

GW

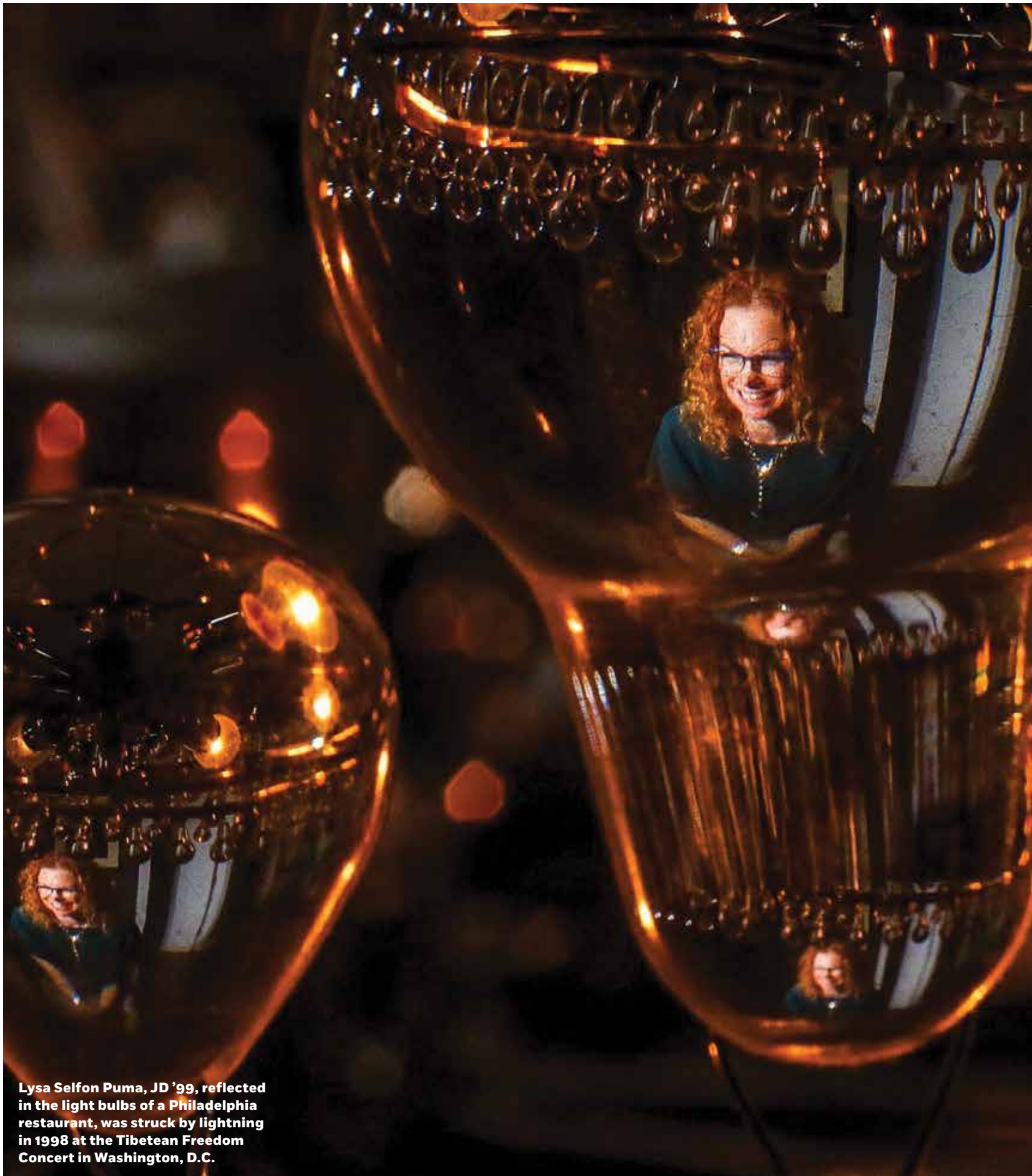
THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
MAGAZINE
SPRING 2018



LOW

HIGH

THE POWER ISSUE



Lysa Selfon Puma, JD '99, reflected in the light bulbs of a Philadelphia restaurant, was struck by lightning in 1998 at the Tibetan Freedom Concert in Washington, D.C.



GW MAGAZINE SPRING 2018

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

THE POWER ISSUE

FEATURES

24 / Natural Power

The Length of a Flash
Lysa Selfon Puma, JD '99, was struck by a thunderbolt in 1998. This is what happened after.

To Hit (and Be Hit) in the NFL Alum and ex-Chicago Bear Garry Lyle takes us inside the violence.

'It's a Strong Body' In bodybuilding, alumna

Dina Al Sabah—an expat member of the Kuwaiti royal family—found freedom, troubles and, on the other side, herself.

'Some Men Never Came Back' The nation's second-longest-held prisoner of war, Everett Alvarez Jr., JD '83, talks about deprivation, torture and the will to outlast his captors.

46 / Power of Identity

Baroque Breakbeats
Vidya Iyer, BA '12, disentangled from the pressures of assimilation and ignited a star—one of last year's most-Google'd names in India.

Circling Back
Psychiatrist Irvin Yalom, BA '52, recalls the uncomfortable

relationship he shared with his parents, with which he still wrestles into his 80s.

The Sphere of Influence
David Eisenhower, JD '76, spent his formative years in the orbit of two presidents: his grandfather and his father-in-law.

64 / Manufactured Power

First Light Physicist Geoffrey Chew, BS '43, recalls the world's first detonation of a nuclear weapon.

A View From the Bottom of the Hill Pedro Pierluisi, JD '84, entered Congress with precious little clout—not even a vote to cast.

Outside the Law
Alumnus Bruce Mencher spent 40 years as a D.C. Superior Court judge. But the greatest power wasn't always the kind he wielded in court.

DEPARTMENTS

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On the cover:
Cover design by
John McGlasson, BA '00



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GW
TODAY

GW MAGAZINE

Spring 2018
Volume 28, Issue 2

What superpower do you wish you had, and why?

“The ability to play music by ear. It would open up a whole new vocabulary.”

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ART DIRECTOR // Dominic N. Abbate, BA '09, MBA '15

“Omnipotence. I’ve always found divinity appealing.”

“I have a lot of regret, so maybe time travel. Although changing history never seems to work out well, so can I go back and change my answer?”

ART DIRECTOR // John McGlasson, BA '00, MFA '03

CONTRIBUTOR // Keith Harriston (senior managing editor), *GW Today*

CONTRIBUTOR // Briahna Brown, *GW Today*

CONTRIBUTOR // Kurtis Hiatt, *GW Today*

CONTRIBUTOR // Kristen Mitchell, *GW Today*

“I’d like to be able to speak/write/read any and all languages.”

CONTRIBUTOR // Ruth Steinhardt, *GW Today*

INTERN // Rebecca Manikkam, BA '17

“To eat as much food as I want without any consequences whatsoever.”

“Every morning while I wait for the Metro, I think about how great it would be to apparate like Harry Potter.”

“I wish I could fly! That would make commuting and travel a breeze.”

Thomas J. LeBlanc
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

Donna Arbide
VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Lorraine Voles, BA '81
VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

“If I had one superpower, it would be the ability to fly. Because if Mary Poppins, Wonder Woman and The Greatest American Hero can, why can't I?”

Sarah Gegenheimer Baldassaro
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A Presidential Portrait

Kudos to GW's Managing Editor Danny Freedman for so accurately capturing the personalities of GW's new president, Tom LeBlanc, and his wife, Anne, in the magazine's last issue ("The What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get President"). I had the good fortune to sit with this couple at GW's Heritage Tea in December and I was blown away by President LeBlanc and his wife's approachability and down-to-earth sincerity when asked about their backgrounds, their first impressions of the campus, their long-term vision for the school and their thoughts about relocating to Washington and the F Street House.

Whether it's because both Tom and Anne come from large working-class families; whether it's because they have both excelled in scientific fields; or that they met in Ames, Iowa, the bedrock of mid-American values; or that they both went to grad school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where I was born, I was personally drawn to this couple. But I never dreamed writer and editor Freedman would capture the essence, enthusiasm and effervescence of this couple in a 12-page profile. Congratulations to Danny Freedman, who does GW's magazine proud, and especially to the LeBlancs for letting him into their lives long enough to uncover their greatness and examine the chemistry and commitment of the couple who will take GW to a new level of excellence.

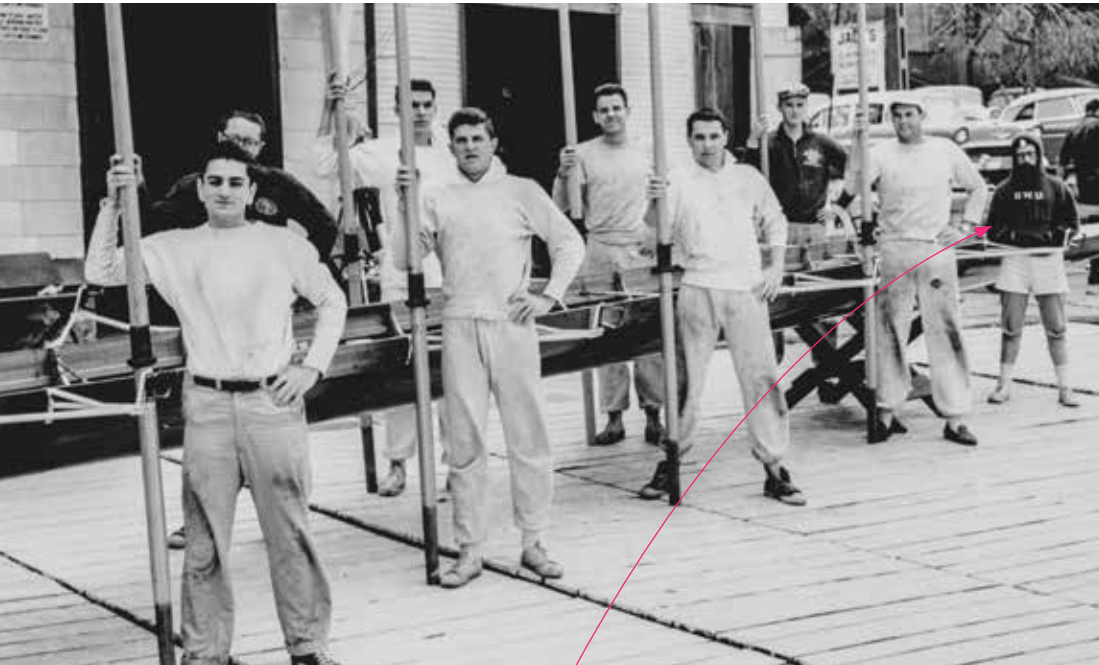
Kathy A. Megyeri, MA '69, MA '82
Washington, D.C.



Word Score

I have just finished the September issue of the *GW Magazine*. I'm not a sports enthusiast, but I enjoyed the article on Mr. Atallah ("George Atallah: 'Language Matters'"). The reason for my letter is BANJAXED—a great word! Thanks for growing my vocabulary.

Denise Mines, BA '78



Tweet all about it



 @mrsplacedsoul

That moment when you open your @TheGWMagazine and realize @smittenkitchen is a fellow @GWAlumni - no wonder I'm always making her recipes. #RaiseHigh

 @DCECON

Love this quote from #GWU grad Deb Perelman @SmittenKitchen: "I hate when people patronize about home cooking....I get annoyed because who is making all of the everyday meals? Moms and home cooks feeding guys who mouth off at magazines about home cooking."



In Days of Oar

Two years ago, a letter spurred us to ask an open-ended question: What reminders of GW do you keep around? This photo of the 1957 crew team comes from Jerry "Tiger" Adams, BA '57. (He earned the moniker while on the hockey team at the University of Alaska before transferring to GW. Someone caught wind of it

here, and the nickname transferred with him.) He's in the dark sweatshirt on the far right. As the coxswain, Adams steered and beat a steady cadence on the side of the boat to set a pace for the rowers. Getting to practice was less controlled: He recalls riding with five teammates in one of the guy's cars—a two-seater MG.



Olympics Update

In February in Pyeongchang, Elana Meyers Taylor, BS '06, MTA '11, won her third Olympic medal. A former GW softball player, Meyers (nursing an Achilles tendon tear) and Lauren Gibbs, took silver in the two-woman bobsled. Germany won gold, and Canada took bronze. For more on Meyers, who won a silver medal in 2014 and a bronze in 2010, see our in-depth profile ("Precious Mettle") in the winter 2018 issue at GWMagazine.com.



All Write!

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GW NEWS

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CULTURE

Echoes of Rwanda

Twenty years ago, Professor Abdourahman Waberi traveled to Rwanda to try to relate to the world the genocide that occurred there. The resulting book, *Harvest of Skulls*, which became available in English last year, draws from his encounters with victims and murderers. // By John DiConsiglio





In 1998, Abdourahman Waberi, then a 32-year-old novelist and poet, embarked on a mission to Rwanda with 10 African authors and filmmakers. It was just four years after the genocide in which members of the country’s Hutu ethnic majority unleashed a wave of violence mostly on the Tutsi minority. In roughly 100 days, as many as a million people perished.

Waberi, now an assistant professor of French and Francophone literature at Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, went to Rwanda in part to open the eyes of the international community, but mostly to listen to witnesses of the massacre. A native of Djibouti, Waberi felt compelled “to mourn with the Rwandan people, to show them compassion and solidarity,” he says.

He visited traumatized survivors in their homes and unapologetic perpetrators in their prison cells.

But when he sat down to piece through the harrowing notes he’d collected, he was reminded of German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno’s dictum on “the impossibility of writing about Auschwitz.” How do you tell the story of an atrocity, Waberi asked himself, without trivializing people’s pain?

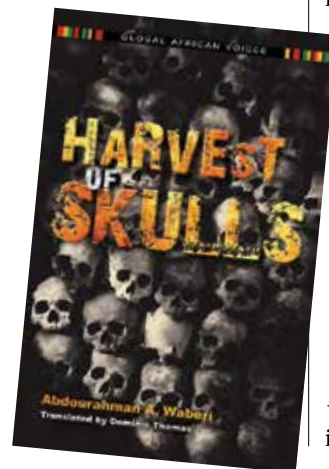
“Language remains inadequate in accounting for the world and all its turpitudes; words can never be more than unstable crutches,” Waberi says. “And yet, if we want to hold onto a glimmer of hope in the world, the only miraculous weapons we have at our disposal are these same clumsy supports.”

After another mission to Rwanda in 1999, Waberi was ready to begin his book *Harvest of Skulls*, a genre-bending mix of fiction, journalism and poetry that he originally wrote in 2000 but was released in English for the first time last year. And, despite the passage of time, the voices of the people he met—from grief-stricken mothers to machete-toting teenagers—still resonate in his life and his work.

“My trips had a huge impact on me, both artistically and emotionally,” Waberi says. “They made me a better man and a better writer.”

RETURNS AND DEPARTURES

Even before traveling to Rwanda, Waberi’s writing was interwoven with Africa and his native Djibouti, a tiny nation nestled in the Horn of Africa between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. He grew up poor in what he calls a shantytown. Few people in his village were literate. By age 10, Waberi was paid in candy to draft neighbors’ love letters and



Waberi’s *Harvest of Skulls*, published in English last year by Indiana University Press

“Language remains inadequate in accounting for the world and all its turpitudes; words can never be more than unstable crutches,” Waberi says. “And yet, if we want to hold onto a glimmer of hope in the world, the only miraculous weapons we have at our disposal are these same clumsy supports.”

job applications. He was 12 when Djibouti declared its independence from France in 1977.

Critical of Djibouti’s current authoritarian regime—its president, Ismail Omar Guelleh, has been cited for human rights abuses including denying freedom of speech and suppressing political opposition—Waberi today considers himself an exile from his own country. He left in 1985 to study in France, and hasn’t returned to Djibouti since 2007. Not all of his books are readily available there, and he worries that if he enters the country to see his mother, he might be jailed for his outspokenness. Still, Waberi felt a literary obligation to write about his homeland. His novels like *Transit* and *Passage of Tears* explore his feelings of displacement.

“My books are filled with returns and departures,” he says.

Waberi had completed a trio of novels about Djibouti when he first traveled to Rwanda with the team of African artists. For two months, he “immersed, shared and mourned” with Rwandans who were willing to talk about the horrors they’d seen. Not everyone was forthcoming. For many, the wounds were too fresh. Others challenged

Waberi. “They said to me: ‘Now you want to write my story? Where were you four years ago?’”

In *Harvest of Skulls*, Waberi set out to represent a full portrait of the genocide, capturing the stories of the victims alongside the murderers. He “lightly fictionalized” his encounters, he says.

In one chapter, he describes an old widowed woman who named her dog Minuar, after the French name for the United Nations peacekeeping mission that she said “failed to protect us.” The dog “fattened up on human flesh during the genocide,” Waberi writes, even feasting on the bodies of slaughtered family members. At Rilima prison, Waberi spoke to genocidaires (“those who commit genocide”) who justified their killings as acts of war.

“We found them to be accusatory and punctilious in the way an American attorney can be,” he recalls. “They were determined, assured in their position and didn’t sound the slightest bit penitent.”

Since then, Waberi—who arrived at the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences in 2013—has received numerous awards and honors. In 2005, he was chosen as one of the “50 Writers of the Future” by the

French literary magazine *Lire*. Last year he received a prestigious Order of Arts and Letters medal from the French government. His writing has been translated into 10 languages; *Harvest of Skulls* is his fifth book to appear in English. And his most recent works—a novel, *The Divine Song*, and a new volume of poetry, *Naming the Dawn*—will be translated into English later this year.

Still, the legacy of Rwanda weighs on him, and he worries that his writing didn’t do justice to the emotional gravity of the tragedy.

“It’s not only an issue of artistic failure,” he says. “It’s also something you cannot overcome psychologically.”

But he’s encouraged by the recent emergence of African novelists—from Nigeria’s Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (author of *Americanah*) and Chigozie Obioma (*The Fishermen*) to Ethiopia’s Dinaw Mengestu (*All Our Names*)—and Rwanda writers and artists who have since produced their own works about that dark era in their nation’s history.

“Maybe what I did was only to put down a first layer of ink,” he says, “but that first layer may have given tools to Rwandans to talk about these events.” 

ADMINISTRATION

Arrivals and Departures

Two new vice presidents are hired this winter, while long-serving administrators announce plans to step away, leaving deep imprints

➤ ARRIVALS



Donna Arbide, GW's new vice president for development and alumni relations, arrived in March. She previously was the University of Miami's interim senior vice president for development and alumni relations.

During Arbide's three decades at Miami, she oversaw alumni relations, annual giving and parent programs as well as fundraising at the schools and colleges. She helped expand giving, led several award-winning programs to establish a national and international network of alumni and parents, and she was the lead visionary and fundraiser for a new alumni center on Miami's Coral Gables campus. Most recently, she worked with the board of trustees and deans to implement the university's multi-year plan and development efforts.

Arbide has served as a board member for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. She also was chair of CASE's Commission on Alumni Relations, helping to launch the international initiative to create standards of practice and alumni engagement metrics for the profession. She will chair the 2018 CASE Summit for Leaders in Advancement in New York.



Mark Diaz, who will join GW on Aug. 1 as executive vice president and chief financial officer, served as the University of Miami's vice president for budget and planning from 2012 to 2017, and as associate vice president in the same

office from 2005 to 2012.

Diaz shepherded the strategic development of Miami's operating and capital budgets as well as organizational and business development within the university's academic and administrative units.

From 2013 to 2016, he also served as interim CFO of Miami's Miller School of Medicine and UHealth, the university's health system. He was a leader of Miami's culture transformation initiative, which sought to improve both constituent service as well as employee morale through the development of a common purpose statement, shared values and organizational expectations.

➤ DEPARTURES



Executive Vice President and Treasurer Lou Katz announced that he will step down at the end of June, becoming a full-time adviser to President Thomas LeBlanc until the end of the year, when

he plans to retire. Katz, who came to GW in 1990, is responsible for its financial, physical and information systems resources and oversees the capital and operating budgets. During his tenure, GW has expanded and improved its spaces for learning, research, studying and living, while investing in academic programming, research and the student experience.

Facilities opened during Katz's time at GW include Science and Engineering Hall, District House, the Elliott School of International Affairs, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, the GW Hospital and Duques Hall. He also was instrumental in the addition of the former Mount Vernon College campus and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus. His creative thinking also can be seen in The Avenue, a mixed-use site in Foggy Bottom developed with Boston Properties, which houses a Whole Foods and other retail outlets, and generates revenue to support academic programming. He was a key player in negotiating the creation of the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, and he shepherded GW's merger with The Textile Museum.

Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs Peter Konwerski, BA '91, MA '94, EdD '97, announced that he will be leaving his current position after the spring semester in order to pursue other endeavors.

During his three decades at GW,



dating to his years as an undergraduate, Konwerski made significant contributions to the university, particularly in his current position in which he leads 150 full-time staff members and 275

students working across 15 units. Known to many by his ubiquitous Twitter handle, @GWPeterK, Konwerski often is seen as the face of the institution, corresponding with current and incoming students, GW families and alumni; helping to solve problems and amplifying GW's values; and responding in times of celebration and crisis around the clock and around the globe.

He's worked to address an array of issues confronting higher education and to shape policy at the campus, regional and national levels. Konwerski has been recognized with the GW Award, one of the institution's highest honors, the GW Alumni Association's Jane Lingo Distinguished Service Award, and on the GW Wall of Fame.



Vice President for Research Leo Chalupa, who in 2009 became GW's first vice president for research, will be stepping down July 1 and, after a sabbatical, will join the School of Medicine and Health

Sciences as a professor of pharmacology and physiology. During his tenure, GW rose in the National Science Foundation's rankings to No. 81 in 2016, up from No. 109 in 2009. With Chalupa's guidance, GW created interdisciplinary research institutes and brought in renowned experts to lead them. He expanded funding to provide seed money for research in new areas; created an annual showcase of student research; and is helping to fund a student-led research journal. His office also provided funding and resources for aspiring entrepreneurs, like the annual New Venture Competition; GW's membership in the D.C. node of the NSF's Innovation Corps, which helps scientists and engineers move projects toward commercialization; and the fostering of institutional and corporate partnerships. Prior to GW, Chalupa spent 34 years at the University of California, Davis, serving as a distinguished professor of neurobiology and ophthalmology, and as chair of neurobiology, physiology and behavior.



SCHOLARSHIPS

'The Beginning of My New Life'

Alejandra Valdes-Rivas reacts as an entourage, including President Thomas LeBlanc and the GW mascot, bursts into the library at Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus in Northwest D.C., along with members of her family bearing balloons and flowers. She was one of 10 D.C. high school students surprised in March with hand-delivered GW acceptance letters and news that they'd been awarded a Stephen Joel Trachtenberg Scholarship, meaning their college education—four years of tuition, room, board, books and fees—would be covered. "This basically means the beginning of my new life," Valdes-Rivas said after the tears and embraces. "I'll be the first one in my family to go to university in the United States." Since 1989, the program has enrolled 174 D.C. students with full-ride scholarships. —Ruth Steinhardt

WORLD

Conflict Adds To Plight of Women in South Sudan

Study finds that some women and girls there face one of the world's highest rates of violence

In South Sudan, armed conflict and displacement intensify violence against women and girls, according to new research by the GW Global Women's Institute.

As many as 65 percent of women interviewed in some locations reported experiencing sexual or physical violence in their lifetime by an intimate partner or non-partner. That rate is double the global average and among the highest levels of violence against women and girls in the world.

The study, conducted across five sites in South Sudan in partnership with the International Rescue Committee, included interviews with more than 2,200 women.

South Sudan declared independence from Sudan in 2011 after decades of civil war, though conflict has continued to erupt.

Women reported increased frequency of assaults by partners in times of conflict, due to the instability of displacement and the economic insecurity it causes. Sexual violence by a non-partner also was exacerbated, according to the study, with many incidents related to a raid, displacement or abduction.

Abuse within the home by husbands or partners was the most common form of violence reported. More than half of the women who ever had an intimate partner reported domestic violence, whether physical or sexual. In the rural town of Rumbek, 73 percent of women said they had experienced intimate partner violence.

Negative attitudes toward gender equality were found in each study site, and the researchers say long-standing practices, such as forced marriage, have made the violence common. Often violence is committed with impunity, the researchers say, and a culture of shame, around rape in particular, is so severe that many women fear reporting an attack could lead to further repercussions. **GW**



TECH

The Weight of Words

A nursing professor's free smartphone app is geared toward helping Hispanic parents boost language development among infants and toddlers.

By the time children from low-income families turn 4, their language skills lag behind their more affluent peers in ways that could impact them for the rest of their lives. It's known as the "word gap," and a nursing professor's new smartphone app is aiming to help Hispanic families, in particular, across the divide.

The free app, Háblame Bebé, launched in March and shepherds adult users through developmental milestones starting at birth to age 3. The app is designed to help parents track their child's language skills, foster a community around cultural pride and boost interaction between children and adults.

Ashley Darcy-Mahoney, an assistant professor in the School of Nursing who helped develop the app, says the goal is to increase both "quantity and quality of words spoken to children," since language skills at age 3 can be predictive of those skills at ages 9 or 10.

Darcy-Mahoney, the director of infant research at the GW Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Institute and a neonatal nurse practitioner, worked on the development of a similar English-language

program, called Talk With Me Baby. She created Háblame Bebé alongside Melissa Baralt, a professor of applied linguistics at Florida International University, and developmental psychologist Natalie Brito at New York University.

Last year, the team won more than \$110,000 to build the app through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration's "Word Gap Challenge."

Studies have shown that by age 4, children from low-income families have heard 30 million fewer words than their more privileged peers. Early exposure to words and the quality of verbal interactions between a parent and child can influence how young children develop language skills, their performance in school and, later in life, their economic success, according to HRSA.

Parents who use the app are able to input their child's age and get regular reminders about topics they could discuss with their children as their cognition matures. They can input the words their child is using and watch short educational videos that demonstrate different ways parents can interact with their children through singing and other language strategies.

Users can also share videos they record through the app straight to their social media feeds, a feature specifically requested by test groups in Miami, Darcy-Mahoney says.

"It helps them build this sense of cultural pride," she says. "In our current climate, there are certainly some challenges for many families that speak Spanish, so this helps to really make them excited and proud to use their home language." —**Kristen Mitchell**

STUDENT RESEARCH

Engineering a Spectacle

Months and years of work was on display in Science and Engineering Hall in February, when undergraduates and grad students presented nearly a hundred research projects during the School of Engineering and Applied Science's annual R&D Showcase, in which students vied for more than \$80,000 in prizes. Research ranged from exploring liquefiable soil to the thermal detection of breast cancer. Here's a look at a few of the projects. —**Kristen Mitchell**



Farming with Fish

Junior Eden Smalley and senior Abigail DeMasi developed an aquaponic system for sustainable farming in the greenhouse on the eighth floor of Science and Engineering Hall. Capitalizing on the symbiotic relationship between fish and plants, the system uses waste from a tank of koi fish to fertilize plants in grow beds, which then clean the water the fish live in. It is a chemical-free way to grow produce, and low energy—using in three hours about the same energy as running a lamp for 10 minutes. Smalley says they wanted to “show there are ways to create sustainable farming, especially on a local level. We want to see it used in a classroom, in your backyard or even on the rooftop of every city building.” They found leafy plants like lettuce and kale even grew larger than controls planted in fertilizer. Now they want to expand the system to grow root vegetables, like beets.



Mapping Asteroids

Doctoral student Shankar Kulamani developed a way to quickly and efficiently discern the exact shape of an asteroid. The information could then be used to calculate its gravity in order for a spacecraft to land or move around it. Kulamani's method uses lasers to measure the distance from a spacecraft to the surface of an asteroid, creating a 3-D model. The technique would allow a spacecraft to measure an asteroid on approach, rather than the current method of collecting data over a series of months and processing that information on the ground. “For some missions, we can't spend all that time trying to calculate the shape model,” he says. “Here, we want to improve that. Rather than spending months just mapping, we can both get the shape and continue our mission.”



An Online Safety Net

A group of students designed a system for identifying and classifying online content related to eating disorders, which could be used to help patients in recovery. Online communities have formed around glorifying eating disorders and thin bodies, with users posting photos and using specific hashtags on platforms like Tumblr and Twitter. The new tool—for which the students worked with a specialist in adolescent eating disorders—screens for these types of images and hashtags, allowing clinicians to easily analyze the kinds of content patients are posting and to keep up with rapidly changing trends online. The kinds of images “are consistent always for these communities,” says junior Samsara Counts. “They're just going to have certain features you can't avoid.” The classifier also could be used to build a browser extension for patients in recovery that filters out potentially harmful images that could trigger a backslide.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Under Oath

Sarah T. Hughes, LLB '22, is the only woman ever to have sworn in a U.S. president. // By Danny Freedman, BA '01

“Get Sarah Hughes.” That was the directive from Lyndon Johnson shortly after President John F. Kennedy’s death, as a hasty transition took shape in Dallas aboard Air Force One.

