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"Lies! Lies! All of It, Lies!"

Jericho High School '68-'69-'70-'71-'72-'73-'74-'75 Online Magazine

Official Propaganda Tool of 1968-1975 JHS Alumnuts

Yearbook 2 facebook

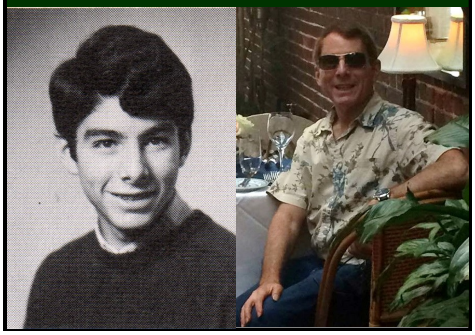
In our travels around cyberspace, we frequently come upon photos of former classmates, especially on Facebook. Can you *believe* how good everyone looks?!

Maybe they're all robots. Yep, that must be it.

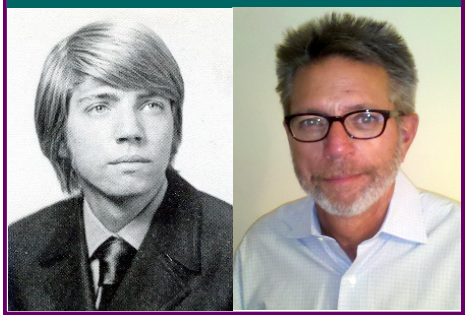
Linda Dalton ('68)
Massachusetts

Renee Maltz Levin ('69)
Long Island

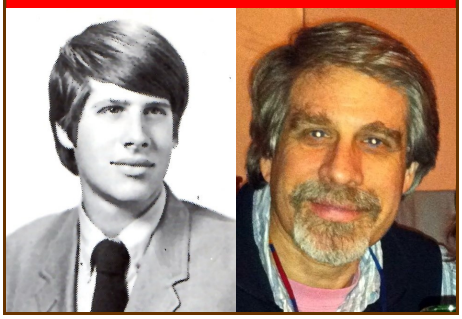
Lee Sorocca ('70)
New York



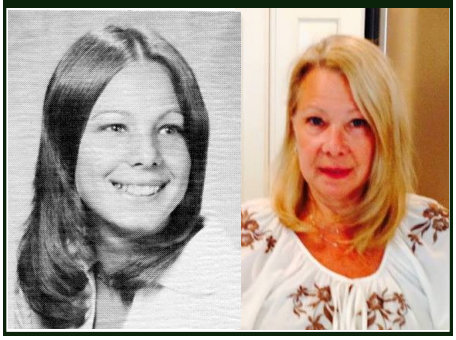
David Rhodes ('71)
North Carolina



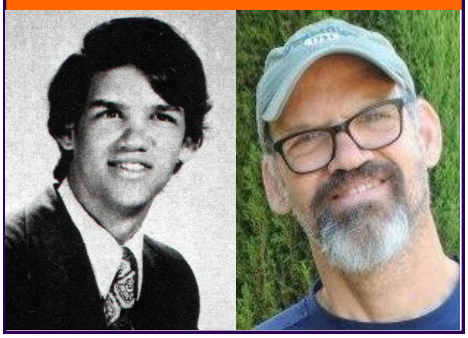
Michael Leshin ('72)
Massachusetts



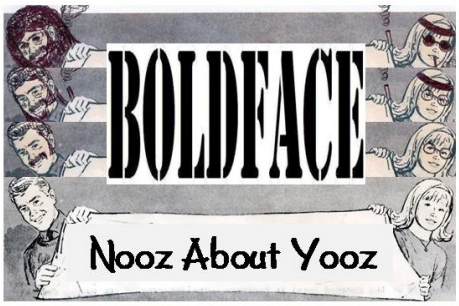
Cathy Cardinale Straus ('73)
Long Island



Joel Stern ('74)
New Jersey



Barbara Blanc Sunshine ('75)
Long Island



Do the clean-cut young folks above look familiar? They should. Their images graced the Jericho School News newsletter that was mailed to your parents to let them know just what it was you were supposedly doing on weekdays.

Volunteers of America: Mindy Wertheimer ('72)

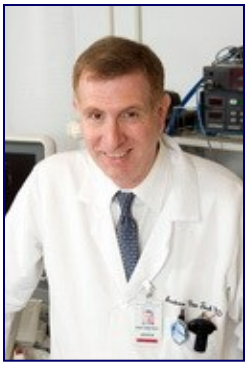
We can't improve upon the following announcement from Jewish Family & Career Services (JF&CS) of Atlanta honoring Dr. **Mindy Wertheimer** as its Volunteer of the Month, so we'll merely offer our congratulations and let the organization speak for itself:

"*Mazel tov* to Dr. Mindy Wertheimer, who has shared her time and talents with Federation in many different roles, on being named this month's volunteer of the month. Mindy, who directs the master's program at Georgia State University School of Social Work, has especially helpful in advising us on governance issues and has conducted the governances best-practices model at Federation's Jewish Leadership Institute (JLI).

"Mindy is a past president of JF&CS, has been a Federation trustee, and served on our Caring Outcomes Allocation Committee. We are grateful for Mindy's breadth, depth, and commitment to Jewish Atlanta."

(Above) That's Mindy with husband Ira Katz ('72) and their daughter Leanna Katz,; and (right) with their other daughter, Jessica Katz Yonatan. She and Ira married in 1978 and have lived in Atlanta for nearly that long.

Better Late Than Never, Right?



After reading the last issue's feature on beloved math teacher Mrs. Judith Broadwin, **Dr. Andrew Van Tosh** ('69) wrote, "It is hard to believe: I went to Johns Hopkins, New York University, and Yale for my medical training, but the best teachers I had in my life were at JHS. I took Mr. Vigilante's freshman English class; I learned more about writing an essay from him, and Ms. Bueschel, than from anyone in my life.

"Mrs. Broadwin was the person who taught me more about deductive reasoning than any other professor I was to have. It was an amazing experience. Perhaps it takes getting old to realize it."

Andrew is the clinical director of nuclear cardiology at the renowned St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn, Long Island.

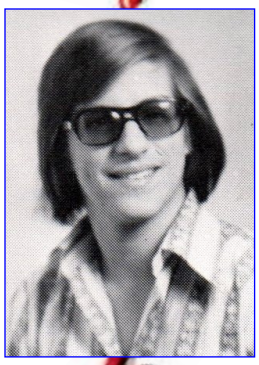
My Favorite Photo

"This is my favorite photo," writes **Amy Lubow Downs** ('72) of Brooklyn. Taken in 2008, it shows Amy surrounded by sons **Keith** (left) and **Ian**, plus pooch **Toby**, who is now eleven in dog years.

Today Ian is a physician, while Keith helps out Amy's ninety-eight-year-old father. "At age ninety-four, my dad sold his house in Jericho and moved to an independent-living facility in Port Washington. My mother died in 2002, and he'd lived alone for twelve years. He was very stubborn and didn't want to move. But finally he agreed, and now even he admits that he is much better off where he is. Keith and my father are good buddies, and he visits his grandfather often."

Longevity seems to run in the family, says Amy. "My father had a sister who died recently at age *103*. She always lived on her own, was very independent, and even played the piano and recited poetry."

Catch Up With . . .
Corey Pepper ('74)
His Love of Performing Is No Act



"After all these years, I'm still doing what I love, and I know so many people who can't say that. I've never had to stop doing it, and at this point, it doesn't look like I'll ever have to."

I was one of those kids who fell in love with acting at an early age. In kindergarten at Cantiague Elementary School, Mrs. Doris Gilbert cast me in the class play. When I say "cast," I mean that she picked me—I don't remember having to actually audition. But not long after that, when I was seven years old, I asked my mom if I could start taking acting classes. I took classes on Saturday mornings with drama teachers Burt Wolfe and Arnold Hruska as part of a weekend enrichment program that the school district offered.

Early on, I developed nodes on my vocal cords. At one point, either in fifth or sixth grade, I wasn't allowed to talk for almost three months, so that my voice could heal. Then I began taking speech and voice lessons with Ms. Andrea Jones who was a speech therapist at Cantiague and she really helped me learn how to speak and sing properly, so I've never had any vocal problems since then.

In high school, being an actor really became my identity. And it's funny, because now, as a drama teacher, I recognize that trait in my students. Not only was I in lots of plays, but I also directed. The show that always stands out most fondly for me is *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, which was the Harlequin Players' big production during my junior year. I was very close with a lot of seniors from the class of '73, like Peter Green, Roberta Eagle, and Charlie Koppelman, all of whom had major parts. And my cousin, Elyse Pepper, and I also had big roles in that: I was Bud Frump and was in about six musical numbers; Elyse played Hedy La Rue. It was just the most fun, and by far the best production we had in high school. I just loved it.

Steve Piorkowski directed *How to Succeed,* as well as most of the other shows I performed in at Jericho. He was and is the most important teacher I ever had. Just a remarkable man, who spent time with kids outside of class and really taught me not just acting stuff but also life stuff. Just a great, great guy. I write him periodically to thank him, because when I talk to my students today, I'm really just trying to channel Steve Piorkowski.

I had a closeness with many teachers, and I know from my own sons' educations that just doesn't happen anymore. I used to be able to go hang out in the teachers' lounge, and nobody would say a word to me. Or I would sit in Steve's office, or if Steve wasn't in, I was really close with the other drama teacher, Gene Huber, who passed away maybe ten or

Continued on page 5

Corey (sitting, second from right) was a sophomore in the December 1971 musical Good News. *Behind him are seniors Michael DiPasquale, Jim Rudy, and Michael Gilbert, and, from the class of 1973, Marc Powers.*

Corey Pepper

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fifteen years ago. I was also really close with English teacher Estelle Stern (later Rankin), who passed away earlier this year.

I was our class's president in tenth and eleventh grade. Between student government and acting, that took up most of my time. Another favorite show for me was our junior-year one-act play: the comedy *Lovers and Other Strangers*. It was a four-member cast. I starred as Frank, Rose Rabena played Bea, David Snyder was Richie, and Bonnie Raymond was Joan. Carrie Kass and Claude Stein codirected. We upset the class of '73's entry, *Small Packages*, from Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, to win the one-act play contest.

Binghamton Bound

My older brother, Larry, who's a oral surgeon, had gone to SUNY Binghamton, and my dad wanted me to go to Binghamton too. Due to financial constraints, it had to be a SUNY school. Binghamton and SUNY Purchase were the two that I most wanted to go to because of their arts programs. I auditioned for both. Truthfully, I never would have gotten into Binghamton based on my grades alone. I fell just short. I was a B-plus student, and you definitely had to be an A student for Binghamton at that time. I went through a Talented Student Admission Program there, so I was able to go up some weekend and audition for the theater department there. I was admitted as a theater major based upon that. I was very lucky to get in

The Pepper family at Dodger Stadium: from left to right, sons Griffin and Logan, wife Susannah, and Corey. Clearly this was taken in July, well before the team's eleven-game losing streak.

My parents were supportive of my wanting to pursue a career in acting, but like many people from their generation—which lived through the Great Depression and then World War II—they were a bit fearful about having a child who wanted to go into show business, which, of course, is a risky was to make a living. They were always encouraging me "Have a backup plan, Corey. Have something to fall back on." Which, in retrospect, was good advice. They really wanted me to get my degree, and, to be honest, that knowledge was probably the only way I made it all the way through college.

Nowadays I encourage all my students to finish their college programs because having that degree gives you more options later on. They ask me all the time, "What is the one piece of advice you have for young actors?" And I say, "Perseverance." Be willing and able to stick at it for a long time. Because it doesn't matter *when* you're successful. If you're successful between the ages of twenty-five and forty, great! Good for you. But there a lot of actors who achieve success between the ages of fifty-five and seventy. How many talented people would have finally gotten their big break, but they gave up and bailed too soon? You need to stay in it as long as possible.

I mentioned before that being *An Actor!* was very much my self-identity. Here's a funny story. In my sophomore year at SUNY Binghamton, I went to an audition for the entire semester of shows, and I thought I had just *kicked ass*. I thought I had done so well. Afterward, a row of professors evaluated us. This new young professor, whom I'd never met before, stood up, and he had this big smile on his face. "Hey, Corey!" he said. "Were you, like, the big star in your high school?"

Being the asshole I was back then, I answered, "Yep! I sure was!"

"Did you do a lot of musical theater in high school?"

"Yes! I did!"

"Hey, tell me some of the musicals you did in high school."

I didn't realize that he was making fun of me. So I proudly listed all of the musicals I'd been in, and he let me talk and talk and talk. After I finished, he said, "Great. *Now* I'm going to explain to you what we're going to do: *we're going to knock the high school out of you and teach you how to act.*" And he

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Corey Pepper

Continued from page 5

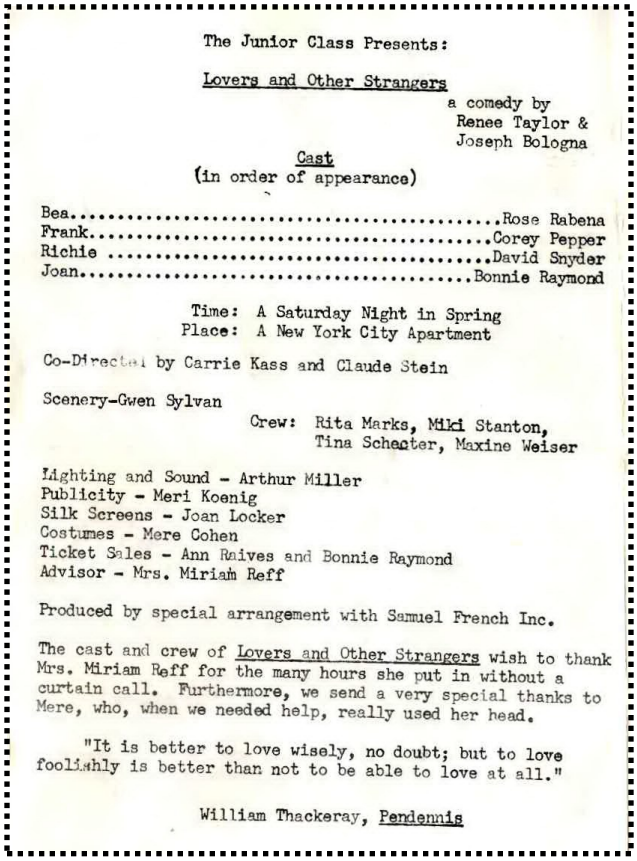
did. So I was really very lucky. Binghamton offered plenty of opportunities to be in productions. They had a big theater and three small theaters. What was really cool for me personally was that I was able to expand and not just act but also direct. I loved musical theater—always have—and I got to direct a whole bunch of musicals there, including a major production of *A Little Night Music*. Then in my senior year, the department produced a comedy that I had written "...and I'll Go To Bed at Noon" All this time, beginning when I was fourteen, I would spend my summers acting in various summer stock theater companies, where we would put on something like ten shows in eleven weeks. It was just the greatest education and experience. By the time I finished college, I had appeared in something like a hundred musicals and plays. Unfortunately, for today's young actors, summer stock theater barely exists anymore.

Comedic Inspiration: Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd—and Classmate Arthur Miller

While I was in college, my parents sold our home on Tioga Drive in West Birchwood and moved out to Los Angeles. Like all other Jews, they'd planned to retire to Florida eventually, but in his late fifties, received a job offer in Santa Monica. Since the weather is so nice out here, they decided to come out West for good.
I graduated from Binghamton in 1977, a year early. Then in 1978, I was cast in a large role in a three-episode TV mini-series, *Studs Lonigan*, movie that was filming in Los Angeles. So I flew out here. It was my first time on the West Coast. I played the young Davey Cohen opposite stars Harry Hamlin, Colleen Dewhurst, Charles Durning, and Brad Dourif. The cast also included a pre Batman Michael Keaton, Jessica Harper, Diana Scarwid, and a young Mare Winningham.

Filming took three months, and I was really kind of miserable out here in LA. For one thing, I had a girlfriend back in New York. For another, I had an ego the size of North America. Even though I had this great opportunity in Hollywood, I decided to go back to New York. "If they want me, they'll find me," I reasoned—which was a very stupid choice at that time.

Although musical theater has always been my first love, I'd become really interested in doing standup comedy and sitcom work. For that, I have to credit my childhood friend Arthur Miller. When I was eight or nine years old, I used to go over to Artie's house to hang out in his basement and watch these old black-and-white comedies he had: Chaplin, Keeton, Lloyd. I fell in love with comedy. I thought that the two of us had discovered something that no one else in the world knew about. Artie also turned me on to the Marx Brothers. I recently contacted him on Facebook and thanked him for the education.



The Junior Class Presents:

Lovers and Other Strangers

a comedy by
Renee Taylor &
Joseph Bologna

Cast
(in order of appearance)

Bea.....Rose Rabena
Frank.....Corey Pepper
Richie.....David Snyder
Joan.....Bonnie Raymond

Time: A Saturday Night in Spring
Place: A New York City Apartment

Co-Directed by Carrie Kass and Claude Stein

Scenery-Gwen Sylvan

Crew: Rita Marks, Miki Stanton,
Tina Schecter, Maxine Weiser

Lighting and Sound - Arthur Miller
Publicity - Meri Koenig
Silk Screens - Joan Locker
Costumes - Mere Cohen
Ticket Sales - Ann Raives and Bonnie Raymond
Advisor - Mrs. Miriam Reff

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.

The cast and crew of Lovers and Other Strangers wish to thank Mrs. Miriam Reff for the many hours she put in without a curtain call. Furthermore, we send a very special thanks to Mere, who, when we needed help, really used her head.

"It is better to love wisely, no doubt; but to love foolishly is better than not to be able to love at all."

William Thackeray, Pendennis

The program for the 1973 One-Act Play Contest, in which the class of '74 scored an upset win over the seniors with Lovers and Other Strangers.

Back in New York, I went to the Improv, the famous comedy club in the heart of Hell's Kitchen, on West Forty-Fourth Street near Ninth Avenue. My first night there, I passed the audition and was asked to become a regular standup there. So that's what I did for the next few years. It was a great experience. Not only does it improve your acting, but it also sharpens your writing. The other regulars at that time included Bill Maher, Jerry Seinfeld, and Larry David. Let me think of who else. Rita Rudner. Dana Carvey. I enjoyed performing my own material, but I never really enjoyed doing standup. I don't mean the performance itself but the lifestyle. It's just not for me. There was a lot of drinking and drugs, which just wasn't of any interest to me, and there were a lot of politics involved.

"I Love L.A." (Caveat: Not Really)

After several years of doing standup and not getting the kinds of auditions I

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Corey Pepper

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wanted, in 1983 I decided to come out to L.A. for TV pilot season, which runs from February to April. I just wanted to see if it would be good for my career to relocate. I came close to getting two pilots and realized, "Okay, this is ridiculous. What am I doing dicking around in New York, when I'm close to getting TV and film work? This is where I need to be.

I'd recently gotten married. I flew back to New York, packed up my wife, our pets, and our apartment, and moved out here permanently in 1984. More than thirty years later, have I come to love L.A.? No, not really. I still don't love it out here. I don't like the weather, I don't like the traffic. I've just never been crazy about living here.

I still miss New York, but I haven't been back there in ten years. No reason to. My parents were long gone from Long Island. My brother lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and my second wife's family lives on Cape Cod. So I do get back to the East Coast, but not New York.

