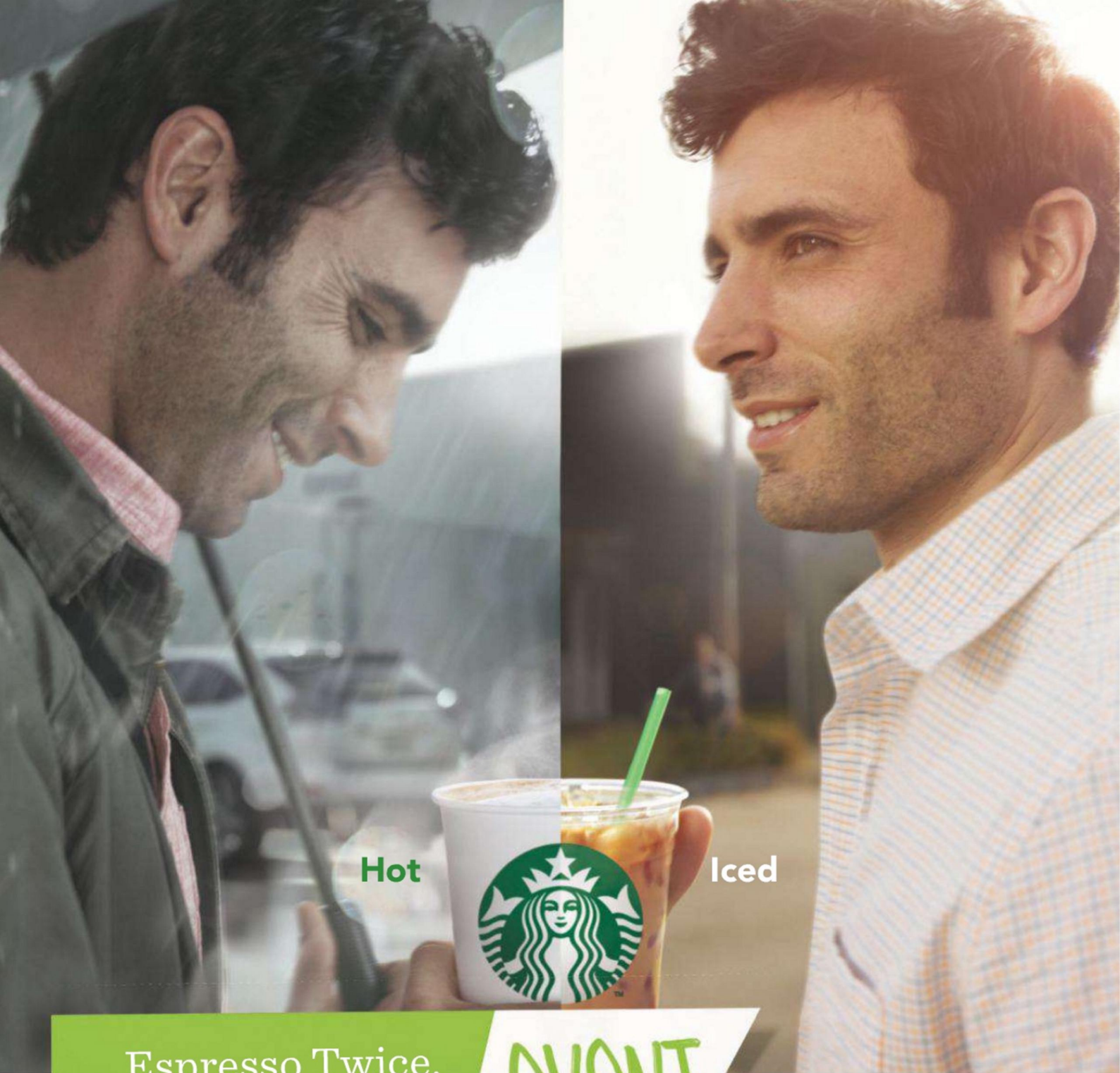
SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 9PM

ENCORE PLAYS SUN. 7PM ★ MON. 9PM

OR WATCH IT ON **HBO GO**

ONLY ON
HBO

HBO GO® is only accessible in the US and certain US territories. ©2012 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. HBO® and related channels and service marks are the property of Home Box Office, Inc.



Espresso Twice,
Half the Price.

EVENT

Thurs 3/8–Wed 3/14

Buy any full-price espresso beverage before 11 a.m. and bring back your receipt after 2 p.m. the same day to get half off any espresso beverage. Start hot and go iced. Or vice versa.

starbucks.com

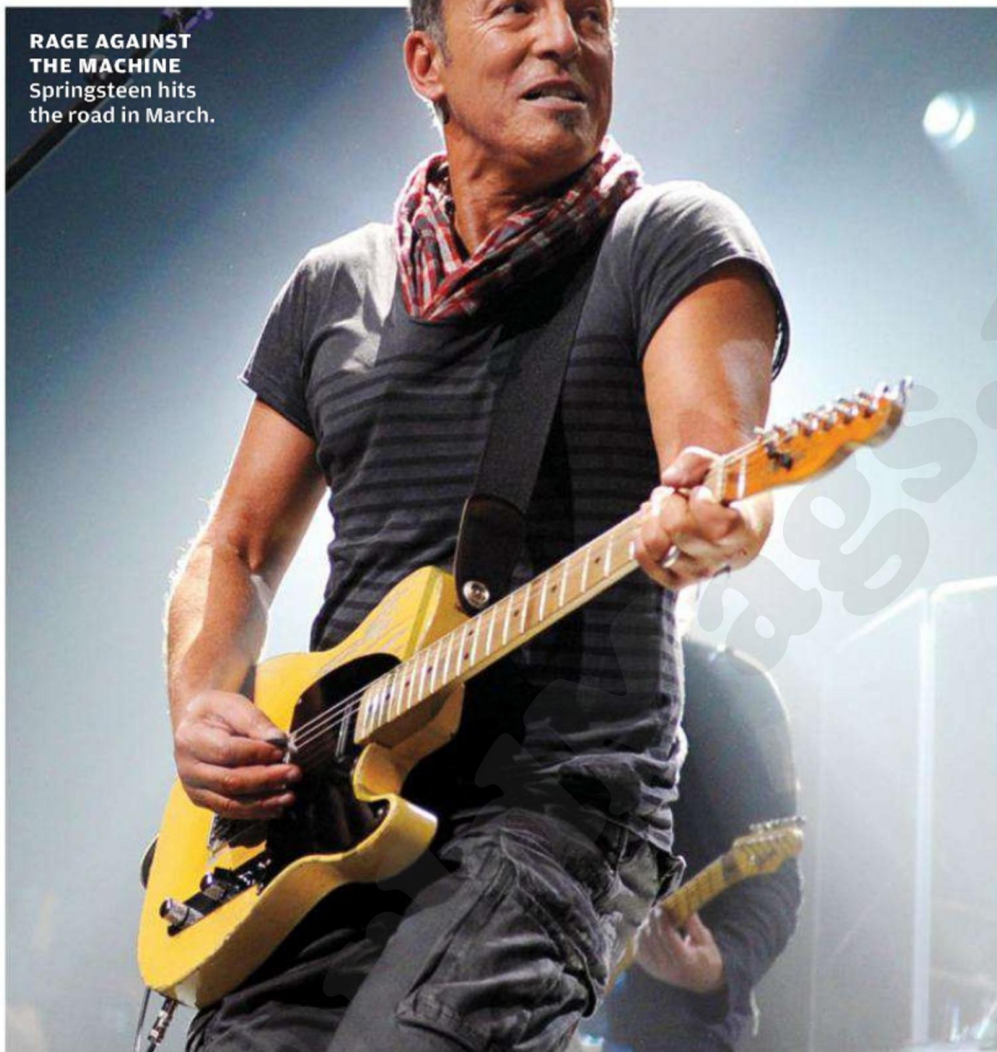
Offer good at participating Starbucks stores in the U.S. and Canada.
Cannot be combined with other offers or discounts.
© 2012 Starbucks Coffee Company. All rights reserved.



Vanilla Latte

Rock & Roll

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
Springsteen hits the road in March.



What's Adele's Next Move?

After storming the Grammys, the singer plots a possible tour
By Steve Knopper

IN JANUARY, ADELE made one of the most important decisions of her career: While recovering from surgery to remove a polyp from her vocal cords, she agreed to perform her biggest hit, "Rolling in the Deep," during the Grammy Awards. Even for the brightest new star the music business has produced in years, the move paid off in a major way: Following the death of Whitney Houston, 40 million people tuned in to the February 12th broadcast, the show's largest audience since 1984. Adele's bravura performance and charmingly plain-spoken speeches ("I've got a bit o' snot!") stole the show, leading to a record-breaking 730,000 fans buying her smash album, *21*, the follow- [Cont. on 14]

Grammy queen
Adele

Occupy E Street: Inside Springsteen's New Album

Bruce tackles Wall Street on *Wrecking Ball*. Plus: E Street Band hit the road
By Andy Greene

IN LATE 2010, BRUCE Springsteen told *ROLLING STONE* that he had just written his first song about a "guy that wears a tie." The songwriter had spent much of his career writing about characters struggling in tough eco-

nomic times, but the financial crisis convinced him it was time to write about the people and forces that brought America to this ugly point.

The result is *Wrecking Ball* (out March 6th), a scathing indictment of Wall Street greed and corruption and a look into the devastation they have wrought. "This is as direct a record as I ever made," Springsteen tells *ROLLING STONE*.

"That's with the possible exception of *Nebraska*, which this record has a lot in common with."

The stark subject matter is paired with an experimental sonic palette that Springsteen created with producer Ron Aniello and a cast of session players, including Rage Against [Cont. on 16]



Red, White and Blues: All-Stars Take D.C.

Jagger, B.B. King and more celebrate the blues with President Obama

ONE OF THE THINGS about being president is some nights you want to take a walk or a drive but you can't," President Obama said at the White House February 21st. "But there are other nights where B.B. King and Mick Jagger come to your house and play a concert." The president reveled in 12-bar bliss as an all-star cast including Jagger, King, Buddy Guy, Jeff Beck, Derek Trucks and a house band led by Booker T. Jones put on a spectacular tribute to the blues in the White House's East Room, filmed for a PBS special. The vibe before the show was loose, even when the president showed up to watch a lengthy soundcheck. "He was just relaxed, sitting in the back in his loafers," says Jagger. "It helped everyone feel at ease."

The set list covered Delta blues, Chicago blues and beyond. King, 86, dusted off his classic "The Thrill Is Gone"; Beck ripped into his finger-



BLUES STATE
Obama joined stars including Jeff Beck, Derek Trucks, Gary Clark Jr. and B.B. King at the White House.

tapping instrumental "Brush With the Blues"; and Susan Tedeschi and Warren Haynes nailed a heart-wrenching version of Etta James' "I'd Rather Go Blind." Jagger, meanwhile, riled up the crowd with a surprising set including the Stones' "Miss You" and Otis Redding's "I Can't Turn You Loose." "It

wasn't really blues, but I wanted to treat it like a club," he says. "I practiced for two weeks before - then it's like riding a bicycle."

But the night's most electric moment came when Guy urged the president to sing a verse of his hometown anthem, "Sweet Home Chicago." "If I got him to sing something,

maybe the people will pay attention to the blues a little more," Guy says. "It's one of the highlights of my career. If you come from the cotton fields like I did, and now you're up there in the White House playing for the commander in chief and the First Lady, how high can you go?"

PATRICK DOYLE

ADELE

[Cont. from 13] ing week. "The Whitney thing definitely added far more poignancy to the whole evening, but it was a dream come true for us," says her manager, Jonathan Dickins. "Adele's natural, but it was nervous for her. It takes guts and a certain character to go back in after not singing publicly for five months, and come back for the first time and do the Grammys."

Until a few weeks ago, Adele planned to follow up her breakthrough year by doing, well, pretty much nothing. Last fall she canceled an arena tour due to her vocal injury. Up through the Grammys, she basically disappeared, recently telling *Vogue* she planned "a four- or five-year" break - spending the time with her new boyfriend in the country home she rented in West Sussex, England, and working on new songs.

That was frustrating news for fans - and concert promot-

ers, who say the singer could pull in millions of dollars per show. "She'll sell every ticket, every show, worldwide," says Andy Cirzan, vice president of concerts for Chicago's Jam Productions. "I have a standing offer for multiple nights here at the United Center."

But now her manager tells *ROLLING STONE* that a 2012

"She's free to do whatever moves her," says producer Rick Rubin.

tour is still on the table, depending on Adele's health. "She's loved the touring she's done in the past," says Dickins, who was planning to talk to Adele about her post-Grammy plans at press time. "At the same time, we want to make sure we can get through it properly." Adds Dr. Steven Zeitels, the Harvard University specialist who conducted her sur-

gery in November, "From everything I see thus far, she has a choice of what to do. Her vocal cords aren't going to get in the way."

While Adele sounded healthy on the Grammys, Dickins warns that doesn't mean she's automatically ready to tour. "That's one song, performed for three minutes 40 seconds, once," he says. "It's not an hour and a half, four times a week. It's a big difference. We still have to be mindful of nursing that voice back to full fitness."

In an era when records almost never sell more than 700,000 copies in a given week - the last was Lil Wayne's *Tha Carter IV* - and even the biggest stars, from Lady Gaga to Coldplay, tend to quickly drop out of the Top 40, Adele's continued blockbuster sales are especially remarkable. In the year since *21* first hit shelves, the LP has moved more than 7.3 million copies in the U.S., spun off three Number One singles, and won the singer six Grammys,

including Song, Record and Album of the Year. "We were expecting some kind of surge, but this is just unreal," says Ish Cuebas, vice president of music merchandising for record chain Trans World Entertainment.

How did she do it? One major explanation is that her music was able to cross over to basically every radio format. "The industry would be a lot better off if we found 10 more artists like her, who had that ability to connect with fans," says Scott Greer, senior vice president for Sony-owned Columbia Records, whose staff planned a yearlong marketing campaign that peaked with the Grammys.

Her label plans to roll out one more single from *21*: "Rumour Has It." After that? "She's free to do whatever moves her," says Rick Rubin, who produced five songs on *21*. "The reason she's good is she *only* does what moves her. Which I think ensures whatever she chooses to do next will be really, really good."



IT'S A
CHALICE,
NOT A
GLASS.



She is a thing of beauty

SPRINGSTEEN

[Cont. from 13] the Machine guitarist Tom Morello. "The record basically started out as folk music – just me and a guitar singing these songs," says Springsteen. "Then Ron brought a large library of sound that allowed me to explore – like maybe a hip-hop drum loop or country-blues stomp loop. The



WRECKING CREW The late Clemons and Springsteen (above). Clemons' nephew, Jake, will tour with the band.

actual drums came later. There was no preconceived set of instruments that needed to be used – I could go anywhere, do anything, use anything. It was very wide open."

Springsteen's challenge over the past couple of months has been to find a way to bring this material to life onstage with the E Street Band. They kick off a massive world tour on March 18th at the Philips Arena in Atlanta – about two weeks after the album hits shelves. "When we play it live, it's going to be a little different," says E Street Band guitarist Steve Van Zandt. "The songs work really well onstage, though."

Wrecking Ball's opener, "We Take Care of Our Own," poses a question: Does America live up to its principles? The songs that follow make the answer clear. The narrator of the slow waltz "Jack of All Trades" struggles to find work, and the anti-hero of the country-folk "Easy Money" decides to imitate "all them fat cats" on Wall Street by turning to crime. The similarly uptempo "Shackled and

Drawn," meanwhile, offers a political analysis worthy of Woody Guthrie: "Gambling man rolls the dice, working-man pays the bill/It's still fat and easy up on banker's hill/Up on banker's hill, the party's going strong/Down here below, we're shackled and drawn."

The album's themes shift midway through, as economic despair gives way to a

quest for spiritual redemption. It ends on a hopeful note with "We Are Alive." The song takes on an Irish-wake feel, as Springsteen celebrates Americans who died fighting for progress: "I was killed in Maryland in 1877/When the railroad workers made their stand/I was killed in 1963/One Sunday morning in Birmingham/I died last year crossing the southern des-

"'Wrecking Ball' is as direct a record as I've ever made," Springsteen says.

ert/My children left behind in San Pablo... We are alive/And though we lie alone/Here in the dark/Our souls will rise/To carry the fire and light the spark/To fight shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart."

There are genuine musical surprises throughout. The cinematic "Rocky Ground" expands on the hip-hop-inspired vibe of "Streets of Philadel-

phia," while prominently featuring the voice of gospel singer Michelle Moore, who even delivers a brief, Springsteen-penned rap. "Death to My Hometown" is a Celtic-influenced foot-stomper that wouldn't sound out of place on a Dropkick Murphys album. "We Are Alive" borrows the horn riff from Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," while "Land of Hope and Dreams" (originally played live with the E Street Band in 1999) has been reworked with electronic drums and a gospel choir.

That song has a saxophone solo by the late Clarence Clemons. Clemons can also be heard on "Wrecking Ball," alongside trumpeter Curt Ramm – who will be in the five-piece horn section hitting the road with Springsteen on his upcoming tour. That horn section will include two sax players – Ed Manion, who toured with Springsteen in his Sessions Band, and the Big Man's nephew, Jake Clemons. "Whoever plays the sax part will emerge

from the horn section, then they go back to the horn section," says Van Zandt. "So it takes the pressure off that spotlight of suggesting that he's replacing Clarence, which is just impossible to do." Audiences will catch a preview of the upcoming tour when Springsteen and the E Street Band play New York's Apollo Theater on March 9th to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Sirius Satellite Radio.

Van Zandt says that the show will feature songs from *Wrecking Ball*, in addition to material from *The Promise*, Springsteen's 2010 collection of outtakes from *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. "But we're always going to play the classics, which is a real fun aspect of a show," Van Zandt says. "If you come to five different shows, you're going to hear we've regularly changed about a third of the show every single night. So by the time you come to five or six shows, you'll have seen at least three different versions of the show."



IN THE NEWS

Whitney, Mars, Civil Wars get Grammy bump

Adele wasn't the only artist to get a big sales bump from the 54th Annual Grammy Awards (page 13), which scored



Houston

unusually high ratings when 40 million viewers tuned in for a **Whitney Houston** tribute the day

after news of her death broke. Folk duo the Civil Wars earned the second-biggest bump, after their brief performance drove sales of their debut LP, *Barton Hollow*, up to 36,000 copies (for a sales increase of 178 percent). **Katy Perry** performed her new single, "Part of Me," and released it on iTunes the next day; the track debuted at Number One on the Hot 100 a week later with 411,000 downloads. **Bruno Mars'** James Brown-inspired performance brought his *Doo-Wops & Hooligans* LP back into the Top 10 with 38,000 copies sold. **Foo Fighters**, whose frontman, **Dave Grohl**, performed three times, sold 23,000 copies of *Wasting Light* and moved up 38 positions on the chart. Seven of Houston's albums also hit the Top 200 albums chart following the Grammys – led by *Whitney: The Greatest Hits*, at Number Two, which sold 175,000 copies. The February 12th CBS telecast scored the second-highest ratings in Grammy history – after **Michael Jackson** won eight awards in 1984, helping to pull in more than 51 million viewers.

Adam Lambert to perform with Queen

Lambert will fill in for late Queen frontman **Freddie Mercury** when the band headlines the U.K.'s Sonisphere festival on July 7th. The gig marks Lambert's third time performing with Queen; they first shared the stage together in 2009 at



Lambert

the *American Idol* season finale, where Lambert and the band performed "We Are the Cham-

pions," and then reteamed for a medley at the 2011 MTV Europe Music Awards. "It's a worthy challenge for us, and I'm sure Adam would meet with Freddie's approval," said guitarist **Brian May**. Added Lambert, "It's gonna be a lot of work, but it's gonna be fucking great. I'm so excited!"

Rock History Comes Alive in Cleveland

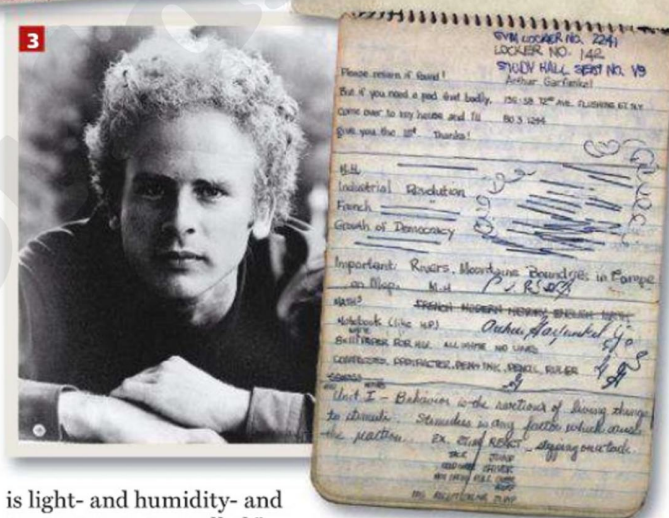
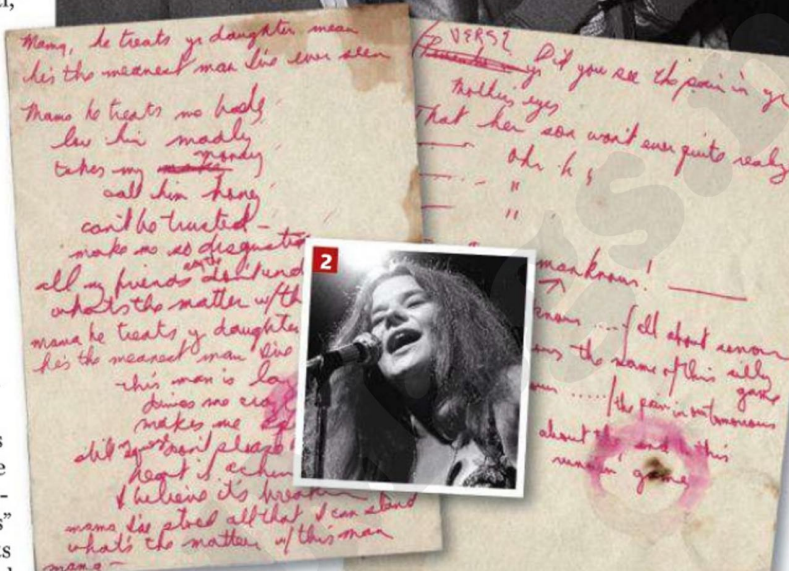
A first look at the Hall of Fame's massive new rock & roll library and archives

THE ROCK AND ROLL Hall of Fame has just finished its most ambitious project since the museum was completed in 1995: This January, a four-story, 22,000-square-foot library full of priceless rock documents opened at Cuyahoga Community College, just minutes from the Hall. "Our goal," says library director Andy Leach, "is to be viewed as the preeminent research facility for rock & roll in the world."

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Library and Archives – which is free and open to the public – overflows with more than 10,000 vinyl records, hundreds of obscure fanzines, nearly every rock book ever printed and countless treasures from major stars.

Early handwritten drafts of Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze" lyrics and Janis Joplin's chords for "Kozmic Blues" show up on crumpled sheets of notepaper. Art Garfunkel donated junior-high French-class notes, a late-1950s set list from an early show with Paul Simon (it's packed with Everly Brothers and Pat Boone covers) and other items. Elsewhere is everything from LL Cool J's lyric notebook to letters from Madonna, Patti Smith and Billy Joel.

Other documents reveal the day-to-day lives of top music executives, including Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun, former Columbia and Arista head Clive Davis and former Warner Bros. president Mo Ostin. Persuading dozens of key players (or their estates) to hand over personal papers was one of the library's greatest challenges. "We let them know that this is the way their history is going to live on," says Jim Henke, the Hall of Fame's vice president of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs. "It wasn't doing the person any good if it's sitting in some attic. We'll preserve it – everything



is light- and humidity- and temperature-controlled."

Visitors to the library can watch hundreds of hours of video – including a wealth of previously unseen material drawn from the Hall of Fame's long history of public programming. (Some highlights: interviews with and performances by Smokey Robinson, Robbie Robertson and Stewart Copeland of the Police.)

And over the past year, the Hall of Fame has been filming extensive new oral histories with central early rock figures – starting with a roundtable featuring Fats Domino, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry. "Those interviews are going to be a real treasure trove," says vice president of Education and Public

Rock of Ages

Treasures at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's new library in Cleveland include the personal papers of Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun (with Mick Jagger in 1976) (1); handwritten lyrics by Janis Joplin (2); and a notebook of high school homework and poetry by Art Garfunkel (3).

Programs Lauren Onkey. The library is also amassing concert recordings, including late-Seventies shows in New York by Smith, Lou Reed, the Clash and more. Says Leach, "These are things that nobody has ever heard before."

For serious researchers, the library provides unprecedented access into rock's primary documents – many of which had been nearly impossible to find for decades. Key books, long out of print, are here; nearly complete runs of magazines like *Cashbox* and *Record Collector* provide a week-by-week account of the music industry's evolution. "There needs to be a place like this," says Leach. "Researchers who have been here remarked how they were able to connect dots they had never connected before."

While the library has been open to the public since January, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is planning a grand-opening celebration for April 9th – the week artists including Guns N' Roses, Beastie Boys and Red Hot Chili Peppers will be inducted at a blowout ceremony at Cleveland's Public Hall. "When artists come to Cleveland, we'll try and take them here," says Henke. "They'll have a much better understanding of what it is – and our ability to get collections is going to increase." ANDY GREENE

ON THE CHARTS

Gotye's Weird Pop Science Blows Up

Meet the Australian star behind the hit "Somebody That I Used to Know"



I GOT YOU
His surprise smash has 85 million YouTube spins.

AFTER HIS SECOND album made him one of Australia's biggest stars in 2006, Gotye holed up in a barn on his parents' 13-acre farm outside of Melbourne and spent the next two and a half years recording alone with a laptop. "Cars would drive past at 100 kilometers per hour, crows would land on the roof and scratch, and temperatures were up and down with no heat," says the indie-pop singer, 31. "In the dead of winter, I'd be jogging in between takes to keep warm."

Gotye's time in the wild paid off: His U.S. debut LP, *Making Mirrors*, has been lodged in the *Billboard* Top 40 for seven weeks, and lead single "Somebody That I Used to Know," a supercatchy, xylophone-powered kiss-off, has been getting heavy airplay and racked up more than 85 million YouTube

views. "As soon as we saw how many hits the video was getting, we put it on," says Dennis Constantine, programming director at San Francisco's KFOG. "The response was phenomenal – we couldn't play it enough."

Born Wouter De Backer in Belgium, Gotye – it's pronounced like "Gaultier," the French version of his first name – moved to Australia with his family at age two. He grew up obsessed with Sting, Depeche Mode and Peter Dinklage, his most obvious influence. Around 2002, while drumming for an indie-rock band in Melbourne, he began teaching himself how to build tracks out of sampled world-music fragments and his own field recordings. "Anything that allows you to not approach a particular instrument or software like you have before," he says, "that's usually what I'm trying to do."

Gotye crafted the driving bass line of "Eyes Wide Open" by messing around with the Winton Musical Fence, a playable art installation in the outback. "I was like a kid in a playground, running around hitting things and recording them on my sampler," he says. The stoned dub groove of "State of the Art," meanwhile, came together on a vintage Lowrey Cotillion organ his parents bought him at a thrift store for Christmas. Adds Gotye, "I like to see what happens when you collide certain things together."

Gotye will hit the U.S. for a short tour this month, including a stop at Coachella, and he's planning a more ambitious tour for later in the year. "I want to keep developing new ideas," he says. "'Somebody That I Used to Know' has changed what I thought was possible."

