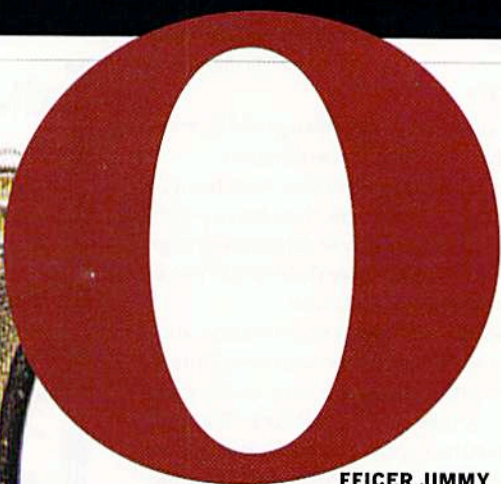




Juicers In Blue

Forget ballplayers. A worse steroid scandal is brewing: Cops who want an edge against the perps, but who become criminals in the process



FFICER JIMMY

(not his real name) knew his steroid use was paying off when, one day, the Ohio policeman needed to wrestle a suspect to the ground—and the guy crumpled like a piece of wet cardboard. “It took no effort at all,” Jimmy marvels. For Kevin, a military policeman, his steroid epiphany came as he was throwing a rowdy patron out of a Southern California bar: Kevin grabbed the guy by his belt and yanked him right out of his chair. “He landed about 2 feet behind me,” he remembers. Former Suffolk County, New York, officer Tom Foley had a steroid moment of a different sort when, while vacationing in L.A., he was pumping iron at Muscle Beach—with visions of his idol, Arnold, dancing in his head—and spectators started taking his picture.

“It was unbelievable!” Foley exclaims with a bashful smile, holding up a framed photo from that session: a shot of his shirtless back, an explosion of finely cut lats and traps. Foley, 33, is seated on the back porch of his girlfriend’s Long Island home, enjoying the simple pleasure of breathing free air. He’s on his very first weekend furlough from prison, where he’s nearing the end of a 3-year sentence. And while he’s stayed in excellent shape behind bars, he’s no longer Muscle Beach buff. “Yeah, it was amazing,” Foley says, peering nostalgically at the photo. “And that was on 200 milligrams.”

CALL THEM JUICERS IN BLUE. WITH THEIR rippling physiques and flair for battling bad guys, they call to mind a flesh-and-blood Justice League—or at least a casting call for a Van Damme movie. And these three men are hardly isolated examples. Cops have long been a hush-hush subset of anabolic steroid users, says Pennsylvania State University sports-science professor Charles Yesalis, Sc.D., author of *The Steroids Game*. “Most of the police officers I’ve known who have used these drugs consider them a tool of the trade.”

The phenomenon cuts across the country: In recent years, cops in nine states have been accused of steroid-related crimes. Like the

four Norman, Oklahoma, police officers whose steroid use was uncovered during a Drug Enforcement Administration investigation last fall, and who were fired. Or the Tampa, Florida, cop who gave a drug dealer a thousand Ecstasy tablets from a police-impounded car in exchange for steroids and was sentenced to 2 years in 2003. Or the Pennsylvania officer who in 2002 pleaded guilty to steroid possession—and to selling 'roids to two other cops.

Such incidents are sufficiently widespread that the DEA has published a pamphlet called *Steroid Abuse by Law Enforcement Personnel*, whose cover depicts two uniformed officers surrounded by floating syringes. Still, because juicing cops are a secretive subculture within a secretive subculture, experts have a hard time quantifying the problem. "Resoundingly, yes, I've heard many, many accounts of police officers taking steroids," says Harvard steroid specialist Harrison Pope, M.D., author of *The Adonis Complex*. "But it's impossible to put a number on it. Even if I got a federal grant to study this, I wouldn't be able to get that number, because of the veil of secrecy." Officer Jimmy, however, is less constrained. "Steroid use is very pervasive in law enforcement," insists the 26-year-old cop. "I'd say, of the

cops I know, 20 percent to 25 percent of them are using."