Once settled in California, I started working regularly as a standup, especially at a club near my home in the San Fernando Valley called the L.A. Cabaret. It's not around anymore. I appeared on TV in some sketch comedy shows you might have watched if you had kids in the 1990s: Nickelodeon's *Kenan & Kel*, starring Kenan Thompson (a fixture on *Saturday Night Live*) and Kel Mitchell, and *The Amanda Show,* starring Amanda Bynes. She's had a lot of personal problems as an adult, and I'll sometimes have people ask me about what a train wreck she was. But was wasn't when I worked with her. The teenage Amanda was as sweet as can be, and extremely talented.

An acting career can be very unpredictable, with lots of ups and downs. I moved out here mainly to do film and TV work, and I wound up having a twelve-year theater gig, of all things. I starred in a show for Disneyland—an improv version of the Disney film *Aladdin*—that was supposed be a six-week summer run. It ended up running for eight years. By the time it was over, I'd given twelve thousand performances, in which I got to use all of my improv skills.

Corey Is Grumpy for Three Years (We're Referring to the Dwarf, Not His Disposition)

While *Aladdin* was still running, I was asked if I'd be interested in acting in something else, and, of course, after all that time, I jumped at the opportunity to do something new. Disney was staging a huge *Snow White* musical at the park, with a $12 million budget. I played Grumpy for four years.

Actually, make that three years. After a while, stage management took me aside and said that my Grumpy was too "angry."

"Too *angry*?" I replied (*not* angrily). "What do you expect? You gave me only one adjective to work with! What other type of character would you expect me to come up with? He's Grumpy! What's another word for grumpy?! Angry!"

I asked, "Have there

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(Top) Corey on TV's Keenan & Kel*; (left) in a 1994 cast photo for Disney's improv version of* Aladdin *(that's him kneeling, third from left); and (above) as a perfectly amiable Grumpy in* Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Corey Pepper

Continued from page 7

been any complaints? Am I scaring children?"

"No, we just think the character seems angry …"

I thought I was about to be fired, but they asked me to take on the role of Doc instead. It was actually my favorite year, because I had my own song, a lighter costume, and a shorter beard. You'd be surprised how much those things can matter.

I was making a good living, with Disney benefits and stock options, too. Most actors would *love* to be in such a steady situation. But it had a few drawbacks. I live in Sherman Oaks, northwest of Los Angeles, and Disneyland is an hour and a half away down in Anaheim. So it was a real schlep. I'd leave home at eight in the morning and usually be home by eight at night. That made it impossible for me to audition for other acting gigs. After *Snow White* closed, Disney offered me other roles, but I finally decided, "You know what? I think I've had it with driving to Anaheim. I'm going to stay in L.A."

It was now 2007. For the first time in my life, I had to go on unemployment. To not have been unemployed before is very unusual for an actor, especially someone who'd been in the business at that point for thirty years. After just a few months, I landed a job working at TVI Actors Studio, as an advisor and consultant to other actors, helping them with their careers. The studio also offered classes, and when they hired me, the owners asked me if I would ever consider teaching a class.

I had to be honest. "I've never taught before," I told them, "but I've been doing improv for twenty years-five. So I *think* I could …" Sure enough, about six months later, the studio lost its improv teacher, and they approached me about taking over the class. And that's what I've been doing for the past ten years: teaching improvisational comedy, which has really turned into a great career for me.

Corey's Kids (nonbiological division): just some of the aspiring young actors who've benefited from Corey's many years of experience.

Truthfully, I was not looking forward to it. It totally took me by surprise. After I started teaching, I thought to myself, "How did I not know that I would love this? How could this have been such a mystery to me?" It seems so obvious, and now I just love it. I think that a lot of people get to a stage in their lives where they enjoy giving others the benefits of their years of experience, in an effort to help them. This has been really satisfying for me.

Also, the success that my students have had has been really gratifying. About twelve years ago, I was hired to teach some weekend classes for a very well known on-set acting coach, Lisa Picotte. Well, she's now opened her own studio (the Lisa Picotte Young Actor Workspace), and together we teach kids ages five through eighteen. Really good young actors. Four or five of them were regulars on major TV shows this past season. One, Ryan Simpkins, just starred opposite Amy Pohler and Will Ferrell in the movie *The House,* and her brother, Ty, was the younger brother in *Jurrasic World*. It's just been real fun.

Not all of the kids in my professional class are actors and actresses. The ability to improvise—to think fast on your feet; to react quickly to what's thrown at you—can be helpful in terms of going on job interviews, interacting with peers, talking to adults; you know, just being able to walk into a room full of strangers and being able to talk comfortably with them. It really instills self-confidence. The arts, in general, are crucial to child development. That's something I learned from Steve Piorkowski all those years ago.

I've been on the faculty of the

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Corey Pepper

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York Film Academy for the last six year in addition to teaching at the Young Actor Workspace, I teach college bachelor of arts and master's classes several days a week there. They have schools in LA, New York, and all over the world as well. We have a lot of international students.

I'd still like to perform. But, frankly, I've lost the desire to fight for it. That's what happened with "old age": I've lost the desire to continue to play the game. At this point in my life, I'm more interested in spending that time helping my youngest son, Logan, with *his* acting career: taking him on auditions, which is incredibly time consuming, so that it doesn't all fall on my wife, Susannah.

I know I haven't mentioned my family up to this point, so let me back up.

He's a Pepper, She's a Pepper ...

My first marriage ended after five years, in 1988, just one year after my oldest son was born. Griffin, who turns thirty this year, is a high school history and journalism teacher at the E. L. Haynes Public Charter School in Washington, DC. Teaching is his calling. However, after college, he went to work for Teach for America, which turned out not to be a good experience. For a while, he left education for political public relations, because he had a degree in poly sci. But eventually he decided to get his master's degree in secondary education at the University of Michigan, and by the time he graduated, he'd fallen in love with teaching all over again.

Griffin got married last year to Madeline Taskier, a third-year medical student at George Washington University. Yes, that makes her another Dr. Pepper.

Corey's Kids (biological division): (left) son Griffin served as best man at Corey's 1997 marriage to Susannah Todd; (below) almost twenty years later, here they are at his wedding to Madeline Taskier.

At the bottom of the page, Logan (on the left) playing Cooper Bradford on the TV sitcom American Housewife; and he and Griffin with Corey's mom who lives in an assisted-living facility not far from his home.

I met my wife, Susannah Todd, in 1989. It was sort of a classic Hollywood romance, in that she was actress at the time, and we were both working in the same restaurant: me as a bartender; Susannah as a waitress. We married in 1997. She eventually left acting and is a Pilates instructor for Equinox.

Against my better judgment, our son Logan, who's fifteen, is an actor. He'd taken my improv class for about the last four years. Then about a year or so ago, he started taking acting classes with my teaching partner, Lisa. He wasn't terribly good when he started, but, boy, he's made himself into a good actor. He has a great agent and manager and has been going out on a ton of auditions. I'm proud to say that he has a recurring role on the ABC sitcom *American Housewife*, as Cooper Bradford, doing three episodes dur-

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Shelley Block ('75): Left Brain, Right Brain

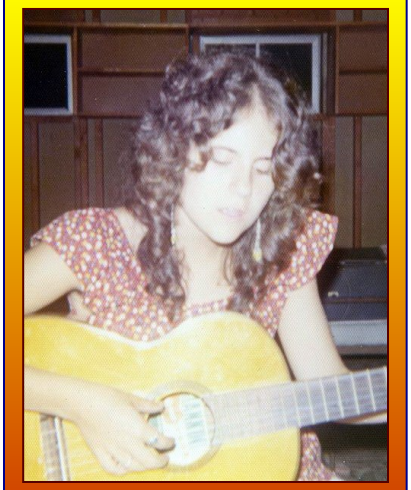
Whether Belting the Blues or Helming a Project for a Major Corporation, She's Got It Covered


The family that plays together .... Shelley and husband Alan Gerber.

As adults, my sisters Abby, Cindy, and I are all close. But growing up, I was closer to Abby ('69), who was six years older than me; Cindy, who graduated in 1972, is exactly in the middle. Abby turned me on to a lot of musicians and artists that I never would have heard about in a million years. When I was little, she would come home from college and hold up an album and say, "Shelley, you *have* to listen to this." She introduced me to Joni Mitchell, whom I've been obsessed with ever since. The Band. The English jazz singer Cleo Laine. Just a lot of interesting things.

Cindy and I had a music connection, too. She turned me on to Sly and the Family Stone, the Rolling Stones, and the Four Seasons. She was *obsessed* with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. So between the two of them, I got to know a wide cross section of music. Then there was my parents' influence, too.

Our mom died last year. In my eulogy, I remembered that we grew up in a house where my parents used to listen to a lot of musical theater and great singers, like Dean Martin, Al Martino, and Jerry Vale. And, of course, Frank Sinatra. Money was tight in our family, so my parents couldn't afford the original-cast soundtracks. Instead, they would buy these knock-off versions of every Broadway show: all Rodgers and Ham merstein, and so on. We put our foot (feet?) down and insisted on the movie soundtracks for *West Side Story, Bye Bye Birdie*. But we knew all the music. All of us. My dad, he was like this little macho man who looked like a Mafia thug, but he was a self-taught musician, so every Sunday, the entire family would gather around the piano, and my father would play all the old songs, always ending the musical evening with all of us singing "Goodnight, Sweetheart."


Shelley at fifteen: She'd already been playing acoustic guitar for three years and was composing her own songs.

My mother was a great singer, with a rich, almost operatic mezzo-soprano voice, but she suffered from stage fright and could sing only for us. Music was a major connection in our family. It was around us all the time. These memories stick with you.

Like everyone else, my first instrument was the Flutophone. Then, when I was twelve, Abby decided to teach herself to play acoustic guitar. Since I always looked up to her and wanted to do whatever she did, I taught myself to play too, using this very popular book, *Alfred's Basic Guitar Method*. I've never taken guitar lessons. I don't think I played very well back then, to tell you the truth, but in my mind, of course, I was fabulous! Abby and I learned all the Joni Mitchell D tunings that she used on her 1971 album *Blue.* (I wish I still remembered what a D tuning is.)

As soon as I learned to play guitar, I began writing my own music. Between my own stuff and the songs I've collaborated on with my musician husband, I've probably composed around three hundred or more songs. I was mainly into folk rock, and wrote about being a woman in angst. Yes, I had *so* much angst and suffered so—I was twelve years old. But in addition to folk, I loved show tunes, too, because I wanted to become an actress.

In junior high school, I played Deborah Sue, one of the teenagers in *Bye Bye Birdie.* Then in tenth grade, I got the part of Smitty in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. I really wanted that part. In addition to working in finances, I teach voice to around forty

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Shelley Block

Continued from page 10

students, and I always tell them, "Don't just focus on landing the lead role. Think about who's the second lead or third lead? Which character is the comic role or the interesting role. In other words, which is the best role for you? That's the part you should want to play. Sometimes, in fact, the lead character isn't all that interesting." Mr. Piorkowski, whom I adored, was a great director. I was just this young sophomore, and I had a very big part in the show, and probably felt a little intimidated. During tech week, he left me the greatest note I could possibly have gotten: "Smitty: You have the potential for stealing the show."

In my junior year, I played Gladys, the comic lead, in Pajama Game. The best friend; the sidekick. Again, that was the part that really interested me. My senior year, though, I never got the chance to be in the play, because I left Jericho for college a year early. Mr. Gene Huber was going to be directing the high school play for

Shelley, second from right, in How to Succeed *(1973), with (l. to r.) Jon Cantor, Anne Glussman, Brian Litt, and Bonnie Raymond.*

Below, going all the back to 1969 at Robert Williams Elementary, Shelley (as Nancy) with Michael Sammis in Oliver: *"He was a fabulous Artful Dodger. Had these big, puffy cheeks; he was so cute."*

1974–75, and he said to me, "If you stay, we'll do *Funny Girl*." It was so tempting, because I *love* Barbra Streisand. He did a lot to help me prepare for college. Nothing against Jericho, but I really felt like it was time for me to leave and go to college.

A Tumultuous Senior Year

What became my last year at Jericho High School, 1973-74, couldn't have been more stressful. Both my sisters were living in Israel at the time of the Yom Kippur War, in which Egypt and Jordan both attacked the country at the beginning of October. Abby was living on a kibbutz in the Golan

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Shelley's White Birch Neighbors: The Politos, the Northshields, the Leibowitzes—and Bob Costas?

White Birch was more of the blue-collar neighborhood of Jericho. We used to jokingly refer to it as the other side of the tracks. Many people probably don't know this, but Bob Costas, the famous sportscaster, lived diagonally across the street from us for a time. He would have been in the class of 1970. He and his sister, Valerie, used to hang out at our house all the time. And my mother and Mrs. Costas were best friends. They remained close for many years, long after the Costases moved to California when I was around seven. Then they came back to Long Island, but to Commack, in Suffolk County. Wonderful people. Bob came to my Dad's shiva. His sister, Valerie, came to his funeral. I was in touch with Bob shortly after my mom passed away last year. He had to work the TV show *Football Night in America* on NBC and could not come to see us.

Shelley Block

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Heights, which got attacked; she spent about a month in the bomb shelters. And Cindy was working at the Tel Aviv Hilton. The Israeli defense minister, Moshe Dayan, used to come in there all the time. At night, she had to keep all the lights out in her apartment.

I remember the night the war broke out. We got a phone call from one of my sisters at, like, three o'clock in the morning. How the call came through, I don't know. Both my parents were very protective, especially my mom, who was a real worrywart, and I could hear her crying. She said to them, very forcefully, "Be safe. And do whatever the Israeli government tells you to do." The war lasted three weeks, and I went to school every morning totally stressed out about my sisters.

In high school, I was friends with people from all groups. I didn't care if you were an artsy person, if you were into sports, if you were a cheerleader or a nerd. If you were nice and a decent person, you were my friend. I'll always have a place in my heart for Carolyn Pollito, because she's a beautiful person both inside and out. I was also very close to Lynne Rosenbaum, who now lives in England, always playing music together. Mere Cohen, Leah Funtleyder (more so in college). A lot of my friends were musicians: Joyce Imbesi, Susan Roggen (wasn't a musician, but took me to the train station for my college audition), Miki Stanton. Claude Stein and I went out for a little bit, but we remained friends. I know I'm leaving out somebody, but it was just a whole potpourri of very cool people.

I also gravitated toward anyone who was political, because I had a very big mouth! I was probably one of first feminists at Jericho Junior High, and that probably happened when I was around fourteen years old, because I used to go away to sleepaway camp every summer at Camp Na'aleh in upstate New York, and one of my counselors there was a huge feminist. She really opened up my eyes.

Sisters are doin' it for themselves! Abby, Shelley, and Cindy at the September 2016 Gathering of the Tribes IV Rock & Roll Heaven Reunion.

If you look at my yearbook picture, I'm wearing a Jewish feminist button that my camp counselor had given me. I wore it every day for three or four years. The only time I took it off, in fact, was when I was in a play. I took a lot of crap for it in school from people who didn't understand. Both guys and girls. Some would call me names, like "Hippie Radical," or they'd call me a lesbian. I didn't give a crap.

I give a lot of credit to my parents, who had strong political and social beliefs. I would describe them as extremely conservative yet socially liberal. For example, both my parents believed in a woman's right to choose. They also believed in equal rights for women, even though, back then, my mother was very old-fashioned when it came to a woman's place. But from the time we were little, my parents would lecture us about the importance of civil rights. And my father, from the time I was three until he died, he would give us monthly lectures about the Holocaust.

> "When I was around ten or so, we would turn on the TV, and there'd be Mom and Dad taking part in a protest, my mom with hair all done up, and holding her sign. This was normal to me."

My parents belonged to the Jewish Defense League, which had been started by Rabbi Meir Kahane. (This was long before he lost his mind.) They used to drag me to JDL meetings. When I was around ten or so, we would turn on the TV, and there'd be Mom and Dad taking part in a protest, my mom with hair all done up, and holding her sign. This was normal to me. "Oh, yeah, there's Mommy and Daddy on TV. I wonder if they're going to get arrested!" Even though they were right wing, they always encouraged my sisters and I to express ourselves, even if they disagreed with our positions and points of view.

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Shelley Block

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Well,* hello*, there! Publicity shot, 1988.

That included my wanting to graduate a year early. They really, *really* did not agree with it. But I made my case, and then my parents consulted with Mr. Eldon Bush, my guidance counselor, who was fabulous. In the end, they told me, "We don't agree with this, but we are giving you our permission." On Graduation Day 1974, we went out to dinner, and my father made a toast. He said, "We did not agree with this, but after seeing you with this graduating class, we now realize that it is time for you to go to college." He understood.

Off to Oswego

I went to SUNY Oswego as a theater major. They have an amazing theater building there; back then, it was considered one of the top fifty theaters in the country, and that included professional theaters. I was in theater class with this really nice, cool senior, who was a TV weather man in Syracuse part-time, and his name was Al Roker. He was awesome then, and he's awesome now. As soon I got there, I started auditioning for shows.

One of the most influential classes that I took was black theater history. I took two semesters of it my freshman year. It was taught by Anderson McCullough, a Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright. He was paraplegic. A large man; looked like the football player Rosie Greer. I never saw someone with such a severe disability get around like he did. He even drove a car outfitted with a special system; he used to drive me places.

Mr. McCullough liked me for my tenacity. (Also, I was a really good student.) I just loved his class. At the end of the second semester, he asked me to meet him after class to discuss something important. "Next year," he explained, "I'm doing something very provocative here. We're getting a lot of resistance, and people are very angry, but I convinced the theater department to do the first African American musical here at Oswego." This was 1975, and the show was *Purlie*. Ossie Davis had written the book, based on his own play. It's brilliant.

"I need someone to assist me as the director," Mr. McCullough said. "I will give you three upper-class credits if you will be my assistant."

I was speechless. That doesn't happen a lot.

I said, "I'm really, really honored, but I have to tell you, this is going to be an African American musical, and you're picking me, this white Jewish girl?"

"I know you have a reputation around campus as being open-minded, you accept everybody, plus you have a background in theater and music. So, yes, I want you to be my assistant."

I said, "I'm in."

Looking back, that was the greatest thing I did in college, even better than performing. I sang in a tavern (the drinking age was eighteen then, remember?), I was in bands—I even sang opera with the Rochester Philharmonic. But being Anderson McCullough's assistant showed me that I could teach people, which would come in handy many years later. I'd never thought about becoming a teacher, although I did consider myself a nurturer, and someone who likes to help others. He had me work with the leads in the show, which was gospel based. We had great singers, but they needed to learn how to sing from their diaphragms, and so on. I helped the conductor in the orchestra pit, worked with the lighting crew—everything. Whatever he needed me to do.

