

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

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JOHN T. FREY
CLERK, CIRCUIT COURT
FAIRFAX, VA

JOHN C. DEPP, II,

Plaintiff and Counterclaim Defendant,

v.

AMBER LAURA HEARD,

Defendant and Counterclaim Plaintiff.

Civil Action No.: CL-2019-0002911

NOTICE OF DEPOSITION BY VIDEO

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Defendant and Counterclaim Plaintiff, Amber Laura Heard, by counsel, will take the videotaped deposition upon oral examination of CORPORATE DESIGNEE – WALT DISNEY MOTION PICTURES GROUP, INC. beginning at 9:30 a.m. P.S.T. on January 21, 2022. The deposition will be held at 633 West Fifth Street, 52nd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071 or Remote via Zoom. The deposition will be taken before an officer authorized by law to administer oaths and take testimony and will be transcribed by a certified Court Reporter and videographer. The deposition will continue until concluded, and will be used for all lawful purposes.

Dated this 6th day of January 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Amber L. Heard

By Counsel:

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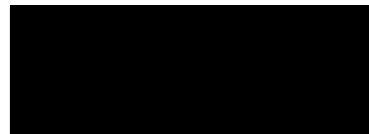
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on this 6th day of January, 2022, a copy of the foregoing shall be served by email, pursuant to agreement and Court Order, as follows:

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Elaine Charlson Bredehoft

ATTACHMENT

John C. Depp, II v. Amber Laura Heard

Fairfax County Circuit Court: CL 2019-0002911

DEFINITIONS

- a. **Action.** The term "Action" means the above-captioned action.
- b. **And/or.** The use of "and/or" shall be interpreted in every instance both conjunctively and disjunctively in order to bring within the scope of these discovery requests any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside their scope.
- c. **Communication.** The term "communication" means any oral or written exchange of words, thoughts, or ideas to another person, whether person-to-person, in a group, by phone, text (SMS), letter, fax, e-mail, internet post or correspondence, social networking post or correspondence or by any other process, electric, electronic, photographs, video or audio tape recordings, or otherwise. All such Communications are included without regard to the storage or transmission medium (electronically stored information and hard copies are included within this definition).
- d. **Complaint.** The term "Complaint" means the Complaint, dated March 1, 2019, filed in the Action.
- e. **Concerning.** The term "Concerning" includes relating to, referring to, describing, evidencing, or constituting.
- f. **Correspondence.** The term "correspondence" means any document(s) and/or communication(s) sent to or received from another entity and/or person.
- g. **Defendant and/or Ms. Heard.** The terms "Defendant" and/or "Ms. Heard" refer to Defendant Amber Laura Heard, including her agents, representatives, employees, assigns, and all persons acting on her behalf.
- h. **Disney.** The term Disney refers Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group, Inc., its affiliates, subsidiaries, employees, agents, assigns, representatives and all persons and entities acting on its behalf, including, but not limited to, Walt Disney Pictures, Sean Bailey, and Jerry Bruckheimer.

i. **Document.** The term “Document” is defined in its broadest terms currently recognized. The term shall include, without limitations: any written or other compilation of information (whether printed, handwritten, recorded, or encoded, produced, reproduced, or reproducible by any other process), drafts (revisions or finals), original or preliminary notes, and summaries of other documents, communications of any type (e-mail, text messages, blog posts, social media posts or other similar communications or correspondence), computer tape, computer files, and including all of their contents and attached files. The term “document” shall also include but not be limited to: correspondence, memoranda, contractual documents, specifications, drawings, photographs, audio or video recordings, images, aperture cards, notices of revisions, test reports, inspection reports, evaluations, technical reports, schedules, agreements, reports, studies, analyses, projections, forecasts, summaries, records of conversations or interviews, minutes or records of conferences or meetings, manuals, handbooks, brochures, pamphlets, advertisements, circulars, press releases, financial statements, calendars, diaries, trip reports, etc. A draft of a non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.

j. **Engaged.** The term “Engaged,” in relation to a person (as defined herein), means contracted, directed, hired, retained, formed an agreement with (whether formal or informal, binding or nonbinding, written or oral), and/or procured the services of, whether or not in exchange for remuneration or other valuable consideration.

k. **Including.** The term “including” means including but not limited to.

l. **Other Litigation.** The term “Other Litigation” includes the following cases either brought against Mr. Depp or by Mr. Depp. Individually, the name in quotations following the title of the case refers to that particular case.

- *Eugene Arreola, Miguel Sanchez v. John C. Depp, II et al.*, Case No. BC704539, Cal. Super. Ct. (Los Angeles County filed May 1, 2018) (“Security Guard Case”).
- *Gregg “Rocky” Brooks v. John C. Depp, et al.*, Case No. BC713123, Cal. Super. Ct. (Los Angeles County filed July 6, 2018) (“Movie Set Assault Case”).
- *John C. Depp, II, et al v. Bloom Hergott Diemer, Rosenthal Laviolette Feldman Schenkman & Goodman, LLP, Jacob A. Bloom, and DOES 1-30*, Case No. BC680066 (Cal. Super. Ct. filed Oct. 17, 2017) (“Attorney Case”).
- *John C. Depp, II, Edward L. White v. The Mandel Company, et al.*, Case No. BC646882 (Cal. Super. Ct. filed January 13, 2017) (“Mandel case”).

m. **Person.** The term “person” is defined as any natural person, business, company, partnership, legal entity, governmental entity, and/or association.

n. **Performance.** The term "Performance," in relation to Mr. Depp, means any creative work in which Mr. Depp or his likeness is, was, will be, may be, or is contemplated to appear, whether or not in exchange for payment or other benefit to Mr. Depp, and includes (without limitation) any appearance (or potential appearance) by Mr. Depp in any film, TV series, product endorsement, advertisement, musical performance, or in-person appearance. To avoid doubt, a Performance includes any creative work in which it was contemplated that Mr. Depp or his likeness would be featured, even if the work was ultimately created without Mr. Depp or his likeness appearing.

o. **Plaintiff and/or Mr. Depp.** The terms "Plaintiff" and/or "Mr. Depp" in the context of any communications refer to Plaintiff John C. Depp, II, and also include his agents, representatives, employees, assigns, and all persons acting on his behalf both individually or as entities, including, but not limited to Infinitum Nihil, Scaramanga Bros. Inc., L.R.D. Productions, Inc., Adam Waldman, The Endeavor Law Firm PC, Frederick Levin, Buckley Sandler LLP, Pat Cipollone, Edward White, Edward White & Co, Benjamin Chew, Camille Vasquez, and Samuel Moniz, or any other attorney or agent representing Mr. Depp.

p. **Requests.** The term "Requests" shall mean the requests for documents to be produced under this Subpoena as set forth in this Attachment.

q. **You and/or Your.** The terms " You" and/or "Your" refer to the recipient of this Subpoena, as well as all persons and entities over which said recipient has "control" as understood by the Rules of this Court.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Where information in Your possession is requested, such request includes non-privileged information in the possession of Your agent(s), employee(s), assign(s), representative(s), and all others acting on Your behalf.
2. Whenever appropriate in these Topics, the singular form of a word shall be interpreted as its plural to whatever extent is necessary to bring within the scope of these Topics any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside their scope.
3. Unless otherwise indicated, these Topics refer to the time, place, and circumstances of the occurrences mentioned or complained of in the pleadings in this case.
4. All references to an entity include the entity and its agents, officers, employees, representatives, subsidiaries, divisions, successors, predecessors, assigns, parents, affiliates, and unless privileged, its attorneys and accountants.
5. If You perceive any ambiguities in a question, instruction, definition, or other aspect of these Topics, set forth the matter deemed ambiguous, and the construction used in answering.
6. If You assert a claim of privilege as to any of Your responses to the Topics, state the basis for the asserted privilege, specify the privilege claimed, and include in Your answer sufficient information to permit an informed ruling on the claim of privilege. If the claim relates to a privileged document, state the date, person or persons who prepared or participated in preparing the document, the name and address of any person to whom the document was shown or sent, the general subject matter of the document, the present or last known location and custodian of the original of the document, and the basis for the claim of privilege with respect to the document. If the claim of privilege relates to a communication, state the date(s), place(s) and person(s) involved in the communication, the subject matter of the communication, and the basis for the claim of privilege with respect to that communication.
7. If You perceive any Topic to be overly broad, unduly burdensome, or objectionable for any other reason, respond to the fullest extent possible and clearly note any objection so as to permit an informed ruling on the objection.
8. These Topics are continuing in character so as to require You to promptly amend or supplement Your deposition within a reasonable time if You obtain or become aware of any further or contradictory information.

TOPICS FOR CORPORATE DESIGNEE UNDER THIS SUBPOENA

In response to this subpoena, You are required to produce a designee or designees to testify to the following:

1. All information concerning (as defined above) the litigation in the United Kingdom High Court of Justice or Court of Appeal in the matter of *John Christopher Depp II v. News Group Newspapers Ltd., et al.*, the Judgment issued by the United Kingdom High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division on February 11, 2020, all subsequent appellate decisions or orders, and the finality of the decisions, and the impact of this ultimate decision, and anything that transpired during or as a result of this decision, on Your business relations with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney, any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production.

2. All information concerning (as defined above) this case, *John C. Depp, II v. Amber Laura Heard, CL 2019-0002911*, pending in Fairfax County Circuit Court in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the impact of anything that has or is transpiring in this case on Your business relationship with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney, any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production. This topic also specifically includes any impact the Op Ed by Ms. Heard had on the above.

3. All information concerning (as defined above) the Other Litigations (as defined above) and the impact of anything that has or is transpiring in any of the Other Litigations on Your business relationship with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney (as defined above), any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production.

4. All information concerning (as defined above) any impact of the June 21, 2018 article titled "The Trouble with Johnny Depp," published in *Rolling Stone*, attached as **Exhibit A**, or the October 2, 2018 article titled "Johnny Depp will not be buried," published in *GQ*, attached as **Exhibit B**, on Your business relationship with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney, any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production.

5. All information concerning (as defined above) any impact of Mr. Depp's delays, tardiness, or no-shows to scheduled film shoots or Mr. Depp's drug or alcohol use, domestic

violence, domestic abuse and/or causing damage to property on Your business relationship with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney, any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production.

6. All information concerning (as defined above) the statements made by Mr. Depp at his deposition in this case on November 10, 2020 concerning Jerry Bruckheimer, Sean Bailey, or future participation in a Pirates of the Caribbean film, attached as **Exhibit C**, and any impact on Your business relationship with Mr. Depp, including considering Mr. Depp for any work with Disney, any future Pirates of the Caribbean role, a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production, and specifically whether Your willingness or unwillingness to pay Mr. Depp an amount greater than any amount Mr. Depp has indicated would be insufficient to cause him to accept a role with You in any future Pirates of the Caribbean franchise.

7. All information concerning (as defined above) any decision to cast or hire, or not cast or hire, Mr. Depp for any role or participation in any Disney production. This includes any communications concerning considering Mr. Depp for a lesser or greater role, a different role, or a different production.

8. All information concerning (as defined above) issues, problems, or concerns with Mr. Depp, including his delays, tardiness, or no-shows to scheduled film shoots or his drug or alcohol use, domestic violence, domestic abuse and/or causing damage to property, during the filming, including shooting and re-shooting, of Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales ("Pirates 5").

9. All information concerning (as defined above) any agreements between You and Mr. Depp, including to produce, finance, direct, or provide consulting for any production by you.

10. All information concerning (as defined above) Documents or Communications concerning (as defined above) the relationship between Mr. Depp and Ms. Heard, including any violence or abuse.

11. All information concerning (as defined above) any actual, alleged, or attempted act of violence involving Mr. Depp.

12. All information concerning (as defined above) any actual, alleged, or attempted drug use or abuse involving Mr. Depp.

13. All information concerning (as defined above) any actual, alleged, or attempted destruction of property involving Mr. Depp.

14. All information concerning (as defined above) any decision to cast or hire, or not cast or hire, or cast or hire in a different role, Mr. Depp for *Pirates of the Caribbean 6* or any future *Pirates of the Caribbean* films.

15. All information concerning Documents and Communications concerning (as defined above) Mr. Depp and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise.

16. All information concerning (as defined above) Documents and Communications related to entertainment trade publications concerning Mr. Depp.