PATRICK DOYLE

IN THE NEWS

Supreme Court rejects Phil Spector appeal

The Supreme Court has refused to review producer Phil Spector's 2009 conviction for murdering actress **Lana**



Spector

Clarkson in 2003. Spector, 72, is serving 19 years to life in prison. In other news, a California

judge has denied **Dr. Conrad Murray's** bail request, forcing him to remain in jail while he appeals his four-year sentence for the involuntary manslaughter of **Michael Jackson**.

Blur, New Order to close out 2012 Olympics

Blur, New Order and the **Specials** will play the August 12th closing ceremony for the 2012 Olympics in London, making them the latest U.K. acts to sign on for Olympics-related music gigs. **Underworld** have been tapped as the Games' opening-ceremony musical directors, and **Mark Ronson** produced the official Olympics theme song with **Katy B**.

Sabbath tour renamed 'Ozzy and Friends'

Black Sabbath have canceled all but one date of their European summer tour to allow guitarist **Tony Iommi** time to receive treatment for lymphoma. The band is still slated



Ozzy

to perform at the Download Festival on June 10th, but additional dates will be billed as **Ozzy and Friends** – featuring **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Geezer Butler** and guitarist **Zakk Wylde**. Drummer **Bill Ward** has refused to participate until presented with a "signable" contract.

TRIBUTE

MC5 Bassist Michael Davis, Punk Pioneer, Dies at 68

MC5 BASSIST MICHAEL Davis, whose thunderous playing helped define the politically charged Detroit band's proto-punk attack on LPs including 1969's *Kick Out the Jams*, died of liver failure on February 17th in Chico, California. He was 68.

Davis befriended MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer after dropping out of college and joined the band in 1966. "Our original

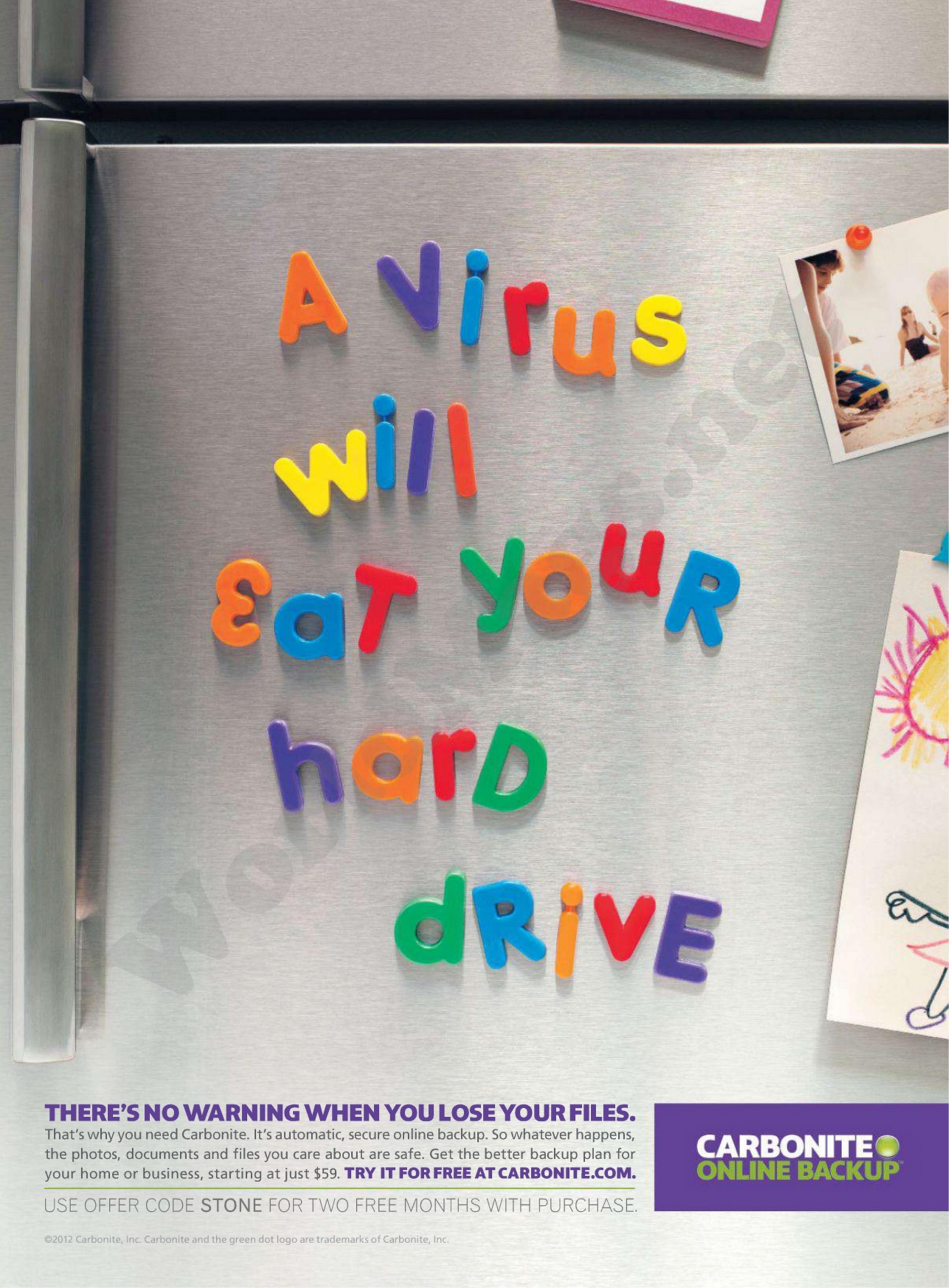


bass player was more of a roots player," says Kramer. "I wanted to go in a different direction, and Michael liked the idea of unorthodox music."

At first, the MC5 mostly played covers of acts, including the Rolling Stones, but they began writing their own songs and embracing left-wing politics under the influence of their activist manager, John Sinclair. The band signed with Elektra in

1968 and scored a cult hit with the influential *Kick Out the Jams*, but never found a mainstream audience.

Davis was kicked out of the band due to his drug use in early 1972; the MC5 split months later, and Davis focused on painting in subsequent decades. In 2003, he reunited with his surviving bandmates for a tour. "Michael was an idiosyncratic player – he leaped right to the post-conventional," adds Kramer. "He was ahead of his time in many ways." **ANDY GREENE**



A virus
will
eat your
hard
drive

THERE'S NO WARNING WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR FILES.

That's why you need Carbonite. It's automatic, secure online backup. So whatever happens, the photos, documents and files you care about are safe. Get the better backup plan for your home or business, starting at just \$59. **TRY IT FOR FREE AT CARBONITE.COM.**

USE OFFER CODE **STONE** FOR TWO FREE MONTHS WITH PURCHASE.

CARBONITE
ONLINE BACKUP

IN THE STUDIO

Norah Jones, Danger Mouse Craft Moody, 'Weird' LP

Singer mines heartbreak on collaboration with Gnarls Barkley studio ace

BACK IN 2009, NORAH Jones and Brian "Danger Mouse" Burton got together in the Gnarls Barkley producer's Los Angeles studio to begin work on a top-secret project. "Nobody from my label or management knew we were doing it," says the singer.

Album Little Broken Hearts
Due Out May 1st

"Brian said, 'I'd rather actually collaborate, and not just be a producer - let's go into the studio and see what happens.'"

The pair spent five days together in June '09, working on what would eventually become Jones' fifth solo album, *Little Broken Hearts* (due May 1st). "I'd never gone in with nothing and wrote songs from scratch, and I'd never played bass before on a record," she says. "I was out of my comfort zone - but I was comfortable because we're friends."

Adds Burton, "The best thing was having just the two of us on those first sessions, not a whole band. Norah had as many, if not more, great ideas than I did."

The sessions were fruitful, but Jones and Burton weren't quite satisfied. They spent the next two years working separately on other projects: Jones completed and released her fourth solo disc, *The Fall*, and made an album with her alt-country band, the Little Willies; Burton started Broken Bells with the Shins' James Mercer, logged studio time with U2 and produced the Black Keys' *El Camino*.

Last summer, the duo finally reconvened at Burton's studio to finish up *Little Broken Hearts*. Jones arrived with a handful of raw, emotionally charged new tunes she penned in the wake



DANGEROUS MINDS Jones' collaboration with producer Brian "Danger Mouse" Burton was nearly three years in the making.

of a harsh breakup with her fiction-writer boyfriend. "I always heard the old stories about how you write better songs when you go through some shit," she says with a laugh. "That sucks, but it's true!"

The album's sound ranges from experimental chamber

"There's a lot of hurt in there," says Jones. "It felt great to put that down on tape."

serenades to stark, electronic-embellished confessions. "It's obviously very different than anything Norah's ever done," Burton says. "I don't know what people will think - I hope they like it, and she doesn't lose a bunch of fans."

One of the boldest departures is "Take It Back," which features fuzzed-out guitars and spooky, distorted vocals. "I never knew how to get weird sounds," Jones says. "It was all about finding a balance be-

tween those effects and making sure my voice was clear and sounded like me."

She gets even darker on "Happy Pills," singing, "Time to throw this away/Wanna make sure that you never waste my time again," over hooky pop-rock chug. "It sounds happy," she says, "but the lyrics are evil and fucked up, which grounded it a little." On "4 Broken Hearts," she belts like a defiant Dusty Springfield while confronting a mutual infidelity: "We tried to be faithful but didn't get far."

In its own quiet way, *Little Broken Hearts* hews closer to heartbreak classics like Marvin Gaye's *Here, My Dear* than to anything in Jones' back catalog. "This time, I've been way less concerned with self-editing," Jones says. "I'm not sad, but there's a lot of hurt in there. And it felt great to say what I felt and put it down on tape. Doing that made me so happy! This album is all about saying things that needed to be said."

MATT DIEHL

STUDIO NOTES

Green Day hit the studio

Green Day spent Valentine's Day in Oakland laying down tracks for their first album since 2009's *21st Century Breakdown*. "Officially started recording the new record today," frontman **Billie Joe Armstrong** wrote on Twitter. "It's FUCK TIME!!!!" Songs in contention for the album may include "Wow, That's Loud," "Make-Out Party," "Carpe Diem" and other riff-driven rockers that the band previewed at a tiny club show in New York last fall.

Nas nears finish line on raw 10th album

The Queens MC is almost done with his first solo album since 2008's provocative untitled LP. "I'd say it's 89 percent done," Nas says. "We're just putting a little bit of icing on top." Last year's furious single "Nasty" is a hint of where he's heading this time. "When I listen back to the record, I'm loving what I'm hearing," adds Nas. "I feel like I'm just getting warm again. This is my time."

Bob Seger aiming for September release

Fresh off a hit-packed arena tour, Seger is getting back to work on his first studio set since 2006's *Face the Promise* - and he's taking inspiration from what he saw at this year's Grammys. "I went there to get stoked," he says. "I'm gonna fire up the writing pad tomorrow night." Adds Seger, "I'm setting myself a deadline of September 24th. Wish me luck!"

D'Angelo poised to end 12-year hiatus

More than a decade after his breakthrough 2000 LP, *Voodoo*, D'Angelo is finally close to completing his third album. "We started working on it right after Voodoo tour, so around 2001," producer **Russell El-**

evado recently said. "Since that time, he's been in and out of the studio." Many of the R&B singer's

new songs feature classic-rock influences. Added Elvado, "The Beatles are one of our blueprints. [There's] definitely gonna be soul, funk, rock...all mixed in there together."



Armstrong



Seger



D'Angelo



SHAKE IT UP™

View this ad through the **TIC TAC VIEWR** app.
To get the app, text "TICTAC" to 313131.



© Ferrero. Standard message/data rates apply. Only available on iOS and Android devices.

RS PLAYLIST

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW



1 SANTIGOLD "Disparate Youth" ▲
Four years after her debut blew our minds, Santigold is finally back. Yes! Get a sneak peek at her new *Master of My Make Believe* (due out May 1st) with this party-starting blast of a single - which combines dub wobble, post-punk skronk and pop hooks into a 100 percent hands-in-the-air jam.



3 ODD FUTURE "Rella" video
Ever wondered what it would be like if Odd Future rolled into your suburb? Check this off-the-chain clip for their doomy new tune - which features a centaur Tyler, the Creator and a robot with a laser dick going haywire all over your cul-de-sac.

4 USHER "Climax"
Diplo - producer/DJ/cool-est dude on Earth - helps Usher cruise into 2012 with this state-of-the-art new single, surrounding the singer's falsetto pleas with chrome-bright bleeps and sighing orchestral accents. Sexxxxxxy.

5 THE TING TINGS "Soul Killing"
Remember back in 2008 how these guys were all up in that iTunes ad? Go back to that innocent age with this No Doubt-y reggae-pop jam, which pairs sunny vocals with a strangely funky squeaky-rocking-chair sample.



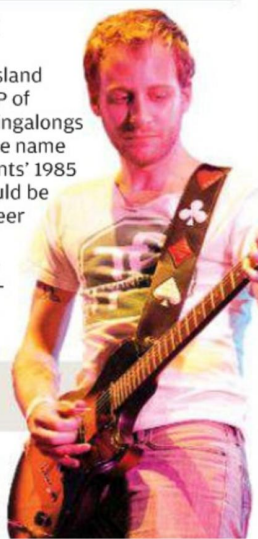
7 M. WARD "The First Time I Ran Away"
The first taste of singer-songwriter (and Zoëy Deschanel bro) M. Ward's forthcoming LP is a lovely little tune, featuring delicate acoustic fingerpicking and dreamy crooning that sounds more than a little like prime Paul Simon.

2 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN "Shackled and Drawn"
Watch out, Wall Street: Bruce is coming for you! "Gambling man rolls the dice, working man pays the bills/It's still fat and easy up on bankers' hill," he growls on this *Wrecking Ball* highlight - one of his angriest, most powerful tunes ever.



6 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT "Montauk"
After years of opera and other fancy music, Wainwright makes a triumphant return to pop with his new Mark Ronson-produced LP. A quiet highlight: this piano ballad for his baby daughter.

8 DEER TICK Tim
The Rhode Island crew's wild new EP of ragged, last-call singalongs has the exact same name as the Replacements' 1985 classic. Which would be a ballsy move if Deer Tick weren't such deserving heirs to their heroes' beer-drenched mantle. Cheers, boys!



IN THE NEWS

George Harrison guitar app launches on iPad

A new iPad app gives Harrison fans an intimate look at his trove of instruments. The *Guitar Collection: George Harrison* lets users manipulate 360-degree images of his guitars, including his Rickenbacker 360/12 and his Day-Glo Fender Stratocaster - while listening to the music he created with each instrument. "I've learned to love this equipment through seeing my father play it," said Harrison's son, **Dhani**, who helped create the app. "I can play around with these things every day when I'm on the bus or in the car, and not have to worry about scratching them."



Harrison

Rihanna, Chris Brown team up for remixes

Three years after Brown was arrested for assaulting former girlfriend Rihanna, the singers have teamed up for remixes of each other's new singles. Rihanna added vocals to Brown's "Turn Up the Music," and Brown contributed verses to "Birthday Cake," from Rihanna's recently released *Talk a Piss*. The duo brushed off criticism over the collaboration on Twitter: "They can say whatever, I'm-a do whatever.... No pain is forever," wrote Rihanna, referencing lyrics from her 2009 single "Hard."

Beach Boys set 50th-anniversary tour dates

The Beach Boys have announced dates for their 50th-anniversary tour, adding 35 stops around gigs at the New Orleans Jazz fest and Bonnaroo. The trek kicks off April 24th in Arizona. "We're going to try and be inclusive of all eras of the Beach Boys' music," **Mike Love** tells *Rolling Stone*. "It's going to be incredible."



Love

Diddy to launch new cable music network

Sean "Diddy" Combs has partnered with Comcast to launch Revolt, a new cable music channel expected to debut in 2013. "I grew up watching BET, MTV, HBO and NBC, and I had a dream that one day I would get a chance to show my perspective," said Diddy. "This channel will give new artists an opportunity to get seen and heard."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SEAN THOMAS; ROBERT WHITAKER/GETTY IMAGES; BYRON PURVIS/ADMEDIA; T. TAN/BEIMAGES/REX USA; AUTUMN DE WILDE; NO CREDIT; TINA TYRELL

Hear It Now! Check out *Rolling Stone's* must-hear music picks at rollingstone.com/rsplaylist.

A SHOE, OR NOT A SHOE?

THAT IS THE QUESTION



THEY'RE NOT SHOES. THEY'RE SANDALS.

Our Sidewalk Surfers combine the year-round style and protection of a shoe with the natural comfort of a sandal. No springs, pumps, coils or airbags — just the unmatched comfort of our patented sandal construction. Once you try a pair, you'll never want to wear anything else again. Smile...Pass It On!



Sanuk.com

Kelly Clarkson

On Super Bowl jitters, rooting for Adele at the Grammys, and the greatness of Whitney Houston

By Austin Scaggs

KELLY CLARKSON IS used to getting backhanded compliments from her fans. "They say, 'You sound way better live than you do on your records!'" says the singer. "They mean it nicely, but it also pisses me off." But on her fifth album, *Stronger* – which spawned a Number One smash with the title song, "Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)" – Clarkson finally captured her fierce pop soprano on record. Audiences on her current U.S. tour, which runs through April, have responded by voting online to request new material like the R&B-tinged hit "Mr. Know It All." "Usually when you go to a show, you want the old stuff, right?" says Clarkson, checking in from a tour stop in Florida. "This time we're doing six or seven new songs a night because people are wanting them. That's pretty cool."

You did some amazing Otis and Marvin covers on *American Idol*. How did you get into soul music?

That's what I always gravitated to, for some reason, even as a child. My stepdad would wake me up at frickin' 6 a.m. playing Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, and my mom was into Three Dog Night and Linda Ronstadt. But I love Aretha and Otis and Bonnie Raitt – the heartfelt stuff. I hear so many singers that sound like vanilla vodka, like they've never had their hearts broken or ripped out. It kills me.

You've sparred with your label in the past. Is that all over now?

Brother, it's been a long road. It doesn't matter how many hits you write, every record is a battle. But my new label heads [at the recently reorganized RCA Records] are far more easy to work with. The fact that we all agreed on "Mr. Know It All" and "Stronger" – I'm baffled. It's like hell has frozen over and pigs are flying. It's so weird. **How was singing the national anthem at the Super Bowl?**

I never want to do that again. I don't generally get nervous, just because I know that

sometimes I'm gonna fuck up. I'm human. But, man, at the Super Bowl everybody was freaking out, telling me how many people are watching. They made me so nervous! I had a teleprompter with the lyrics right in front of me, but they were always a line behind. It was not fun. That's what I got for trying to cheat.

How did that compare to singing "Ave Maria" for the pope in 2008?

I was way more nervous at the Super Bowl. I wasn't really that nervous about singing to the pope – the problem there was that I was told that it was disrespectful to turn your back on the bishops. But I was surrounded by them! I was like, "Do you want me to turn circles the entire time?"

Speaking of religion, isn't it sacrilegious that you're a mentor on this season of *The Voice*?

People have given me such a hard time. I came from a singing show, so I like singing shows, obviously. What was the big shocker there? I don't know why people get all bent out of shape.

Your recent comments in support of Ron Paul ruffled feathers too.

Oh, my gosh! I'm hanging out with my brother and my little niece, playing Barbies, and Ron Paul comes on TV. He doesn't BS around anything. I was like, "This dude is refreshing." All I did was tweet what I thought, and people went crazy! All of a sudden, people were like, "You hate gay people" – what? I didn't even endorse him! All I said was that I like him. I voted for Barack, so it's not even like I'm a hardcore Republican.

Are you a big Whitney Houston fan?

Are you frickin' kidding me? I know every Whitney Houston song. I wanted to cover one of her songs at our shows as a tribute, but it's hard to cover her!

Were you jealous when Adele won all her Grammys?

No way! Even when the Civil Wars beat me in my category [Best Country Duo/Group Performance], I was happy. As long as I don't get beat by someone who sucks. And I voted for Adele in all the categories where she won – I've been a fan of hers since "Chasing Pavements," and people have given her so much crap about her weight. She's beautiful, by the way. If I could roll over and look like that... She's freakin' hot. **2**



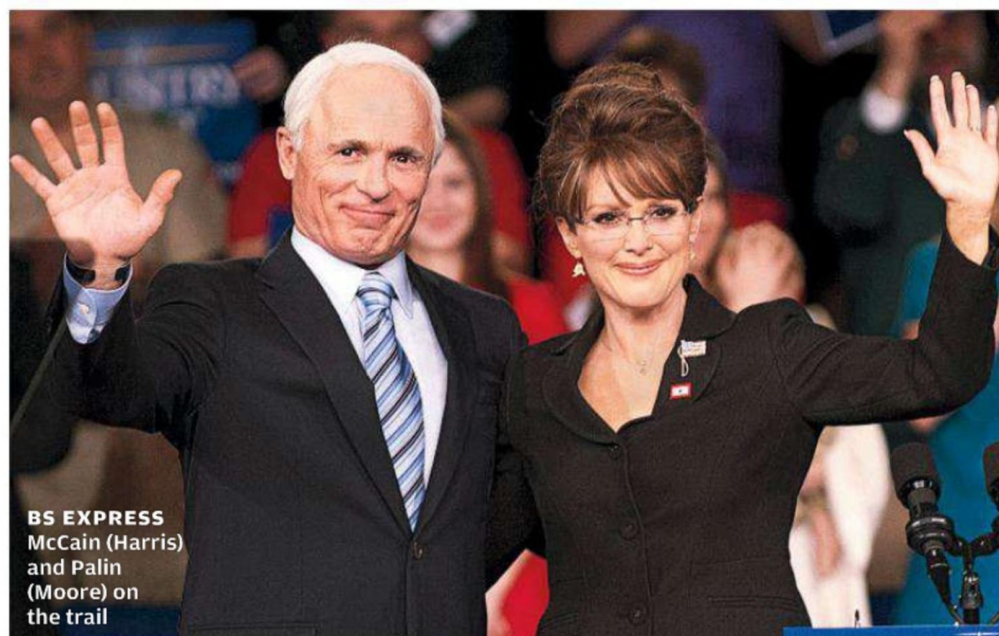
is for versatile.

A white Toyota Camry is shown from a side profile, parked on a light-colored floor. The trunk is open, and a large, colorful assortment of items is spilling out. These items include a large bunch of balloons in shades of purple, pink, and orange; several suitcases in red, orange, and brown; a green topiary garden with a small ladder and a chainsaw; a large, fluffy dog; a young girl in a pink dress and red cape; a person playing a cello; and a picnic spread with food and a basket. The scene is set against a plain, light-colored background, emphasizing the car's ability to hold a wide variety of objects.

Options shown. Cargo and load capacity limited by weight and distribution. ©2011 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.



TOYOTA
moving forward



BS EXPRESS
McCain (Harris)
and Palin
(Moore) on
the trail

The Amateur

'Game Change' exposes Sarah Palin as the first 'Real Housewife' candidate in history, but she wouldn't be the last By Rob Sheffield

THERE'S A GREAT SCENE toward the end of HBO's *Game Change*, the controversial and shamelessly entertaining movie about Sarah Palin and the 2008 presidential campaign, starring Julianne

Game Change
March 10th, 9 p.m., HBO

Moore as the Wasilla Windbag. A few of John McCain's advisers hit the hotel bar on Election Eve, drowning their sorrows, cursing the day Palin came on board to capsize the campaign. Woody Harrelson, as McCain's top strategist, Steve Schmidt, complains that it wasn't a campaign at all – it was just a “reality show.”

Hey, welcome to 1992, Einstein. The subtext of *Game Change* is not simply that political campaigns have turned into reality shows – it's that they've turned into crappy reality shows. Palin didn't blow it as a national politician because she was too reality-TV; she wasn't reality-TV enough. She didn't have the stamina, the patience or the adaptability, which means her skills were strictly amateur-level. If she

had a little more of Khloe Kardashian's will to power, she might have stood a chance.

Game Change begins in the summer of 2008, with McCain's team trying to get a grip on Barack Obama's popularity. “If he heals a sick baby,” says McCain, played by Ed Harris, “we're really fucked.” Schmidt fumes, “This man is on the cover of every news magazine – he's on the cover of every *entertainment* magazine.” (Hey, don't look at us, pal. We put Howard Dean on the cover too.)

Once McCain's people decide they need an Obama of their own, they find Palin on YouTube – the same way Journey found their new lead singer – pluck her from obscurity and whisk her onto the national stage, like so many overnight TV sensations before her. At first, the McCain staffers are in awe of their new find, raving that she's “the greatest actress in American politics.” When they learn she's clueless about government and foreign policy (upon being informed Germany was our enemy in WWII, she enthuses, “Flipping awesome!”), they rejigger their strategy to fit what they see as her strengths. “She's a great actress, right?”

Schmidt says. “Why don't we just give her some lines?”

As long as the camera is on her, she's on – as they say, “She's a red-light performer.” But as the campaign wears on, and her intellectual flaws are exposed, she falls into a catatonic daze. It turns out the day-to-day strain of a campaign is not the right kind of gig for a red-light performer, since politicians have to be on even when the camera goes off. Moore's performance

becomes riveting as Palin unravels into phone-throwing fits and silent stupors. The meltdown scenes are harrowing: When she falls apart trying to prepare for her debates, and she just sits there twitching helplessly, it's like watching Moore in the *Boogie Nights* cocaine-binge scene where Rollergirl asks her to be her mother.

Having seemingly learned nothing from the Palin fiasco, the Republicans have turned the 2012 campaign into the same loser reality-TV show. Donald Trump, Herman Cain and all those debates became an extended goof of *Survivor* starring a wacky bunch of contestants who keep pissing one another off. And even if they realize they're crippling themselves with these TV gaffes, they keep showing up, because they can't walk away from a camera.

Palin has dismissed *Game Change*, and said she isn't going to watch. That's not how politicians talk. That's not how reality-TV stars talk, either. That's the grumbling of an amateur, somebody like Kim Kardashian's ex-husband's mom. Reality TV has gotten a lot more sophisticated in the past four years – but as this crop of Republican candidates keep showing us, politicians haven't. They didn't learn a thing by watching Palin bomb. You can see why people mean it as an insult when they refer to Palin as a reality-TV star. But calling her a reality star is giving her a compliment she hasn't earned.

WATCH LIST

By Jupiter's Cock!