Whatever the true tally, it raises the question of what this means for the average, mostly law-abiding civilian. The next time you're pulled over, will you be hassled by an officer raring for a fight? If a cop loses control in a fit of 'roid rage, will your township get slammed with a brutality lawsuit? And, experts speculate, do steroids render cops less effective at their jobs, making you less safe?

"It hasn't been studied enough, and we need to know more," says

"What law enforcement needs is a little testosterone," says Officer Jimmy. "Every cop should do a cycle a year."

Larry Gaines, Ph.D., chairman of the criminal-justice department at California State University at San Bernardino and the author of one of the very few research papers about cops on steroids. "We don't have a sense of the scope of the problem. And it is a potential problem, because of the potential for violence."

Officer Jimmy sees the matter differently. Although he professes to feel conflicted about juicing—it is, after all, a felony to take anabolic steroids without a prescription—he thinks 'roids made him a better cop. "What law enforcement needs is a little testosterone," he says. "Every cop should do a cycle a year."

WHEN JIMMY FIRST BECAME A patrolman 4 years ago, he was in enviable shape: a former high-school quarterback with chiseled abs, who benched 225 in his thrice-weekly workouts. Even so, he couldn't help but notice that his physique paled in comparison with those of some of his ripped colleagues. They were broad-shouldered, slim-waisted, and veiny, forever cracking their tree-trunk necks, and as big as action heroes as they cruised through the streets. Jimmy learned through the grapevine that they had ste-

roids to thank. "It was a big shock," he recalls. "Not to sound naive, but we're here to serve and protect, and we're breaking the law." But it got him thinking. At 5'6" and 155 pounds, he wasn't the most imposing presence; if anything, he felt puny and vulnerable when facing down suspects.

Curious now, Jimmy started doing some Internet sleuthing. Six months later—and despite his efforts, still no larger—he was ready to give 'roids a try. A buddy hooked him up with a cocktail of Depo-Testosterone, Sustanon, Deca-Durabolin, and Anadrol. Mornings, Jimmy would lock himself in his bathroom and inject himself in the right butt

check. Then he'd dress for work: blue uniform, holster, badge.

"I'm doing this for you," Jimmy answered to his wife's objections, "so I can come home safe to you."

His anxiety over life and limb is common among cops today. Despite falling crime rates in many U.S. cities, officers say that their patrols are rougher than ever, with criminals who are bigger, badder, and more audacious. Which is why, some argue, police need steroids: They have to be even brawnier than the people they're fighting. One former

Maryland officer says he was scared into taking steroids after a suspect grabbed his radio off his belt during a tussle. "It easily could have been my gun," he says. In higher-crime areas—where, experts say, steroid-using cops are more prevalent—suspects are sometimes so zooted on drugs that they're nearly impossible to subdue. "We've had crack and meth users fight two to four officers," says a 28-year-old Iowa cop, a former juicer who says he's tempted to start again. "We recently had a crack user break his leg and disarm one police officer, while he was fighting two other cops."

Complicating things further, the number of excessive-force complaints has spiked over the past decade, according to the National Police Defense Foundation (NPDF), making police worry that anytime they reach for their batons, tasers, or guns, they'll be slapped with a brutality suit. "A police officer is supposed to use necessary force to overcome the person," says a former Philadelphia cop. "So if they use fists, you use a nightstick. If they use a knife, you use a blackjack. But if you use them, you get sued. So you gotta be strong."

The cops make a convincing enough case that many experts find themselves nodding along—

How to Defuse an Angry Officer

Snip the correct wire and you can prevent detonation

Most cops are cool under fire, whether they're taking verbal shots or live bullets. Still, there are hotheaded exceptions. Some might be in the throes of 'roid rage, while others could be suffering from violent police officer syndrome (VPOS), a rare form of post-traumatic stress disorder that results in a low threshold of frustration and a high propensity for violence. In either case, your survival strategies are the same.