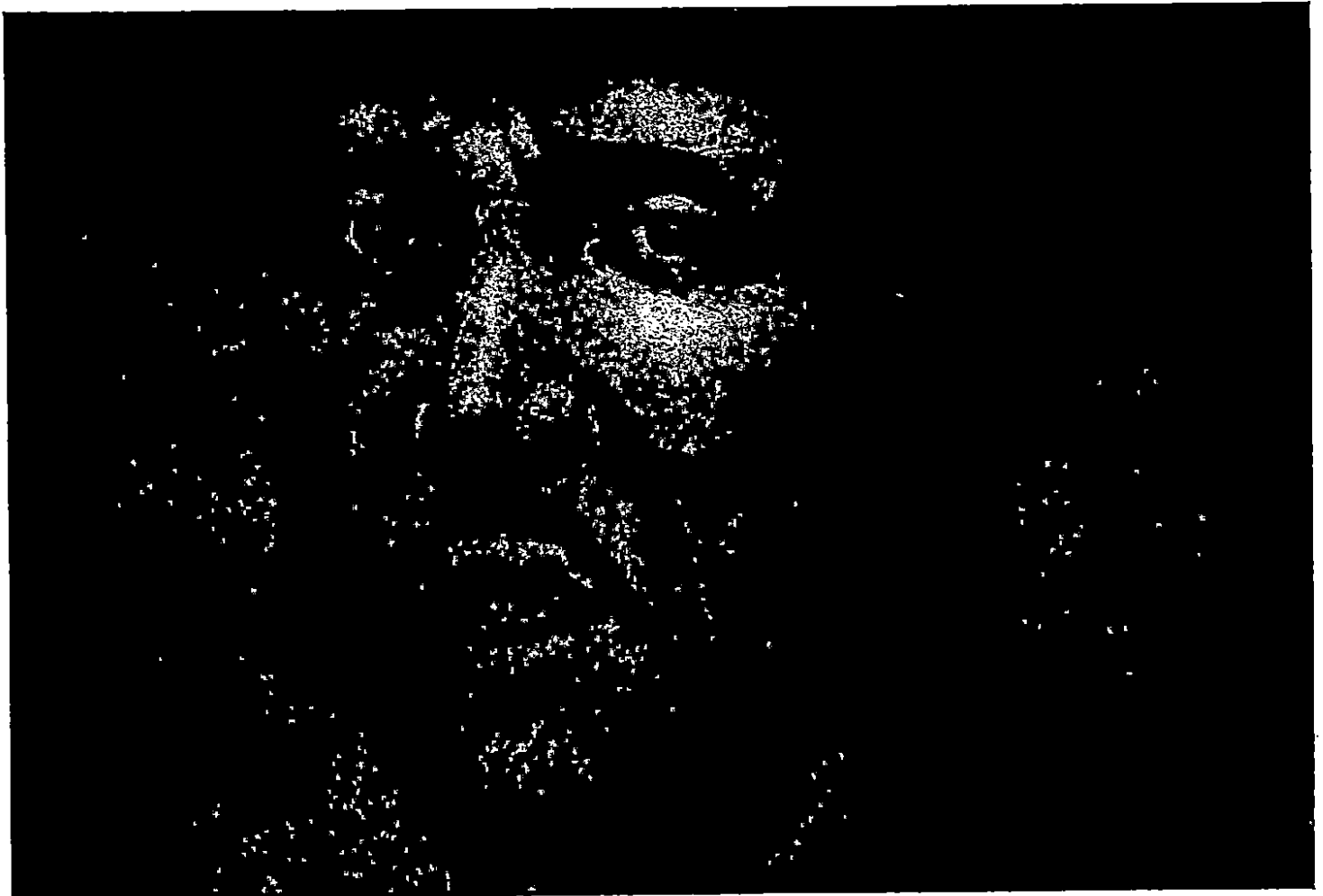
17. All information concerning (as defined above) Mr. Depp's disagreements with writers, directors, or producers concerning the filming, editing or release of *Pirates 5*.

EXHIBIT A

The Trouble With Johnny Depp

Multimillion-dollar lawsuits, a haze of booze and hash, a marriage gone very wrong and a lifestyle he can't afford – Inside the trials of Johnny Depp

By **STEPHEN RODRICK**



Matt Mahurin for Rolling Stone

Johnny Depp isn't here yet. Still, his presence is all around the 10,500-square-foot rented mansion at 16 Bishopswood Road in London's Highgate neighborhood.

He is here in the busy hands of Russell, his personal chef working up the Peking duck. He is here in the stogie-size joint left by the sink in the guest bathroom. He is here in the never-ending reservoir of wine that is poured into goblets. And he is here in a half-done painting upstairs that features a burning black house, a child Johnny and an angry woman who resembles his mother, Betty Sue.

And then he is actually here. He is in the living room, crooning his entrance: "Oh, my darling, oh, my darling, my darling Clementine. You are lost and gone forever, my darling Clementine."

Depp has come from a photo shoot for the Hollywood Vampires, his sometime band that features Alice Cooper and Joe Perry. Trailing behind is his lawyer Adam Waldman. Depp is dressed like a Forties gangster, jet-black hair slicked back, pinstripes, suspenders and spats. His face is puffy, but Depp still possesses the fixating brown eyes that have toggled between dreamy and menacing during his 35-year career. Now, Depp's studious leer is reminiscent of late-era Marlon Brando. This isn't a coincidence, since Depp has long built his life by imitating his legends – buying an island like Brando, becoming an expert on quaaludes like Hunter S. Thompson.

"Hey, I'm Johnny. Good to meet you."

He reaches out a right hand whose fingers recently had their tats changed from "slim" – a reference to his ex-wife Amber Heard – to "scum."

"So are you here to hear the truth?" asks Depp as Russell brings him a glass of vintage red wine. "It's full of betrayal."

We move to the dining room for a three-course meal of pad thai, duck and gingerbread with berries. Depp sits at the head of the table and motions toward some rolling papers and two equal piles of tobacco and hash, and asks if I mind. I don't. He pauses for a second. "Well, let's drink some wine first."

This goes on for 72 hours.

It had taken a month and almost 200 e-mails for the message to become clear: Come to London; Johnny Depp wants to bare his soul about his empty bank accounts.

It's estimated that Depp has made \$650 million on films that netted \$3.6 billion. Almost all of it is gone. He's suing The Management Group, run by his longtime business manager, Joel Mandel, and his brother Robert for negligence, breach of fiduciary duty and fraud. The suit cites, among other things, that under TMG's watch Depp's sister Christi was given \$7 million and his assistant, Nathan Holmes, \$750,000, without his knowledge, and that he has paid the IRS more than \$5.6 million in late fees. (Most of the ire is directed toward Joel, who had day-to-day responsibility for Depp's account.) There are additional charges of conflict of interest, saying that TMG invested Depp's money for its own purposes and returned it without profit. The suit seeks more than \$25 million from TMG, accounting for "tens of millions" it claims TMG illegally took for its commission, plus any additional damages the court sees fit.

The Mandels categorically deny all wrongdoing and are countersuing, alleging that Depp breached his oral contract with the company. The suit suggests that Depp has a \$2-million-a-month compulsory-spending disorder, offering bons mots like “Wine is not an investment if you drink it as soon as you buy it.” Depp was continuing to “concoct malicious and false allegations” against the company, according to TMG’s countersuit, because TMG had filed a private foreclosure notice on one of Depp’s properties, claiming Depp owes TMG \$4.2 million in unpaid loans.

Over the past 18 months, there has been little but bad news for Depp. In addition to the financial woes, there were reports he couldn’t remember his lines and had to have them fed to him through an earpiece. He had split from his longtime lawyer and agent. And he was alone. His tabloid-scarred divorce from actress Heard is complete, but not before there were persuasive allegations of physical abuse that Depp vehemently denies. Depp’s inner circle had begged him to not wed Heard or to at least obtain a prenup. Depp ignored his loved ones’ advice. And there were whispers that Depp’s recreational drug and alcohol use were crippling him.

During my London visit, Depp is alternately hilarious, sly and incoherent. The days begin after dark and run until first light. There is a scared, hunted look about him. Despite grand talks about hitting the town, we never leave the house. As Depp’s mind leads us down various rabbit holes, I often think of a line that he recited as the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*: “Have I gone mad?”

His closest confidant seems to be Waldman, a lawyer he met less than two years ago. Waldman, 49, possesses an unlined face, sandy hair, a designer black leather jacket and a soothing voice that could make the bird-flu epidemic sound reasonable. He tells me he is married to the “world’s number-one face doctor.”

Depp seems oblivious to any personal complicity in his current predicament. Waldman seems to have convinced Depp that they are freedom fighters taking on the Hollywood machine rather than scavengers squabbling over the scraps of a fortune squandered.

One day, Depp shows me his artwork, and it strikes me that Depp is now a worn Dorian Gray. “I imagine Johnny doing a version of Jack Sparrow at 70, at 80,” his friend Penélope Cruz tells me. “It will be as charming and as great.” But the things that were charming when he was 28 – doing drugs and running around the scaffolding on a high floor of Atlantic Records’ L.A. building – seem disturbing at 55. (Cruz ends our conversation by telling me about Depp trying to pull his own tooth at a London restaurant while having dinner with her and Stella McCartney.)

Maybe being a permanent Peter Pan is the key to Depp’s onscreen charm. But time has passed. Boyish insouciance has slowly morphed into an aging man-child, still charismatic but only in glimpses. If his current life isn’t a perfect copy of Elvis Presley’s last days, it is a decent facsimile.

Depp and Tom Petty had long been friends, and Petty’s death hit Depp hard. “We’d call each other and ask, ‘Hey, you still smoking?’ ” Depp recalls. “Tom would go, ‘Yeah, I’m still smoking,’ and I’d feel better: ‘Well, if Tom is still smoking, I’m OK.’ ”

Depp goes quiet, perhaps realizing the sadness of what he has just said. He wipes his eyes. "I loved him," he says.

The two shared more in common than an addiction to nicotine. They both arrived in L.A. whiskey tango from Florida, intent on making it as rockers (perfectly played by Depp in the video for Petty's "Into the Great Wide Open"). Depp changed course after an L.A. drinking buddy named Nicolas Cage told him there was money to make in acting. He eventually started in his breakout role as a high school narc on *21 Jump Street* in 1987.

We sit down for dinner, and I ask if he remembers the first big purchase he made when he started making money. He rolls another joint that he first passes to me and then to Waldman. He wants me to know it wasn't a Ferrari, but a house for his mama.

"My mom was born in a fucking holler in eastern Kentucky," says Depp. "Her poor fucking ass was on phenobarbital at 12."

Depp grew up the youngest of four, raised mostly by his mother, Betty Sue. His father was a civil engineer, but largely absent. They lived first in Kentucky and then Florida, moving, according to Depp, more than 40 times. His mom hurled things, but she was still his mom. "Yeah, there were irrational beatings," says Depp. "Maybe it's an ashtray coming your way. Maybe you're gonna get clunked with the phone." Depp pauses. "It was a ghost house – no one talked. I don't think there ever was a way I thought about people, especially women, other than 'I can fix them.'"

Mostly, Depp remembers his mother coming home from double shifts at her waitressing job; he would rub her feet as she counted out the coins from her tips. He bought her a small horse farm outside of Lexington, Kentucky, with one of his first big paydays.

"Betty Sue, I worshiped her," says Depp, but his smile quickly fades. "She could be a real bitch on wheels." He tells me what he said at her 2016 funeral: "My mom was maybe the meanest human being I have ever met in my life."

After buying the house for his mom, Depp treated himself to a 1940 Harley-Davidson, which he still owns. From 1986 to 2006, he made 32 movies, showing a once-in-a-generation range from *Edward Scissorhands* – beginning a lifelong collaboration with director Tim Burton – to an acclaimed portrayal of an undercover cop in *Donnie Brasco*.

Depp acquired a taste for the grandiose life along the way. He bought the Viper Room in the early 1990s, an old speakeasy once frequented by Bugsy Siegel, and turned it into a small rock club where everyone from Guns N' Roses to Johnny Cash played. He suffered through the death of his friend River Phoenix from an overdose at the club, amid wild claims in the supermarket rags that he'd delivered the fatal dose to Phoenix himself. "Imagine living with that," says Depp, his eyes clouding over.

He chafed against playing the standard, dashing Hollywood hero. An adviser yelled at him when he took the title role in *Ed Wood*.

“The guy told me, ‘Johnny, it is not about you doing black-and-white movies about a cross-dressing, D-movie director – it’s about fucking the girl and carrying the gun,’ ” Depp says. “ ‘You need to fuck the girl, and you need to carry a gun.’ ”

A constant in Depp’s business was his older sister Christi, who managed his day-to-day affairs. (She never responded to requests for comment for this story.) In 1999, they realized that his current management company couldn’t handle his rapidly expanding financial affairs and they needed to move to a bigger firm. By then, Depp had moved above Sunset Boulevard to an 8,000-square-foot estate nicknamed “Dracula’s Castle.” He spent a day interviewing financial managers. His last meeting, he says, was with Robert and Joel Mandel, brothers who ran TMG. Depp says he immediately took a shine to Joel, the youngest child of an Auschwitz survivor. Depp saw a kindred spirit. “He was a nervous wreck,” says Depp. “He was pouring sweat. He was broken.” (TMG disputes this portrayal).

I ask him why he would place his money in the hands of a person he would describe as a “broken toy.” Depp says because he felt a kinship: “The monofilament that goes through all my characters, if you really look, they’re all fuckups. They’re broken.”

I try to probe deeper, but Depp is restless. The mansion is spookily quiet. It’s now three or four o’clock in the morning, and his cook and security guards have all retired. Despite the hour, Depp’s mind is a space-ball ricochet, moving through a random series of flashcards of his life. There was an incident last year at the Glastonbury Festival, where he asked, perhaps drunkenly, “Can we bring Trump here? . . . When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?” Depp was roasted in the press. “I was trying to connect it to Trump saying he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue, but it didn’t come out right,” says Depp with a shrug.

He moves to the couches in the living room and flips on the television. Depp has an affinity bordering on obsession with the *bons vivants* who had their late prime in the 1970s, whether it is Marlon Brando, Hunter S. Thompson or Don Rickles. “Rickles was the bravest comedian ever,” says Depp. “He’d say anything.” As proof, he finds a video of Rickles on a Dean Martin celebrity roast, turning to boxer Sugar Ray Robinson: “I want to thank Sugar Ray Robinson, who said to Rocky Graziano, ‘Hey, baby, you’re hurting me.’ Sugar Ray is a great champion. Sugar, we would ask you to talk, but you know the blacks, your lips lock.”

“Jesus,” says Waldman.

Depp insists it’s ballsy, not offensive. I mumble, “I don’t know about that.” Depp isn’t paying attention. He considers himself a funny man and tells me how in one of the early *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies Sparrow washes ashore and mumbles an incoherent curse.