Spartacus: Vengeance
Fridays, 10 p.m., Starz

Spartacus is back, and gorier than ever – it does for blood-stained tunics what *Downton Abbey* does for starched collars and corsets. The Starz gladiator extravaganza returns with a mix of ribald wordplay, breasts and blood. The titular hero seldom meets a head he doesn't slice off, in his quest to lead a revolution of gladiators, slaves and whores. It's a self-contained world, where every warrior's favorite oath is “By Jupiter's cock!” *Vengeance* is a slightly retooled version of *Spartacus: Blood and*



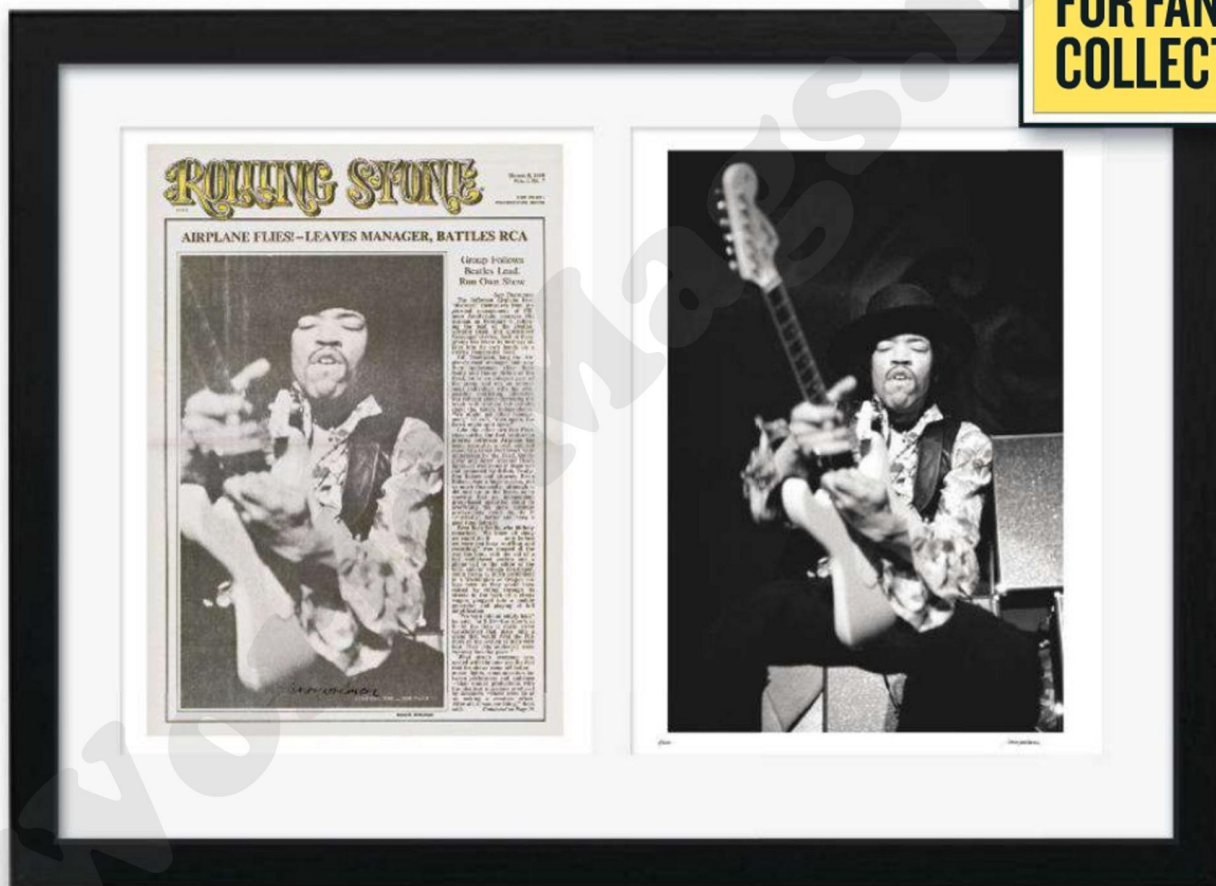
McIntyre unleashes the ultraviolence.

Sand, which lost its star, Andy Whitfield, to cancer. But Liam McIntyre gamely steps into his role. Nothing slows down the story, where revenge rules all the other passions. Although lust runs a strong second.

R.S.

Collect Rolling Stone Covers *with the* Original Photographs

PERFECT GIFT
FOR FANS AND
COLLECTORS



For the first time, you can own reprints of the iconic magazine covers, paired with fine art prints of the photographs.

LIMITED EDITION OF 200 EACH AND
HAND-SIGNED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHER.



rockpaperphoto.com/rollingstone

"I drank a ton last night so I could have liquor bloat for Fat Tuesday." —Jared Followill

Random Notes

Axl's Private Party

Axl Rose and his hired Guns capped a three-night club run in New York with an invitation-only Fashion Week gig at Hiro Ballroom, where Chelsea Clinton, Jimmy Fallon, Justin Timberlake and Matt Damon snake-shaked to GN'R gems like "Estranged," "Don't Cry" and "You're Crazy." Said Axl, who recently turned 50, "This is like the old days. I can't hear shit. And you people are great."



GN'R fans
Timberlake and
Damon

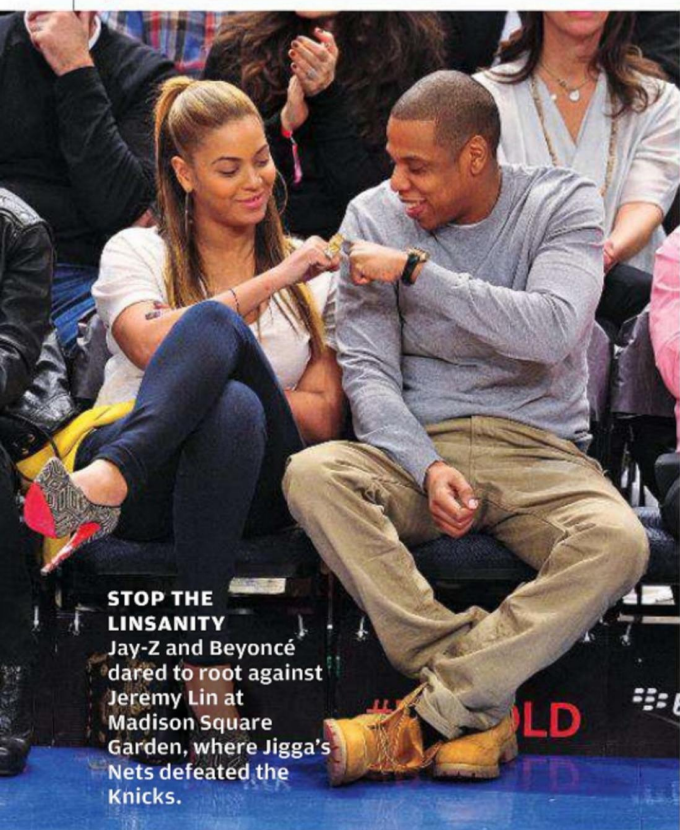


Nobody
accessorizes
— or rocks a
neon-orange
Fu Manchu
— like Axl.



RUNNING MAN

Bassist and
marathoner
Flea showed
some funky
footwork on
a jog in Los
Angeles.



STOP THE LINSANITY

Jay-Z and Beyoncé
dared to root against
Jeremy Lin at
Madison Square
Garden, where Jigga's
Nets defeated the
Knicks.



FRIENDLY AFFAIR

Kid Rock and Sly Stone
kicked it at Rock's
charity gig in Malibu.

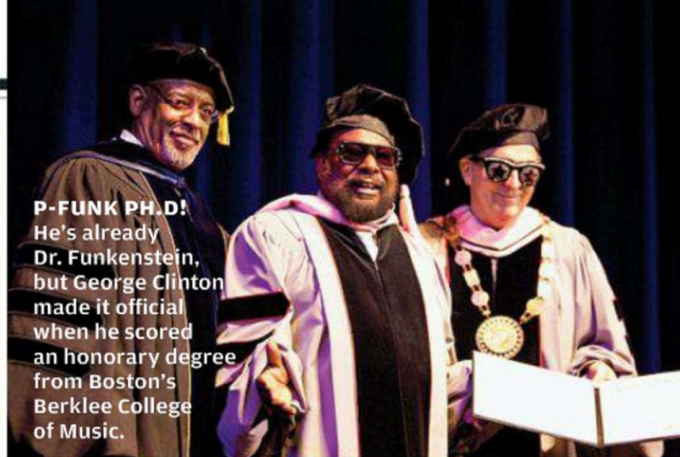


MRS. SANDMAN

M.I.A. took a break from flipping
off cameras to build sand castles
in the Grenadines with her three-
year-old son, Ikhyd.



SOUL TRAIN
Budget-conscious diva Rihanna rode the London Underground's Jubilee line.



P-FUNK PH.D!
He's already Dr. Funkenstein, but George Clinton made it official when he scored an honorary degree from Boston's Berklee College of Music.



ROC BOY
Madonna's embarrassed son, Rocco, 11, tried to resist a cuddle from the Queen of Pop in New York.



Bruce and Paul earned a Grammy for Best Rock Embrace.



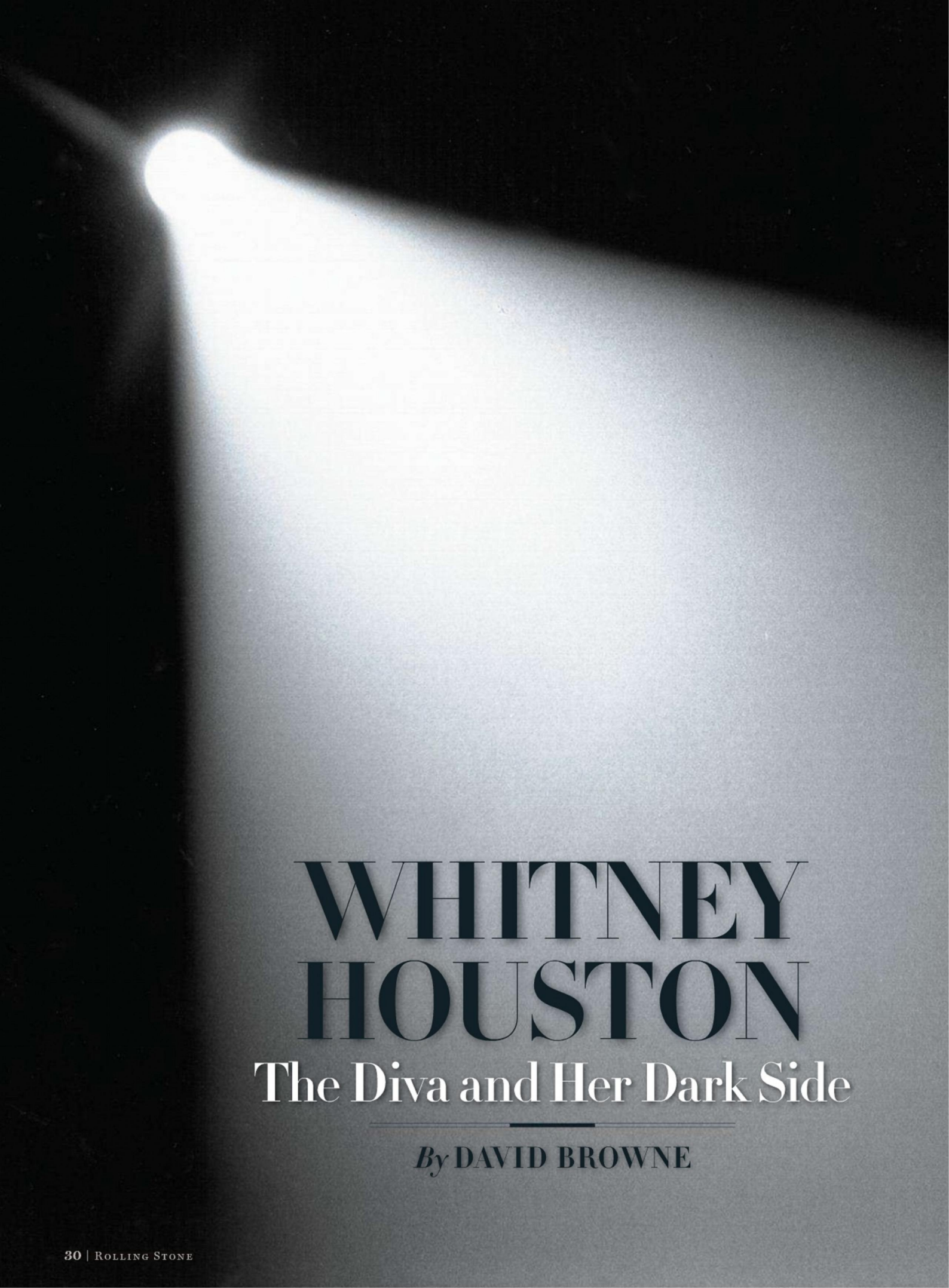
Gaga went goo-goo for Macca.

Sir Paul Takes the Grammys

He's already one of the world's best singers and songwriters, but at this year's Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, Paul McCartney proved he's also a brilliant schmoozer. McCartney cheek-kissed Adele, giggled with Lady Gaga and bro'ed down with Bruce Springsteen behind the scenes.

Onstage, he was no less the charmer, singing a timely "Valentine" ode to wife Nancy Shevell and leading Springsteen, Dave Grohl and Joe Walsh on an awesome voyage through Abbey Road.





WHITNEY HOUSTON

The Diva and Her Dark Side

By DAVID BROWNE



Houston at
London's
Wembley
Arena in 1988

EARLY IN THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 7TH, Whitney Houston was ready to reclaim her place in music. Wearing black pants and a matching black sweater, she rolled into producer Harvey Mason Jr.'s North Hollywood studio with her sister-in-law and manager Patricia Houston. Whitney had just finished filming a role in an upcoming movie, *Sparkle*, and tonight she would lay down her part for a song on its soundtrack, "Celebrate," a duet with co-star Jordin Sparks written by R. Kelly. ¶ After singing a few warm-up scales, Houston hit the mic. Her voice was no longer the brawny, octave-

spanning instrument heard on her platinum hits of the Eighties and Nineties. She'd already spent several days with Mason working on her part, and still wasn't finished. "Whitney had days when she sounded amazing; she had days when she sounded decent; and she had days when she sounded not so great," Mason says. "But she was really working to improve." This session was better than most; after she'd taken her last pass, Houston excitedly asked Mason, "You got it, you got it?" When Mason told her he did, she exclaimed, "Now play it!" The two danced in front of the speakers as the booming party anthem shook the studio. For a short while, the troubles that had plagued Houston for more than a decade evaporated.

Sparkle, a remake of a 1976 music-business cautionary tale, would mark Houston's return to the big screen for the first time in 16 years; she was cast as the mother of a fledgling singer, played by Sparks. As a teenager, Houston had loved the original movie, which followed an R&B trio—one member winds up dead from an overdose, while another becomes a star. "I would go every Saturday for, like, four months straight, and I'd watch the matinee to evening show," Houston told a group of reporters in November. "It was a positive reinforcement for young African-American women, that anyone who wants to can pursue their dream or their desires."

Aretha Franklin, a longtime family friend, had attended a preview of the remake and was relieved at what she saw. "Like a lot of artists, Whitney lost her way, but she found it again," Franklin says. "I thought she looked absolutely stunning in the movie. She looked fresh and healthy and all of that."

But in the days that followed the session with Mason, Houston's demons rose up again. She was spotted at Hollywood nightspots acting spacey and probably

drunk. She made a surprise appearance at a press conference hosted by her mentor, Clive Davis, smelling of cigarettes and alcohol. On Saturday, February 11th, Houston was planning to attend Davis' annual pre-Grammy party at the Beverly Hilton, where she was also staying. She'd flown in from her home in Alpharetta, Georgia, for the party and to work on the *Sparkle* songs. But later that afternoon, after she'd spent an inordinate amount of time in the bathroom of her fourth-floor room, members of her entourage burst in to find her submerged in her bathtub. Houston was declared dead at age 48. At press time, the cause of death was still undetermined, since toxicology reports haven't yet been released, but Beverly Hills detectives announced that a small amount of prescription drugs, which reportedly included Xanax, were discovered in her room.

Diligent professional one moment, wild child the next: Those were the opposing sides of Houston in her last days—and, it turns out, much of her life. Blessed with a peerless combination of bravura lung power, model-perfect looks, and an image that was both warm and regal, Houston was that pop rarity: a genuine crossover star, juggling music and film, audiences young and old, black and white. "Because

of her cousin Dionne [Warwick], she understood all those pretty-ass melodies from Burt Bacharach," says Narada Michael Walden, one of Houston's many producers. "But because she was young and from the era of Michael Jackson, Prince and Madonna, she had soul in her too—those rhythms. She had both sides. Plus, she was so damn gorgeous. You couldn't say no to her."

But after she peaked with her 1991 version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and 1992's *The Bodyguard*, her fans watched as, year by year, Houston's demons were revealed to the world: Her voice grew huskier, her looks hardened. Her records, when they appeared, didn't sell as well as they once had; her live performances revealed a performer physically and vocally rusty.

People who worked with her still find it hard to comprehend her dark side. "A lot of us talked about that, and no one could come up with an answer," says Gerry Griffith, the A&R man who brought Houston to Davis' attention around 1982. "Where is that rebellion coming from? It didn't come out for a while." When it did, it came out in force, nearly destroying her personal life, career and music.

FROM THE START, WHITNEY Houston was a child of both the church and the charts. Her mother, Cissy, was a Newark, New Jersey-born soprano powerhouse who sang backup on classic records by Franklin ("Ain't No Way," "Chain of Fools") and Van Morrison ("Brown Eyed Girl"), and toured with Elvis Presley (when she was a member of the Sweet Inspirations). Her cousin Warwick had crossed over to pop in the Sixties and Seventies with hits like "Walk On By" and "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?" Whitney, born in 1963, inherited her voice from her mother, and her elegant good looks and strong will from her father, John Houston, who worked variously as a truck driver and for the city of Newark, and who would later manage his daughter's career.

When Whitney was four, her parents moved her and her two brothers to suburban East Orange, New Jersey, where many black families relocated after the Newark riots. Houston was a shy kid; her grade-school principal recalls Houston standing in line, tightly holding her classmates' hands, her head down. When Houston's godmother, singer Darlene Love, would stay at the family's home while on tour, she shared a bed with "Nippy," as Whitney was called. "I was pregnant at the time and she'd go, 'What do you want, what do you want?'" Love recalls. "There was a store on the corner where she'd run down the street and buy fruit for me. So charming from Day One."

By the time Houston started high school at Mount Saint Dominic Academy, an all-

"A LOT OF US TALKED ABOUT IT: 'WHERE WAS THIS REBELLION COMING FROM?'" SAYS HER A&R MAN, GERRY GRIFFITH. "NO ONE COULD COME UP WITH AN ANSWER."

Contributing editor DAVID BROWNE chronicled the first year of "Late Night With David Letterman" in RS 1140.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: DAVID CORIO/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BETTE MARSHALL/GETTY IMAGES, 2: EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES, 2: NANCY KASZEMAN/ZUMA PRESS



5

Becoming Whitney

(1) As a teen in East Orange, New Jersey, Whitney Houston idolized her cousin, singer Dionne Warwick (picture on wall at left), and her gospel-powerhouse mother, Cissy (poster at right). (2) By the early Eighties, she was singing backup for Cissy (left). (3) With her professional mentor, Clive Davis, on the day she signed to Arista in 1983. Davis and Houston were close for the rest of her life. (4) Houston in 1987, around the time that "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" became her fourth Number One smash. (5) Houston brought her daughter, Bobbi Kristina, to a 2009 TV performance promoting her last album, *I Look to You*.

girls school in nearby Caldwell, she'd become more popular; it didn't hurt that the Houstons had one of the few pools in the neighborhood. She blossomed into a lanky, beautiful girl with a wide smile. A local friend, Richard Gregory, took her to her prom, but only after talking her into it – she wasn't a heavy dater. It was her voice that caught everyone's attention. Cissy was the musical director of Newark's New Hope Baptist Church, one of the oldest black churches in the country; Whitney joined the choir when she was 11. "When I used to watch my mother sing in church, that feeling, that soul, that thing – it's like electricity rolling through you," Houston told *ROLLING STONE* in 1993. "If you have ever been in a Baptist church, when the Holy Spirit starts to roll and people start to really feel what they're doing, it's incredible. That's what I wanted."

Houston was exposed to more than gospel. "Cissy brought her to one of my recording sessions," Franklin recalls of their first meeting. "She was around nine or 10. I think Cissy had instructed her to be very quiet because she didn't say too much after that. She was just very quiet and very attentive." By the late Seventies, Cissy's solo career was in middling shape, and she tried cutting disco records. During a session for disco producer Michael Zager, one of the backup singers called in sick. When Cissy suggested her 14-year-old daughter fill in, Zager thought Cissy was joking. "Nippy" showed up wearing her white-and-blue school uniform and flawlessly sang the parts that Zager taught her. "I almost fell out of my chair," Zager recalls. Houston was so impressive that Zager gave her a prominent part on his disco hit "Life's a Party."

Her few stabs at rebellion amounted to wearing different-colored socks to her Catholic school. When Whitney accompanied her mother to recording studios, Cissy would remind her daughter why they were there. During one session with Zager, Whitney began cracking jokes. "Everyone was laughing," Zager says. "After an hour, Cissy yelled at Whitney, 'Get it together and start recording!' Cissy was all business."

The Houstons were in no hurry to have Whitney turn pro; Cissy kept her away from a record deal until she finished high school. Still, she began a career as a backup singer on albums like Chaka Khan's *Naughty*, and word of her raw, emerging talent spread fast. Houston also began a teen-modeling career, after a rep from an agency spotted her on the street near Carnegie Hall; before long, Houston was

posing for photos in bathing suits, preppy pleated skirts, and ice-skating outfits in magazines like *YM* and *Seventeen*.

During now-legendary shows at clubs like Sweetwater's, Cissy would often give a solo spot to her daughter, who sported a short Afro and would step out on covers of pop hits like Stephanie Mills' "Home." Whitney still very much deferred to Cissy, even during these first real moments in the spotlight. As Darlene Love recalls, "It was, 'OK, now, go on back in the background – this is Mommy's show. OK, go sit down now. Don't be trying to take over.'"

Arista A&R man Griffith heard about the younger Houston and made his way to Cissy's shows. "I had worked with Aretha, Minnie Riperton and Phoebe Snow," says Griffith. "So to see Whitney incorporate all of what they had at one time just



HIGH NOTE

Houston's soaring 1991 Super Bowl performance took the national anthem back to the pop charts.

freaked me out. She was a natural. It flowed so easily."

At Griffith's urging, his boss, Arista head Clive Davis, went to one of Houston's Manhattan showcases. "I was stunned when she did 'The Greatest Love of All,'" says Davis. "It was a song I'd commissioned 10 years earlier for a movie about the life of Muhammad Ali. Signing her was one of those no-brainers."

"Clive wasn't jumping crazy like when Marvin Gaye was free and he was calling every five seconds, 'Have you heard back?'" recalls Roy Lott, one of Davis' vice presidents. "This was still a new artist." But Davis was impressed enough to outmaneuver a competing label, Elektra, for her talents.

At the signing day in 1983, Houston, in a Levi's sweatshirt and jeans, was very much a work in progress. "Just a regular kid," recalls Lott. "Not squeaky-clean, but

a regular kid." Everyone knew Houston could sing, but expectations were modest for someone so young. Talent agent Ben Bernstein, hired to set up tours and personal appearances for Houston, says everyone would've been thrilled to sell a few hundred thousand albums.

HOUSTON ALREADY HAD A father, but in Davis, she found a protective and overly dotting show-business father figure. Known equally for his love of an across-the-board pop song and his considerable ego (later, industry execs would joke that Davis thought the CD was named after him), Davis had started as a lawyer for Columbia Records before becoming head of the label in 1967, where he signed Santana, Janis Joplin and many others. After being ousted in 1973, he launched his own company, Arista, in 1975.

The 50-year-old Davis, who was three decades older than Houston, treated his signing like newfound royalty. "He talked about Whitney the way he talked about Janis Joplin," says former Arista creative-services director Ken Levy. "He was from the world of great singers. He's enchanted by powerful voices." From the start, Davis was viewed fondly by Houston and her family; the fact that he'd worked with Warwick and Franklin at Arista played in his favor. They believed in Davis so much that they asked for a rare key-man clause in Whitney's contract: If Davis left Arista, she could leave as well.

Davis took his time with Houston: Over the course of more than two years, he and his team sifted through material, arranging showcases with her for songwriters and spending close to \$400,000 on the album, a huge sum. More than the heads of most labels, Davis approved all the song choices. "Clive would gather material and send her a cassette of songs," says Lott. "And 95 percent of the time she would say, 'That sounds great.'"

Houston seemed happy to let Davis take control, since she had crossover dreams herself. "She was always looking to impact as many people as possible," says Lott. "She wanted to be a major artist." She began wearing wigs onstage and in videos – her choice, according to Lott.

During those early days, Houston enchanted everyone who encountered her. After the L.A. session for "Saving All My Love for You," "we were all fawning over her," recalls pianist Robbie Buchanan. "Nathan East, who was playing bass, asked her to marry him. She just blushed." At the session for "How Will I Know," producer

Walden remembers the skinny Houston walking into a New York studio with Cissy and nailing the vocals. "When it was done, she leaned back in the chair in the control room like an old veteran," says Walden. "She loved her voice."

Her debut album, *Whitney Houston*, released in March 1985, was a textbook crossover success. Arista released "You Give Good Love" to R&B stations. When it caught on, three other singles followed: "Saving All My Love for You," "How Will I Know" and "The Greatest Love of All." All hit Number One on the pop charts.

"Gospel was the basis of her gift," Griffith says. "You put pop on top of it, and boom."

AS HOUSTON'S SECOND album got under way, the pressure was on. Houston was developing signs of the forcefulness she'd come to exhibit later. This time, the same musicians who worked on her debut rarely saw her. "She got more assertive," says keyboardist Preston Glass. "On the first album, she was very gracious and spent time talking with us. On the second album, when she came in to do her vocals, she said, 'I don't want anyone around except the producer and engineer.' Later I'd have to ask Narada, 'How'd it go?'"

Walden, who did most of the tracks on *Whitney*, noticed a change in Houston as well. "After a first album, most acts have a sophomore jinx, and I said to her, 'Are you nervous?'" Walden says. "She said, 'No. If they loved me the first time, they'll love me now.' I was really taken aback by her confidence. But she was right."

Whitney, released in 1987, repeated the first album's formula of bouncy pop R&B ("So Emotional," "I Wanna Dance With Somebody [Who Loves Me]") and mass-appeal ballads ("Didn't We Almost Have It All," "Where Do Broken Hearts Go") – all four of which went to Number One on the pop charts. Men were attracted to her, and young women related to her mix of heartbreak and empowerment. "I first saw her in the 'I Wanna Dance With Somebody' video," says Christina Aguilera. "I was instantly drawn. She represented a female who was strong and had a strong voice, and that appealed to me as a young girl."

Some of the pressures of being America's new pop princess began to chafe. Off-stage, she would sneak away and smoke cigarettes. And she expressed a desire to branch out musically. "She was smarter than people took her for," says Steven Saporita, executive producer of some of her early videos. "She wanted to discover her gospel roots early on, and more themed music. At that time, Linda Ronstadt had done a Mexican record, and I remember we talked about it and how interesting it was."

Some of this filtered up to Davis: "After the second album, she came to me and said, 'Everyone's telling me I should write songs. Is this wise?'" he recalls. "She saw that Madonna and Janet Jackson were co-writing. I said, 'Look, you're from the tradition of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Barbra Streisand and Frank Sinatra, whose genius is in their voice and the meaning they find in songs.'"

A turning point seemed to arrive in 1989, when Houston was nominated for Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Single by a Female at that year's *Soul Train* Awards. Seated up front, Davis and Houston listened as the announcement of her name was greeted with scattered boos. The two looked at each other with baffled expressions. Crossover success had come at a price: For critics in the African-American community, Houston – or, as some called her, "Whitey Houston" – wasn't black

"SHE WOULD LOOK AT US AND SAY, 'WHAT DO THEY MEAN I'M NOT BLACK ENOUGH?' SAYS DON IENNER. 'THAT MIGHT HAVE HAUNTED HER THE REST OF HER LIFE.'"

enough. The criticisms seem silly now, but at the time they stung deeply. "She would look at us and say, 'What do they mean I'm not black enough? I've been in the church my whole life,'" recalls Don Ienner, who had been general manager of Arista. "It was horrible and undeserved. That might have haunted her the rest of her life."