- ▶ **PUT 'EM UP.** "Keep your hands visible, not in your pockets or behind your back," says Tom Cogan, Ph.D., a psychologist who treats VPOS. Surrender control and the officer won't need to assert his power.
- ▶ **DON'T BLINK.** Look the officer square in the eyes and lock your gaze with his, says Cogan. If you glance down at his shirt or up to his hair, he could see it as a sign of disrespect.
- ▶ **HOLD YOUR QUESTIONS.** To a hopped-up cop, even a simple query could cause trouble. "Just asking, 'Gee officer, why is this road closed?'" could elicit an aggressive response," says Cogan. Wait until your day in court.
- ▶ **CALL FOR BACKUP.** Think you're in physical danger? Dial 911 or ask a passerby to stick around, says Michael Mantell, Ph.D., former chief psychologist for the San Diego Police Department. Also, "If you're in a car, you don't have to pull over right away. Go to a public place and then stop."

—ERIN HOBDAY



Juicers say it's not about filling out a uniform.

so much so that when steroid specialist William Howard, M.D., founder of the Sports Medicine Clinic at Baltimore's Union Memorial Hospital, was once asked by a police commander whether he thought a particular officer was on 'roids, Dr. Howard replied that he had no clue—despite the officer's inflated body. "Of course, I'm pretty convinced he was taking steroids," Dr. Howard admits. "But this guy was on the worst beat. That's why I covered for him. I'm not proud of it, and I don't condone it, but I understood this guy."

Others, however, are deeply skeptical of cops who invoke the survival defense to justify their juicing. "Any officers saying they need to take steroids to perform their jobs, I don't buy it," says NPFD executive director Joseph Occhipinti, who insists that with all the training cops receive, they're well prepared for whatever comes their way—including knowing better than to charge into every situation like *Braveheart*. "If you

need to subdue a guy, and he's 6'2" and 300 pounds, you request backup!" he says. Lt. Tom Easley, of the Norman, Oklahoma, police department, agrees. Even though the cops who were recently ejected from his force claimed they'd needed steroids for safety's sake, Easley says, "it was a rationalization. I know that at least one was physically fit, ate well, and worked out, but he got

stuck at a particular weight. And he wanted more."

Maybe so, but Long Island-based police psychologist Dan Goldfarb, Ph.D., believes that cops who use steroids to make an already buff body bigger are actually the exception. "The reality is, police work is not geared toward good physical health: shift work, fast food, lots of time stuck in one place, high stress levels, low levels of exercise," says Goldfarb, who has counseled cops who confided their steroid use to him. "They say to me, 'I need big muscles and don't have the time to work out.'" By using steroids, the cops get the image they're gunning for—and then some—in a hurry.

In Officer Jimmy's case, the transformation took just a few months. His bench press shot up 80 pounds in 2 weeks; by the end of his 6-week cycle, he was 25 pounds heavier. Walking the beat with his new, thick-thighed swagger, Jimmy truly felt like *The Man*. "I knew no one was going to mess with me. And if they did, I knew I could take 'em," he says. "The confidence thing was huge." Jimmy says his newfound self-assurance made him an even calmer officer, one whose judgment was never clouded by fear. While he appreciated the on-the-job benefits, however, Jimmy was also infatuated with his own ballooning frame. At 5'6" and a hulking 185 pounds, Jimmy looked positively cartoonish. He loved

the stares he attracted in public. When he was issued a larger uniform to accommodate his new bulk, Jimmy opted to wear his old, smaller shirt, to better showcase his biceps.

His colleagues noticed. Mum was the word on duty, of course. But during off-hours, the officers conferred: *What're you stacking? Which antiestrogens are you using? And Are my bitch tits showing through my uniform?* When Jimmy developed a golf ball-size pus nodule on his butt, which popped during a house party full of cops, they just laughed and pointed at the wet spot seeping through his jeans; they'd all been there.

FORMER POLICE OFFICER TOM Foley's steroid tale begins with an injury. It ends in Attica.

Foley was once a gung-ho officer, the kind who'd sprint into a burning building to rescue an unconscious civilian—which he actually did in 1999, earning him the title of Suffolk County Cop of the Month. All that changed a year later, when he tackled a fleeing DWI suspect on a dark roadside and heard his own wrist crack. "I have a titanium plate with screws in here," Foley says, tracing a finger down a scar that slices the length of his forearm. Three surgeries and 2 years of physical therapy failed to restore full motion to his wrist, without which, his department determined, he couldn't safely handle

To Catch a Cop

A little detective work may help rid the force of 'roids

It's relatively easy to spot a steroid user: bad acne, big man-boobs, a tree-trunk neck. Still, none of these signs count as ironclad evidence of juicing. If you want that, you need to test the person's urine using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS), a process that's as high priced as it is high tech: \$100 per screening. "If you're testing a large police department, it can get very expensive very quickly," says Larry Gaines, Ph.D., chairman of the criminal-justice department at California State University at San Bernardino.