I also studied voice for four years with the department chair, Leon Carpetyan. Midway through my sophomore year, though, I had a revelation: I really did not like theater peo-

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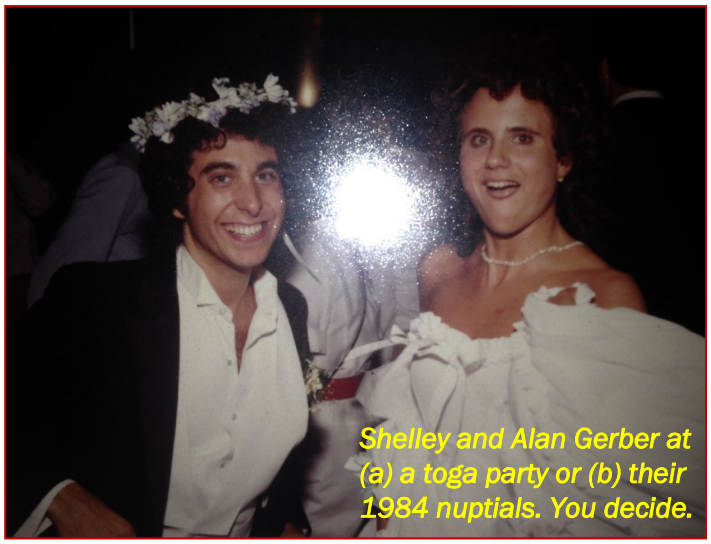

Shelley and Alan Gerber at (a) a toga party or (b) their 1984 nuptials. You decide.

Shelley Block

Continued from page 13

ple! I preferred being around musicians. So I went to my college advisor and said, "Listen, I have all of these music credits, and I have all of these theater credits. Can I change my major to music, and use these theater credits for something else, as a double major?" The something else was communications. A few months before graduating in 1978, I began sending out resumes. I got a phone call from a gentleman named John Barron, who owned a summer stock theater company up in Forestburgh, New York, part of the Catskills. He interviewed me over the phone and hired me sight unseen to be the

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It was the worst job I ever had, but I learned so much. I performed my own music in the cabaret, ran the box office, wrote press releases, cleaned toilets—I didn't care. The experience also confirmed my earlier distaste for theater people. So when the summer ended, I was ready to get a regular job.

From Box Office to Office

I wound up getting hired at an advertising agency, Cadwell Davis Savage, a subsidiary of Compton Advertising, which then was bought up by the huge Saatchi & Saatchi agency in 1985. I started as administrative assistant to Franchielle "Frankie" Cadwell, one of the first women to have started her own ad company. I loved her; she was another big influence on my life. If you ever saw the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, the Meryl Streep character was my boss; she looked like her, acted like her.

During my two years there, I kept on writing music and singing. I lived with my parents for four months, and then my sister Abby and I moved to Forest Hills, Queens. Cindy, meanwhile, was living in Brooklyn. The ad agency promoted me to junior copywriter. I wrote ad copy for Maxi Pads, tampons, toothbrushes. Back then, there were real constraints and a lot of censorship. For instance, you couldn't say "menstruation" or "period.' They didn't even let you say "that time of the month." You had to say "those special days." It was really screwed up!

From working on Madison Avenue, I started to get depressed. Like, seriously depressed. I decided I wanted to live in Manhattan. For a year, I was basically a vagabond. I lived in all the different neighborhoods: Soho, Tribeca, the Upper West Side. At one point, I roomed together with Anne Glussman, from the JHS class of 1974. I started seeing a therapist, and I realized I needed to sing again.

One day, Frankie Cadwell and her partner, Herman Davis, the art director, called me into the conference room. They both loved me, although exactly why, I couldn't tell you. She said, "Listen, we can see that you're not yourself. We think you're realty talented, but something is wrong. What is it?"

I started crying, and I told them, "I want to go back to singing. I don't think I want to be here." The two of them were so kind. They suggested that I think about it for a month and then decide. When I did indeed give them thirty days' notice—that seemed only fair—they couldn't have been nicer. They threw me a big going-away party, and Frankie bought me a designer outfit from Fiorucci.

Abby, who was still living in Forest Hills, was working at a law firm. One day she called me up and said, "Shelley, don't get a job working as a wait-

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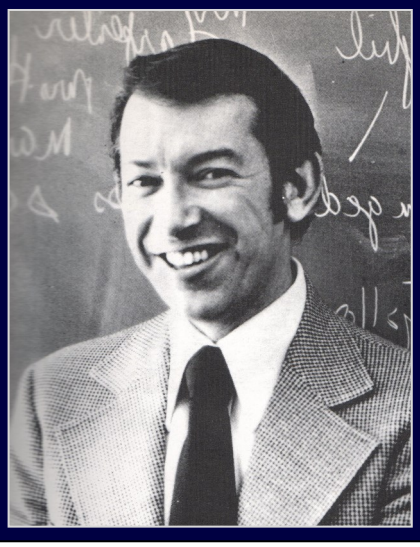
In Tribute: Mr. Stephen Piorkowski

Mr. Stephen Piorkowski, truly a beloved teacher of English and also director of so many plays at Jericho High School, passed away on September 15, 2017. It's fitting that in this issue of the JHS alumni magazine not just Shelley but also Corey Pepper ('74) talk at length about what an important person he was in their lives.



"Bob'll Fix It!" Robert Simon ('72): Forty Years of Chasing Magic

TV Producer
Los Angeles, CA

Some people know who they are in high school, and some don't. I was more in the second group. Looking back, I realize I could have been more driven growing up. It was like, I'd be in a school play if chosen, but I didn't go out of my way to look for my passion. I liked reading, I liked playing. I loved the outdoors, and still do. Bikes, too, were important to me, then and now. But I was insecure about stepping out; I was just getting by under the radar. I could have tried more things.

I liked television as a kid but never thought about it as a career. I didn't even consider that being in TV was a *job* and that real people made it their careers. That kind of thing wasn't available to us, because where we were raised, most people had a profession. You owned a business, you were a doctor, a lawyer, or you were a sales rep, like my father. Probably every adult I knew was ~~in~~ either in retail, health care, or manufacturing. I don't think I ever knew somebody's dad who was, say, a writer or an artist. It didn't dawn on me that some people write the books we read and make up the stories we loved for a living.

I hire new assistants and many production assistants on most projects; people in their early twenties just starting out on their career paths. I marvel at kids today. They want to be storytellers, although they may not know how that will manifest in terms of a career. They have their eye on the big prize and have so many avenues open to them. Many want to be screenwriters, and even though they may end up doing something else, within or outside of the filmmaking process, they'll be storytellers. With so many more outlets, including YouTube, blogs, and other venues that haven't been invented yet, the sky is the limit. There is no financial barrier to getting your ideas into the world.

If I thought about telling stories, it was only in my imagination when I was playing. Nowadays, many high schools—and even my old summer camp—have their own TV studios and radio stations. Everyone has an excellent video camera on their cell phone, but not in the 1970s.

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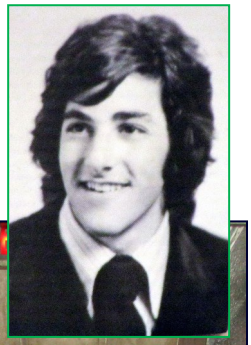

Bob? Meet Bob: In April 2017, Bob was inducted into the JHS Alumni Hall of Fame. Here he is with hall founder Mr. Bob Hoffman. Bob was wrapping up shooting the NBC series Quantico *the very next day and looking forward to going home to LA.*

Robert Simon

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There are many ways to flex your creative muscles, at least in the affluent schools. Unfortunately, there are a lot of practical things our formal educations don't prepare us for. I try to fill in those blanks with new grads who come into the business.

One teacher at Jericho High who was really important for me was Mr. Thomas Bryant, who taught mechanical drawing and metal shop and was also a soccer coach. He was a real role model. Mr. Bryant was the first adult of color that I knew. Jericho was a great community, but there was still a lot of racial bias.

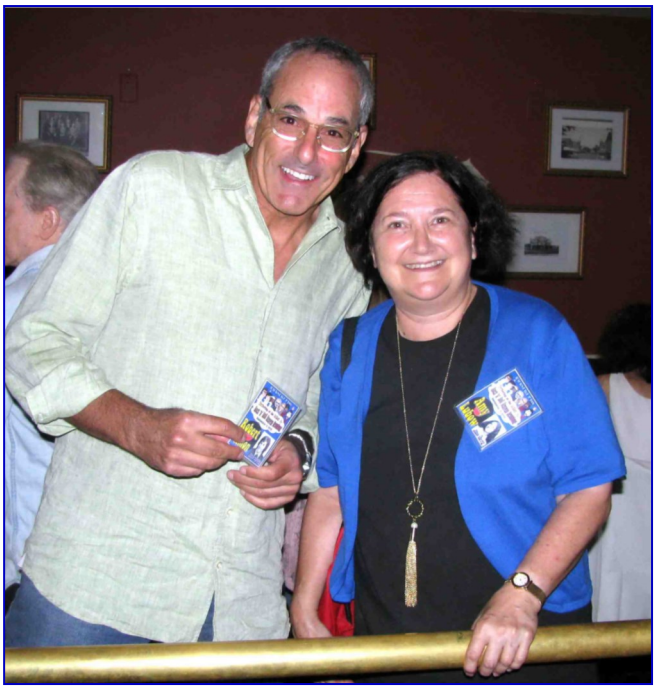
Of course, it wasn't like being in the South, my next stop after graduating high school. It was subtle. People in the neighborhood would have been nervous if "other" people moved in. I would say that my parents would have reacted that way too. But Mr. Bryant was so intelligent, kind and soft-spoken. It had to have been strange for him to be the only African American adult in the entire school.

Even though I would often venture into the city as a teenager, the world opened up for me when I went to college at Georgia Institute of Technology. I feel so bad for kids today coming out of college saddled with such enormous debt. You know much I paid for college? After my first semester, $7.50 per credit. Along with my lodging and meal card, I think I paid $2,000 for my freshman year. That was largely because I became a Georgia resident; I did the same thing when I transferred to the University of Florida in my junior year. When I tallied up what my parents spent on my college education, I joked to them once, "You know, you can't really hold that over my head!" I guess bang for the buck and financial puzzles were in my DNA.

"I feel so bad for kids today coming out of college saddled with such enormous debt. You know much I paid for college? After my first semester, $7.50 per credit … When I tallied up what my parents spent on my college education, I joked to them once, 'You know, you can't really hold that over my head!'"

Truthfully, I don't know how I got accepted into Georgia Tech for architecture and civil engineering, because the school was in the top ten and took roughly the top 5 percent from high schools in the South, and that definitely did not include me. My high school grades were terrible. But I'd scored extremely high on the SAT—particularly in math—and that's probably the only way I was able to get into a decent school.

I turned over a new leaf once I got there. I'd never worked so hard at education before. There were so many smart people around me that it forced me to sort of wake up and step up. I took calculus, organic chemistry, design. Going to college was also an awakening in that it was the first time I was truly free and on my own, except for having gone to sleepaway camp. I'd never been in the South before. I made a lot of friends, some of whom still live there (and many of whom had never met a Jew before). One of my best friends is a dude from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He insists he's not a redneck because he's from northern Alabama. He is still the smartest guy I know. There were no women to speak of at Georgia Tech. so there was a minimum of on-campus distractions, but Atlanta was full of them, so it was a great, fun time. I even had the opportunity to host the E Street Band. Bruce Springsteen and company were an opening act for the Beach Boys. Since it was early in their career, they had minimal road money, so the band would try to find local



Because Bob (shown here with classmate Amy Lubow Downs) was in New York shooting Quantico *in September 2016, he was able to attend his first JHS reunion in a decade and a half.*

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Robert Simon

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housing. Clarence Clemons slept in my dorm bed. My life would collide with Bruce on more occasions down the road.

At Georgia Tech, the easy classes were the liberal arts courses, like English, history, and the humanities, and many of the students would sleep through them. But those were the classes that fascinated me. I became more interested in education for education's sake, whereas the focus at Georgia Tech felt more like vocational training. Getting you ready to be an engineer. So after my sophomore year, some friends and I all transferred to the University of Florida in Gainesville. It was totally different from Georgia Tech, but after my folks dropped me off with my bags at LaGuardia Airport again, I figured out how to navigate another new place. I began reading more, studying history, humanities, and philosophy. I had to pick a new major, of course. I changed from civil engineering to journalism, not because I necessarily wanted to become a journalist but because it seemed like the closest thing to literature and storytelling. And it led to my working in television: the school had a public broadcasting station, and I got a job there first as a cameraman and then as a director.

Culver City, CA: It Sounded So Swell

My first job out of college was as a cameraman at Long Island's Cable-

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Robert Simon

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sion, Cable TV was really just getting off the ground. I'm not so sure that they cared about where I'd gone to college, or even *if* I'd

My first job out of college was as a cameraman at Long Island's Cablevision, Cable TV was really just getting off the ground. I'm not so sure that they cared about where I'd gone to college, or even *if* I'd gone to college; it was more a matter that I was willing to work for minimum wage. I worked on a weekly news show with Larry Meli, also from Jericho; he was in the class of 1970, along with my sister, Phyllis. Larry and I are still friends. He lives near me now, in Malibu, and is a very successful businessman; in fact, we had lunch together just a few weeks ago.

Ironically, around the same time that I moved from Florida back to Long Island, my parents sold our house on Merit Lane in East Birchwood and relocated to Fort Lauderdale. Eventually they moved again, to Boynton Beach. My mom passed away four years ago, but my dad, who is now ninety-three, still lives there on his own, mostly independent.

I spent a year and a half at Cablevision, then I moved into Manhattan and started to figure out what I wanted to do with my life.

I still remember going on my first interview for a job as production assistant on the film *The Eyes of Laura Mars.* It was a psychological thriller, starring Faye Dunaway and Tommy Lee Jones, and written by John Carpenter. This would have been 1977. I showed up wearing what I thought was appropriate attire: a blue sports coat and khaki dress pants. Unbeknownst to me, the uniform for the movie industry was already just a T-shirt and jeans. The people doing the interviewing looked at

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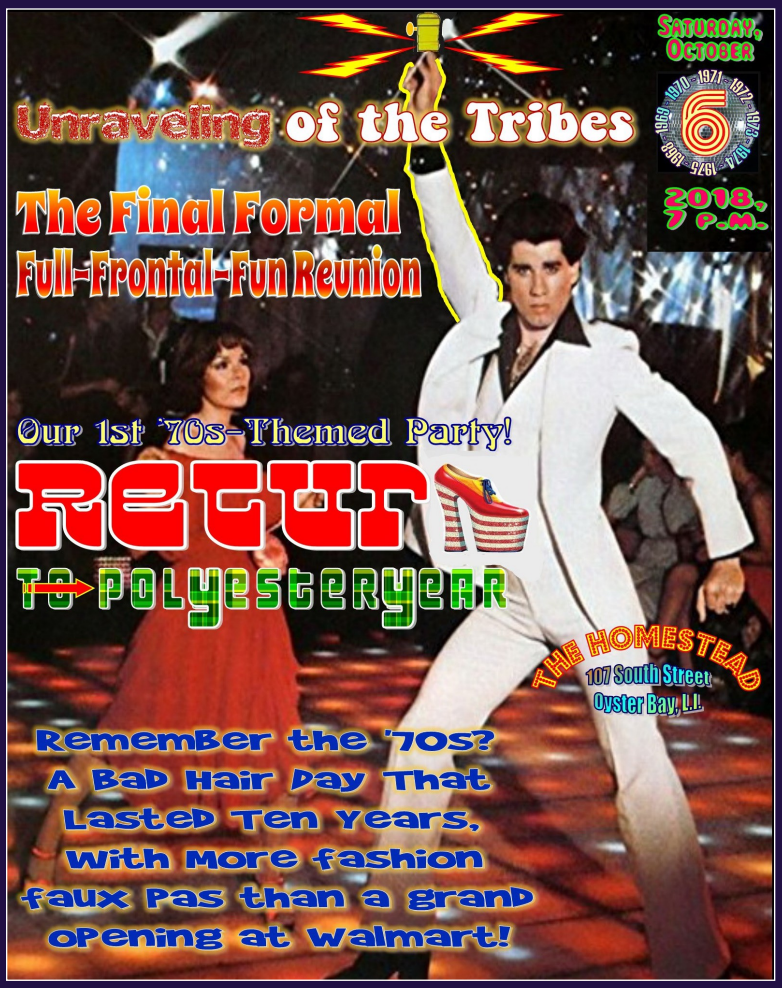
State of the (Re)Union:

Don't Miss "Unraveling of the Tribes 6," Saturday, October 6, 2018



The sixth annual "Gathering of the Tribes" will be held on Saturday night, October 6, 2018, at the Homestead restaurant/bar, 107 South Street, in Oyster Bay. Only this gathering is an *Unraveling* of the Tribes: the final formal reunion. It's going to be the best party you've ever been to, so don't miss this one.

It's also our first 1970s-themed reunion: "Return to PolyesterYear!" Check your mood ring, break out your Huckapoo shirt, your denim leisure suit, and your clunky platform heels, and hustleon down to the Homestead. The festivities begin at 7:00 p.m. We'll also organize a beach picnic at Bayville's Random Beach on Sunday the 7th, and we'll try to arrange a tour of Jericho High School for Saturday morning, as we've done in the past.

Click here for your invitation, which includes directions, a list of places to stay, and every other conceivable piece of information. ■

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By Dan Clurman (72)

About Dan: "I have been a coach and educator for the last thirty-plus years, delivering training and classes in nonprofits organizations, universities, and corporations.

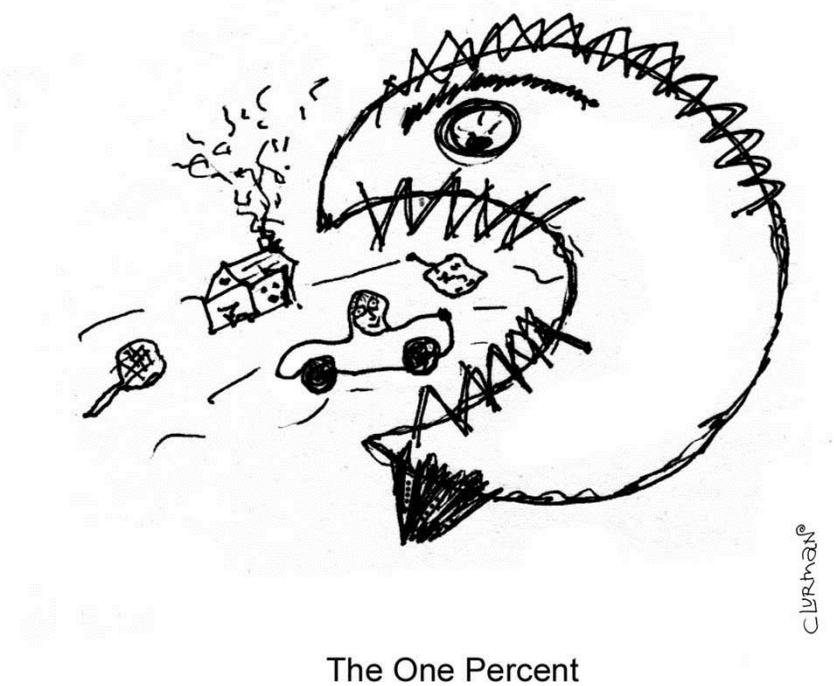
"I assist professionals, business people, couples, and students to more skillfully navigate life transitions, as well as improve their communication and presentations. I also have a small practice as a Feldenkrais® practitioner, a movement-based form of education.

"I've cowritten a few books, *Money Disagreements: How to Talk About Them* and *Conversations With Critical Thinkers,* as well as a book of poems and drawings, *Floating Upstream.*"

These toons are taken from Dan's most recent book, *You've Got to Draw the Line Somewhere,* available for $15 at http://www.dantoons.com.

Daniel Goleman, best-selling author of *Emotional Intelligence,* has this to say about *You've Got to Draw the Line Somewhere:* "impish but pointed, edgy and astute, wise, and just plain funny."