Johnson’s secretary called Hughes’ office that day in November 1963, but her clerk said she wasn’t there. Johnson, according to Robert Caro’s *The Passage of Power*, had his secretary call back, and he took the phone: “This is Lyndon Johnson,” he said. “Find her.”

Hughes, LLB '22, had been appointed a federal judge by Kennedy two years prior—the first female federal district judge in Texas.

It was Johnson, though, who’d initially floated her name—Hughes was a longtime political booster of his—but he was rebuffed. She was 64 at that time and considered by U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy and the American Bar Association to be too old. Hughes already had put herself through GW Law at night, working days as a D.C. cop; she had served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives; and she was the first female

state district judge in Texas, seated by the governor and then winning her seat in the next seven elections.

Hughes’ federal judgeship came only—and swiftly—after U.S. House Speaker Sam Rayburn, of Texas, made clear to Bobby Kennedy that legislation was on the line.

Johnson was livid over the double embarrassment: After being told no on Hughes’ appointment, he’d advanced another candidate for the post. But now, in need of a judge in Dallas, he took the opportunity to call upon Hughes himself.

Hustling aboard the plane, Hughes recalled in a 1969 oral history with the University of North Texas, “I embraced Mrs. Johnson and the vice president. We didn’t say anything; there really wasn’t anything to say.” She leaned in to Jackie Kennedy and told her that she’d loved her husband.

One could “see the sadness

and the grief all over [Jackie’s face], but her eyes were dry, she didn’t weep, she didn’t say a word. Her poise was outstanding. Her courage was outstanding.”

After the oath, Johnson said, “Let’s be airborne,” and Hughes barely stepped off the ramp before the plane got on its way.

For Hughes, who died in 1985, the brush with the presidency seemed to feel like an overgrown footnote. She’d left a massive impression from the bench: She was a member of the three-judge panel that first ruled on *Roe v. Wade*, finding the state’s ban on abortions to be unconstitutional; she helped women in Texas secure the right to serve on juries; she improved the treatment of prisoners in Dallas.

Swearing in Johnson, she said in that 1969

interview, “was just another job that had to be done.” She never understood “why there’s so much to-do about it.”

When the interviewer points out that perhaps it’s because she was the first woman to swear in a U.S. president, and that so seldom is the oath administered outside of Washington, she allows a resigned: “I suppose so.”

TOP: Judge Sarah T. Hughes (with back to camera) swears in Lyndon B. Johnson on Nov. 22, 1963, with his wife, Lady Bird, on his right and Jackie Kennedy on his left. INSET: Hughes and Johnson in March 1966

IN BRIEF

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Dean Ben Vinson III has been named provost and executive vice president of Case Western Reserve University. Vinson, who joined GW in 2013, will begin his new role in July. "Ben has been a wonderful partner, built a strong leadership team, promoted scholarly excellence and leaves CCAS in a position of strength on virtually every dimension," says GW Provost Forrest Maltzman.

RICE HALL

President Thomas LeBlanc this winter launched a series of receptions around the U.S. to meet GW alumni, families and friends. The events, hosted by the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, so far have taken place in Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Patients with hypotension, or abnormally low blood pressure, can now be treated with a drug initially developed by researcher Lakhmir Chawla from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the GW Medical Faculty Associates. The government approved the use of the drug, Giapreza (angiotensin II), to increase blood pressure in adults with septic or other distributive shock, in which the brain and other organs can't receive enough blood to function properly. La Jolla Pharmaceutical Company entered into a worldwide license agreement with GW for the intellectual property rights in 2014.

No. 1

Rajiv Rimal, chair of the Prevention and Community Health Department at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, was recently awarded a \$4 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for a project that aims to address iron deficiency and anemia in India. More than half of all women of childbearing age in India are anemic, with rates in the eastern state of Odisha particularly high. Anemia is especially risky for pregnant women and their developing babies.

GW's 2018 spot, among medium-sized colleges and universities, on the Peace Corps' annual ranking of schools producing volunteers to the program. Currently, 50 GW undergraduate alumni are serving in the Peace Corps. It's the sixth time in a decade that GW has reached the top spot.

Future events are planned for Boston (April 10) and New York City (May 9).



The Student Association and university leaders announced the creation of a Sustainable Investment Fund. The initiative, which the SA proposed to President Thomas LeBlanc last fall, will be established with an initial \$2 million from the endowment toward responsible investment vehicles. As part of a larger approach, the fund will promote innovation in sustainable practices and seek to avoid investments in the top coal, oil and gas companies. The payout from the fund will go toward GW's student financial aid budget.

MILKEN INSTITUTE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares announced in February that a research team from the Milken Institute School of Public Health will conduct a study to estimate the mortality tied to Hurricane Maria, which hit the island in September. Early counts set the death toll at 62, but other reports estimate it to be much higher.

HEADLINERS AT UNIVERSITY EVENTS

GEORGE WELCOMES

“He laughed one time and that got to me. I said, ‘Bring me your sheet where you did your calculations and let me check yours’—and there was a sine wrong in his calculations.”

Former NASA engineer Christine Darden, DSc '83, recalling a time when her math was repeatedly dismissed by a male engineer. Darden, who features in Margot Lee Shetterly's 2016 bestseller, *Hidden Figures*, became one of NASA's human computers in 1967 and says that, by then, she was not subjected to the racial discrimination faced by the other women in the book. Darden rose to become a leader of the engineering group working to minimize sonic booms. She spoke in February at an event sponsored by the School of Engineering and Applied Science's Dean's Council of Women in Technology.

Christine Darden

“People don't understand your work. They think it's arts and crafts. I'm an art teacher—I do arts and crafts. You guys are therapists, and there's a big difference.”

Second lady Karen Pence, speaking with GW students in February during a visit to the university's art therapy graduate program. Pence, a former art teacher with a master's in arts education, last year unveiled an initiative to raise the profile of the field of art therapy. The Columbian College's program, founded in 1971, was one of the first of its kind in the nation.

“I try to teach a group of journalists ... that the test of whether you are real journalists is not whether you anger your enemies, it's whether you anger your friends.”

Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic*, in reference to working with young journalists to modulate the tendencies toward hyper-tribalism and partisanship. He spoke in March alongside Moshe Halbertal, professor of Jewish thought and philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and New York University, in a conversation about civil discourse hosted by the Mayberg Center for Jewish Education and Leadership, which is housed within GW's Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Jeffrey Goldberg

Karen Pence

DARDEN: GOLDBERG: HARRISON JONES / PENCE: WILLIAM ATKINS

“We just have to get past the inspirational speeches. It really is a season—it’s a really long season at this point—but it really is a season for us to begin moving and acting with a little bit more of a sense of urgency.”

Political strategist and analyst Angela Rye, speaking in February at a kickoff event for GW’s monthlong Black Heritage Celebration sponsored by the Multicultural Student Services Center. She said she hoped to inspire students to act on the issues facing the country, particularly the black community, and bring about social change by demanding—rather than asking for—solutions. Rye is principal and CEO of D.C.-based advocacy firm IMPACT Strategies. She previously served as executive director and general counsel to the Congressional Black Caucus.

“Just because someone is charged with a hate crime does not mean they are not necessarily domestic terrorists as well. Hate crimes and domestic terrorism are not mutually exclusive.”

Thomas Brzozowski, domestic terrorism counsel for the Justice Department’s National Security Division, discussing the difficulty of handling criminal cases after incidents that are widely considered by the public to be domestic terrorism—which he says is defined by federal statute but is not a chargeable offense. Defendants are likely to face hate crime or weapons charges. Brzozowski spoke in January at an event sponsored by GW’s Program on Extremism.

“We know our adversaries ... are continuously evolving their tactics. We need to reflect on this. When our adversaries evolve, they concede that we have been successful today, and they demonstrate that they have not given up on attacking us tomorrow.”

Transportation Security Administration head David Pekoske, speaking in March during a “State of the TSA” address at GW’s Jack Morton Auditorium. Pekoske said the agency is increasing its focus on public areas outside security checkpoints and is testing technology for the 3-D imaging of carry-on bags, which is already in use for checked bags.

“The issue in front of us is not a scientific debate; it has everything to do with political will.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), speaking about climate change at Lisner Auditorium in February for the launch of 350.org’s Fossil Free U.S. campaign, which promotes a transition to renewable energy and an end to fossil fuel use.



Angela Rye

Thomas Brzozowski

David Pekoske

Bernie Sanders

SHOWCASING NEW BOOKS BY GW PROFESSORS AND ALUMNI

BOOKSHELVES

The Original Listicle

Jenna Weissman Joselit explores the curious life and times of the Ten Commandments in America. // By Menachem Wecker, MA '09

In 2005, Jenna Weissman Joselit was trying to decide on a subject for her next book when, watching the news, she saw a group protesting outside the U.S. Supreme Court. The men, who lobbied for less separation between church and state, carried miniature Ten Commandment-shaped placards.

"I was struck by the juxtaposition of the quotidian and the holy, all cut down to size," she recalls.

Joselit, who is the Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of History, often mines material objects and ephemera to tease out statements about American character. And here she had stumbled upon a cache of stories that took her to all sorts of un-promised lands.

She knew from the start that she wouldn't be examining the theological implications of the text, laid out in Exodus and Deuteronomy as revealed to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

Instead, the resulting book, *Set in Stone*, is a series of vignettes, almost like a short story collection or an episode of the radio show *This American Life*, exploring how the commandments shaped—and in turn have been shaped by—America.

"This is a book about scale," Joselit says. "There's something mighty about the Ten Commandments."

No longer the sole property of churches, synagogues and Sunday schools—she notes, for example, that the commandments' numerical structure inspired radio personality Laura Schlessinger to apply them to self-help in a 1998 bestseller—representations of the commandments have grown "more commonplace and livelier too," Joselit writes, "more colloquial, less august."

This "taming of the Ten Commandments" has taken many forms over the roughly 150-year span covered in the book. New York's Anshi Chesed ("men of kindness") synagogue struggled with that notion in May 1850, when an abstracted stained-glass display of the Ten Commandments—arranged in a circle, rather than the traditional tablets—in its new sanctuary split the congregation. The design was a Jewish take on the rose window

more typical of ecclesiastical architecture. One commenter in a Jewish newspaper suggested Moses himself wouldn't recognize the form.

Ten years later, the commandments divided Newark, Ohio, when an amateur archaeologist claimed to have found an ancient version of

the Decalogue in a Native American burial mound. The discovery, which fed into prevalent identifications of indigenous Americans with the Lost Tribes of Israel, at the time struck *The Cincinnati Daily Inquirer* as, if authentic, "among the most important discoveries of the kind ever made upon this continent."

Others doubted the significance of the object. Either way, it remains on view in a vitrine at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum in Ohio.

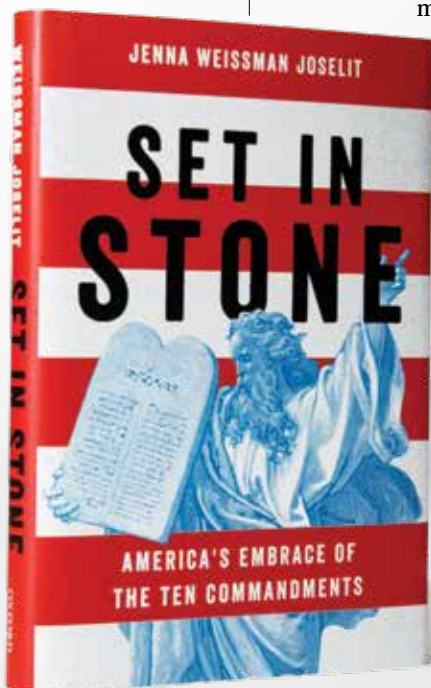
The book also focuses on Cecil B. DeMille's epic 1956 film, *The Ten Commandments*, which starred Charlton Heston and whose vast sets and reach epitomized the physical enormity of the commandments in the United States. There even have been excavations of the set in the California desert, Joselit writes, noting that the sculptures and architecture were meant from the start to convince people of ancient Egypt.

Since the book's publication, Joselit says she's encountered a near-constant stream of stories about the Ten Commandments' staying power in America.

Washington, D.C.'s new Museum of the Bible explores the commandments, everywhere from its digital displays to immersive exhibits to the gift shop. During a visit to Charleston, S.C., where she spoke on the South's "love affair" with the commandments, Joselit learned of Melvin's Barbecue, where patrons can read the commandments on their styrofoam cups.

In Mississippi, a legislator recently introduced a bill that mandated the recitation of the commandments at the start of each school day. He even one-upped Moses, requiring Ten Commandments displays of a certain size—"You couldn't just have a rinky-dink version," Joselit says—installed in the classrooms, the auditorium and the cafeteria.

Asked, then, if she might be preparing a sequel to the yearslong project—after all, there was a second iteration of the tablets in Exodus—the conversation again turns biblical: "God no!" she laughs. ☑



Set in Stone: America's Embrace of the Ten Commandments (Oxford University Press; 2017)

Join fellow alumni in an online book club covering professional development, lifelong learning, personal growth and other career topics. (The club is hosted by PBC Guru, a book club management company, which is partnering with GW Alumni Relations.) For more information, visit: www.pbc.guru/gw

An Unlikely Audience: Al Jazeera's Struggle in America (Oxford University Press, 2017)

By William Lafi Youmans, assistant professor of media and public affairs

When Al Jazeera launched its English-language channel in the U.S. in 2006, it did so in the face of “open hostility” from the Bush administration, which had been “tarnishing the brand as a virtual enemy combatant,” Youmans writes. In particular, many were outraged that the channel interviewed Taliban members and other insurgents. And yet, the news service grew in reach and reputation, and in 2013, it bought Current TV, which gave it “a sizable cable and satellite TV distribution footprint.” But then less than three years later, it shuttered the new channel, after having spent some \$2 billion on it. This book tracks Al Jazeera’s efforts in the U.S. and focuses on the geographical forces that shaped its offices in New York, Washington and San Francisco.

Some Say the Lark (Alice James Books, 2017)

By Jennifer Chang, assistant professor of English

Careful reading of this poetry collection, a 2018 PEN America literary award finalist, unveils layered imagery and storytelling, and frequent citations from literary history. It can be sobering and reflective. “Even when happiest I think about dying,” reads one line. “Who am I to call myself human?” asks another. Another notes that the best walking “is without reason, formless, scattering the self into thinking.” Elsewhere, the author reflects on the creation of poetry: “What does it even mean to write a poem?/ It means today/ I’m correcting my mistakes./ It means I don’t want to be lonely.”

The Cheese Trap: How Breaking a Surprising Addiction Will Help You Lose Weight, Gain Energy, and Get Healthy (Grand Central Life & Style, 2017)

Neal D. Barnard, adjunct associate professor of medicine, MD '80

This book, with about 65 pages of recipes, encourages readers to begin improving their health not by cutting sugar, carbs or processed food, but cheese. “You love cheese. But I’m sorry to tell you, it does not love you back,” the author writes. “And the sooner you recognize it, the sooner you’ll conquer your weight or health problems.” Not only is cheese full of calories, but it also contains “mild opiates,” he adds. “If cheese were any worse, it would be Vaseline.”

Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry During the Cold War (University of North Carolina Press, 2017)

By Gregg A. Brazinsky, associate professor of history and international affairs

Sino-American competition—that is, between Washington and Beijing—in both Asia and Africa was “intense and enduring” during the Cold War, largely driven by status, according to this book, which notes that recent histories have challenged the view that the U.S. was entirely focused on the Soviet Union during the Cold War to the exclusion of other nations. In fact, “when it came to crafting policy toward the Third World, Americans sometimes viewed Beijing as an even greater threat than Moscow.” Ironically, both the U.S. and China weakened their statuses in this period due to their competition.

The Unexpected President: The Life and Times of Chester A. Arthur (Da Capo Press, 2017)

By Scott S. Greenberger, MIPP '09

The 21st U.S. president, who assumed office after James A. Garfield’s assassination, tends to be known even to history buffs only for his “distinctive facial hair,” notes the author, a journalist and editor. “Arthur’s fascinating and surprising story had a lasting impact on the country—so why have we forgotten it?” Having come from New York’s political machine, Arthur shocked and thrilled supporters when he took on

the very cronyism from which he had emerged; he became a proponent of civil service reform, civil rights and protecting Native Americans’ land. He was driven by an unusual pen pal: a bedridden young woman, Julia Sand. “It is the tale of a good man who veered off the right path, but rediscovered his better self with the help of an ordinary young woman who believed in him.”



SPORTS



NUTRITION

Athl-eats

University athletic departments more and more are hiring, either full-time or as contractors, registered dietitians to minister to their athletes. The trend started at Nebraska in 1994, and it's on the verge of going industry-wide.

// By Matthew Stoss

On a February night, GW sophomore women's rowers Carson Shehab and Emily Spencer have come to the Smith Center to learn to make a pomodoro-ish sauce.

Overseen by Lauren Trocchio, a registered dietitian contracted by the university to minister to its more than 500 athletes, and proctored by GW caterer Maria Iturralde (of Creative Catering DC), these cooking classes instruct athletes how to eat healthy away from the training table. Teach a man to fish and what have you.

Both transfers, Shehab (Tennessee) and Spencer (Syracuse) came from programs that employ sports-specific dietitians. College athletic departments started hiring them in the mid-1990s, and as of spring 2017, according to the Collegiate and Professional Sports Dietitians Association, 73 universities employed full-time sports dietitians, and that doesn't include the dietitians, like Trocchio, who work as consultants.

"A lot of growth happens when the coaching carousel turns and coaches go to new schools and go, 'Hey, where's my [sports dietitian]?' " says Chelsea Burkart, who is president of the CPSDA, the professional organization of sports dietitians. Founded in 2010, it has more than 1,200 members.

Having been helped by sports dietitians in the past, Shehab and Spencer have turned evangelistic about a trend that's becoming the norm.

"I always believed sugar was bad," Spencer says. "I had to be convinced that this is a tool you can use—and that didn't happen by me reading a book one day. That was something my previous dietitian had to explain to me."

Spencer says she learned from her Syracuse sports dietitian that sugary fruit snacks offer

quick energy boosts and that she rows better with a mid-practice granola bar.

"I bring it into the boat with me—which is kind of uncommon—because I worked with this dietitian and I know that two hours without me eating anything isn't good," Spencer says. "I actually perform better with something in between."

At GW, in addition to hosting the periodic cooking demos—they draw about 30 athletes a session and teach, among other things, nutrition and knife skills—Trocchio gives team talks, devises pre- and post-game meals, advises on road-trip menus and counsels athletes one-on-one.

"We have big team meetings where we discuss how to properly fuel before practice," Shehab says. "When you wake up, it's so important to eat something, even though you don't want to. She tells us what we should be eating for what type of workout it is, how we should be refueling afterwards, and we also talking about foods that are sustainable"—she means foods that bodies can use for a long time—"and how you should grocery shop."

Nutritional specifics for athletes vary by sport and by athlete. Individualization is important, as Spencer learned. Before she settled on the pre- and mid-practice granola bar, she tested a smoothie. It just made her sick.

"We know that people respond differently to different foods," says Trocchio, alluding to digestion and body chemistry. "We know that one athlete might be fine with steak and potatoes, and another athlete—there's no way they could tolerate it."

In general, an ideal plate for a college athlete is one half good carbohydrates (brown rice, whole grains, unskinned potatoes), a quarter lean protein and a quarter vegetables. But Trocchio's approach is a

“Body image drives a lot of about how people choose to eat, so it’s very hard to tell someone to eat a certain way if they have a certain idea of how they look or what they should look like. They’re not going to take your suggestion if we haven’t resolved that component.”

temperate one. She encourages athletes to aim for what she describes as an 80-20 diet.

“Eighty percent of the time, it’s choosing foods that are better for performance and healthy and 20 percent of the time making room for their favorites,” says Trocchio, a former distance swimmer at the Coast Guard Academy. Today, she’s a lieutenant commander in the reserves after spending eight years on active duty. “I definitely don’t take an all-or-nothing approach with them.”

Conferring with Trocchio isn’t mandatory, and coaches use her in various ways and to various extents. Some have her talk for 15 minutes every week. Others prefer bigger presentations less often, and some don’t use her at all.

Trocchio, who has her own clinic, Nutrition Unlocked, in Arlington, Va., was hired in 2015 and she says the team talks and menu planning are the obvious parts of her job, but that 75 percent of what she does is psychology. She’s even mused about supplementing her dietetics education with a psych degree. Diet changes are lifestyle changes, and when body image is involved, consultations can turn delicate.

Eating disorders and disordered eating are just as common among college athletes as they are among civilians. About 10 percent of the general population has an

eating disorder, according to the National Eating Disorder Association. Trocchio, citing research, says the number is only slightly higher among college athletes, about 15 percent. That includes anything from a clinically diagnosed illness to an athlete unintentionally undereating.

“On the weight front,” Trocchio says, using an example. “I don’t want to tell them that weight doesn’t matter, but for different sports, there are clearly different body types that excel in different sports. There is no exact number or weight or body fat that you have to have to be healthy or a good athlete in your sport. That’s probably a message that has to get told again and again for it to stick, and it’s a message that has to come from everybody—coaches, strength coaches, dietitians, trainers.

“It’s a big part because body image drives a lot about how people choose to eat, so it’s hard to tell someone to eat a certain way if they have a certain idea of how they look or what they should look like. They’re not going to take your suggestion if we haven’t resolved that component.”

Simply, it’s about developing trust. Spencer says that’s how her dietitian at Syracuse convinced her to make changes. The SU dietitian, Spencer says, understood that she has an empirical

mind and presented studies to sway her.

“The element of trust came from the fact that she’d been working with our team for a while,” says Spencer, a political philosophy major before she transferred to GW. “She was in this position and she had worked with our team psychologist and she was trusted by friends.”

In 1994, Nebraska became the first school to hire a full-time dietitian. By 2004, six schools employed one, and by the end of the decade, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which oversees the credentialing of registered dietitians, introduced a sports dietitian certification. Ten years after that, it’s almost a given that a Division I college athletic department would employ a dietitian, a logical complement to strength and conditioning coaches and trainers.

Burkart, CPSDA president and a sports dietitian at Texas State, foresees every D-I university having a sports dietitian in the near-to-semi-distant future and every Power 5 conference school having one in next year or two.

The reason for the imminent saturation, she says, is a slow-burning philosophical shift.

“[A dietitian] doesn’t fit the old-school paradigm or mentality

of, *Pull-up your bootstraps and run another lap*,” Burkart says. “That is in contrast to, *If I can fuel you better, you can run another lap*. Yes, mental toughness is never going to go away, and it’s incredibly important, but we can also blend it with the importance of sports science.”

In 2014, the NCAA ruled on the related issue of how much and how often a university could feed its athletes. A three-year push by administrators, coaches, players and the CPSDA convinced college athletics’ governing body to soften the longtime standard of three meals a day. This allowed for unlimited meals and snacks and more individualized diets. The CPSDA pursued the change in the name of student welfare—with job creation for a fledgling industry as a perhaps less-than-serendipitous side effect.

GW offers breakfast daily for its athletes and a snack bar on Wednesdays as well the several-times-a-semester cooking classes, from which the athletes take home leftovers.

“I’m learning by preparing food myself and listening to Lauren,” Shehab says of Trocchio, “and I can apply it to myself when I’m older and now. I know how to meal prep. I know how cook things properly. It’s more about getting real-life ready.”

Ostensibly, the reason for the hiring of sports dietitians is the maximization of athletic performance. That’s certainly a reason why Burkart and Trocchio got into the profession but not *the* reason. Shedding a tenth of a second off a 40-yard-dash time is just the byproduct of the pursuit of a grander purpose.

“Everyone talks about nutrition for performance—and that’s important and that’s kind of the standard line,” Trocchio says. “But, honestly, when I come here and I talk to these athletes, I’m just trying to teach them how to eat and give them good lifelong nutrition habits.”



Lauren Trocchio is GW’s sports dietitian.



GOLF

Finding—Not Feeling—His Way

All-A-10 golfer Logan Lowe has used a deliberate, analytical playing style to shoot the two lowest rounds in GW history.

// By Matthew Stoss

LOGAN LOWE

HEIGHT/WEIGHT
6-foot-2, 164 pounds

YEAR
Junior

HOMETOWN
Grass Valley, Calif.

MAJOR
Real estate

NOTABLE
Shot lowest round (64) in GW history; has two career wins; finished third in stroke play in 2017 U.S. Amateur tournament; two-time All-Atlantic 10 selection

Winging it can be darkly alluring. It offers absolution for failure and confirms genius (or the illusion of) in the event of success. GW golfer Logan Lowe, as any mortal might, was once seduced by the power of winging it.

For him, it manifested in golfing by feel.

“I realized that trying to be more free in the sense that everyone else was free—it wasn’t the same for me,” Lowe says. “My sense of freedom is having everything mapped out. For me, freedom is: I’ve already done all the thinking, so I can just go execute.”

Golfing by feel means deferring to intuition while adapting and scrambling in the moment—eyeballing an approach shot off a bad lie, for

example. Some can golf that way. Lowe learned that he cannot.

“I’d be analytical in the situation, in the present,” the 6-foot-2, 164-pound, 20-year-old junior says. “And being analytical in the present isn’t great because then you’re just analyzing: Why I’d just hit that bad shot. Not: What do I have to do to get past this shot?”

“... Now, I’m analytical before and after. Before [a round], it’s: Here’s my game plan, I go execute. And after: It’s what did I do wrong and then how do I fix that for the next round?”

An aspiring real estate lawyer (if pro golf doesn’t work out), Lowe enjoys preparation, and he compares researching a law case to researching a golf round. He says both disciplines require a lot of “work behind the scenes” for

a “few minutes of show time.”

Embracing his true, winging-it-averse self has yielded the two lowest rounds in GW golf history (65 last season and 64 this season), spots on the All-Atlantic 10 golf team each of his first two years, two career wins and a scoring average of 70 in 2017-18.

In the 2017 U.S. Amateur Tournament in Los Angeles, Lowe finished third in stroke play, shooting a 4-under-par 136 over two rounds to finish five strokes behind winner Hayden Wood from Oklahoma State.

Lowe says his game took off in the fall of his sophomore year when he committed to preparation. Like all college golfers, he keeps detailed yardage books—pocket-size notepads with maps of each hole—during practice rounds.

“I played well. I contended in a lot of tournaments,” Lowe says. “But it was the same thing: I’d make a mistake and I wouldn’t recover as well as I’d normally like to. I just realized that I didn’t think my way around the course well enough to recover from mistakes.”

Previously, he’d recorded only surface-level details in the books, like club choice and where he’s hitting it. Now he devises a Plan B and makes a full-out course manual.

He outlines which holes are good for him and which aren’t, where he can get a stroke back after a bogey, and he details contingencies for mistakes. The aim is to get the hard thinking done when there’s no pressure and to turn surely from the dark temptation of winging it. **EW**



The women's basketball team celebrates its Atlantic 10 title in Richmond, Va., in March.

BASKETBALL

Cummings Through in the End

Led by tournament MVP Brianna Cummings, the Colonials won their third A-10 title in four seasons.

Led by four double-figure scorers, the fifth-seeded GW women's basketball team beat sixth-seeded Saint Joseph's 65-49 in front of 2,103 at the Richmond (Va.) Coliseum to win its third Atlantic 10 tournament championship in four seasons.

Most Outstanding Player: Brianna Cummings

The 5-foot-10 senior guard from Lawrenceville, Ga., scored 17 points and had five rebounds and five assists in the title game and was named the A-10 tournament's Most Outstanding Player. She made nine of nine free throws and four of 13 field goals.

All-Tournament Team: Mei-Lyn Bautista and Kelsi Mahoney

Bautista, a junior point guard, had eight points, seven assists and zero turnovers, and Mahoney, a junior forward, had 12 points.

Other Top Performers

Senior forward Kelli Prange had 14 points, and freshman forward Nelia Luma had 10.

NCAAs Again

By winning the A-10 tournament, the Colonials earned the league's automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. It was GW's third NCAA appearance in four seasons and its first under second-year coach Jennifer Rizzotti. GW, a 14 seed, lost 87-45 to third-seeded Ohio State in the first round of the NCAAs, finishing the season with a 19-14 record.

From Sixth to First

The Colonials, picked to finish sixth in the 14-team A-10, last won the conference tournament in 2015 and 2016. They finished tied with Saint Joseph's for fifth in the A-10 during the 2017-18 regular season, going 10-6 in the conference.

HONORS

Athletics Hall of Fame: Class of 2018



Gene Guarilia, BS '59

He averaged a double-double from 1956 to 1959 and went on to win three NBA championships with the Boston Celtics under coach Red Auerbach, BS '40, MA '41, HON '93.