Houston and Davis sought to make her image and her sound more soulful on her third album, *I'm Your Baby Tonight*, using producers like LA Reid and Babyface. "We shot the cover under the Brooklyn Bridge with her on a motorcycle," says Levy. To everyone's surprise, she even rode the bike around the set of the shoot. "Privately, she was rebellious," says a source who worked with her at the time. "She was, 'Oh, yeah? I'm so much cooler than people think.' But she couldn't really say that. It used to flip her out when the urban world would get in

her face and say she sang like a white girl. The next time I saw her, she started talking a little more street." That side of Houston became more prominent, thanks to a new man in her life.

THE 1989 "SOUL TRAIN" Awards shook Houston's world in another way. That night, Houston met Bobby Brown. Raised in the projects of Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, Brown, then only 20, was a star himself, having scored hits as a member of New Edition. His multimillion-selling 1988 solo album, *Don't Be Cruel*, established him as the king of new-jack swing, and he was a hell-raiser in other ways – he had already fathered three kids with two women.

As Houston later told RS, Brown was initially brusque toward her: "He was hot, he was on fire. I and some friends of mine were sitting behind him. I was hugging them, we were laughing, and I kept hitting Bobby in the back of the head.... I leaned over and said, 'Bobby, I'm so sorry.' And he turned around and looked at me like, 'Yeah, well, just don't let it happen again.' And I was like, 'Ooooooh, this guy doesn't like me.' Well, I always get curious when somebody doesn't like me."

Eventually, it was Brown who asked Houston out; the two became a couple almost immediately. Houston turned down his first marriage proposal. She told RS, "The first time he asked me to marry him, I said, 'Forget about it, no way. It's just not in my plans.' [But] after a year or so, I fell in love with Bobby." They married in 1992.

To many, the couple were a strange fit. But Houston and Brown, as one of their later duets would say, had something in common: "When you love, you love," Houston told RS. "You know, Bobby and I basically come from the same place. Bobby comes from Boston, out of the projects. I come from Newark, out of the projects. Bobby has two very strong parents, I have two very strong parents." She later told Oprah Winfrey they were in "crazy love" at the time and had sex constantly.

Her marriage to Brown worked on other fronts; she'd long been attracted to bad boys, and had briefly dated Eddie Murphy. But rumors swirled that Houston was in a relationship with Robyn Crawford, a female friend from her teen years who worked as Houston's assistant on the road. Houston denied the rumors to RS: "Our relationship is that we're friends. We've been friends since we were kids. She now is my employee. I'm her employer. And we're still best of friends. I mean, what kind of a person am I – to be married and to have another life?" Crawford has never addressed the issue (and declined to speak with RS for this article).

Brown was later quoted saying the marriage was "doomed from the very begin-



MORE WHITNEY

Go to rollingstone.com for tributes from Aretha Franklin, Alicia Keys, Darlene Love and more.

ning. I think we got married for all the wrong reasons. Now, I realize Whitney had a different agenda than I did.... I believe her agenda was to clean up her image, while mine was to be loved and have children. The media was accusing her of having a bisexual relationship with her assistant. In Whitney's situation, the only solution was to get married and have kids. That would kill all speculation, whether it was true or not."

Houston ferociously defended her marriage to the press. "You see somebody, and you deal with their image. It's part of them, it's not the whole picture," she told RS. "I am not always in a sequined gown. I am nobody's angel. I can get down and dirty. I can get raunchy." Looking back on that time, Houston later told Winfrey, "[Brown] allowed me to be me."

Months after her marriage to Brown, Houston made her feature-film debut in *The Bodyguard*. By then, she'd been signed to Triad, a Hollywood talent agency. Watching the glamour-girl video for "Where Do Broken Hearts Go," several Arista executives joked, "There's the screen test." The moment arrived with *The Bodyguard*. Houston's role – a pop star being stalked by a psycho – wasn't a stretch, and expectations for the film were modest.

At the last minute, co-star Kevin Costner suggested Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You" to replace another song planned for the film. During the sessions for the song, producer David Foster saw Cissy Houston nearby: "She had no idea who I was, and she leaned over and said, 'You're witnessing greatness right now – I hope you know that.'" During the making of the *Bodyguard* soundtrack, Houston painstakingly worked on all the vocal parts in "I'm Every Woman" while visibly pregnant. Her daughter with Brown, Bobbi Kristina, was born in March 1993.

Promotion executives at Arista were initially worried that radio stations wouldn't play a song with a 45-second a cappella intro, but nothing could stop "I Will Always Love You," a massive hit that helped the soundtrack album sell at one point a million copies a week. By the late Nineties, according to Lott, Arista's annual gross profit had jumped from \$35 million, when Houston was first signed, to \$400 million, and Houston's record sales were largely credited with boosting that number.

After making two more movies – the female-empowerment film *Waiting to Exhale* and the comedy *The Preacher's Wife* – Houston returned to music full-time with 1998's *My Love Is Your Love*. By now, rumors that she and Brown were a tempestuous couple were rampant. The album had a tougher lyrical and musical stance, particularly on one of its standouts, "It's Not Right But It's Okay," about marital infidelity.

While working on the album with Houston, Wyclef Jean sensed her growing disenchantment with the expectations placed on her from all sides. "We talked about the church, because that's where it started," says Wyclef. "Once you can stand up and rock the church congregation, everything else is easy. But when you're a church person, people expect you to be a certain way."

ON THE DAY "MY LOVE IS YOUR Love" was released, Arista arranged a record-signing session at the Virgin Megastore in New York's Times Square. Lines began to form around the block. Only one thing was missing: Whitney Houston. After some frantic searching, her handlers finally found her – in the bookstore two levels down, reading a book of dirty sex jokes and letting loose with her full-throated laugh.

"SHE HAD LOST THE TOP RANGE OF HER VOICE," SAYS ARETHA FRANKLIN. "THE AUDIENCES WERE NOT KIND. BUT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, SHE GAVE IT HER VERY BEST."

Houston began acting out in other, more dramatic ways as word of her turbulent marriage and drug use with Brown made the rounds. On tour to promote the album, in 1999, she canceled five shows – including one in her hometown of Newark, 15 minutes before showtime. With a sold-out arena waiting, promoter John Scher was called backstage by Houston's father, John, who was then managing her. "He closed the door and looked at me very upset and said, 'She's not gonna make it,'" Scher recalls. "He was welling up with tears." The official reason was throat ailments, although Scher was never told the precise reason for the cancellations. "That was a tough tour," says Scher. "She had issues, and during that tour they sometimes got the best of her."

The girl who had once been so prompt to teen-modeling sessions was now showing up for a photo shoot six hours late. In 2000, Houston was fired from a planned Oscars performance after wobbly rehearsals in which she reportedly kept breaking into "The Way We Were" instead of the song the orchestra was playing, "Over the

Rainbow." That same year, she was a no-show at Davis' induction at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Performing at Michael Jackson's huge New York concert the following year, she looked distressingly thin.

"We were lacing our marijuana with base," Houston told Winfrey in 2009. "We were buying kilos and ounces and ounces.... I didn't think about the singing part anymore." Asked if she missed it, she replied, "No." When Houston opened her mouth to sing, out came a deeper, sometimes hoarser tone that seemed incapable of hitting the once-easy high notes. "The voice is a muscle, and you're always taught to go to the gym and warm up and stretch first before you lift hundred-pound weights," says Foster. "She was lifting hundred-pound weights right out of the gate and probably did some damage to her voice."

Just Whitney..., released in 2002, made her sound behind the curve, overtaken by younger R&B acts like Alicia Keys and Destiny's Child. The album came and went with minimal impact. The most depressing part of its promotion arrived when Houston was interviewed by Diane Sawyer. Asked whether she was doing hard drugs, Houston famously snapped, "First of all, let's get one thing straight. Crack is cheap. I make too much money to ever smoke crack. Let's get that straight. OK? We don't do crack. We don't do that. Crack is wack."

Houston's self-destructive behavior during this time still surprises those who worked with her. "There was zero indication there would ever be a problem," says Arista's Lott of her early days with the label. To make matters worse, Houston suffered two significant losses early in the decade: In 2000, Davis was ousted as head of Arista. In 2003, her father died after a battle with heart disease and diabetes; she entered rehab for the first time the following year. "If Clive hadn't left Arista and John hadn't passed away, it's possible things would have turned out differently," says a source.

For many fans and friends, her wild, disheveled appearances in Brown's 2005 reality show, *Being Bobby Brown*, were the dismaying capper. "We all watched that, and we were like, 'Oh, no,'" says songwriter Diane Warren. For years, Houston kept up a stoic front about Brown. "She was working hard to keep herself together, and I think she felt that if she admitted any feeling of sadness or weakness she would crumble," Crawford told *Esquire* in her only public statement on Houston's death. In 2006, after years of turmoil, Houston and Brown separated, officially divorcing the following year.

In 2007, Davis had risen to a new position overseeing the RCA Music Group, which included Arista, and he began plotting Houston's comeback by gathering

new material. Warren wrote one song, "I Didn't Know My Own Strength," expressly for Houston. "She got rid of Bobby Brown, she got help, she was strong," Warren says. "She was taking on the world again. When she heard it, she was like, 'You wrote my life story. You really got inside my heart.'" Warren watched Houston summon up her old vocal prowess at the sessions for the song. "Some people were saying, 'She's not gonna hit those notes anymore, she doesn't have it, her voice is damaged,'" Warren says. "But I sat there, and she nailed it."

I Look to You, the album that would be Houston's last, wasn't the triumphant comeback she and the label had hoped. Although it sold an impressive 300,000 copies in its first week, proving the loy-

would focus on singing onstage. McManus says Houston wasn't doing drugs or drinking on the tour, beyond some champagne in her dressing room, and in later shows, Houston did rise to the challenge. "She had lost the top range of her voice, and some of the audiences were not very kind," says Aretha Franklin. "But night after night, she stood there like a champion and gave her very best."

After she hit one especially strong note in the last Australian show, in Melbourne, she saucily told the audience, "See, I'm not so bad!" Promoter Scher says there were some "initial conversations" about a U.S. tour, but he never heard anything more. In the spring of 2011, Houston was once again in rehab for drugs and alcohol.



LOOK TO YOU Houston at a 2009 awards show, one of her final televised appearances.

alty of her fan base, it didn't generate any major hits, and newer pop acts like Lady Gaga and even Miley Cyrus far out-sold her.

In 2010, Houston launched a comeback tour of Australia, Asia and Europe, her first since 1999. But several shows into the tour, in Brisbane, Australia, she looked and sounded winded, had coughing fits and couldn't remember the names of her backup musicians. During "I Will Always Love You," she paused before the song's climactic power note to take a drink, then finally sang it softly. TV-news cameras caught fans walking out in disgust, and the reviews were brutal.

According to Australian promoter Andrew McManus, Houston and her team made a mistake having her sing and dance along with her dancers. "Whitney tried to dance, but by the third song she was duffed," McManus says. At a meeting the next day, it was decided that Houston

ON THE DETROIT SET OF *Sparkle* that day in November, Houston looked surprisingly radiant in all white, and sounded upbeat about the project and her future. "I don't think of it as like, as a comeback," she said. "Entertaining is in my family bloodline. I can't help it. It's natural."

"It was the happiest I've ever seen her working, and I'm not blowing smoke," says a friend, *Sparkle* producer Debra Martin Chase. "She hung out on the set. She was in the makeup trailer, on time, every day." Between filming, Houston attended a Detroit Lions game and popped into a studio to record a song with producer Harvey Mason. Houston had first sung that song in her Baptist church in Newark, and it would be the last track she would record alone.

According to reports, Houston fell off the wagon hard in the next couple of

months, hitting bottom with a confused and confusing two weeks in Los Angeles. On Thursday, February 2nd, she was seen wandering around by herself in the Hollywood nightclub Playhouse, drunk. A few days later, she met with Davis at his hotel bungalow to happily play him the *Sparkle* tracks; a few days later, she would make a bedraggled, uninvited appearance at his press conference for a project with Brandy and Monica.

That night, Houston and her entourage visited the club Tru Hollywood to cheer on a performance by Kelly Price. "Hold on, I'm gonna come up," Houston said, making her way from her table to the stage. She joined Price for a brief harmony on the hymn "Jesus Loves Me." In video footage shot that night, Houston sounds raspy. Backstage, Houston reportedly got into a tussle with former *X Factor* contestant Stacy Francis, which may have accounted for the bits of blood seen dripping down Houston's leg as she left the venue.

The night of Houston's death, Davis' annual party went on. The mood saw-sawed between somber and upbeat; one minute, Pitbull rocked his playful hit "Give Me Everything," and the next Davis was asking for a moment of silence in Houston's honor. "It was fucking weird," says Warren. "It was like this surreal, weird movie. People are talking and we're acting normal. But there's nothing normal about this, because four floors above us is Whitney Houston's body, not even cold. And I'm just sitting there, like, 'Can I have more wine, please?' I don't even drink."

At Houston's funeral on February 18th, the different aspects of her world once again converged: family members alongside record executives, Bobby Brown alongside childhood friends from her school and church. R. Kelly's moving, gospel-rooted take on "I Look to You" and performances by longtime friends BeBe and CeCe Winans contrasted with the sight of Brown storming out at the beginning of the service after feeling his posse had been dissed by being asked to sit in different parts of the church.

Producer Walden remembers the last few times he saw Houston, when she said she wanted to work with him again, this time on a remake of Brainstorm's obscure 1977 disco hit "Lovin' Is Really My Game." Walden cut the track and waited for Houston's schedule to open up so they could finish it. "Like Aretha, Whitney was always a threat," he says. "Like Michael Jackson, always a threat." But Houston never made it to Walden's studio in the Bay Area, nor was she able to sing one of its most telling lines: "Why not give me a chance/I swear I could prove it." **CS**

Additional reporting by Patrick Doyle, Monica Herrera, Dan Hyman and Simon Vozick-Levinson





EIGHT WILD
NIGHTS AND
BUSY DAYS IN
THE LIFE OF
SKRILLEX,
ELECTRONIC
MUSIC
SUPERSTAR
**BY NEIL
STRAUSS**

PHOTOGRAPH BY
FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3

AGE OF BASS



WANT TO GO TO A PARTY AT THE drummer from Muse's house?" Skrillex turns and asks. ♣ "Sure, why not." ♣ Fifteen minutes later, the car is full and navigating through the Hollywood Hills. Skrillex is in the back seat with his girlfriend, U.K. singer-songwriter Ellie Goulding, and the bartender from the hotel we just left. In the front seat is his tour manager, Road Hog, who's never been in the hills before. ♣ Ratatat's "Loud Pipes" is blasting through the car. Goulding and Road Hog are celebrating the moment, singing "the Hog is in the hills" to the instrumental track. Skrillex – nee Sonny Moore, known to close friends as

Skrilly and drunk friends as the Skril – is recording the jam on his iPhone. "This is going to be a track," he says excitedly as we park. Behind us, another carload of Skrillex's friends and crew unloads, and they all climb the hill, a mobile party. "Every night is like this," Skrillex says, bounding up to the house. "It's just totally random."

To spend a week with Skrillex is to learn to operate with no sleep, no silence and no pause. Even sitting still, he's moving – bouncing a leg up and down, tapping his fingers, looking around the room to take in everything going on. "He's inhuman," says his European booking agent, Simon Clarkson. "We gave him only one night off in Europe, and he calls and tells me he's putting together a party that night so he can DJ. He doesn't stop."

"I book myself tight," Skrillex confirms. "If I have any time off, I get antsy. I haven't taken a vacation in, like, eight years."

It is this tireless, jittery energy that's propelled Skrillex through an accelerated music career: He joined his first indie and punk bands when he was 12, toured the world fronting the Top 40 screamo band From First to Last at 16, and signed a solo deal with Atlantic Records the year he turned old enough to legally go to the clubs he'd been performing at. Now, at 24, he's performing 300 shows a year playing the most noncommercial music of his career – his tonally dirty, dynamically aggressive brand of bass-rattling dubstep – and to everyone's surprise, most of all his own, he has become the most exciting thing happening in popular music this moment. He won three Grammys in February. His Facebook page has been growing by 300,000 new fans a week. And everyone is blowing up his phone, from Dr. Dre to Kanye West, who took Skrillex to Vegas in his private jet, watched him DJ and then invited him to his hotel room to cut some tracks.

Contributing editor NEIL STRAUSS interviewed Howard Stern in RS 1127.

"I'm aware of what's going on, but at the same time there are parts I can't see with any perspective and don't know if I should," he says as we stand in a bedroom with Muse drummer Dominic Howard and four girls who are cavorting around the room, hungry for the pair's attention. "I mean, it's surreal when you step back and see everything going on. But when I'm in the moment, I don't realize it."

If Skrillex continues to have his way, he will never realize it. "I don't like being overexposed," he says. "I don't like being on covers. And I don't like people talking about me."

So in order to get a better understanding of who he is, here are a few scenes culled from eight days spent in a nonstop maelstrom of vodka, bass and late nights with pop's reluctant phenomenon.

SCENE ONE

Interior, car, Arts District, downtown Los Angeles – afternoon

"I GOTTA ASK MANAGEMENT TO TAKE down that sign," Skrillex says as we pull into a parking lot. The sign reads LOFTS STARTING IN THE HIGH 300'S.

He straps on a black backpack, which contains his entire studio (a MacBook and



"I'M NOT ANGRY, I'M HAPPY, DUDE," HE SAYS. "WELL, NOT THAT HAPPY. I'M ON A MISSION."

Dre Beats Pro headphones), and walks through the courtyard to the last unit. "I prefer the gloominess to the sun," he says as he opens the door. "I don't know why."

He walks inside and marvels at the bare loft. It is almost his – just as soon as he closes – along with the adjacent apartment. He then points out where he's going to build a studio, bar and lounge for his crew and friends to hang out in. "I haven't met any of my neighbors yet," he says. "But the walls are thick – and we've done screaming tests."

Standing on the edge of his metal stairwell, Skrillex looks like a skate-kid-turned-goth-turned-computer-hacker. He's a diminutive five feet five in all black – from the long, greasy undercut and thick-framed glasses to the G-Star pants and Converse trainers.

Four days earlier, he turned 24. These lofts are his birthday present to himself – and a surprising purchase, because he rarely spends any of the hundreds of thousands of dollars he earns from his shows on anything but creating new shows. He rarely even stays in the luxury hotel rooms promoters buy for him on the road, preferring instead to crash on the couches of friends.

Just 21 months ago, Skrillex was at an all-time low. A solo rock release on Atlantic Records had been delayed for months because of an obscure legal dispute; he had spent the entirety of his advance, was living off his credit card, and touring expenses and medical bills had left him about \$60,000 in debt. (When he was fronting From First to Last, he had an operation to remove nodes that had formed on his vocal cords.) Collection agents were calling his friends trying to track him down, unaware that he was basically homeless. Evicted from the warehouse he was squatting in, Skrillex was sleeping on his fellow DJ 12th Planet's couch in a downtown apartment, management office and studio known as the Compound.

While stuck in limbo, he decided to put out *My Name Is Skrillex*, an EP of electro-industrial-dubstep songs he'd been working on. But his label, which wasn't enthusiastic about the project to begin with, held it up for nine months trying to clear the samples. So Skrillex released it himself as a free download on his manager's website, promoting it on his MySpace page. The downloads came – hundreds of thousands of them, crashing the website countless times. Soon Deadmau5 was calling to put him on tour as an opening act and sign him to his label.

Skrillex remembers the moment when he realized that everything had changed: a year ago at a 3,600-ticket show in Austin. "At that time, it was the biggest show I'd ever sold out by myself," he recalls. "And I felt this new responsibility, like, 'Fuck, it's real now. I'm not just playing raves and clubs, but they're here to watch me.'"



The other vindicating moment came shortly afterward, when he paid off his debt in one day. Now, just a year later, Skrillex is turning money away, including \$200,000 to put his song "Kyoto" in a *G.I. Joe* movie and \$300,000 to do a promotion with a mobile-phone company. "The minute I start to overthink something, I know I shouldn't do it."

After Skrillex leaves his apartment, he heads to the hipster sausage restaurant Wurstküche for lunch. However, before he can get through the door, he is waylaid.

"Aren't you the guy who was looking at apartments?" a man in his thirties asks.

"I actually bought the one in the corner," Skrillex tells him.

"Then I'm your neighbor," the man says. "But don't worry: I'm quiet. I can't stand noisy neighbors."

Skrillex shifts his feet, and looks around uncomfortably.

"So," the man continues, "what do you do for work?"

SCENE TWO

Int. the Hollywood Palladium – late night

THE PALLADIUM IS PACKED WALL-TO-WALL with sweaty bodies, nearly every one

of them waiting hungrily for the drop. Skrillex stands onstage behind his MacBook, bringing down the levels on his remix of Benny Benassi's "Cinema" until the audience is singing a cappella, lighters raised in the air. Skrillex points an index finger high, as if to say, "Wait for it." The vocals echo, speed up, a voice orders "Drop the bass," and then, here it comes, a growling, woofer-shuddering *WAH-WAH* topped by screeching electro laser-fire. It is auditory, vibrational adrenaline. And the crowd explodes – the rave kids, the hard-rock kids, the hip-hop kids, the pop kids, all the tribes. Heads nod violently, hands flail in the air, girls are launched onto shoulders, a mosh pit erupts in the center of the dance floor.

Four minutes later, drenched in sweat, Skrillex bounds off the stage. After other shows this week, Skrillex has asked if the mixes sounded OK, if the parts where his overheated MacBook went dead hurt the vibe, if the crowd was into it. But tonight, he has no doubts.

"That was *the* show," he says. "One of those magical moments." He leads the way to his backstage dressing room, as his "dogs" (as he calls his inner circle) press in behind him. Something happened in the room tonight: From the front of the

house to the back of the balcony, everyone seemed to be in the mix and on the ride. "I don't think I'll be remembered in a big Michael Jackson, Led Zeppelin way," Skrillex says as he crosses the threshold of his dressing room, the small crowd spilling in behind him. "I think I'll be remembered in this way: by the people who were there, who can't capture or explain it." He pauses, and tries to clarify. "I'm not trying to brag or anything. It's not about me. It's about facilitating a good time for everyone."

And this is the secret of Skrillex: He's not an entertainer, but the host of a party that never stops. Not party in the sense of copious drug-taking – he's never done acid or Ecstasy because he's scared they will change his brain forever, and he's worried cocaine will come with a hangover that'll keep him from working (though a quart of vodka and diet Red Bull evidently doesn't). But party in the sense of constant good times, close friends and overstimulation.

Onstage, he's not so much performing as conducting an experience for every person in the room. Before the shows, he obsessively walks through each venue, making sure the audience can hear the high end from every spot and the lights don't blind anyone in the front. And during the shows, when the music doesn't get everyone dancing, he resorts to peer pressure. "Fuck your camera phones," he urged the crowd at Cinespace four nights earlier. "You can't party through a screen. Put your phones away!"

Most nights end with Skrillex DJ'ing at an afterparty, someone's house, a studio or a hotel room. It's as if he has an addiction to playing music, and needs to do it every night to prevent himself from feeling some sort of existential pain. It is a compulsion brought on not necessarily by a need to perform and be seen, but to bring people together and give them a good time.

"I'm transparent, man," he elaborates, lighting a cigarette. "What you see is what you get: I love music. I love hanging out with other people. I feel good when I make someone else happy. I want that energy in the room. You know, no one can be alone. That's why I DJ."

When pressed, he looks into his past to explain his need to make sure everyone's happy. "That's my mom's side," he finally says. "My mom was so loving, but annoyingly overhospitable. I'll have already eaten, like, 10 things, and my mom would be like, 'You want something else?' No, thanks. 'Do you want this?' No, I don't want anything else. 'OK, do you want this other thing, then?' No, no, I'm full. 'Do you want me to go to the store to get this one thing you like?' No, no more anything!"

"And I can get that way: If I get a couple drinks in me, that's when I start to reintroduce my friends over and over again."

Though many have placed Skrillex in the role of young angry white male – the

Kurt Cobain or Eminem of dance music – he says they’ve got the wrong guy. “I’m not angry,” he responds. “I’m happy, dude!”

He pauses, and reconsiders: “But not too happy. I’m on a mission.”

SCENE THREE

Int. Atlantic Records studio indoor parking lot, Hollywood – evening

AS SKRILLEX EXITS THE CAR, HE RUNS into Craig Kallman, Atlantic’s CEO. He pulls Skrillex aside and says he’s received a number of calls inquiring into the possibility of Skrillex doing a reality show.

“No,” Skrillex says firmly.

“What about one of the late-night talk shows? They’re all calling for you.”

“I don’t want to be everywhere,” Skrillex grumbles. “I barely want to be anywhere.”

So why is it that Skrillex avoids publicity? Because he wants to retain some semblance of a normal life? Or wants to remain relatively underground and credible?

All that may be true. But there is a much bigger reason: He’s worried you’ll judge him. Sure, he was touring the world in a rock band at 16, but that excitement was tempered by serious acne, which hamstrung his social life. “I used to hide my face with my hair all the time,” he admits. “That’s why I have long hair.”

But a year and a half ago, “I shaved the side of my head as a kind of a way to get over that,” he says defiantly. “I was like, ‘Fuck it, now I can’t hide my face! I’m not here to be pretty. I’m here to make music.’”

He goes quiet again. “But I won’t lie: That’s why I don’t like to be in the spotlight and in the press. I don’t like to see myself.”

SCENE FOUR

Ext. warehouse rooftop, downtown L.A. – afternoon

“SEE THAT BIG MOUNTAIN RIGHT there? Just below that, that’s where I grew up,” Skrillex says. He is standing on the roof of a Pillsbury dough factory that his friend Jeremy has converted into a woodworking warehouse and showroom. “That’s Mount Washington. It’s part of northeast L.A.”

His father was an insurance-claims investigator, whom Skrillex describes as “a politically incorrect dude who doesn’t give a fuck.” His mother was a housewife. They raised him with no punishment, total honesty (he even told them the first time he got drunk) and unconditional support for anything he wanted to do. This set in motion his somewhat quirky lifelong disgust with



SKRILLEX'S WORLD

Born Sonny Moore, Skrillex joined the screamo crew From First to Last when he was 16 (1). After releasing his first dance EP online, his friend Deadmau5 (2) brought him out on the road. With girlfriend Ellie Goulding (3).



rules of any sort and people who impose their beliefs on others.

When he was two, the family moved to San Francisco. By elementary school, Moore’s musical ambitions were firmly in place: He wanted to be Michael Jackson. “I would dress up like him every day,” he remembers. “And I’d perform for my parents all the time. I’d even go to school in a hat, a white shirt and black pants with high-water shoes.”

At 12, his family returned to L.A. and he became a skate punk, listening to the Dickies and the Subhumans, and smoking cigarettes. “One day, the teacher said, ‘You can’t smoke and go to school,’” Moore recalls, still indignant. “So I stood up and said, ‘I smoke. So I’ll go somewhere else.’ I walked out that day. I don’t think anyone should tell anyone what to do.”

That was the end of his formal schooling. In keeping with his parents’ philosophy of unconditional support, they sent him to the home of a tutor every day, where, along with roughly 10 other kids, he received an hourlong lesson and homework.

Around this time, Moore started playing with local bands, but none of them could keep pace with his workaholicism. “We were doing practice three times a week and I was pissed off,” Moore remembers. “I was like, ‘Only three times a week? Let’s play every day!’” He left his most serious early group, the pop-punk crew At Risk, when the parents of his bandmates began getting too meddlesome.

While trawling MySpace, looking for emo girls to sleep with and new bands to jam with, Moore met an older kid in Georgia named Matt Good, who had a screamo band called From First to Last. Moore sent Good some videos of himself playing guitar, and one day Good told him, “We kicked out our singer, and I’m gonna start singing. Want to come and try out for guitar?”

