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NEW



The Bicycle Thief

BY STEVEN LECKART

Tom Justice was a gifted cyclist on track for Olympic gold. From his early years, he was groomed by coaches to represent the US on its national team. A charming and popular high schooler, Justice's peers predicted he'd be on the cover of a Wheaties Box one

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Epic writers travel the world searching for encounters with the unknown. Wartime romance, unlikely savants, deranged detectives, gentlemen thieves, and love struck killers: stories that tap into the thrill of being alive.

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Who.



JOSHUA DAVIS

Matador, sumo wrestler, impulsive drift racer, Contributing Editor @Wired for a decade. Davis has reported from inside prisons on three continents.



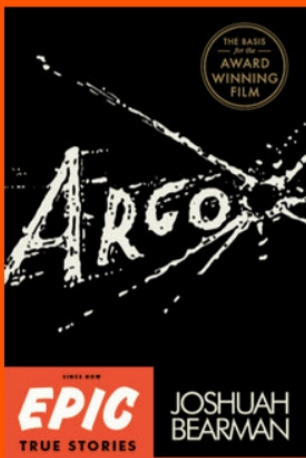
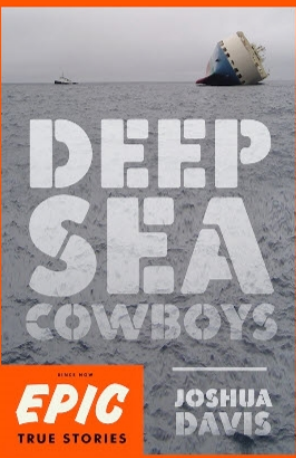


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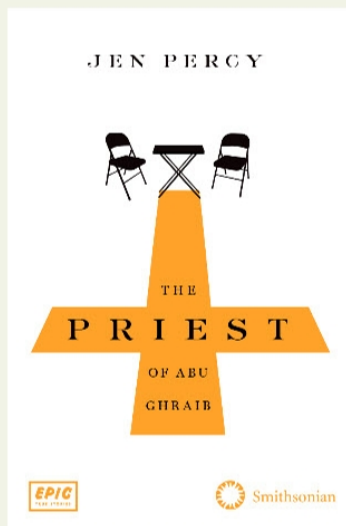
Precocious

BY PATRICK BURLEIGH

Patrick Burleigh was 18 months-old when he grew his first pubic hair. By the time he turned three, he had a mustache and the testosterone levels of a teenager. At nine he could pass for an adult nearly twice his age.

The men in Burleigh's family carry a gene that causes them to experience an extremely early onset of puberty. From his great grandfather's stint in WWI at age 11 to the author's own way-too-youthful misadventures with LSD and tagging across Venice Beach in the 1990s, the Burleigh boys have been saddled with the burden and responsibilities of manhood while still children. But it wasn't until Burleigh was set to have a son himself—a son very much at risk to inherit his genetic mutation—that he dug into his family history and confronted his own tortured childhood.

"Precocious " is a recollection of Burleigh's fraught early years as unnaturally advanced young man, and an incisive examination of the baggage that men pass down to their sons. His condition was extreme, but if illness is metaphor, then Burleigh's story has a lot to say about how we teach our boys how to confront the promise and peril of masculinity.



The Priest of Abu Ghraib

BY JEN PERCY

In May of 2004, Joshua Casteel, a 22-year old evangelical from Iowa, received a letter of deployment. He'd be going to Abu Ghraib prison. Everyone who knew him was surprised.

Casteel was devout and deeply opposed to the war on terror. And yet he would be an interrogator. And he turned out to be good at it. Casteel sat with Iraqi schoolboys, taxi drivers, farmers, and imams. He asked them about their personal lives, their families, and their children. He gained their trust. And from that, he gained information. He was deeply conflicted, but his superiors were in awe. His platoonmates nicknamed him "Priest." And he continued his work right up until the day he fell terribly ill.

Our latest article by Jen Percy—published in partnership with Smithsonian—traces Casteel's journey from Cedar Rapids to Baghdad and back. It's an odyssey marked by pain and moral quandary; the story of a brilliant-but-tortured man working to reconcile his own faith with the stark realities of war and crushing expectations of patriotism.

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It began with a murder. Writer Stephen Elliott arrived in Venice Beach soon after the killing of a homeless man. As he grapples with the meaning of the crime, he begins to see that the influx of tech money has made Silicon Beach a very complicated place.

Elliott's journey through the underbelly of the tech boom brings him into contact with a commercial landlord who wears a pink leotard, a dominatrix who wants a roommate, and a venture capitalist who ran psychological operations for the US military in Iraq. In the end, the truth about this place is as murky as the haze over the Pacific Coast Highway.

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EPIC
TRUE STORIES

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STORY



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