Kimberly Beck, BA '08

She led GW to four straight NCAA tournaments and back-to-back Sweet 16 appearances in 2007 and 2008. She is GW's all-time assists leader (717).



Kristin Davidson, BBA '96, MS '98

She is GW's all-time assists leader (19) and ranks sixth in points (55) and 10th in goals (18). She led the Colonials to the NCAA tournament in 1996.



Megan Hogan, BA '10

The most-decorated performer in the women's cross country program's history, she won two Atlantic 10 individual championships, was a two-time All-American and qualified for the NCAAs three times, finishing eighth out of 253 runners in 2010.



Yegor Mescheriakov, BS '98, MTA '11

He ranks eighth on GW's all-time scoring list (1,645 points) and helped the Colonials to back-to-back NCAA tournament appearances in 1998 and 1999.



Tom Zebroski, BA '10

He holds the GW records for career hits (299) and runs (213). During his senior year, he led the Atlantic 10 with 18 home runs and set the single-season school records for hits (103), runs (75) and total bases (175).



Matt Osborne, BS '03, MS '05

He is the program's all-time leading scorer, netting 45 goals, and he led GW to an NCAA berth in his senior season, in which he had 19 goals and 11 assists.



Mary Jo Warner, administration

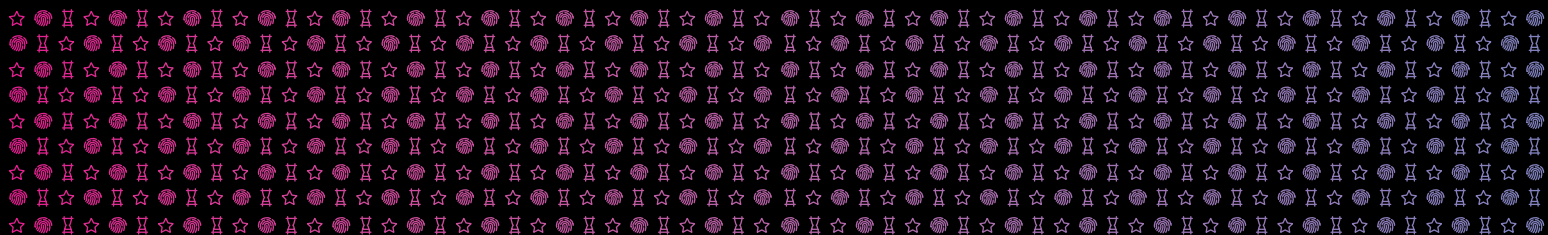
She spent 37 years at GW, serving as assistant director of athletics, director of women's athletics and senior associate director of athletics as well as on several NCAA committees. She retired in 2014.

The GW Athletic Hall of Fame was founded in 1959, inducting seven inaugural members, a group highlighted by former Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach, BS '40, MA '41, HON '93. After this year's inductions, the GW Hall of Fame has 160 members.

NATURA



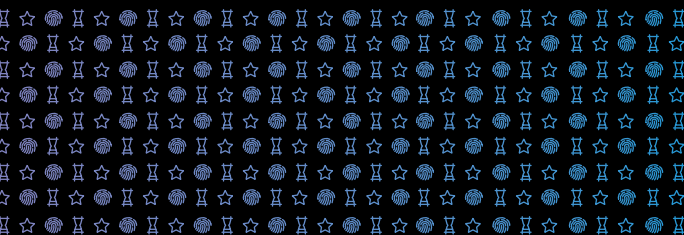
ROOM





MANUFACTURED

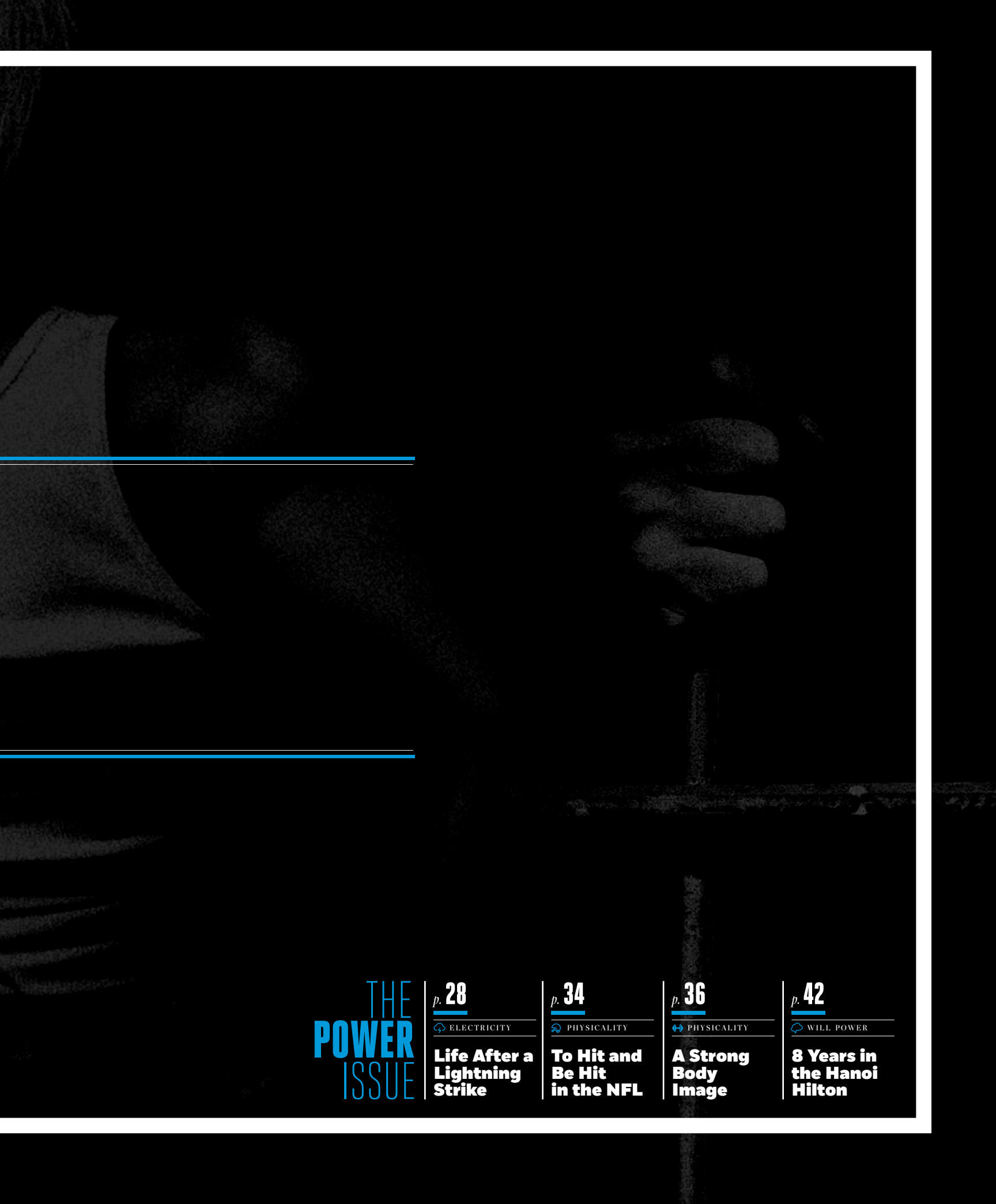
WEER



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NATURAL
POWER



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Lysa Puma, JD '99, was **hit by a thunderbolt** at the Tibetan Freedom Concert on June 13, 1998. She spent the ensuing months recovering and as a minor celebrity, touring the White House and meeting rock stars and the Dalai Lama. Twenty years later, she has a normal life—but she still has **“lightning days.”**

THE LENGTH OF A FLASH

// By MATTHEW STOSS





After being struck by lightning, Lysa Selfon Puma, JD '99, met the Dalai Lama in a Washington, D.C., hotel. Twenty years later, the plot of that meeting is lost to time, life and Puma's fritzing hippocampus, just like the strike itself.

"It's been filled in by some people," says the now-45-year-old Puma. "But I have no memory of that."

It's a gray Thursday in January and we're sitting in the back of a French restaurant. It's a few blocks from Puma's house in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood of Philadelphia where she lives with her husband Michael, JD '99, who's an employment lawyer, and their kids, 14-year-old Madaline and 10-year-old Lev. Lysa's a regular at the French restaurant. Someone

should film an *A Moveable Feast* adaptation here.

"From memory tests then to memory tests years ago to a memory test last year," Puma continues, "there's been a pretty aggressive increase in memory problems. If you're talking to me and someone interrupts, I cannot listen to them or I have no idea where you and I were. It's so hard to get back."

The memory of that November 1998 meeting with the Dalai Lama has been especially hard.

Puma recalls only fragments and feelings. Even the name of the hotel eludes her, although she suspects it may have been near Capitol Hill.

"I don't remember," Puma says. "But he had a whole floor."

On June 13, 1998, Puma was struck by lightning on a sunny day at RFK Stadium. She and her sister, Amanda, BFA '01, were on an upper concourse and wandering among the more than 60,000 in attendance during a Herbie Hancock performance at the D.C. edition of the Tibetan Freedom Concert. Puma was 25 years old and on a cellphone. She had just finished her second year of law school at GW.

Eyewitness accounts being famously

unreliable, it's impossible to know what genre of lightning hit Puma—a direct strike or a glancing flash off, or through, whatever did take the direct strike. And unless there's video of Puma getting hit (there isn't, that she knows of), we'll never know.

But whatever exactly hit her—paramedic Johnny Shaw describes a hovering blue ball, a shotgun bang and black smoke—the force of it stopped her heart and knocked her prostrate across the concrete, the impact breaking her nose and leaving her face a melange of burn, blood and char. She was dead for about seven minutes before serendipity smiled. An off-duty paramedic (Shaw) and a hospital resident were nearby and they ran to her. If they hadn't...

"I never thought about it like that," Puma says, "But, yeah. Wow."

Officials canceled the concert for the rest of the day. The following morning, Puma looked not unlike an unmasked Darth Vader, and Sean Lennon announced to a reassembled RFK crowd that she was still alive.

Today, Puma believes she took a direct strike to the head, an assertion she defenses with the big scar under all her curly, regrown auburn hair and the severity of her injuries. The lightning, whatever its form, undeniably burned a tuft off the back of her head, exploded her right eardrum, left burns down her face and the right side of body, and heated the underwire in her bra enough to brand her upper torso.

The incident was well- and widely reported, conferring unto Puma a minor celebrity. She appeared on MTV News, received personal attention from some of the Tibetan Freedom Concert acts and went on a special tour of the Clinton White House.

"We did not meet the president," says Amanda Wachstein, Puma's sister. "But we met Buddy the dog."

The Beastie Boys, a Tibetan Freedom Concert headliner and still one of Puma's favorite bands—"I was so sad when Adam Yauch died"—sent her a signed *Hello Nasty* CD, then just released, and had her attend a later show. Dave Matthews, who hand-wrote her a thoughtful note, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers also invited Puma to concerts.

A few days after the lightning strike, Anthony Kiedis, the Chili Peppers' frontman, visited Puma in the hospital's burn unit. Puma, suffering second- and third-degree burns, was at the time on Dilaudid, an opiate comparable to morphine.

"I just remember this man had the most beautiful skin, ever," Puma says. "He must have sat and talked to me, but I really couldn't talk much. And then I had two friends come and visit, and they said that I said, 'Oh, Mike and Roland, this is my friend, Anthony. Anthony, this is Mike and



1

ODDS OF A

IN

PERSON GETTING HIT

13,500

BY LIGHTNING

LYSA SELFON PUMA



SHE WAS DEAD
FOR ABOUT SEVEN MINUTES
BEFORE
SERENDIPITY
SMILED.



Roland.' They couldn't believe I could do the introduction and then they were like, 'Oh my god, you're Anthony Kiedis.'"

Puma healed quickly. Her first night out was just two months later at the now-defunct Toledo Lounge in Adams Morgan. It's where she met her future husband, Michael.

"He was sitting at the table, a couple drinks in, when I sat down," Lysa Puma says. "We had the same friends but we never knew each other, and he said, 'You know, your hair looks nice short. You should keep it like that.'"

"It wasn't a secret that I got struck by lightning, but him saying that was huge because, you know—I felt ugly. I didn't look like me."

The ensuing November, the Dalai Lama, in the United States to talk with Washington officials about Chinese rule of Tibet, asked to meet Puma, making his request through her hospital. She describes the invitation as "whacky" and remembers asking, "Me? Why?"

For security and privacy reasons, Puma says, she couldn't bring a buddy and she couldn't record the chat.

"That was hard because my memory wasn't good," Puma says. "So it was his holiness, my American translator, one of his assistants and me."

Reconstructing the visit isn't easy. Time has also hazed the memories of the family and friends who debriefed Puma after the meeting. Twenty years later, they recall less than her. But Puma remembers driving her green, stick-shift Saab from her Dupont Circle apartment to the meeting at the

now-forgotten hotel. She dressed modestly. The Dalai Lama wore his robes. The visit, she estimates, lasted about a half-hour and included time for pictures. They sat by a window in the parlor of a hotel suite.

"We went to a room, and the assistant had given me a version of a prayer shawl," says Puma, who's Jewish and familiar with similar rituals in her religion. "In Judaism, it's called a *tallit*, but it was a Tibetan one. You were supposed to present it to the Dalai Lama, and he blessed it and he put it around me."

She says he asked about the physical effects of the strike and how she felt and that he spoke slowly.

"I remember just feeling he was very calm, loving," Puma says, adding that she seemed to be in the presence of someone "not regularly human. I felt this, sort of, kind of like, greater sensation than regular life—a lightness."

What was said remains murky, except this.

"I asked him," Puma says, "'Why do you think this happened?' And I figured, maybe he would know. And he said, 'Maybe it's something about what you will do or what your children will do that will have a huge impact on the world.' And I left."

Mary Ann Cooper is a doctor who has studied lightning and treated lightning-strike survivors for 30 years. Her father was fascinated by lightning, and later, she chose to specialize in lightning- and electrical-related injuries after a mentor told her, "If you want to be known for

something, find a niche."

Lightning strikes on humans are certainly that. Medical research all but ignores them because not enough people are hit to merit a multimillion-dollar medical-research grant, unlike, say, cancer or heart disease. But the grant-givers don't arbitrate mystique, and the rarity and lethal spontaneity of the thunderbolt has affixed it in the most ancient parts of man's imagination.

"Lightning is probably experienced by nearly everyone on this Earth," says Cooper, a professor emerita at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Department of Emergency Medicine who has largely self-funded her research. "It's far more experienced than floods or tsunamis or earthquakes or volcanoes or any of those things. It's somewhat unexpected, so naturally, you think that a lot of people would think it must be something that the gods in Greece or the gods in Rome or somebody like that is doing. People get killed. Maybe it's retribution for something they did in their life? A lot of myths grow up about this kind of stuff."


Across cultures, lightning is a semiotic hallmark of myth and religion, and the thunderbolt is the weapon of choice (and vengeance) for the lords of various pagan pantheons as well as the Abrahamic god.

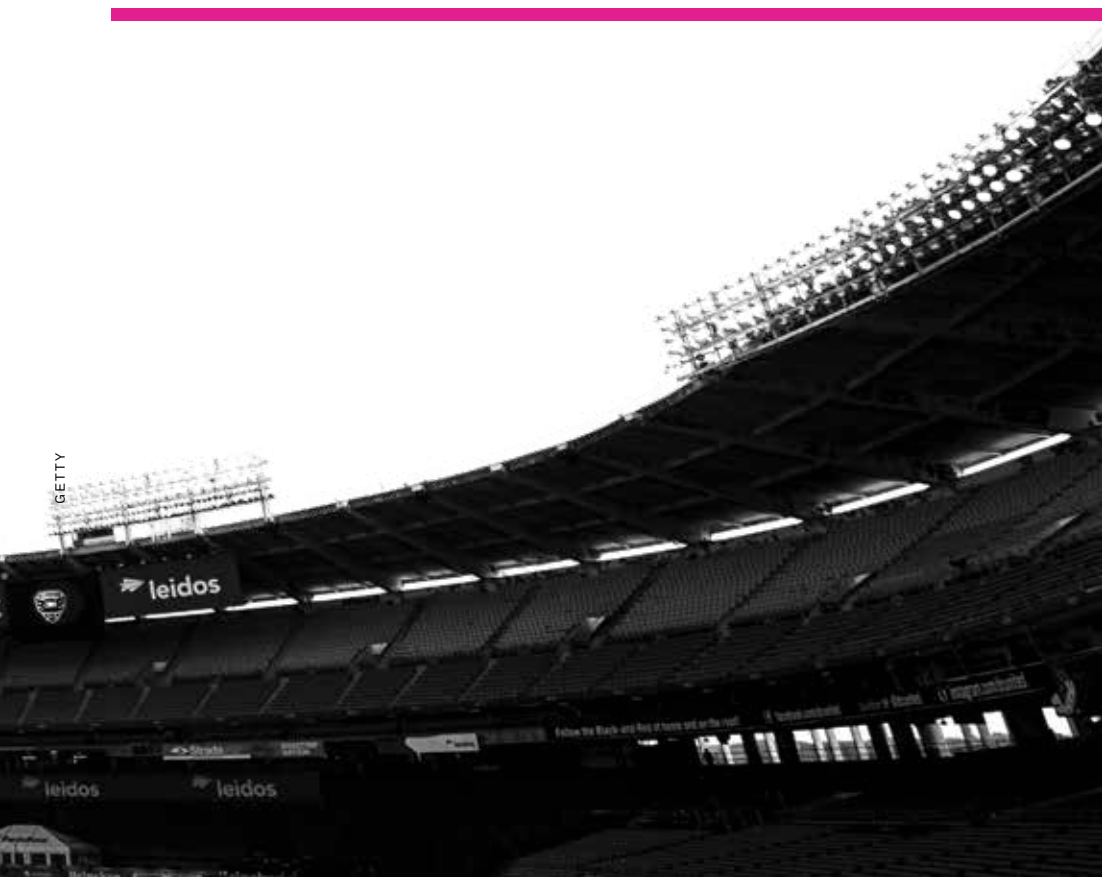
In the Bible, thunder and lightning parallel the voice and fury of God (Exodus 19:16-18) and presage the second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:27), and we continue to ascribe supernatural wonder and meaning to those billion-volt flashes that strike the Earth an estimated 100 times a second, traveling at a tenth the speed of light and burning five times hotter than the surface of the sun.

In more recent lore, we have the story of Roy Hobbs cutting his bat from the wood of a tree split by lightning, and a thunderbolt imbuing the Flash with superspeed. We believe that rubber soles are tantamount to lightning repellent and that there's more to human lightning rods than sophistry and superstition.

"After lightning has burned its way a mile or two through the air—which is a very good insulator—you think it cares what it hits?" Cooper says.

In any single year from 2008 to 2017, no more than 39 people in the United States, a country of 325 million, were killed by lightning, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Only 16 were killed in 2017. The odds of a person being hit in their lifetime are about 1 in 13,500, but one man, a Shenandoah National Park ranger named Roy Sullivan, was struck seven times between 1942 and 1977. He died of a self-inflicted gunshot in 1983.

Reliable data on lightning strikes, 



largely assembled by dredging news stories and obituaries, goes back only a handful of decades, but it's believed that people today are struck less than ever. Urbanization and the profusion of lightning-safety knowledge help keep people from dangerous areas—elevated, open spaces—and away from obvious targets like trees and big metal poles.

Most people when struck, about 50 percent, experience ground currents. Cooper says the type of strike is best determined by the situation in which a person is hit, not their injuries. (They don't vary enough to be of great use.) For example, if a bunch of people are standing in a field and they all go down, it's probably a ground current. If one person is in a forest and next to a tree, it's probably a side flash. Direct strikes typically involve a lone victim in an open area and, according to Cooper's research, make up just 3 to 5 percent of all incidents.

It's suspected that a direct strike results in death more often, but there's no way to prove it, short of paying hundreds of people to get struck by lightning and then counting the bodies. But if hundreds of people were willing to take a bolt for science, they'd be happy to know that lightning strikes are more survivable than ever. Ninety percent of people struck by lightning in developed countries live because of modern medicine and access to it. Also (surprisingly) working in their favor: the immense power of lightning.

Essentially, one lightning bolt contains more energy than the human body can absorb, so the body rarely, if ever, takes a full dose. Here's a rough analogy: Think of aiming a firehose at a small bucket.

"A very small amount of that water is actually going to go into that bucket," Cooper says. "The vast majority of it is going around the outside of it."

Then the water turns the bucket into a projectile. Now, pretend the water is lightning and the bucket is a person.

"It's similar to being close to a 5-kilogram TNT bomb," Cooper says of a lightning strike. "You can get blown away if lightning hits the concrete next door. You could have had concrete shrapnel blown into your legs or something like that. So you could not only have the electrical injuries, you also have the concussive injuries that you would have from an IED."

The violence of absorbing any amount of a lightning strike can bounce the brain, basically Jell-O suspended in a case, off the skull just like anything else—a car crash, falling off a bicycle, playing football. And the after-effects of a lightning strike are similar to those of post-concussive syndrome. Victims are amnesiac of the event and develop memory problems. They suffer

hyperirritability and years of debilitating headaches. They can't multitask, they lose executive function and have trouble sleeping.

Brain scans of lightning-strike survivors, Cooper says, don't usually show abnormalities, so to explain why many lightning-strike survivors turn out a bit askew, Cooper uses another analogy: a computer after an electric surge.

"If you opened up the computer and looked at it, you probably wouldn't see any burns on the inside of the computer," Cooper says. "But when you try to tune it up, some of the files aren't to be found anymore; some of the files are corrupted. Things don't get retrieved from where you thought you had them or they're missing or the file's name got changed. That's basically what happens with the brain, as well."

Madaline Puma is on the phone from her parents' house in Philadelphia and talking about when she found out her mom, who is in the background cutting vegetables for dinner, was struck by lightning. Madaline was 8 years old and hiding in her parents' room during a thunderstorm.

"My mom just took me aside and said, 'You don't need to be afraid of the lightning,'" says Madaline, now 14. "And then she told me the whole story and I said, 'Well, why would you tell me that? Because that's going to make me even more afraid.' And she said, 'Well, because then you know you can get better. It's nothing to be scared of.'"

Madaline, who's interested in science, has since mastered her fear and now just thinks it's a strange, crazy story. Her 10-year-old brother Lev thinks that, too, but also has other opinions. Madaline passes the phone to him.

"I thought it was pretty cool because she got to meet the Dalai Lama and the Beastie Boys," says Lev, an aspiring Philadelphia Eagles quarterback and secret agent.

"I asked if it hurt," he adds. "Then I realized she couldn't really even feel it."

The kids—but mostly Lev—also lament her lack of top-tier superpowers. What their mom (allegedly) got wouldn't even get her on the Avengers' JV team.

"Whenever she's around electronics," Lev says, "they don't work. They stop. Something weird happens. It's kind of awkward."

So she can't use the microwave?

"Yeah, she can't," Lev says. "We have to use it."

Madaline, compelled to clarify, reclaims the phone. Presumably by force.

"Electronics *do* work," she says. "Just around her, they usually stop working for a little bit. She doesn't really have a superpower or anything. It's just weird."

Things will be loading slow or it'll say she doesn't have wifi when there's wifi or something like that. But it just ends up happening a lot. Not like an actual superpower—just like a weird coincidence."

Madaline relinquishes the phone.

"Hi, it's Lev again."

Sitting in the back of the French restaurant, Lysa Puma is considering what the Dalai Lama said to her 20 years ago in the hotel she can't remember, half-eaten chicken paillard on her plate and a white wine at hand.

"I waffle between thinking it happened because just 'wrong place, wrong time' to: 'Am I supposed to do something good with this?'" Puma says. "'Am I supposed to do something bigger than me?' But I haven't had that moment, yet."

She thinks some more.

"To me," she says, "it was probably just a random, freak occurrence. I wouldn't ascribe any higher meaning to it—but that's not romantic at all."

Puma is more culturally Jewish than religiously Jewish. She wouldn't describe herself as secular, but her theism might be tenuous. At one point, she posited that God may have been once but isn't anymore. She's taking theology classes to work it all out.

"Everybody wants it to be romantic," Puma says about being struck by lightning. "It's not. It's just a thing; it happened. I had help around that most people wouldn't in that circumstance, and I was a good patient. I followed directions. I worked hard. I was determined. I was optimistic. I didn't let it deter me from having a happy, healthy life and wanting to go back to law school and finish and take the bar exam. It could have been a really easy excuse to not do all those, but I was me and I wanted to continue my life."

Puma graduated from GW less than 11 months after getting struck by lightning, spending the fall semester in an independent study with former law school dean Michael Young, now the president at Texas A&M.

"That's what she needed," says Young, who remains friends with Puma. "She was still in [physical] therapy and things like that, so it seemed like an opportunity for her to get a good educational experience and for me to do a little good for one of our students."

Young says Puma's independent study involved working as a research assistant while he served as chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Liberties, a position that had him cross paths with the Dalai Lama a few times. Once, Young says, he asked the Dalai Lama about his meeting with Puma.

"He just talked about how brave she was,"

Lysa Puma, sitting in her home in Philadelphia, shows the photo of her 1998 meeting the Dalai Lama.



Young says.

After finishing her law degree, Puma spent a year and a half practicing immigration law before getting into legal recruiting, eventually founding her own firm. In the past year, she's gradually shut that down to spend more time with her kids and focus on charity work, aware (and very grateful) that her husband Michael's position as a partner at Morgan Lewis, a big international law firm, makes that possible. Puma serves on the board of the Philadelphia Children's Alliance, a nonprofit that provides legal help to sexually abused children.

Like her parents, David and Rosanne Selfon, she's also active in Reform Judaism. She wants to start an after-school program for Jewish teens in the Center City neighborhood of Philadelphia, and in the weeks after being struck by lightning, she founded a charity for burn victims: The Burning Bush Fund. The name alludes to the Exodus story in which God speaks to Moses through a conflagrant shrub. It was a rabbi from Puma's hometown synagogue in Lancaster, Pa., that pointed out the less-than-subtle parallel between Puma and the bush. Both were burned, neither were consumed.

Now, as much as anyone can be, Puma is a normal, functional human being. She sings but can't dance. She likes white wine and to

recommend books. She became an occasional carnivore shortly after the lightning strike, taking a doctor's advice to eat a little meat to abet her convalescence. She doesn't remember the logic behind it. Recently, she quit yoga after 10 years because it took her that long to decide she "hated it."

Outwardly, other than some discoloration on her right cheek, some "tacky" skin on her torso and the grill marks from her bra, nothing about Puma indicates *I was speared by god-fire and lived*. But there are long-term, scarless injuries. Some are attributable to the lightning—the memory loss, for instance—but for others, the lightning can be blamed only anecdotally.

Three years ago, Puma was diagnosed with renal cancer during a hospital visit for back pain, and shortly after, doctors removed a portion of her left kidney. Well before that, she developed asthma that's become increasingly virulent, with some attacks lasting months. Her once-20-20 vision is no more, the hearing in her right ear is spotty, she suffers phantom nerve pain, has what seems like a second-hand immune system and on some days—her "lightning days"—she's just inexplicably exhausted. She says she feels like she's aging at an accelerated rate.

Health insurance companies must despise her.

Two decades removed, the lightning often means more to other people than it does to her. Puma's celebrity is diminished but not gone, and every month or so it flares up when someone blunders into the story of June 13, 1998. Puma says she doesn't think about it and that it comes back to her only if she's asked, or on those "lightning days." But she understands the story's allure, even if it's morbid, and people are forward and pry.

"It's a curious thing," Puma says. "Lightning is something scary and so huge. I understand that people want to know what it was like and they can't believe someone's alive. They want to know what I remember and if I have powers. I understand because that's what we're shown in movies, with people coming back from the dead—that they saw a light."

She says she saw no light and that she didn't know she was dead for seven minutes until someone told her after she came back to life. She neither remembers nor dreams about it, the subconscious memory, if there ever was one, assuredly burnt away by an early summer's thunderbolt.

"No light, no tunnel," Puma says. "Maybe if I was there, I'm not supposed to remember it. Or it was never there."

She supposes she could have asked the Dalai Lama that—maybe she did—but she says she's never been especially self-pitying about what happened to her. She thinks she knows why, too, propounding that it took so much effort to get off the ventilator, to learn to eat again, to walk, plus the multiple surgeries to rebuild her broken nose, that she just didn't have the time to consider etiology or the dark minutes she spent glimpsing her mortality.

She has time now.

"I don't know if I think about it more than the average person," Puma says, "but I think that comes into my head. I think, how long can the luck go? If everyone has a certain amount of luck they're allowed, am I running thin on mine?"