“I say ‘Dirty Sanchez,’ ” says Depp, using slang for an obscene sex act. “Before the DVD, they dropped it out.”

Depp has a great affinity for Sparrow, whose persona is borrowed from Keith Richards, another Depp idol. He’s protective of the character and claims he battled with Disney screenwriters repeatedly.

“Why must you have these fucking heinous subplots?” asks Depp. “It’s convoluted. There is not a fucking soul that wants to see Captain Jack Sparrow sad.”

He flips through the news and comes across a report on Harvey Weinstein. He shakes his head and calls him an asshole for burying his film *Dead Man* because director Jim Jarmusch refused to give up his contractually mandated final cut. “He was a bully,” says Depp. “Have you seen his wife? It’s not a wide range. It’s not like he went, ‘I must go to the Poconos to find some hairy-backed bitch.’”

Depp pauses, ruminating on whether he is being unkind. He mentions that once he tagged along as Weinstein was picking up his kid from school and that he could tell Weinstein really loved her. “The image that took my breath away was Harvey Weinstein, a goliath Shrek thing, bending down to put on his daughter’s raincoat.”

Outside, the London dark is giving way to a gloaming predawn. Everyone is exhausted except for Depp. He disappears for a few minutes and returns reanimated, and then proclaims that we have to watch his good friend Marilyn Manson’s “KILL4ME” video, starring Depp in a series of lewd poses with barely clad women. Depp cranks the television’s volume and shouts above the industrial guitars, “Marilyn’s the best. He’s such a good friend. He’s played Barbies with my daughter.” Waldman groans at the Manson music and buries his head under a pile of throw pillows. This doesn’t dissuade Depp, who turns the sound up until the screen reads 99.

Jet-lagged, I tell Depp I need to get some sleep. He looks disappointed but leads me down a dark corridor that twists and turns. In my sleep-deprived haze, I think I might be about to be “disappeared.” Then, a door opens and a giant man wearing a surgical mask appears. I shout in fear.

“What the fuck?”

Depp laughs.

“That’s just one of my security guys. He’s got the flu. He’ll make sure you get out safely,” he says and gives me a half-hug.

“We’ll talk injustice tomorrow.”

It was Adam Waldman who first contacted *Rolling Stone* about writing a story about the injustice being done to Depp’s reputation and bottom line. He pointed to what he perceived to be an anti-Depp story in the *Hollywood Reporter*, where the Mandels were cast as eminently reasonable men who repeatedly tried to warn Depp about his precarious financial positioning. Nobody from TMG was quoted, but Waldman was convinced its fingerprints were all over the story.

Waldman made it clear he was doing an end-run without the involvement of Robin Baum, Depp’s formidable publicist of many years. I started looking into the case and Waldman to see if he was legit. There was stuff about him being Cher’s lawyer – the singer is godmother to his daughter Pepper – but the first hit was a *Business Insider* story that read “Here Are the American Executives Who Are Working on Behalf of Putin.” Waldman was the first on the list,

which detailed his service for Oleg Deripaska, an aluminum magnate and Russian oligarch with strong ties to the Russian president.

According to *Business Insider*, Waldman has been paid more than \$2.3 million for his work on behalf of Deripaska. Meanwhile, Deripaska became a bit player in the Russian-collusion scandal when it was reported by *The Washington Post* that then-Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort offered to give Deripaska private briefings on the campaign shortly before the GOP convention. Waldman had his own cameo in the Putin-Trump meshugas. In February, none other than Trump would accuse him in a typically factually distorted tweet – without naming him – of trying to broker a meeting between Trump-dossier writer Christopher Steele and Democratic Sen. Mark Warner. In April, Deripaska was placed on Trump's sanctioned list, making it exceedingly difficult for Deripaska's holdings to do business in the United States.

Waldman joined the game in October 2016, having been told by a client that Depp needed help. TMG had just slapped the foreclosure notice on his L.A. homes for failure to make payments on a \$5 million loan from the company. TMG had filed it as a nonjudicial foreclosure so there were no public filings. The public at this point had no idea of Depp's financial situation.

Waldman was about to change that. He says he joined Depp for dinner at the Bel Air home of Ed White, Depp's new accountant. Waldman says that White mentioned that he believed TMG had taken a cavalier approach to Depp's accounts. Waldman listened closely and said he'd investigate the situation.

Waldman and Depp quickly became compadres. When Waldman would find a friend he thought was on the Mandels' side, he'd call the star and just say, "Tessio," after the Abe Vigoda character who betrays the Corleones in *The Godfather*. Depp instantly understood and would mutter back, "Fucking Tessio."

Two months later, under Waldman's guidance, Depp filed his lawsuit against the Mandels. The suit claimed that Depp wasn't given monthly financial statements and often was presented only a signature page to sign for transactions. The suit further alleged that – in addition to the \$7 million given to his sister Christi – TMG had cost Depp \$6 million in tacked-on fees by paying his IRS taxes late for 13 years straight. Depp accused TMG of taking out \$34 million in loans in his name as a result of mismanagement, with the final straw being a \$12.5 million "hard money" loan engineered by his longtime attorney Jake Bloom in 2014, at 10 percent interest. The loan stipulated Christi's, Bloom's and the Mandels' fees would be paid before loan repayments and definitely before Depp saw a dime of residuals from his *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. (Depp eventually filed a separate suit against Bloom.) Depp's lawyers argued that the hard-money loan, taken through the financial firm of Grosvenor Park, was an illegal inside deal because Bloom had a prior relationship with Grosvenor. Of the original \$12.5 million loan, according to Depp, \$1.2 million was immediately disbursed to the trio before the loan was officially processed.

Depp and Waldman believe his lawsuit will change Hollywood forever. The suit swings for the fences and claims TMG owes Depp more than \$25 million in ill-gotten five-percent commissions because, among other reasons, they claim TMG had acted not only as financial managers but also as lawyers, meaning it needed to enter a new agreement with Depp for each movie deal.

(The same charge would be eventually levied against Bloom, who has filed a countersuit, denying all the claims.) Since this didn't happen, the suit alleges, Depp is entitled to recoup millions in commissions. The TMG suit points to this as being among the most ridiculous of Depp's claims, that they never acted as attorneys since he already had high-priced Hollywood lawyers Bloom and Marty Singer on retainer.

This alleged violation of Section 6147 of the California statute particularly jizzes Waldman and, in turn, Depp. Waldman says when he first contacted TMG, Joel Mandel kept muttering that Depp's situation was all about "Hollywood math," where the star spends what they think they've made, not taking into account taxes and agent and manager fees. (TMG denies this conversation ever happened.)

Waldman is Depp's self-styled avenger. "No one challenges the monster of Hollywood and survives," Waldman tells me. "Everyone is too afraid. Johnny's not afraid."

Mandel's camp says he learned of Depp's lawsuit when a reporter called him asking for comment, a rarity since it is common in legal circles to contact opposing counsel before filing a suit.

The two warring sides met a few days later in a conference room for a settlement meeting at the law office of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, the law firm that employed Ben Chew, one of Depp's litigators. Waldman was on the phone from Europe, and Chew was on video conference from Washington.

To Mandel's side, it wasn't clear why the meeting had been called: If Waldman had wanted to try to work out a settlement, it would usually be attempted before dropping a legal bomb on the opposing counsel. Mandel eventually spoke up.

"You didn't do your diligence," he said, and cited mistakes in the initial filing, including statements that Depp's finances were being handled by a CPA-in-training, when in fact they were being covered by an accountant with 30 years' experience.

"The facts are there, you can read them," Waldman recalls saying via speakerphone from Munich. "You're welcome to respond to them."

Mandel lost it, according to two people in the meeting.

"You've cost me tens of millions of dollars," said Mandel. "Now it's my turn. I'm gonna destroy Johnny. They'll know everything." (Both Mandel and his attorney, Michael Kump, adamantly dispute that Mandel ever said any of that.)

The Mandel team got up to leave, but in the hall, they say they could hear Waldman's voice questioning the rest of his legal staff if they had carefully gone over the complaint.

Asked what he thought about all the legal shenanigans, Depp shrugs. "I'm just a small part of this," he says. "It's the fucking *Matrix*. I didn't see the movie, and I didn't understand the script, but here's what it is."

Unfortunately for Depp, TMG filed a thermo-nuclear complaint last summer. The lawsuit described the actor as a spoiled brat with no impulse control. Kump noted TMG had never been sued by any of its other clients and that “Depp lived an ultra-extravagant lifestyle that often knowingly cost Depp in excess of \$2 million a month to maintain, which he simply could not afford.” The suit claims Depp did give millions to Christi and other friends and family, but that the star knew all about it and still employed those who benefited from his money.

Kump pressed on, arguing that “Depp has also spent millions to employ an army of attorneys” – in addition to his longtime personal attorney Bloom – “to bail him out of numerous legal crises” and pay “hush money.” Some of the charges seem like cheap shots. TMG offered no specifics about the hush money and legal crises. His taxes? The suit alleges that they were paid late because Depp was chronically cash poor.

The purchases listed by TMG read like Depp gave his wallet to a tween with ADD. There was \$75 million for 14 residences. He spent \$3 million to shoot his pal Hunter S. Thompson’s ashes into the sky from a cannon. A mere \$7,000 to buy his daughter a couch from the set of *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*. He bought some 70 guitars and 200 pieces of art, including Basquiats and Warhols, owned 45 luxury vehicles and spent \$200,000 a month on private air travel.

Then things got personal. According to the suit, Depp kept a sound engineer on the payroll so he could feed him lines through an earpiece while filming. This Depp does not deny, saying the sounds fed to him made him act with just his eyes.

“I’ve got bagpipes, a baby crying and bombs going off,” says Depp. “It creates a truth. Some of my biggest heroes were in silent film,” Depp tells me, lighting another cigarette. “It had to be behind the eyes. And my feeling is, that if there’s no truth behind the eyes, doesn’t matter what the fucking words are.”

But that didn’t explain the 12 storage facilities for his Hollywood memorabilia, heavy on Brando and Marilyn Monroe. Mandel alleged Depp spent \$1.2 million to keep a doctor on call and another \$1.8 million a year on round-the-clock security, including for his elderly mother. (When asked why his mom needed security, Depp responded that it was in case she needed an ambulance, according to sources with intimate knowledge of the conversation. TMG tried to convince Depp a nurse would be cheaper, but he couldn’t be persuaded.) Kump suggested the source of Depp’s problems was psychiatric: “In retrospect, it appears that Depp may suffer from a compulsive-spending disorder, which will be proven in this action through a mental examination of Depp.”

Back in London, I’m sitting with Waldman, going over the jabberwocky of the case for a few hours, when Depp emerges after sunset – I never saw him in daylight – dressed in his pirate-homeless attire: tattered jeans, an oversize white shirt festooned with a series of handkerchiefs. His mood is equal parts maudlin and swagger.

There are a few things Depp insists TMG got wrong – for example, the \$30,000 a month the Mandels claimed he spent on wine.

“It’s insulting to say that I spent \$30,000 on wine,” says Depp. “Because it was far more.”

Depp says they got the Hunter S. Thompson cannon story wrong too. "By the way, it was not \$3 million to shoot Hunter into the fucking sky," says Depp. "It was \$5 million."

Depp elaborates. He says the cost of the rocket launch increased when he decided he wanted Thompson's arc to be at least one foot higher than the Statue of Liberty's 151-foot height. That part could be true, but I checked around about the price tag and Depp seemed to be bullshitting. Multiple reports said that the cannon stunt did cost \$3 million, but perhaps Depp wanted the number to be even bigger, taking a cue from Thompson, who could never resist taking a good, true story and juicing it up with imaginary details.

It doesn't take a psychiatrist to figure out that Depp has been greatly influenced by Brando and Thompson, two father figures who did not give a fuck about what the world thought about them. Depp and Brando had been friends since the 1995 film *Don Juan De Marco*. When Depp bought an island in the Bahamas, it was Brando, owning his own Tahitian island, who advised him to make sure his house is above sea level.

His connection to Thompson was more visceral, spanning 'ludes and literature. Depp had been a fan of the gonzo journalist for years and courted friendship as he played Thompson in Terry Gilliam's 1998 adaptation of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. During the filming and afterward, the two became drug-taking companions.

Waiting for dinner, Depp tells a story about Thompson picking Depp up at the Aspen airport. Doing a dead-on impression, Depp mimics Thompson's mumble: "Uh, there's something I want you to try when we get to the house."

Thompson had a pipe filled with a sticky resin waiting for him. Depp did a hit, and the room spun. Hunter was shocked, says Depp. "He was like, 'Damn, some kids brought that over, and I took a hit and puked my guts out.'"

Depp says he never found out what was in the strange concoction. They also bonded over an encyclopedic knowledge of pharmaceuticals. Later that night, Depp laments the passing of quaaludes from the drug scene. He reminisces about the bootleg 'ludes he used to take.

"They're made with just a little bit of arsenic, or strychnine," says Depp. He stands up and a grin spreads across his face. "So the high was far more immediate." Once, Depp asked a Florida bouncer to punch him while on 'ludes just for kicks. "You either wanted to smile and just be happy with your pals, or fuck, or fight," he says.

Depp is evangelical in the uses of narcotics and thinks they could have expedited the capture of Osama bin Laden.

"You get a bunch of fucking planes, big fucking planes that spray shit, and you drop LSD 25," he says. "You saturate the fucking place. Every single thing will walk out of their cave smiling, happy."

With the deaths of Brando and Thompson, Depp lost the two people who could understand his fantasyland existence.