And that’s when Moore’s life changed. Not just because of the offer, but because at the same time a family friend told him he’d run into his mother. “No,” Moore responded when he heard the name of the woman, “she’s just a friend of the family.”

But afterward, he realized that there’d been clues all along that the woman actu-

ally *was* his mother. He'd even asked his parents once if he'd been adopted, after he overheard a conversation that seemed to suggest it. This time, Skrillex confronted them more directly. When they told him it was true, his reaction, as he recalls, was "Fuck you!" He'd rarely been angry with them before, but suddenly he felt like an idiot – like everybody had known but him. And so, with the family rule of honesty shattered, Skrillex reacted like he did in school: "I told my parents to fuck off and got out of there. I was talking to that band on the Internet anyway. And so I said, 'Fine, I'm coming to Georgia.'"

Skrillex doesn't especially like talking about the circumstances of his adoption, and he hasn't seen his biological mom since he was a teen and his biological dad in four years. "I don't have time to fixate on who I was," he says. "I'm doing too much right now. And I don't want to ever analyze what I should be or shouldn't be compared to someone else who wasn't in my life."

As for his adoptive mom and dad, things eventually returned to normal. "I love them to death," he says. "I want to take care of them as they grow old."

From First to Last had just signed to Epitaph Records. Moore impressed the bandmates enough that they didn't just make him their guitarist – they made him the singer. He recorded two albums with them, made it into the Top 40 and began pulling a larger salary at 17 than his father ever did. But, he recalls, "Almost right away, I didn't have a real connection with them."

The nightly screamo-ing also damaged his vocal cords, leading to his operation. But the bigger problem was he just wasn't enjoying himself. (A friend around at the time says that members of the group were negative to be with and often belittled Moore.) One night, after three years in the band, he felt a little sick before a concert in Philadelphia, canceled the show and never returned.

So by the time he was 19, Moore was living in a loft in downtown L.A. and learning to DJ with help from a neighbor – taking his MySpace handle, Skrillex, as his DJ name. He signed a solo deal with Atlantic as Sonny and released an emo-electro-pop EP, *Gypsyhook*. The Sonny LP recorded afterward (and never released) is the missing link between From First to Last and Skrillex: It is almost its own genre, swapping the pop for the electronic aggression he'd been experimenting with as a DJ and producer.

From the rooftop, Skrillex points out the spots where he cut his teeth as a DJ. "See that blue building?" he asks. "We used to throw parties there. Also that orange building. Pretty much every building around this general area." He stubs out his cigarette. "The parties were fun, but you never want them to be at your place."

SCENE FIVE

Int. Zencu Sushi, downtown L.A. – day

IT IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE GRAMMYS. More than anything Skrillex has done before, his five nominations have put him on the map as a musician to be taken seriously. He appears to have very little concern for whether he wins, and doesn't even remember all the categories he's nominated in. However, there is an aspect of the awards show that's weighing much more heavily on his mind: Should he or shouldn't he take his girlfriend, Ellie Goulding?

At the Muse party, he'd made an interesting comment about her. "She's made me more secure," he said. "It's hard to explain, but I try to *be* less and *do* more."



"THE DROP IS AS GOOD AS THE BUILDUP," HE SAYS. "YOU HAVE TO GET THE MOST INTENSITY AT THE RIGHT TIME."

How long ago did you meet Ellie?

Months and months ago. I sent her an e-mail, like, "I'm Skrillex. I don't know if you know who I am, but I love your shit." We started texting and talking on the phone. Just randomly, when she was in New York, she flew out to Memphis for a couple of days to see me. We're not a public thing, but I want to take her to the Grammys and have a seat for her. What do you think about shit like that? Is that cheesy?

You have to do it. She's your girlfriend.

I love her. She's my fucking girl. I definitely want to take her, but the red carpet can be weird.

Have you ever been on a red carpet before?

Not a real one. Should I do it?

I think you should do it, just to represent for the music. And if you don't do it, people think, "Oh, he thinks he's too good."

Exactly! Yeah. I don't even know what to expect. What the fuck? It's something I never expected. I thought I made it [with From First to Last], then I lost everything and went down to square one. So this is all just bonus now.

SCENE SIX

Int. Atlantic Records studio, Hollywood – evening

AS SOON AS HE WALKS INTO THE studio, Skrillex mixes himself a drink and pulls his MacBook out of his backpack. He plays a track he's recording with Damian Marley and a side project with Goulding that sounds like Portishead. "It needs to go somewhere," he says, shaking his head, "and it's too pop."

He launches the program Ableton Live. Within minutes, a pretty good dub-step track begins to take shape. "I like to make structures first," he says. He then begins creating a montage of layered vocal snippets, filtered live drum samples and crowd cheers building up to the drop. "A lot of times," he says, "the drop is as good as its buildup. You have to get fucking the most intensity at the right time. That's what I've been trying to focus on more. Usually the longer the buildup, the better."

SCENE SEVEN

Int. the Velvet Margarita bar, Hollywood – night

FOUR COCKTAILS AND TWO SHOTS into the evening, Skrillex suddenly turns on his barstool and asks, "Are you light-switched off or light-switched on?"

What do you mean?

"Because what's the point if there's nothing else?" he continues. Evidently, the topic is whether or not there's life after death. "If I woke up tomorrow, and I knew there was nothing else at the end, I'd think, 'Then why am I more significant than the shit she wiped off her ass this morning? Or what difference is there between me and a stuffed animal? Or what makes a serial killer or a rapist wrong?'"

These are deep questions. Worthy of only the finest margarita and highest-grade medical marijuana. He isn't religious, but he does believe in "spirit" and that "we're part of something bigger." He also, as he puts it, "likes aliens."

Skrillex moves outside, where, with two cigarettes burning in his hands, he considers his future, beyond music.

"One day, when the buzz and excitement isn't happening, I want someone to reflect with," he decides. "I'd like to have maybe two kids and adopt one. There are so many unwanted kids at age three or four. I was adopted and I love my dad, and it worked out."

He pauses and imagines the future he just described. "I don't know." He shakes his head. "I'm with a machete in the forest right now. But when I get to where I'm going, *then* I'll have a family." He takes a drag off his cigarette. "And I'll stop smoking cigarettes. And I'll start going to the gym and get ripped." 15

THE BEAUTIFULLY EMPTY MIND OF WILL FERRELL

The anxiety-free joy ride of the nicest guy in Hollywood

By **ERIK HEDEGAARD**

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER YANG

MAN ON THE RUN
Ferrell captures a
young fan's attention
in New Orleans.





LAST NIGHT, just as he was going to sleep, Will Ferrell started worrying about ghosts. Like, what if, right now, a ghost wafted into the room and said, "Hi"? What should he say back? And, more importantly, if it's a hostile ghost, what action should he take next? Lie still? Move? He was staying in a rented house in New Orleans. He started planning an escape route, but drifted off in the middle of it. Then, at 5:50 a.m., he awoke, untroubled and unperturbed by any bad mojo or evil spirits. In fact, he didn't have a single thought in his head. You would think there would be a million thoughts bouncing around in there. For instance, he could be pondering the movie he is making here, a political comedy called *The Campaign*. Or about any of his other far-flung ventures, the TV show he oversees, *Eastbound & Down*; the wildly successful comedy website that he helped found, Funny or Die; or his new movie due out soon, *Casa de mi Padre*, a wacky but droll telenovela spoof done in Spanish with English subtitles. But, no, it's none of those things. "Nope, I don't think there was anything," he says, sounding a little puzzled himself. But he doesn't question it. It's just part of a process that allows him to move forward with no worries, no fears, no real concern about any of last night's ghosts. "I just make a decision and go and feel good about it," he says.

Here he comes now, down the street, around a corner, loping forward, a big man with a big head, wearing a suit, no tie, a striped shirt, regular shoes. He stops in front of a restaurant called La Petite Grocery. He says he has heard the margaritas here are excellent. He says he would like one with salt. He goes inside, is seated at a table, does not remove his jacket, sits up straight, orders his drink, sips his drink, orders ice water, orders a salad, orders the fish, and says, thoughtfully, "I can't tell you where I first thought of *Casa de mi Padre* and I can't tell you when, but a light bulb went off that said putting me in a Spanish-speaking movie with the cast being entirely Latino, and myself playing a kind of La-

tino actor, and the joke not being that I'm speaking poor Spanish, that it would be hilarious. I guess I did it specifically to raise the question 'Why did you do this?' It's one of the craziest things I've done."

And what about his ass, which was first made famous in *Old School*? Does his ass make an appearance in this movie?

He nods vigorously. "I did full ass in *Old School*, but this is its longest appearance." Makeup? "Yes, someone had the either wonderful or horrible task of putting makeup on my ass." He shrugs. He goes on, "This kind of thing is not a big deal to me. In college, they had this thing where you'd run naked on fraternity row, and if anyone challenged me, I'd be happy to do it."

Right around then, it becomes clear that Ferrell, 44, isn't going to be the kind of off-the-wall guy you might think he would be. He does not make goofy faces, does not rage apocalyptically, does not slip into George W. Bush voice, does not strip down and streak to further demonstrate the wonders of his ass, and, in toto, gives no indication whatsoever that he is anything like his most popular movie characters (Ron Burgundy, Frank the Tank, Ricky Bobby, etc.) or anyone from his years on *Saturday Night Live*, either. In every

acters he plays are: They're overbearing, and macho, and totally oblivious to their own idiocy. And yet those who know him well say that's where all such comparisons must end because within his somewhat fleshy and oft-exposed bosom there lies no real darkness, no grisly burdens, no lifelong sadnesses such as bedevil the rest of us. "Normal" is the word usually used to describe him. And so it would seem, as he sits here tonight, all kinds of pleasant and courteous. Then again, he's a guy who goes to sleep worrying about ghosts but wakes up without a thought in his head – and how normal is that?

HE WAS RAISED IN THE WHITE-bread California suburb of Irvine, and from the start nothing could faze him. When he was eight, his mother, an elementary-school teacher, and his father, a keyboard player for the Righteous Brothers, divorced, leaving his younger brother, Pat, quite shaken, but Will, not at all. As he said to Pat, "Look at it this way: We're going to have two Christmases!" He was sunny like that and kind of a dream child for any newly single mother to have. Of course, he got into trouble. Once, after some kid stole

WHEN HIS PARENTS DIVORCED, FERRELL TOLD HIS BROTHER, "LOOK AT IT THIS WAY: WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TWO CHRISTMASSES!"

way possible, he spends the next several hours comporting himself according to all acceptable standards of behavior, mainly because that's just how he is.

"Well, yes," he says, forking a piece of lettuce mouth-ward. "Meeting fans, I'll be like, 'Oh, hey, how are you?' And, literally, they're like, 'What are you going to do? Do something! Are you sure that's him? He's not doing anything!'" Yes, I fear they're horribly underwhelmed."

Not to mention disappointed and maybe even a little infuriated. He's a great guy, no doubt about it. Everyone says so. "He has one of the most freakishly healthy egos of anyone you're ever going to meet," says his moviemaking partner, Adam McKay. Not to put too fine a point on it, but he is beloved. "There's something about Will that is so completely American," says former *SNL* cohort Tina Fey. "A tall, white version of America that you used to see in Seventies movies and TV. He's like one of the *Bad News Bears* grown up. He's like a superfunny Jon from *ChiPs*. He's the Trapper John of comedy. If I describe it any more, I'll fall in love with him." And what makes him so perfect as an American symbol is how like America the char-

acter he plays are: They're overbearing, and macho, and totally oblivious to their own idiocy. And yet those who know him well say that's where all such comparisons must end because within his somewhat fleshy and oft-exposed bosom there lies no real darkness, no grisly burdens, no lifelong sadnesses such as bedevil the rest of us. "Normal" is the word usually used to describe him. And so it would seem, as he sits here tonight, all kinds of pleasant and courteous. Then again, he's a guy who goes to sleep worrying about ghosts but wakes up without a thought in his head – and how normal is that?

In school, he didn't suffer from lack of popularity. "I learned in first grade how to open a door and have it hit the bottom of your foot and then snap your head back like it hit you in the face, and I started doing that, making the other kids laugh, and it became a new way to make friends. It was also an easy way to talk to girls, to go up and be funny. I was never really bullied much, either. I was big for my age and fairly athletic."

Actually, more than fairly. He played varsity soccer, kicked for the varsity football team and captained the varsity basketball team. Throughout high school, he continued to make kids laugh – wearing

Contributing editor ERIK HEDEGAARD profiled Chaz Bono in RS 1148.

pajamas to school, cracking wise over the school PA system – and his senior year he was voted “Best Personality.” At the University of Southern California, he could be spotted wearing janitor’s clothes, interrupting classes to entertain his pals. And, of course, as a member of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, he loved to ditch his clothes and streak.

Graduating with a degree in sports information, he moved home to figure out what to do next, since he’d realized that he didn’t like sports information after all. Then, on a lark, he took an improv class and decided to go in that direction. “One day, I said to my father, ‘I’m thinking of giving the comedy thing a try, what’s your advice?’ He goes, ‘If it wasn’t based on luck, I wouldn’t worry about it, because you have talent. Just know that there’s a lot of luck involved and if you eventually decide to do something else, don’t treat it as a failure. Just know it’s one-in-a-million.’ Those words took all the pressure off, and I just treated it like a game.”

In 1991, he moved to L.A. and struggled. “I remember going to do a scene study, and they said, ‘I’m sorry, I don’t know how to tell you this, I’m not trying to be mean, but you’re not good.’” Undeterred, he tried out for the Groundlings, the famous improvisational-comedy troupe, was accepted, rose through the ranks prodigylike, and within 18 months wound up on *SNL*, where he became a hit both with the audience and with the show’s writers. Unlike other *SNL* luminaries, he’d take on even the smallest of parts, believing he could make something of them anyway. If the writers came up with 40 sketches for a show, Ferrell would be written into 30 of them. He stayed for seven years.

In 1998, he headlined in his first movie, *A Night at the Roxbury*, co-starring Chris Kattan, and bombed. It looked like his winning streak was over. But then, in 2003, he got his second chance and had two hits in a row, first in *Old School*, and then in *Elf*, and he followed them up with two other biggies, *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* and *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*. Along the way, he and McKay evolved the perfect archetypal Ferrell character. On the one hand, a guy who is “all puffed up,” as Ferrell says, “with that we’re-number-one attitude, and yet horribly flawed.” On the other hand, he’s a total deadpan absurdist – “like when he’s doing Ron Burgundy,” says McKay, “and he’s telling Christina Applegate that San Diego means ‘whale’s vagina,’ and he’s not playing it goofy, he’s playing it real, and

this crazy fucking thing he’s said sneaks up on you. That’s his favorite kind of laugh.” Those kinds of laughs are what have made Ferrell superpopular, especially among rappers. “He gets mentioned in rap songs a lot, probably because of how he makes fun of the absurdity of white culture, and how full of self-importance and jive white culture is,” says McKay (Jay-Z and Kanye West sampled Ferrell dialogue for last year’s hit “Ni**as in Paris”). “Wherever we go, where there’s a black crowd, they go nuts for him.”

And so it’s gone, with only a few wobbles along the way, like the 2005 groan-

you wouldn’t know it by him. But then, sit with him long enough, and a few oddities do crop up.

For one, he didn’t have sex until he was 21 and a junior in college. According to him, it was no big deal: “In my mind’s eye, it seemed like the way it was supposed to happen.” And maybe so. Or maybe that’s just how it plays back in his head, another fortuitous byproduct of a sunny disposition. Certainly, his mom thought it’d happened years earlier, while he was a senior in high school, when she concluded he’d slept with one rather loose classmate in particular: “I’m telling you now,” she said, “if you

slept with this girl, you’d better slap a condom on that pecker of yours.” Ferrell chuckles while telling this story. Apparently, that’s just how his mom talked.

And he is a little weird about his wardrobe. “I rotate my clothes so everything is equally worn. I rotate my tennis shoes as well, so sometimes that can mean black shirt with orange shorts and red shoes, which I don’t give a shit about, but my wife will be like, ‘Really?’”

And he does have Joan Rivers as an enemy. “In a magazine she said, ‘You have to be careful of meeting your idols, because I met that Will Ferrell and he’s an asshole.’ This is where that came from: At the Golden Globes, a producer told me to go say hello to Joan while she was talking to Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer, so I do, and Joan is like, ‘Excuse me, do you know who you’re interrupting?’ and I’m like, ‘Yes, they’re very big important people.’ She thought I was being a jerk.” He shrugs. That’s the way it sometimes goes, when he blunders into things. But for the most part, it’s been a nauseatingly smooth ride.

Not even any big childhood illnesses?

“Nope, I’ve been fairly lucky.”

Come on, man, seriously, no adolescent angst ever? No self-loathing?

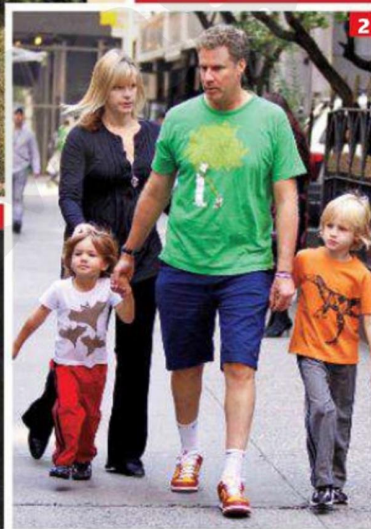
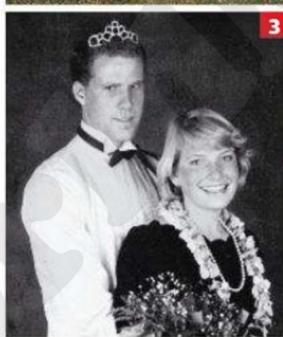
“No way. Not even close.”

What about pills? Are you on any pills?

“I take fish oil and 81 milligrams of aspirin a day.” He smiles. “81. Science has shown 80 wasn’t effective.”

OK, what about animals you hate. Have any of those?

A long pause. Finally, “I don’t know if I love Chihuahuas.” It’s a careful phraseology, purposefully designed to soften the blow of his opinion to the Chihuahua fans of the world. Which is just like him. He’s Will Ferrell. He’s been fairly lucky. Why should he make it any worse for you, just because you happen to own a Chihuahua?



Anchorman

(1) In his latest movie, *Casa de mi Padre*, Ferrell plays a Mexican cowboy trying to save his family from narcos. (2) With his wife, Viveca, and two of their three sons. (3) Ferrell was named 1986’s Winter Ball Prince his senior year of high school.

er *Bewitched*. But even the biggest of his flops – 2009’s disastrous *Land of the Lost* – couldn’t keep him down. Within a year, he was back, in *The Other Guys*, a buddy-cop spoof that earned \$170 million. His attitude has always seemed to be, if this one doesn’t work, then for sure the next one will. As Lorne Michaels once said to him, “You and Steve Martin are eternally optimistic – you were raised in Southern California, where it’s sunny all the time.”

AND SO HERE HE SITS, DALLYING over his margarita, blessed as blessed can be, his Swedish-born wife of 11 years, Viveca, at home in L.A. taking care of their three kids, ages seven, five and two, all blond-haired, blue-eyed boys. If it’s raining anywhere in the world,



THE FRACKING BUBBLE

It's not only toxic – it's driven by a right-wing billionaire who profits more from flipping land than drilling for gas. Is energy's latest boom just another scam founded on hot air?

By JEFF GOODELL



PAY DIRT
Chesapeake Energy, the largest leaseholder in the United States, now owns the drilling rights to an area twice the size of Maryland.

AUBREY McCLENDON, AMERICA'S SECOND-largest producer of natural gas, has never been afraid of a fight. He has become a billionaire by directing his company, Chesapeake Energy, to blast apart gas-soaked rocks a mile underground and pump the fuel to the surface. "We're the biggest frackers in the world," he declares proudly over a \$400 bottle of French Bordeaux at a restaurant he co-owns in his hometown of Oklahoma City. "We frack all the time. What's the big deal?" ♣ McClendon dominates America's supply of natural gas the same way the Tea Party-financing Koch brothers control

the nation's pipelines and refineries. Like them, McClendon is an influential right-wing power broker – he helped fund the Swift Boat attacks against John Kerry in 2004, donated \$250,000 to the presidential campaign of Rick Perry, and contributed more than \$500,000 to stop gay marriage. But unlike his fellow energy czars, McClendon knows how to tone down his politics and present a friendlier, less ideological face to the public. He secretly gave \$26 million to the Sierra Club to fight Big Coal, and built a Google-like campus for Chesapeake's 4,600 employees in Oklahoma City, complete with a 63,000-square-foot day care center, a luxurious gym and four cafes manned by cook-to-order chefs. He even voted for Barack Obama because he thought the country needed "an inspirational figure."

At 52, McClendon still looks like the whip-smart accountant he once aspired to be – crisp white shirt, polished shoes, a toss of white hair. To hear him tell it, the cleaner-than-coal fuel he produces will revive our faltering economy, free us from the tyranny of foreign oil and save the planet from global warming. "I have a fossil fuel that makes other fossil fuels obsolete," he boasts. By McClendon's estimate, the industry has drilled more than 1.2 million wells nationwide, yet so far there have been only a few confirmed cases where things have gone wrong – despite dire warnings from scientists and environmentalists that fracking pollutes rivers and streams, contaminates drinking water and turns large swaths of farmland into industrial moonscapes. "Where is the mushroom cloud?" McClendon asks. "Where are the dogs with one leg? Where are the people that have been maimed or hurt?"

He sips his Bordeaux; his own private wine cellar once boasted more than 10,000 bottles. It's a good riff, with some truth to it. But what McClendon leaves out is the real nature of the business he's

in. Fracking, it turns out, is about producing cheap energy the same way the mortgage crisis was about helping realize the dreams of middle-class homeowners. For Chesapeake, the primary profit in fracking comes not from selling the gas itself, but from buying and flipping the land that contains the gas. The company is now the largest leaseholder in the United States, owning the drilling rights to some 15 million acres – an area more than twice the size of Maryland. McClendon has financed this land grab with junk bonds and complex partnerships and future production deals, creating a highly leveraged, deeply indebted company that has more in common with Enron than ExxonMobil. As McClendon put it in a conference call with Wall Street analysts a few years ago, "I can assure you that buying leases for x and selling them for $5x$ or $10x$ is a lot more profitable than trying to produce gas at \$5 or \$6 per million cubic feet."

before it melted down." Like generations of energy kingpins before him, it would seem, McClendon's primary goal is not to solve America's energy problems, but to build a pipeline directly from your wallet into his.

AS RECENTLY AS A DECADE ago, many energy experts believed that America was nearly pumped out – that the only oil and gas left here at home was too difficult and too expensive to get out of the ground. Until we can ferment synthetic fuels with genetically engineered yeast or develop solar cells as cheap as Frisbees, the argument went, we would be stuck buying oil from the Arabs.

Geologists had long known there was a lot more energy buried deep underground – they called these subterranean rock layers "the kitchen," because it was where the gas and oil were actually made, before they bubbled up and gathered in reservoirs. But nobody knew how to extract these deep reserves – at least, not in a way that made economic sense. Then, in the 1980s, a Texas wildcatter named George Mitchell began working on a way to drill a mile down into the earth, turn the drill sideways, and keep drilling horizontally into a thin layer of shale. Next, he pumped in a few million gallons of water and sand under enough pressure to shatter the rock. When he pumped the water out, gas and oil flowed out of the rock's fractured pores.

The new technique ignited a boom in drilling for "unconventional" sources of gas and oil: Shale gas now provides 25 percent of America's gas supply, enabling the U.S. to pass Russia as the world's largest producer of natural gas. Initially, even environmentalists were enthusiastic.

FRACKING IS ABOUT CHEAP ENERGY THE SAME WAY THE MORTGAGE CRISIS WAS ABOUT REALIZING THE DREAMS OF NEW HOMEOWNERS.

According to Arthur Berman, a respected energy consultant in Texas who has spent years studying the industry, Chesapeake and its lesser competitors resemble a Ponzi scheme, overhyping the promise of shale gas in an effort to recoup their huge investments in leases and drilling. When the wells don't pay off, the firms wind up scrambling to mask their financial troubles with convoluted off-book accounting methods. "This is an industry that is caught in the grip of magical thinking," Berman says. "In fact, when you look at the level of debt some of these companies are carrying, and the questionable value of their gas reserves, there is a lot in common with the subprime mortgage market just

Fred Krupp, who heads the Environmental Defense Fund, called the gas boom a "potential game changer" – a cleaner energy source that could replace coal and oil for a few decades, until the cost of wind and solar power dropped enough to put fossil fuels out of business. But exactly how much gas and oil we can continue to squeeze out of deep sources like shale rock is unclear. In his State of the Union address, President Obama estimated that there's enough to fuel the country for nearly 100 years. T. Boone Pickens, the energy billionaire who has a major stake in Chesapeake Energy, offers an even more sweeping assessment. "Natural gas," he tells me point-blank, "is the solution to America's energy problems."

Contributing editor JEFF GOODELL is the author of "Big Coal." He wrote "Obama's Pipeline Limbo" in RS 1145.



Rigging the Game

Aubrey McClendon, a top producer of natural gas, has built a drilling empire that looks more like Enron than Exxon. "There is a lot in common with the subprime mortgage market just before it melted down," says one analyst.

At first, when oil and gas producers confined themselves to fracking in the wide-open spaces of Texas and Oklahoma, nobody much gave a damn. The trouble started in 2007, when drilling operators made a run on the Marcellus Shale, a broad region of gas reserves that stretches through Pennsylvania and up into Ohio and New York. Almost overnight, fracking's technological miracle was recast as the next great environmental menace. The Oscar-nominated film *Gasland* exposed the dark underbelly of fracking, interviewing residents who could literally light their faucets on fire, thanks to the gas that had contaminated their drinking water. Last year, *The New York Times* documented how gas drillers were dumping millions of gallons of irradiated wastewater loaded with toxic chemicals into Pennsylvania's rivers and streams, largely without regulatory oversight.

At the same time, scientists began to conclude that America's reserves of natural gas have been overhyped. In January, the Energy Department cut its estimate of the amount of gas available in the Marcellus Shale by nearly 70 percent, and

a group affiliated with the Colorado School of Mines warns that there may be only 23 years' worth of economically recoverable gas left nationwide. Even worse, new studies suggest that because of fugitive emissions of methane from wellheads and pipelines, natural gas may actually be no better than coal when it comes to global warming. "I was an early optimist about natural gas," says Robert Kennedy Jr., who sits on a panel that's advising Gov. Andrew Cuomo on whether to allow drillers like McClendon to expand into New York. "But after looking into it, I now believe that, without tighter regulations and stricter oversight, the shale-gas boom could turn out to be an economic and environmental disaster."

THE OIL AND GAS BUSINESS IS full of guys like T. Boone Pickens, self-made men who rose from a hardscrabble life on the prairie to become titans of the industry. McClendon, by contrast, grew up awash in oil money: He's the great-nephew of Robert S. Kerr, the influen-

tial Oklahoma governor and senator who co-founded the Kerr-McGee Corp. in 1929. Kerr-McGee was the ExxonMobil of its time, an energy giant that eventually sold for \$16 billion. McClendon's personal fortune is now estimated at \$1.2 billion, including a major stake in the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder and a \$20 million retreat in Bermuda.