"As you can tell, I'm not into the mystical component of this or the faith part, but I definitely feel like the aging process was accelerated from that, for sure."

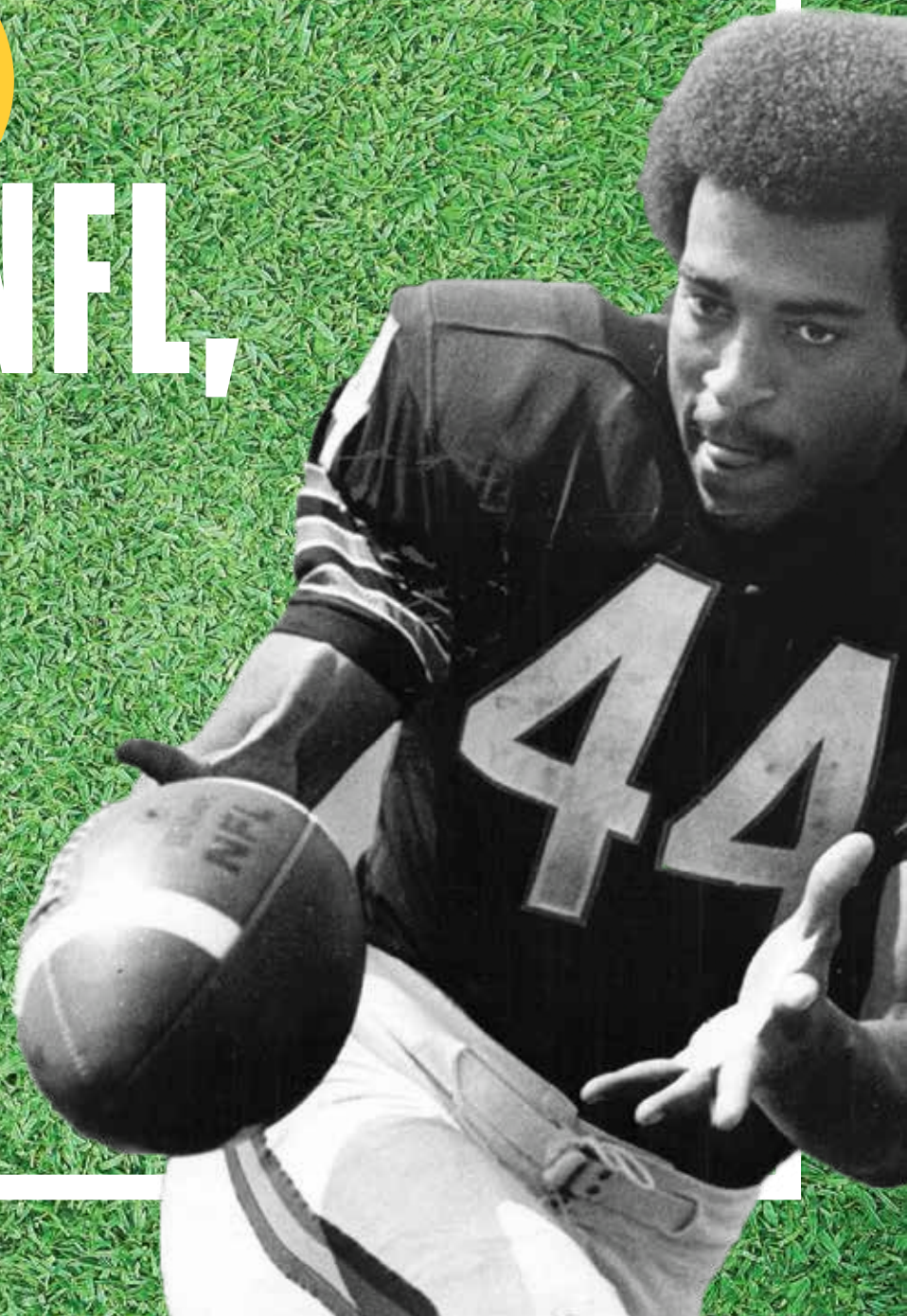
We've been at the French restaurant so long, we've sat through the shift change. The new waiter, like the old one, has a bow tie. The chicken paillard's still half-eaten but the white wine's all drunk. The sun's come out.

"It's kind of why I slowly stopped doing my business without ever officially ending it," Puma says. "That thought's been in my head when it never really was before. It's like, you know what—I've been through a lot. Maybe I'll just stop trying to do everything right now and focus on my kids, on Mike, on me, do my charity stuff. That's enough." ☐



TO HIT (AND BE HIT) IN THE NFL, WITH GARRY LYLE

// By MATTHEW STOSS



It seems like playing in the NFL must really hurt sometimes—large men of a certain temperament doing all they can to squish by violence other large men into the grass.

Garry Lyle played seven NFL seasons, finishing with 12 interceptions, after an all-star career at GW during the football team's final years. (Administration, citing expense and a lack of interest, had the program put down after the 1966 season.)

Lyle, as a running back and then a free safety for the Chicago Bears from 1968 to 1974, got to hit and be hit—he tore two ligaments in his right knee as the result of one hit in 1972—and over the winter, the 72-year-old expounded on what it's really like to give and take a shot in the NFL.

So, does it hurt?

It's not that painful.

Really?

Unless something goes wrong.

Ah.

Good contact is like an instantaneous blip. It's a blink of the eye. It's like a noise and it's over with and you get up. Now, when something breaks, like a finger or an arm, or you twist something—that's where the pain comes in. But good, solid contact does not hurt. You're conditioned for that and you have pads on. A lot of times, you get kicked in the shin or in one of the exposed parts of your body—your hands, your arms—and you feel something but it's not necessarily painful until later when things swell. If it's broke, you feel pain right away.

What about hitting someone else?

It's you and a guy. On the line, it's a little different because there are a lot of people there and you might get double-teamed and then somebody will run into you.

But as a defensive back, it's usually you and a receiver or you and a running back. It's one-on-one, and in the moment before contact, what I used to tend to do and what most people do, is, if the guy is bigger than you—and most of the running backs are—I always felt like it was more important to hit him harder than a smaller guy. If you didn't, it's big train/little train; you're gonna lose.

It's all about leverage. If you could hit him harder and have the right leverage point, you could win.

That's defense. What about getting hit when you're on offense?

It's usually by multiple people, and shoulders are hitting you and helmets are hitting you and legs are hitting you, and sometimes, in effect, you're not dragged, but pushed across the turf.

What's that like?

It's not something you think about. It's really very quick. It's over. It's like a split second and you get up and you go back to the huddle and you get ready for another play. It's only when something goes wrong, like you have a torn ligament or a twisted ankle or knee or worse, and then you can't get up. There's only one time I couldn't get up.

Why couldn't you get up?

I had my knee busted up. We were playing the Detroit Lions at Soldier Field [in Chicago in 1972]. I was having a good year. I think it was the fourth game and I already had three interceptions. Their quarterback was

a guy named Greg Landry, and he went back to pass and I dropped into my coverage and he ended up running the ball, and he's coming up the right sideline in front of our bench and I'm going over there to hit him, and just before I hit him, something hit me. It was a fella named Craig Cotton who was their tight end—actually, it was a clip. He busted my leg up and it was just hanging there.

Ew.

Now, that pain was excruciating. My leg was just hanging there. I was just laying there, not far from our sideline, and I pass out. They had me on the sideline; they shot me up to numb the pain. Four hours later, I was on the operating table. Eight hours later, I woke up with this big, white thing on my leg. It was a cast.

It's the power issue, so I'm obligated by the theme to ask: Does hitting someone in the NFL feel powerful?

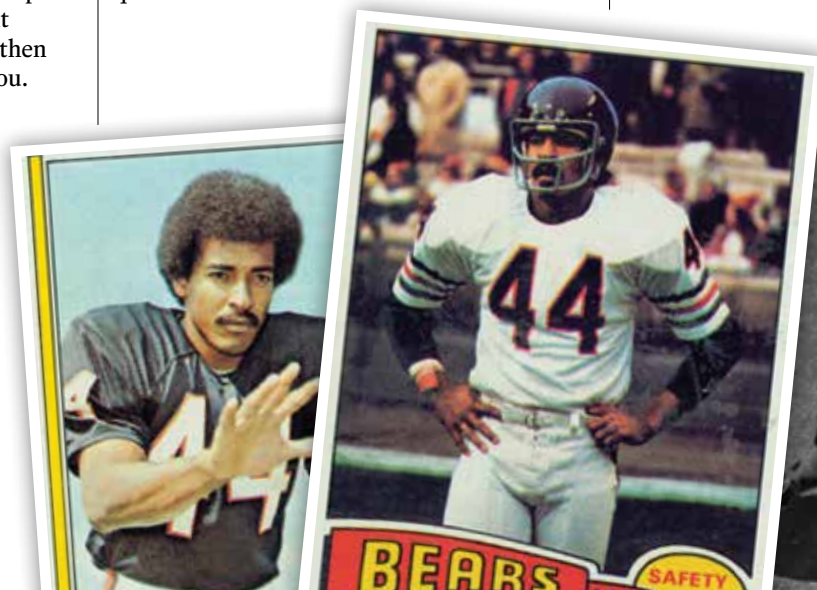
No.

Hmm.

It's just a feeling of preparation—getting prepared to do your job, to carry out your assignments. Now, this is kind of interesting: When you get out of ball—and I was in the corporate world for 30 years [at Xerox]—people find out that you played, and everybody wants to try you. And they all want you to join their flag football team or whatever, and they have no idea that you can't do that because if you did that, you'd whack somebody.

You talk to anyone who's ever played pro football ... ask them if they ever joined a flag football league. Probably most of them haven't for the reason I just said, especially if you played defense. You cannot play soft. So, flag football's not gonna work. If you come out there, I'm gonna whack you.

I believe you. 





Alumna Dina Al Sabah has spent her life at odds with what others think her body should be. Then, in the early 2000s, the expatriate member of the Kuwaiti royal family discovered bodybuilding and, along the way, who she is.

**'IT'S A
STRONG
BODY.'**

// By **JENNI LAIDMAN**



It was bitter cold when Dina Al Sabah arrived at GW in January 1994. She was 19 years old. She hated the city, with its crime—

there would be nearly 400 murders in Washington, D.C., that year; in 2017, there were 116—and the constant warnings about which streets were safe. Her new country repelled her; she puzzled over the empty babble of afternoon television, the antics on Jerry Springer and Ricki Lake. *What kind of country was this?* she wondered. It was nothing like London, where she'd completed her secondary education. And it sure wasn't Morocco, where Al Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family, had lived since she was 9 years old.

And now here she was, stuck in an icebound, gray city. Friendless.

So she went to the gym. To kill time.

Five years later, Al Sabah, BS '97, MS '99, MBA '01, would stride onto a stage in southwest Virginia in a bikini to appreciative applause. She'd flex her intricate back muscles, contract her powerful quadriceps and ripple the impressive washboard of her abdomen. That was her first bodybuilding competition, a small amateur event in Roanoke. She finished second. It was awesome. The following year, she competed twice. In 2001, she competed three times, taking two firsts and a third. In 2002, she took to the stage four times, winning three firsts and a third. In 2003, she went pro.

But this pursuit of perfection has several layers. Al Sabah wasn't just shaping a powerful body, she was reshaping her relationship to it. The recontouring was physically punishing, but her relationship with her body had been punishing for years, long before she started lifting weights.

Al Sabah developed an eating disorder as a preteen that would persist through her bodybuilding and modeling careers and later be diagnosed as anorexia. Compulsive-exercise tendencies exacerbated the effects of her undereating, and her career gave her a cover story to rationalize it.

Al Sabah attributes the disorder, in part, to family pressures, describing them as generally unspoken, often passively expressed, expectations for how her body should look. By age 13, she says, she learned to see her naturally muscular frame as fat. If an adult dieted, she did, too. Several times a day, she'd step on the scale, watching the needle and worrying. At one point, she says, someone put her in a girdle. Some days, she'd eat only Jell-O and, no kidding, cotton balls dipped in olive oil. Al Sabah says she read about it in a magazine interview with a model.

"They would swallow them," says the now-44-year-old Al Sabah, who lives in the palatial penthouse of a Washington, D.C., apartment

building with her husband, David Alden, and their son, Dyllan, who turns 4 in May. "And they thought it would fill up their stomachs and they wouldn't be hungry."

When her mother's trainer suggested Al Sabah might be a good sprinter, given her muscular lower body, Al Sabah corrected him.

"I'm fat," she told him.

"That's not fat, that's muscle," he said.

But his message didn't penetrate, not for several years. She recognized the first glimmer of a different self-image while standing in front of a magazine rack shortly after she moved to Washington. She was riveted by the bodies in women's fitness magazines, publications like *Oxygen* and *Shape*. Inside were strong and shapely bodies like hers. She felt a buzz of recognition.

That's a body that looks like mine, she'd think. *Oh, and there's another body like mine. So I belong somewhere.*

She was already muscular when she decided to compete, at the urging of a fellow gym member, in that first bodybuilding contest. Her gym friend, a novice himself, told her she could do it, that she was 99 percent of the way. He offered to help her, despite his lack of experience. He'd only competed once and didn't know what he was doing. That made two of them.

"It was the blind leading the blind," Al Sabah says.

The diet and workout regime he outlined was strict, ridiculous, unhealthy. Chief among its goals was eliminating almost all fat from her diet. She soon moved on to more qualified coaches, but her eating disorder remained disruptive.

Food was a math problem of calories in/calories out, a pinpoint balancing act she was scrupulous to maintain. On her healthiest competition diet, she might consume only 1,650 calories a day. But in her early competitive years, her caloric intake would fall to 1,200. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a normal, non-bodybuilding, comparably aged woman requires 1,800 to 2,000 calories a day.

Al Sabah's brutal workout routine made it worse. Leading up to a competition, she'd have two hour-long cardio sessions a day, walking on stepmills and sprinting on incline treadmills. She paired the cardio with two to three lifting sessions a day, at least five days a week: morning, midday and night, sometimes sneaking an extra session around 1 a.m. She'd do three or four exercises for each body part, three to four sets each, the rep-weight ratio determined by the needs of that body part.

For the already well-muscled areas, like her quads, she did high reps at low weights to hone and maintain. If an area needed to be built up, like her naturally slim shoulders, ➡

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she went with low reps and high weights.

Her body fat got down to 8 percent, dangerously low for a woman. According to the American Council on Exercise, body-fat levels of about 25 to 31 percent are ideal for women. For a female athlete, it's 14 to 20 percent.

By age 25, Al Sabah ended up overworked, underfed and malnourished.

To make sure she was meeting her objectives, each week she sent photographs of her body to a coach, whose feedback determined the pace and focus of workouts for the coming week. At the time, she says, it was worth it. It enhanced her sense of self.

"The fun part was being able to go and claim my body as my own," Al Sabah says. "It's not a body that's being put in a girdle or shamed or called fat or whatever. It's a strong body."

As she took to the small Roanoke stage in her first contest, her real competitors weren't the other women. Her nemesis was the sylph she would never be, the fat girl she never was. The earliest competition, indeed the constant competition, was for the right to be Dina. It was a contest she couldn't end, a contest she couldn't bear to lose, not even with a grueling regime that made her hair fall out and turned her skin ragged. And that was far from the only problem.

Al Sabah is a direct descendant of the emir who ruled Kuwait at the beginning of the 20th century, and her family, the House of Al Sabah, has reigned over the predominantly Muslim Persian Gulf nation of 4 million since the 1750s.

Al Sabah's branch of the family has traditionally been the more liberal branch, she says, interested in human rights, avant-garde in their approach to life. Her grandfather—who was son of an emir but never reached the throne—wanted to modernize Kuwait. He built the nation's first hospital. He sent her father and his siblings to the United States for Western educations.

Al Sabah spent most of her childhood moving from place to place, living in her homeland only briefly as a toddler. For six years, until age 9, she lived with an aunt, bouncing between the United Arab Emirates, Italy and Egypt, where she lived on a mango plantation in Giza. She then went to Morocco with her parents before school took her to London and D.C.

Wealthy jet-setters and now divorced, her parents traveled a lot and were largely absent. Growing up, Al Sabah says, her relationship with her parents was distant.

"When they were there, they would meddle," Al Sabah says. "I was glad they were gone."

In recent years, they've grown closer,

reaching a "good place." They talk about once a week via the texting app WhatsApp, exchanging pleasantries, checking in on the family and discussing current events. Currently, Al Sabah's father lives in Kuwait and her mother lives in Turkey.

In their absence, Al Sabah says her aunt in Egypt assumed a parental role and is in many ways responsible for Al Sabah's self-reliance. Her aunt also influenced her worldview, especially as it applied to religion. A secular woman, Al Sabah's aunt took an ecumenical approach to religious education, presenting Al Sabah with the religions of the world and their teachings, and today, Al Sabah's connection to Islam is loose, at best.

A woman bodybuilder of Islamic heritage was unheard of at the time Al Sabah entered the scene in 1999. Women from Muslim nations were only beginning to emerge in sports like tennis and running, and those women faced harsh criticism. Al Sabah in heels, a bikini and a spray tan couldn't hope to dodge the condemnation, especially as she started to moonlight as a fitness model, a career that eventually supplanted bodybuilding and became her dominant income source.

She was featured on the cover of *FitModels* in a lace-top bra.

On the cover of *Iron Man*, Al Sabah seems to glisten with a post-workout glow as she crouches beside a dumbbell. She looks angry on the cover of *Fit Beauties*, wearing a bikini with a denim bottom and a gingham bra while standing beside a hay bale.

Al Sabah says family members complained.

We can't put up with this. How can we defend our relationship with you if you continue doing this?

She responded: "Well, you don't have to. Don't call."

In the early 2000s, Al Sabah's family threatened to cut her off financially, but by that time it didn't matter. Al Sabah had money, thanks to her modeling career and her lucrative website, *FitDina.com*. At its peak around the year 2000, the website generated as much as \$12,000 a month. The subscription-based

"Even the sight of an athlete in a T-shirt and shorts is simply too much, let alone a bodybuilder. Even coming from a liberal family, there is still a lot of resistance to this type of display."

site featured R-rated photographs of her in various states of undress. Now, *FitDina.com* exists largely as a résumé and a time capsule. As the first decade of the 21st century progressed, comparable websites began to offer content free—a trend that became the internet norm—and *FitDina.com* drifted into virtual dormancy. But the website had served its purpose: It paid for her MBA in 2001, which she earned after finishing a graduate degree in telecommunications and computers and an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering.

Still, strangers, ostensibly motivated by her perceived blasphemy and assumed apostasy, sent her threatening emails—and still do, on occasion.

"You're going to burn in the fires of hell, blah blah blah," Al Sabah says. "... I mean, it's so funny. The last one I got, which was hysterical, was, 'You're ruining my religion for me.' And I thought, well, how on Earth am I doing that? What type of religion is it that one little person is going to ruin that for you?"

"It's not like I'm in Kuwait doing all this. I live here in the United States, where it's fine for me to run around wearing Daisy Dukes in the street. If you don't like it, don't look."

That she faced such opposition isn't too surprising. Kuwait is culturally liberal, but only relative to other Muslim nations. The Kuwaiti throne is forbidden to women—making Al Sabah ineligible, even if she wasn't an expatriate—and it wasn't legal for a woman to serve in the Kuwaiti parliament until 2005. No woman was elected until 2009, and there is only one woman serving in the 50-member National Assembly now.

Women on Kuwait's women-only beaches wear a full abaya, a neck-to-floor cloak, when they go into the sea, and the 1992 Olympic gold medalist, runner Algerian Hassiba Boulmerka, received death threats for wearing regulation shorts and T-shirts in competitions.

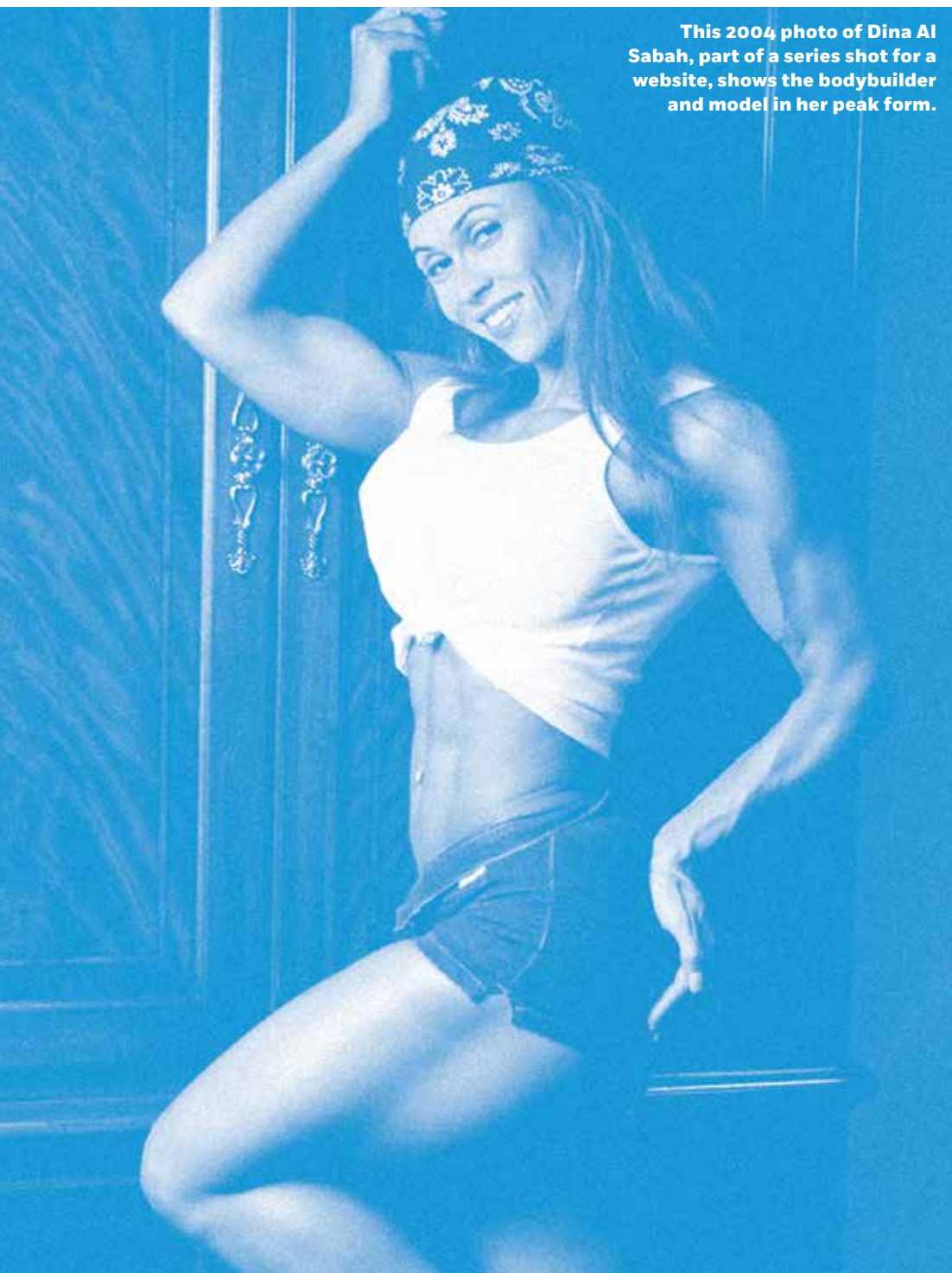
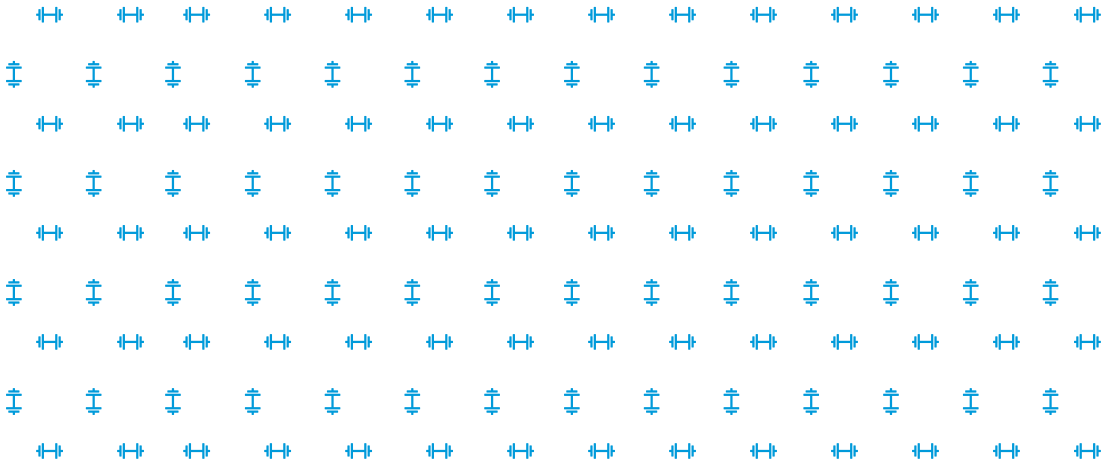
"Even the sight of an athlete in a T-shirt and shorts is simply too much, let alone a bodybuilder," says Valentine M. Moghadam, a professor of sociology at Northeastern University in Boston who studies women in Muslim societies. "Even coming from a liberal family, there is still a lot of resistance to this type of display."

"The Gulf countries in particular still have large, extended family units," she adds. "So in a societal structure like that, yes, the actions of a member of the family do reflect on the family as a whole."

Al Sabah says: "People will see my last name, and I'll get questions: ... 'How could you be doing this? Your family must be so ashamed.'"

No matter the criticism, Al Sabah was undaunted. Her tenuous relationship with





This 2004 photo of Dina Al Sabah, part of a series shot for a website, shows the bodybuilder and model in her peak form.

her native country has largely inured her to the vitriol.

“I wasn’t connected to that,” Al Sabah says. “I didn’t live in Kuwait. I was not really that connected to my extended family. It was just so easy to say, ‘Peace out!’ I wasn’t missing anything at that point. I was living in the U.S., I had friends, whatever, life was great.

“I always thought that if I stayed in Kuwait,” Al Sabah continues, “I’d be forced to marry whoever my family wanted me to marry or to live the life they chose for me. I just didn’t want that for myself. I wanted to live my own rebellious existence, and it’s the only one I have. I just wanted to do whatever the hell I wanted.”

In 1999, when Al Sabah first competed, the opportunities for women were limited to traditional bodybuilding and the bulked-up bodies that defined and ruled the sport. But that began to change as the International Federation of BodyBuilders, the world’s governing authority of professional bodybuilding, added new categories for women, broadening the discipline’s audience and the women eligible to compete.

One of the first new categories introduced was the fitness division, which allowed for less-bulky bodies—more in tune with how Al Sabah saw herself. She won a fitness competition as an amateur in 2001 but later switched to the also newly created figure division, designed to appeal to still-slighter bodies.

Today, a regional amateur contest can attract nearly 200 competitors, often more than its men’s counterpart. The new women’s categories, including the bikini, figure, fitness and physique divisions—delineated by escalating muscularity—offer more places where women of various body types can fit in. Men’s competitions have also added new, less-muscle categories to attract more competitors.

But Al Sabah’s goal was to go pro, and her Kuwaiti citizenship complicated that.

At that time, to become a professional, a bodybuilder had to win their way through the

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farm system of their national organization and finish in the top three of an IFBB-sanctioned show. Kuwait, not surprisingly, did not have an organization that sponsored a sport featuring women in bikinis. This left Al Sabah, then a permanent U.S. resident, with no avenue to the pros.

So for about a year, she implored U.S. and international officials for an exemption while competing in major national shows to raise her profile. She wrote letters explaining her special, yet unfortunate, circumstance.

"They had made exceptions for people from other countries who did not have a national federation," Al Sabah says. "So I petitioned after winning a slew of regional shows and beating people who went on to qualify and become pros."

Al Sabah spent four years on the amateur circuit, switching to the figure division in 2001. At the "tail end" of 2002, Al Sabah says, she got a phone call from an official at the National Physique Committee, the United States' national bodybuilding organization. She was in her office in Rockville, Md., where she had a day job doing IT (Al Sabah didn't have to work but she wanted to put her degrees to use). She thought she was going to be, at best, reprimanded for her persistence and, at worst, banned for being a nuisance. Turned out, that's not why the official called.

"He said they have agreed to let me turn pro," Al Sabah says. "I was *elated*. It was pretty crazy."

In 2003, she qualified for her first Olympia competition, among the best known of all the bodybuilding competitions. Arnold Schwarzenegger won the men's iteration, Mr. Olympia, seven times. He used the Olympia shows, in part, to launch his film career, starring first in the 1975 documentary *Pumping Iron* alongside Lou Ferrigno.