Here in London, he turns melancholy, musing about going through his recent travails without them, a fucked-up genius missing his fucked-up genius fellow travelers. As Depp's life unraveled, he no longer had his closest confidants. Depp goes glassy-eyed thinking about his loneliness. "Marlon and Hunter," he says. "I needed my guys."

For more than a decade, what was good for Johnny Depp was good for Joel Mandel, and the financial manager took many steps to keep it that way. He installed an extra phone line in his Los Angeles home that had a special ring so Depp could reach him at any point, day or night. On the occasion of his wife's 40th birthday, Mandel had a hundred people over to his house. Still, he reached out to Depp and told him he would excuse himself from the party if Depp wanted to talk about his latest financial adventure.

During the good times, Mandel told Depp his goal was to make him financially secure enough that he would never have to take a part just to pay the bills. They never got to that point. According to TMG's lawsuit, Depp never had more than six months of savings in the bank. This grew exponentially worse after the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series began, earning him approximately \$300 million. Depp had always been critically acclaimed, but it was Jack Sparrow who turned him into a global brand with action figures and \$30-million-per-film paychecks coming in. But Depp's tastes grew wilder, and daily conversations between Mandel and Christi revolved around either trying to stop Depp from buying another house or finding a project that would pay for the new house.

Except for Christi, Depp couldn't count on his actual family for guidance – they seemed at the core of many of his financial fiascos. Over some tuna-fish-and-corn sandwiches – Depp's favorite – he talks of the money pit that Betty Sue's farm in Lexington had become. Soon after its purchase, he tells me, Depp's other sister and her husband moved in and were hired to manage the property. Eventually, their son joined the payroll. (Meanwhile, Depp was supporting his ex-partner Vanessa Paradis and their two children, Jack and Lily-Rose, in their own French villa that Depp bought for them.)

According to Depp, after years of keeping him in the dark, Mandel communicated to him that the Kentucky branch of his family's spending was out of control. So Depp asked him to send a file with all their expenses. He was in makeup on a *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie when the file arrived, and he asked his assistant to print it. His assistant said he couldn't do it.

"It's over 200 pages," the assistant said.

Depp called Mandel and asked him what the hell was going on.

"[My sister] was buying handbags for my mom, who was bedridden," Depp recalls. "Jewelry, fucking this, that, everything."

In 2013, Depp was told that Betty Sue had terminal cancer. He moved her up to Los Angeles and rented her a \$30,000-a-month house that was far enough away from his spread that they could coexist. Somehow, Betty Sue got better with treatment, and Depp informed the Mandels that the lease should be ended and Betty Sue could head back to Kentucky. But the house kept running up \$30,000-a-month charges because, according to Depp, the Mandels forgot to cancel the lease.

(TMG says that Mandel simply renegotiated the house's lease as directed, which required giving the landlord four months' notice.)

Betty Sue died in 2016. I ask Depp if he has sold her farm. He tells me his family still lives there.

"Their thinking is that I'm going to take care of them forever and that the farm is now theirs," he says. "I didn't make that promise."

I then ask what seems like a logical question: Why didn't Depp just pick up the phone and read his family the riot act and cut off their credit cards?

Depp furrows his brow and looks confused. He's convinced that was TMG's job: "That's why I'm paying them."

Ironically, the Mandels argue that nothing would have made Joel Mandel happier than cutting up the Depp family's credit cards, but Johnny couldn't pull the trigger. Back at my hotel, I look at Depp's court filings. Among the pile of charges against the Mandels, there is no mention of the Kentucky farm.

Depp's case centers largely on the claim that he was kept clueless until it was too late, despite the fact that, besides himself, the only person who had the power to authorize new expenditures was his sister Christi. The Mandels have produced a series of e-mails and notes that undermine Depp's argument. In 2008, Depp was intent on purchasing a house adjacent to his property in the Hollywood Hills. Mandel suggested it wasn't a great time to buy the house, but it could happen if other cuts were made. Depp wrote back, "We must buy this house."

In the same e-mail, he simultaneously chastised Mandel for sending him hefty packets with too much information and expressed complete confusion at how his finances were run.

There are more signs Depp knew his situation was chronically precarious. Mandel wrote to him again in 2008, as the Great Recession was hitting, about his financial shortcomings. In the same e-mail where Depp insisted on buying the Hollywood Hills house, he said he would talk to his agent, and Bloom, his lawyer, and rectify things: "I will call Tracey and Jake and prepare them to make some ludicrous deals to refill the glass and make it fucking overflow."

A TMG staffer was tasked with trying to moderate Depp's spending on his various homes. In January 2009, Depp contacted Mandel and demanded that the staffer be taken off his account immediately because he was restricting his spending. Later that year, according to Mandel's notes submitted into evidence, Mandel suggested they meet to discuss his financial situation that had further deteriorated because Depp had taken much of the previous 12 months off. But Christi called Mandel back the next day and said Depp didn't want to discuss it and knew what needed to be done.

According to Mandel's notes, Christi called and said, "He realizes he needs to work his ass off" to maintain his lifestyle and that he wanted Mandel to do whatever was necessary to get him through the current rough patch.

That November, Mandel and Christi communicated about a loan that needed to be taken out to cover obligations until Depp got paid for his next film. Christi replied that it was hard to get Depp to sign the loan papers: "He left before I could get his signature . . . always had someone in the room and never able to have him alone. . . ."

Mandel e-mailed Depp again, asking him to watch his holiday spending. Depp e-mailed Mandel back on December 7th, 2009:

"Dear Joel, First, thank you for dealing and getting me through. Secondly, I am doing my very best on holiday spending, but there is only so much I can do, as I need to give my kiddies and *famille* as good a Christmas as possible, obviously within reason. But, regarding the plane situation . . . I don't have all that many options at the moment. A commercial flight with paparazzis in tow would be a fucking nightmare of monumental proportions. . . . What else can I do??? You want me to sell some art??? I will. You want me to sell something else??? Sure . . . what???"

By January 2010, according to court filings, Mandel was still requesting that Depp sign loan papers. He told Christi that "we are almost \$4,000,000 overdrawn." Depp eventually signed.

Depp was stubborn even when his friends tried to save him from himself. In 2010, he started Unison Records, his own label, but by 2014 it had lost between \$4 million and \$5 million. His friend Bruce Witkin, the label's president, apologized for the losses and suggested it was time to call it quits, addressing Depp by the pet name Baha. Depp wrote back to Bwoosie, a.k.a. Witkin, telling him to keep going and that it took the world 20 years to catch up to his genius. The label was finally closed a year later.

Depp's spending didn't change as he aged. In what court filings by TMG call a "come to Jesus moment," Mandel set up a meeting in 2012 between himself, Depp and Bloom at Depp's Hollywood Hills compound, where Depp had purchased five homes that he had knitted together into an urban estate. It was deliberately planned by the Mandels to occur in the late afternoon, when Depp was clearer headed. Joel Mandel presented Depp with a one-page summary of his situation and stated flatly that something had to change or the financial futures of Depp and his kids were in jeopardy: Depp grudgingly agreed to sell his yacht but would consistently whinge about the sale to Mandel until the end of their relationship.

The "come to Jesus" meeting was actually the beginning of the end, though the relationship teetered on precariously for three more years. According to the countersuit, in 2015, Mandel made another plea to Depp about his dire circumstances, and Depp responded by text: "I am ready to face the music, in whatever way I must. . . . I know there's a way to dig ourselves out of this hole and I'm bound and determined to do it." Things didn't get better. In August 2015, Mandel told Depp's staff that there had to be new rules on controlling expenses on travel, car rental and town-car services.

Later that year, Mandel and his other advisers told Depp he had to make two movies and sell Hameau, his St. Tropez estate, and he had to do it quickly in order to cover millions in loans he

had taken out to cover previous debts. The message got the actor's attention. Depp responded by asking Mandel if he was broke.

Depp seemed to come around. He initially agreed on selling Hameau but then reneged after receiving a crying phone call from his daughter, Lily-Rose, begging him not to sell her childhood home. A conflicted Depp took his frustrations out on Mandel: "Listen, you and I are going to have to fucking sit down and you're going to have to explain this shit to me because I don't appreciate a phone call from you in the 11th hour," Depp recalls telling Mandel. "If you're going to call me, call me in the third hour."

It wasn't out of the ordinary for Depp to send an apologetic text or e-mail a few hours after an outburst. Depp vacillated about Hameau, and the property was briefly listed for \$13 million and then jumped to \$27 million, a sign that Depp was in no hurry to unload it. He broke promises to make the house available for potential buyers. Around the same time, he bought \$108,000 in suits while on a trip to Singapore, according to communication from someone who was there.

By January 2016, Mandel was informing Christi that they had 30 days of liquidity left. Things got so desperate that Mandel told Depp staffers to stop spending money on houseplants. A frustrated Depp said he wanted to review his accounts. The Mandels didn't have a problem with that. Depp still professed he trusted Joel Mandel, texting him in late February that he had great love for him. But then communication suddenly ceased. Depp fired TMG 10 days later, in March 2016, and the legal war began.

In our conversations in London, Depp's ugly 2016 divorce from Heard is the subject that dare not say its name, but it is inextricably linked to Depp's troubles. Before Depp met Heard, his relationship with women was publicly chivalrous. When Penélope Cruz told Depp that she was pregnant right before the beginning of the shoot for the fourth *Pirates of the Caribbean*, she wondered if she should drop out of the project. Depp told her that was ridiculous. "He protected me every day, and by the end, I was six months pregnant," says Cruz. "I'll never forget that."

Depp and Heard met on the set of *The Rum Diary*, an odd, unsuccessful ode to Hunter S. Thompson's early reporting years. Christi was apparently opposed to their marriage, and that opposition led to a strain on her relationship with her brother; Depp's last constant connection to the real world was severed. Depp, according to TMG's suit, spent \$1 million on the wedding, held on his Bahamian island.

On May 20th, 2016, Depp's mother died. The next night, Heard reportedly called iO Tillet Wright, an artist and friend of the couple, and told Wright to call 911. Wright wrote later on the website Refinery29, "I could hear [Depp] saying, 'What if I pulled your hair back?'"

Wright called the police, and photographs of Heard with a bruise on her face emerged. Wright also wrote: "The reports of violence started with a kick on a private plane, then it was shoves and the occasional punch, until finally, in December, she described an all-out assault and she woke up with her pillow covered in blood. I know this because I went to their house. I saw the pillow with my own eyes. I saw the busted lip and the clumps of hair on the floor."

Two days later, Heard filed for divorce, on the eve of Depp's mother's funeral. That summer, video was leaked to TMZ of Depp smashing cabinets and pouring himself a Big Gulp-size glass of red wine. When he realized Heard was filming the incident, he appeared to grab her phone and trash it. The couple settled their divorce in August, filing a joint statement that partially read, "Our relationship was intensely passionate and at times volatile but always bound by love. Neither party has made false accusations for financial gain. There was never any intent of physical or emotional harm."

Heard received a reported \$7 million payment – which she donated to charity – and they both signed nondisclosure agreements. Before I arrived, Waldman had instructed me that Depp couldn't speak about Heard because of the NDA.

Heard's name was front and center that night in London because J.K. Rowling had released a statement – in the wake of the #MeToo movement – explaining why she hadn't fired Depp from *Fantastic Beasts*. "When Johnny Depp was cast as Grindelwald, I thought he'd be wonderful in the role," Rowling said. "However, around the time of filming his cameo in the first movie, stories had appeared in the press that deeply concerned me and everyone most closely involved in the franchise. . . . However, the agreements that have been put in place to protect the privacy of two people, both of whom have expressed a desire to get on with their lives, must be respected. Based on our understanding of the circumstances, the filmmakers and I are not only comfortable sticking with our original casting, but are genuinely happy to have Johnny playing a major character in the movies."

Later that night, Depp tells me about the acute depression he entered as his personal and financial lives came crashing down simultaneously.

"I was as low as I believe I could have gotten," says Depp in a dead voice. "The next step was, 'You're going to arrive somewhere with your eyes open and you're going to leave there with your eyes closed.' I couldn't take the pain every day."

He went on tour with the Hollywood Vampires and decided to write a memoir on an old manual typewriter, like his hero Thompson.

"I poured myself a vodka in the morning and started writing until the tears filled my eyes and I couldn't see the page anymore," he says. He wipes his eyes with the sleeves of his white shirt and continues his monologue. "I kept trying to figure out what I'd done to deserve this. I'd tried being kind to everyone, helping everyone, being truthful to everyone." He pauses for a moment. "The truth is most important to me. And all this still happened."

I have a harder time getting an answer on how Christi had received \$7 million in unaccounted money, and his assistant Nathan Holmes nearly \$750,000. Depp describes Christi as being the Mandels' "patsy," without going further into detail. Members of Depp's inner circle later tell me that Depp and Christi's relationship was badly damaged when he married Heard without a prenup. "He cut himself off from the only people looking out for him," a longtime associate tells me. The former insider also maintained the idea that Depp didn't know his sister was receiving payments from his account was ludicrous.

Depp also tells me that Holmes never really received the total \$750,000. "He didn't get it all," says Depp. Later, Waldman tells me that Depp was confused and that Holmes had received all the money. (Both Holmes and Christi still work for Depp, with his sister running his production company, Infinitum Nihil.)

One of the central questions at the heart of the competing lawsuits will be the court deciding whether informing Christi of Depp's financial state is the same as telling Depp himself. In TMG's quiver is an e-mail submitted into evidence in which Christi told a Mandel associate not to bother her brother because she was "a one-stop informational center" for Depp. When Mandel tried to apply Christi's producer's share of back-end movie profits to pay down the loan, according to sources familiar with the transaction, Depp became furious and refused to allow it, hardly the action of a man being bamboozled by his management company.