By the time McClendon headed off to college, at Duke University, he didn't have much interest in the family business. He majored in history, joined a frat and listened to a lot of Bruce Springsteen. But his real passion was accounting. "I just wanted to be a businessman," he says, "and to me, the best way to understand business was to be an accountant." He might have gone on to a steady, solid career at Arthur Andersen had he not come across an article in *The Wall Street Journal* during his senior year. "It was about two guys who had drilled a big well in the Anadarko Basin that had blown out, and it was alleged to be the biggest blowout in the history of the country," McClendon recalls. "They sold their stake to Washington Gas and Light and got a \$100 million check. I thought, 'These are two dudes who just drilled a well and it happened to hit.' So that really piqued my interest."

After graduation, McClendon married his college sweetheart and went to work for a small Oklahoma City oil company owned by his uncle. He worked in accounting for a few months, but quickly became what is known in the industry as a "landman" – the person who finds and negotiates the leases that allow drillers to extract oil and gas. "Landmen were always the stepchild of the industry," he says. "Geologists and engineers were the im-

portant guys – but it dawned on me pretty early that all their fancy ideas aren't worth very much if we don't have a lease. If you've got the lease and I don't, you win."

In 1982, McClendon struck out on his own as a landman. He was 23, living in a modest house, making \$24,000 a year. "I bought a typewriter, rented an office, bought some maps and basically just started to follow around other companies, trying to see what crumbs they would leave," he says. He called his tiny outfit Chesapeake Investments – for no reason except that "I always loved that region of the country." He soon forged a partnership with another landman, Tom Ward. "We worked together for six years," Ward recalls, "doing deals for scraps of land in Oklahoma, faxing each other in the middle of the night. Eventually, we got the hang of it."

When the fracking revolution began, McClendon says, he and Ward quickly realized that the new technique offered

them an opening. In the natural gas industry, the advantage had long gone to operators with the geological and engineering expertise to pinpoint gas reservoirs. Now it didn't matter where you drilled – the gas was pretty much evenly distributed throughout the earth's deep shale layers. The edge suddenly belonged to operators who could lock up as much land as quickly and as cheaply as possible – precisely the skill that Ward and McClendon had developed scraping around Oklahoma land deeds. In 1989, the two men chipped in \$50,000 to form a new company, Chesapeake Energy, to focus primarily on shale gas. It grew like a Silicon Valley startup: By 1993, when Chesapeake went public, the firm was valued at \$25 million.

From the outset, financial risk-taking was as much a part of the firm's success as technological innovation. Chesapeake was the first gas-exploration company to issue high-yield junk bonds, which gave it a steady cash flow to pay for leasing and drilling. "To be able to borrow money for 10 years and ride out boom-and-bust cycles was almost as important an insight as horizontal drilling," McClendon says. "For the first time, we were able to build a company where, if something didn't work for a little bit of time, we could regroup and find something that did work."

By 2003, Chesapeake had expanded deeper into Oklahoma and Texas, as well as Louisiana and Arkansas. "They became a land-acquisition machine," says Phil Weiss, an analyst at Argus Research who has followed the firm for more than a decade. The key to success was discovering new gas plays before other companies, then leasing vast tracts of land as quick-

ly and quietly as possible. Chesapeake's land operation became almost as technologically sophisticated as its drilling operation, with a huge databank of property records and mineral-ownership rights across the country. "The goal is not just to pump gas," explains Pickens. "It's also to lock up future reserves." The company's financial statements estimate that it currently holds drilling rights to as much as 100 trillion cubic feet of gas – enough to supply the entire country for five years.

At Chesapeake, McClendon operated more like a land speculator than an oilman. "Our approach is to go in early, quietly and big," says Henry Hood, who

directs Chesapeake's land purchases. "We like to get our deals signed before anybody knows what we're up to and tries to run up prices." But buying up such huge swaths of land requires huge chunks of cash – and the money often comes not from gas production, but from selling off land or going into debt. After Chesapeake drills a few wells in a region and "proves up" the reserves, it hawks the leases to big oil and gas companies looking to get into the shale-gas game. In 2010, it pocketed \$2.2 billion by selling land it bought in Texas for \$2,000 an acre to one of China's largest oil companies for \$11,000 an acre. "That's a five-to-one return on investment," says Jeff Mobley, Chesapeake's senior vice president for investor relations.

In recent years, the company has also sold off the future proceeds it expects to receive from thousands of wells – a complex financing deal that enables it to borrow cash now without counting the debt it will owe when it has to drill the wells later. The very first deal, made with Deutsche Bank and a Swiss investment firm, brought Chesapeake more than \$1 billion in return for 15 years of future production from 4,000 wells. "It's not illegal, but most gas and oil companies don't do it," says Bob Brackett, an analyst with Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "Chesapeake's poor credit rating pushes them to turn to unconventional financing."

To make its operations even riskier, leaseholders like Chesapeake are required by law to drill on the land within three to five years after acquiring the rights or wind up forfeiting the lease. "The more land they acquire, the more capital they have to spend upfront," says Deborah Rogers, a former investment banker who

forced to sell off 94 percent of his stock in Chesapeake – some 33 million shares – for \$550 million to meet a margin call on his personal investments. (Only a few months earlier, the stock had been worth \$2 billion.) Despite the dramatic setback, Chesapeake's board boosted McClendon's annual salary to \$112 million, making him the highest paid CEO at any S&P 500 company at the time. The pay hike, which sparked a shareholder lawsuit, was scorned by Wall Street analysts. "McClendon clearly thinks of Chesapeake as his own personal piggy bank," says one. In the end, that piggy bank may prove to be empty: In February, Chesapeake announced that, because of low gas prices, its revenues will fall \$3.5 billion short of its expenses this year.

UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO, Bradford County was a forgotten landscape of struggling dairy farms and strip-mall nail salons dotting the Susquehanna River in northeastern Pennsylvania. Then, in 2007, gas speculators looking for the next big play zeroed in on the geologic formation called the Marcellus Shale, a 300-foot-thick layer of gas-soaked rock that underlies much of Pennsylvania, as well as parts of Ohio and New York. Chesapeake was one of the first operators to rush into the region, buying up nearly two million acres of land in just a few months. Since then, the company has drilled more than 600 wells here, and it hopes to drill thousands more, virtually covering the region with rigs. "In 10 years," McClendon says, "the Marcellus is likely to become the most productive natural gas field in the world." The county, population 62,000, has already been transformed from sleepy farmland to industrial boomtown: the roads crowded with trucks hauling water, the rail lines rumbling with trains hauling sand, the roadside bars overflowing with drill hands from Oklahoma and Texas, the hotels and motels booked for months in advance.

Chesapeake's operations in the region are run out of an old department store in the county seat of Towanda, located on the banks of the Susquehanna some 20 miles south of the New York state border. It feels more like a military outpost than a corporate office, with dozens of white SUVs emblazoned with the Chesapeake logo parked in rows out front. Inside, offices are separated by thin walls thrown up in a hurry, many of them decorated with arty shots of drilling rigs in pristine landscapes. In these parts, the company's PR efforts are squarely aimed at quelling any environmental fears. To underscore how safe fracking is, Brian Grove, Chesapeake's director of corporate development in the Marcellus region, explains that the layer of shale being

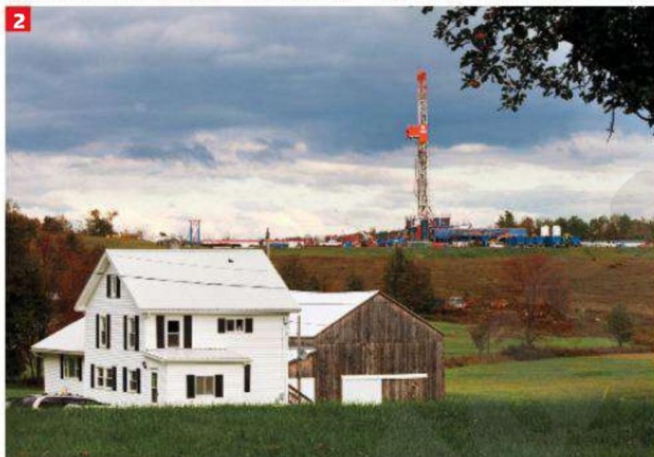
CHESAPEAKE MADE \$2.2 BILLION BUYING LAND IN TEXAS FOR \$2,000 AN ACRE – AND SELLING IT TO AN OIL FIRM IN CHINA FOR \$11,000 AN ACRE.

learned just how precarious Chesapeake's business model was when she looked into the firm's financial statements after the company sunk wells near her property in Texas. "Then they have to drill it or lose it, which further adds to capital costs. And the more they drill, the more gas they produce, which lowers the price of gas and further reduces their revenues. In the end, this drilling treadmill is difficult to sustain for long – especially if the wells underperform, or the resource turns out to not be as valuable as they thought."

This sort of gambling suits McClendon, who is known for placing big bets – and sometimes losing big. During the financial meltdown in 2008, McClendon was

ly and quietly as possible. Chesapeake's land operation became almost as technologically sophisticated as its drilling operation, with a huge databank of property records and mineral-ownership rights across the country. "The goal is not just to pump gas," explains Pickens. "It's also to lock up future reserves." The company's financial statements estimate that it currently holds drilling rights to as much as 100 trillion cubic feet of gas – enough to supply the entire country for five years.

At Chesapeake, McClendon operated more like a land speculator than an oilman. "Our approach is to go in early, quietly and big," says Henry Hood, who



A Big Fracking Mess

Waste sludge is pumped into a containment pond at a fracking site in rural Pennsylvania (1). Because drilling rigs are often set up so close to homes (2), the toxic and radioactive waste from fracking can poison drinking water (3).



drilled is 7,000 feet beneath the surface, whereas drinking water rarely runs deeper than 1,000 feet. "That leaves 6,000 feet of rock in between," he says. "There is no way that any fluids are going to migrate from the shale rock up to the drinking-water aquifers."

Grove, an affable guy in a Chesapeake shirt, also points out that the entire length of the well bore is encased in heavy steel, to prevent gas from leaking into the drinking water. What's more, he adds, the top 750 feet of the well, where it's most likely to pass through aquifers, gets a triple layer of steel – a precaution the company took after it had some problems with methane near the surface getting into drinking water. In short, he suggests, the fluids and gas traveling up the well bore are completely isolated from the surrounding earth by up to three layers of heavy steel. "It's a closed system," he says. "Done right, drilling and fracking does not pollute drinking water." This, in essence, is the mantra at Chesapeake: *Everything we do is safe and environmentally responsible. Trust us.*

One afternoon, Grove drives me out to the Nomac 7 rig, which is drilling about 15 miles east of Towanda. I climb up into the operations box on the rig and watch as the driller guides a bit a mile down into the earth through an eight-inch hole. Once the drilling is finished, millions of gallons of fracking fluid – water and sand, mixed with a host of chemicals that make the water "slippery" – will be injected deep into the well to fracture the underground shale. The wastewater, known as flowback, will then be pumped out, and gas production will begin.

The problem with all sophisticated technology, of course, is that things inevitably go wrong. Last April, a Chesapeake well in Bradford County suffered a massive blowout. It was the onshore, natural gas version of what happened to BP in the Gulf two years ago: A wellhead flange failed, and toxic water gushed uncontrollably from the well for several days before workers were able to bring it under control. Seven families were evacuated from their homes as 10,000 gallons of fracking fluid spilled into surrounding pas-

tures and streams. Pennsylvania fined the company \$250,000 – the highest penalty allowed under state law.

Well failures, in fact, are fairly common at drilling sites. I ask Anthony Ingraffea, an engineering professor at Cornell University and a former consultant for oil-service firms, to look at the 141 violations levied against Chesapeake in Pennsylvania last year. According to Ingraffea, 24 of them involved failures of well integrity. "When a well loses integrity, it means the seal is broken and something – usually methane, but it could also be flowback water – is leaking out underground," he says. "And it's impossible to know where it is going, or in what amounts."

It's also impossible to know what chemicals are flowing out of the wells, or how toxic they are, because companies like Chesapeake are not required to disclose the compounds they use in fracking operations. Providers of fracking fluids, such as Halliburton, claim that the composition of such fluids can't be revealed without disclosing trade secrets. In 2005, the industry lobbied hard for what's known as "the Halliburton loophole," which exempts it from federal disclosure requirements. In recent months, Colorado, Texas and Pennsylvania have moved to tighten state regulations and require mandatory disclosure of what's in the fracking fluids, but loopholes still remain. "We don't know the chemicals that are involved," Vikas Kapil, chief medical officer at the National Center for Environmental Health, admitted at a recent conference. "We don't have a great handle on the toxicology of fracking chemicals."

Whatever it is, there's a lot of it: Random data I sampled from five wells that Chesapeake drilled in Pennsylvania and Ohio last year reveals that the company injected between 24,000 pounds and 230,000 pounds of chemicals into each well. Some of the chemicals are relatively harmless, used in common household products. But others – such as 2-butoxyethanol – are known to cause cancer in animals.

An even larger threat is the flowback waste that is pumped out after a well is fracked. It's a salty brine, mildly radioactive, and laced not just with toxic chemicals but with natural hydrocarbons and heavy metals like barium and benzene, which are known carcinogens even in minute quantities. In fracking operations out West, the flowback is generally injected into underground sites that meet EPA standards. But in the Marcellus, there are virtually no injection sites. In the early days, gas producers did pretty much whatever they wanted with the billions of gallons of toxic water their

operations produce. "Since there were no laws covering the disposal of this stuff at first, they just dumped it into rivers or hauled it off to sewage plants to be 'treated,' which they knew didn't work," says Deborah Goldberg, a lawyer at Earthjustice. "They just wanted to get rid of the stuff as quickly and as cheaply as possible." At one fracking operation, a subcontractor was caught opening the valves on the back of his truck and dumping the wastewater on roads.

New laws in Pennsylvania now prohibit companies from discharging flowback into rivers and streams. Instead, operators like Chesapeake either "recycle" their water by running it through a filtration system, or haul it off to Ohio and inject it underground – a process which, some seismologists now suspect, is the reason Ohio was hit by an uncharacteristically large number of earthquakes last year. (The injected water lubricates fault lines, the theory goes, causing them to slip.)

McClendon dismisses the dangers of flowback, insisting that other industries cause far more pollution. "Why are you not focused on the amount of oil runoff from parking lots when it rains?" he recently asked a top environmentalist. "What about the billions of tons of agricultural chemicals that run off every day into streams and rivers? That's real pollution that kills real fish, and degrades a real environment. What's worse for Chesapeake Bay? Fertilizer runoff from poultry farms? Or fracking 200 miles away for which there is no evidence that one drop has ever gotten more than 100 yards away from a well site?"

According to McClendon, environmentalists hate fracking for a self-serving reason: because it upends their dreams of green power. "If you believe in a world where the wind and the sun are going to produce all our power in the future, then we've disrupted that vision of the world," he says. "On the other hand, if you dream of a world where air is cleaner, where energy is half the price it was before and we're not exporting a million dollars a minute to OPEC or having to go fight wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, then you should embrace natural gas. That's what's so troubling to me – that people are willing to turn a blind eye to the enormous, well-known consequences of what we do today and not realize that this new path is the only affordable, scalable way to something else."

LAST YEAR, SCIENTISTS AT DUKE University, McClendon's alma mater, published the first rigorous, peer-reviewed study of pollution at drilling and fracking operations. Examining 60 sites in New York and Pennsylvania, they found "systematic evidence for methane contam-

ination" in household drinking water: Water wells half a mile from drilling operations were contaminated by methane at 17 times the rate of those farther from gas developments. Although methane in water has not been studied closely as a health hazard, it can seep into houses and build up to explosive levels.

The study caused a big stir, in part because it was the first clear evidence that fracking was contaminating drinking water, contrary to the industry's denials. Just weeks after the study was released, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection fined Chesapeake \$1.1 million – the largest fine against an oil and gas operator in the agency's history – for contaminating 17 wells in Bradford County, including some that had been part of the Duke study.

McClendon, a major benefactor to Duke, fired off a blistering letter to the university, which was printed in the alumni magazine and widely circulated online. He didn't point out any errors by the scientists or question their methodology. Instead, he went after their character, dismissing the study as "more political

her two children left for college, a landman from the company showed up at her door and asked to lease the mineral rights beneath her farm. "He told us there was natural gas in the shale rock a mile down, and they had a new way to drill for it that was minimally invasive and would cause very little damage to our land," she recalls. "He said it was a patriotic thing to do, that natural gas would help America gain energy independence."

The landman offered Vargson \$100 per acre, plus 12 percent in royalties. He told her there was no way to predict how big the royalties would be, but emphasized that she stood to make "a lot of money" over the 30-year life expectancy of the well. Vargson accepted the deal. "We thought we were taken care of," she says.

Drilling, which began the next year, was an immediate nightmare. One morning, Vargson woke up at 6 a.m. to find 18 trucks idling in her driveway. The hillside behind her house was leveled for a drill pad, and the rig went up 500 feet from her back door. Once the fracking began, water trucks made hundreds of trips up and down her driveway, while air com-

TO DEMONSTRATE THE GAS LEAK, SHE WALKS OVER TO HER FAUCET AND LIGHTS A MATCH. A FLAME SHOOTS OUT LIKE A BLOWTORCH.

science than physical science" and accusing them of having a bias against fossil fuels. "These guys," he tells me, "have invested their lives in the view that climate change is occurring, that fossil fuels are bad, and that natural gas is a fossil fuel, and therefore it's bad."

When I ask Avner Vengosh, a geochemistry professor who served as a lead author of the study, about McClendon's letter, he laughs lightly. "I have no agenda," he says. "I am a scientist. I report what the evidence I find tells me to report." He and his colleagues visited Chesapeake's headquarters in Oklahoma a few weeks before the study was finished and shared their results with the company. They also offered to consider any data that Chesapeake might have that would challenge their results. "They offered us nothing," says one scientist who attended the meeting.

One of the wells in the study belongs to Sherry Vargson, a dairy farmer who lives in a white house on nearly 200 acres in Granville Summit, a rural area 20 miles from Chesapeake's regional headquarters in Towanda. Unlike many residents, who have been forced by gas companies to sign nondisclosure agreements, Vargson is happy to discuss her experiences with Chesapeake. In 2007, shortly after

pressors roared all day and night. When the gas was flared off before production began, the flame was so bright in the night sky that she could see it glowing red on the horizon 12 miles away.

Vargson noticed not long after production began in 2009 that water in the trough out back stopped freezing on cold nights. Inside the house, the faucet began to sputter and spit. Her husband seemed to have a lot of headaches, and Vargson felt nauseous if she stayed in the shower for more than a few minutes. Acting on a tip from a friend, she had her water tested. It was loaded with methane.

"I discovered I could light my water on fire," she says. "And I still can."

To demonstrate, she walks over to the faucet in her kitchen, lights a match and turns on the faucet. *Whoosh!* A flame shoots out like a blowtorch.

Vargson stopped drinking the water after she discovered the methane – but tests showed that her water also contained elevated levels of toxic chemicals like radium, manganese and strontium. Chesapeake agreed to supply Vargson with fresh drinking water, delivered to her door in five-gallon jugs once a month, but it denies any responsibility for the elevated methane levels. Tom Darrah, a Duke geologist

who has examined Vargson's well for a new study, finds that difficult to square with the facts. "Anyone who has seen the data I have and thinks this much methane in her well is from natural sources has their head in the sand," he says.

For Vargson, and many homeowners just like her, fracking has proved to be a full-blown disaster. Since she signed up with Chesapeake, her back pasture has become a full-time industrial zone, her water supply has been contaminated, and it will be virtually impossible to sell her home, since it lacks drinkable water. What's more, her well turned out to be a dud: The landman from Chesapeake who sold her on the deal failed to mention that 80 percent of a well's gas is often depleted within the first two years. In all likelihood, Vargson's well will end up being a money-loser for Chesapeake, either sold off to another company or refracked in an attempt to dislodge more gas. Either way, the royalty checks that Vargson and her husband were counting on for retirement will hardly pay for dinner and a movie. "We made about \$1,400 the first month, and it's been all downhill from there," she says. Her check for last November: \$70.

I ask her how she feels about the promise of fracking now. "I think the industry is destroying our water resource to extract a gas resource," she says. "And in the long run, I don't think that's a very smart trade."

AS FRACKING HAS come under increasing attack, McClendon has used his financial clout to keep the drills pumping. Chesapeake spent only \$2 million on federal lobbying last year – about average for a company its size – but it has contributed almost as much to political candidates and PACs in the current election cycle as the Koch brothers. (McClendon makes it clear that he won't be voting for Obama this time around.) In Pennsylvania, Chesapeake has contributed more than half a million dollars to state and local politicians since 2008 – the highest total in the industry.

McClendon, who funds an industry lobbying group called America's Natural Gas Alliance, has also used his cash to attack Big Coal, hoping to topple his chief competitor and refit coal plants to run on natural gas. In 2007, when a Texas utility threatened to build 11 new coal plants, he won over many clean-energy activists by spending \$1 million on a "Coal Is Filthy" media blitz. The \$26 million he gave to the Sierra Club helped fund its "Beyond Coal" campaign, which has blocked more

than 150 new coal plants. But in 2010, when McClendon tried to cement an alliance with environmental groups at a two-day conference in Colorado, the plan backfired. McClendon struck many of the assembled activists as aloof and arrogant. A few weeks later, after he backed away from a promise to lobby for tougher laws requiring the industry to disclose the chemicals it uses in fracking fluid, one top environmentalist sent an e-mail to other participants calling McClendon "a pathological liar."

But McClendon's worst enemy may not be environmentalists or coal companies, but his own recklessness. He played a leading role in creating the fracking bub-

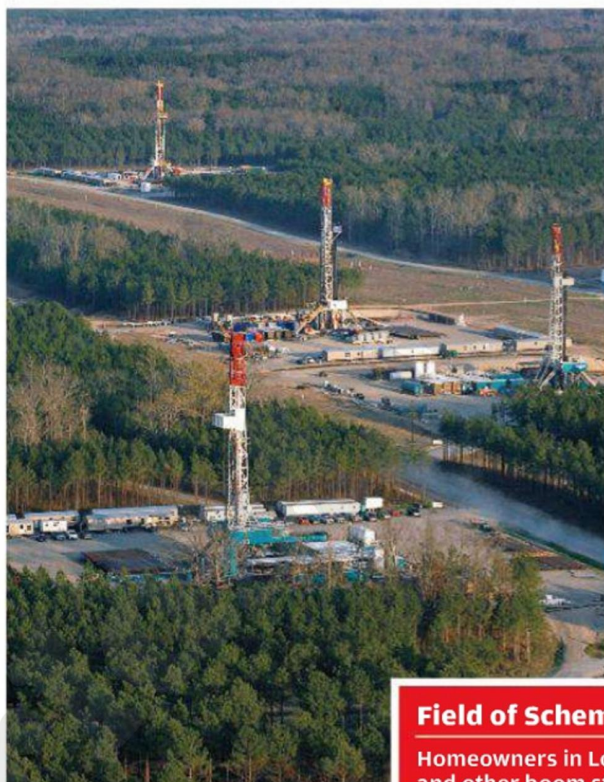
gas to China doesn't exactly mesh with McClendon's emphasis on making America energy independent. But unless something changes, that's precisely where things are headed – on a grand scale. "In the Marcellus, the boom has just begun," says Ingraffea, the Cornell engineer. "The idea is to drill *everywhere*." Tougher laws and stricter enforcement could mitigate the damage to people and the environment, but widespread drilling – especially at the boomtown pace that McClendon is pushing – will inevitably result in mishaps. Well casings will fail. Fracking chemicals will be spilled. Drinking water will be contaminated. Methane will seep into the atmosphere, accelerating global warming. When you add it all up, you can see why many environmentalists and clean-energy activists no longer see natural gas as a bridge to a more sustainable future. "It's time to stop thinking of natural gas as a 'kinder, gentler' energy source," Mike Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club, recently blogged. "Instead of rushing to see how quickly we can extract natural gas, we should be focusing on how to be sure we are using less."

That kind of talk enrages McClendon. "What does that mean, Mike?" he asks angrily when I ask him about Brune's comment over dinner at his restaurant. "Does that mean we maximize the use of coal? That we fill the countryside with windmills and kill all the migratory birds and double electricity prices while we do it? What's

the human cost to doubling electricity prices? What's the human benefit to halving them? I think those are enormously important questions that are never imposed at the same time

people say, 'Fracking is bad.'"

I look at the \$400 bottle of wine on the table. Much of what McClendon says is misleading – wind power is as cheap as gas in some places and falling fast, and cutting back on gas doesn't have to mean burning more coal. But his plan is clear. He's not going to back off until every last square foot of shale rock in America is drilled and fracked and sucked clean of gas. McClendon may rely on sophisticated new drilling technologies, but at heart, he's driven by the same dream of endless extraction that has gripped oil barons and coal companies since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. In the end, all his talk of energy independence and a cleaner, brighter future boils down to a single demand, as simple as it is disastrous: *Drill, baby, drill.*



Field of Schemes

Homeowners in Louisiana and other boom states have leased huge swaths of land to frackers – but many wells never pay off.

ble by hyping the promise of endless natural gas and sweet-talking Wall Street into funding a massive land grab. If the bubble bursts, Chesapeake's stockholders won't be the only ones who pay the price – the shock waves will be felt throughout the economy, from homeowners who rely on natural gas for heat to manufacturers who were betting on it to power their new factories. Thanks to McClendon's gambles, Chesapeake is struggling to cover \$10 billion in long-term debt. In recent weeks, the company has announced it will sell off more land and shut down some production. McClendon also hopes to increase demand and boost gas prices by promoting cars and power plants that run on natural gas, and by cutting deals to export gas to Europe and Asia, where prices are five times higher than in the U.S.

Turning vast stretches of Pennsylvania into a pincushion in order to ship

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

The cast of HBO's 'Game of Thrones'
rocks the season's hottest fashions

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PEGGY SIROTA

STYLING BY LEE HARRIS



SPRING IS COMING

Alfie Allen, Lena Headey, Kit Harington and Emilia Clarke return for a new season of HBO's sex, blood and sorcery epic. "People get snobbish about fantasy," says Clarke, "but it's difficult to do with this show. Take the fantasy out, and it's still an incredible piece of writing. It's hard not to become immersed in it."

From left: Allen's shirt by John Varvatos. Headey's poncho by Issa London. Harington's shirt by John Varvatos. Clarke's dress by DKNY.



ADULT FANTASY

"People respond to this show because it's so different," says Harington. "You don't know who is safe and who's not. Usually, you know who's going to win the fight, but in this, you don't. It could be the hero, it could be the villain."

From left: Clarke's top by AllSaints Spitalfields, pants by Carven.

Headey's jumpsuit by Diesel, sandals by Jimmy Choo.

Opposite page, from left: Allen's tank top and boots by AllSaints Spitalfields, jeans by John Varvatos, belt by Kelly Cole.

Harington's shirt by John Varvatos, jeans by AllSaints Spitalfields, belt by Kelly Cole.







WATCH THE THRONE

By Gavin Edwards

CIVIL WAR AND UNCIVILIZED behavior: That's what to expect in the second season of *Game of Thrones*, which returns April 1st. "The world that you see in the first season gets dismantled," says actor Kit Harington. "All the characters that you know and love are very much out of their depth in Season Two. Everything goes to shit."

The first season climaxed with the shocking execution of Ned Stark [Sean Bean] after he misjudged the politics of royal succession, underscoring that any character on the show can get the ax. Actors who still have a job include Harington, as Stark's bastard son, pledged to a military order in the North; Emilia Clarke, as the exiled princess Daenerys; Alfie Allen [Lily Allen's kid brother], as the heir to an island kingdom; and Lena Headey, as the incestuous Queen Cersei.

With its gripping political machinations, *Game of Thrones* feels as much like historical fiction as it does *The Lord of the Rings*. Or as Adam Scott's character put it on *Parks and Recreation*, "It's not just for fantasy enthusiasts! They're telling human stories — in a fantasy world."