Until the cost of GC/MS drops, police chiefs should consider the approach used by college athletics: Test less, but smarter. Since it began random drug screening in 1986, the NCAA has controlled costs while reducing steroid usage rates by about 68 percent. "Cops should understand this because they do random traffic checks," says Frank Uryasz, president of the National Center for Drug Free Sport, which has overseen NCAA testing. "When they're trying to catch speeders, they don't put a cop at every corner, but you and I may not speed, because we know one could be there." And just as there's a penalty for doing 85 in a 55, there have to be sanctions for juicing, says Uryasz. "It only works if the other officers see there are consequences." —KATE DAILEY

Special Report

a gun. At age 29, he was urged to retire.

"I wasn't ready to hang it up," Foley recalls. He says that in 2002, his doctor prescribed him steroids in the hope of restoring flexibility to the ligaments. As a lifelong athlete and weight lifter, he "was always very against steroids," but Foley was astonished at the pain relief they gave him—and was equally amazed at the gains he made at the gym. His doctor agreed to put him on a second cycle. But by this time, thrilled by his swelling muscles, Foley had his own ideas about which steroids he wanted to use. He found a supplier: another cop forced into retirement by injury, who'd also started on 'roids in the hopes of keeping his job. Foley rationalized that he'd stop juicing once he was able to rejoin the force.

It's a heartwarming story: the good cop led astray by his own good intentions. But when Foley was arrested later that same year, it wasn't just for steroid possession. It was also for orchestrating a cocaine deal, to which he pleaded guilty. (He says he was set up, and copped a plea rather than risk a far lengthier jail sentence.) What's most striking about

the end to Foley's saga is that it seems as though quite a few officers caught with steroids are actually nabbed for dealing other drugs. Take former Thomasville, North Carolina, cop Russell McHenry, for instance. According to court documents, Officer McHenry was a weight lifter and a steroid user. But after his 'roid source was arrested in 2001, McHenry found a new dealer in the form of a crooked Davidson County vice cop named Lt. Scott Woodall, who sold off the drugs he seized from suspects.

Before long, McHenry began selling Woodall's steroids to local bodybuilders, then branched out into pot, coke, Ecstasy, and ketamine. (McHenry served 2 years after cooperating with the feds; Woodall was sentenced to 27 years.) One wonders if, for some cops, steroids are a sort of gateway drug: whether, having corrupted their code—and having gotten away with it—they become more receptive to doing other illegal things.

Criminal-justice professor Gaines thinks it's a possibility, although he feels that the steroid-using cops who are most at risk of turning to the dark side are those few who

start selling steroids. "Steroids are inviting [for cops to deal in], because they know there's not a lot of enforcement," Gaines says. "But I think once a person makes that leap to dealing steroids, it's not difficult to jump into dealing other types of drugs."

WHEN IT COMES TO COPS PICKLED IN testosterone, on-the-job performance is another cause for concern. For instance, one problem for many juicers is that their nipples and testicles become hypersensitive. This might not seem like a big deal, except that in Officer Jimmy's case, it meant that the slightest graze against his nips or 'nads sent him reeling in pain; despite his Samsonian strength, he'd have been rendered helpless by a purple nurple. And, while before he'd been lithe and quick, Jimmy found his new bulk difficult to maneuver. "A powerlifter isn't going to be a very good martial artist," he observes. Not only that, but he could barely make it up a flight of steps without gasping for air. Jimmy's muscles may well have proven useful in a fight—if suspects had been willing to stand still while he clobbered them.