It seems Depp's strategy is a classic Hollywood defense: I wasn't paying attention, and while I wasn't paying attention, the people supposedly paying attention robbed me blind. He tells me that, to do justice to the assortment of eccentrics he played on film, he couldn't let the outside world intrude. (Tim Burton told me in his role of Willie Wonka, Depp was channeling one part Anna Wintour and one part Michael Jackson.)

"If there were things for me to sign that would come in – and there would be occasionally – I would sign them like this," says Depp, pantomiming signing an imaginary paper with his right hand while his head was swiveled far to the left, staring into the London gloom. "I don't want to fucking see what they are because I trust these people."

Later, he grimaces: "Now I look right at everything I sign."

After my London visit, I obtain access to some of Depp's loan agreements, including one for more than \$10 million. The terms and amount of the loan were right there on the summary page he signed. Depp would have had to sign with his eyes closed to miss them.

It appears it will be up to others to bail out Johnny Depp. One of them was almost stopped before she started. On the night of February 28th, 2017, Janine Rayburn received a courier letter from Michael Kump, TMG's primary lawyer. It read:

"I am writing to provide you with a copy of the Severance, Release, Confidentiality and Non-Disparagement Agreement that you entered into with TMG effective December 3[rd], 2010. . . ."

The letter did not arrive randomly. Rayburn is a former account manager for TMG and was tasked with handling Depp's finances. She was about to be deposed for the lawsuit. Kump's letter was a polite threat, implying that testifying would violate her 2010 separation agreement with TMG.

Rayburn was apparently undeterred and gave her deposition two days later. Quickly, it became obvious why Kump wanted to quash her testimony. Rayburn had worked on the Depp account from 2008 to 2010, and she saw things that she claims were not on the level. According to her testimony, she says her concern was piqued when she was asked to notarize documents without

Depp or Christi present – which is illegal in California. Rayburn took the documents back into Mandel's office and put them on his desk.

"I can't do this," Rayburn said she told Mandel.

According to her, on one occasion, Mandel said that Christi would sign her notary log later, but Rayburn still refused. (Mandel's lawyer denies this ever happened and that he went to extraordinary lengths to get Depp's signature while Depp was on set.) During the same time period, Rayburn saw Christi's expenses being paid out of the Depp fund; her daughter's wedding, rent and mortgage payments. On two occasions, she said she asked Christi to explain the seemingly unapproved expenditures. "He's my brother. My money is his money. His money is mine," Christi answered, according to Rayburn's testimony. Rayburn said she asked Mandel about the odd Christi-Depp situation, but he shrugged it off.

Trying to prove Rayburn's suggestions that some of Depp's financial signatures were sketchy, Waldman sent me two Depp signatures. One is for a 2010 loan, purportedly signed by Depp while he was overseas. The signature is generic and subdued. Then Waldman sent me a more recent signature that is flamboyant and outlandish. They look superficially similar. Depp didn't agree. He wrote to Waldman: "If, one wanted to make the signature APPEAR to have been done very quickly, AS MINE IS, but, in fact . . . looks as if executed from careful study, instead of organically. what i'm saying is that . . . these "shapes" DID NOT COME FROM MY HAND!!!"

During Rayburn's deposition, one of Depp's attorneys asked if Depp was kept in the loop about his spending. "I do not believe that Johnny was aware of his financial situation," said Rayburn. "To my knowledge, financial statements were not sent to him."

Rayburn was terminated from TMG in 2010, being told "it wasn't a good fit." Still, she was asked to stay on three weeks longer and train her replacement. Baffled by the firing – she received a \$40,000 severance package – Rayburn wrote two pages of contemporaneous notes to herself about her Depp experiences including: "Joel says – JD always drunk – will sign anything." (Mandel's lawyers deny that he ever said anything about Depp's drinking.)

Depp's lawyers also produced an e-mail from a Depp staffer, recounting a time when Rayburn claimed Joel Mandel needed to confront Depp about his precarious situation, but got so nervous he "went home with shingles." The staffer wrote that a residual payment from Disney saved Mandel from having to have the conversation with his star client. (A source close to Mandel claims he's never had shingles.)

Mandel's lawyers also went after Rayburn's credibility. She admitted that just because she wasn't aware of Depp getting sent a monthly statement, doesn't mean it didn't happen. To put distance between her and Depp, Mandel's lawyer elicited Rayburn to admit she'd only talked to Depp twice, and that both times were about his eBay account. Mandel's legal team also noted that she misrepresented her educational background (professing she had a bachelor's degree in business when she did not), and wasn't part of the TMG team that regularly briefed Depp on his finances.

Still Rayburn's testimony left a mark. At the end of her day of testimony, Depp's lawyers requested more time. Kump declined and said if they wanted more time, they would have to seek a court order that he would oppose. Rayburn was not deposed again.

Part of Depp's suit claims that the Mandels are guilty of inside dealing. According to his legal team, the Mandels wired \$1.5 million of Depp's money, without telling him, into Lionheart, a hedge fund that, according to the SEC, is partially owned by the Mandels. Waldman claims TMG never disclosed that they owned Lionheart. (TMG asserts there were multiple conversations.) In 2008, the Mandels put the \$1.5 million back in Depp's account with a minuscule profit of \$32,000. Depp's return was a measly 0.3 percent, which, the Mandel team says, was because Depp — always cash poor — needed the money and the market was crashing due to the Great Recession.

The chronic late payments of Depp's taxes are a black mark against TMG.

"I just had no clue," says Depp in one of the few moments when he looks genuinely worried. "If you're knowingly not paying the United States government taxes, somebody is gonna fucking catch up with you and hand you a bill and you'll probably go to the pokey."

While the Mandels claim it was all about Depp's cash-flow problems, Miriam Fisher, a tax attorney first employed by TMG and later by Ed White, suggests TMG had two options: get their clients' finances in shape so he could pay on time, or borrow money from a commercial lender and not use the Internal Revenue Service as its bank. "TMG had a lot of options, and they chose the worse one: make the IRS your creditor."

The attention of Depp's suit has shined an unwelcome spotlight on TMG, which has always kept a low profile. *The Wall Street Journal* reported in August that both the SEC and the IRS were in the preliminary stage of investigating the Mandels on alleged money laundering and fraud. (The Mandel legal team is convinced Waldman called the agencies; Waldman denies the claim.)

Whether these federal investigations will amount to anything is unknown — nothing has emerged so far — but there was no doubt whom the Mandels blamed for their troubles: Johnny Depp. TMG's lawyers released a statement:

"In 30 years of business, no current or former client of TMG has raised any issue, other than Johnny Depp, who continues to spread malicious, unfounded lies about the company. TMG will vigorously defend and defeat all of Depp's fabricated claims."

On the third day, I go back to my hotel room for a hot shower and a change of clothes before returning to the mansion.

"You should have just stayed here," says Depp.

When I tell him I needed to change my underwear, he grins.

"That's why I always wear two pairs," says Depp with a smile. "Matter of fact, I'm wearing six condoms right now." I laugh, which seemingly encourages him: "I also have a dental dam if you need one."

We are all punch-drunk in each other's company, but some are just plain drunk. Maybe it is the booze and hash, but Depp seems happy to just have someone to hang out with, even though we have exhausted the ins and outs of his case. Someone mentions they can't stand Oasis. This is enough of an opening for Depp to grab an acoustic guitar and spend 20 minutes tuning it, before squawking out a few notes of "Wonderwall." My head pounds, but you can tell the guitar brings him comfort, taking him back to his younger days when he was a male ingénue and not a punchline: bankrupt, isolated and one more mistake away from being blackballed from his industry.

He talks about his early days living with a few roommates in an L.A. flophouse. One time, after ending the previous night in a cheap Venice Beach motel, Depp returned home. Within 48 hours, everyone was scratching below the belt. There was an apartment meeting: "We're itchy. Why are we itchy?"

Depp shaved his entire body. He looked at the crabs under a magnifying glass.

"They look like crab-crabs, like from the sea." He laughs a bit. "I gave everyone scabies," says Depp, taking another drag on a cigarette. "You know how hard it is to tell your roommates that?" He puts on a voice that sounds like Kramer from *Seinfeld*: " 'Uh, I got scabies from a hotel room, I swear. Sorry, dude.' "

He recalls going to the drugstore to buy Kwell, an anti-scabies medication. "I think the guy was, 'Price check on the Kwell.' "

Everyone laughs, but Depp isn't done.

"My roommate couldn't say much. He was a bank robber." I say that sounds like bullshit, but Depp tells me to look it up.

"He was the ponytail bandit," he says. "He was 11 and 1, but that one will get you. He only robbed banks in Beverly Hills."

I look it up on my phone, and there was, in fact, a ponytail bandit in L.A. at the time. Depp nods after I show him confirmation.

"I told you," he says. "I don't lie."

The night turns into early morning. A light snow begins falling on the grand backyard of the house, a backyard that no one in Depp's entourage has set foot in during their stay.

This spring showed Depp's legal team in disarray. In April, the team gave notice that it was quitting and an obscure Orange County firm was taking its place. Three weeks later, Ben Chew, Depp's chief litigator, re-emerged and signed back up with Waldman. Adding to his troubles, Depp is being sued by his American bodyguards for back wages, and they have alleged they had to alert Depp to "illegal substances visible on his face and person" when in public. After many delays, Depp finally sat for a deposition on May 26th. The trial is still scheduled for August. What happens next is anyone's guess.

The wild card is Christi. She's made no public statements about the dispute, and neither party has accused her of wrongdoing. But the crux of the dispute may hang on how much power Depp gave her over his finances.

Legal experts say the lawsuit could cost Depp millions in legal fees, and his chance of recouping that at trial seems dubious. Waldman kept floating alternate theories involving Malaysian banks, a Hollywood superagent and Mideast investors, nothing has been substantiated – maybe he'll pull it off at the trial. Depp spent Christmas in France, the winter in the Bahamas and much of the spring at his Hollywood estate. He never did sell Hameau or any of his other properties. He seems unlikely to compromise or admit defeat.

"I have never, ever in my life been the bully kid," Depp tells me. "I never went out of my way to hurt anybody. When I was a little kid, what I was taught was never fucking start a fight, but if somebody fucking tags you or invades your fucking world, finish the fucking fight. To my mom's exact words, 'Lay them out with a fucking brick.' "

Depp says the fight is for his children, Jack and Lily-Rose, a Chanel model.

"My son had to hear about how his old man lost all his money from kids at school, that's not right," says Depp. He rubs his eyes with his tobacco-stained hands. He says one of the proudest moments of his life was when Jack said he'd started a band and Depp asked what they were called.

"The kid says 'Clown Boner.' " Depp smiles proudly. "We don't need a paternity test. That's my kid."

Depp rambles on about what he wants to do as soon as the lawsuits are settled and he is vindicated. There is a French book he wants to adapt and direct. It's about a man who loses his wife, loses everything and then checks into a senior-citizen home even though he's only in his forties.

"It's called *Happier Days*," Depp tells me. (This is not to be confused with a Keith Richards documentary that Depp says he's halfway done with, which is tentatively titled *Happy*.)

From there, it's a short jump to musing about a remake of *Titanic*, filmed entirely in a bathtub.

"That would be great, but Hollywood never takes risks anymore," says Depp with a sigh.

I want to go home, but feel reluctant to leave. One of the most famous actors in the world is now smoking dope with a writer and his lawyer while his cook makes dinner and his bodyguards watch television. There is no one around him who isn't getting paid.

Light begins to seep through the windows. Waldman goes to sleep. He has an early flight to Switzerland to go cross-country skiing with Oleg Deripaska. I see this as an opening to leave. Depp looks for a security guard to call me a cab, but his knocking goes unanswered. So he walks me out.

"Thanks for coming," says Depp. "This could be your Pulitzer."

For the next 15 minutes, Depp tries to figure out how to open the gates to his mansion fortress. He clicks buttons and pushes the fence, but nothing budes. He is a lost boy who won't find his way home before dark. I finally tell him I can shimmy over the fence. I clamber over and jump down. Through the bars we say good night.

"Take care, man," he says. He goes silent for a moment. "Thank you for listening."

He then turns around and walks back into his gilded prison and pushes open the heavy door. After a moment, it slams shut behind him.

In This Article: Johnny Depp, Pirates of the Caribbean

EXHIBIT B

Johnny Depp will not be buried

By Jonathan Heaf

The death metal begins at 2.43pm. It's loud. And it is coming from inside the church. The noise is a proud, ungovernable fury, like a prize bull being dragged to the slaughterhouse by its copper nose ring. The idyllic quiet of the southern French countryside, the soft rub of the *cigales* and the warm breeze rolling off the Mediterranean is torn down the spine by wailing, demonic vocals and pedal distortion. Everyone outside, some drinking small glasses of pastis de Marseille in the 37C heat, turn to look at the church door and then at one another.

Despite the rupture, the shattered tranquillity, it is a positive sign for those who want an audience with our host. The man rumoured to be sleeping inside the small, single-storey chapel – its original confessional area transformed into a closet, its cloister now used as an artist's studio with large, unfinished canvases leaning against the perimeter – must surely be awake. No one could sleep through what sounds like Satan's own alarm bell.

Two weeks ago there was an invitation, confirmed late yesterday, to come to Johnny Depp's villa and talk openly and without caveats. If you rise at 5am in North London, get the first Nice-bound British Airways flight out of Heathrow around 7.45am and then take a taxi for an hour due east along the scorched yellow coast, past Cannes, past Fréjus and not quite to Saint-Tropez, you will find yourself in the rural town of Le Hameau De Gassin, hemmed in by rows of young, short vines, forming tracks like nature's braids, their bruise-coloured fruit just beginning to swell and sag with new weight.