Thrones also features more sex than Skinemax at 3 a.m. "The show resonates because it occupies the same human universe we do," says D.B. Weiss, who created the series with David Benioff. "And how can you make it feel real if the people in the story aren't obsessed with sex?"

From left: Clarke's wrap by J. Mendel, pants by Carven. Headey's vest by J. Mendel, jeans by DKNY.

THE COP THAT DIDN'T SEE YOU SPEEDING.
DELIVERING AN AWESOME **BEST** MAN SPEECH.
HOW **THINGS** TASTE FRESH FROM THE GARDEN.
FINDING 20 BUCKS **IN** YOUR COAT POCKET.
NEEDING ONLY ONE **LIFE** TO FINISH AN OLD ARCADE GAME.
FINDING OUT THAT YOU **ARE** GETTING A TAX REFUND THIS YEAR.
FREE FOOD SAMPLES AT THE BIG BOX STORE.



Do your taxes for free with TurboTax.

When you file your simple return with the TurboTax Federal Free Edition, you get the step-by-step guidance you need – and every penny you deserve – all for free. Start filing today at TurboTax.com.



Federal FREE Edition

TurboTax.com



FREE TO PREPARE.



FREE TO PRINT.



FREE TO E-FILE.

Simple Federal taxes free with TurboTax Federal Free Edition. State returns included for additional fee. ©2011 Intuit Inc. All rights reserved. Intuit, the Intuit logo and TurboTax, among others, are registered trademarks of Intuit Inc.

Reviews

NEW ALBUMS.....Pg. 64

SINGLESPg. 65

MOVIESPg. 68

CHARTSPg. 74



Springsteen scans a broken nation on his most turbulent album ever

Bruce Springsteen

★★★★★

Wrecking Ball Columbia

BY DAVID FRICKE



Wrecking Ball is the most despairing, confrontational and musically turbulent

album Bruce Springsteen has ever made. He is angry and accusing in these songs, to the point of exhaustion, with grave reason. The America here is a scorched earth: razed by profiteers, and suffering a shameful erosion in truly democratic values and national charity. The surrender running through the chain-gang march and Springsteen's muddy-river growl in "Shackled and Drawn"; the double meaning loaded into the ballad "This Depression"; the reproach driving "We Take Care of Our Own," a song so obviously about abandoned ideals and mutual blame that no candidate would dare touch it: This is darkness gone way past the edge of town, to the heart of the republic.

Springsteen has been here before, a lot. He drew from his own father's working life for the numbed spirits on the assembly line in 1978's "Factory." But the diminished dreams haunting *The River* and the cycles of hunger and violence in "The Ghost of Tom Joad" always came with light: a stubborn faith in American honor and our better natures. Even *The Rising*, Springsteen's response to the crushing anguish and moral challenges of 9/11, was written and played to heal and unify, a masterful balance of mourning

and the guitar-army backbone of the E Street Band.

On *Wrecking Ball*, Springsteen throws nuance to the curb. "Death to My Hometown" is an obvious allusion to the battered nostalgia of "My Hometown," on 1984's *Born in the U.S.A.* But even the vacant storefronts in the latter song are gone now; the place has been flattened. "I never heard a sound/The marauders raided in the dark/And brought death to my hometown," Springsteen sings, a blunt indictment of cold greed and congressional impotence. And he delivers it like delicious revenge, with a robust Irish-wake rhythm and noble-warrior glaze: a sample from a 1959 Alan Lomax recording of the Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. The effect is a dance through ashes with a reminder: In a righteous fight, music is still good ammo. "They'll be returning sure as the rising sun," Springsteen warns. "Get yourself a song to sing...Sing it hard and sing it well/Send the robber barons straight to hell." It's Woody Guthrie in this foreclosure era with a new sticker on his guitar: THIS MACHINE KILLS GIANT VAMPIRE SQUID.

Wrecking Ball is Springsteen's first album of new songs without the full, disciplined fire of his E Street Band since 2005's *Devils & Dust*. It is his first, too, with a new coproducer, Ron Aniello, whose more pop-oriented credits include a 2007 solo album by Springsteen's wife and E Street vocalist, Patti Scialfa. Springsteen gives a pair of prominent guitar solos to fellow traveler Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine, including the high, warming cries that counter the heartickness in "My Depression." But for the most part, Springsteen and Aniello are their own basic-track combo: working with loops lathered in thick, wet echo, playing many of the instruments themselves before laying on the strings, folk-jubilee accordion, pealing brass and choral voices.

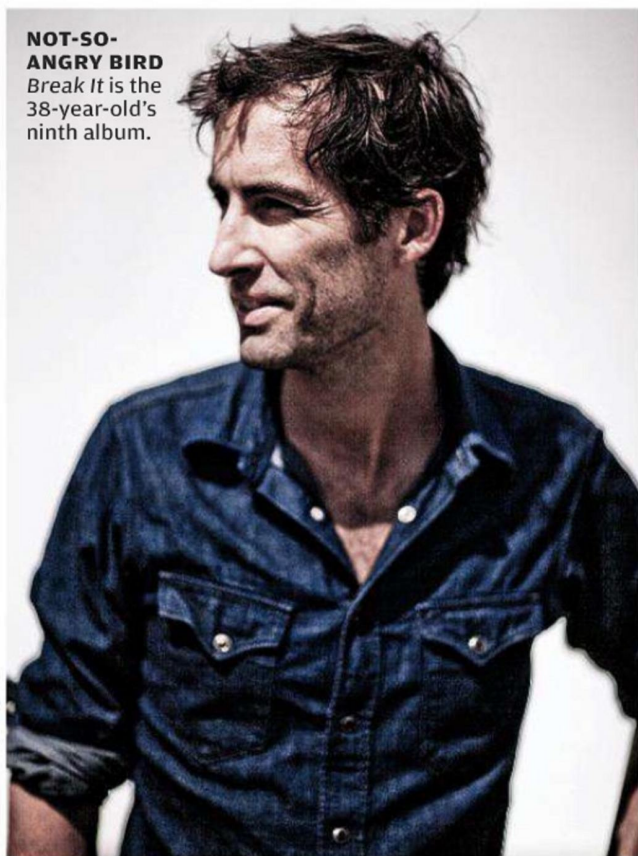
The effect is a manic, compelling seesaw between intimacy and blowout, anguish and uplift, that echoes the emotional zigzags and hair-trigger temper in the songwriting. "The blood on our hands will come back to us twice," Springsteen laments in the sufferer's hymn "Rocky Ground," over a hip-hop tension with storefront-chapel choruses. He is also ready to brawl. "C'mon and take your best shot/Let me see what you got," Springsteen taunts in "Wrecking Ball," a song he debuted live in 2009 as a goodbye to the old Giants Stadium but repurposes here as a battle of wills ("Hold tight to your anger/And don't fall to your fears") with big-band charge and Jersey-hardass swagger.

Actually, for an election year, *Wrecking Ball* is a boldly apolitical record. The basic premise is that the true business of politics – responsible governing, a commerce of shared rewards – is broken, with plenty of guilt to go around. It may be a sign of how hard optimism is to come by that Springsteen covers himself here – reviving "Land of Hope and Dreams," originally released on 2001's *Live in New York City* – to insist all is not lost. He makes a glorious case. The new arrangement is Phil Spector gone to church with help from Curtis Mayfield. You get resurrection, too. The late Clarence Clemons is featured on saxophone, a beautiful extension of his life with Springsteen.

But Springsteen's most gripping new song on *Wrecking Ball* is the one that ends in the worst kind of frustration. In the weighed-down moan and slow-walk piano of "Jack of All Trades," Springsteen plays a guy from the new permalence working class, skilled and drifting, with no benefits, security or, by the end, patience. "If I had me a gun, I'd find the bastards and shoot 'em on sight," he swears between Morello's strafing bursts of guitar. Because there is no such thing as free enterprise. Someone, usually at the bottom of the chain, pays for that share price. And someday, that stone may demand blood in return.

Key Tracks: "We Take Care of Our Own," "Jack of All Trades"

NOT-SO-ANGRY BIRD
Break It is the 38-year-old's ninth album.



Andrew Bird: Elegantly Irked

Chicago singer-violinist seethes politely amid his signature chamber-pop beauty

Andrew Bird ★★★★★½ Break It Yourself Mom + Pop



Over a nearly 20-year career, Chicago singer, songwriter and violinist Andrew Bird has built a rep as one of indie rock's most beguiling light touches – a dude who makes Jeff Tweedy look like a Nordic death-metal pyro. Fusing elements of jazz, Celtic folk and chamber pop while softly talk-singing – or whistling – tunes with titles like "Scythian Empires," he might be gratingly pretentious, if he wasn't so unobtrusively amiable. But on his ninth album, Bird gets direct, even confrontational. "Desperation Breeds..." sets the tone, opening the record with a dark blast of piano-guitar discord. Soon we get a sense of what's under his skin: "Go ahead and congratulate yourself," he sings on "Eyeoneye," a conservatory-Neil Young breakup seether. Andy's pissed, albeit in an I-know-she's-intentionally-forgetting-to-DVR-*Downton Abbey*-just-to-spite-me kind of way.

The emotional urgency energizes his fluid multi-instrumental elocution and learned metaphors; sometimes it sounds like he's burning an effigy of his ex in the quad at iTunes U: On "Give It Away," he evokes "worthless currency" over a gently plucked violin, analogizing inflation and failure like the Ron Paul of love. Whether contemplatively highbrow (the symphonic meditation "Hole in the Ocean Floor") or forlornly down-to-earth (the alt-country of "Fatal Shore"), his angst studies feel cathartic without seeming mean-spirited; when healing marimbas and crickets materialize for the album-ending instrumental lullaby, "Belles," it's a welcome exhaling moment. He's earned his rest. JON DOLAN

Key Tracks:
"Danse Caribe,"
"Eyeoneye"



LISTEN NOW!

Hear key tracks from these albums at rollingstone.com/albums.

TOP SINGLES

Norah Jones

★★★★½

"Happy Pills"

"Would you please just let me go now?" pleads Norah Jones. She's addressing some fool who crushed her feelings, but you'd hardly know it from the breezy way her voice swings over producer Danger Mouse's bopping bass line. Breaking up never sounded so fun.

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

Blur

"Under the Westway"

Debuted live and acoustic in London, this drizzly Ray Davies-style ballad should sate anyone missing the Blur of old. "It was a quiet day in my city today/Everything was sinking," Damon Albarn sings mournfully, tying everyday London life to new heartbreak.

MICHAELANGELO MATOS

Odd Future

★★★½

"Rella"

Tyler, the Creator's crew returns with a middle finger to the usual targets, ears, gays and women included ("Let's get it poppin' like MC Lyte around some dykes"). It lacks the subtlety of jackhammering, though Left Brain's arrhythmic beat and the group's tongue-twisting blather comes close.

JEFF ROSENTHAL

Debo Band

★★★★½

"Asha Gedawo"

A Tune-Yards side project? No, but this Ethiopian-American crew's update on Seventies East African funk sounds just as giddily strange. Guitar solos, massed vocals, violin and brass rush in like a Red Bull marching band. Dance at your own risk.

WILL HERMES

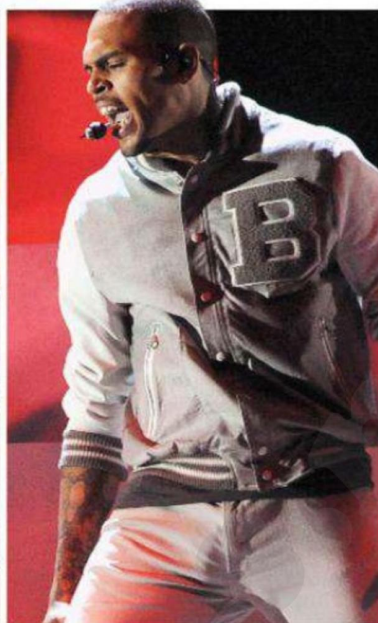


LISTEN NOW!

Hear these and more hot new tracks at rollingstone.com/songs.



Rihanna and Brown



Rihanna and Chris Brown's Lurid Reunion

Rihanna and Chris Brown ★★★★★½ "Birthday Cake (Remix)" ★★★★★½ "Turn Up the Music (Remix)"

The musical reconciliation of Rihanna and Chris Brown raises a welter of emotions: outrage, sadness, bewilderment, revulsion. It's not merely, as some armchair psychoanalysts have suggested, evidence of crippling codependency; nor is it solely a morally obtuse publicity stunt. It's business as usual, consistent with the music that has made Rihanna a prolific hitmaker: From "Breakin' Dishes" to "S&M," her songs explore the violence of sex and, yes, the sexiness of violence. "Turn Up the Music" is pro-forma club R&B that spices up Brown's simpering lead vocals with some flirty

cooing from Rihanna. Her "Birthday Cake" is a more sonically arresting piece, a raucous mix of buzzes, beats and X-rated chants. Brown announces, "I wanna fuck you right now"; Rihanna ups the ante by turning sex into a power play: "I'm-a make you my bitch." Is it coincidence that Rihanna is the dominatrix, and Brown the submissive who gets crushed beneath her leather boot heel? The revenge is symbolic, of course. Unfortunately, symbolic victories are the only kind available to Rihanna - and evidently, they're the kind she cares about most. JODY ROSEN

BOOTLEG

Mötley Crüe

The Joint at Hard Rock Hotel, Las Vegas, February 3rd, 2012

It was inevitable that Mötley Crüe would wind up with a residency in Las Vegas. Thirty-odd years into their career, Vince Neil, Tommy Lee, Nikki Sixx and Mick Mars are still a living manifestation of the city - grimey, greedy, crass, hedonistic and loud - which means they know how to throw a wild onstage party. This 12-night run in February allowed the band to stretch beyond its hits. The Crüe dug early-Eighties favorites "On With the Show," "Bastard" and "Shout at the Devil" out of mothballs for the occasion, and a midshow acoustic session featured a smartly stripped-down rendition of the group's Dr.



Neil

Feelgood hit "Don't Go Away Mad (Just Go Away)." Mötley Crüe's onstage antics have almost always overshadowed their music, and few people would clamor for a Tommy Lee or Mick Mars solo, from 1983 or 2012. But the band's career highs are a huge step above the hair-metal dreck of Poison and Warrant. Sure, no one mistakes "Girls, Girls, Girls" for high art - but who could hate a show with "Home Sweet Home" as its grand finale? It's just not possible.

ANDY GREENE

Mayer Mends Old Wounds

John Mayer ★★★★★½

"Shadow Days"

John Mayer's new LP was held for months while the singer recuperated from throat surgery, and the break seems to have given Mr. "David Duke cock" some time for self-reflection. "I'm a good man with a good heart/Had a tough time, got a rough start," Mayer assures over country-tinged soft rock. You've got to admire a man who takes the high road, and as Mayer's George Harrison-inscribed guitar melts into the sunset, his contrition is sympathetic. JON DOLAN

Arcade Fire's Fight Song

Arcade Fire ★★★★★

"Abraham's Daughter"

Count on Arcade Fire to throw a funeral at the multiplex. Their haunting, cathedral-huge battle hymn for *Hunger Games* updates a Civil War-era song about volunteers giving their lives for the Union, adding a ghost-children chorale led by Régine Chassagne, a martial pulse and lyrics about "angels crying for the slaughter." It's some of the starkest, and creepiest, music the band has ever made - chamber rock strewn with black bunting and dipped in goth war paint. J.D.

BOOKS

Brown
in 1966

James Brown's Bottomless Groove

The rhythm revolutionary who changed pop forever finally gets the bio he deserves



The One: The Life and Music of James Brown ★★★★★½

RJ Smith *Gotham*

He liked to say he was born dead, that his bloodline was more Native American and Asian than African-American, that his mother passed away when he was four. None of it was true, but James Brown needed others to know he was different. Special.

And what was true was startling enough: that he learned enough from Little Richard to impersonate him; that he burned so hot on stage he needed an IV drip afterward; that he rose from shoeshine boy to international superstar. Many have explored Brown's sound – the way he found limitless possibility in a single element of a song; the way his shift of those elements set off a big bang of modernist rhythm that still reverberates half a century later. But no one has better marshaled the forces of history and politics to help make sense of a life as chaotic and contradictory as Brown's music is bottomless. The result is a biography as illuminating as it is definitive.

Smith, a senior editor at L.A. *Weekly* and veteran music journalist, roots his story in the soil of Georgialina – the intersection of Georgia and South Carolina, where Brown was born and raised – starting with the drumbeats of 18th-century slave rebellions. He traces Brown's penchant for “don't give me nothing” self-reliance back to the vicious Jim Crow politics that forced the black community of Augusta, Georgia, to fend for itself. And combing through history books, newspapers and original interviews, Smith creates a vivid picture of Augusta's street life, boxing rings and revival-tent culture, where Brown's aspirations and foibles took shape.

All this is rendered in a novelistic voice that is as easy as it is rich (despite a few precious moments). Even more impressive is the attention paid to Brown's many bands. *The One* functions as a minihistory of the grooves of R&B, soul, rock & roll and funk, as Smith gives the drummers some: Nat Kendrick, Clayton Fillyau, John “Jabo” Starks, Clyde Stubblefield and the other long-suffering players who animated Brown's vision.

If that vision were all *The One* was about, it would be a happier book. But Brown's life was marked by the violence inflicted on him. His fighting spirit made his career, from *Live at the Apollo* to the whip-snap way he fired one of his best bands (when the group's members asked for more money and respect) and hired a bunch of kids from Cincinnati anchored by bassist Bootsy Collins. But it also meant he was quick to reach for his gun, and to use his fists on the women in his life (the details of his beating of Tammi Terrell are devastating). Virtually everything he accomplished unraveled except for his music. In the end, he was lost in drugs and his own legend. And yet, as Smith writes, his art remains singular, “a total experience, the opposite of crossover pop – the audience crossed over, to a world that hadn't existed until he made it so.”

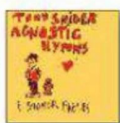
JOE LEVY

Todd Snider

★★★★½

Agnostic Hymns and Stoner Fables *Aimless*

Recession special from one of music's sharpest wordsmiths



Alternative title: *Occupy Nashville*. Todd Snider's latest is the sharpest musical

response yet to the excesses of the one percent: hilarious, infuriated broadsides about economic injustice delivered in Snider's stoner drawl over twangy roots rock. “In the Beginning” is a retelling of the Genesis story as a parable of the economic downturn; “New York Banker” laments that “good things happen to bad people”; “Precious Little Miracles” is jazzy lullaby crooned to the young people: “Your school is a joke and you'll always be poor.... Is that what all you crazy kids are so upset for?” Our Great Recession has found its dust-bowl balladeer. JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: “In the Beginning,” “New York Banker”

VCMG ★★★★★

SSSS *Mute*

Two dark lords of New Wave reunite after 30 years



Talk about a collaboration that had to happen: Vince Clarke was the original

songwriter for Depeche Mode, until he split over creative differences. While he racked up synth-pop hits with Yaz and Erasure, Martin Gore took over songwriting duties for Depeche Mode. So the long-awaited reunion is the New Wave equivalent of the Rocky/Apollo rematch at the end of *Rocky III*. The two legends go for minimal electro – no lyrics, no pop hooks, just a stripped-down set of Nineties-style trans-Europe synth grooves. They revel in the dark-wave textures and autobahn beats of “Single Blip” and “Skip This Track” without any frills. For these guys, “Spock” isn't just a song title – it's an emotional stance.

ROB SHEFFIELD

Key Tracks: “Single Blip,” “Windup Robot,” “Bendy Bass”

The Magnetic Fields ★★★★★½

Love at the Bottom of the Sea *Merge*

Witty mastermind behind 69 Love Songs gets back on topic



Revisiting his favorite subject with his main band, Stephin Merritt delivers

15 synth-pop exercises, all 2:39 or under, savoring love in all its twisted flavors. A straight dude falls for another man in sugary harmony (“Andrew in Drag”), a religious babe cock-blocks her own boyfriend over electro-sputters (“God Wants Us to Wait”), and jealousy blooms everywhere. The humor wouldn't be as sharp if the arrangements didn't set up the jokes. And while the Magnetic Fields pose as indie rockers, internal rhymes like “Let Laramie take care o' me till they bury me” suggest they've learned something from rappers and honky-tonkers, too. WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: “Andrew in Drag,” “My Husband's Pied-a-Terre”

fun. ★★★★★½

Some Nights *Fueled by Ramen*

Queen-y New York trio work up enjoyable bombast



Nate Ruess, lead singer of the NYC indie-pop trio fun., might be the Platonic ideal of a

21st-century rock star. He has a huge voice, all snarl and Broadway panache; at his full-fathom best, he could send Adam Lambert scrambling for cover. His music blends classic bubble-pop tunefulness with rococo rock & roll – close harmony chorales, showy key changes, a dash of Queen here, a dollop of *Les Miz* there. In “We Are Young” (featuring Janelle Monáe), and 10 other rollickingly catchy songs, Ruess' knack for the anthemic is matched by Gen-Y humor – emo self-deprecation that leavens the bombast. “Some nights I rule the world/With bar lights and pretty girls,” he sings. “But most nights I stay straight and think about my mom.” J.R.

Key Tracks: “Some Nights,” “We Are Young”

The Ting Tings

★★★★½

Sounds From
Nowheresville *Columbia*

Brit duo hop from ska to
electro, pile up perky hooks



"Should have been a lawyer," barks Katie White on the Ting Tings' second album.

She certainly knows how to argue her case. In 2008, the English duo emerged as international stars with sassy punk-pop rants like "That's Not My Name." Here, the band again is at its best when White is proclaiming ("I'm gonna paint my face at the Guggenheim!") and dissing ("Liar, liar/Your words expire") in a voice pitched somewhere between cheerleader, rapper and Tourette's sufferer. The music dips into ska, Eighties electro and power ballads, and the sumptuously noirish torch song "In Your Life" proves White's heart is as big as her spleen.

JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "Hang It Up," "Hit Me Down Sonny," "In Your Life"

Air

★★★★

Le Voyage Dans La Lune

Astralwerks

A spaced-out set inspired by a
cinematic landmark



Between Daft Punk's astronaut gear and Air's analog synth-powered *Moon*

Safari, French electronic musicians have historically shown great nostalgia toward the old Space Age. Continuing the trend is Air's score to a marvelously restored color version of Georges Méliès' pioneering 1902 film about space travel (recently re-canonized in Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*). At 31 minutes, this set is double the film's length, so alongside score instrumentals like the twitchy trip-hop jaunt "Sonic Armada" is nonfilm filler like "Seven Stars," a piano-driven countdown with Beach House's Victoria Legrand. Like her collaborators, she sounds like she was weaned on *The Dark Side of the Moon*.

WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "Sonic Armada," "Seven Stars"

Ceremony

★★★★½ *Zoo Matador*

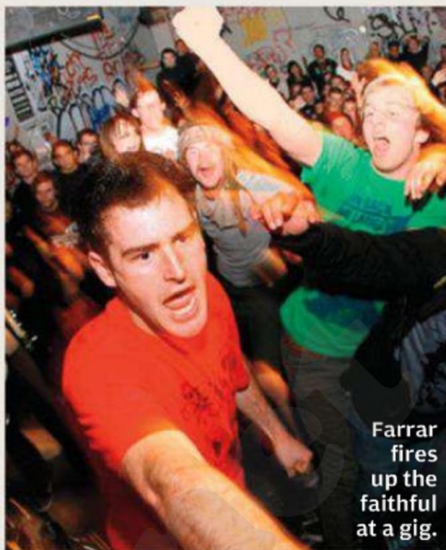
Bay Area hardcore guys thrash and
burn, with precision and purpose



Ceremony's website offers visitors this adorably Luddite message: "We do not have a Twitter, MySpace or Facebook." Indeed, interpersonal connection does not seem to come easy for this Bay Area hardcore punk band: "It's getting hard...to stay human," frontman Ross Farrar hollers on the group's first LP for Matador Records. Previous Ceremony discs were dervish blurs of nail-gun thrash. On *Zoo*, Ceremony obliterate more discriminately, recalling the post-punk of Joy Division, the Fall and Wire – if those bands had spent more time in weight rooms than art galleries. Farrar's vein-popping rants stick with you because they're so refreshingly pure-hearted: "I caught the world flu/I saw the world blue," he self-diagnoses. It's hard to resist the urge to barf along.

JON DOLAN

Key Tracks: "Hysteria," "Repeating the Circle," "Nosebleed"



Farrar fires up the faithful at a gig.

KEY FACTS

Hometown Rohnert Park, California

Backstory Ceremony were initially lumped in with the ludicrously intense "power-violence" punk scene: Their 2005 debut had less-than-a-minute songs with titles like "This Is My War."

Homeboy Farrar's bucolic hometown – a.k.a. "the Friendly City" – inspired parts of 2010's not-exactly-friendly *Rohnert Park*. **Pain Dogs** Ceremony love Tom Waits – fitting, since Farrar often sounds like he's singing into a bullhorn.

Kevin Gordon

★★★★½

Gloryland *Crowville Media*

Roots-rock bard riffs on the
KKK, ZZ Top and terrorists



Great songwriters are a dime a dozen in Nashville, but Kevin Gordon is an anomaly:

a recovering poet who is better at selling outsider art than country hits, though Keith Richards and Levon Helm have sung his songs. The centerpiece here, "Colfax/Step in Time," is a slow-burning 10-minute slice of life about a kid in the segregated South, with Gordon's talking-blues-meets-codeine-rap flow remembering his marching-band days and slyly rhyming "Kool and the Gang" and "Ku Klux Klan." Meanwhile, the title track parses religious fervor in terms of politicians and human bombs. But the smarts on *Gloryland* never undercut the roots-rock rush. Dude's a juke-joint professor emeritus.

W.H.

Key Tracks: "Colfax/Step in Time," "Gloryland," "Bus to Shreveport"

Tyga

★★★★½

Careless World:
Rise of the Last King

Young Money/Cash Money

Rising MC throws party,
forgets to invite fresh ideas



That Tyga ranks as the fourth-best rapper on Lil Wayne's label is hardly a sign of weakness. The 22-year-old's first LP for Young Money lays bare its Top 40 aspirations with misty-eyed R&B ("Far Away") and clings mostly to an everyman rags-to-riches narrative; it also keeps a shrewd eye on the club with the dank champagne-room bounce of "Faded" and Top 10 hit "Rack City." Tyga's strength isn't in introspection, but curation. Pharrell Williams, Wale, Nas and J. Cole all guest, and those who don't are there in spirit: "Do It All" apes Kanye West's "Power," and "Black Crowns" ends with a voicemail message from Mom that would make even Drake squirm.