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The potential for aggression is another point to think about. Many juicers experience an intense rush called hypomania, which, says Dr. Pope, "can impair your judgment and inspire all manner of reckless behavior." It doesn't take much to imagine cops in this state jumping at the opportunity for a high-speed chase, or rushing into perilous situations without backup. Or worse. The prospect of a cop in the grip of that rare but real fury known as 'roid rage also makes experts nervous. Dr. Howard says that in his 25 years of treating steroid users, he's seen only one or two instances of 'roid rage, but that even so, "it's impressive when it does happen, because they can really cause some mischief. One case of 'roid rage in a police officer is enough to merit concern."

Penn State's Yesalis, however, scoffs that 'roid rage is so uncommon it's barely an issue. "I'll show you as much alcohol-induced rage in a football weekend in a college town!" he says. "I'm not saying it doesn't exist, but I'm more concerned about, say, alcoholic cops. Or cops abusing street drugs." Indeed, as far as

anyone can tell, there is no record of steroids playing a role in a police-brutality case—although, as experts point out, that could be attributable to a lack of widespread testing. Nevertheless, Dr. Pope feels there's reason for concern. "You could have someone who's not

"You can have someone who's not particularly aggressive, and he goes on steroids and has a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality change."

particularly aggressive, who has no history of psychiatric disorders, and he goes on steroids and has a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality change. And, of course, a police officer in that situation could be quite dangerous."

And yet, police departments aren't doing much to prevent steroid use. Very few precincts screen for anabolics, in part because of the expense: At roughly \$100 a pop, a steroid test is 10 times more costly than a run-of-the-mill drug test.

"It's expensive, but it's worth it for the deterrent effect," argues Chief Gary Schira, of the Bloomington, Illinois, police, one of the

handful of departments in the country that randomly test for steroids. Tom Foley concurs that the fear of testing positive would keep cops from juicing: "Right now, a guy who's on the fence, thinking *Should I or should I not do it?*—it's an easy decision, because he's not

worried he's going to get caught," he says. Still, there's been no national call for mandatory testing, which means that nearly all departments are content to test only when there's reason for suspicion.

It's easy to speculate about why police departments might turn a blind eye: If they catch a 'roided officer, they might feel compelled to fire him—and it's a big hassle to replace a policeman. With all the training required, it takes a year before a new officer is out on the street, says Lt. Easley—which is why, even after his four juicing officers were outed by a

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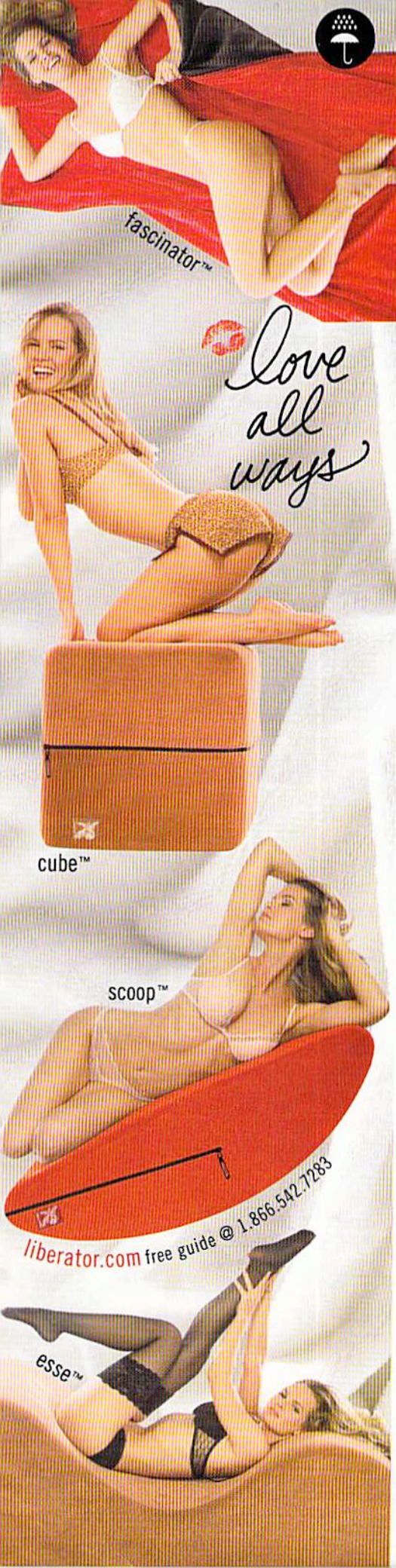


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Special Report

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DEA investigation, "it was a difficult decision to fire them," he says. "They were good officers. And when you let go of four people all at once, everybody's in a bind."