Depp's complex of around seven or eight small stone abodes sits above this quiet, unremarkable old town, with a view that stretches out over the rippling Ligurian Sea. On a clear day you can walk out to one of the several high, rocky outcrops on the estate, squint and see the island of Corsica and, beyond that, waters rich with fables and myth, where scholars believe Homer's Odysseus ordered his crew to tie him to his own mast to hear for himself the song of the Sirens.

Squint harder and you might catch Italy's west coast twinkling, with Pisa, Genoa and, beyond that, the beauty and corruption of Florence. Earlier, I arrived at the compound's gates, passing director Tim Burton and his family, who were off out on a boat trip with various children, sun-kissed and grinning. Burton has been staying with Depp these past weeks, enjoying the baked, private utopia.

Having been buzzed in, a golf cart driven by a native named Daniele takes me up to the main set of buildings. Daniele – a man in his late sixties with an impressive whipped-cream moustache and a long, ivory ponytail who, it must be noted, looks astonishingly like Asterix from René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo's famous French comics – is the man from whom Depp bought the land and original 19th-century houses 20 years ago. It was purchased by Depp and Vanessa Paradis, his then partner, as a sanctuary, a place to escape with children, to play freely away from the full beams of Los Angeles and Paris.

When the estate was listed on the market in 2015 for \$63 million – a warning shot of the actor's financial problems – many of the news reports described the property as being a “village-like compound”. As our tyres crunch their way up the wide gravel path towards the collection of stone buildings, it's easy to see why.

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There is a modest main house with weathered blue shutters, almost entirely covered in rippling, bright-green foliage. There's a hidden pool, a gazebo, a stone terrace with wooden shade and a jumble of around four or five bedrooms and bathrooms. The slanted, near-flat roof is terracotta tiled, while on the lower flank a heavy wooden door leads into a cave à vin, now converted into a cosy – if you find crypts cosy. The space is peppered with candle drippings and cowhide throws.

From here we turn hard right, pulling inside what feels like the estate's main courtyard, or village square, a place where the road widens and comes to a natural point of congregation, a patch of gravel with a small tree at its centre. In front of us, 30 feet away, is the church, silent, with its door locked, while to our left is what appears to be a quintessential French café, a building that was originally intended to be a garage. The café's brown fabric awning has a name across it in an art-nouveau period type, “Chez Marceline”, which refers to Marceline Lenoir, Paradis' long-standing acting agent.

At a polished wooden table outside the café, two men are sitting sipping Evian. Their names are John Evans and Daniel Rolle and they are expecting us. Evans' and Rolle's looks are route-one Mayfair hedgie on an off-site: crisp, pale-blue shirts (tucked in), narrow but not-too-skinny indigo jeans, a woven belt at the hips and a vintage Rolex on the wrist. It's clean, tasteful and quietly refined, rather than anything ostentatious or flash.

Evans and Rolle have been the point men in regard to today's logistics. They work for a London-based company called Hawthorn, a public-relations firm that, among other things, specialises in dealing with crisis management for companies and high-net-worth individuals.

One of Hawthorn's partner companies in the US has been consulting on the sale of The Weinstein Company, but it's worth mentioning that Evans himself advised against such a move, despite the “ludicrous fee” offered. Firms such as Hawthorn don't do minor skirmishes or call editors seeking corrections in the entertainment pages; they are a firm who exceptionally wealthy clients call if there's no one else to call. They are the Harvey Keitels of this world: wolf men, fixers, public-image adjustment specialists, polymath corporate strategists.

Ben Elliot, nephew of the Duchess Of Cornwall, is a cofounder and partner of Hawthorn. He also set up Quintessentially, the concierge service for the wealthy elite – think heli-skiing off Everest's Hillary Step or a balcony suite with a view of the Monaco Grand Prix. It was Elliot who made initial contact to ask whether GQ would be interested in meeting and talking to Depp.

Despite Depp being someone who has long underscored his disdain for the media – someone who once chased the paparazzi with a plank of wood outside a London restaurant for photographing his children – we were informed that he wanted to talk.

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It's about two months after the publication of a widely read *Rolling Stone* interview, entitled "The Trouble With Johnny Depp". It is an article that Depp will talk about later, addressing it as he does most topics, with a sort of vengeful nonchalance. This is a man, I will come to understand, who will happily spill his guts all over the table, yet remain flippant about cause and effect. This "coolness", one suspects, is his armour. The actor refers to the *Rolling Stone* article as "a sham". In fact, he goes much further. "I was shafted. The guy [journalist Stephen Rodrick] walked in with absolutely one intention. And I could see it and I thought maybe I could help him understand, you know?"

"I trusted Jann Wenner [cofounder and publisher of *Rolling Stone*], as I knew him through Hunter [S Thompson, the late writer and a mentor of Depp]. I trusted what the magazine stood for, or what it used to stand for. I wanted Jann to see if he could write, to see if a piece could be written... to put things in perspective. That's all, just to put things in perspective."

Perspective can be a treacherous thing. It can be hoodwinked. It can be manipulated. Perspective, after all, is inherently subjective. Yet Depp was right to be belligerent. Anyone who didn't know any better would have read that *Rolling Stone* profile – together with a steadily accumulating digital silo of cuttings and clickbait about the star's life of late, his financial woes, his savage and hostile divorce from American actor Amber Heard, accusations of domestic violence that he is challenging in a defamation case in the UK, and that videotape – and come away with a pretty bleak picture of the 55-year-old.

The article stated Depp was near to broke: having made \$650m on films that netted around \$3.6 billion, yet "almost all of it is gone". Up until a few weeks ago, Depp was suing his longtime business partner Joel Mandel and Mandel's brother Robert (and their firm, The Management Group [TMG]) for negligence, breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, forgery and theft.

The suit claimed that as his tax filers, TMG had failed to pay Depp's taxes on time for all 16 years of their representation, costing Depp more than \$8.3m in penalties. Depp's suit also pointed at TMG's conflicts of interests, their alleged wrongful investment of the star's money in companies with which they had a relationship and their enabling of Depp's immediate family members to spend his fortune without proper authority or knowledge. TMG counterclaimed against Depp for breach of contract and fraud, saying that it was the actor who was responsible for any financial

turmoil in which he found himself. Last summer, the *Wall Street Journal* and others reported that Depp's former business managers were to come under investigation by the American IRS, Department Of Justice and Securities And Exchange Commission for bank fraud and money laundering.

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By the time I reach Depp in his French villa, the litigation has reached a settlement and, later this month, in August, he will win the first stage of a separate case against his longtime lawyer Jake Bloom, over \$30m paid to Depp's former attorneys Bloom Hergott by his former business managers without any contract. The latter appears to be a vindication of sorts for Depp. "Hollywood jolted," reported one industry headline.

Sitting with the Hawthorn executives in Chez Marceline, waiting for Depp to emerge from his quaint, nondenominational lair, there is also continued talk of stories emerging about Heard and the pair's acrimonious split. Heard filed for divorce in May 2016, only 15 months after the couple got married in February 2015. Court records filed by Heard cited "irreconcilable differences", with a temporary restraining order granted against Depp, who Heard accused of domestic violence. A much-circulated leaked video claimed to show Depp "throwing a wine glass" at Heard and the 32-year-old's lawyers previously claimed that Depp "violently attacked" her. Heard herself was arrested for domestic violence against a previous partner in 2009. Heard denied the accusation and no charges were brought.

The claims then go from the disturbing to the downright bizarre. Although the couple's divorce settlement was reached in August 2016 – with Depp paying a reported \$7m and the restraining order lifted – even this morning, on my way to Depp's compound, the most peculiar story yet emerged from their volatile relationship, that Heard allegedly defecated in the star's bed after a particularly nasty row in April 2016. Heard has come out with a statement last night claiming the incident was far from a dirty protest on her part, but rather blamed the deposit on her dog, a 4lb teacup Yorkie called Boo, who suffers bowel problems.

As I hear the satanic noise blare out from Depp's church in France, it makes one wonder: who, or what, am I about to encounter today, at his home, inside his sanctuary? An actor who is crippled by fame, money and excess? A relic of an old Hollywood star system that is broken and growing old disgracefully? Someone who simply doesn't fit into the brave new era, an era when scandal and stories can no longer be hidden away or buried under an avalanche of enforced NDAs?

© Greg Williams



'Shall we go and sit in the sun, talk, get heatstroke, vomit and die? Maybe

later'

Or is Johnny Depp simply a man who has been wronged and harbours a genuine desire to set out to protect his name and his past work so that he can begin to bring himself back from what has been a period of his life he'd sooner forget? Does he seek vengeance against an industry – and certain individuals – that he says took advantage of his naivety? Is this a man who still believes in trying to be the outsider, an artist who desperately wants to be free of responsibility, something that might be mistaken for isolation and eccentricity but is actually something closer to a belief in romantic rebellion?

"It's time. He's ready."

As I'm led towards the church where the demonic wall of noise has finally been silenced, I realise, perhaps for the first time, that I have no idea who or what will appear, blinking into the hot white light. It feels like stepping inside the eye of everything that tornadoes around this one man and his astonishing life. As the church door opens and I hear a cough, I wonder: where does the myth of Johnny Depp end and the truth of who Johnny Depp really is begin?

"Are you a John or a Jonathan?"

"I'm Jonathan," I say. "You must be Johnny."

"Johnny, John... I'm a John. Is it Jon-a-than or Jon-a-thon? I'm John Christopher Depp II. I have a number after my name which makes me sound... I don't know, grander than I should be." Immediately there's that smile, one that hovers between charm and mischief, heroic and villainous. His eyes will remain behind an enormous pair of reflective aviator shades for the next four hours. "Shall we go and sit in the sun, talk, get heatstroke, vomit and die?" A pause. And then the head goes right back with the laugh. "Maybe later."

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Come on, Jonathan, there's a really cool little spot I want to show you..." Depp has emerged from his slumber looking if not healthy then certainly healthier than I expected. Friends I had spoken to about my assignment voiced concerns over Depp's mental and physical state – most with little to no actual factual insight, it should be said – many referring to an image taken of the star recently while on tour round Europe with his band, Hollywood Vampires.

The photograph, taken by a fan, showed Depp gaunt, pallid and in need of some sleep – or at least a large green juice and once round the block on a SoulCycle. Not only that, but, perhaps even more disturbingly, his usual battered fedora had been replaced with a baseball cap, a baseball cap with the word "fugly" emblazoned on it. Johnny Depp? In a baseball cap?

Today, however, Depp's skin is clear and absent of bloat or puffiness. It must be added, however, that his clothes are less intact. He is wearing a baseball cap and his

shirt in particular appears to have had its arms pulled off, as if it was once the property of an irate Bruce Banner pre-anger management classes. In fact, the shirt is like nothing I have ever seen before: part dress shirt, but with a mandarin collar, yet no sleeves. Over his shirt is a pinstripe blue waistcoat and around his neck are various chains, trinkets and talismans.

On the end of one necklace is a silver "gonzo fist", the icon characterised by two thumbs and four fingers holding a peyote button originally used by Hunter S Thompson's 1970 campaign for sheriff of Pitkin County, Colorado. Through Thompson's prolific life and writing style, the fist has become a symbol of gonzo journalism as a whole. For Depp it is both a memento of his late friend, someone he once lived with in a basement in Owl Farm, Thompson's base camp in Aspen, Colorado, and a reminder of how one should work and live, with a strong sense of the individual and unhinged from corporate or fiscal systems. As Depp so often says, "Beat the system from the inside out."

© Greg Williams



The jeans are baggy and a patchwork of blues, holes that have been mended and stitched innumerable times. Depp's trouser-wearing history has always been, well, patchy, to say the least, always looking like he's just come from break-up sex with a werewolf. He was once taking a child to a birthday party in Los Angeles when he realised his jeans had a hole the size of a hubcap across the rear-end. Rather than change, which would have been the sensible thing, he grabbed a roll of silver gaffer tape and fashioned his own filler.

Depp's belt is something else. It's worn brown leather, but the buckle is attached to the side rather than the front. It's unusual, I note, as we walk towards a huge stone table where we will sit and talk in the shade for the afternoon. "This? Well, it's no Texas Belt Buckle. You know what Texas Belt Buckle is?" I have to confess I do not. "Well, a Texas Belt Buckle is where you have to pull your scrotum up over the top of your jeans without undoing them. All the way up and over. Oh, the horror of it all... You have to bring your cock back around and stick it through... Your cock has to go around the bend in a sort of semi fruit basket and then, well, then you're fucked. You pull your testicles out over the top and leave them just resting there. That's a Texas Belt Buckle. Then, of course, there's a Dirty Sanchez, which is something else entirely. 'Dirty Sanchez', which I managed to sneak into *Pirates...*"

For those in the dark about what a Dirty Sanchez might be, all you need to know is that it's a term that originated in the spit'n'grind of the LA porn industry, something that could occur when certain protruding members are stuck into certain orifices and then into certain other holes. I'll let your imagination run dark, but let's just say it's unfathomably gross and a term for an obscene sex act that couldn't be less suitable for inclusion in a \$300m Disney film about a pirate, itself based on a family-friendly

theme park ride in Florida.

“Yeah, I [said] it in *Pirates* and they never caught it when it went out to the theatres,” Depp chuckles as we take our seats opposite one another. “They caught it when it went to DVD. I did it because I wanted to see who would be the one at Disney to find it...” As to why Depp wanted to find out who would be the person to red flag such a thing is unclear, although the fact he is still proud to have got the obscene term included in that first blockbuster – albeit as a mumbled, near incoherent entry – and past corporate eyeballs (and ears) is not insignificant.