Only 12 competitors in the "figure" division walked the stage in Al Sabah's first Olympia. It wasn't a bad rookie outing. She finished fifth and looked spectacular—but it was mostly just a look. She was still malnourished because of her undereating and her over-rigorous workout regimen. With every competition, more hair fell out;

her normally poreless olive skin still looked ragged. Her longtime eating disorder persisted, embedded in her routine.

Al Sabah rationalized the physical toll competition exacted as simply part of the program.

"It just went with the territory, and I did not know better," Al Sabah says. "Many old-school competitors would say that the worse they felt, the better they looked. The truth is that it is an extreme discipline."

But the cost wasn't quite paying off at the professional level. She was competitive but not winning, and the reason why, she says, was out of her control.

The judges, overwhelmingly male and steeped in the big-muscle bodybuilding world, were looking for a physical symmetry that, genetically, she didn't have. Her quads and glutes were naturally larger than her shoulders, and no matter how much work she did, the gap seemed either too wide to close or just not worth the abuse implicit in trying. And, after a lifelong battle against self-image, finally, she just liked the way she looked.

"I thought that I was representing what I thought was the best of my body," Al Sabah says. "It's a subjective discipline and it's hard to say what someone will like, and you have a panel of different judges, and there's a disagreement about what they're looking for. But I didn't want to devote more time to that particular look. I'm going to show what I think looks best for me."

So, in 2004, at 29 years old and after five grueling years, she quit.

Not long afterwards, Al Sabah started therapy for her anorexia and began working with a registered dietician. She replaced the super-restrictive diet with one that allowed for a healthy balance of proteins, carbs and even fat.

New regimen in place and her eating disorder managed as best it could be, Al Sabah made two brief returns to bodybuilding, first in 2006 in the figure division and then in 2010 and 2011 in the bikini ranks. She was still competitive, qualifying for the bikini Olympia both years, but she didn't win. It wasn't about winning.

"Why not?" Al Sabah says. "It was a challenge."

Her closest friend, Michelle Bell, a former figure competitor who lives in the Bay area of California, says that Al Salah's move into bikini at age 36 was gutsy.

"Most of the bikini girls are genetically built with a nice body," she says. And often, what they really have going for them is youth. "Getting on stage with these 18-year-olds and still being able to hold your own—and look better than most—granted I'm probably biased, but I think she won by simply being able to do it so long and so gracefully."

But as long as she was competing, she was in trouble.

"Even the healthier diet was not something sustainable," Al Sabah says. "I only became healthier after stopping the competitions."

She quit for good in 2011, and seven years later, she still works out daily but has abandoned the three-a-days of 10 years ago. The competitions enabled her eating disorder, she says. Even today, she acknowledges an "altered" relationship with food.

"Food is not a pleasure for me," she says. "Well, now I can derive pleasure from it, but that is not how I look at it primarily. Food is fuel, and I always break everything down into what it will be doing for my body. I always have mental calculations going on of what I ate too much of, or what I am lacking in a certain day. I still go to therapy occasionally because you're never really recovered."

On a Thursday morning in January, she's in a gym in Foggy Bottom. Forty minutes into her workout, and she's only beginning to show effort. Her makeup-free skin glows. Renegade strands of dark hair work loose from her French braid as she moves with machine precision through each lift, a faint whoosh of outbreath escaping with every exertion, like the chug of a demure steam engine. It's a twice-weekly routine. Then there's the four spin classes each week. And she'll work out some at home. For her, this is a reasonable amount of fitness. For her, this is a contest she can win. ■



The second-longest-held American prisoner of war—and the first Vietnam War inmate at the “Hanoi Hilton”—talks about deprivation, torture and the will to outlast his captors.

'SOME MEN NEVER CAME BACK'

// By RACHEL MUIR





It was Day 5 in the Hanoi Hilton's notorious "blue room," where the worst torture was carried out.

The North Vietnamese interrogators had accused U.S. Navy Lt. Everett Alvarez Jr. of defacing a picture of their president, Ho Chi Minh. They repeatedly demanded that he atone by writing a letter to American pilots stationed in South Vietnam calling them criminals, haranguing them for being wrong.

A defiant Alvarez was so sleep-deprived that he would fall off the stool where he was made to sit during interrogation. He had spent most of the past days alone in a cramped cell, where mosquitos swarmed him and rats scampered over him. When he nodded off, his interrogators slapped and kicked him.

Food and water were withheld, and there hadn't been access to a bathroom in days.

"Hang in there, Ev," a fellow prisoner tapped in code from the next room.

It was November 1966, and Alvarez was in his third year as a POW.

"I don't like to brag," Alvarez, JD '83, answers when asked how he found the strength to endure years in captivity. "I'm not a braggart."

And he doesn't need to be; the facts do just fine on their own.

Alvarez, now 80, was the first U.S. pilot to be shot down over North Vietnam, the first to be held in the Hanoi Hilton and the second-longest-held American prisoner of war ever, at nearly eight and a half years. (The longest, Floyd J. Thompson, was captured in South Vietnam and held just 10 days shy of nine years. Alvarez missed first by a matter of months.)

"It was a long ordeal of mistreatment, degradation, torture, harassment," says Alvarez, who eventually wrote a book, *Chained Eagle*, about his experience.

Survival, he says, was a matter of faith, of camaraderie, of character.

On Aug. 5, 1964, Alvarez was a 26-year-old Naval officer zooming over the Gulf of Tonkin in his Douglas A-4 Skyhawk. He was on the frontlines of the first U.S. bombing raid on North Vietnam when he came under heavy fire.

"It was extremely frightening," says Alvarez. "I was flying very low, and my plane was out of control. My parachute opened just before I hit the water."

He was hauled out of the Gulf of Tonkin by local fishermen who were armed with rifles and a grenade.

A few days later, Alvarez was told he was being moved and thought he was on the brink of

"HE RESISTED ALONE, FOUGHT ALONE, SUFFERED ALONE"

release. Instead, he was taken to Hao Lo, the infamous French colonial-era prison later dubbed the Hanoi Hilton.

The first 13 months, Alvarez was kept in isolation. Meals, when they came, could be a blackbird, served claws-up with feathers, eyes and beak intact; a chicken head floating in an pool of grease; or an animal hoof with hair still attached. His weight plummeted from 165 pounds to about 110.

The North Vietnamese guards brushed aside Alvarez's attempts to invoke the Geneva Convention. The U.S. had not formally declared war, they said.

The old, fetid prison was rife with roaches and long-tailed brown rats so large Alvarez first mistook them for cats. And there were a lot of hours to while away alone in his cell, especially for a young pilot used to a regimented military schedule.

"I prayed a lot," says Alvarez, a former altar boy who says he drew strength from his family's Roman Catholic faith.

Using a rusty nail, he scratched out a cross on one of the prison walls. Facing it, he would recite the Latin Mass (to the best of his memory) and Our Fathers and Hail Marys.

Some days, he would watch ants make their resolute path across his cell or play both sides of a chess game on a makeshift board fashioned from the cardboard and paper of a writing pad.

He would relive his childhood, growing up in a Mexican-American family among the lettuce fields of Salinas, Calif., immortalized by John Steinbeck. "We were, basically poor, but we didn't know it. We were happy."

Alvarez would think of his wife of seven months, Tangee, going over their wedding and the last time they saw each other in San Diego. ("You'll be home by Christmas," she'd hopefully told him.) He treasured two grainy photos of her that his guards had copied from media reports after his capture.

He says he spent a lot of time thinking about how he needed to comport himself so he would be able to live with himself after the war. "It depended on my personal integrity,

my loyalty to my family, to my country," Alvarez says.

After six months, Alvarez caught sight of other Americans, fellow downed pilots, housed in the prison.

Fifteen months into captivity, Alvarez got a cellmate—a burly, red-bearded Air Force aviator named Tom Barrett—as the ranks of POWs swelled to dozens.

For those POWs and for the hundreds more that would come, the fact that Alvarez had endured a year of imprisonment, harassment and near starvation alone was nothing short of awe-inspiring.

John McCain, the U.S. senator from Arizona who famously spent five and a half years in the Hanoi Hilton, says Alvarez was deeply revered by his fellow prisoners of war.

"He resisted alone, fought alone, suffered alone," McCain, 81, tells *GW Magazine*. "That's why the rest of us held Ev in such high regard—not just because he had been there the longest, but because we had found courage and strength in numbers.

"He had only his own resources, his own courage and integrity," says McCain. "They were enough."

The two men remain close half a century later. "Every single day of that friendship has been one of the great privileges of my life," McCain says.

In turn, Alvarez says the brotherhood forged by the POWs in Hao Lo was essential to his continued survival.

"We were all in the same boat," he says. "We hung together as a group, and most of us made it. Without them, I can't speculate on what would have happened to me."

Often punished by the guards if they talked to each other, the POWs developed a "tap code" system of communicating, based on a five-by-five square in which the squares stood for letters. A first tap meant the row a letter was in, and the second the column. They used the system to pass information from cell to cell, to give each other encouragement, to joke around.

It was a lifeline—especially as torture began in earnest.

Men were taken one by one for interrogation, often with the goal of creating propaganda, letters or recordings in which the POWs “confessed” to crimes, apologized and urged America to end the war. A common and excruciating method of torture was to tie or handcuff the men’s arms behind their backs, cutting off circulation to their hands. Men were also beaten with fists, with sticks, with rubber hoses.

“You eventually broke,” says Alvarez. “Everybody would at some point.”

Whenever possible, the POWs injected small acts of sabotage, pronouncing words wrong, writing gibberish-laden confessions. Ho Chi Minh became “President Horse Sh** Men”; Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk became “Prince No Good Shnook.”

On that November 1966 day in the Hanoi Hilton’s blue room, Alvarez reached his breaking point, finally scrawling out: “I protest against the long, involved, costly, controversial, violation war against the gallant, heroic, liberated, freedom-loving, liberated, independent-loving Vietnamese

people.”

He hoped no one in the U.S. could possibly take his scribbling seriously.

“You just had to get through to the best of your ability, to at least try to maintain your dignity and your self-respect,” he says. Most of the men in the Hanoi Hilton felt, or at least hoped, they would draw the line at capitulating if they thought doing so would jeopardize another POW.

“Some men never came back,” says Alvarez. “I was never put to that test.”

The POWs’ treatment improved dramatically in late 1969, when it became clear that their condition would be a key element of any peace accord with the U.S.

But, for Alvarez, heartbreak was still to come.

During his internment, he had written letters whenever permitted to Tangee, calling her “sweetheart,” telling her how much he loved her, how he couldn’t wait to be reunited. Her letters, though, had become so seldom as to be nonexistent. The mail was

notoriously erratic; there was no way to know if she had received his letters, or he hers. Still, Alvarez was worried. They’d been apart seven years.

On Christmas Day 1971, he was given a “present,” a letter from his mother telling him that his wife “had decided not to wait for him.”

“She has probably gone off with another man,” the guard matter of factly told him.

He was given a second letter from his mother on Tet, the Vietnamese lunar celebration, about a month later. The letter left no doubt. Tangee had in fact divorced him, remarried and may be expecting a child. It was a gut punch.

Alvarez withdrew. Prayer and the unwavering support of his friends pulled him through months of pain. When spring came, he writes in *Chained Eagle*, it was like a rebirth for him as well. He found it didn’t hurt to think about Tangee anymore, and there was a freedom from being responsible for a wife’s happiness, from having to ask someone to put their life on hold for an unknowable amount of years.



“We knew something was up,” Alvarez recalls. It was February 1973 and the bombing of North Vietnam had greatly intensified after Richard Nixon’s reelection.

“One day I found myself in a 40-man cell with all the first guys who were shot down,” he says. They were about to head home on the “Hanoi taxi,” the aircraft made famous for repatriating POWs, to a hero’s welcome.

While he felt like “an old man,” Alvarez was still only 35, had a lot of time to make up for and, he says, a lot of doors open to him given his hero status.

He soon remarried and had two sons, and continued to serve in the Navy until his

retirement, as a decorated commander, in 1980.

He was tapped by the Reagan administration in 1981 to serve as deputy director of the Peace Corps and, the following year, deputy administrator of the Veterans Administration. He earned a law degree at night from GW, graduating in 1983.

Alvarez then built several consulting and government contracting businesses in the D.C. area. He continues to lead Alvarez LLC with his son, Marc. (He tried retirement once; it didn’t suit him.)

Although he kept in touch with many of his fellow POWs, he says that for years he was too busy to dwell on Vietnam. He wrote

Chained Eagle, together with author Anthony S. Pitch in 1989, a full 25 years after his capture. Asked why a book, and why then, he gives what seems like the equivalent of a verbal shrug over the phone line: “Everyone told me I should write about it.”

Now, he says, memories of being a POW are less avoidable, prompted by the increasing number of funerals he’s attending.

But he says he doesn’t resent or regret his experience in Vietnam. “What happened to me was just being in the right place at the right time,” he says.

“Never did I expect to be there so long. But the way I look at it is: God had a plan for me. I had to stick around a while. So I did.” **EW**





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☆ AURA OF POWER

**To Think
Like
Ike**



When Indian immigrant Vidya Iyer, BA '12, disentangled from the pressures of assimilation, she ignited a star—a YouTube phenom who last year became one of the most-Google'd names in India.

BAROQUE BREAKBEATS

// By JULYSSA LOPEZ





“IT ALWAYS FELT
LIKE TWO SEPARATE
WORLDS: I’D GO TO
SCHOOL, AND THE
BUS DRIVER WOULD
PLAY USHER AND
THE BACKSTREET
BOYS, BUT THEN
COMING HOME,
I’D BE PRACTICING
CARNATIC MUSIC AND
EATING *DOSA* AND
SPEAKING TAMIL
WITH MY MOM AND
SISTER.”



The flickering lights turn Mumbai's Jio Garden, which hosts some of India's biggest music festivals, into a fluorescent galaxy of blue and purple flares. In the center of it all, Vidya Iyer—known to the thousands of fans at the sprawling venue that night last March by her stage name, Vidya Vox—walks across the stage, a beaming, dimpled pop star who'd flown more than 18 hours from California the week before to perform for the ravenous crowd screaming her name.

From behind her, a thundering electronic beat washes over the venue. Iyer brings a turquoise-trimmed microphone to her lips and, in a soaring voice, begins to sing "Be Free," a song she helped write back in 2016. The fans chant the lyrics along with her.

Then in a sudden, mesmerizing flash, Iyer lowers her voice and launches into the winding lyrics of "Pallivalu Bhadravattakam," an ancient song in India's Malayalam language, usually reserved for temple rituals in the southern state of Kerala. Next to her, a percussionist pounds out a roaring rhythm on two massive *chenda* drums, used widely in south Indian folk music. With the syncopating electronic beat still trilling over the speakers, Iyer finishes the Malayalam verse and effortlessly slips back into the English chorus of "Be Free." The audience explodes into cheers.

For the past three years, this has been Iyer's stock-in-trade: the seamless binding of Eastern and Western worlds, stitched with a beat. Her inventive mashups of baroque Indian songs and sparkly American pop covers elevated her into the consciousness of the internet, and she's now making a bid to translate that into live audiences and original hits.

"I think a lot of people especially of the Indian diaspora abroad share the same story as me, in the sense that they love their Indian heritage and want to keep in touch with it, but at the same time they have to acclimate to their local American culture," says Iyer, BA '12. "So the music is kind of the best of both worlds."

The classically trained singer teamed up in 2015 with her boyfriend, music producer Shankar Tucker, to start a YouTube channel under the stage name Vidya Vox. What began as a quiet testing ground for mashups soon launched a phenom, garnering a following that has topped 4 million subscribers. The 30 videos they've posted to the channel have been viewed more than 365 million times.

Many of Iyer's enthusiasts started visiting her channel for covers of songs like Taylor Swift's "Blank Space" or Justin Bieber's "Sorry" that mixed in well-known Indian music and harmonies. One of her first mashups was a blend of Ellie Goulding's

"Love Me Like You Do" and the Tamil ballad "Hosanna," which has amassed 24 million views after being picked up by *Storypick.com*, a website that targets Indian-American millennials.

Their work has gained some recognition in the music industry, too. When Iyer and Tucker fused Major Lazer's "Lean On" with the Punjabi folk song "Jind Mahi," one of the creators of "Lean On," the Grammy-winning DJ Diplo, tweeted about the remix, calling it "so epic." They've also collaborated with up-and-coming South Asian pop stars, including the Sri Lankan singer Arjun and former Indian Idol contestant Devender Pal Singh. Media outlets have noticed their growing popularity as well: Last year alone, Iyer was featured by the likes of NPR, *Vogue India*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Billboard* and NBC News.

But most of the attention has come from a constituency of enthusiastic international fans, who flock to Iyer's YouTube channel as soon as new videos and songs are uploaded and leave thousands of comments in different languages, a polyglot of emojis and "I love you"s. Many comments, especially from South Asian viewers, reflect on the pair's ability to express a complex duality that's familiar to many people straddling two cultures.

"Feeling proud after seeing our southern heritage and awesome culture. Keep it up," reads one of the 17,000-plus comments on "Be Free." "Wowww!!" writes another on a different video. "Proud to see that a singer who mostly lives out of India can still sing English as well as Hindi so well."

Fascination with the L.A. artist, who mixes flowing silk saris, ornate Punjabi jackets and layers of silvery bangles into her wardrobe, has attracted more than 740,000 followers on Instagram and a million on Facebook.

Last year, Iyer and Tucker released their first album—a set of originals—and began to see Iyer's online following materialize as ecstatic fans cheered at shows from Dubai

Iyer's YouTube following has topped 4 million subscribers, and the 30 videos she's posted have been viewed more than 365 million times.

Iyer performs in November at the 60,000-seat Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi

LOVEBUG ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY





to Hong Kong and South Africa. By the end of December, she was one of India's most-Googled people of the year. And now the most-viewed video on her YouTube channel is an original song—"Be Free," with more than 55 million views. Nothing else comes close.

Iyer taps into a well of south Indian sound that hasn't been heard widely in mainstream Western culture, says Sunaina Maira, a professor of Asian American studies at the University of California, Davis, and the author of *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City*. As any diasporic community reaches for a link to its roots, "music is a very powerful medium," Maira says, "because it's creative and expressive and social." For the South Asian diaspora, the electricity generated by Iyer can be traced back to new fusion bhangra music that swept Britain's South Asian communities in the 1980s.

Iyer's younger sister, Vandana, BA '13, who takes time off from her marketing job in New York City to travel with Iyer and Tucker as a backup vocalist, was with them for a six-city tour in India last fall. She watched, stunned, from the stage as people packed giant venues in places like Bangalore and Hyderabad to sing along to her sister's music.

It fills a void, she says, for South Asian audiences who want more representation in mainstream pop culture.

"Marrying the best of these two worlds is something no one's really done in India, and no one's done it this well," she says. "You see these young girls and mothers and little children all there, screaming her name and they just seemed absolutely overjoyed."

For most of her life, Vidya Iyer's singing was more of a secretive hobby.

She started to learn Carnatic singing when she was 5 years old and living in Chennai, the southeast Indian city where

she was born. The music is a complex and challenging listen—intricate and sinewy, often made up of low, droning tones. It's an ancient art, which evolved from the Sama Veda, a series of chanted Hindu scriptures said to have laid the foundation for Indian classical music.

Iyer's grandmother, uncles and mother had been Carnatic musicians who sang at local temples, and Iyer's mother was eager to pass down the tradition to her two daughters.

When Iyer was 9, her family relocated to Virginia. One of the first things her mother did in America was to enroll the girls in private Carnatic lessons, this time at the home of D.K. Nagarajan, an Indian singing guru who lived in Potomac, Md. He drilled the basics into the Iyers, teaching them the intricacies of different *ragas*, patterns of notes that make up the framework of Carnatic music. Even the smallest vocal flourish can change a *raga*, and the specific order and rules of each *raga* had to be practiced and memorized. It can be a difficult and tedious discipline for easily distracted elementary school children; both Vidya and Vandana have memories of refusing to practice at home or bursting out into giggles during staid performances.

While trying to keep up with her Carnatic training, Vidya Iyer was also struggling to settle into life in the U.S. She had just started sixth grade when she arrived in Virginia, and remembers a disorienting few months trying to navigate her new school. When she asked her teacher for "a dustbin," her classmates snickered behind her; she'd also try to conceal the meals of *dahl* and *naan* her mother packed for her before other kids would start teasing.

"There were so many things that I ended up hiding about my Indian identity, from my food to the singing," Iyer says. "It always felt like two separate worlds: I'd go to school, and the bus driver would play Usher and the Backstreet Boys, but then coming home, I'd

“THAT WAS THE TURNING POINT, I THINK. I SAW THAT YOU DON’T HAVE TO WAIT FOR ANYONE TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE.”

be practicing Carnatic music and eating *dosa* and speaking Tamil with my mom and sister.”

That changed when Iyer came to GW for a degree in psychology. She found a blossoming South Asian community on campus. She joined the South Asian dance team GW Chamak, auditioned for the Western Indian dance competition Raas Chaos and organized Holi on the Quad as president of the GW Hindu Students Association. After friends learned she could sing, she’d often be asked to perform the Indian national anthem at events.

“I was coming from totally being petrified about sharing Indian culture to full-blown embracing it,” Iyer laughs. “Because my Indian friends knew about so many of my experiences already, it wasn’t like I had to explain myself, or be afraid of anything. But also, I’d already gone through assimilating to U.S. culture in middle school and high school, so now I could bring back some Indian culture.”

While she was at GW, a friend introduced her to Tucker, a Caucasian composer and clarinetist who was completing Fulbright research about music in India.

Tucker had put together an Indian band that performed locally and he invited the sisters to collaborate with him. In 2011, during Iyer’s junior year, the trio piled into Iyer’s City Hall dorm room to film a rendition of the south Indian song “Nee Nenaindal” for Tucker’s YouTube channel. Tucker edited and uploaded the video that night, and watched with surprise as it slowly amassed thousands of views.

Iyer says the experience stuck with her. “That was the turning point, I think. I saw that you don’t have to wait for anyone to give you a chance. You could just put out your creation on the internet, and people can watch your stuff across the globe.”

Still, she was terrified of abandoning the path she was on. Iyer finished her psychology

degree and took a job at a cardiology clinic, biding time as she studied for the med school entrance exam. But the passion to perform kept nagging her, especially as Tucker organized shows in India and toured with his band.

Iyer sought the advice of her mother and her sister, who, to her surprise, both encouraged her to pursue music. In 2013, Iyer quit her job—something she says made her “out-of-her-mind scared,” but seemed to her to be the only way to give music a real shot. She joined Tucker in Mumbai that September, where she had lined up vocal lessons in the northern Indian Hindustani tradition. She also worked with a Western vocal coach through Skype, exercising her voice for almost six hours a day. Between practice, she’d join Tucker for local performances.

Iyer briefly toyed with the idea of going into the musically driven world of Bollywood, which is anchored in Mumbai and makes up one of the largest film industries in the world. But she found Bollywood competitive and somewhat limiting for artists who wanted to write their own music. Instead, she and Tucker moved back to Virginia in 2015 with a plan to launch the Vidya Vox YouTube channel. They composed their first mashup—Sia’s “Big Girls Cry” interlaced with a popular Hindi hit called “Kabhi Jo Badal”—and shot a video of Iyer singing it at a nearby park.

Vandana was home when they were working on the video, and she was the first person to see the final product.

“I got really emotional and I was like, ‘I hope you’re ready to be famous,’” she remembers. “Three years later, I was right.”

After moving to L.A. in 2016, Iyer and Tucker began chiseling away at *Kuthu Fire*, their first EP released

independently last August. The six-song project harnesses the strength of their mashups by melding American and Indian rhythms and melodies, but also includes original writing from both musicians.

Although most songs are up-tempo dance tracks that celebrate south Indian heritage, Iyer also shares a bit of her personal story on the EP. On “Home,” she outlines the leap she took when she left Virginia, as she puts it, “for a dream of what life could be.”

Now, Iyer and Tucker are working on a full-length album that they plan to release this year. They’re also hoping to organize an American tour to bring the music to bigger audiences in the U.S., since they’ve only performed a handful of one-off shows in Dallas, Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

In their three-bedroom Silver Lake apartment, the duo has carved out a makeshift studio, where they spend their time hunched over their laptops and a tangle of mics. Most of their new work is in English, and they’ve begun collaborating with other musicians and songwriters in the L.A. area, although Tucker says they won’t abandon the Indian sounds they’ve mastered.

“We’re always kind of trying to include hints of the two musical traditions and trying to find a sweet spot ... [where] it’s not just a little bit of Indian percussion on top of a more pop beat, but we’re genuinely finding different ways of bringing cultures together,” Tucker says.

It’s a sonic space they’ve built that Iyer wishes she’d had when she was a kid—one through which she’s still exploring herself—and she hopes her music can save younger generations a piece of that angst.

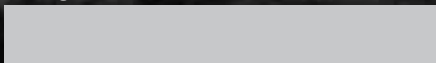
“I’m proud of where I’m from, but I also love living in America. I think there’s some serious power in finding that kind of balance and being able to show off your culture, because it makes you go, ‘This is who I am, take it or leave it.’” **EW**



In this excerpt from his new book, *Becoming Myself: A Psychiatrist's Memoir*, one of the most esteemed living interpreters of the human condition recalls the uncomfortable relationship he shared with his parents and the forgivenesses never gifted, with which he still wrestles in his 80s.

CIRCLING BACK

// By IRVIN D. YALOM, BA '52



I have a patient, Rose, who lately had been talking mostly about her relationship with her adolescent daughter, her only child. Rose was close to giving up on her daughter, who had enthusiasm only for alcohol, sex, and the company of other dissipated teenagers.

In the past Rose had explored her own failings as a mother and wife, her many infidelities, her abandoning the family several years ago for another man and then returning a couple of years later when the affair had run its course. Rose had been a heavy smoker and had developed crippling advanced emphysema, but, even so, she had for the past several years tried hard to atone for her behavior and devoted herself anew to her daughter. Yet nothing worked. I strongly advocated family therapy, but the daughter refused, and now Rose had reached her breaking point: every coughing fit and every visit to her pulmonary doctor reminded her that her days were limited. She wanted only relief: “I want her gone,” she told me. She was counting the days until her daughter would graduate from high school and leave home—for college, a job, anything. She no longer cared which path her daughter would take. Over and again she whispered to herself and to me: “I want her gone.”

I do all I can in my practice to bring families together, to heal rifts between siblings and between children and parents. But I had grown fatigued in my work with Rose and lost all hope for this family. In past sessions I had tried to anticipate her future if she cut her daughter off. Would she not feel guilty and lonely? But that was all to no avail, and now time was running out: I knew that Rose did not have long to live. After referring her daughter to an excellent therapist, I now attended only to Rose and felt entirely on her side. More than once she said, “Three more months till she graduates from high school. And then she is out. I want her gone. I want her gone.” I began to hope she would get her wish.

As I took my bicycle ride later that day, I silently repeated Rose’s words—“I want her gone. I want her gone”—and before long I was thinking of my mother, seeing the world through her eyes, perhaps for the very first time. I imagined her thinking and saying similar words about me. And now that I thought about it, I recalled no maternal dirges when I finally and permanently left home for medical school in Boston. I recalled the farewell scene: my mother on the front step of the house waving goodbye as I drove away in my fully packed Chevrolet, and then, when I vanished from view, stepping inside. I imagine her closing the front door and exhaling deeply. Then, two or three minutes later, she stands erect, smiles broadly, and invites my father to join her in a jubilant “Hava Nagila” dance.

Yes, my mother had good reason to feel relieved when I, at 22, left home for good. I was a disturber of the peace. She never had a positive word for me, and I returned the favor. As I coast down a long hill on my bicycle, my mind drifts back to the night when I was 14 and my father, then age 46, awoke in the night with severe chest pain. In those days, doctors made home visits, and my mother quickly called our family doctor, Dr. Manchester. In the quiet of the night, we three—my father, my mother, and I—waited anxiously for the doctor to arrive. (My sister, Jean, seven years older, had already left home for college.) Whenever my mother was distraught, she reverted to primitive thinking: if something bad happened, there must be someone to blame. And that someone was me. More than once that evening, as my father writhed with pain, she screamed at me, “You—you killed him!” She let me know that my unruliness, my disrespect, my disruption of the household—all of this—had done him in.

Years later, when on the analytic couch, my description of this event resulted in a rare, momentary outburst of tenderness from Olive Smith, my ultraorthodox psychoanalyst. She clucked her tongue, tsk, tsk, leaned toward me, and said, “How awful. How terrible

that must have been for you.” She was a rigid training analyst in a rigid institute that valued interpretation as the singular effective action of the analyst. Of her thoughtful, dense, and carefully worded interpretations, I remember not a one. But her reaching out to me at that time, in that warm manner—that I cherish even now, almost 60 years later.