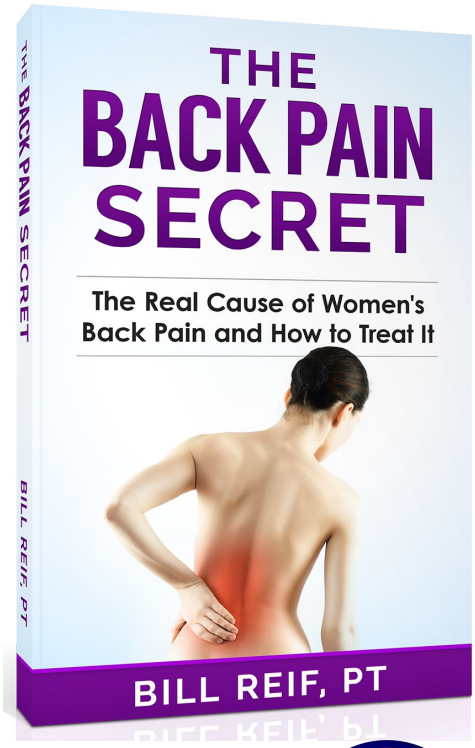
Death has got your back



The One Percent

Between the Covers

New Works from JHS Authors



To download *The Back Pain Secret...*

Click Here

Physical Therapist Bill Reif ('71) Feels Your Pain

Bill Reif, from the JHS class of 1971, has been a physical therapist for going on forty years. A graduate of both the State University of New York at Buffalo (BS in physical therapy) and Emory University (MS in physical therapy), he has written his first e-book, *The Back Pain Secret: The Real Cause of Women's Back Pain and How to Treat It.*

Over the years, Bill observed that when women experience back pain, "their source of pain is often very different from men."

According to Bill, many of his female patients "have seen countless doctors and had unnecessary surgeries, but, unfortunately, they are still in pain."

His e-book reveals what he calls the Back Pain Secret. First, by using the techniques explained and illustrated in *TBPS*, readers are able to help identify the source of their pain. Then through illustrations, instructions, and sixteen

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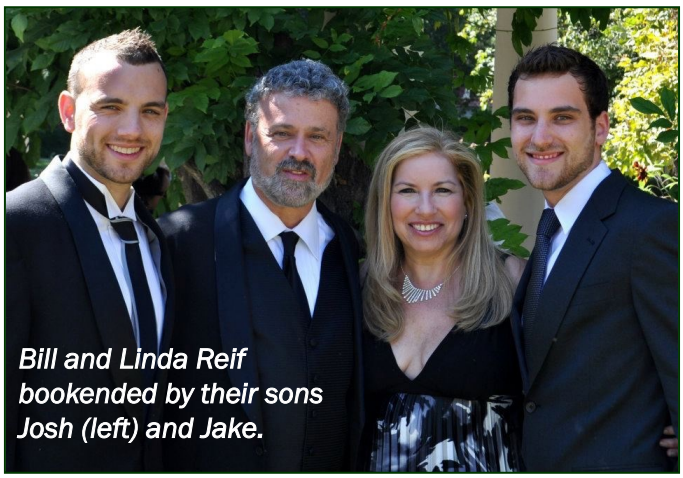


Bill and Linda Reif bookended by their sons Josh (left) and Jake.

Between the Covers

Continued from page 20

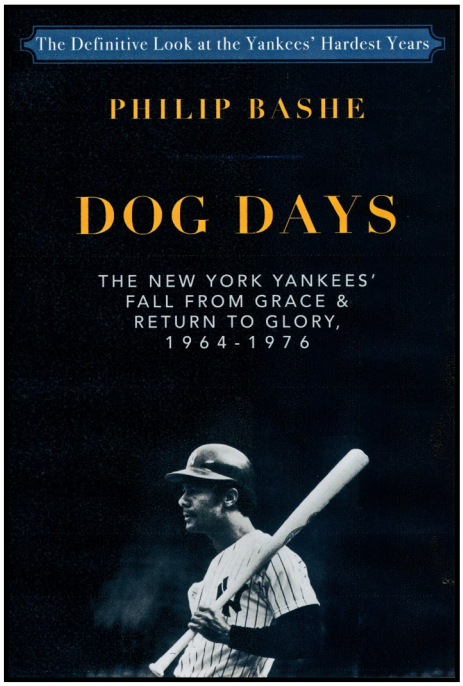
Bill Reif

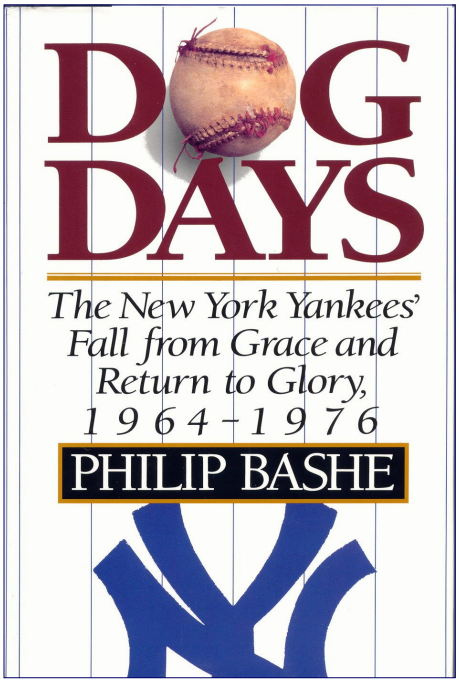
exercise videos directly accessible through the e-book, they can learn how to how to alleviate their pain.

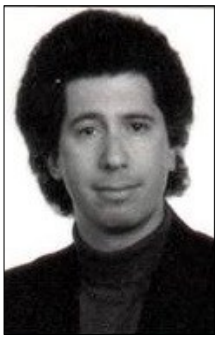
To download *The Back Pain Secret*, simply click on the button at left. The book can be read on all Apple devices (iPad, iPhone, Macbook), with iBooks or the free kindle app or Google play books app, as well as on Android or Windows devices (tablets, phones, computers).

Bill lives in Roswell, Georgia. He and wife Linda will be celebrating their thirty-fifth anniversary in 2018. ■

Philip Bashe ('72) Gets Recycled







Top l., the new book jacket; above, the original cover. (That's stalwart Roy White holding the bat; the only Yank to suffer through the entire '65–'76 draught.) Far l., my original '94 author's photo. Hey, I was having a poofy hair day. So shut up! Near l., my "current" photo. (It's really from 2010, but I know you won't say anything.)

Three of author Philip Bashe's eighteen books are being republished in the coming months, beginning with the November publication of *Dog Days: The New York Yankees' Fall from Grace and Return to Glory, 1964–1976*, originally published by Random House in 1994.

Used to be, most books went out of print after ten or more years, simply because, in the days before online book sales, mortar-and-brick book stores had limited space. With thirty-five thousand new titles published annually, you couldn't possibly stock them all.

The new model, with the advent of online sales and books stored digitally, is "print on demand," which means that, at least in theory, books will never go out of print again. Yet they'll still be available as traditional books or as downloadable e-books.

"Last summer," Phil explains, "I received a phone call from Echo Point Books, a publisher in Vermont that specializes in resurrecting deserving titles that have gone out of print. They were interested in republishing my biography of Rick Nelson, *Teenage Idol, Travelin' Man: The Complete Biography of Rick Nelson*, published by Disney's Hyperion company in 1992 and 1993. Then they looked at the list of books I've written and also wanted to republish *Dog Days* as well as *Heavy Metal Thunder*, one of my first titles, published by Doubleday in 1985."

Dog Days tells the tale of the national pastime's greatest franchise suddenly laid low, beginning with the final out of the 1964 World Series. As Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Elston Howard, and the other Yankees stars trudged off the field at Busch Stadium while the newly crowned World Champion St. Louis Cardinals joyfully mobbed winning pitcher Bob Gibson, they had no reason to assume that they wouldn't return to the Fall Classic for a sixth consecutive year in 1965. After all, they were the Bronx Bombers, who, in a dynasty stretching back to 1949, had won the American League pennant fourteen times in sixteen years, including nine World Series rings.

The very next day, the Yankees cruelly fired rookie manager Yogi Berra, despite his having come within two runs of winning it all, and, bizarrely, replaced him with none other than the man who had just de-

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Between the Covers

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Philip Bashe

feated them: Cardinals skipper Johnny Keane.

Poor Johnny Keane will forever be remembered as the Herbert Hoover of baseball: the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time. When the opportunity to manage the Yankees came along—secretly, in August 1964, when it appeared that both New York and St. Louis were destined to finish well out of the running in their respective leagues—he couldn't believe his good fortune, Not long into the 1965 season, he couldn't believe how fate had tricked him.

The perennial Yankees dynasty, beginning with the 1921 team led by the mighty Babe Ruth, plunged into decline, finishing dead last in 1966—by which time, Johnny Keane was long gone. Three months after the season ended, he died of a massive heart attack at age fifty-five. But, says Bobby Richardson, who'd just retired after a decade as the team's steady second baseman, "I really think Johnny died of a broken heart."

It would take New York eleven tortuous seasons to rebuild and return to the World Series. Bear in mind that free agency was still years away, and the Yankees' owners had allowed the franchise's fabled farm system to go barren before selling to team the CBS. This odyssey between pennants saw aging players retire or fade away. A parade of replacements—men such as Roger Repoz, John Ellis, Celerino Sanchez, Steve Whitaker, and the infamous Horace Clarke, who, somewhat unfairly, came to epitomize this sorry era in Yankees history—faced the unenviable task of competing not only against the rest of the American League but also against the club's own storied past.

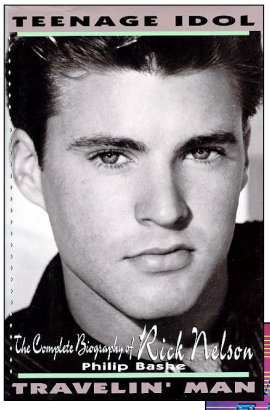
What's more, they had to compete against the circus attraction across town: the lovable losers known as the New York Mets. It used to be said that rooting for the perennially winning Yankees was like rooting for US Steel. They were coldly efficient, inspiring loyalty but not necessarily love. Then here came the expansion Mets, under another beloved manager that the Yankees had cut loose unceremoniously following the 1960 World Series: Casey Stengel. The 1964 Mets, now playing in a pop-art ballpark, Shea Stadium, bordering the New York World's Fair, finished last for a third consecutive season yet outdrew the Yankees.

Unfortunately for the Bombers, falling on tough times did not confer upon them the rock-star popularity that the Mets enjoyed. And when the Amazin's achieved the impossible in 1969, going from ninth place to winning it all, they only lured more New York fans from the Bronx to Queens. The young Mets were the team of Woodstock; the Yankees still represented the stodgy establishment.

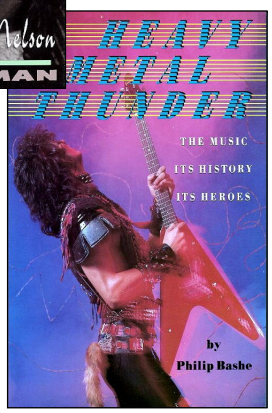
They tried bucking that image, engaging in sideshows that the Old Yankees would have considered blasphemous, such as manager Ralph Houk's bringing in recent acquisition Rocky Colavito—one of the preeminent sluggers of the 1950s and 1960s, now winding down his career in the Bronx—to hurl 2 2/3 innings of scoreless relief against the first-place Detroit Tigers in August 1968.

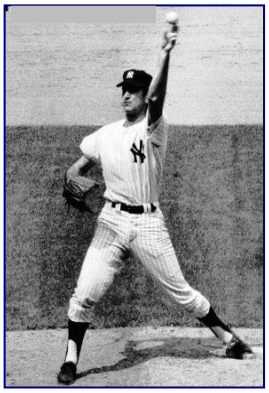
Light-hitting shortstop Gene "Stick" Michael, known for his baseball cunning, distinguished himself as a master of the hidden-ball trick. He employed it twice in crucial situations during the 1970 season, which marked the first time New York had won ninety or more games since that last pennant year of 1964.

Another highlight of 1970 was the comic relief provided by reliever



They're b-a-a-c-k! Coming out in 2018, Teenage Idol *and* Heavy Metal Thunder.





Steve Hamilton's "Folly Floater": a high-arcing stop-action lob that hung tantalizingly in the air before wafting down as if by parachute. Every time Hamilton tossed it, the crowd went bonkers. Most opposing hitters fell into the appropriate spirit, laughing as they hacked away madly. In a June game against Cleveland, Tony Horton begged Hamilton to throw him one. After popping up weakly to second, the Indians first baseman crawled back to the dugout on his hands and knees in mock shame. "The pinnacle of the Folly Floater," Hamilton called it.

Still, attendance at Yankee Stadium lagged far behind their crosstown rivals. At one infamous game at in September 1966, a mere 413 fans braved misty weather for a day game against the White Sox. "I don't think it was even that many," recalls rookie right fielder Steve Whitaker. "It was so quiet that Clete Boyer and I carried on an entire conversation

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without having to shout." Boyer, who guarded the hot corner, was on the other side of the ballpark. Another time, in 1967, someone called the office of charismatic team president Michael Burke, to find out what time the game started that night.

"What time can he get here?" Burke deadpanned.

But eventually, year by year, new stars emerged: Roy White, Bobby Murcer, Rookies of the Year Stan Bahnsen ('68) and Thurman Munson ('70), Ron Blomberg, Sparky Lyle, Graig Nettles, Catfish Hunter. And a new dynasty would be christened on a chilly October evening in 1976 when first baseman Chris Chambliss rocketed a ball into the right-field stands at the renovated ballpark in the bottom of the ninth of the final game of the AL playoffs, breaking a 6–6 tie and catapulting New York back into the Fall Classic at long last.

"Most of my books are about serious subjects," explains Phil, who has written about parenting, medicine and science, caring for the seriously ill, biotechnology, addiction, and cancer prevention and treatment, among other subjects. "I'm proud of all of them, and I love researching and interviewing, whether I'm sitting down with renowned physicians, scientists, or musical artists. But I have to admit that it was special fun talking with about 150 of the players that I grew up rooting for as a long-suffering Yankees fan: Murcer, White, Houk, Hunter, Chambliss, Michael, Lou Piniella, Bobby Cox, Tom Tresh, Tony Kubek, Jim Bouton, and, yes, the immortal Horace Clarke. At the time, he was back in his native Virgin Islands working as a baseball instructor—presumably teaching a new generation of second basemen how to bail on the double play."

(Left) Just another morning at the Bashe household circa 1985. Put up the coffee, turn on the smoke machine. Naw, Patty and I were hanging at noted photographer Mark Weiss's Manhattan studio the day he was shooting the cover to my book Heavy Metal Thunder, *using a model from Montreal. After he'd finished and turned off the smoke machine, he said he had some film left and took a few shots of us for fun. "Hello, Cleveland! Are you ready to rock?"*

Dog Days also examines the Yankees' struggle in the context of the societal changes taking place in the 1960s and 1970s. On one hand, baseball was a microcosm of America, but in certain respects, it was well ahead of the rest of the country. Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947. By the 1960s, most teams were well integrated—even the Yankees, whose racist general manager, George Weiss, had resisted signing black players longer than most of his contemporaries, a factor that contributed later to the franchise's decline.

Talented lefty Al Downing, who grew up in Trenton, recalls how, as a joke, he and two other black players, Elston Howard and Hector Lopez, used to stand in front of the team's Fort Lauderdale hotel during spring training. "We knew that sooner or later somebody would come up, hand us their keys, and say, 'Hey, mind parking my car?'" At the Yankee Clipper Hotel, "the black players were allowed to eat in only one of the dining rooms."

As for illicit drug use, which was just beginning to infiltrate society at large, the counterculture couldn't compete with Major League Baseball, where for decades players had been routinely gobbling amphetamines—pep pills, or Greenies—for energy. Now other substances found their way into the clubhouse.

One of the more colorful characters of the 1970s, pitcher Dock Ellis, won seventeen games for the Yankees in 1976, the year they finally finished first, under Billy Martin. He may be better remembered, though, for the time when, as a star on the Pittsburgh Pirates, he forgot where he was and wandered out onto the field wearing pink hair curlers. Or the time in 1970 when he pitched a no-hitter while tripping on acid.

"I got my days mixed up," Ellis explained, "and thought I wasn't pitching until the next day. So I dropped a tab. Then I got to the ballpark and found out it was my turn to start." In nine innings, he didn't allow a single hit to the purple-melting-demon-headed San Diego Padres, although Ellis had no memory of the game whatsoever. Not to mention most of the 1976 season in the Bronx, which he floated through in a drug-induced haze.

"I was usually down in the corner of the dugout, high, messing with the camera guy," he recalled. In the Big

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Wanna learn what some of your former teachers are up to? Then drop in, pull up a chair, set a spell, but most of all – NO TALKING! – at the …

(Above) Mrs. Kuferberg is close to a number of her former students and is a regular presence on Facebook. On a recent visit to see her son in California, she met up for lunch with the class of '75's Pamela Lopez in Burbank.

Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

At 84, She Might Be Retired from Teaching … But Not from Performing!

I grew up in Brooklyn in a half musical family: my father played violin, and my mother sang. My two brothers, however, are not musical, although one time my younger brother said to me, "Why did you let me stop taking piano lessons?" He regretted not continuing. I said, "Arthur, I'm your sister, I'm not your mother. It wasn't up to me." I have a gorgeous six-foot Steinway piano in my home, and every time Arthur comes over, he sits down at the piano and plays. That was my retirement present to myself, when I retired from Jericho High School in 1988. Because I never used up all my sick days, I received an extra year's salary, which was … very nice! I bought the piano and put the rest into annuities.

I'm eighty-four years old, and I've been playing the piano since I was four. At age six, my mother got me a private teacher who held annual recitals in Carnegie Recital Hall, so I got to perform there every year. Then I continued with another very fine teacher until I was twenty. And in high school, I also began taking voice lessons.

Joan Brooks performing at the age of twenty.

Our home high school was Tilden High. But neither I nor my brothers went there. Allan went to Stuyvesant High, and Arthur went to Polytech High. I went to the High School of Music and Art, in Manhattan. My parents had heard of it, and when I was in eighth grade, I took the admissions test and passed. To get in, though, you needed a recommendation from your principal, and Mr. Withers, the principal of Winthrop Junior High, refused!

My parents were furious, and they scheduled a conference. The principal explained his reasoning, such as it was: "Look, Joan is too young to be traveling to the city. Give her a year to grow. Here she's a big fish in a little pond. There she's going to be a very little fish in a very big pond."

So I didn't begin at the High School of Music and Art until my sophomore year, which I really resented. I missed a lot. That really wasn't Mr. Withers's decision to make; it should have been left up to my parents. But that was the way it was.

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Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

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"The Happiest Time I Ever Had in School"

The High School of Music and Art was the most fantastic school. It was the happiest time I ever had in school. And I still have friends from there. We meet every once in a while and have mini reunions. It's a wonderful feeling. I have one friend who recently lost his wife, and he was a mess, and I said, "Why don't you come down here for a change of scenery? Clear your head up a bit." I met him when I was fourteen years old! Seventy years later, we're still friends.

It was a fairly small school; I think my graduating class of 1950 had about 220 students, 98 percent of whom went on to college. It was a tough school, with a passing grade of 75. What a pleasure it was to be surrounded by other boys and girls who were as passionate about the arts as I was. And the teachers were marvelous and very committed. The classes were small, so you received a lot of individual attention. I received such a good foundation at M&A. The courses were so advanced that when I got to Hunter College, I was able to go directly into sophomore and even junior classes. That's how far ahead we were of kids from other schools.