It serves to illustrate what has been, and what still is, at Depp’s moral core, a conflict that boils and foams beneath the actor’s surface: the tussle of being true to his artistic sensibilities while also being a willing participant in and figurehead of a billion-dollar franchise. It is the age-old problem faced by many successful creatives, that of art vs commerce.

Jack Sparrow was for Johnny Depp what *Iron Man* would eventually become for Robert Downey Jr: a global hit that pivoted the actor – or at least his image – from that of a young, somewhat surly indie misfit who had already illustrated a distaste for being a teenage pin-up (via *21 Jump Street*), wore oversized vintage leather jackets and smoked Marlboro Reds while smooching wild fashion cats such as Kate Moss, into a global megastar with his own merchandise line, including a 25cm-high pirate figurine with removable cutlass and leather booties.

It was the moment the man who played Ed Wood turned into Mickey Mouse, albeit Mickey Mouse with a fondness for a bottle of Château Calon Ségur (2014). “I was freaked out by it,” he admits when he realised where acting was going to take him, rather than music, which had always been his main creative outlet. “I mean, at the beginning I genuinely didn’t give a fuck about acting. But I began to enjoy it. I enjoyed creating those characters up there, being in the trenches and sparring with collaborators, actors, directors... The trouble with working with these big studios is they can get uncomfortable about certain creative decisions you make. That happened with *Pirates*. My view is if the studio isn’t worried then I’m not doing my job properly.”

Did Disney try to alter his *Pirates* performance? “Disney hated me. [They were] thinking of every way they could to get rid of me, to fire me. ‘Oh, we’re going to have to subtitle him.’ ‘We don’t understand Captain Jack Sparrow. What’s wrong with him?’ ‘What’s wrong with his arms?’ ‘Is he drunk?’ ‘Is he mentally fucking stupefied?’ ‘Is he gay?’”

I ask Depp directly: did Disney ask if Jack Sparrow was being played as openly homosexual in *Pirates*? “They asked me, ‘Is he gay?’ and I answered the question over the phone. It was a lady called Nina Jacobson from Disney at the time [Jacobson is herself gay, it should be noted, and has long campaigned for greater diversity within the all-male club of old Hollywood boardrooms] and she asked me a couple of questions and then said, ‘What is it, Johnny? Is he gay?’ My tendency, of course, is to be irreverent so I said, ‘Nina, didn’t you know all my characters are gay?’ That was a pretty abrupt end to the conversation. And I just continued shaping Jack the way I believed was best.”

Was Depp angry at Disney for its lack of vision? Its lack of trust? “No. I told them, ‘Look, you don’t like what I’m doing, fire me. You hired me to do a job and play the character and this is what I want to do.’ This is the work. I mean, hadn’t they seen

any of the work I'd done previously? You might want to take a look at that before you hire a motherfucker, you know?"

Did he feel vindicated once it was clear his treatment for Jack was going to work, when audiences fell in love with him? "I knew I was right. Even the very first time when they came back to me saying, 'No, no, what is this?' it felt right. Even when the other actors were looking at me like I was an absolute menace, I stayed with it. I mean, the older actors were probably thinking, 'Jesus Christ, he's wrecked.' Because I would tear up the script on set. I'd go rogue. I'd fly for a little bit to see where things went. And not everyone appreciates this way of working. Oliver Stone didn't appreciate it when I changed all the lines he wrote for me in *Platoon* and that's no doubt probably why most of my stuff ended up on the cutting-room floor."

Depp and I are sitting under what can only be described as a tent or canopy of green vines. We are about 150 metres from the main house. Inside the tent is a huge, monolithic stone table and benches that resemble something dragged from the palaeolithic age, pockmarked and grooved from years of wear and deterioration. Depp bought it when they acquired the house. "I did a film with Roman Polanski [*The Ninth Gate*] in Paris with Vanessa. We were supposed to stay two months and we ended up staying ten years." As we talk, Depp keeps his cap and his shades on. Occasionally he seems a little sleepy, stifling a yawn, although after a while he shakes off the sleep and is engaging, coherent and certain. He twists and moves rarely, maybe tucking his legs to one side or sitting cross-legged like a sort of skater/war vet/yogi. Otherwise, he is entirely still. He takes care with his answers, speaking at a steady pace, unafraid to be patient and wait until the right word arrives from his consciousness and escape into the ether.

A man, maybe a housekeeper, brings us refreshments in one of those light-blue plastic laundry baskets: sweet, bottle-green tea, Coca-Cola, water. No alcohol. Later I ask Depp if he believes he has a problem with alcohol: "Do I like a drink? Yes. Do I need a drink? No." The only visible vice is the rolling tobacco that he smokes in liquorice papers; he'll roll one up every 20 minutes or so and often not light it immediately. He lets it hang from his mouth, the paper sticking to his lower lip as he talks and answers questions. He has all the tobacco warnings, all the images of blackened lungs, scribbled out by an assistant. His fingers are cluttered with rings and his arms are full of black ink.

The tattoos have been much discussed: the "Wino Forever" on the upper right biceps being perhaps the most infamous, an alteration of what originally was "Winona Forever", which Depp got when he was dating Winona Ryder, the pair having worked together on Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* in 1990. A more recent tattoo read "Slim" in a gothic font, a letter on each of the proximal phalanges (the finger bones closest to the palm of the hand). Slim was the name Depp used to call his ex-wife Amber Heard. After the divorce he had it amended to "Scum" and more recently "Scam".

"The truth will come out in all of this and I will be standing on the other side of the roaring rapids. I hope other people will too"

There's something about the torment of the past few years that, intentionally or not, shakes such spiky subjects – his break-up, his reputation, his financial problems – to the surface. Quite simply, they are in the air. I can feel it. Depp can feel it. And without even being nudged, the topics fall onto the table and demand to be picked at.

Depp, one can tell, feels he has suffered, sounding at times like a wounded animal who has healed and is now ready to bite back. He is also, although he may deny it, angry – angry about a lot of things – and he’s vengeful and absolutely, categorically certain of his position and his standing.

“The last three or four years has felt like a perverse situation that was inflicted on me. It hurts.” How did the actor take the claims about his long-term managers eviscerating his trust, their relationship, in that way?

“It is crass to speak about money but, I mean, when I found out the *Pirates 5* film had just been finished, right before the business manager started to go, ‘Oh, you’ve got to sell the house in France! Oh, my god! Shit’s hitting the fan!’ Now, my front fee – I am even embarrassed to say it – for *Pirates 5* alone was £35m. And then I went on my honeymoon after that film and while I was on honeymoon that’s when I got the call from the guy and I was like, ‘What? I don’t understand? How could this be?’”

TMG claimed that they did what they could to handle Depp’s finances responsibly and repeatedly warned him that he was overspending, but he has a different perspective. “My belief was that I needed to not envelop myself in the notion of money, how much I was making, how much was there. I just knew that I was making enough money in salary and back-end that everything should be tickety-boo. Nothing should have gone as sideways as it did. And when I found out, that is when the war began. It was from every angle. The judge, you know, called them on all the petty personal allegations and said you are trying to decapitate this man in a public forum. That is not what you do.”

Depp has a theory, however, about a wider conspiracy being fuelled by the troubles surrounding his finances and deteriorating marriage, a theory that points to the Hollywood industry itself, “this vile fucking circus”, as the actor calls it. “But did it stop all the power mongers in Hollywood who were interested in shutting me up? Big money was being thrown about. People suing me at every opportunity. I mean, it’s all so obvious. Listen, I know I was never going to be Cinderella – I know this and accept it. But it felt like within a very, very short period of time that suddenly this version – for lack of a better word – of Cinderella had been immediately turned into the beast. He’s Quasimodo.

“I could feel people look at me differently, because of the accusations towards you. And then people start putting things in magazines: ‘He’s insane. He needs to take a sanity test...’ You know, ludicrous stuff. But the only thing that I could do was know what I still know. Ultimately, the truth will come out in all of this and I will be standing on the right side of the roaring rapids. I hope other people will be too. I know the truth and if I had to walk away from all of it today, the job, the career, all of it, and go toodle-oo, then fine.

“I’ve got nothing to prove to anyone, because I’ve never been in competition with anyone. I don’t buy into that shit. I’m not interested in receiving any spray-painted action figures. You know, maybe whatever this thing is, whatever I leave behind, you know, my legacy to my kids or the people, I haven’t watched 98 per cent of that shit. It may be completely insane. It may be crap. It may be interesting. I don’t fucking know what it is. But what I do know is that I did something, and I tried something different, for a period of years. Did it work? Who the fuck knows? But I did it and I’m fine to stop.

“I love the process of creating a character. I love the safety of, you know, being that

character. I mean, there was great safety in being as open as you could possibly make yourself on *Edward Scissorhands* and to try to see things, mundane, normal things, as beautiful and new, you know? Captain Jack was a different animal, Ed Wood, a different animal, Mad Hatter [from *Alice In Wonderland*], Willy Wonka [*Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*]...

“Yet there’s a common thread going through all these characters. There’s a filament that connects them. Even though they’re all very different, they’re all very much the same, because it all has to come out of some sort of truth, you know? And the truth is they’re all fucking misfits. They’re all misfits and they’re all misunderstood. And judged in a condescending manner, in a bad way.”

The message is loud and clear as to what Depp believes went down with his long-term management and business partners. I wonder: does he worry about his reputation, his legacy, not least in regards to women? Is he concerned that so much of what has been put out in the press, so much of the scandal, has caused an irreversible erosion of his good name? Or does he simply not worry because, as he says, he never wanted to be put on some pedestal or claim to be a role model, a Cinderella figure?

“Do you know... I’ll tell you...” The following pause is long. Depp and I sit in silence. The question hovers over us. Then, he seems to simply decide to talk.

“It’s not about being a role model. No, it’s not that at all. The tape that came out...” He stops and chuckles and repeats his words, “The tape that came out, or the tape that someone made, that miraculously appeared on YouTube, taken from someone’s phone. That was not Downtown [LA, where he lived with Amber Heard]. She [Heard] wanted to make like it was recent. It was an older video and [what happened in it] had to do with finding out that I had lost hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.”

The video in question, blurry, clandestine, shows Depp filling a large beaker with red wine and then grabbing Heard’s phone after seeing she is recording. The video was “leaked” or released by showbiz gossip channel TMZ in the States, although compared to Heard’s other allegations against Depp the video content seems unexceptional or certainly the least disturbing.

Although the pair have now settled out of court, what Heard alleges to have happened in April 2016 still reverberates throughout my meeting with Depp. Heard alleged that on Saturday 21 May, Depp attacked his wife and threw an iPhone at her face. Heard phoned the police, who found “no evidence of any crime”. However, Heard claims to have taken a selfie later that day showing bruising around her right eye and cheek. The following Wednesday she filed for divorce. Depp is currently suing the *Sun* for alleging in a headline, since altered, that he is a wife beater.

I feel like I have to broach the subject with Depp. Does the actor consider himself a violent man? An aggressive man? Can he lose his temper or is he prone to if intoxicated? “The thing that hurt me is being presented as something that you’re really as far away from as you could possibly get, you know?”

“Then there was that time when the paparazzi were trying to take a photograph of Vanessa and she’s pregnant with Lily-Rose and I was not going to let them make a circus out of it. So I did what I had to do. Got her in the car, they didn’t get the picture, and I said, ‘Take a fucking picture because then I’ll stove your fucking head

in. You've got your cameras out. First one click. Let's go.' And that's just the truth. I would've. I've even said before, if a paparazzo gets a shot, they're far away and they get a shot of me and my kid, whatever, that's their thing. But if I catch you, I will eat your nose. I will eat your nose, chew it up and swallow it in front of you and then you'll fucking think about it next time. I fucking mean it. But to..."

Depp goes quiet again. It seems like he needs to take stock every so often, to recharge, to get back into a specific lane or mood every time the conversation veers into talking about the volatile relationship with Heard and the results of its breakdown. "To harm someone you love? As a kind of bully? No, it didn't, it couldn't even sound like me. So, initially, I just kept my mouth shut, you know? I knew it was going to stick on me and it would get weirder. Keep going, you know? Go nuts. I ain't going to get into a pissing contest with someone about it. Spit out what you need to spit out and, you know, my attorneys will take care of the rest. I never went out and spoke about the shit.

"But of course I care what my family and my kids think. I mean, you realise right away, essentially, that what is being done is the commencement of what they hope is to be your funeral." Depp is still talking at a measured pace, in his low, cool tones, but his words are just a little clipped at the ends. His vowels just a little firmer.

"And worse than that, to take away future earnings that are for my kids, you know? I do this shit for my kids, man. How could someone, anyone, come out with something like that against someone, when there's no truth to it whatsoever? I'm sure it wasn't easy for my 14-year-old boy to go to school, you know what I mean? With people going, 'Hey, look at this magazine, man. What, your dad beats up chicks or something?' Why did he have to go through that? Why did my daughter have to go through that?" I tell Depp I can see how that would anger him. "She didn't..." Depp is often all too aware that some of the intricacies of his and Heard's relationship need to be put in the third person. This is why, at times, he will start off using a subjective pronoun but switch to something more objective, swapping a "she" for "that person".

"Why didn't that person speak to the police?" continues Depp. "I mean, they spoke to the police, but the police saw nothing and they offered her an emergency medical technician. She said no. Police see nothing on her. Police see nothing broken in the place, no marks, and then they offer her an EMT to have a look at her and she says no and I don't know if it was the next day or a couple of days later, but then there was a bruise. There was a red mark and then there was a brown bruise."