“You killed him, you killed him.” I can still hear my mother’s shrill voice. I remember cowering, paralyzed with fear and with fury. I wanted to scream back, “He’s not dead! Shut up, you idiot.” She kept wiping my father’s brow and kissing his head as I sat on the floor curled up in a corner until, finally, finally, about 3 a.m., I heard Dr. Manchester’s big Buick crunching the autumn leaves in the street and I flew downstairs, three steps at a time, to open the door. I liked Dr. Manchester very much, and the familiar sight of his large round smiling face dissolved my panic. He put his hand on my head, tousled my hair, reassured my mother, gave my father an injection (probably morphine), held his stethoscope to my father’s chest, and then let me listen as he said, “See, Sonny, it’s ticking away, strong and regular as a clock. Not to worry. He’s going to be all right.”

That night I witnessed my father drawing close to death, felt, as never before, my mother’s volcanic rage, and made a self-protective decision to shut the door on her. I had to get out of this family. For the next two to three years I barely spoke to her—we lived like strangers in the same house. And, most of all, I recall my deep, expansive relief at Dr. Manchester’s entrance into our home. No one had ever given me such a gift. Then and there I decided to be like him. I would be a doctor and pass on to others the comfort he had offered me.

My father gradually recovered, and though he had chest pain thereafter with almost any exertion, even walking a single block, and immediately reached for his nitroglycerin and swallowed a tablet, he lived another 23 years. My father was a gentle, generous man whose only fault, I believed, was his lack of courage in standing up to my mother. My relationship with my mother was an open sore all my life, and yet, paradoxically, it is *her* image that passes through my mind almost every day. I see her face: she is never at peace, never smiling, never happy. She was an intelligent woman, and though she worked hard every day of her life, she was entirely unfulfilled and rarely uttered a pleasant, positive thought. But today, on my bicycle rides, I think about her in a different way: I think of how little pleasure I must have given her while we lived together. I am grateful I became a kinder son in later years.

From time to time I reread Charles Dickens, who has always had a central place in my pantheon of writers. Recently an extraordinary phrase in *A Tale of Two Cities* caught my eye: “*For, as I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in a circle nearer and nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind of smoothings and preparings of the way. My heart is touched now by many remembrances that had long fallen asleep ...*”

That passage moves me tremendously: as I indeed draw closer to the end, I, too, find myself circling more and more to the beginning. My clients’ memories more often trigger my own, my work on their future calls upon and disturbs my past, and I find myself reconsidering my own story. My memory of early childhood has always been fragmented, probably, I’ve always believed, because of my early unhappiness and the squalor in which we lived. Now, as I move into my 80s, more and more images from early life intrude upon my thoughts. The drunks sleeping in our vestibule covered with vomit. My loneliness and isolation. The roaches and the rats. My red-faced barber calling me “Jew Boy.” My mysterious, tormenting and unfulfilled sexual throbblings as a teenager. Out of place.

Always out of place—the only white kid in a black neighborhood, the only Jew in a Christian world.

Yes, the past is drawing me in and I know what “smoothings” mean. Now, more than ever before, I imagine my dead parents watching and taking great pride and pleasure in seeing me speak before a crowd. At the time my father died, I had written only a few articles, technical pieces in medical journals that he couldn’t understand. My mother lived 25 years longer and, though her poor grasp of English, and, later, her blindness, made it impossible for her to read my books, she kept them stacked by her chair and stroked them and clucked over them to visitors in her retirement home. So much is incomplete between my parents and me. There are so many things we never discussed about our life together, about the tension and unhappiness in our family, about my world and their world. When I think of their lives, picture them arriving at Ellis Island, penniless, without an education, without a word of English, my eyes tear up. I want to tell them, “I know what you went through. I know how hard it was. I know what you did for me. Please forgive me for being so ashamed of you.”

Looking back at my life from my 80s is daunting and sometimes lonely. My memory is unreliable, and there are so few living witnesses to my early life. My sister, seven years older, has just died, and most of my old friends and acquaintances are gone, too.

When I turned 80, a few unexpected voices from the past awakened some memories. First there was Ursula Tomkins, who found me via my webpage. I had not thought of her since we attended Gage Elementary School together in Washington, DC. Her email read, “Happy 80th birthday, Irvin. I’ve read and enjoyed two of your books and asked our Atlanta library to get some of the others. I remember you from Miss Fernald’s fourth grade class. I don’t know if you remember me—I was pleasingly plump with red frizzy hair and you were a beautiful boy with coal-black hair!”

So Ursula, whom I remembered well, thought I was a beautiful boy with coal black hair! Me? Beautiful? If only I had known! Never, not for a moment, had I ever thought of myself as a beautiful boy. I was shy, nerdy, lacking in self-confidence, and never imagined that anyone found me attractive. Oh, Ursula, bless you. Bless you for telling me I was beautiful. But, why, oh why, didn’t you speak up earlier? It might have changed my entire childhood!

And then, two years ago, there was a phone message from the deep past that began: “THIS IS JERRY, your old chess buddy!” Even though I had not heard his voice in 70 years, I recognized it immediately. It was Jerry Friedlander, whose father owned a grocery store on Seaton and North Capitol Streets, just a block from my father’s store. In his message he told me that his granddaughter, in a clinical psychology course, was reading one of my books. He remembered that we had played together regularly for two years when I was 12 and he 14, a time I remember only as a wasteland of insecurity and self-doubt. Since I remembered so very little from those years, I jumped at the opportunity for feedback and pumped Jerry for any impressions he had of me (after, of course, sharing my impressions of him).

“You were a nice guy,” he said. “Very gentle. I remember that in all our times together we never had an argument.”

“Give me more,” I said greedily. “I’ve such hazy images from then.”

“You played around some but, for the most part, you were really serious and scholarly. In fact I’d say *very* scholarly. Whenever I came over to your place, your head was buried in a book—oh yeah, that I remember well—Irv and his books. And always reading hard stuff and good literature—way over my head. No comic books for you.”

That was only partly true—in fact, I had been a major aficionado of Captain Marvel,

Batman and Green Hornet. (Not Superman, though: his invulnerability drained all suspense from his adventures.) Jerry's words reminded me that during those years I often bought used books from a bookstore on Seventh Street just a block from the library. As I reminisced, an image of a large, rust-colored, arcane book on astronomy drifted into view. No matter that I couldn't understand much of the optics discussed: that book fit another agenda entirely—I left it around in plain sight for my sister's attractive girlfriends to find, hoping to awe them with my precociousness. Their pats on the head or occasional hugs or kisses were quite delicious. I hadn't known that Jerry noticed the book too—he had been an unintended target hit by friendly fire.

Jerry told me that I generally won our chess games, but that I was not a gracious loser: at the end of one marathon game, which he had won in a hard-fought endgame, I pouted and insisted that he had to play my father. And so he did. He came to my home the next Sunday and beat my father as well, though he was certain my father had let him win.

This anecdote staggered me. I had a good, if distant, relationship with my father, but I cannot imagine having looked to him to avenge my loss. My recollection was that he taught me to play chess, but by the time I was about 11 I was beating him routinely and looking around for stronger opponents, especially his brother, my uncle Abe.

I always had an unstated grievance toward my father—that he never, even once, stood up to my mother. In all the years that my mother disparaged and criticized me, my father never disagreed with her. He never once took my side. I was disappointed by his passivity, his unmanliness. So I was puzzled: How could I have called upon him to redeem my failure with Jerry? Perhaps my memory erred. Perhaps I was more proud of him than I had thought.

That possibility gained credence as Jerry proceeded to describe his own life odyssey. His father had not been a successful businessman, and, on three occasions, business failures had forced the family to move, each time downward, to less comfortable quarters. Moreover, Jerry had to work after school and during summers. I realized that I was far luckier: though I often worked in my father's store, it was never a requirement but always for my own pleasure—I felt grown-up waiting on customers, adding their bills, collecting money and giving them change. And Jerry had worked summers, whereas my parents had sent me to two-month summer camps. I had taken my privileges for granted, but my conversation with Jerry made it clear that my father had done many things right. Obviously he had been a diligent, intelligent businessman. It was his (and my mother's) hard work and business acumen that had made my life easier and my education possible.

After I hung up with Jerry, other forgotten memories of my father seeped in. One rainy evening when the store had been crowded with customers, a huge, menacing man had grabbed a case of liquor and run out into the street. Without hesitation, my father had taken off in pursuit, leaving my mother and me alone in a store packed with customers. Fifteen minutes later my father returned, carrying the case of liquor—the thief had tired in two or three blocks, dropped his booty, and taken off. It was a gutsy thing for my father to have done. I'm not sure I would have been up to the chase. I *must* have been proud of him—how could I not have been? But, strangely, I hadn't let myself remember. Had I ever sat down and considered, truly considered, what his life had been like?

I know that my father started work at 5 in the morning, buying produce from the Washington, D.C., southeast produce market, and that he closed the store at 10 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on Friday and Saturday. His only day off was Sunday. I occasionally accompanied him to the produce market, and it was hard, grueling work.

EXCERPT

Yet I never heard him complain. I remember talking with a man I called “Uncle Sam,” my father’s best friend even in childhood back in Russia (I referred to everyone in the circle who had emigrated together from Cielz, their shtetl in Russia, as uncle or aunt). Sam had told me about my father sitting for hours in the tiny cold attic of his house and writing poetry. But all that ended when he was conscripted into the Russian army as a teenager in World War I to help build railroad tracks. After the war, he came to the United States with the help of his older brother, Meyer, who had emigrated earlier and opened a small grocery store on Volta Street in Georgetown. His sister Hannah and his younger brother, Abe, followed. Abe came alone in 1937 and planned to bring his family over shortly, but it was too late: the Nazis killed everyone left behind, including my father’s older sister and her two children and his brother Abe’s wife and four children. But, of all this, my father’s lips were sealed; never once did he speak to me of the Holocaust, or, for that matter, of anything else from the old country. His poetry, too, was a thing of the past. I never saw him write. I never saw him read a book. I never saw him read anything but the daily Jewish newspaper, which he would grasp as soon as it arrived and scan. I realize only now that he was looking for any information it might hold about his family and friends. Only once did he allude to the Holocaust at all. When I was about 20, he and I went out to lunch together, just the two of us. This was rare: even though he’d sold the store by this time, it was still hard to pry him away from my mother. He never initiated a conversation. He never searched me out. Maybe he was uncomfortable with me, though he wasn’t at all shy or inhibited with his clan of men—I enjoyed seeing him laugh with them and tell jokes as they played pinochle. Perhaps we failed one another: he never inquired about my life or my work, and I never told him that I loved him. Our lunch discussion remains clear in my mind. We spoke together as adults for an hour and it was quite wonderful. I recall asking him if he believed in God, and he replied, “After the Shoah, how can anyone believe in God?”

I know that it’s now time, past time, to forgive him for his silence, for being an immigrant, for his lack of education and his inattention to the trivial disappointments encountered by his only son. It’s time to put an end to my embarrassment at his ignorance and time to remember his handsome face, his gentleness, his graceful interactions with his friends, his melodious voice singing the Yiddish songs he learned as a child in the shtetl, his laughter as he played pinochle with his brother and friends, his graceful sidestroke as he swam at Bay Ridge beach, and his loving relationship with his sister Hannah, the aunt I most adored. 📖

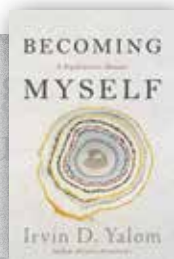
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Irvin Yalom with his mother and sister, Jean, circa 1934.



Irvin Yalom's parents, circa 1930.



Irvin D. Yalom, BA '52, has been seeing patients for more than 60 years and is the author of 14 books, ranging from foundational texts on the practices of existential psychotherapy and group therapy to international best-selling nonfiction and novels. A professor emeritus of psychiatry at Stanford University, Yalom lives in Palo Alto, Calif., with his wife, Marilyn, an author, historian and senior scholar at Stanford.



THE
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ISSUE



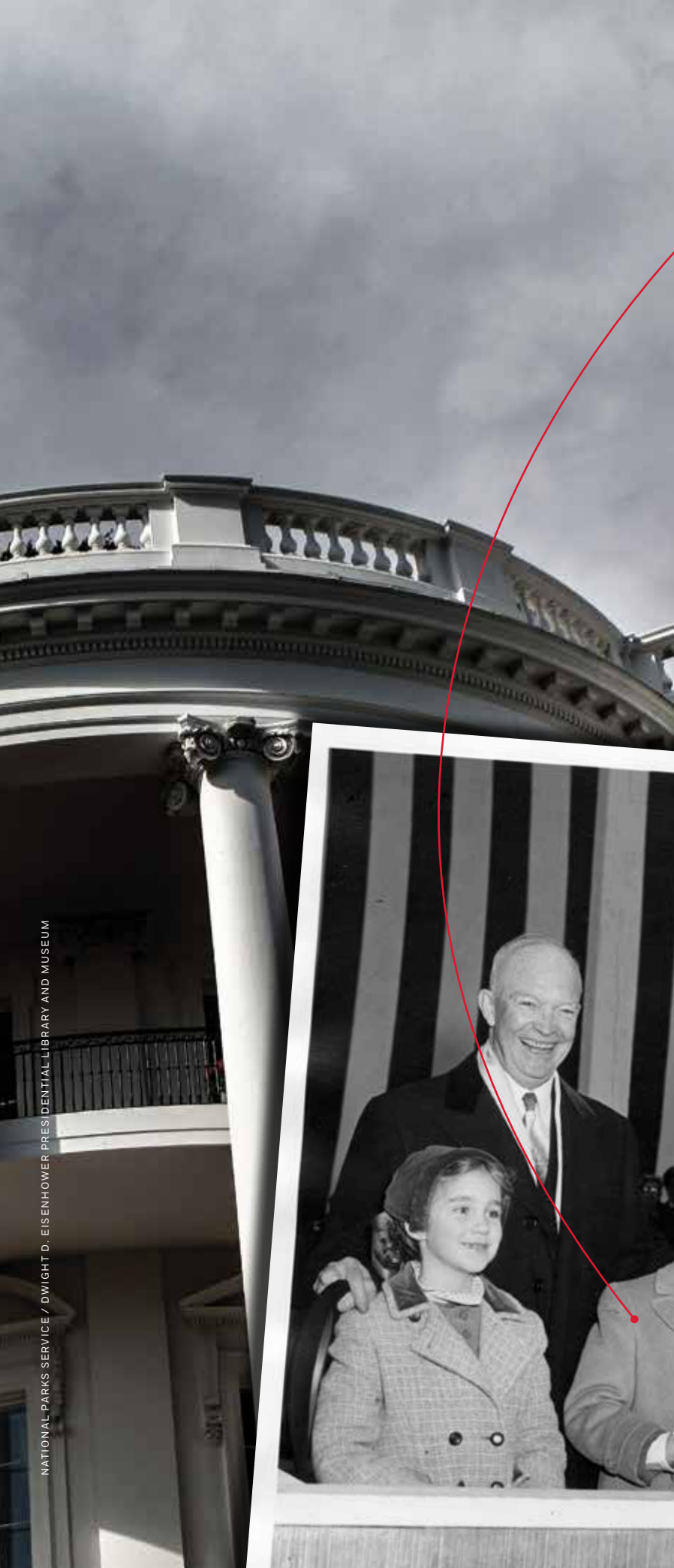
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David Eisenhower, JD '76, spent his formative years in the orbit of two presidents: his grandfather and his father-in-law. He tells us what he learned.

THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

// By **MATTHEW STOSS**





Dwight Eisenhower is **DAVID EISENHOWER's** grandfather and Richard Nixon is his father-in-law. The son of Brig. Gen. John Eisenhower, **David**, today a 69-year-old professor and historian at the University of Pennsylvania, spent the first half of his life around the U.S. presidency—he lived in the White House while attending law school at GW—and some of the most powerful and influential people of the 20th century.

David has authored two books about his grandfather, *Eisenhower at War 1943–1945* and *Going Home to Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961–1969*, and he has studied power and those who wield it. In January, he talked about power and what he's learned living so close to it. (This interview was edited for space and clarity.)



David Eisenhower looks at his future wife, Julie Nixon—who is sitting in front of her father, then-Vice President Richard Nixon—during President Dwight Eisenhower's 1957 inauguration.

How has your life, your relationships, your family, your friends influenced how you view power? What is your conception of it?

It gave me an idea of how people in those positions think. One of the things I feel I can do when I look at the Eisenhower papers, for instance, is I can hear my grandfather and I can think with him. When I see the Nixon papers, I can do the same thing. You just learn to think along and you learn what matters to powerful people. The other thing is, it gives you—and this has shaped my life—it gives you a powerful, insatiable curiosity. That is about as succinctly as I can put the impact that that had. The second experience, 1969 to '74, really turned me into a historian.

You said you learned what matters to powerful people. Can you expound? What did you learn about what matters to powerful people?

In the case of Nixon, I would say practically everything he did as president revolved around a central question, and that was managing and redeeming the Vietnam War.

Everything—I mean everything. If you're talking [Department of Health, Education and Welfare] and [Health and Human Services] policy, it mattered to

him as it bore on that central question. I think that's the way leaders think. I certainly observed that in Nixon. I think leadership is mission-oriented, and that's something that I absorbed with him.

It's something I feel I can intuit when I'm reading other histories.

I never felt growing up as a kid that anything we were experiencing in the White House was in any way permanent, so I felt that it was special and I knew that I was experiencing something unique for a while...

When I went to write about my grandfather—which was a major undertaking—essentially, I was able to identify a similar lifelong focus beyond 1943 that shaped practically everything he did as a leader afterward. I applied what I understood about Nixon to Eisenhower, and I found that it worked. That may not sound dramatic, but I think coming to a conclusion like that about a leader or about someone in power is half or three-quarters of understanding what they're doing.

As a kid, were you aware of other kids that didn't have grandfathers that commanded the effort to beat Hitler? How self-aware were you?

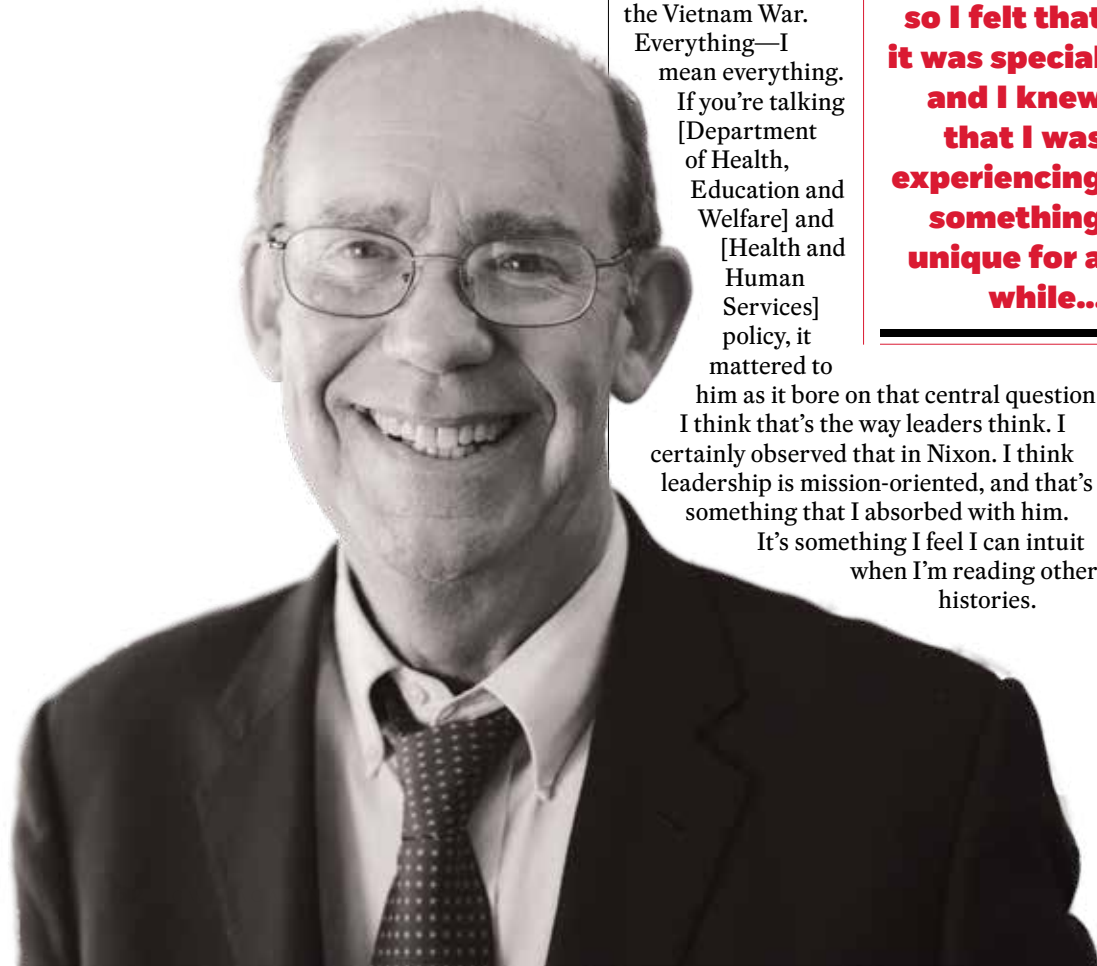
I was aware of, yes, my grandfather is special, but the reason I was aware of that is that we were an Army family, and the Army people, they are not wealthy. In fact, they're not even middle class. We lived on an Army base and I understood my grandfather was sort of a super Army officer. But we were Army kids, and what was drilled into us at a very early age is that the Army consisted of a series of duty stations, and the White House was a duty station, which meant that that ended and you went on to something else.

I never felt growing up as a kid that anything we were experiencing in the White House was in any way permanent, so I felt that it was special and I knew that I was experiencing something unique for a while and I enjoyed sharing it with friends to the extent that I could. I recognized that my grandfather, for one reason or another, had been really singled out in a big way from his Army colleagues. He was on a very special trajectory.

I think I was conscious as a kid, for some reason, that I was in the middle of a major political national drama. I was at the White House but I always felt a certain detachment from it, meaning, at some level, I was enjoying it and observing it as well as being part of it.

When I was growing up, my dad was a TV sports reporter, and when he would go to my school events—he was on TV and he would cover Super Bowls and things like that—and all of my friends and their parents would want to talk to him about it, and it would annoy me because I just wanted to hang out with my dad. At any point in your life, did—

I can remember one time that did happen to me. I got sent to prep school [in New Hampshire] in the fall of 1962 and I did not want to go. Phillips Exeter Academy is a very tough grind, and right away, it was very hard and I was very homesick. My grandfather was on a political tour. This was the fall



of the off-year elections in 1962; he was campaigning across the country and he came to southern New England to campaign for whoever was running for, I believe, Senate in New Hampshire, and that brought him right to campus. So I was going to have time with him. He was a connection to home and he was overwhelmed by, as you can imagine, school, staff, students. The entire student body practically followed him around and I couldn't get a word in edgewise, and that bothered me because I was very homesick.

That's the only time I can really think of that happening. I was very rarely around friends and my grandfather simultaneously. That might set you and me slightly apart. My grandfather was not very accessible during that period. The way I shared my experience with friends would be to have them as guests of the White House, swim in the pool or watch movies or play games on the third floor or things like that. I don't think very many of them actually met my grandfather. He was always off doing something else. He slipped into a few things that I did in Gettysburg—Little League games and so forth. He would slip in occasionally, but he would sit in the car from a distance.

Can you separate him as president/general and grandfather? Or are they conflated in your mind?

They were very conflated—and that was a personality thing. What I knew from being around him was he was hard to capture. He was a dynamo. He was white hot. He was so energetic, but forbidding in many ways. He worked very hard at being a friend and caring and things like that, and I appreciated that, but I was always aware of this: I didn't know anyone like him. That does have to do with his station.

It's probably fair to say you grew up with a certain level of privilege, which, in some cases, can lead to arrogance. Did you ever think you were better than anyone?

I don't think I think I'm better than someone or not, but let me just imagine that I'm not arrogant, and I think I can explain why that is.

First of all, we were all taught growing up that the White House was a temporary duty station, and second, most of my experience—most of it by far—is after the presidency. And in those periods, we felt really sort of cast out and we felt vulnerable, and I can't imagine a better way to come to Earth than to go from Washington, D.C., and the White House to rural Pennsylvania—which is where we went in 1959—and then set loose to make your way with no expectation of ever experiencing anything special again in the

future. I actually came to prefer it. I loved the town of Gettysburg. I love where I grew up. I like what I do. I don't miss the White House or any of that at all. And I think what other people would call a normal way of life is something that I've always really valued and I have no real issues with it.

I can see how someone who is born into this and then they never really depart it may be arrogant, but I wouldn't even venture to say or to call anyone arrogant that I happen to know in that position.

Today, Eisenhower is consistently ranked among the top presidents. You go from Eisenhower to Nixon, who resigns. These are completely different experiences with the same office. Did Nixon resigning—

It's actually not that different of a feeling, to be honest.

How so?

Of course, I'm a very different age. But I never felt things were comfortable in the Eisenhower years. So the discomfort in the Nixon years, well, it just wasn't that different.

What was different was post-January of '73 when the Watergate phase began. It felt like 1960. We were leaving office now and it was embarrassing in many ways. It was agonizing. I felt badly for the Nixon family, etcetera, but it was a transition and transitions are tough. The '60-'61 transition was tough. So I don't see them as starkly different.

The one thing that would be different would be the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was really a painful chapter. It was difficult. The Nixon presidency was never serene. It couldn't be because everything was given over to resolving that conflict. This was coming up at the end of the Eisenhower years. The very last conversation that I can remember in the White House as a 12-year-old was our final dinner in the family dining room on the first floor of the White House. I was seated close to my Uncle Milton [Eisenhower] and my grandfather who were talking about the Indo-China War and Eisenhower's forthcoming meeting with President-elect Kennedy to talk about this situation, and I can remember thinking as a 12-year-old: This does not sound good and this is something that's going to concern us for a while. And by the time Nixon takes office in 1969, this is a very serious situation.

I never felt that this was something that would ever be resolved in a sunny way or that President Nixon or anybody who had anything to do with the resolution of the Vietnam War ever felt that this was a story that would have a happy ending. I felt that Nixon would do a good job with it and that we would come out of the situation better, but I

never felt that it would be in any way happy.

I think what I'm saying here is, looking back on it, you would think there would be a big discontinuity between the two presidents, but I really don't see it that way. It's not that stark.

Different ages, different presidencies—how did Nixon influence your view of power?


What I learned around Eisenhower is the significance of [World War II]. The thing that was around throughout Gettysburg and in Washington was the weight of the war. I can remember being in a hospital in Washington, D.C., and seeing people completely disfigured by World War II. We were visited by these heads of state, and as grandchildren, we were all exposed to them and they were all war-significant figures, like Queen Elizabeth or Harold Macmillan, Churchill or Nikita Khrushchev.