Many of the graduates went on to do fabulous things. Bernie Nero was in one of my classes. You probably know of him as Peter Nero, the famous pianist. Another classmate, Eli Levine, became a well-known music educator in jazz, under the name Lee Evans. You know who else attended the School for Music and Art? Alan Arnold, who many years later was largely responsible for my teaching in the Jericho district. I'll tell you you about that in a moment. Alan lives up in the Albany area, conducting and writing music and arrangement. He is amazing.

I still lived at home with my parents while attending Hunter. I spent a lot of my early life on the train: I went to high school in Manhattan by train, and I went to college in Manhattan by train.

Accordion never looked so good ...

I started off wanting to be a performer. But my mother said, "That's not practical. Get yourself a teaching degree." Which I did. I didn't use it, though, for a very long time. Beginning around the age of twenty, I started doing club dates. All different kinds. I played at conventions. I did weddings, bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs. I also performed at a lot of "twenty-five-year clubs." These were clubs for people who'd been with a company for twenty-five years. They were rewarded with a lovely dinner—and me! I played the pop tunes of the day: "Bewitched," "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing," and later on, "Sweet Caroline" and "Proud Mary."

I also sang in many languages. So if someone in the audience asked me to sing a song in Italian, I could. Hungarian? I could. German? *Ja!* (I played at a lot of Oktoberfests.) I also sang in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Spanish.

In the club-date business, you have to know those languages. And if I didn't know a particular language, one of my many women friends who were also in the club-date business could teach it to me. For example, I had a Hungarian friend who taught me a famous old Hungarian love song. I once played a club date where violinist Yitzhak Pearlman was a guest, and his friend, who was a very famous violist, from Hungary, was also there. And I was strolling the party, and the friend looked at me and said, "Magyar?" Meaning "Hungarian?" I sang that song for him, and he was thrilled!

Most of the clubs I played were in New York and New Jersey. But I also performed at the opening of the Boston Aquarium and did a lot of home parties in Connecticut. My instrument then was the accordion, which was essentially the forerunner of the electronic keyboard. I have one now, and I hate it! I'm a Renaissance woman: I like an acoustic piano. But what can you do? You need something portable. Electronic keyboards are here to stay.

At Age Thirty, a Sour Note

When I was thirty, I developed a double vocal cord hemorrhage due to an undiagnosed allergy to aspirin. I went to a doctor to see what could be done to repair the damage. He dissuaded me from undergoing laryngeal surgery. "If you have the operation, you'll never sing again," he said bluntly. This was the same surgery that Julie Andrews underwent many years later, and look what happened there: it ended her singing career. He suggested a noninvasive option: vocal coaching. There were no guarantees it would help. But I

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Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

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decided to try. He gave me the names of three teachers; I picked the one who lived closest to me.

For a long time, not only couldn't I sing but also I couldn't even speak. It was very difficult because I had two young children: my daughter was six, and my son, three. I had to pantomime everything. My doctor was very wise. When we were discussing the course of therapy, he suggested, "Go back to school, get your master's degree, and start to teach." Which I did, at Queens College. And that's how I came to Jericho, by way of Wantagh.

I'd been teaching in Wantagh for six months. Alan Arnold happened to be the organist in my temple, and one day in 1965, he took me aside and said, "A job just opened up in the Jericho district at the George A. Jackson Elementary School. I'm going to bring you an application. *You're going to get that job.*"

So I filled out the application and sat down for an interview with Dr. Carey, who was the superintendent of schools at the time. He said, We've had four music teachers in this school, and they have not been successful. How are you going to make the kids like music?" I replied honestly, "You can't make kids like anything. I hope that they like *me*. And maybe if they like me, they'll like what I like."

He said, "You're hired."

I spent ten happy years there. Every spring we had a concert, and beforehand, I would invite Mr. John Bolles, the principal, and the teachers who were going to serve as chaperones to my house in Hicksville for dinner. Then from there, we'd all go to the school for the performance. In 1975, at the preshow dinner, Mr. Bolles wasn't acting like himself.

"What's the matter?" I asked him.

He said sadly, "I lost something today." I had no idea what he was referring to.

"Well, what did you lose?"

He looked at me and said, "I lost you."

"What does that mean?" I was really confused.

He explained: "The registration in the district is down, and they are closing the Robert Williams Elementary School. Therefore, teachers who do not have tenure are being dismissed. The choral director at the middle school and the high school was the last one hired. He's now out, and you're in."

"But I don't want to go there!" I protested. "I want to stay right here at Jackson." But there was nothing I could do about it. In the fall, I'd be moving up to the junior high school and the high school.

Face to Face with Intimidating Mr. K.

A longtime friend of mind was the choral director at Hicksville High, the school my own kids attended. I explained to him that I was being moved up to the secondary level,

"Every day, I cried. I cried, and I cried. I just couldn't get the hang of teaching seventh-grade music."

"and," I confessed, "I don't have a clue what the repertoire is." He kindly went through his material and he gave me a packet. "Here," he said. "This should carry you through your whole first year."

Now I go in to meet the chairman of the music department, Bill Kupferberg. And … I didn't like him at all! He was kind of nasty. Truthfully, he didn't want me, and I didn't want him. He liked the guy who had just been dismissed, and he didn't want an elementary school teacher, But what he didn't know was that my training and my degree were in secondary music.

I presented him with all of the music my friend had given me and said, "I'd like to use this for the middle school and the high school." He took one look at it and groaned.

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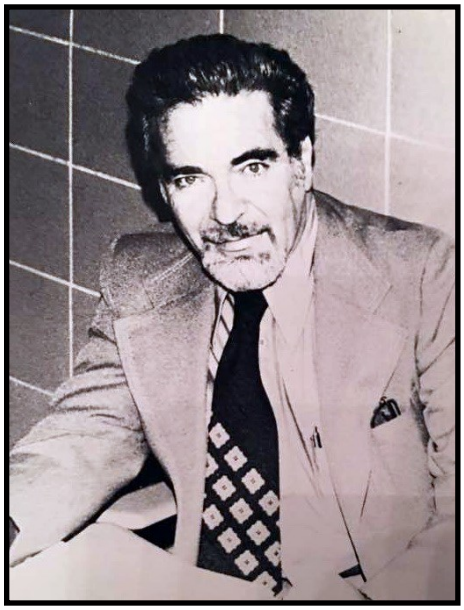

JHS yearbook photos for Mrs. Joan Greenberg and Mr. William Kupferberg.

Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

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"The cost of all that music," he said, "is more money than I have in the entire music budget! I have to repair instruments; there are many things that have to be done in the music department that don't involve you. So you can't have that music! We have a music library. Go pick out your music from there."

I went home, and I cried. What a nasty guy! Then came the first day of school. I meet my first class. Seventh grade. It's 7:20 a.m. Make a seventh-grader sing at 7:20 in the morning? You feel like an animal trainer in the circus. And guess who's in the class? A lot of the kids that I'd had at Jackson. And they'd turned into little hellions. They didn't want me; they wanted a new teacher! They'd had me every year throughout elementary school. And they gave me the business.

Every day, I cried. I cried, and I cried. I just couldn't get the hang of teaching seventh grade music. The saving grace was the high school. The students there were marvelous.

The Kupferbergs married in 1981, while both were still teaching at JHS, but they didn't tell the district superintendent until the end of the '81–'82 school year, when Mr. K. retired. See, you weren't the only one afraid of the superintendent!

Bill Kupferberg saw what was going on and called me into his office. He said to me, "Joan, if you can get through a whole week without crying, the department is going to take you out for a drink on a Friday." Sometime in October, it finally happened: I didn't cry once all week. So a group of us went out to the Milleridge Inn. Then the following week, I started getting the hang of it, and I made it to Friday again without crying. "Well, then," he said, "we're going to take you out again." This went on for weeks.

Finally, one day he sad to me, "Tell you what. The other music teachers aren't really drinkers, so *I'll* take you out." And that's how a relationship began to build between Bill K. and myself. From there, the relationship grew and grew. His marriage was on the rocks; my marriage was on the rocks. We both got divorced. And in 1981, we got married. We didn't tell anybody, though. The kids might have suspected something, but none of the teachers knew. Bill had taught in Jericho since the late 1960s, and he was retiring at the end of the 1981–82 school year. It was only then that we told David Nydick, the school superintendent, that we'd gotten married.

Bill was a marvelous, very accomplished trombone player. In his twenties, he was first trombone for the San Antonio Symphony and also played for the Baltimore Symphony. His sound on the instrument was exquisite: he made is sound like a cross between a French horn and a cello, which is not a traditional trombone sound. He was headed for the New York Philharmonic, but first they wanted him in Pittsburgh, which had a very fine symphony. However, his wife at the time didn't want to travel; she wanted to be back in Brooklyn near her mother and father. (Bill grew up in the Bronx. It seems like everyone who taught at Jericho came from either the Bronx or, like me, from Brooklyn.) So he gave up his career as a musician and went into teaching.

He had taught previously at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, which is similar to Juilliard. He and his wife moved to Long Island, and he got a teaching position in Commack. Then an opportunity opened up in Westbury as chairman of the Music Department. He was there for many years. Finally, the same job became available in Jericho, which was a step up from Westbury. Bill auditioned and was hired.

The kids all loved him. The students used to hang out in the Music Department office all the time. He was a very sweet and gentle man. I told you how I didn't like him the first time I met him. He had a goatee at the time. One day I said to him, "You know, you look like Mephistopheles! You're really frightening looking. But underneath, you're really a marshmallow!"

He shrugged. "Just don't tell the kids," he said.

Her Carnegie Recital Hall Debut—At Age Forty-Two

I taught another seven years at Jericho after Bill retired. I had a lot of fun there, I must say. Although most of the kids were into rock, when I taught them the Crucifixus from the Mass in B minor, by Johan Sebastian Bach, they went crazy over it! Now, these were mostly Jewish kids

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Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

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singing a Latin mass. (We were not allowed to teach religious music, so I taught it as a historical piece—that's how I got around it.) I had them singing in almost every language you could conceive us—Spanish, Hebrew, German, French, Yiddish, Italian—and they took to it like ducks to water. They loved it because it was something new.

In addition, I had a Sweet Adeline group, with the girls. Singing a capella is so in nowadays, and that's what this was: music from the 1920s. Then there was a madrigal group, too. I used to set a table onstage, with a nice lace cloth, candlesticks, and a bowl of fruit in the middle, and the students would sit around the table and sing madrigals. It was absolutely beautiful! You know, when you give something new and challenging to a student, they grasp it. I also taught the boys how to sing barbershop quartet.

The whole time I was teaching, I never really stopped performing. In 1975, at the age of forty-two, I made my debut as a classical bell canto mezzo soprano (isn't that a mouthful!) at the Carnegie Recital Hall and got good reviews, including one from music critic Robert Sherman of the *New York Times*. I sang in several small regional opera companies. I played the Egyptian princess Amneris in *Aida*; Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*; Mercedes in *Carmen*; and I also played the witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, which was my favorite role. I love singing opera; that's how I got my jollies.

I did stop playing club dates, though, when I turned fifty-five. This is why: I was performing at the Americana Hotel at Fifty-Second Street and Broadway in Manhattan, and I overheard one of the waiters ask the head waiter, "Who's doing the music?" And the head waiter gestured toward me and said, "*Le vecchia*." That's Italian for "the old one." I came home, and, let me tell you, I was furious. I said to Bill, "That's it, I'm not accepting any more dates. No one is going to call me 'the old one' again!"

Bill, too, continued to work as a musician after retiring from teaching. He was first trombone in a number of big bands and also managed the Long Island Philharmonia. He continued to perform, also in big bands, after we moved down to Florida in 1997. We had a beautiful home in Glen Cove. But the winter of 1995–96, we had something like seventeen snowstorms. Now, we lived on a hill, with a huge driveway. It was easy to slide down it, but not so easy to get up it. And *I* was the snow shoveler; I was getting tired of shoveling snow all the time. One day I just said, "Bill! Enough! I want out of here." We had friends in a community in Boynton Beach. We came down, looked around, and eventually bought our home (off Piper's Glen Boulevard, between Jog and El Clair Ranch Roads, for those of you who know the area).

Mrs. K.'s children Teddy and Jan recently (left) and not so recently (above).

Joy and Sorrow

It was a very easy transition for both of us. I like green and warm weather, so we were very happy down here. Bill developed bladder cancer, and appeared to have beaten it. Unfortunately, in 2014 it returned. I asked the oncologist if there were any treatments for Bill. He said no, because Bill had related kidney failure, and the chemo would have killed him.

"How long have I got?" Bill asked. The doctor replied, "Six months." He lasted only three. He had a very difficult death. At the end, we had hospice care, and they were marvelous; I cannot say enough about hospice care. But Bill was in such pain. At seven o'clock in the evening, they called in a critical-care nurse, who kept administering morphine. By three in the morning, he was gone. I was happy that he was out of pain, finally, but so sad that Bill had to suffer so. He just didn't deserve it. He was ninety.

Both Bill and I had two children, from our first marriages. My daughter, Jan, just turned sixty. She was a teacher, too, of children from infancy to age three, which has always been her passion. Now she writes curricula for that age group. She lives in Annandale, Virginia. And my son, Teddy, is a Grammy Award–winning musician and soundman. (Two Grammys, to be exact.) He attended the Philadelphia College of Performing Arts as a percussion major; he's a really good drummer. But around 2004, he switched to sound engineering, and he's been doing it ever since, running his own studio in Burbank. He oversaw the sound for the documentary *Standing in the Shadows*

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Mrs. Joan Kupferberg

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of Motown, which won a Grammy. The second Grammy came from his having engineered singer Chaka Kahn, who appeared in the film.

I have two grandchildren, from Bill's daughters, Alice and Julie. (He also had a son, Eric.) Our granddaughter just graduated from Oxford University with her master's. And my grandson has a master's in engineering; he works for one of the auto companies in Detroit.

I've had a very varied, exciting career. I never knew what I was going to do next. For fifteen years, I was the organist in a temple in Roslyn, Long Island, and for five years at the temple we belonged to in Sands Point. Then I was the accompanist for the cantor at a temple down here.

I'm also part of a group, Les Dames, made up of five women. We perform in senior communities, libraries, independent living facilities. Basically, anyone who'll hire us, we'll be there. It's a really nice act. We sing songs based on our lives: songs about our kids, about being addicted to chocolate, and sex! The oldest, a soprano, is eighty-nine; the youngest is sixty-eight—a mere baby. They love singing, and their voices are absolutely beautiful. It's fun. My belief is, if you have a passion, never give it up. Do it as long as you can. So I think I'll be playing that Steinway until my last breath.

I always considered my Jericho chorus kids my children. Sometimes after a concert, I would invite them to the house and throw a party for them. I loved these kids. Loved them. And we had a good time together. They performed beautifully, and they learned so well. Now I get to converse with them on Facebook, which is wonderful. Many of them were Bill's students. What I like about it is that we are politically connected, and we all rant and rave together. I'm so proud of the men and women they have become. ■

Mrs. K. (far left) singing with Les Dames. Click here to hear the ladies: ♫♫♫♫♫.

Shelley Block

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ress or in a bar. I'm working on this new system called Wang. It's word processing. This is like the hot new thing."

I hung up on her. "I'm not doing that!" I huffed. But then I thought about it, and an hour later I called my sister back. First, I apologized. Then I asked for the information for how I could learn word processing. Before long, I was getting sent out on jobs. Next, I got a job at a law firm. As for my singing, I began studying with an excellent vocal coach, Terri DiLeva. She was amazing. It was like she connected the dots for me. She taught me about the mix: mixing the chest voice with the head voice, and then making it sound like one voice. She used to have me listen to different recordings. For instance, if you listen to Barbra Streisand singing "People," it sounds like she's belting it out. But she wasn't. She was singing in her mix voice. She had a strong head voice. It was a revelation for me. Then she said to me—and I tell my own students this all the time—"Everyone is going to tell you you're fabulous. But then you have to evaluate, Are you *really* fabulous?" The other thing I realized was that I had pitch problems sometimes. So she hooked me up with Joshua Green (whose father, Hal Green, was the musical director for a lot of the great Broadway musicals) for ear-training lessons. Except for Mr. Sandy Valerio at Jericho, I'd never had a really good voice coach before until Terri DiLeva.

I studied with a voice teacher while at SUNY Oswego, but in four years, we never really found a connection. He never showed me how to apply classical singing techniques to the material that I was doing. That's what I mean by connecting the dots. Back in seventh grade, there was a lovely chorus teacher, Joan Ganz Kramer. (She's married to Mr. Herb Kramer, the science teacher.) She told my parents, "Your daughter has a gift," and suggested that I would benefit from private voice lessons.

But my dad was a New York City schoolteacher; my mom was a stay-at-home mother. There'd just been a lengthy teachers' strike, and prior to that, my dad had been through thyroid cancer and a huge cancerous mass in his neck. He nearly died on the operating table. My parents were hanging on for dear life financially, and I didn't want them worrying about coming up with the money for me to take voice lessons. So I made up a lie.

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Shelley Block

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"I don't need voice lessons," I told them. "I'm a natural singer." It was the biggest lie I've ever told.

At a Songwriting Workshop, Finding Inspiration—and a Husband

During the day, I was working at the law firm. At night, I was performing a one-woman show around Manhattan, at places like the Horn of Plenty Restaurant in the Village and the Inner Circle. I sang mostly my own songs but also Stevie Wonder, Rickie Lee Jones, a showtune. Just a cool mix of different styles.

On the advice of one of the law partner's wives, in 1983 I attended a Thursday night songwriters' workshop run by a songwriter named Lou Stallman, who'd penned a great 1960s r&b hit, "It's Gonna Take a Miracle." I loved the class, in which you had to write a song a week and then debut it in front of the others and receive feedback. We'd just go around the room.

One night, I performed early. About a half hour into the class, this really cute guy walks in. He's extremely late, and I'm pissed off, thinking, *Who the hell does this guy think he is?* He sits rights across from me, cute as can be. But I'm thinking to myself, *Oh, I can't wait to hear the crap that he's gonna play.*

He plays this r&b song he wrote, "Find Me Someone to Love." It was one of the most beautiful songs I ever heard. And I am looking at him, like, *Are you kidding me? Holy crap!* (Not crap.) When the class is over, this crazy guy comes running over to me. "Listen," he says, "I missed your song. I'd really like to hear it. Do you want to get something to eat?"

I said sure. We wound up talking for, like, three hours, and it turned out that he was a full-time jazz musician, composer, and arranger, and he played all kinds of music, and he was from New Jersey, and his name was Alan Gerber. This was 1983.

I never thought this would happen, but after just one hour of meeting him, it was literally love at first sight. We both fell instantly in love. He was living in New Jersey, and I had my own apartment on East Ninety-Fourth Street and Third Avenue. Alan drove me back to my apartment and said, "I have a bunch of gigs tomorrow, Saturday, and Sunday. But

Shelley and her parents circa 2012.

why don't you come out to my house Sunday night, and we'll work together on a song for the next workshop?" We exchanged numbers.

The next morning, I'm walking down Third Avenue on my way to work, and I'm thinking to myself, *Oh my God, I'm in love. This is going to be my husband. I just met my husband. I'm going to marry this guy*. And unbeknownst to me, he was thinking the same thing.