MONICA HERRERA

Key Tracks: "Rack City," "Lil Homie"

The Decemberists

★★★★

We All Raise Our Voices
to the Air (Live Songs
04.11-08.11) *Capitol*

Like Kiss' *Alive!* – if it were cut
at a Renaissance faire

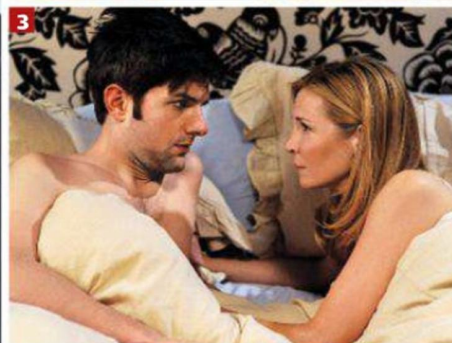
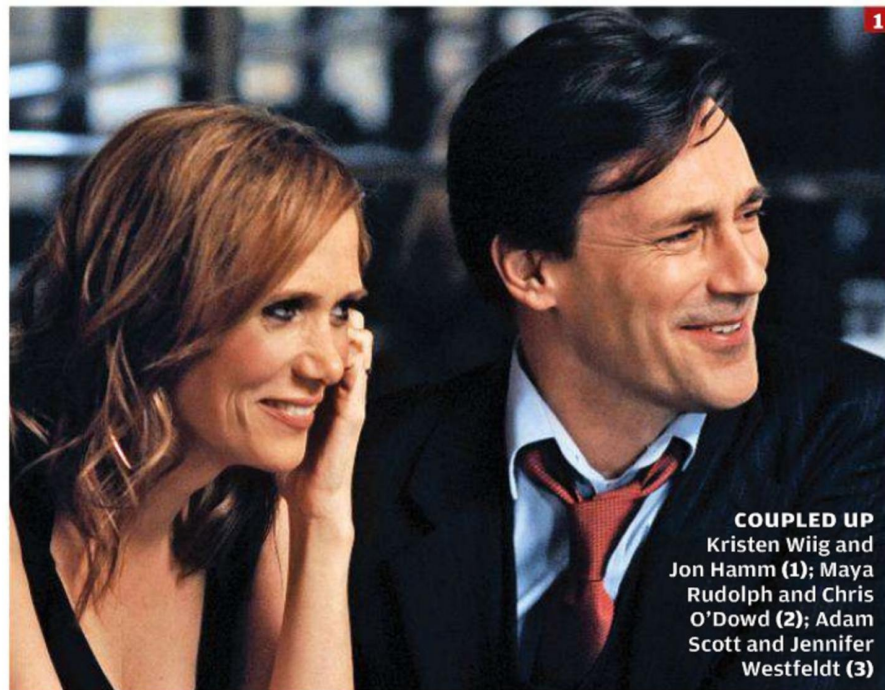


Can a live set be called "stripped-down" when it has a 16-minute folk-rock opus, a yodeling drummer and nautical-themed audience participation?

In the case of a band as overweeningly theatrical as the Decemberists can be, the answer is...kinda. This is a surprisingly crisp live LP, even at two discs: taut and driving, full of Celtic and country flourishes, held together by richly melodic tunes. Even grandiose moments have kick; the 10-minute "I Was Meant for the Stage" goes from ballad bonhomie to guitar wailing and free-jazz fanfare – a sweet explosion to singe your sweater vest.

J.D.

Key Tracks: "Calamity Song," "Rise to Me"



COUPLED UP
Kristen Wiig and Jon Hamm (1); Maya Rudolph and Chris O'Dowd (2); Adam Scott and Jennifer Westfeldt (3)

Meet the Crazy Parents

A darkly perceptive comedy about couples and kids, for better and worse **By Peter Travers**

Friends With Kids ★★½

Kristen Wiig, Jon Hamm, Maya Rudolph, Adam Scott, Jennifer Westfeldt
Directed by Jennifer Westfeldt

JENNIFER WESTFELDT AND Jon Hamm, an unmarried, child-free couple for 15 years, noticed something about their friends with kids: These harried parents were becoming strangers and disappearing from their lives. A light bulb went off. Why not produce a movie on the topic? *Mad Men* star Hamm would take a role and bring in a few of his friends from *Bridesmaids*—Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph and Chris O'Dowd. And Westfeldt, who co-wrote and acted in the indie hits *Kissing Jessica Stein* in 2001 and 2006's *Ira & Abby*, would take a role and make her debut as a solo writer and director. Pressure? Bring it on.

The result is *Friends With Kids*, an indelibly funny and touching comedy with a real sting in its tail. The laughs leave scars. For this, credit Westfeldt, an actress of rare wit and grace, and now a filmmaker with a keen eye for nuance. Westfeldt plays Julie, a thirtysomething

Manhattanite who can't find a guy to make her feel as alive as Jason (Adam Scott), her platonic BFF from college. Her peers have already coupled up. Missy (Wiig) and Ben (Hamm) are so hot for each other, they sneak off for quickies. Leslie (Rudolph) and Alex (O'Dowd), appalled at the sight of kids in chic restaurants, live lives out of *Sex and the City*.

Skip ahead four years, and everything changes. Leslie and Alex have two kids they can barely handle, and have exiled themselves to Far Tortuga, meaning Brooklyn. Missy and a heavy-drinking Ben cope with a newborn and snipe at each other. The tension isn't missed by Julie and Jason, but even they decide to enter the baby fray. One caveat: They

share custody but maintain separate apartments and lives. When baby Joe is born, Jason still finds time to bonk dancer Maryjane (a standout Megan Fox), and Julie finds bliss in Kurt (Edward Burns, very fine), a divorced father of two. They're the envy of all their friends until Julie starts having feelings for the father of her child.

Westfeldt has cleverly set a series of traps to show how parenthood defines character. A gimmick? For sure. But amid the potent hilarity, Westfeldt unearths painful home truths, especially at a Vermont cabin where the friends lick their wounds and create new ones.

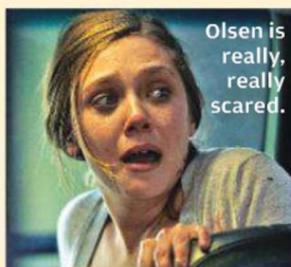
The cast could not be better. Wiig is seriously good, giving her cold-steel scenes with the excellent Hamm a wounding edge. Rudolph and O'Dowd provide the healing warmth the film needs. And Scott, of *Parks and Recreation*, is terrific as a pussy hound who grows into a man of feeling. But this is Westfeldt's show. In front of the camera and behind it, she's the live current that pulls us in and makes us care. Westfeldt is the pulse of *Friends With Kids*, presenting us with life in all of its vibrant, messy sprawl.

Experiment in Terror

Silent House

★★½ Elizabeth Olsen
Directed by Chris Kentis and Laura Lau

Elizabeth Olsen gets locked inside an old, dark, creaky lake house. If you ask why, *Silent House* is so not for you. Logic goes south the minute pretty Sarah (Olsen) lets her dad (Adam Trese) and uncle (Eric Sheffer Stevens) persuade her to get the family's creepy cabin ready for sale. Zap! She's trapped for nearly 90 minutes. And so are we. The fun is in the technique. Directors Chris Kentis and Laura Lau, the mischief devils behind the shark-infested *Open Water*,



Olsen is really, really scared.

trail Olsen with a high-def camera through trial by slammed doors, flickering lights and psychological terror. *Paranormal Activity* has been here before, of course, but *Silent House* springs tangy new tricks, and Olsen (younger sis of Mary-Kate and Ashley) is a primo scream queen.

Salmon Fishing in the Yemen

★★★★

Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt, Kristin Scott Thomas
Directed by Lasse Hallström

RELAX. THE TITLE IS MEANT to provoke a "Huh? What?" That's the reaction of fisheries expert Dr. Alfred Jones (Ewan McGregor) when PR consultant Harriet Chetwode-Talbot (Emily Blunt) tells him that billionaire Sheikh Muhammad (a wonderful Amr Waked) wants to bring fly-fishing to the desert—damn the cost! The British prime minister sees the crazy idea of shipping 10,000 North Atlantic salmon to Yemen as a ploy to distract from the nasty business in the Middle East. He enlists his hardassed spokeswoman, Patricia Maxwell (an irresistibly bossy Kristin Scott Thomas), to make it happen. That she does.

This is a rich subject for satire and sticking it to political bureaucracy. Screenwriter Simon Beaufoy (*127 Hours*) has

mined Paul Torday's book for delicious nuggets about Western capitalism at war with Muslim culture. Director Lasse Hallström clearly appreciates Sheikh Muhammad's dream of using salmon fishing to unite the people of Yemen across barriers of sect and class. Some might object to the *Chocolat*



SON AND DAD
Dano and De Niro

sweetness Hallström brings to the unlikely romance between the married Dr. Jones and the engaged Ms. Chetwode-Talbot. But McGregor and Blunt have charm to spare and the no-bull instinct to cut to the heart of a scene. In the Dead Sea of Hollywood formula, their film is a distinct delight, brimming over with spirit and surprise.

Being Flynn

★★★★

Robert De Niro, Paul Dano
Directed by Paul Weitz

A YOUNG WRITER, COPING with addiction, finally meets the drunk, delusional father he never knew at the homeless shelter where the writer works.

That's the improbable truth at the core of *Being Flynn*, the uneven but undeniably powerful film from writer and director Paul Weitz.

Based on Nick Flynn's 2004 memoir, *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* (great title), *Being Flynn* is a film that aches with sadness. Paul Dano excels as Nick, the budding writer, poet and playwright who drifts through his twenties until he takes a job at the New York homeless shelter that employs his girlfriend, Denise (Olivia Thirlby). Seeing his father, Jonathan (Robert

De Niro), lining up for the shelter is a jolt. Jonathan is a writer too, claiming to be on par with J.D. Salinger and Mark Twain. He talks obsessively of his magnum opus, *Memoirs of a Moron*, and unearths long-buried memories of Nick's childhood and his troubled mother, Jody (the ever-superb Julianne Moore).

The film is a duel between father and son, with Nick providing narration for each in the hope of understanding his old man. From *L.I.E.* to *Little Miss Sunshine* and *There Will Be Blood*, Dano has shown himself to be an actor of subtle brilliance. His quiet intensity is a wrenching contrast to De Niro's unhinged flamboyance. Weitz directed De Niro in *Little Fockers*, a strained farce that barely tapped the actor's skills. Here, you can feel De Niro's full engagement in a character that echoes his roles in *Taxi Driver* and *Awakenings*. It's a great wreck of a performance that feels bruisingly true. At its best, when it keeps sentimentality at bay, so does *Being Flynn*.



The gum that looks like candy. But it's not.

Sugarfree Mentos® Gum has a crunchy shell, a fresh burst of flavor and an amazingly long-lasting chew. It's everything you've ever wanted in a gum.

AUDIO ENGINEERING



800.255.PLAY
WWW.MI.EDU



MUSICIANS INSTITUTE
COLLEGE OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
AUDIO ENGINEERING



ALL THE PARTS YOUR CAR WILL EVER NEED

- ✓ Everyday Low Prices
- ✓ Easy To Use Website
- ✓ Huge Selection
- ✓ Fast Shipping



GO TO WWW.ROCKAUTO.COM ROCKAUTO, LLC (EST. 1999)



HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS

Quality Tools at Ridiculously Low Prices

LIFETIME WARRANTY
ON ALL HAND TOOLS

FACTORY DIRECT TO YOU!

How does Harbor Freight Tools sell high quality tools at such ridiculously low prices? We buy direct from the factories who also supply the major brands and sell direct to you. It's just that simple! See for yourself at one of our 380 Stores Nationwide and use this 20% Off Coupon on one of our 7,000 products*, plus pick up a Free 9 LED Aluminum Flashlight, a \$6.99 value. We stock Shop Equipment, Hand Tools, Tarps, Compressors, Air & Power Tools, Woodworking Tools, Welders, Tool Boxes, Generators, and much more.

- Over 20 Million Satisfied Customers!
- 1 Year Competitor's Low Price Guarantee
- No Hassle Return Policy!
- 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed!

Nobody Beats Our Quality,
Service and Price!

SUPER COUPON!



FREE!
WITH ANY PURCHASE

3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT
NINE LED ALUMINUM
FLASHLIGHT
ITEM 65020/69052/69111
REG. PRICE \$6.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1 Free item available with any purchase. Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the offer. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

20% OFF
ANY SINGLE ITEM!

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1 Use this coupon to save 20% on any one single item purchased when you shop at a Harbor Freight Tools store. Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

7 FT. 4" X 9 FT. 6"
ALL PURPOSE WEATHER
RESISTANT TARP

LOT NO. 877
\$349 REG. PRICE \$6.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 6 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

29 PIECE TITANIUM
NITRIDE COATED
DRILL BIT SET
drillmaster

LOT NO. 5889
\$999 REG. PRICE \$24.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

HAULMASTER MOVER'S DOLLY
LOT NO. 93888

1000 LB. CAPACITY
\$799 REG. PRICE \$14.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

580 LB. CAPACITY FOUR DRAWER TOOL CART
US • GENERAL

LOT NO. 95659
\$999 REG. PRICE \$229.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

PITTSBURGH 12" RATCHET
BAR CLAMP/SPREADER

LOT NO. 46807/68975/69221
\$199 REG. PRICE \$5.49

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



800 WATT/900 MAX. WATTS
PORTABLE GENERATOR (63 CC)
CHICAGO ELECTRIC GENERATORS

LOT NO. 66619
\$899 REG. PRICE \$179.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

HAULMASTER 1000 LB. CAPACITY SWING-BACK TRAILER JACK
LOT NO. 41005

SAVE 50%
\$1999 REG. PRICE \$39.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

DIGITAL INSPECTION
CAMERA WITH 2.4" COLOR
LCD MONITOR
CENTECH

LOT NO. 67979
Requires four AA batteries (included).
\$799 REG. PRICE \$119.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

SUPER COUPON!

80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL SET
CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT NO. 97626/68986
Item 97626 shown
\$749 REG. PRICE \$24.99

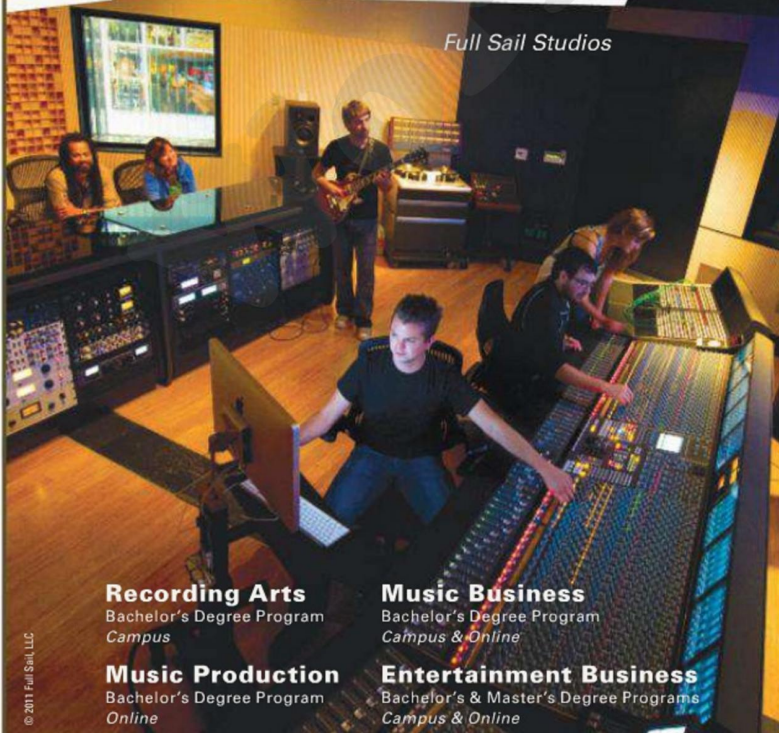
HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 9 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 7/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

380 Stores Nationwide

Order Online at HarborFreight.com and We'll Ship Your Order FedEx.
or 1-800-423-2567

TURN YOUR PASSION FOR MUSIC INTO A CAREER

Full Sail Studios



Recording Arts
Bachelor's Degree Program
Campus

Music Production
Bachelor's Degree Program
Online

Music Business
Bachelor's Degree Program
Campus & Online

Entertainment Business
Bachelor's & Master's Degree Programs
Campus & Online

Campus Degrees

Master's

Entertainment Business
Game Design

Bachelor's

Computer Animation
Creative Writing for Entertainment
Digital Arts & Design
Entertainment Business
Film
Game Art
Game Development
▶ Music Business
▶ Recording Arts
▶ Show Production
Sports Marketing & Media
Web Design & Development

Associate's

Graphic Design
▶ Recording Engineering

Online Degrees

Master's

Creative Writing
Education Media
Design & Technology
Entertainment Business
Internet Marketing
Media Design
New Media Journalism

Bachelor's

Computer Animation
Creative Writing for Entertainment
Digital Cinematography
Entertainment Business
Game Art
Game Design
Graphic Design
Internet Marketing
Mobile Development
▶ Music Business
▶ Music Production
Sports Marketing & Media
Web Design & Development

fullsail.edu

Winter Park, FL
800.226.7625 • 3300 University Boulevard

Financial aid available to those who qualify
Career development assistance
Accredited University, ACCSC
To view detailed information regarding tuition, student outcomes, and related statistics, please visit fullsail.edu/outcomes-and-statistics.



**FULL SAIL
UNIVERSITY**

The SHOP

SUMO LOUNGE - URBAN LOUNGE GEAR

Sumo Lounge offers the best selection of huge bean bags at prices starting at just \$149! Free shipping on all orders!

Call Toll Free (1) 866 340 7866

www.sumoulounge.com



My Grow Buddy - Indoor Gardening System

The "My Grow Buddy" grow box is our best selling indoor gardening system at Dealzer.com. This hydroponics system comes with everything you need except for the plants! Simply add plants and water to your indoor gardening system and you're all set! This unit comes complete with 3 year warranty and unlimited 24/7 tech support. Call or simply visit us at online to order one today! Grow ANY plant indoors!

Price: \$499
Dimensions:
41" X 28" X 18"



www.Dealzer.com
888-HYDRO-81

Rockabilia.com

With over 60,000 items to choose from, Rockabilia.com offers the largest selection of music merchandise you will find on the Web - period. From t-shirts, long sleeves & hoodies to posters, patches and rare collectables, you won't find this stuff anywhere else - trust us. Make us your source! Enter code PC225RS at checkout and receive 15% off your order through 4/15/12. You may also place an order or request a free 120-page catalog at 1-952-556-1121.

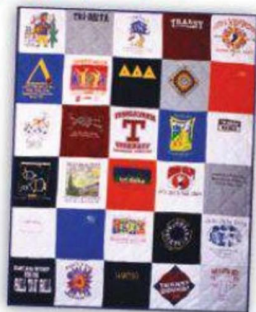
www.rockabilia.com



T-shirt Quilts

Campus Quilt Company turns your t-shirts into an awesome new quilt. Get those hard-earned shirts out of your closet and off your back! We do all of the work and make it easy for you to have a t-shirt quilt in as few as two weeks. As featured on the Today Show, Rachael Ray Show, and Real Simple. Mention you saw us in Rolling Stone for \$10 off. 502-968-2850

www.CampusQuilt.com



VIAGRA, CIALIS, LEVITRA, PROPECIA, VALTrex ONLINE!

All FDA approved brand name medications. USA Pharmacies and Doctors since 1998. Order Online, by Phone (800-314-2829) or Mobile Device!
• Safe
• Secure
• Discreet



www.Viamedic.com

Design T-Shirts Online!

Create custom shirts for your group with our fun & easy Design Lab! Name-brand apparel, extensive art library and font collection. FREE design assistance & FREE shipping. SAVE \$10 on 6 or more items with voucher code: stone7. Call today 855-411-0682 or visit us online at:

customink.com/rstone



CustomInk
Design T-shirts Online



Dive Bar T-Shirts

Join the club and receive a new T-shirt every month from the best bars you've never heard of!

DiveBarShirtClub.com



It's always St. Paddy's Day in Philadelphia

This Paddy's Irish Pub t-shirt is a must for any fan of "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia". It also makes a great St. Patrick's Day t-shirt. Visit the web address below to get 10% off your order. Price: \$20

80sTees.com/paddys

1-866-80sTees



Your Children's Names!

The PagePendant™: Cut from the Pages of Your Life! \$189
LifeNames Ring features up to 4 names! \$169
Money-back guarantee. Free Resize.
3-Day Rush Available! Find Carved Creations on Facebook. 888.497.7799
For more styles and designs, visit

www.ccforslife.com

CARVED CREATIONS
JEWELRY FOR LIFE





**BANG
SOMETHING
NEW**

 **IMPERIAL**

CHARTS

iTunes Top 10 Songs

- Katy Perry**
"Part of Me" *Capitol*
- Whitney Houston**
"I Will Always Love You" *Arista*
- Adele**
"Rolling in the Deep" *XL/Columbia*
- Adele**
"Set Fire to the Rain" *XL/Columbia*
- Kelly Clarkson**
"Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)" *RCA*
- fun.**
"We Are Young" *Fueled by Ramen*
- Nicki Minaj**
"Starships" *Young Money/Cash Money*
- Chris Brown**
"Turn Up the Music" *RCA*
- Adele**
"Someone Like You" *XL/Columbia*
- One Direction**
"What Makes You Beautiful" *Syco*

COPYRIGHT © 2012 ITUNES

College Radio Top 10 Albums

- The Black Keys**
El Camino *Nonesuch*
- Cloud Nothings**
Attack on Memory *Carpark*
- Dr. Dog**
Be the Void *Anti-*
- Of Montreal**
Paralytic Stalks *Polyvinyl*
- Tennis**
Young and Old *Fat Possum*
- First Aid Kit**
The Lion's Roar *Wichita*
- Sharon Van Etten**
Tramp *Jagjaguwar*
- Air**
Le Voyage Dans la Lune *EMI*
- Nada Surf**
The Stars Are Indifferent to Astronomy *Barsuk*
- Shearwater**
Animal Joy *Sub Pop*

COPYRIGHT © 2012 CMJ NETWORK INC.

From the Vault

RS 625, March 5th, 1992

TOP 10 SINGLES

- Mr. Big**
"To Be With You" *Atlantic*
- Right Said Fred**
"I'm Too Sexy" *Charisma*
- Michael Jackson**
"Remember the Time" *Epic*
- Shanice**
"I Love Your Smile" *Motown*
- Vanessa Williams**
"Save the Best for Last" *Wing*
- Eric Clapton**
"Tears in Heaven" *Reprise*
- Prince and the New Power Generation**
"Diamonds and Pearls" *Paisley P.*
- Atlantic Starr**
"Masterpiece" *Reprise*
- Tevin Campbell**
"Tell Me What You Want Me to Do" *Qwest*
- Amy Grant**
"Good for Me" *A&M*



On the Cover

"The Beatles were elevator music in my lifetime. 'Yummy Yummy Yummy' (I've Got Love in My Tummy)" had more impact on me. I distinctly remember singing that song in a swimming pool and my father saying, 'Don't sing that, it's a nasty song.'" —**Michael Stipe**

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published biweekly except for the first issue in July and at year's end, when two issues are combined and published as double issues, by Wenner Media LLC, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 2012 by ROLLING STONE LLC, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration No. R125041855. International Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 450553. The subscription price is \$39.96 for one year. The Canadian subscription price is \$52.00 for one year, including GST, payable in advance. Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes and returns to P.O. Box 63, Malton CFC, Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3B5. The foreign subscription price is \$80.00 for one year, payable in advance. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post publication agreement #40683192. Postmaster: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE Customer Service, P.O. Box 6003, Harlan, IA 51593-1503.

Top 40 Albums

- 1** **Adele**
21 *XL/Columbia*
- 6** **Whitney Houston**
Whitney: The Greatest Hits *Arista*
- 3** **NOW 41**
Various Artists *Universal/EMI/Sony Music*
- 9** **Adele**
19 *XL/Columbia*
- 8** **2012 Grammy Nominees**
Various Artists *Grammy*
- 2** **Van Halen**
A Different Kind of Truth *Interscope*
- 5** **Paul McCartney**
Kisses on the Bottom *MPL/Hear*
- 30** **Bruno Mars**
Doo-Wops & Hooligans *Elektra*
- 17** **Lady Antebellum**
Own the Night *Capitol Nashville*
- 41** **The Civil Wars**
Barton Hollow *Sensibility*
- 14** **Coldplay**
Mylo Xyloto *Capitol*
- 10** **Drake**
Take Care *Young Money/Cash Money*
- 12** **Kelly Clarkson**
Stronger *19*
- 4** **The Fray**
Scars & Stories *Epic*
- 16** **Jason Aldean**
My Kinda Party *Broken Bow*
- 22** **The Twilight Saga**
Breaking Dawn: Part 1 *Summit/Chop Shop/Atlantic*
- 18** **Rihanna**
Talk a Talk *SRP/Def Jam*
- 11** **LMFAO**
Sorry for Party Rocking *Party Rock/Will.I.Am/Cherrytree/Interscope*
- 24** **The Band Perry**
The Band Perry *Republic Nashville*
- 15** **Kidz Bop Kids**
Kidz Bop 21 *Razor & Tie*
- 59** **Foo Fighters**
Wasting Light *Roswell*
- 19** **Luke Bryan**
Tailgates & Tanlines *Capitol Nashville*
- 29** **Mumford & Sons**
Sigh No More *Glassnote*
- 7** **Dierks Bentley**
Home *Capitol Nashville*
- 42** **Taylor Swift**
Speak Now *Big Machine*
- 23** **Young Jeezy**
TM:103: Hustlerz Ambition *CTE/Def Jam*
- 37** **Tony Bennett**
Duets II *RPM/Columbia*
- 27** **Jay-Z and Kanye West**
Watch the Throne *Roc-a-Fella/Roc Nation/Def Jam*
- 49** **Bon Iver**
Bon Iver *Jagjaguwar*
- 21** **Mary J. Blige**
My Life II... The Journey Continues (Act 1) *Matriarch/Geffen*
- 32** **Skrillex**
Bangarang (EP) *Big Beat/OWSLA/Atlantic*
- 20** **Tim McGraw**
Emotional Traffic *Curb*
- 26** **The Black Keys**
El Camino *Nonesuch*
- 28** **Gotye**
Making Mirrors *Samples 'N' Seconds/Fairfax*
- 25** **Nickelback**
Here and Now *Roadrunner*
- 13** **Lana Del Rey**
Born to Die *Polydor/Interscope*
- 72** **Whitney Houston**
Whitney Houston *Arista/Legacy*
- 80** **Whitney Houston**
The Bodyguard *Arista*
- 31** **Lil Wayne**
Tha Carter IV *Young Money/Cash Money*
- 43** **Maroon 5**
Hands All Over *A&M/Octone*



Rolling Even Faster

After her Grammy-night triumph, Adele sold a staggering 730,000 copies of her smash 21 - even though it's already been out for an entire year.



Whitney Forever

In the first full sales week after Houston's death, her 2000 best-of set - one of seven LPs back in the Top 200 - sold 175,000 copies.



Fair Warning

VH barely promoted their first album with David Lee Roth since 1984, which may be why it sold a not-earthshaking 246,000 copies in two weeks.



Macca's Classics

McCartney tackles old-school tunes from Irving Berlin to Fats Waller on his new standards disc. It sold 132,408 LPs in its first two weeks in stores.

00 Chart position on Feb. 22nd, 2012
00 Chart position on Feb. 15th, 2012
NEW New Entry
2ND Re-Entry

Copyright © 2012
Billboard/Prometheus
Global Media, LLC
All rights reserved.
www.billboard.com

FROM THE MAKERS OF PLANET EARTH



frozen planet

SUNDAYS 8PM

PREMIERES MARCH 18

 **Discovery**TM



FACEBOOK.COM /FROZENPLANETUS
DISCOVERY.COM /FROZENPLANET



All the content, half the price.

Movies and TV Shows
100,000 new releases and popular TV shows.

Music
18 million songs from your favorite artists.

Apps and Games
Thousands of the most popular apps & games at your fingertips.

Millions of books
Enjoy children's books, comic books and cookbooks in vibrant color. Plus hundreds of magazines and newspapers.



Amazon Silk, the revolutionary cloud-accelerated web browser
Ultra-fast web browsing using Amazon's cloud technology. Exclusively on Kindle Fire.

State-of-the-art dual-core processor
Stream music while browsing the web and downloading movies.

kindle fire | \$199

Learn more at amazon.com/kindlefire

amazon