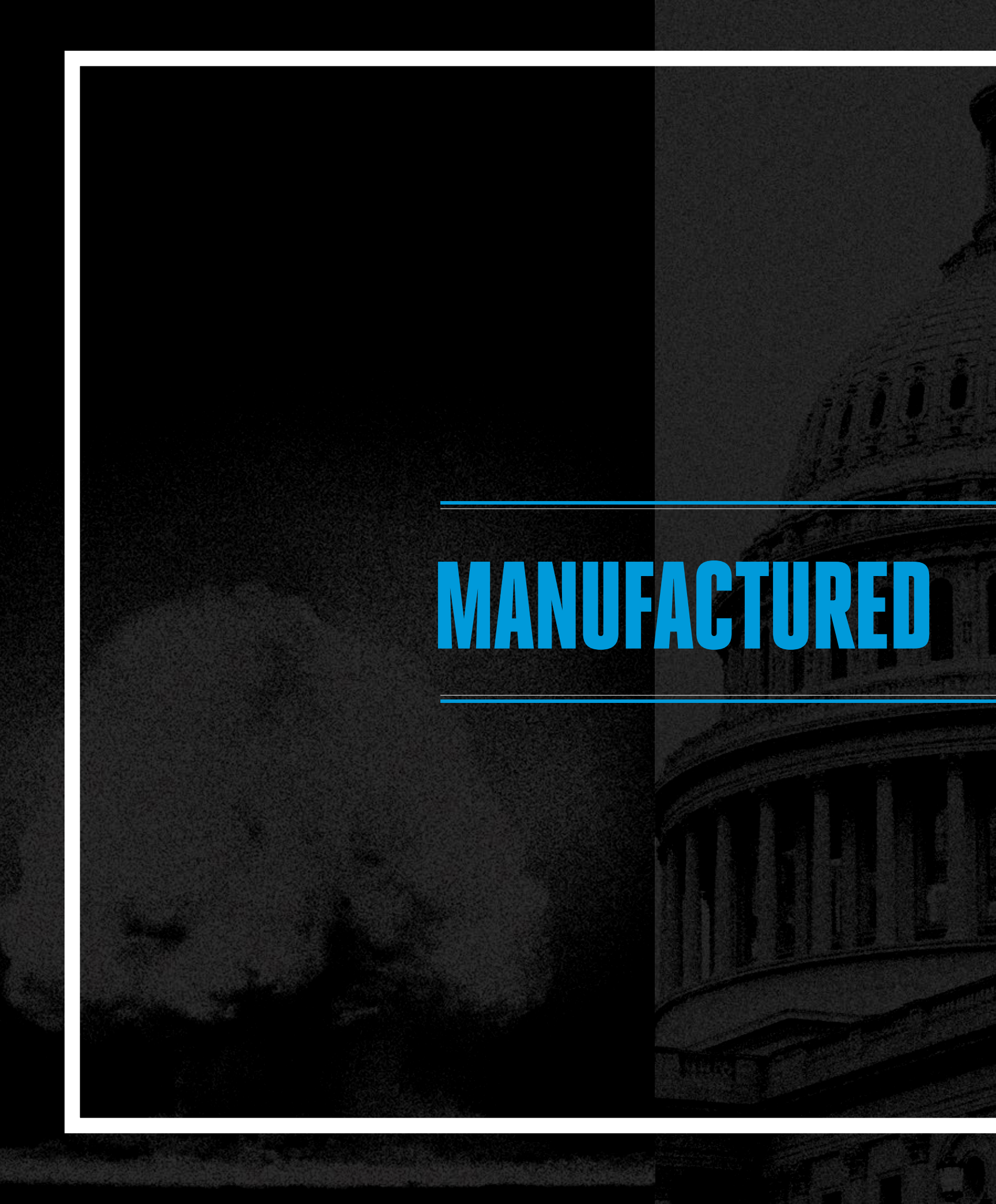
My takeaway from Nixon—I saw decisions being made. We actually discussed decisions being made, over dinner. I got a much clearer look at the way power worked in that situation. I would say that I apply those lessons to see how they work elsewhere. Again, what I come back to is that the presidency is a very broad responsibility, and if you approach it that way, I don't think you can accomplish anything in the White House. What presidents do is, they successively take up major issues, and that is what the Nixon White House was essentially all about.

Has this ever felt annoying to you? I'm sure you've answered these types of questions for your entire life, but is it a burden?

No, and I think that I probably encounter this less than you'd expect because of the way my university career has unfolded. I don't feel burdened by it. I think that what I had at a young age—actually, for the first 26 years of my life—was an amazing treasure trove of experiences which have kindled an interest in history and a desire to know and learn.

I've noticed you refer to your grandfather as "Eisenhower."

I do, yeah. I wrote about him. I also feel a little old to call him "Granddad" now. "Granddad" would be misunderstood. I'm now a granddad myself. But I came to know him that way. When I was writing *Eisenhower at War*, I came to know him as "Eisenhower"—and I teach the presidency at University of Pennsylvania. So that's just sort of a habit. There is a human being there and I remember him very vividly, and he was somebody who lived the role. He was the role. There's not really a private Eisenhower as far as I'm concerned. 



MANUFACTURED



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 JURISPRUDENCE

**It's
Hard
to Judge**



A Manhattan Project physicist recalls
the world's first detonation of a
nuclear weapon.

// By DANNY FREEDMAN, BA '01

FIRST LIGHT

“I DON’T BELIEVE I ANTICIPATED THE FAMOUS MUSHROOM-CLOUD EFFECT. IT HAD AN APPEARANCE OF NOTHING THAT I’D EVER SEEN BEFORE IN MY LIFE. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT ANYBODY HAD EVER SEEN ONE.”

→ On a summer morning in 1945, a fireball erupted and rode a column of white-hot violence into the New Mexico dawn, twisting and folding into itself as it climbed tens of thousands of feet. The blast vaporized a 100-foot steel tower and punched a dent in the earth hundreds of feet across, fusing the desert surface into a glassy, jade-like glaze. More than five miles away, the blast threw a man off his feet; 10 miles away, it felt on the skin like an oven door had been opened. Windows shattered more than a hundred miles away and the explosion was visible from twice that distance.

The official line was that there’d been an explosion at a remote military munitions cache. But Geoffrey Chew, BS ’43, was one of a handful who knew better.

He and the others sitting up in the predawn hours, their eyes trained on the Trinity test site midway between Albuquerque and Las Cruces, had seen the very first glimpse of a nuclear weapon. A few weeks later, Japan—and the world—got the second.

Chew was 21 and had been a physicist on the Manhattan Project for a year and a half. Scientists at the Los Alamos outpost were given white badges that carried unfettered access to the goings-on around the lab, he says. So while he wasn’t directly involved in the Trinity test and wasn’t lying in the dirt holding welder’s goggles to his eyes, he did watch the explosion from a mountain hundred miles or so away, where he’d camped the night before with labmates Harold Argo and his wife, Mary Langs Argo.

All three were working under Hungarian-American physicist Edward Teller, who was focused not on the fission bomb, like those that would be dropped on Japan, but on creating a weapon powered by fusion, the hydrogen bomb—a device so powerful that it requires a regular atomic bomb just to light its fuse.

(Both Argos also were GW alumni, and had passed through ahead of Chew. And Teller had taught at GW in the ’30s, having been recruited there by his friend George Gamow, the Russian-born physicist renowned for advancing the Big Bang model of the universe, among other things. Chew had been a student of Gamow’s, who recommended him to Teller.)

The bomb that went off at 5:29 that morning was later estimated to carry the force of 21,000 tons of TNT—four times what had been predicted. By comparison, that was several thousand tons more than the attack on Hiroshima and roughly the same as Nagasaki. It seems nobody was fully certain whether the test would work, and if it did, what they’d see.

“There was conjecture—not taken very seriously, but people worried about it a little bit—that the atmosphere might have been ignited by this event,” Chew, now 93 and an emeritus professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley, says with a belly laugh. “But it wasn’t. The computations were made, and there didn’t seem to be any chance that the atmosphere would actually get ignited. But ... it was impressive as, you see, there had never been anything like this happening in the history of mankind.”

Chew moved on in 1946 to the University of Chicago, ending his work on the H-bomb. He earned a doctorate under Nobel Laureate Enrico Fermi, whom he knew from Los Alamos, before gaining renown himself in the 1960s as a Berkeley theoretical particle physicist.

In this edited transcript, Chew recalls for *GW Magazine* the scene from July 16, 1945, when the first nuclear bomb detonated in the desert.

I heard all about it as preparations were being made, and I knew exactly when it was going to happen and where it was going to happen. Together, with a couple of other colleagues who also had white badges, we decided to go on the night before the test to the top of a mountain that was about a hundred miles from the location of the test.

I can’t remember the name of the mountain. It was to the north of Alamogordo, I guess. It was a mountain that was frequently used by tourists to get beautiful views of the whole surrounding area, and it had at the top a region where picnickers could have nice lunches and so on.

We drove there the night before the test. We went to bed in our sleeping bags, but got up an hour before the scheduled time of the test and found ourselves surrounded by other white-badge members of the lab who were not directly involved in the test, but who also knew exactly when and where it was going to take place.

So it was quite a little local community at the top of the mountain there. And among the people there were security guards



8.1 SEC.

who came up and checked to be sure that everybody up there had a white badge.

So there we were. And everybody got into position looking in the right direction. And the scheduled time came and passed, and nothing happened. We supposed that the test had been a failure.

It was a real possibility. We waited for maybe half an hour and then decided that, "OK, it was a failure," and we started putting our sleeping bags together. And I remember that my back happened to be facing north, which was opposite to the direction. And at approximately one hour after the originally



11.5 SEC.

scheduled time, everything lit up.

So of course I turned around, and then I saw this sight which became so famous of the mushroom cloud rising up. And it was, of course, stupefying.

I don't believe I anticipated the famous mushroom-cloud effect. It had an appearance of nothing that I'd ever seen before in my life. That was the first time that anybody had ever seen one.

And, well, it was clear to us just looking at this that the test had been successful. There was no question about it. So we sat around and discussed the tremendous historical



14.8 SEC.

significance of what we just witnessed, recognizing that it was going to have a big influence in world affairs, I can remember that. And we were talking back and forth about the kind of effect it would have.

I remember in the middle of the discussion, the sound finally reached us. It took probably 10 minutes or so, something like that.

It was a big sound, there was no question about it. A big boom. I don't think the quality of the sound by itself was different from what you would get from any explosion. But of course, it was remarkable. The magnitude



1,000 METERS

18.1 SEC.

of the sound and knowing [that we were a hundred miles away from the site of the test] ... that was impressive, I remember.

Oh wow. Oh, I will never forget that.

There were various opinions in the group that was talking about it, and everybody agreed that it was going to have a major impact on the course of human events. But some people thought it would be bad, and other people were just content to say it would be a big impact. Nobody could figure out, of course, what actually transpired after that.

I guess eventually the decision had to be made by Truman as to whether or not

the atomic bomb would be used in the war against Japan, and the scientific community split up. There were a lot of scientists who thought it was a mistake to use the bomb at all. And at the time of the test, I remember that was already growing, that idea that this was not perhaps a good thing for humanity to have a weapon like this.

What did I think? Well, I was very young still. I guess I was still so interested in whether the effort at Los Alamos was going to succeed or not, I didn't really get over that at the time that I was at Los Alamos. No, I think at the actual time of the test, I was still

so young that I didn't take my own opinion very seriously somehow. But I was aware that there were other scientists at the lab who had reservations about whether it was a good idea to go ahead and make this test.

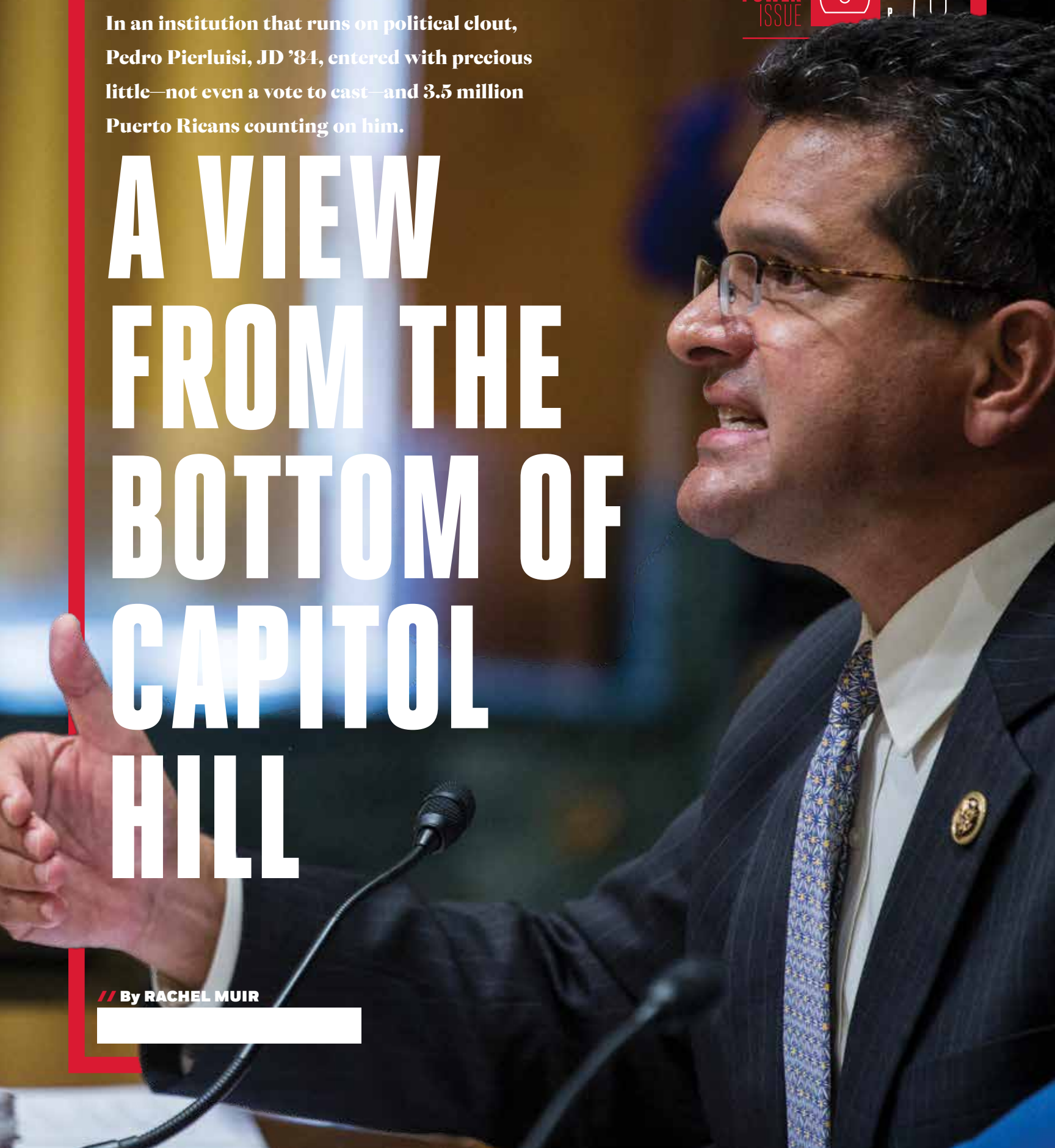
I was such a junior: I was only 19 years old when I arrived at Los Alamos, and I was 21 when the test was made. And I was in so much awe still—I just had so much respect for the scientists who were running the place. My role was so minor in the project that I kind of thought, you know, that having an opinion was not meaningful for me at that point. I had to grow up a bit more. **GM**



In an institution that runs on political clout, Pedro Pierluisi, JD '84, entered with precious little—not even a vote to cast—and 3.5 million Puerto Ricans counting on him.

A VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM OF CAPITOL HILL

// By RACHEL MUIR



I KNEW THAT I'D HAVE TO USE MY ADVOCACY AND NEGOTIATING SKILLS TO THE UTMOST, SINCE I DIDN'T HAVE A VOTE.

➔ Of the 441 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, only six do not have the right to vote. For eight years, until January 2017, Pedro Pierluisi, JD '84, was one of them.

Pierluisi served as Puerto Rico's resident commissioner, the sole position in Congress that represents the territory and, at the time, its roughly 3.5 million people.

Like the lone congressional delegates that represent the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands, Pierluisi could vote in committee, sponsor and cosponsor legislation, offer amendments and make speeches on the House floor—but he couldn't vote on legislation in the full House. And he had no counterpart to advocate for Puerto Rico in the Senate.

"It limits you," he says. And he wanted the job, in part, to take a shot at removing those limits.

"I ran for office because I wanted to make progress on changing the status of Puerto Rico," says Pierluisi, who caucused with the Democrats during his two four-year terms and served as the territory's attorney general before being elected to Congress in 2008.

"The lack of political rights for American citizens residing in Puerto Rico affects our quality of life significantly," he says. "I felt it was important to try to make a difference, understanding that it's a tough battle."

And he knew what he was getting into. While in law school at GW, Pierluisi served as an intern in then-Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Rio's office, where he got to see firsthand the day-to-day challenges.

"I knew that I'd have to use my advocacy and negotiating skills to the utmost, since I didn't have a vote," he says.

For Pierluisi, a crucial step was forging strong relationships with congressional

leadership. He also became active in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and on the board of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, a nonprofit focused on providing leadership opportunities to young Latinos.

He drew on partnerships with what he calls Puerto Rico's "natural allies," delegations from Florida and New York, whose constituents include large Puerto Rican populations. And he landed assignments on powerful committees—including, for all eight years, the House Judiciary and House Natural Resources committees—where he positioned himself as an expert (he was the Judiciary Committee's only former attorney general) and set about proving himself to the committee chairs.

"I worked hard to gain their respect by doing my homework and being prepared," Pierluisi says. "I also used advocacy skills I developed in law school and in my 20-plus years as an attorney to raise awareness of the issues that affect Puerto Rico."

That meant working the House floor while members filtered in to vote, and carefully crafting his speeches and testimony—sometimes hammering Congress from within, especially when it came to drawing attention to what he saw as the U.S. government's unequal and indifferent treatment of Puerto Rico and its citizens.

In September 2015, as the island grappled with a debt crisis—more than \$70 billion in debt that it was unable to repay and an inability to file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection like a traditional U.S. municipality might—Pierluisi told the Senate Finance Committee that "it would be the height of hypocrisy for this committee to criticize Puerto Rico without acknowledging the federal government's shared responsibility for this crisis. ... Congress treats Puerto Rico in discriminatory fashion under

numerous programs within this committee's jurisdiction. My Senate allies and I have filed bills to address these disparities, and the committee should act on them. Otherwise, spare us the lectures about Puerto Rico's own failings."

In December of that year, speaking on the House floor, Pierluisi denounced the U.S.-Puerto Rico relationship—under which Puerto Ricans pay some federal taxes but don't have the right to vote for the presidency—as "a national disgrace."

"The relationship between the federal government and Puerto Rico allows you to treat us decently whenever it suits you and to treat us poorly whenever it does not. We live at your whim, subject to your impulses, which are bound by virtually no legal rules or moral standards," he told his colleagues in Congress. "If there is a silver lining in this crisis, it is that the crisis has caused a clear majority of my constituents to conclude that the relationship between the federal government and Puerto Rico must change. Puerto Rico must have equality in this union or independence outside of it."

Pierluisi says his efforts paid off. He counts among his accomplishments legislation that allowed Puerto Rico to restructure its public debt and that secured federal funding to stimulate Puerto Rico's economy and significantly expand its Medicaid program.

"But the lack of a vote was frustrating," says Pierluisi, who now practices law in San Juan with the firm O'Neill & Borges.

He continues to advocate for statehood for Puerto Rico, which would enable not only voting representation in Congress, but also let Puerto Ricans vote in federal elections.

"Puerto Rico and its citizens deserve more, and we need to continue to make the case for equal rights for Puerto Ricans." ■



Bruce Mencher, BA '57, JD '60, spent four decades as a judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. But the greatest power, in his experience, wasn't always the kind he wielded in the courtroom.

OUTSIDE THE LAW

// By RUTH STEINHARDT

→ Every day of his 40-plus years as a judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, after hours spent grappling with choices that would determine the lives of the people before him, Bruce Mencher had a ritual. From the judicial bench he would move to the piano bench—from wielding one kind of power to yielding, happily, under another.

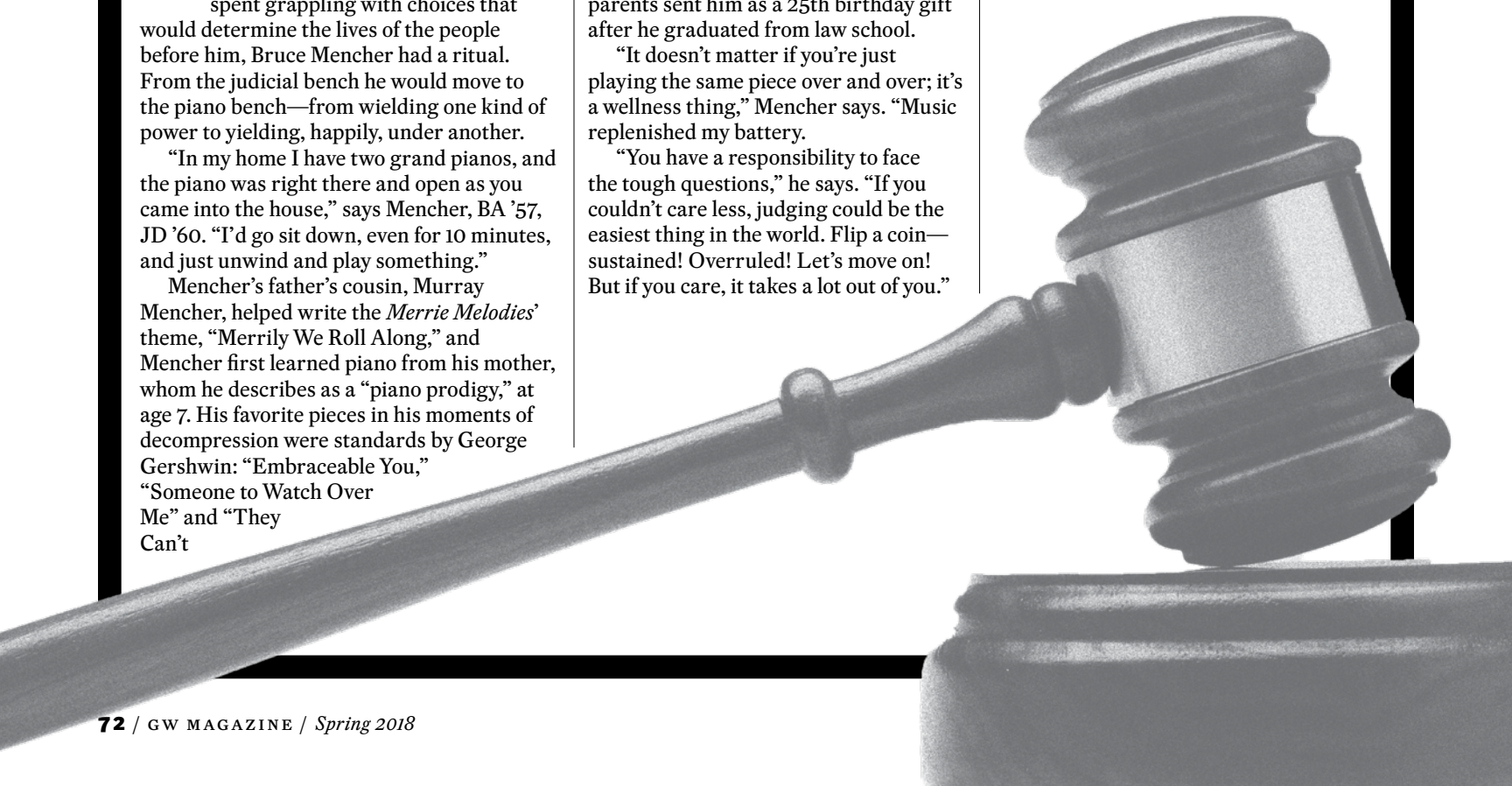
"In my home I have two grand pianos, and the piano was right there and open as you came into the house," says Mencher, BA '57, JD '60. "I'd go sit down, even for 10 minutes, and just unwind and play something."

Mencher's father's cousin, Murray Mencher, helped write the *Merrie Melodies*' theme, "Merrily We Roll Along," and Mencher first learned piano from his mother, whom he describes as a "piano prodigy," at age 7. His favorite pieces in his moments of decompression were standards by George Gershwin: "Embraceable You," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "They Can't

Take That Away From Me," juxtaposed in a lush, nostalgic medley. He arranged it himself on the Knabe grand his parents sent him as a 25th birthday gift after he graduated from law school.

"It doesn't matter if you're just playing the same piece over and over; it's a wellness thing," Mencher says. "Music replenished my battery."

"You have a responsibility to face the tough questions," he says. "If you couldn't care less, judging could be the easiest thing in the world. Flip a coin—sustained! Overruled! Let's move on! But if you care, it takes a lot out of you."



“I loved my law,” Mencher is quick to say. Before he was a judge, he was a partner at Wilkes and Artis in Washington, D.C., for six years; before that, he pioneered the honors program for outstanding law school graduates at the general counsel’s office in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was assistant corporation counsel to the District of Columbia. He sometimes found himself reading Supreme Court opinions on vacation because he wanted to know how the cases that steered his decisions might be altered or overturned. (“You know, we’re going home tomorrow,” he remembers his late wife saying with fond resignation.)

But there was a lonely weight, too, to his work. As a trial judge, Mencher supervised every kind of case, from high-stakes divorces to thefts and slayings. And many cases, like child custody and low-level felonies, involved no jury.

“Outside of a naval captain in navigable waters, a trial judge has the most authority going,” Mencher says. “Even an appellate court takes three [judges]. With me, it just took me. One person. And that became daunting, at times very daunting.”

Once a jury administered a guilty verdict in a murder case, for instance, the severity of the sentencing “was pretty much set,” Mencher says. More difficult for him were low-level felony cases: a defendant with no prior criminal history who broke into a store at night, for example, harming no one. That person would eventually re-enter the community, either rehabilitated by their sentence or scarred by it.

His decisions were unlikely to be overturned, given the vast scope of a trial judge’s sentencing options in such cases. But the opinion of a higher court wasn’t his primary concern.

“I knew I wasn’t going to be reversed,” he says. “But in the big picture of life? You want to be right in how you did it.”

Adding to the pressure of Mencher’s decisions was the fact that he rarely saw those he sentenced reintegrate into society. They generally only reappeared before him if he established mandatory check-ins, or if they re-offended—violating, for instance, a probation he had imposed. (Due to the volume of cases they hear, it is simply not feasible for a trial judge to keep tabs on every person he sentences.)

For someone to commit a crime during a probation he’d permitted in his original sentence could be “a terrible, terrible feeling,” Mencher says. “On the other hand, you can’t shy away from it by saying ‘Well, I’ll put everybody in jail because they may do something when they get out.’ There’s a lot of caring and study

you have to do.”

Part of that caring and study involved understanding each defendant or plaintiff’s particular circumstances.

“Defendants are not fungible,” Mencher says. “People are not fungible, children are not fungible, families are not fungible. You have to be so very careful with how you handle them.”

Some circumstances could be heartbreaking. “We had guys who would go into CVS and steal diapers or baby wipes or toothpaste,” Mencher remembers. “So my ruling would have depended on why they were there. Did they have a record? What was their background? Why are they doing it? Are they professional criminals, or just bums who aren’t going to work, or are they people who hit it rough and are just trying to get things for their wife and kids?”

Another factor in Mencher’s calculus was the purpose of the punishment itself.

“When you sentence a person, why do you sentence him?” Mencher asks. “Punishment is one reason. Protection of the community is another. You hope rehabilitation is another. But to think you’re going to put a person in prison for 30 years so he’ll rehabilitate himself—I used to think that was almost absurd. If I’m giving him that type of sentence, the primary reason has to be punishment and protection of the community, and if he gets rehabilitation [incidentally], wonderful.”

Did he ever regret a sentence?

“No,” Mencher says without hesitation. But he says there is one case he still thinks about. A man and his co-defendant had robbed a card game, and during the robbery, the co-defendant killed one of the players. Although the man in question was not the shooter, he was convicted of felony murder and received the same sentence.

Mencher is clear that the man, who had a significant criminal record, “deserved what he got.”

“But with what he accomplished while he was in jail—on reflection, if I could have given a lighter sentence, I would have eased up,” Mencher says. The sentence-reduction motions the man filed and the letters he sent to Mencher told a story of someone

“DEFENDANTS ARE NOT FUNGIBLE. PEOPLE ARE NOT FUNGIBLE, CHILDREN ARE NOT FUNGIBLE, FAMILIES ARE NOT FUNGIBLE. YOU HAVE TO BE SO VERY CAREFUL WITH HOW YOU HANDLE THEM.”

determined to make the best of a terrible situation. “He got his GED, he took courses, did all sorts of good things,” Mencher says. “Everything you would hope for.”

But after 120 days have passed since a final judgment, a trial judge in D.C. simply doesn’t have authority to reduce an inmate’s sentence. However extensive Mencher’s authority, it wasn’t limitless. He could only let the parole board know that he had no objection to the man’s request for a favorable early parole decision.

“When I was on the court, it could be so fast and so furious—one case after another, the next case, the next case,” Mencher says. “I couldn’t always slow it down. But I tried to bring as much wisdom as I could to it, and whatever ability I had—knowledge, experience, civility—to do the best I could.”

Since he retired in 2016, Mencher has a little more time for the other love of his life: music. He has been on the board of the Trinity Orchestra in Washington, D.C., for almost 20 years. A few years ago, he performed with them as narrator in a new piece based on the life view of Czech dissident, leader and playwright Vaclav Havel. The grand piano still stands just inside the door of his D.C. home. And in his apartment in Key Biscayne, Fla., where he now spends three months out of the year, he has an electronic piano on loan from his neighbors.

“It just looks like a little spinet, but it has a nice sound,” Mencher says. He has time to learn new pieces now, which he rarely did during his career. At the moment, he’s focusing on a Chopin waltz. But after some urging, Mencher agrees to play his Gershwin medley.

The sound is full and vibrant even over the phone, though compression lends it a tinny, melancholy quality. In the melting chords of the three old standards, it becomes easy to picture a quiet living room, where a man who tried to hold power as gracefully as possible could finally let it go.

Mencher is laughing by the time the last note dies away. He sounds very young.

“Music gives back what life takes away,” he says. “Not completely, but it does a pretty good job. At least for me.”