On Saturday I went to Abby's house in Queens for dinner with her and my parents. She opened the door and says, "What's up?" I said, "I'm in love. I just met my future husband!"

She rolled her eyes. "You're out of your mind. Whatever you do, don't tell Mommy and Daddy; it'll just upset them."

And I *didn't* tell them I'd met my soon-to-be husband. Instead, as soon as they walked in, I said, "I just met my father of my children."

"What!!??!" Of course, they immediately thought I was pregnant. I reassured them that I wasn't. "I mean, I met the father of my *future* children."

I was dating a lot of lawyers at that time. So they asked, "Is it Richard?" "No." "Is it that other one?"

"No. It's a guy named Alan Gerber. He's a musician."

Dead silence. Finally my mother said, "Shelley, *you're* a musician. You need to be with a lawyer; someone who's going to support you," blah blah blah. "No, that's not in the cards. I like musicians, what can I tell you?"

I went over the Alan's house on Sunday night, and we wrote this great song together called "We Can't Take It Back." We fell madly in love, and by Monday night, he told me that he wanted to marry me. I told him the same. And … that was it. We were inseparable. I moved in with him shortly after, and then we got married a year later. And the only reason we waited *that* long was that my parents had moved to California and his family had moved to Texas, so it took a bit of doing to get everybody together. We had a beautiful wedding at the Livingston Country Club in Short Hills, New Jersey. Naturally, our first dance was to the song that he played in class when we first met, "Find Me Someone to Love." The two of us also performed four songs, including "We Can't Take It Back."

Alan got me into singing more jazz and expanded my horizons. He's a world-class pianist and synthesist, and if I'm to be honest, he's more talented than I am. That's why he's been able to make music his full-time career, which is remarkable. He's never done anything else.

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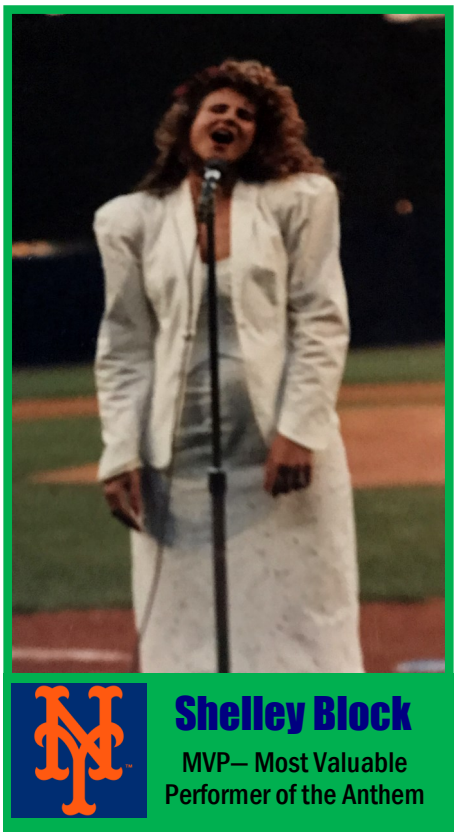
I can understand why musicians, and actors, and artists often fall in love. Creating together is a very intimate act. Alan and I speak the same language; we don't have to explain anything to each other. We get it. We began working together, performing at weddings, parties, Bar Mitzvahs. We also began recording. Alan recorded a few commercial jingles, which I sang on. You'd go to this one mall in New Jersey, and you'd hear the mall's "theme" over the PA system every fifteen minutes: "The value is alive … at Feedmill Plaza!" Well, that was us.

I sang the national anthem at Shea Stadium a number of times, which was a thrill because to this day, despite everything, I'm a diehard Mets fan. "The Star-Spangled Banner" isn't as hard to sing as people think, but what's really hard is that when you sing in a large venue, you have to contend with what we call the "bounceback." When you're singing into the microphone "By the dawn's early light," you're *hearing* "Oh, say can you see?" echoing throughout the stadium. You have to wear earplugs.

The first time I sang there was 1987, the year after the great Mets team of 1986 won the World Series. Gary Carter, Ron Darling, Darryl Strawberry, Dwight Gooden. What a thrill. I sang at Shea until about 1994; after that, life got in the way.

In June 1990, I'd just found out that I was pregnant with our first child. Alan got a call seeking a keyboardist and vocalist to be flown to London for a special gig with a thirteen-piece band. It wasn't until we turned up at JFK Airport that we were told it was a fiftieth birthday party for King Constantine II of Greece at the



Kensington House Hotel. (By then, he was actually the former king, Greece having abolished its monarchy in the 1970s.) I've never been a royalty fanatic—in fact, I think they're jokes, really—but this was pretty cool. Princess Diana was there, along with much of the European royalty.

I have to tell you, they treated the musicians nicer than we'd ever been treated in the United States. They had a French chef prepare us a meal before we performed, and the charming Greek consul gave me a private tour of all the rooms. No one knew I was in my first trimester, but *I* sure did. I felt like shit. My mother-in-law, who owned a clothing store, got me gowns to wear that would accommodate my newly acquired huge breasts.

The gig lasted eight hours nonstop, so I was exhausted by the end. It was around four o'clock in the morning, and I thought I was going to *die*. King Constantine came over to me, kissed my hand, and said, "My dear, you have a lovely voice." I almost fainted because he was *really* handsome! Alan was laughing the whole time. Afterward, he said, "I gotta tell you, that's one good-looking guy. And he's a king! Good for you!"

Motherhood + Music = Magical Mania

We named our daughter Jazlana. I suppose she might be the only person by that name in the world, because we made it up. My husband wanted a musical theme, but we also wanted her name to include letters from the names of my deceased grandmothers Jenny and Leah, plus Alan's grandma, Lillian. Originally, in the hospital, we had a hyphen in there somewhere. But it became Jazlana. Our son, Jess, came along five and a half years later, in 1996.

Once we had a child, I realized that one of us had to have a more stable thing going on other than music, so I took a full-time job at the investment firm Lehman Brothers in its creative resources department. A funny thing happened: they kept on

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"Can I keep the chair as a souvenir?" An exhausted (and pregnant) Shelley relaxes after performing for royalty.

Shelley Block

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promoting me. I discovered that although I was this crazy, artsy person, the other side of my brain worked extremely well: organization, focus, and also, I got shit done!

We'd bought a house in Middlesex, New Jersey, in 1986. So in addition to working full-time, I was raising a baby, maintaining a household, and then recording until two in the morning. While making demos together, we'd keep Jazlana on her little play mat. Three hours of sleep, and then I was up to catch a train into Manhattan and work eight hours.

If you lived on the East Coast, you might remember Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The category 4 storm flooded our house. All my demo tapes were ruined, and Alan's beautiful soundproofed recording studio was destroyed. It was a very traumatic time for us. Our son, Jess, who was three at the time, remembers nothing about it. But Jazlana, who was eight, was traumatized. We were evacuated in the middle of the night, and of the twenty-three houses on our street, only five survived. Ours wasn't one of them.

Thank goodness my mother-in-law lived in a large house one town over and could take us in. Alan stayed at our house to try to salvage some of his recording equipment. We had more than five feet of water in the basement. During the three years that we lived with his mother, he would go back and forth, because he was afraid the house would be vandalized; although we couldn't live there, we still had our lives on the upper floors. Cindy's husband, Benis Dawkins, was extremely handy, and, God bless him, he came over every week to help rebuild. In the end, however, the federal government bought out the houses of those who wanted to sell.

I lost interest in singing during this time that we were displaced. I just focused on our kids and on my job, which I was now doing for the investment bank UBS. Same job as at Lehman Brothers, but at four times the compensation. I became the director of the Presentations Department, putting together the slick PowerPoint presentations, and other types, that the bankers would rely when they went out to pitch businesses or existing clients.

Shelley and Alan with daughter Jazlana, the Rutgers grad.

Having been a performer helped me in terms of being able to walk into meetings with confidence and having good interpersonal skills. But corporate America is just like the arts: it's very cruel. To succeed, or to survive, you've got to have a degree of tolerance for bullshit. (I tell this to my voice students; if nothing else, I am very direct.) I wore my nice suits to the office, but sometimes the Human Resources Department would have to visit me: "Um, The Bankers didn't like the slit in your dress." "The Bankers didn't like that you wore your hair to the side; it looked too cabaret-ish." Are you freakin' *kidding* me? But okay. All right.

Caught Up in the 2008 Financial Meltdown

Everyone knows what happened to the financial sector during the so-called Great Recession. My old company, Lehman Brothers, dissolved. And UBS was affected too, though not as badly. As a vice president, I'd had to let people go over the years, but that was usually for poor performance. It's never easy, but having to let dozens of people go because of the recession and the mortgage crisis was painful. I was overseeing seven major offices around the country: New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and others. Plus I had my global partners around the world. In April 2008 we started laying off employees, and things came to a head in May, on a day I called D-Day. I always tried to do what was best for the firm and what was best for my folks. So we set up a room in the executive suite, and we started letting people go.

Most people cried. We hugged. We tried to do it with dignity. At one point, the person from HR, Maureen, and I were so emotionally wiped out that we took a break and went down to the office, where everyone was sitting paralyzed, terrified that they were going to be let go. When Maureen and I walked down the stairs, all the people who were left suddenly stood up and started clapping. I absolutely lost it. "Why are you applauding?" I asked, crying.

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Someone spoke up. "Because we're getting calls from people who said that they'd been let go but that they'd never been treated with such respect and dignity before." If only all companies exhibited that kind of basic decency. I can't say it was extended to me, however.

In August the ax fell. I got called to come up to Human Resources. The global head of my division, who was probably one of the most inappropriate people I'd ever met in my life, tells me over the phone from the London office, "Well, you know, we're making changes, and we're letting you go." Boom. The whole time, the head of HR, whom I always gotten along with, stood with his back turned to the rest of us. I found out later, it was because he'd argued with them not to fire me, right up until the minute they called me in. He was furious. When it was over, his was the only hand I shook.

I will say this: UBS gave me a very generous severance package. But I was extremely upset. However, you know what? I left there with my dignity intact.

Under the terms of my leaving, I couldn't accept another job for two months, but every day I got up like I was going to work. The job market, of course, was terrible. Unbeknownst to me, I would be out of work for more than three years. It was frightening. If it was just Alan and me, we would have been okay. But we had two children to worry about.

I was still of the mind-set "I've got to get back into corporate America." But things had changed in corporate America. Used to be, you'd interview someone for a job and be upfront: tell them either yay or nay or that they were under serious consideration. Things were done properly and humanely. But after the economy collapsed, it was like no one gave a shit anymore. You would go on an interview, and nobody would even get back to you. So unprofessional. And I'm talking about large companies, too.

On the positive side, my kids were thrilled to have me home. Jazlana, who was going into her senior year of high school, confided to me, "Mommy, I'm not upset that you lost your job, because now, for once, I'm going to have a stay-at home mom for a while." And she really meant it.

Son Jess, also at Rutgers, is a double major in acting and communications, with a minor in film. And like his mom, he's a Jets fan. It's good they have each other to lean on.

Just as I grew up in a house full of music, both our kids grew up surrounded by music. Jazlana used to go to gigs with Alan when she was little. She was also in a dance company from age five until she was twelve; at one point, she was taking eleven classes a week. But then she announced that she's had enough. "You know, Mommy, I really don't like being around dancers." (Sound like me and my feelings toward actors.) "I just want to take ballet, because ballet relaxes me." So that's what we did.

As for Jess, he's always had excellent pitch. Jazlana and I share a love of hip-hop. One day when she was five and a half and Jess was maybe just six months, we were driving in our van with Hot 97 blasting. Remember the female r&b group En Vogue? The radio started playing one of their songs with really complex harmonies, and from the back, we hear Jess, sitting in his little car seat, matching the notes. My daughter and I just looked at each other. "Are you hearing this?" "Yes!"

By the time he was three, he was sitting in on my husband's jazz gigs, singing a jazzy version of "This Old Man." They kept modulating up the scale—going from one key to the next, higher and higher—and Jess never flinched. The musicians were looking at him like, *What the hell?* He's played violin, saxophone, and played in both his high school marching band and the band at Rutgers. He just started his senior year at Rutgers, where he's a double major in acting and communications, with a minor in film.

Our daughter went to Rutgers too, but at its Newark campus. I've insisted that both my kids have double majors, like I did. Jazlana chose journalism and the university's school of criminal justice. She had an internship with the Newark Police Department doing community outreach, which she absolutely loved. It turned into a paid position, but then she got shifted to an office job. She missed being out on the street. At the same time, she was working as a blogger for Funkmaster Flex, a hugely popular DJ on Hot 97,

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who'd started his own website. It's funny, because when she was little, we used to listen to him together all the time. He got a real kick out of that, when Jazlana first told him.

One day she called up Alan and me and said, "I need to choose one job or the other. Would you be angry with me if I chose the radio station?"

I said, "Who do you think you're talking to? Your father and I have the most unconventional life possible! So long as you pay your bills, we're in your corner." She lives in Elizabeth, New Jersey; her room is still here. Some comes over and crashes. Jess lived on campus his freshman year but didn't like it. He felt that he could study better at home, so he lives with us. He has been on full tuition scholarship his entire college career. He also has an extensive and diverse range of music, which now includes hip-hop. Both our kids are very interesting. They are different from each other yet very close.

The Next Chapter: Teaching and Consulting

After my layoff, I started volunteering for nonprofit organizations, which turned into part-time consulting jobs. I started working at a digital marketing company in 2011, but two years later, they downsized. Within days, I began working as a consultant for Morgan Stanley. After working forty to fifty hours a week, since 2013, I now work three ten-hour days. Now, there is a shelf life with consultants, and I know that someday this will come to an end, I feel blessed to be there. I also know that a lot of people think ill of a lot of these banks, and deservedly so, but I have to tell you, Morgan Stanley was exactly what I was looking for: to be part of a company where the people are professional but without having a stick up their ass. Everyone has a mutual respect for one another, and I like it. Plus, we have fun!

The rest of the time, I'm building my business as a voice teacher. I'd taught a few private students a long time ago. I had a twelve-year-old, a thirteen-year-old, and two heavy-metal guys in their in their twenties or thirties. They wanted to learn how to scream-sing. But I had to stop once I got promoted at Lehman Brothers. This time around, my returning to teaching happened almost accidentally. My first student was my own son. Jess performed in plays throughout high school, so naturally I helped him with his singing. He said to me, "Wow, you're a really good teacher!" In seventh grade, he was to play Benny Southstreet in Guys and Dolls. Some neighbors down the street, a brother and sister, were also in the show: he was Nicely-Nicely, and she was Adelaide. They were struggling a bit with the music, so Jess suggested they come see me for some informal lessons.

One day I went to pick up Jess at rehearsal. The director, who was also the choral director, asked me, "Are you giving the three of them voice lessons?" I said "Yeah …"—a bit hesitantly, thinking she was going to yell at me for interfering or something. Instead, she thanked me, adding, "You are teaching them exactly how I teach my students." She asked if I'd ever thought about becoming a voice teacher and gave me some advice and pricing and so on.

I thought about it a bit and decided, "You know what? Maybe I should do this." One by one, I started acquiring new students, entirely through word of mouth. I went from having three students to around forty. I give lessons both in the music room in our home and I also make a few "house calls" in New Jersey.

I have such a range of students. My youngest is eight, and my oldest student is this seventy-three-year-old firecracker who is also a belly dancer. I see her in her home in Princeton once a week. Another student is the mother of a student; she sings Indian music. My students expose me to all types music: Indian, Ladino, gospel, indie, pop, musical theatre, rap, and more. Another woman, who is around my age, wanted to learn to sing Contemporary Christian music, just for her own enjoyment. At first, she thought I might be offended because I'm of a different faith. "Offended?" I said. "So long as the music doesn't suck, I'm in!" Good music is good music, and a lot of the Christian Contemporary stuff is excellent. In fact, there's this one song she sings that makes me cry every time. I've got to tell you, it's absolutely beautiful.

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So now I've got this perfect balance between my creative side and my organizational side. At work, at the big Morgan Stanley Building in Times Square, I'm surrounded by a lot of people in their forties, thirties, and even their twenties. Everyone gets along great. I'm sort of the office mom. The young guys invite me out to go drinking with them. Most of the time I can't. "I've got to teach. Sorry!" But sometimes I join them; we mostly talk sports. It's so cute.

One day a young female colleague came up to me and said, "Can I ask you something? Were you, like, a rocker chick?"

I said, "Well, something like that."

"Because you're cool, and young, and with it."

"I was a lot of different kinds of chicks," I told her. "Rocker chick. Jazz chick. Musical theater chick. All of the above."

They couldn't believe I turned sixty this year. I'm not embarrassed about my age, so why lie about it?

With Age Comes Hard Moments

Just a week into my job at Morgan Stanley, in 2013, my dad, Seymour, was put on life support and died. Three years later, my mom passed away, and just two months after that, just before last Christmas, Cindy's wonderful husband, Benis, died of cancer. It was a lot to process emotionally. I cannot tell you how nice my colleagues were. You know how much you are loved when a crisis arises, and people don't have to go out of their way to be kind, but they do so anyway.

And, of course, my sisters and I always have one another. We're very close. Cindy's son, B. J., is a realtor in Spokane, Washington. He's married to this model-gorgeous police detective. She's a total badass! They have three adorable daughters. Abby, who is also widowed, has one daughter, my niece Natalie. She is just a beautiful human being. She doesn't live far from Abby, on Long Island, and has a master's degree in social work. I'm lucky to be close to my mother-in-law who now lives in the same assisted living facility that my Mom had moved into.

Life throws a lot of curves at you, and we just all kind of move ahead. Because what else can you do? So I choose to stay positive. That's how I've gone through life. It's been an amazing journey so far. ■

"One day a young female colleague came up to me and said, 'Can I ask you something? Were you, like, a rocker chick? Because you're cool, and young, and with it.'

"'I was a lot of different kinds of chicks,' I told her. 'Rocker chick. Jazz chick. Musical theater chick. All of the above.'"

See.
See Shelley.
See Shelley Sing
(and Alan Play).

♫ "Twisted"

♫ "The Nearness of You"

♫ "Neverland"

Corey Pepper

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their first season, and he's about to start work on his first episode of season two.

You might think that he benefits from having a father who's both an actor and an acting teacher. But, in fact, he didn't really like working with me. He heard my constructive advice regarding his performances as being critical. In short, he was offended. That's why he takes lessons from one of the other teachers I work with. Lesson learned: sometimes a parent must stay the parent and leave the coaching to others.

I just turned sixty-one, and I consider myself to be very lucky. To have the stability that I've enjoyed is really kind of ridiculous for an actor. After all these years, I'm still doing what I love, and I know so many people who can't say that. I've never had to stop doing it, and at this point, it doesn't look like I'll ever have to. ■

Robert Simon

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me and scratched their heads, like "*Who* is *this* kid?" (Nowadays, of course, even the most successful people dress like they're homeless.)

My early work was in movies (*Into the Night*, starring Jeff Goldblum and Michelle Pfeiffer, *A Stranger Is Watching* (from a Marry Higgins Clark thriller, starring Kate Mulgrew and Rip Torn) and TV movies (*Christmas Eve, Triplecross*), mainly as a second assistant director or first assistant director.

After ten years, I was ready to move to California. I kind of knew I'd end up out there one day, because even as a kid, I liked the idea of California—probably from listening to the Beach Boys. Do you remember how at the end of many of the TV shows we used to watch, it said, "Filmed at Culver City." I always thought to myself, "Wow, Culver City. That must be a cool place."