For that reason, Gaines thinks that most instances of cops caught with steroids are handled privately. In his 1991 *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* study, he notes that nearly all the police personnel he interviewed denied encountering steroids on their force—but then later fessed up that they knew officers who'd gotten buff suspiciously fast. "My guess is, most police departments look at steroids as being less problematic than other drugs," Gaines says. "So I suspect they counsel the individual officers and schedule future drug tests. And no one finds out about it."

OFFICER JIMMY CYCLED ON AND OFF

steroids seven times in 3 years. He'd probably still be doing it now if he hadn't watched President Bush give the State of the Union address on TV in January 2004. In it, Bush announced, to thunderous applause, that the use of steroids in sports "is dangerous. . . . So tonight I call on team owners, union representatives, coaches, and players to take the lead, to send the right signal, to get tough, and to get rid of steroids now." That was it for Jimmy. Although he still thinks that police officers would be well served by juicing every now and then, he's decided it's not worth the risk. "Here the leader of the free world is saying we're going to crack down on steroids," says Jimmy. "I don't want to get caught. I've got too much to lose." In the year and a half he's been off steroids, Jimmy has lost some of his bulk, although he's still big enough to make people do double takes.

"That's all I ask," he says, laughing.

The time he's spent away from steroids has given Jimmy some room to reflect. And it's led him to a surprising conclusion. Although he remains convinced that steroids made him a better cop, he now realizes that his improved job performance was really an unexpected benefit.

"At some point, I had to be real with myself," he says. "I wanted to be big for personal reasons." Not for survival or self-protection. Not to be some kind of superhero. "If I really wanted to be a great officer, I would go to the shooting range every week. But I don't have time," he explains. "Actually, last time around, I barely qualified in my shooting. But I still didn't go to the range," Jimmy adds, then jokes, "I was too busy going to the gym." **MH**

Paul Walker

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acter is following a trail of airplane wreckage. "Every time he picked up a piece," Zuccharini says, "a shark would swim up, so he was having to do a long breath hold, pick up a part, react to it as an actor, and then deal with the fact that every time he picked up some scrap metal, a shark would come in to see if it might be food." Director John Stockwell (*Blue Crush*) says that what made it all possible was the hypercompetitive relationship that developed between Walker and costar Scott Caan. "When Scott showed some aptitude underwater as a breath holder and free diver, Paul was like, 'Okay, I'm going to go deeper and stay longer.' So they kept pushing each other."

WALKER ATTRIBUTES HIS FIGHTING

spirit to his grandfather, a World War II veteran who also fought twice for the middleweight boxing title, and his father, who was in the Air Cavalry in Vietnam and fought a few amateur bouts. Walker grew up with a speed bag and a heavy bag in his family's backyard. His dad taught him a lot of punch combinations, and he wanted to be like his forebears so much that when the first Gulf War broke out, he decided to enlist. The only reason he didn't actually go to war, he says now, is that "I went home bragging about the idea, thinking my dad would think it was cool, and he goes, 'You say that one more time, I'm going to knock your ass out, nail you in a crate, and ship you to Canada.'" His dad had seen enough of war to want his son's energy directed elsewhere.

Thus the surfing, an obsession that Walker sometimes places even above his fast-rising Hollywood career. Growing up in Sun Valley, California, Walker surfed every time his family went to the beach; these days he surfs almost every day. "It keeps things grounded for me," he says. "It's where I came from, and it's who I am. I sometimes struggle, because my job is like the antithesis of what surfing is all about. Surfing's simple. It's real."

We were out in the clear, blue Hawaiian water now, and a wave appeared on the horizon as Walker spoke. He spun to catch it. While he was gone, our female friend from the seawall paddled up to me on her own surfboard and struck up another conversation. I assumed Walker would want to rejoin us—it was such an effortless and high-quality hookup—so when I finally caught his eye, I started waving.

Walker waved back, then pointed to the horizon: Another big wave was on the way, he meant to say, and shouldn't we try to catch it? **MH**