A day after the alleged phone-throwing took place, Heard was seen at a party, specifically Amanda de Cadenet's 44th birthday party. De Cadenet posted a picture of herself, with Heard smiling brightly on her right and model Amber Valletta to her left. Heard is tagged in the photo; her hair is brushed over her left eye and cheek. At some point, however, the image was deleted. Depp is emphatic about his version of events. "She was at a party the next day. Her eye wasn't closed. She had her hair over her eye, but you could see the eye wasn't shut. Twenty-five feet away from her, how the fuck am I going to hit her? Which, by the way, is the last thing I would've done. I might look stupid, but I ain't fucking stupid."

To suggest that a woman, a man or anyone might have made up such a serious allegation is a tremendously dangerous and damaging thing to do. If we as a global community are striving for equality and acceptance to run through every part of our lives, through all races, cultures and genders, then we need to believe those who stand up and claim to have been subjected to physical or verbal abuse. Let me be

clear: this is not a piece of investigative reporting. It is merely a snapshot, a chance to sit down and talk to a person of immense interest and talent, who has, it must be noted, brought joy to millions of film lovers all over the world, ever since he moved from Kentucky to LA and a friend, Nicolas Cage, told him he should go and see his acting agent.

This isn't a piece claiming to know with any authority about what happened between Johnny Depp and Amber Heard in May 2016 or at any other time between the pair in private. All I wanted to do was come to Depp and ask him to give his side of the story, which up until now has not been properly heard. Before we met, it was agreed with his advisors at Hawthorn that both parties would go into this meeting with one simple aim: to record what happens candidly. From my side, this is what I saw and this is the conversation we had.

"We probably shouldn't be talking about this," continues Depp, "but I am worried. I worry about the people that bought it and I worry about her. It's just not right. I will never stop fighting. I'll never stop. They'd have to fucking shoot me. An episode like this takes time to get over. It's a mourning for someone you thought was..."

Again, a pause and quiet. All I can hear is the blood rushing about my skull, nitroed by adrenaline and the swirling white nicotine clouds.

The love of his life?

"Well, something. I did marry her somehow."

Is he single now?

"Yeah," he says, chuckling and sounding somewhat relieved.

Does that feel good?

"Yeah."

Does he think about wanting to find love ever again?

"No."

I need to take a leak. Depp tells me I can use his bathroom and that I'll find it back at the church. He gives me a set of instructions and directions, although with the electricity of the conversation we have just had still pinging about in my hot skull I nod and smile but when I actually arrive at the church I realise that I wasn't really paying attention. I walk in through the main door and that's when I realise I am standing slap bang in the middle of Johnny Depp's bedroom. Alone. With a full bladder.

Actually, I am not quite in his bedroom yet. I am in a small kitchenette. There's a sink and a box of tissues on a small table and beyond that a door that leads to the bedroom. I can see it's the bedroom because I can see the huge four-poster bed against the far wall. I venture further in, thinking that there must be an en suite somewhere and now I really am in the middle of Johnny Depp's bedroom, inside his church, which he had built in the compound he bought with his ex-partner 20 years ago. It makes one's head spin to be alone in someone's private space. It's so intimate, like climbing inside their head or diary and riffling through their thoughts without

telling them you're doing so.

I take a quick scan of the room. There's a jumble of family photographs, a guitar on a stand and clothes strewn about like a teenager just home from school. Down the far end, towards the main church door, which is blocked, two sofas face one another. On the sofa closest to me, down the right-hand side is the most intriguing object of all: a black vintage typewriter with round, silver keys. To the left of the machine is a pile of notes and typed pages. I had heard a rumour that Depp was writing a memoir, a book of his life, and had been doing so for the past few years. It's a book about the abuse he suffered at the hands of his junkie, desperately violent late mother; about how, in anger, he used to take a baseball bat from the garage as a kid and just spend an hour wailing it against a palm tree in their yard; a book about the work, the films that never made it; about his relationships, his friendships; about when Allen Ginsberg called the actor as he was dying; about Bob Dylan, his friend; about Edward Scissorhands; about the industry, the circus; about the corruption, the excess and the sordid beautiful truth about it all.

There's a page spooled into the machine already. There are a handful of sentences typed, the black ink speckled and smudged on the grained, ivory paper. What is written is private. It's also eloquent. It reads like someone trying to write vividly, someone desperate to get it out, get it down, so he might hold it up and scream, "Look! This is what happened!" This feels like snooping. I make a swift exit and go back to the bathroom in the café. Eventually I wander back to Depp, the smoke signals from his cigarette indicating he is still where I left him.

"You know, on the road with the band, it's impossible to bring oil paints," explains Depp. "Mineral spirit stinks up the fucking place, you know? So I've just been doing watercolours and odd drawings. I've also been doing a lot of writing. I kind of started a book, a couple of months before I broke up with Amber."

Fiction? Memoir? A play?

"I've written around 300 pages. I have about 300 more pages more to go. I am halfway. They are more memories. And some of the beauty and the knowledge that I've been able to glean or sponge off of some of these magic fucking people I know, from Brando to Hunter to Patti Smith to Dylan to Ginsberg. I have been so lucky to have met all these folk. I don't have cards or make notes really. No structure is blocked out. I have reminders. I'll make a list of reminders."

Of events he wants to remember?

"Yes, but it's not written in any kind of linear form. It should be more like the unplanned telling of a story around the campfire." I ask Depp if he finds it hard writing about some of the more painful memories.

"Sure. I mean my childhood was dark. My mum wouldn't edit. There was no editing. She would say what she meant, what she felt, in that instant. No matter how wrong it might have been even, or how hideously evil it was in the moment, she didn't edit. It came out: bleurgh! She was out of her mind, obviously, and she didn't know what the fuck she was doing. She got four kids and she hated the world. Was there fuck loads of verbal abuse? Yeah, man. Was there fuck loads of physical abuse? Yes. And never-ending, to the point that pain, physical pain, was just a given. But the last four, five years that I was involved, let's say... Well, that was quite a dark time too.

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"I mean, you can write about those things and what's interesting is you write about those things early on and once you've had a few years away from that chapter you go back and reread what you've done so far. And then you realise that you do feel the same way you did, but you're so far beyond it. It puts everything else into perspective. Because at a certain point one must be able to say, 'What the fuck else can any of you do now? What else can any of you do to hurt me?'"

The patter has changed. He is still calm, still warm, but the emotions are right here on the table with us, right in our faces. Maybe it's just Depp's natural charisma, but the intensity of the conversation feels like lifting weights. Not because it's difficult to talk or that it isn't natural, but simply because of the rawness, the emotional density of the topics. We sit in silence. Depp doesn't move, not a single muscle flinches. It's like he's looked into the Gorgon Medusa's eyes to see for himself life's savage reality.

The cigarette hangs unlit, like a stogie to be chewed on or soaked with spit. "What was it that Dylan Thomas said, 'To begin at the beginning,' right? And Ernest Hemingway, 'All you have to do is write one true sentence' – one of the hardest things in the world to do. And [Allen Ginsberg's] 'First thought, best thought.'"

Depp has taken his writing lessons from brilliant yet often difficult men. He has strung them together like bunting: to begin at the beginning, all you have to do is write one true sentence: first thought, best thought... Much like Ginsberg, Depp has that ability to perform, to unspool himself and all his kinks. A drive into Depp's memories, one suspects, would be like trying to control a car on a winding mountain road with its brakes cut, thrilling yet perilous.

"And Hunter. Hunter! He was right in the centre of every story. And all those stories were true. I have all the tapes and the napkins. Hunter wanted me to buy his archives, but I'm its custodian. They belong to Hunter's grandson, Will. I think we are going to take it on the road, to show people, to show people the reality, the madness and the goddamn beauty of it all."

For the first time, Depp takes off his shades. He rubs his eyes, which aren't bloodshot or kohl-lined, but are clear, backlit and luminous. "I want the truth. That's really my biggest obsession in the world. It's just the fucking truth."

Yet to live on impulses, to put down all the raw facts unedited as they come out, well, that's a powerful type of storytelling. As Hunter himself warned of such precision reporting: "Absolute truth is a very rare and dangerous commodity."

The truth has no time for perspective. Or rather, truth is not about perspective as a point of view. But to see the whole truth? The whole story? Now, that sort of perspective will allow you to get the entire picture: the correct height, depth and position of all the facts in relation to one another, something that is absolute.

There is no doubt Depp is seeking the truth. That is his mission. One day, maybe he will find the right words, in a conversation or in a book, and when he does they will

be simple.

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Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes Of Grindelwald is out on 16 November.

The print version of this story includes errors by inaccurately attributing a quote to Johnny Depp, as well as certain factual inaccuracies. GQ apologises and has amended the online version accordingly.

EXHIBIT C

1 yellow bellied? 14:17:39

2 A No, I didn't consider Jerry Bruckheimer 14:17:41
3 to be yellow -- 14:17:46

4 Q Did you consider Sean Bailey to be yellow 14:17:46
5 bellied? 14:17:50

6 A Yeah. 14:17:50

7 Q Why? 14:17:50

8 A Because he wasn't man enough to -- 14:17:52
9 listen, I was involved in five films in that series 14:17:59
10 of Pirates of the Caribbean, and I was very lucky 14:18:06
11 to be a part of that, and I was very happy -- I'm 14:18:10
12 happy still that I was a part of that because I 14:18:14
13 have a character that has made a lot of people 14:18:16
14 smile and happy, and that gives me great pleasure, 14:18:20
15 but when -- when these people, who have made 14:18:26
16 upwards of four, five, six, seven billion, eight 14:18:35
17 billion dollars on a ration of films that you've 14:18:42
18 done for them and your character is on the ride in 14:18:49
19 Disneyland in three different spots and in Shanghai 14:18:58
20 and in Orlando and all over the place, I've found 14:19:02
21 it fascinating that not one call. 14:19:06

22 Nobody was man enough to give me the boot 14:19:09

1 based on allegations, and -- but it was still okay 14:19:14
2 to leave the supposed wife-beater on the rides, and 14:19:24
3 it's still okay for them to sell merchandise of the 14:19:31
4 supposed wife-beater, and they can still sell 14:19:35
5 action figures of the supposed wife-beater. They 14:19:40
6 haven't taken me off their rides. So I would say 14:19:44
7 that something's rotten in the state of Denmark. 14:19:50
8 Q Do you know for sure that you are not 14:19:55
9 going to be part of Pirates 6? 14:19:58
10 A Without question. 14:20:00
11 Q And is that based only on the article 14:20:02
12 that came out sometime after the op ed? 14:20:05
13 MR. CHEW: Objection to form of the 14:20:08
14 question. I think it misstates the testimony, but 14:20:13
15 you may answer. 14:20:16
16 A I don't -- I don't recall the dates of 14:20:17
17 what went first, how this all went down. I'm 14:20:23
18 sorry, your question again? 14:20:30
19 Q Do you know for certain -- 14:20:32
20 A Right. 14:20:33
21 Q -- that you are not on Pirates 6? 14:20:34
22 A Oh, that I said yes, no. 14:20:36

1	Q	And then I said is that --	14:20:38
2	A	Correct.	
3	Q	-- based on the article in the newspaper	14:20:40
4		sometime shortly after the op ed from Amber Heard.	14:20:43
5	A	Yes, I believe it's from that, and I	14:20:49
6		believe it's from the global barrage of -- of	14:20:52
7		fraudulent claims against me that -- that have	14:20:59
8		flown throughout the world on this thing called the	14:21:04
9		internet and in various magazines and all that. As	14:21:11
10		I've stated earlier, things that she said, did,	14:21:18
11		yeah, I believe of course, there was no way they	14:21:28
12		were going to let me in Pirates -- they were going	14:21:35
13		to bring me into Pirates 6 if someone's out there	14:21:38
14		screaming about you being this horrible human being	14:21:42
15		and then the press backs it up and sells it to you,	14:21:44
16		sells it, you know?	14:21:49
17	Q	So you assume that because of everything	14:21:51
18		that's been continuing on in these allegations,	14:21:54
19		that you're not going to be in Pirates 6?	14:21:58
20	MR. CHEW:	Objection to the form of the	14:22:00
21		question. It misstates the testimony.	14:22:02
22	A	I can tell you the God's honest truth	14:22:05

1 right now, based on everything, if they came to me 14:22:08
2 with \$300 million and a million alpacas, nothing 14:22:10
3 under this earth, on this earth would get me to go 14:22:21
4 back and work with Disney on a Pirates of the 14:22:26
5 Caribbean film. 14:22:29
6 Q Okay, thank you. If -- in your 14:22:30
7 complaint, you said at paragraph 5, quote, "Mr. 14:22:40
8 Depp's reputation and career were devastated when 14:22:45
9 Ms. Heard first accused him of domestic violence on 14:22:50
10 May 27, 2016," end of quote. In what way was your 14:22:53
11 career devastated at that point? 14:23:01
12 MR. CHEW: Excuse me. Which complaint 14:23:03
13 are you referring to? 14:23:04
14 MS. CHARLSON BREDEHOFT: His complaint. 14:23:05
15 MR. CHEW: Could you show it to him? 14:23:06
16 MS. CHARLSON BREDEHOFT: No, I don't need 14:23:08
17 to show it to him. I just quoted it. 14:23:09
18 MR. CHEW: You don't need to show him a 14:23:11
19 document you're asking him about? 14:23:13
20 BY MS. CHARLSON BREDEHOFT: 14:23:15
21 Q That's correct, I absolutely don't have 14:23:15
22 to. I'm asking him what his -- was your career in 14:23:16

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

JOHN C. DEPP, II,

Plaintiff,

v.

AMBER LAURA HEARD,

Defendant.

Civil Action No.: CL-2019-0002911

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