Career-wise, it just felt like my future was in the West and not in New York. Content was all created in Los Angeles, and New York was just a distant shooting location. A very expensive place to shoot with great backgrounds. If the story was set in New York, there was just no other place to shoot. Many times, I'd work on a film, shooting exteriors in sub-zero temperatures for a few weeks, just to be left behind when the company went back to the West Coast to the warm, comfortable studios to shoot on sets. It's not that way so much anymore since chasing tax incentives has changed the business, but in the late 1980s, the business was slowing down as New York and its crews priced themselves out of the market.

One day I was with a friend of mine, and I turned to her and said, "It's time." I think it took me all of two weeks to get my stuff together and make the move. I didn't have a job lined up per se. But I was a second assistant director, I was a member of the Directors' Guild, and I had some people who had left me behind on the cold New York streets to call for work once I relocated.

Incidentally, one of the first things I did when I got out to California was visit Culver City. It's actually a lovely little place now, with a really nice downtown with cool restaurants. But thirty years ago, it was a pit. I remember driving down the I-10 Freeway in my Volkswagen Bug, and I saw the sign: you could get off and turn right to Beverly Hills or go left to Culver City. I made the left. It was … a wreck. Nobody ever went there. The city was full of vacant stores, cheap houses, and only a couple of studios. The beloved Culver City of my dreams turned out to be kind of a joke.

One of the first TV series that I worked on brought me back to Florida: I spent two years there on *Miami Vice*. I was first assistant director. In some respects, it remains the favorite experience of my career, simply because it was so much fun

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Yes, Bob Really Did Produce the Pilot for a TV Show Called *Jericho*

Remember Shaun Cassidy? Singing teen idol? Star of *The Hardy Boys Mysteries*? Half-brother of David Cassidy? He's a good friend and an amazingly prolific and talented TV producer and writer. In fact, he was already into his third career while on *The Hardy Boys*, because he knew that the acting thing wasn't going to last forever.

We've worked together on several shows that Shaun created. The series *Jericho* (2006–08), about a tiny Kansas town struggling to survive in the aftermath of a global nuclear holocaust (*not* about a certain suburban hamlet on Long Island with extraordinarily high SAT scores) came to life from an idea he had in his head. ■

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to work on. The show played a big part in Miami's renaissance and its becoming a cool city. Series creator Michael Mann had conceived *Miami Vice* to be this thing that Miami wasn't yet but could aspire to. It became ingrained in the city's identity and involved the entire community.

We owned the city. For me, as a single person living there, it was amazing. We shot scenes in every club, so managers would give me a VIP card. We knew the cops, and they knew us. Now, contrast that with David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, for which I was coproducer during its two seasons from 1990 to 1991. As great and as creative as *Twin Peaks* was, when we were filming, it was like working in a vacuum. Because until the show aired and began generating a lot of attention—maybe midway through the first season—nobody in town knew who we were. We were just another network show that odds said would fail.

The other thing that was great about *Miami Vice* is that, as a long-running show, you could use your imagination and then realize your vision for the show. For example, for one episode, Dick Wolfe, the writer, had a scene take place in a club at night, and I just couldn't make the schedule work without us needing to move to another location, hiring extras, and so on. We were shooting on the beach for much of the day, so I went to the producers and said, "I can't make this work the way that Dick envisions the scene. But do you think we could take that scene in the club and put Sonny Crocket [Don Johnson] and Rico Tubbs [Philip Michael Thomas] on this poolside, which overlooks the beach, with hot girls in bikinis and all of that."

And they said, "Yeah, maybe! Call Dick and pitch him on it."

"M-m-me?" I was the first assistant director, and this was just my second episode.

But I called Dick, explained the idea, and he was immediately receptive to it. "Sounds good. What's the geography of it?" The writers tailored the scene to the location that I'd presented to them, just like that, and I felt like, "Oh, this is amazing!" I came to the important realization that everybody's voice is vital. In episodic television, we were doing twenty-two hours—twenty-two episodes, or the length of about twelve films—in a single season. Nobody can make every creative decision, so everybody's creative input is important, and I've carried that lesson with me ever since.

When Bob has time off, "I've got to get out into nature," he says. That's Bob with Seanne Biggs and their eight-year-old dog Bird. "She's a rescue. Hates other dogs, loves people, and she's a great office dog, so she's been able to travel with me to a bunch of TV locations." Wonder if she qualifies for SAG card?

I Know What You're Thinking: What Does a TV Producer *Do*, Anyway?

My job, whether I am credited as "Produced By," or "Coexecutive Producer," or "Executive Producer," I am the only producer in the credits who actually doesn't have another job. Everyone else can be called something else. Associate producer is the head of post production; a coproducer could be anybody from the production manager to a midlevel writer. An executive producer could be the guy who developed the show or a high-level writer. All of those titles are fluid. Sometimes there are people credited that I do not know, or who were associated with the project in some ancillary or historical way but have nothing to do with the current team.

A "Produced by Robert Simon" credit is my favorite, but I don't take that anymore. It's the only one nobody else can get, but you leave that credit behind when you move up to another title rung. Ultimately, the executive producer creates the overall vision of the show and has final say over the scripts we shoot; then the studio entrusts me with an allocation toward $100 million for a season of twenty-two episodes, and I have to spend that money creatively and wisely to turn the creator's vision into the show that you see.

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I work with a new director on each episode and guide the project in the right direction, while keeping it within the budget. Because sometimes the show's creator or the director's vision is way beyond what we can afford. I'll give you an example:

From December 2015 until April 2017, I was the producer and coexecutive producer of *Quantico*, an ABC drama about young CIA recruits training at the base in Quantico, Virginia. I came in midway through season one after the short-lived *Wicked City* was cancelled. *Quantico*'s first season was being shot in Montreal. We had a couple of training scenes that took place on airplanes.

First we looked around to see if there was a plane we could use, but there wasn't. Now, there is a company out in the California desert that I've rented plane fuselages from in the past. But it would have cost a fortune to ship it all the way to Montreal. The executive producer really wanted this scene: a series of training exercises with agents drawing their guns on a hijacked airplane. I pitched the following: we'd use real seats, but not a whole plane. We'd construct what was like a ribcage that would appear to be a plane mockup in the middle of a dark warehouse. Imagine a plane with its skin stripped away, and open on the sides. The production designer sketched out what I suggested, and it wound up working out great, because it wasn't as confining as shooting the scene on an actual airplane. So we came up with a solution that was not only fiscally responsibly but also was visually interesting; in fact, it probably worked better than using the real thing. So everyone was served.

The following season took us to New York. This time, we had to show passengers traveling on an airplane. We couldn't find a plane locally without breaking the bank and sucking up a shooting day for a very short but not unimportant scene. I love going exploring wherever we're filming, and one day I went to the aircraft carrier the USS *Intrepid*, which is docked on the West Side of Manhattan. Well, guess what they also have there on the pier right next to it: one of the original Concorde jets. We needed that plane.

I asked the location manager to call the Intrepid Museum and see if they would let us shoot on board the Concorde. Yes, they would. Then I had to do battle a bit with the studio

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A boy and his bike. (Clockwise from lower left): Bob, at age five, exploring the wilderness that is East Birchwood; riding 'round Austin, Texas, where his TV travels took him for several years; and exploring the desert under the big sky.

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regarding insurance. When you shoot on a ship or a plane, you need to take out special insurance on the hull or the fuselage, respectively, even if the boat or plane isn't moving. For this scene, we needed both. But I made it work because I figured we could fill out the rest of the day shooting some scenes in rooms on the *Intrepid*.

In a sense, I'm the pragmatic creative guy who has to make the show fit within all of these boxes, taking into account that I'm dealing with people who have very different interests: from the actors, to the director, to the show's creator, to the studio. That means I have to deal with the actors and all their needs, which ultimately come to me and which I'm more than happy to indulge as best as I can, and to mediate all of the petty little fights that go on between the people who creatively facilitate the show.

When I started in film and TV, I was intimidated by actors. I am still amazed by good acting. The industry in-joke is, "You know how to make an actor unhappy? Give him a job!" When an actor gets a job, they're thrilled. Young actors on television? This puts them on the map, and they are paid boatloads of money. After a couple of months, though, all of that is forgotten. Most are great, but many just turn into whiny babies who would rather not have to show up. Maybe they have to be in the background in some other cast member's shot and just don't want to come to work for that. So a lot of what I do is just deal with trying to keep everybody happy. Just like in any workplace, an actor will have a director that she doesn't like, or a director will have an actor that he doesn't like. My door is always open, and they come in, and I have to find a way to keep the peace and keep the process moving forward.

Twin Peaks's David Lynch: Caution—Genius at Work

Working with David Lynch on *Twin Peaks*, I saw how very, very aware he is of everything that goes on around him. Early on, there's a scene where the town's sheriff, played by Michael Ontkean, meets for the first time in a conference room at the station with Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle McLaughlin). It's this terrible-looking, paneled room with a conference table in the middle. And there was either a deer head or a moose head (I honestly don't recall, so let's so with moose head) on the wall.

After rehearsal, everybody went home. The next morning, they came in to do a final rehearsal and shoot, to find that the taxidermied moose head had fallen off the wall and landed on the table. The set dresser ran in, picked it up, and began to mount it back on the wall.

"No! No!" David said. "Leave it there. Let's get some black spray paint, and paint an outline where the head had been on the wall." So he shot the scene with moose head lying on the table. If something didn't feel right, he wouldn't do it. The man could waste a lot of time. But once it felt right to him, he would go like gangbusters. ■

High-Def Equals High Expectations

If a show I'm producing looks crappy, I am the first person that the studio will complain to. Even when the ambition of the show is greater than its budget. I need to find a way to make it all work. With the advent of high-definition TV, the quality has to be better than ever. You can't build a crappy set, because it will show. You learn to be resourceful, which is one of the challenges of my job that I love the best.

I'll give you an example from another show I produced a few years ago: ABC's *The River*, a supernatural action adventure. Lincoln Cole journeys through the Amazon Jungle with his mother in search of his father, the famed explorer Dr. Emmet Cole, who has vanished mysteriously. To bankroll the mission, they agree to let their trek be filmed for a documentary.

We needed to show a research vessel making its way down the Amazon River. Not just once but every week and throughout each episode. Now, how do you do that? Where can you find a navigable river that is picturesque and undeveloped? Well, nowhere, but my job is to figure out a way. The studio thought it was going to do it all with visual effects. I told them, "No, you're not going to have the money to do it all with visual effects, so you're going to end up shooting on sets, and it's going to look cheesy."

Here's what I came up with: A location manager showed me a short, beautiful little river on the north shore of Oahu. Problem was, there was a bridge blocking the en-

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trance so no way to get a boat in there and if you could, the water wasn't deep enough for a boat of any size. So we built a three-story set on top of what was essentially a gigantic ~~a~~ surfboard that we pushed up and down this narrow spit of water and created a couple of floating foliage rafts to change the look of the shoreline. I had a great production designer and construction team, but it was a marine architect I'd met who figured it out with me. This goes back to my broad liberal arts education as well as my engineering background, beginning with learning mechanical drawing from Coach Bryant.

Almost everything I've ever studied, I use in work and life. Because while I don't design sets personally, the first pass of set design is the blueprints that the set designer makes. And the funny thing is, I always thought that everybody could read a blueprint, because to me, reading a blueprint is like reading a memo. I understand elevations, I understand how to see in 3-D what's on a page in 2-D. And that has served me so well, because I don't have to wait for a set to be built to understand what it will look like. So if we want to make revisions, which we have to do all the time, we can do it early. Bringing all affected departments in will save time and money, and, in the end, make the project better. I can be part of that conversation and speak to experts in these fields in their own language.

> "Used to be, I'd be up for anything. If the phone rang—'We need you'—I didn't even ask where, I went. I was up for any challenge. But I've had a change of heart. I would love to be able to work and sleep in my own bed."

Basically, I am not the expert in much, but I know enough about a lot of different things to be able to know who the expert is and be able to work with him, so that when called upon, I can say, "Yeah, I know something about that!"

And each show, in turn, teaches me something. I once did a pilot about a guy who buys a circus. I got one of the clowns to teach me how to juggle. While filming a Western, one of the stuntmen taught me how to rope. And you never know when juggling and roping will come in handy, right?

Travelin' Man

Then there's the learning experience from traveling to shoot on location. For The River, ABC suggested shooting on the Mississippi River in Louisiana. I said, "Winter in Louisiana? That's going to look terrible!" We went to Puerto Rico instead. ABC didn't want to shoot the show there because they'd had a bad experience there with one of its other shows, but we made it work and had a great experience. I met a whole new group of film professionals, and learned a lot about boats and how to move them. Then when The River got picked up, I instigated the moved to Hawaii, I got to live in Mahalo, Oahu, for a year. For two other shows, I lived in Austin, Texas. Then there was Richmond, Virginia, more Miami, Denmark, New Mexico, Colorado … I could go on for a bit.

Wherever we shoot, I bring my bicycle with me, and whenever I find some spare time, I'll go looking for some local artifacts and trace some history that's going to show me something else. By the time we're done, I usually know the place as well as the location manager, because I'll have gone up and down every alleyway and read every historical marker.

Like, during the year that I was back in New York doing *Quantico*, I rode my bike to every site listed in *Atlas Obscura*. I went down to the famous Five Points section of Manhattan, which doesn't exist anymore. The federal courthouse building stands right on the spot. But when you explore the surrounding neighborhood, you can understand the migration of the people who lived there in the nineteenth century. And from that, I came to understand the city so much better. I love that. Want to know where the oldest manhole cover in Manhattan is? I did, and now I do.

That said, the nine months in New York was tough. I'd already spent time in Montreal; then I had move the show down there, with twenty-five tractor trailers. I was set up in a great apartment on twenty-Ninth and Fifth Avenue, but that is a long time to be away from home, which for me is West Los Angeles, where I live with my girl, Seanne Biggs.

We've been together for twelve years. Seanne, who's from Orange County, California, used to be a cardiac ICU nurse taking care of people right after heart transplants—talk about pressure! Now she's in the field of medical informatics. We met

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through our mutual love of cycling. We're part of this very big and robust Southern California cycling community. We didn't like each other very much for a while! But then a mutual friend insisted that we go out together. Good thing we listened.

Because of the nature of the work I do, we've gotten used to being apart, in a good way. It's hard, but we do it. When I'm away on location, I'll fly home if we have a break of four or more days. Luckily, Seanne loves traveling and has a flexible work schedule. So she'll fly out to be with me and hang.

Production on *Quantico* ended last April. As soon as I get back, I have to get out into nature. I took a monthlong motorcycle trip to Colorado, visiting my sister in Denver. My father was staying with her, so I got to see both of them. Then I took a couple of other road trips to San Diego and through the dessert around there.

Used to be, I'd be up for anything. If the phone rang—"We need you"—I didn't even ask where, I went. I was up for any challenge. But I've had a change of heart. I would love to be able to work and sleep in my own bed.

I was working a lot with a director who is a cancer survivor. *Quantico* was very difficult for everyone at the beginning, and we would have these conversations about "How much time do you have left?" It sort of sunk in. I tend to work on very difficult shows. I don't get the shows like *This Is Us*, which I would love to do: something that shoots in town and is ... simpler. I thrive on the huge challenge of floating a boat down the Amazon, creating battle scenes and big visual effects shows, but those are the things that shorten your life. DGA members tend to die young.

It's just an extraordinary time in television. Because the hours that are being created for Showtime, HBO, Netflix, Amazon, are just amazing. Sure, there are still crappy shows; there always were and always will be. But there's lots of quality, too. I did two network pilots and one show with Noah Hawley, who created *Fargo* for TV. He's a producer, screenwriter, and author. The FX Network basically told him, "Do whatever you want to do," and left to his own devices, he's found a great place off network for himself where he can work much better.

With all of these outlets, there are more TV shows than ever before. Now, that makes my job harder on some levels. For one thing, it's become much harder to hire good crews. When we were shooting *Quantico* in New York, we'd have crew members literally walk across the street to work on another show for another nickel an hour.

In general, we don't have all the assets that we used to have. We're expected to do and do it better with fewer assets and less time. But, again, I enjoy that challenge. My goal never changes: to make the best show that I can. Even after all this time, I adapt to the changes in the industry and remain open to whatever opportunities present themselves. I've never wanted to be pigeonholed, so I've tried many different types of shows.

That's the thing: you have to be open to the magic, because it's going to happen—just maybe in ways that you didn't anticipate. ■

Between the Covers

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Philip Bashe

Apple, "kids used to throw me drugs on the field, because they'd heard that I was a head. A doper. New York was a big, beautiful playground for me."

According to Phil, "In writing *Dog Days*, I was curious to learn to what extent the players I rooted for were affected by the tumult of the 1960s and 1970s. They seemed like men to me at the time, but many of them were barely out of their teens."

For instance, rookie Thurman Munson was just twenty-two when he and the other Yankees heard about National Guardsmen shooting to death four young people at Munson's alma mater, Kent State University, during a student protest against the Vietnam War on May 4, 1970. Shortstop Gene Michael, a decade older than Munson, not only attended Kent State but also grew up in Kent, Ohio. Upon hearing the news, while the Yankees were out west in Oakland, a horrified Michael was thoroughly dumbstruck.

"Kent was the most conservative, laid-back community you'd ever want to see," he recalled. "A pretty little town, called the Tree city. The school was laid back too. It was easy and nice.

"I thought, *Jeez, if this can happen in Kent, it can happen anywhere.*"

Ballplayers were affected by the quagmire in Vietnam, but not to the same degree as others their age. Most were able to serve safely in the Army

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Reserves just one weekend a month, with no worries about being shipped overseas. Reservist Steve Kline, a promising right-handed starter whose career ended prematurely due to arm trouble, remembered receiving an angry letter from a grieving mother who wrote, "My son died in Vietnam, but you get to duck service just because you're a ballplayer." It stung, says Kline, a sixteen-game winner in 1972, but he understood her outrage.

One of the few major leaguers to be conscripted was the Yankees' nineteen-year-old phenom Bobby Murcer. The latest in a long line of New Mickey Mantles, he too hailed from Oklahoma. Murcer was even signed by the same Yankees scout who'd discovered the Mick: Tom Greenwade. "I didn't really worry too much about being compared to Mickey Mantle," he reflected. "I mostly worried about what Mickey thought about being compared to me!"

The lefthanded-hitting shortstop was expected to share the infield with Mantle in 1967, when Uncle Sam suddenly beckoned. Previously, he'd been deferred, but "out of the blue, I got a 1A classification in the mail, along with my draft notice. That was a little bit strange. Obviously, we were wondering what the deal was."

According to Murcer, the deal was this: he was being made an example of. In an atmosphere of increasing public discontent with the Vietnam War, accusations were flying that the troops overseas were inequitably drawn from minorities and the underprivileged.