CLASS NOTES

// 1960s AND EARLIER

Adam Peiperl, BA '57, donated his work "Raised Rock" (2016) to the Art Institute of Chicago.

Cliff Stearns, BS '63, a former U.S. congressman and Air Force officer, authored *Life in the Marble Palace: In Praise of Folly* (FriesenPress, November 2016). In the book, Stearns describes the lessons he learned and the experiences he had during 24 years in the House of Representatives. He held a book-signing with Pat Buchanan at the Metropolitan Club in Washington, D.C., where they answered questions on the political landscape.

Paul Spencer Sochaczewski, BA '69, authored *Exceptional Encounters: Enhanced Reality Tales from Southeast Asia* (Explorer's Eye Press, January 2018), a collection of tales about just-over-the-rainbow Asian kindness, greed, ambition, passion and dreams.

// 1970s

Laura Wais, BA '71, had a photography show titled "Sand and Sea" at Canessa Gallery in San Francisco. The exhibition featured a collection of underwater images from the Indo Pacific, paired with desert photos from *Burning Man* by photographer Bobby Pin. Wais is working on a book about the Galapagos Islands, *Galapagos From a Naturalist's Point of View*, featuring her collection of land images from 2016 and 2017.

Lawrence Schneider, MA '72, authored *Say Yes On Saturdays* (Lawrence Schneider, September 2017), an autobiographical coming-of-age story about the struggles of a shy boy with learning disabilities from a Cleveland working-class family. An Air Force veteran, Schneider worked for Army Ballistic Missile Agency (a NASA forerunner) and as an aerospace engineer for the Navy.

J. Vincent Aprile II, LLM '73, has been writing the "Criminal Justice Matters" column for 25 years at *Criminal Justice*, a quarterly magazine published by the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section. In 2003, Mr. Aprile retired after 30 years as a public defender with the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy and now works as a criminal defense attorney at Lynch, Cox, Gilman and Goodman in Louisville, Ky.

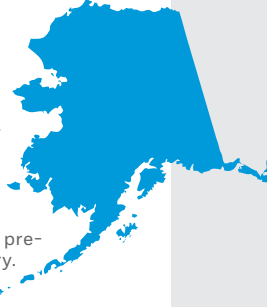
John P. Ferguson, MBA '73, was named a "Lifetime Achiever" by *Marquis Who's Who*, which has been publishing compendiums of biographical data on notable people since 1899. Ferguson is the former president and CEO of Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey.

Gary S. Horan, MS '73, is the president and CEO of Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth, N.J. Trinitas named its new \$18.7 million emergency department after Horan.

Robert A. Bloom, BBA '75, joined BDO USA in McLean, Va., as an assurance director.

Pamela Horwitz Cravez, BA '78, authored *The Biggest Damned Hat: Tales from Alaska's Territorial*

Lawyers and Judges (University of Alaska Press, March 2017), a collection of stories about Alaska's pre-statehood legal history. Cravez is the editor of *Alaska Justice Forum*, a publication of the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center.



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"My family has had a presence at George Washington University since my father earned his MD in 1934. With the continued growth of GW, my wife and I wanted to create a legacy for our family here via its medical research programs."
- Carlos Diaz, MD '72

DAR3276

Harry A. Milman, PhD '78, authored *SOYUZ: The Final Flight* (XLIBRIS, November 2017), a science-fiction thriller about a forensic toxicologist, recruited to assist NASA's medical team who unravels the source of a mysterious incident and suspicious deaths aboard the International Space Station.

George Santopietro, BA '78, was appointed assistant provost for academic operations at Radford University in Virginia, where he has been teaching economics for almost 30 years.

// 1980s

Brian Fein, BBA '83, was named branch manager of Guaranteed Rate in Annapolis, Md. He has spent 34 years in the mortgage industry and joined the company after nearly a year at PNC Bank.

Elliott Kugel, MS '83, was named one of "America's Top 250 Wealth Advisors" in the Oct. 24, 2017 issue of *Forbes*. Kugel is a managing director of investments at Merrill Lynch in Bridgewater, N.J.

Luis J. Fujimoto, BS '85, was elected president of the American Association of Dental Boards Foundation and he is the vice president of the New York County Dental Society.

Ira C. Gubernick, BAccy '86, was named to the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* inaugural list of the "Best of the Bar." Gubernick, vice chair of Cozen O'Connor's corporate practice group, is one of only 40 attorneys selected out of about 200 nominations.

George F. Indest III, LLM '86, earned a certificate in reasonable attorney fees and proper legal billing practices from the National Association of Legal Fee Analysis. The president and a managing partner at The Health Law Firm in Altamonte Springs, Fla., Indest also was named to the nation's top attorney fee experts 2017 list by the NALFA.

Ellen Ray, MD '87, was promoted to chief of emergency medicine at Heywood Health Care. She will supervise the emergency departments at Athol Memorial Hospital in Athol, Mass., and Heywood Hospital in Gardner, Mass.

// 1990s

Michael A. Kotula, JD '90, an attorney at Rivkin Radler in Uniondale, N.Y., was recognized in the 2018 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* for insurance law.

Nithya Nagarajan, BA '90, MBA '92, joined Husch Blackwell as a partner in the firm's international trade practice group in Washington, D.C.

IN MEMORIAM

Gretchen Hill Fowler, BA '41,

(Feb. 14, 2018, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., 99) was an economist at the Federal Reserve from 1940 to 1951 and served as the head of clubhouse and grounds at the Chevy Chase Women's Club. She was a member of the Sawgrass Players Women's Club.

Bernard Blankenheimer, MA '50,

(Feb. 7, 2018, Longboat Key, Fla., 97) was an international economist who spent more than 30 years at the U.S. Department of Commerce, including as director of the agency's Africa division and director of the Office of Import Programs. He helped establish the African studies programs at Howard University and Johns Hopkins University. He was a lecturer at JHU, Howard and American University.

Wallace "Wally" E. Hutton, JD '56,

(Dec. 6, 2016, Fort Myers, Fla., 87) served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and continued in the reserves for more than 20 years. He was elected Frederick County (Md.) commissioner in 1966 and later served in the Maryland House of Delegates. He was on the board of several organizations, including the VFW, the American Red Cross and the Fredericktowne Players.

Ronald S. Deitch, MD '58,

(Nov. 8, 2017, Washington, D.C., 85), a lifelong Washingtonian, practiced ophthalmology in the city from 1964 to 2012. His enduring interests were collecting locks and keys, sometimes ancient ones (including from the Roman Empire), and the study of the organ and Classical music.

Richard Guttmacher, BA '58,

(Jan. 10, 2018, Waterville, Maine) co-founded Bionetics Research Laboratories in Bethesda, Md., and was an executive officer at MIT's Education Research Center. He worked as an administrator and instructor at the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency.

Harold M. Liberman, BA '59,

(Aug. 26, 2017, New Richmond, Ohio, 83) served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and taught history for nearly 30 years at Anacostia High School in Southeast Washington, D.C. He was a lifelong beekeeper and an avid reader. He loved to take care of his mini farm and tend his animals.

Graham Callahan Huston, JD '66,

(Jan. 10, 2018, Pinehurst, N.C., 76) practiced law in Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia for 41 years. He ran in the Boston Marathon and retired to Pinehurst, N.C., from Falls Church, Va., in 2007. He loved golf, music and theater and was an avid reader.

Peggy Cooper Cafritz, BA '68, JD '71, HON '11,

(Feb. 18, 2018, Washington, D.C., 70) was an activist and a vocal fixture in the Washington,

D.C., arts and education scene, eventually amassing one of the largest private collections of African American art. She founded the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, served on the D.C. Board of Higher Education and as D.C. school board president. President Bill Clinton appointed her in 1993 to serve as vice chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and through her work at WTOP-TV and WETA-TV, Cafritz won Emmy and Peabody awards. At GW, she founded the Black Student Union.

Michael S. Alba, MSA '72,

(Jan. 1, 2018, Vienna, Va., 78) served for many years in the U.S. Air Force before retiring in 1988. He was awarded a Bronze Star, one of his many medals, for his work as adviser to the South Vietnamese Air Force. He also served at NORAD and the Alaskan Air Command. After retiring from the USAF, he worked at Merrill Lynch for 14 years, eventually becoming a vice president.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Pamela Jane Woodruff, BA '76, MPhil '92,

(Oct. 1, 2017, Olney, Md., 75) taught in the GW psychology department for nearly 40 years, including the popular "Attitudes Toward Death and Dying" class. The wry Woodruff spoke comfortably and bluntly about topics typically considered off-limits—abortion, suicide, the sexually taboo. She pushed her students—and humanity—to use plain language and abandon coddling euphemisms, believing it would make us all more open, more compassionate and, ultimately, less afraid. When asked for a summer 2016 *GW Magazine* story about the possibility of an afterlife, she said, "We're not gonna have a choice, are we?" Woodruff retired in May 2016.

Allan Weingold

(Jan. 27, 2018, Rockville, Md., 87) was a former professor in GW's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. He served as chairman of the GW Medical Faculty Associates Governing Board and as executive dean and vice president for medical affairs of SMHS. After retiring in 1997, he served for 10 years as the inaugural chair of the school's dean's council.

Erik Winslow

(Jan. 28, 2018, Olney, Md., 80) was a U.S. Navy veteran and professor emeritus of management at GW, where he taught for 44 years. Winslow held numerous leadership roles, including chair of the department of management sciences, chairman of the GW faculty grievance committee and co-director of the center for entrepreneurial excellence. He was a basketball and soccer coach with the Wheaton Boys and Girls Club in Maryland.

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FROM THE GW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Greetings fellow Colonials!

It's a new year. Can you believe it? It seems like just yesterday I was greeting you for the first time. Now the days are getting longer and spring is coming. Spring excites me because it means that the seeds that were planted in the fall will begin to bloom. The GW Alumni Association was busy this fall planting the seeds, and this year we look forward to seeing the fruits of our labor.

If you've been following the university, you know that we are in a time of great change—transformational change. Our new president, Thomas LeBlanc, is implementing his vision for GW to become a preeminent research institution. To rise to this level means that we have to change how we've interacted with alumni and students. The GWAA is a big part of that change.

Last time I wrote to you, I mentioned a partnership with the university that is more aligned and shares the same goals. We are entering the final stages of our strategic alignment process and now implementing those goals, which will create a flourishing partnership and help the GWAA rise to a level where we are the chief volunteer organization of the institution. In doing so, we will begin to interact with students as soon as they matriculate to the university. Our alumni engagement committee, through a partnership with admissions, student affairs and career services, will connect with students in the application process for student-alumni interviews, continue our summer send-offs and provide support and mentorship to students and student groups as soon as they step foot on campus. By building a sense of community, students will have a meaningful experience from the beginning and will carry that sense of community and family through their alumni years.

As an association, we realize that we need to reach out to our alumni and to provide them with more opportunities to interact in different ways with the GW community. We're broadening our reach into the alumni community by connecting with regional networks and affinity groups to provide them with peer support, access to resources, and training.

We'll be on the road with President LeBlanc as he visits the alumni community. We want to make sure that you know that we can't rise to preeminence without you. Alumni are the lifeline of the university and we want to meet you. It's going to be a busy spring, but it's worth it.

I'm encouraged by all of the thoughtful emails and connections with new and old alumni that have been forged over the last six months. Let's keep the dialogue going. Feel free to reach out to me at any time. I'm here to serve you.

I can be reached at gwaapresident@gwu.edu, on LinkedIn or on Twitter (@vmperry6).

Onward and Upward!

Venessa Marie Perry
GWSPH MPH '99



David A. Oblon, BA '90, was elected as a circuit court judge in Virginia's 19th Judicial Circuit (Fairfax). He will serve an eight-year term.

David B. Sharpe, JD '90, is an editor of *Sharpe, Sharpe, and Winship's Cases & Materials on Admiralty* (West Academic Publishing, 2017), one of the oldest maritime-law casebooks in the country. Sharpe is a shareholder at Lugenbuhl, Wheaton, Peck, Rankin & Hubbard and an adjunct professor at Tulane University.

Mark Weinberg, BA '91, a former adviser, speechwriter and spokesman for President Ronald Reagan, authored *Movie Nights with the Reagans: A Memoir* (Simon & Schuster, February 2018). Weinberg shares a behind-the-scenes look inside the Reagan presidency through the movies they watched together every week at Camp David.

Tim Diemand, JD '92, a partner in Wiggin and Dana's litigation department and a member of the firm's executive committee, was named one of the *Connecticut Law Tribune's* 2017 "Distinguished Leaders."

Leslie Hanlin, MA ED & HD '92, EdD '97, was hired as the executive director of Roanoke regional initiatives in Virginia Tech's Outreach and International Affairs department.

Jan Makela, MBA '93, was named a "Best-Selling Author" by the National Academy of Best-Selling Authors for her book *Be The Manager People Won't Leave* (Celebrity Press, May 2017). She was also joined the Forbes Magazine Coaches Council.

Racheline Maltese, BA '94, co-authored with Erin McRae *A Queen from the North* (Avian30, May 2017)—a romance novel set in an alternate United Kingdom in which the Wars of the Roses never ended. It was named *Library Journal's* Best Indie Ebook for 2017.

Carrie Hane, MA '95, co-authored *Designing Connected Content: Plan and Model Digital Products for Today and Tomorrow* (New Riders, December 2017) with Mike Atherton.

Amy Impellizzeri, JD '95, authored *The Truth About Thea* (Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing, October 2017), a thriller about the secrets that unravel as a recovering heroin addict-turned-counselor begins to work with a young woman who has been diagnosed with a pathological addiction to creating fake social media identities. The book was included in the Francis Ford Coppola Winery's "Books & Bottles" program, which pairs wine and books in a gift box.

Bernard A. Nigro Jr., JD '96, was appointed by President Trump to serve as deputy assistant attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice's antitrust division. He was the 2017 recipient of the GW Law Distinguished Alumni Award and has served as vice chair of the American Bar Association's section of antitrust law.

Mary Camuto, MEd '97, authored *Make the Most Of Your Workday: Be More Productive, Engaged, and Satisfied As You Conquer the Chaos at Work* (Career Press, May 2018).

Donielle Alyse Tawil Escalante, BA '97, MEd '99, was named World Languages Department chair at Deerfield High School in Deerfield, Ill.

Gregory S. Gargulinski, BA '97, joined Davison, Eastman, Muñoz, Lederman & Paone as a partner in the firm's Freehold, N.J., office.

Gideon Yechiel Zelermyer, BA '97, won a 2017 Grammy award for "Best Rock Performance" for his collaboration with Leonard Cohen on the song "You Want It Darker."

Ali Katz, BA '98, authored her second book, *Get the Most out of Motherhood: A Hot Mess to Mindful Mom Parenting Guide* (Skyhorse, September 2017). Katz is a motivational speaker, parenting coach and meditation expert.

Guillermo Silva, LLM '98, a principal at Bauzá Brau Irizarry Ojeda & Silva in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was nominated to a three-year term as a member of the Pennsylvania State University's Alumni Council.

// 2000s

Tracey Ellis, MPH '00, and Kathryn Holloran, MEd '05, founded International Diagnostic Solutions in 2009, a telehealth company that provides online therapy and special education services to children, family and schools throughout the world.

Laurie Spinella Gibbons, BA '00, was named senior appellate counsel in the Nassau County, N.Y., district attorney's office. Gibbons and her husband, Brian, welcomed their daughter Olive Kathleen on June 30, 2017. Olive joins sisters Elena Theresa, Meara Marie and Alice Rose.

Sabrina Ashjian, BBA '01, received the 2016 Wildlife Prosecutor of the Year award from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for her environmental-protection work.

Jason Day, JD '01, of Perkins Coie, was named firmwide chair of the public companies and capital markets practice in Denver.

Seth J. Gillihan, MA '01, authored *Retrain Your Brain: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in 7 Weeks: A Workbook for Managing Depression and Anxiety* (Althea Press, October 2016).

Rand Haley, MA '01, authored *Catalyzing Research: Research Leaders and the Complex Faculty/Administration Interface* (36 Spruce Publishing, October 2017). The book targets current and aspiring research leaders in organizations, including research universities, independent research institutes, academic medical centers and research-active hospitals.

Steven A. Shoumer, JD '01, partner in Blank Rome's real estate group in Philadelphia, was inducted as a fellow to the American College of Mortgage Attorneys.

Miles K. Davis, PhD '02, was named the 20th president of Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore. He is the first African American president in the institution's 160-year history.

Mark SooHoo, BA '02, joined Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in Chicago as executive director of digital communications.

David I. Brody, BA '03, was named a 2017 "Rising Star" by *New England Super Lawyers*. He is an attorney in Boston at Sherin and Lodgen.

Jared Degnan, BBA '03, joined Morrison, a digital advertising and marketing agency, as chief strategy officer in Atlanta.

Josh Gerben, BBA '03, Rachael Protos BS '04, and Colleen Wellington, BA '09, celebrated the 10th anniversary of Gerben Law Firm, which specializes in trademark law. Gerben founded the firm; Protos is the office manager; Wellington provides professional-level support.

Dave Gottesman, BA '03, co-created Perchance, a mobile app that uses GPS to help the app's users find their missed connections. For more information, go to WeFunder.com/perchance.

Omar Baker, BA '04, MD '08, was named to *NJBIZ's* "Forty Under 40" list. Baker is the co-president, chief quality and safety officer and director of performance improvement at Riverside Medical Group in northern New Jersey and helped create the Omar and Behnaz Baker Patient Assistance Fund, which supports families of patients with chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

Jesse Coslov, BA '04, is the co-founder and CEO of The Dog Stop, an all-inclusive dog-care facility in Pittsburgh that has boarding, daycare, obedience training, grooming, at-home services and a retail store. The company has 10 stores in four states and plans to expand. For more information, visit TheDogStop.net.

Sandy Hugill, MTA '04, launched *TheBreweryLog.com*, a blog chronicling her visits to (and reviews of) breweries worldwide. Hugill is based in Columbus, Ohio.

Karen Kline, MBA '04, was promoted to partner at Duane Morris in Boca Raton, Fla.

Joseph B. Schwartz, BBA '04, a partner at Murtha Cullina, was named co-chair of the firm's municipal practice group.

Amin Al-Sarraf, BA '06, a senior associate in Glaser Weil's litigation department, was appointed by the California State Bar board of trustees to serve on its Legal Services Trust Fund Commission for a three-year term.

Charlie Leizear, BS '07, MBA '12, was named director of first-year admission at Occidental College in Los Angeles. He will play a central role in the selection of the Barack Obama Scholars, a scholarship dedicated to Obama's legacy of public service. Obama attended Occidental before transferring to Columbia University.

Brian C. Willis, JD '07, a real estate and business attorney, was named a partner at Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick in Tampa, Fla.

Nathan Brill, BBA '08, joined Blank Rome's corporate, M&A and securities group as an associate in Washington, D.C.

Iris Drayton-Spann, MA '08, was hired as vice president of human resources and organizational development by WETA, the Washington, D.C.-area PBS station.

Kaitlin Yarnall, MA '08, was named National Geographic's vice president of media innovation. She's worked at National Geographic for 12 years and started her career as a cartographer. She's also served as executive editor of the magazine.

LaPrincess Brewer, MD '09, a cardiologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., received the 2017 Community Service/Volunteerism Award from the Minnesota American College of Physicians.

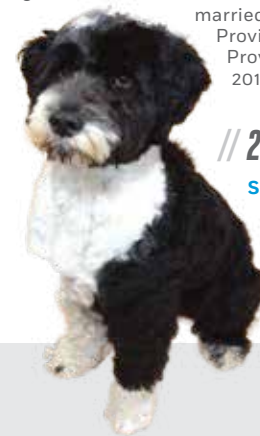
Abbey J. Marr, BA '09, is one of eight people selected for the Empire State Fellows Program, a leadership training program designed to prepare professionals for careers as New York state policymakers.

Ryan Torrens, JD '10, a consumer protection attorney, is seeking the Democratic nomination to run for Florida's attorney general. For more information, visit RyanTorrens.com.

Dana Rosenfarb, BA '09, MD '14, married Jason Siperstein at the Providence Public Library in Providence, R.I., on Aug. 26, 2017.

// 2010s

Seth Locke, JD '11, co-chair of Perkins Coie's government contracts practice in Washington, D.C., was promoted to partner.



Amanda Eamich Nguyen, MA '11, was promoted to principal and director of marketing at CHIEF, an advertising and marketing firm in Washington, D.C.

Leah Morrison, BA '12, joined English, Lucas, Priest & Owsley as an associate attorney. She focuses on tax law and trusts and estates.

Ashleigh N. DeLuca, BA '13, founded the Starling Sponsorship Program, which provides academic scholarships for students in The Gambia. DeLuca now is raising money to send three of those students to college in the United States. For more information, visit AshleighDeLuca.Wixsite.com/starlingsponsor.

Tara Brandner, MS '14, DNP '16, is president-elect of the North Dakota Nurse Practitioner Association and received the North Dakota Legendary Nurse Award in advocacy from the North Dakota Center for Nursing. She also completed the American Association of Nurse Practitioners Health Policy Fellowship in September 2016.

Dawn Stoppiello, MFA '14, was hired by the University of Southern California's Gloria Kaufman School of Dance as an assistant professor of practice in dance and new media.

Michael A. Barton, BA '15, is a second-year student at the New England School of Dental Medicine and is engaged to Kells Eily Lynch.

Ari Masefski, BA '15, represents the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies and discusses, on college campuses around North America, possibilities for environmental cooperation in the Middle East. The Boston-based Masefski leads and facilitates conversations about Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and environmental cooperation in communities across the continent, bringing program faculty and alumni from Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

Michelle Manikkam, BS '15, was admitted into Liberty University's College of Osteopathic Medicine. She spent three years doing research at the National Institutes of Health.

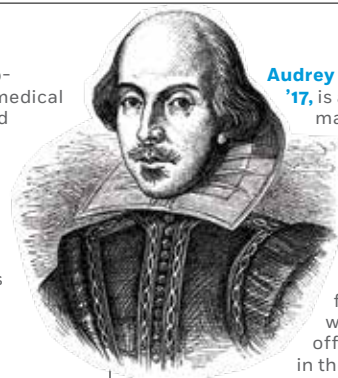
Mustafa K. Sharif, BS '15, co-established Genetoo Inc., a medical technology company focused on reducing the number of infections associated with prosthetic-implant surgeries.

Michael Crowley, MFA '17, played Cobbler, Trebonius, servant to Caesar, Dardanius and Third Citizen in the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's production of "Julius Caesar" in Baltimore.

Dominique Eaton, BBA '17, is a legal secretary at Covington & Burlap in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca Manikkam, BAccy '17, MAccy '18, graduated from GW. She has a 2-year-old German shepherd named Rocket.

Séamus Miller, MFA '17, played Marullus, Titinius, Decius Brutus and Fourth Citizen in the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's production of "Julius Caesar" in Baltimore.



Audrey Stam, BBA '17, is an order management specialist at Rohde & Schwarz.

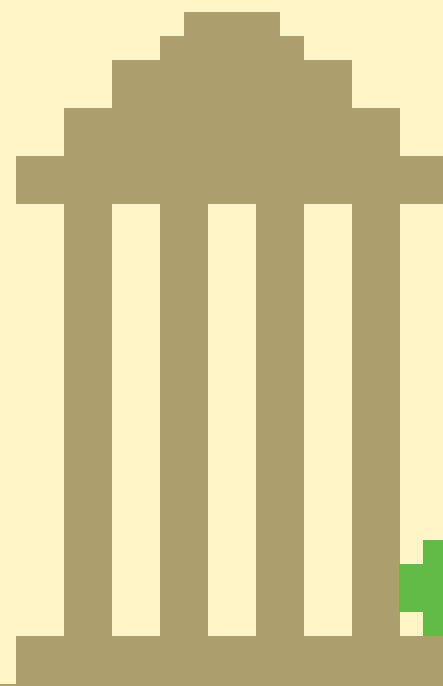
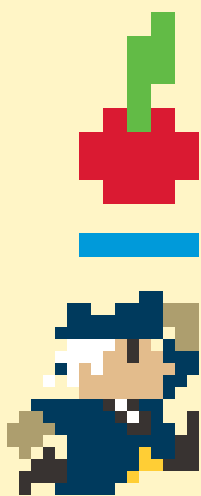
Laura Wolter, BA '18, graduated from GW. She was a front office assistant in the Division of

External Relations for three years and will be working toward her PhD in social psychology.

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INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Q&A

A Soft-Power Superpower

The Elliott School's Skip Gnehm, BA '66, MA '68, a former U.S. ambassador in the Middle East, parses the state of America's world influence. // BY MATTHEW STOSS

The Harvard University political scientist Joseph Nye invented the term “soft power” in the 1980s to describe a country’s cultural cachet and its non-military influence on the world. The concept spans economics, tourism, health care, the arts. With soft power, a Disney World in Paris works the same way for the United States as humanitarian aid in Syria.

America has been a soft-power superpower for decades. But Elliott School of International Affairs professor Skip Gnehm, BA '66, MA '68, who spent 36 years as a diplomat, notably serving as the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait during the Gulf War, sees it diminishing.

What is the state of U.S. soft power?

Overall, strong—but weaker. The rest of the world sees the current administration’s emphasis on making America great as a withdrawal of America from global issues. If you take either the climate agreement or the Asian-Pacific free trade negotiations, these are areas in which you would have to say America was exercising its soft power, its influence in the world, its global presence. It’s such a dominant country, not just economically, but morally and ethically. It has always played a leadership role. And when you withdraw from these sorts of international endeavors, your influence really isn’t there.

Are other countries filling our soft-power vacuum?

China is definitely a country that could be put on that list of countries that are opportunistically taking our withdrawal to their advantage, with the trade agreements in Asia but also in banking, where they set up this international bank that’s a

rival to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, that we actually dominate. But we didn’t thwart their efforts to get other people to join it, and so we’ve allowed a counterweight structure to the global monetary system that we’ve dominated for decades.

Should we be worried about this abdicating of U.S. soft power?

I think we need to be quite worried about it. Again, there are other players in the world who are not looking after our interests; they’re looking after theirs and those interests are actually inimical to ours—Russia, China, Iran—then their influence grows and they stake out turf, if you will—and I don’t mean just physical dirt. I mean in the economic area as well. They then begin to balance out our power and our influence, and it makes it more difficult for us to go back, if ever, to have the dominance and influence that we had before.

But it’s not all bad, right?

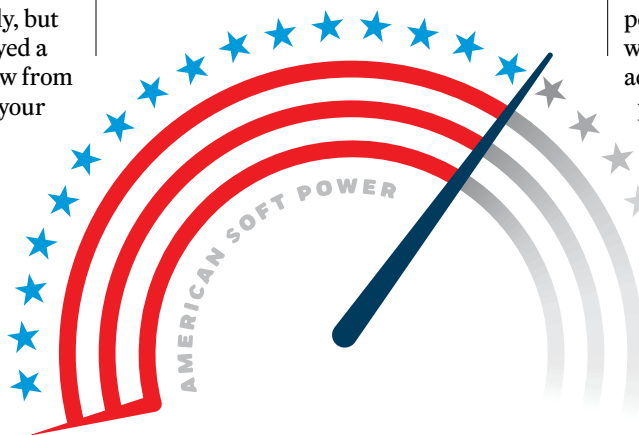
I say all this with still not wanting to lose the point that we have a lot of soft power because of who we are, what we are, what we stand for. Where do so many people in the world want to come if they have really serious medical problems? It’s the Mayo Clinic and other places in the United States. Where do the families that can afford it and that have kids with really solid scholarly skills want to come to school? They’d like to come to a university in America. Foreigners love to come to the United States as tourists. Disneyland to Las Vegas to New York City, you name it. But we can undercut those areas of soft power—and we have—through some very obvious policy changes. If it suddenly becomes difficult to get a visa, they can’t come for any of those reasons.

Have you seen that happen?

We have a lot of foreign citizens who still come here. Don’t get me wrong. But you have many people that I know in the Middle East who have stopped coming to the United States for their summer vacations. They still own their property in the United States but don’t come anymore because they’re afraid of being embarrassed—stopped at Immigration when they arrive, questioned. Maybe some of them will even tell you that when they’re in the streets, they’re afraid someone will say nasty and ugly things to them. Now whether that’s going to happen, we can debate that point, but the perception is there. Those are ways you undercut your influence.

What is the international perception of U.S. power today?

Very often people around the world now connect American power with military power, especially after 9/11. America as a whole needs to rethink that image. We can achieve many of our objectives by using soft power, by our presence in non-military ways. And that requires resources, whether it’s maintaining the State Department with a capacity to do its job or nongovernmental organizations of Americans that work abroad with refugees, such as Doctors Without Borders. If you start cutting assistance to such organizations operating abroad, you’re undercutting your influence—a very positive influence. **EW**



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