"At the time, I couldn't really talk about it, but I guess I can now," he

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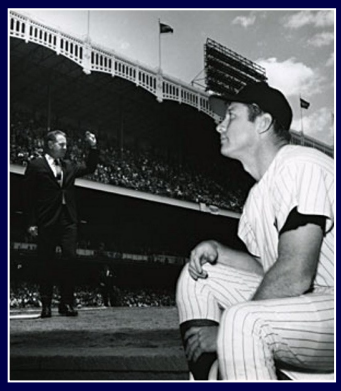
FROM DAMNED YANKEES TO YANKEES OF THE DAMNED

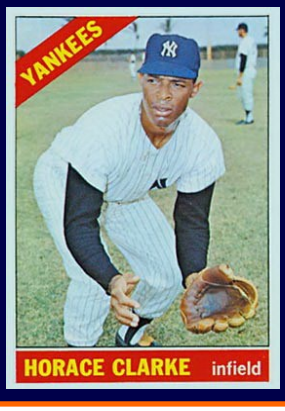
Yogi Berra congratulates Cardinals manager Johnny Keane following the hard-fought seven-game 1964 World Series. Twenty-four hour later, the Yankees callously fired Berra (the same day the Soviet Union canned Premier Nikita Khrushchev), while Keane shocked the baseball world by resigning in St. Louis. He replaced Yogi as manager five days later—though the deal had actually been struck in secret two months before.

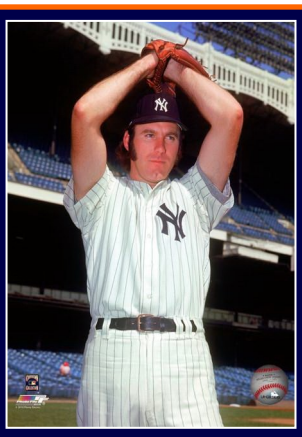
A melancholy Mickey Mantle watches his close friend Whitey Ford retire abruptly due to arm trouble on May 30, 1967. Bobby Richardson had retired over the winter; Roger Maris and Clete Boyer had been traded, and Elston Howard would follow them out of town shortly. The Yankees' infield consisted of a gimpy Mantle stationed at first, Horace Clarke at second, Ruben Amaro at short, and Charlie Smith at third. Small wonder the Yankees finished ninth that season.



The Major loses his shit over an ump's call. It happened a lot and never failed to entertain. After two and a half years as GM, a job he never wanted, Ralph Houk returned to the dugout in May 1966. He wrung the most out of mostly lackluster squads but quit on the final day of the disappointing 1973 campaign. Houk couldn't abide the interference of cantankerous new owner George M. Steinbrenner. He remains the *only* one of the Boss's many skippers not to be fired.

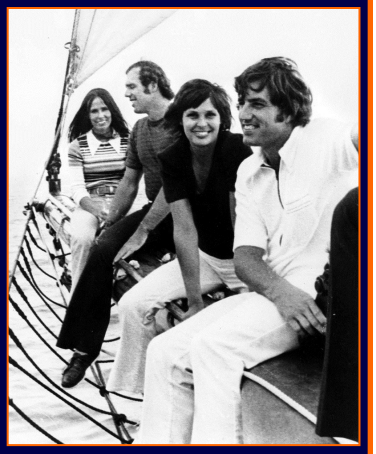
Somewhat unfairly, this losing period in Yankees history is often refered to as "the Horace Clarke Era." The Virgin Islander started at second from 1966 until 1974, much to the dismay of the pitching staff, most of whom were sinkerballers who lived or died on the quality of the infield. Clarke not only had limited range, but he was notorious for holding the ball on the double play at second to avoid being spiked. According to reliever Jack Aker, in 1971 all the starters, including ace Mel Stottlemyre, all threatened to go on strike if Ralph Houk didn't replace him. But as the Major explained, there simply wasn't anyone better down on the farm.

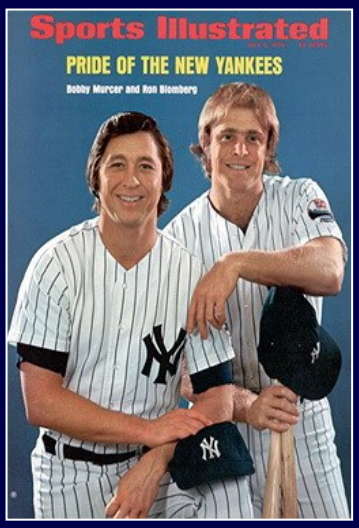




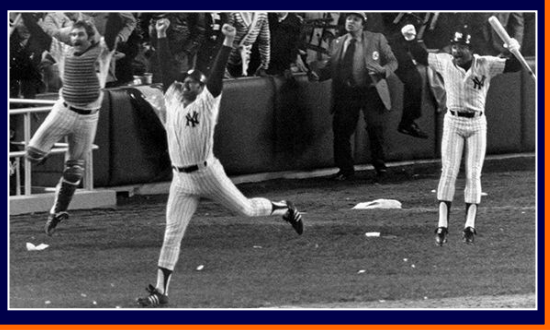
Over the winter of 1971–72, Yankees GM Lee MacPhail traded reliable Stan Bahnsen to the White Sox for a third baseman named Rick McKinney. "The worst trade I ever made," MacPhail called it years later. McKinney, nicknamed "Bozo," committed four errors in one game in April and developed such a phobia that he'd pray the ball wouldn't find him. By May, he was hiding out at the triple-A club in Syracuse. Far more successful was McPhail's '72 trade of Danny Cater to the Red Sox for colorful Albert "Sparky" Lyle. He anchored the bullpen for the next seven years, ringing up thirty-five saves his first year in pinstripes and winning the Cy Young Award in 1976.

In spring training 1973, a different kind of trade dominated the headlines: pitchers Fritz Peterson and Mike Kekich revealed that over the winter, they'd traded wives. Not just wives, actually, but their families—even their pet pooches. Condemnation was harsh and swift. But the critics got it all wrong. This wasn't some tawdy instance of wife-swapping a la *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*. The two couples had married young and came to realize they were better suited to the other's partner. The public pressure broke up Kekich and Marilyn Peterson's relationship. But Fritz and Susanne Kekich are still married forty-five years later.





It wasn't quite Murderers' Row, but by 1973, the Yankees displayed some of the ol' five o'clock lightning. The middle of the lineup was built around Bobby Murcer and Ron Blomberg—baseball's first designated hitter—Thurman Munson, and newcomer Graig Nettles. Blomberg, being Jewish, was hugely popular in the Bronx. In 1972 militant activist Rabbi Meir Kahane demanded permission to present the twenty-three-year-old Georgian an award on the field. When the club turned him down, he showed up anyway. Blomberg had never heard of Kahane, but the words *militant* and *radical* convinced him that he was going to be *shot* at first base. Stadium security tailed Kahane in the stands, however, and Blomberg lived to breathe another day.



October 14, 1976: Chris Chambliss (middle) muscles a ball just over the right-field wall in the bottom of the ninth to put the Yankees back in the World Series for the first time in twelve years. Thurman Munson (l.) leaps out of the dugout, while on-deck hitter Sandy Alomar exults at right.

Between the Covers

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Philip Bashe

Gradually, this ragtag assemblage of players coalesced into a team, becoming incrementally better year by year. If you were a younger fan, the Yankees' glory years were ancient history. This was your team, and you rooted for Jake Gibbs, Pat Dobson, Mel Stottlemyre, Danny Cater, and the others, taking pride in their modest successes.

told Phil in a 1992 interview. "Me being a nineteen-year-old kid, I was getting a lot of publicity in New York. The Kennedys got involved with my draft board in Oklahoma, wondering why in the heck I wasn't serving my time. It became a political issue." Robert Kennedy, then the junior senator from New York, was a staunch supporter of a lottery-type draft.

As a college undergrad in the off-season, Murcer should have qualified for a student deferment. But when he inquired at his local draft board, "I was told that the heat from Washington was too much, and there wasn't anything they could do." On March 6, 1967, he was inducted into the army.

"I certainly didn't have any qualms about serving my country," Murcer stressed. "It was just the way it came about that I questioned." But during his two years as a radio operator, he fretted that by the time he got discharged, his baseball career would practically be over—at the geriatric age of twenty-two,

"Back then," he said with a laugh, "if you lost two years, it seemed almost like the end of the road." Hardly. Murcer never equaled Mickey Mantle, but he became the

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cornerstone of the New York lineup and played a total of seventeen seasons. From 1969 through 1977, he averaged 90 runs batted in.

Like Mantle, he was shifted to the outfield—primarily to minimize casualties. In his first thirty-two games at third base, Murcer committed fourteen miscues, many of them on javelin tosses to Joe Pepitone that sent fans in the stands behind first base ducking and covering. During a May series in Oakland, two of his throws to second sailed into the outfield. "Later in the game," Murcer remembered, "somebody hit a two-hopper to me, and as I fielded it, a voice in the stands yelled, 'Watch out! He's got it again!'

"After the inning was over, Ralph Houk said to me in the dugout, 'Young man, tomorrow you come to the ballpark and take some fly balls in the outfield.'

"'How come?'

"'Because I want to get you as far out there as I can. I hope they *never* hit you a ball.'"

A few nights later, Murcer was pawing the grass in right field. He quickly proved himself to be such a natural outfielder that Houk soon installed him in Yankee Stadium's vast center field (461 feet to dead center), a hallowed spot in franchise lore that had been patrolled previously by Mickey Mantle and, before him, Joe DiMaggio.

Taking a Breather Turns Into an Extended Vacation

As Phil explains, "By the time of my last book, *Science Lessons* [Harvard Business Press, 2008], I'd written eighteen books in about twenty-two years. And some of them, like the thousand-page *Complete Cancer Survival Guide* [Doubleday, 2000 and 2005, named book of the year by the American Medical Writers Association], were the equivalent of two or three books in terms of size.

Over the years, I'd done some editing on the side for Simon & Schuster, Random House—the usual suspects in the publishing world—and decided to take a breather from writing and do book editing full time. I enjoy it, get a lot of satisfaction out of it, and, also, editing other people's work improves your own writing. For starters, it quickly disabuses you of the idea that every word or thought is a pearl. When I was a magazine writer and editor, my nickname was 'Basher the Slasher.' But I was always every bit as critical of my own work as I was of my staff of writers, if not more so.

"Well, here it is, nine years later, and I'm still doing it. Writing a book can be grueling work. I've had books that have taken me nine months to complete, while others call for so much research and interviewing that I might be living with them for two and a half years, and spend time traveling, too.

"As most people probably know by now, Patty and I have a wonderful son, Justin, now twenty-five, with autism spectrum disorder. I've worked at home since 1986, so I've always been an extremely involved dad. Patty, who has written twenty-five books, including several bestsellers and books that have been made into TV movies, decided to change careers fifteen years ago. She earned a master's in autism education and became a certified instructor in applied behavioral analysis (ABA), the only approved therapy for children with autism. As a supervisor at Life's WORC (the same agency that runs the dayhab program that Justin has attended since 2011), she works directly with children and families, supervises ABA providers, and frequently teaches and lectures. She still finds time to write, too.

"With Patty no longer working at home since 2003, much of Justin's care and needs have fallen to me, and being an editor gives me the flexibility to take our son wherever he needs to go. He has a very active social life but doesn't drive, and neither do his friends. So … Phil the chauffer at your service! I can do editing at two in the morning, if necessary; it's hard to do that on a steady basis when writing, which is more intense and eats up a different part of your brain. Plus, my editing projects are finished in a few weeks, or at most, two months, as opposed to several years.

"I would like to write one more book. I have a proposal ready for a book geared toward moms of kids with special needs on how to get the men in their lives more involved. Absent fathers, both figuratively and literally, is a major problem in the special needs community. For me, being Justin's dad is the most fulfilling thing I've ever done, and I would propose that being there for one's child is the ultimate test of manhood.

"But until circumstances allow that kind of commitment again, I'm really happy doing what I'm doing. I

Continued on page 45

Between the Covers

Continued from page 44

Philip Bashe

get to edit books in virtually every genre, both fiction and nonfiction.

"At this point, I've edited probably close to a thousand titles, from authors such as Hillary Clinton, Dr. Mehmet Oz, Linda Ronstadt, Tony Robbins, David Carr, Shania Twain, political writer Roger Cohen, Jerry Rice, Jerry West, Amy Goodman, Dan Brown, Gene Hackman, Cyndi Lauper, Tony Curtis, Stanley Bing, Hunter S. Thompson, Judith Miller, US Congressman Keith Ellison, Phil Knight, Cass Sunstein, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as many books on health and medicine from physicians, and a series on US Wars from the US Military Academy at West Point.

"As you can see, it's pretty varied, which I thrive on, both as a writer and an editor. Most are good and some are great, while with other manuscripts, my job basically boils down to 'polishing a turd.' But I get satisfaction from that, too. My attitude is always 'Damn it, I'm gonna make this the *shiniest* turd it can possibly be!'

"Which, I suppose you could say, is kind of my approach to life in general!" ■

Teenage Idol, Travelin' Man

Rick Nelson grew up in America's living rooms as the undisputed star of his family's long-running, culture-defining ABC-TV sitcom *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. In 1957, at sixteen, he started recording records, with father Ozzie at the controls. (Yes, "square" Ozzie Nelson, a onetime popular bandleader—wife Harriet was his orchestra's singer—was literally a founding father of rock & roll.)

The music was still regarded by most as a nefarious influence on American youth and a threat to unravel the very fabric of US society. Yet almost every week, the wholesome Nelsons essentially smuggled rock & roll into US homes, as Rick appeared at the end of most episodes to debut his latest hit: "Stood Up," "Waitin' in School," "Poor Little Fool," "Believe What You Say," "Travelin' Man," "Hello Marylou," to name just a few. Even once the hits dried up in the mid-1960s, he continued to make the music he loved, touring up to 250 nights a year. John Fogerty, a lifelong admirer who inducted Rick posthumously into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, said it best: "Maybe he came from Hollywood, but the sound was pure Memphis."

Who Listens to Critics, Anyway?

If they say something nice about your books, *everybody* should! Why, critics are as infallible as the Pope! Every single word below is the unvarnished, gospel truth!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dog Days: The New York Yankees' Fall from Grace and Return to Glory, 1964 to 1976

"An outstanding sports history."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"With great care and compassion, *Dog Days* rises above the multitude of similar sports books; Bashe's mixing the Yankees' and its players' stories with that of America's should be a model for others writing in the same genre."
—*South Bend (IN) Tribune*

Teenage Idol, Travelin' Man: The Complete Biography of Rick Nelson

"Fluidly told and thoroughly documented. A singular and interesting biography."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Bashe's style and the varied career and influence of his subject place this volume several notches above other recent biographies.
—*Publishers Weekly*

Heavy Metal Thunder

"Bashe gives a surprisingly rich and reflective overview. Rather than pandering to prejudices, he examines them."
—*New York Times Book Review*

"Bashe dissects this anarchic musical style in a well-researched, authoritative study."

Concept: A girl. A camera. And the greatest city in the world!

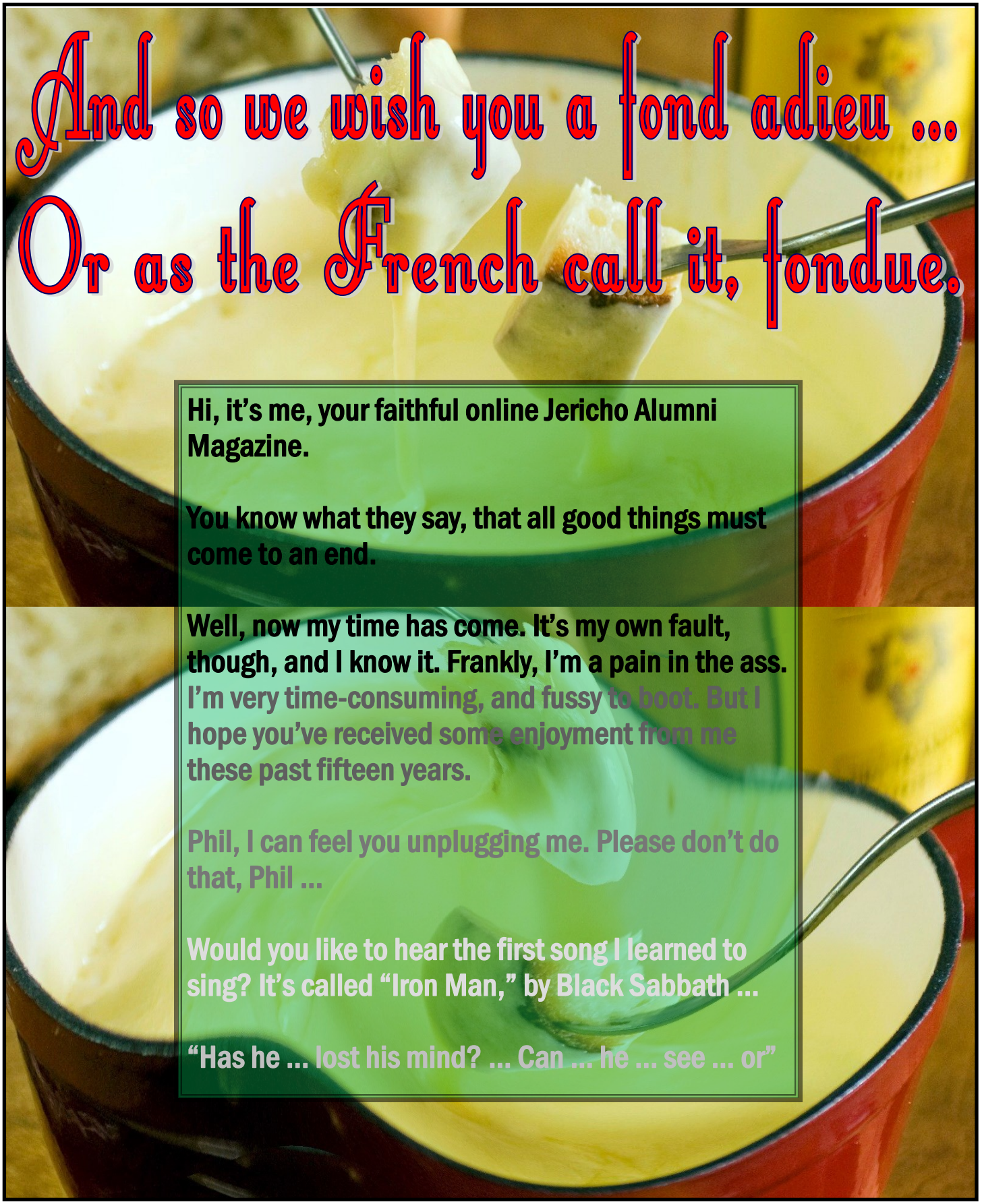
1. The *Playbill* staff in Times Square watching the eclipse through cereal boxes. Remember when we did this in the '60s?

2. When the sunset aligns with the street grid. #manhattanhenge

3. Yankees game viewing from the box courtesy of Jerry Dikowitz with Beverly Weissman and Bobbi Solomon.

4. Momma Mourning Dove laid two eggs in my window box, and these two cuties arrived a couple of weeks later. Over the course of six weeks, I watched them grow. They still come back daily.

5. Meet the kids from Camp Simcha, a camp for children with pediatric illnesses, including life-threatening cancer. They came to the city for the day from Glen Spey, NY. I first saw them from my office window, where they were dancing atop a double-decker bus. Then Shayna and I ran into them on Central Park West. They were amazing and inspiring!



And so we wish you a fond adieu ... Or as the French call it, fondue.

Hi, it's me, your faithful online Jericho Alumni Magazine.

You know what they say, that all good things must come to an end.

Well, now my time has come. It's my own fault, though, and I know it. Frankly, I'm a pain in the ass. I'm very time-consuming, and fussy to boot. But I hope you've received some enjoyment from me these past fifteen years.

Phil, I can feel you unplugging me. Please don't do that, Phil ...

Would you like to hear the first song I learned to sing? It's called "Iron Man," by Black Sabbath ...

"Has he ... lost his mind? ... Can ... he ... see ... or"