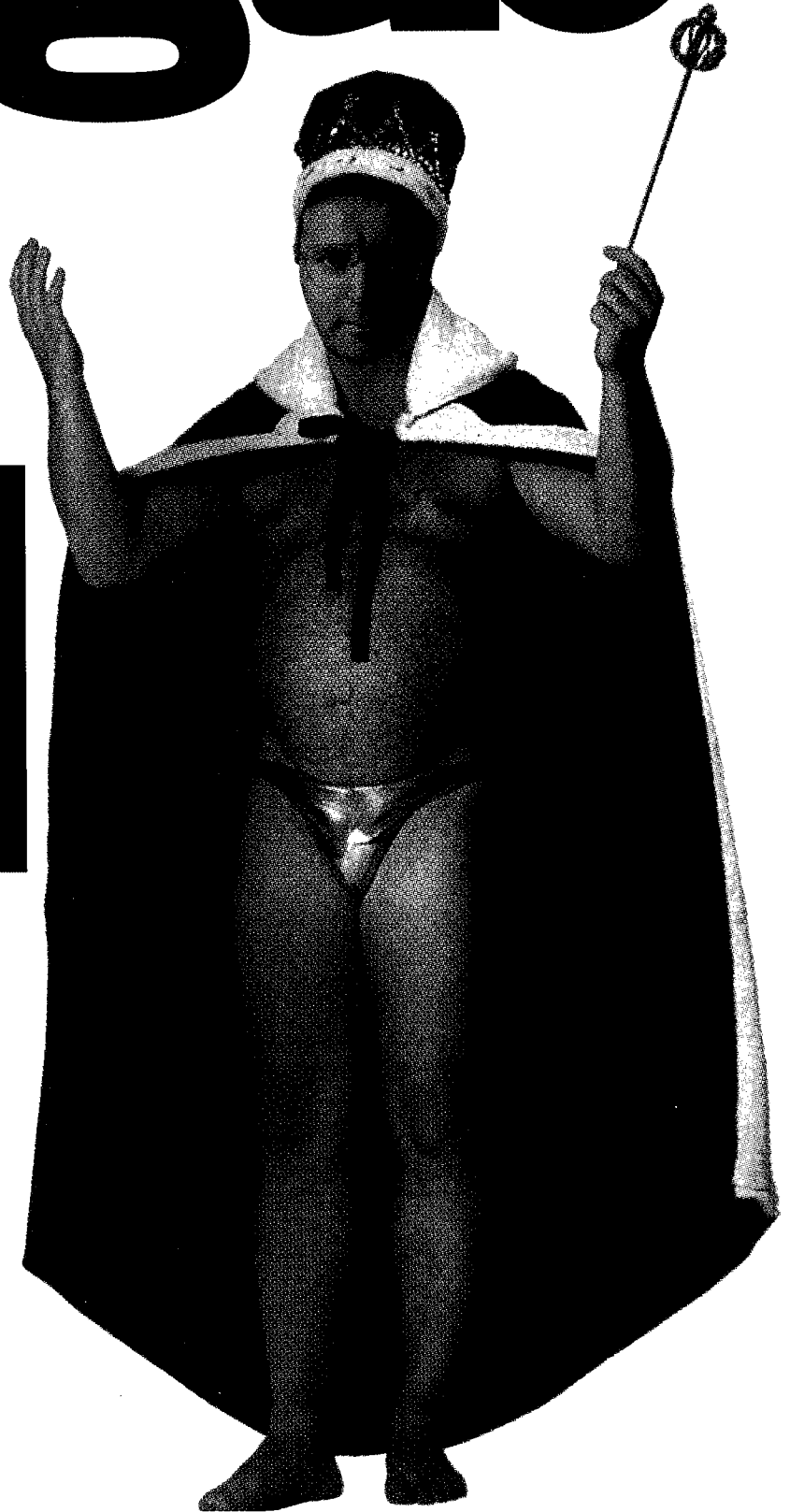


Plague weekly



UN **WORST**

*This year's biggest losers,
both Gorgeous and Grottesque!*

THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES

All hail New York University President L. Jay Oliva,
our distinguished unanimous choice for...

BEST UNDRESSED MAN, 1994.

Huzzah!!! Huzzah!!! Huzzah!!!



FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS QUANTAS PHYSICAS

Hunter S. Thompson accosts and abuses crippled scientist Stephen Hawking, *but in a nice kind of way*

It was November, 1993, my body was weary and my mind fried. Or maybe it was the other way around. Either way, I had just returned to the owl farm at Woody Creek from a gruesome journey to New York City. *Walking* magazine had sent me to the big city to cover the less glamorous aspects of the New York Marathon.

I got there two weeks late and spent the entire time hanging out in Greenwich Village. I remember stopping scores of people on Bleecker Street and asking them if they'd seen the Pope. Most just turned and walked briskly away from me. Some co-ed with a tight NYU sweatshirt said that she had seen him standing in line at Mondo Perso. As far as I know, I ended up turning in a story on the speed-walking incident in the Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Next thing I knew it was February, so I caught the first cab to JFK and got the hell out of the city as fast as I could. Only a twisted bastard like Sinatra could claim to want to "wake up in a city that never sleeps." How can you wake up if you never get any sleep? Moron insomniacs are creating bad craziness in every cheeseball nightclub these days.

I was happy to get back to the Owl Farm and my pet peacocks. They told me it was 1994, and where the hell had I been all this time, but I just ignored them, cracked open the champagne and put on my favorite paper hat.

Before I had time to blow my fun whistle and grab a glass of iced Wild Turkey, my phone rang. By the sound of the ring, I knew it was bad news. Don't ask me how I know a bad ring from a good one, I just know. With a head full of acid and almost thirty years of gonzo-journalistic experience somehow credited to my name, I can tell a good ring from a shitty one, and this smelled worse than my college roommate. And it wouldn't be scared off as easily.

My agent informed me that the *Plague*, some moronic, student-run humour magazine wanted me to do a review of

Stephen Hawking's latest book. You know Hawking, that diseased physics genius. I think he's on late-night cable with that show, *Physics Friends*. I don't know. Pop culture has gotten really stupid.

Well, I was not only supposed to review his book, but I was being flown to his home in Cambridge to get the story firsthand. My agent said that the arrangements had already been made and that a car was on its way to pick me up.

Ye Gods, once more into the air I go. Since my bags were already packed from the New York fiasco, I figured that I had time to grab some goodies from the cupboard. I snagged a bag of coke, a sheet of blotter paper, and a liter of Wild Turkey. I was only going to be in Cambridge for a day or two, so I figured I had enough shit to hold me over. I decided right there that if I was physically capable I would make an attempt to remove the flight-waitress' skimpy outfit at thirty thousand feet. Unless the eight-legged aliens prevent me. Those bastards never let me have *any* fun.

The limo ride and the flight to Cambridge are a blur. About all I can say for sure was that a fat Haitian named "Jorge" drove me to Boulder, gave me my tickets, and pointed me toward my gate. The next thing I remember, I was pissing into the garbage can in a bar at Chicago O'Hare. I probably missed my flight to Cambridge, but I'm not sure. By my calculations, I should have reached Boston at 10:23 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, but instead I woke up late on Friday when some guy slammed down his baggage next to me on the merry-go-round thing. I found a key to a Royal Inn hanging out of my coat pocket and sat there for a while, pondering the implications of this ominous development.

I picked up my rental car around noon. Sunday noon, that is. It was a candy red 1994 Pontiac Grand Prix, paid for by those *Plague* dopes. I wondered if their managing editor has ever kissed a girl besides his mom. The drive to Cambridge was



Hawking in his office—does he take his wife right there, next to the desk?

crazy. Twice, I swerved off the road for fear of hitting the giant Gila monsters which suddenly appeared in front of me. I kept hearing these ghostly voices in my head saying "You have got to be kidding me. Thank you, Bert I Gordon."

I almost swerved a third time, but by then I realized that there are no Gila Monsters east of Nevada. And I had some trouble with those Massachusetts drivers—all those morons were driving on the wrong side of the road. I guess those snotty academics in Cambridge think they can be more liberal in their observance of the rules of the road than regular folk.

[What Thompson never seemed to realize is that Stephen Hawking lives in England, not Massachusetts. This not only accounts for his difficulties on the road, but also his "lost" day of travel. We attempted to explain this to him, but he threatened to sue us for 'vicious assault with deadly amphibians, illegal aliens, and Haitians'—ed.]

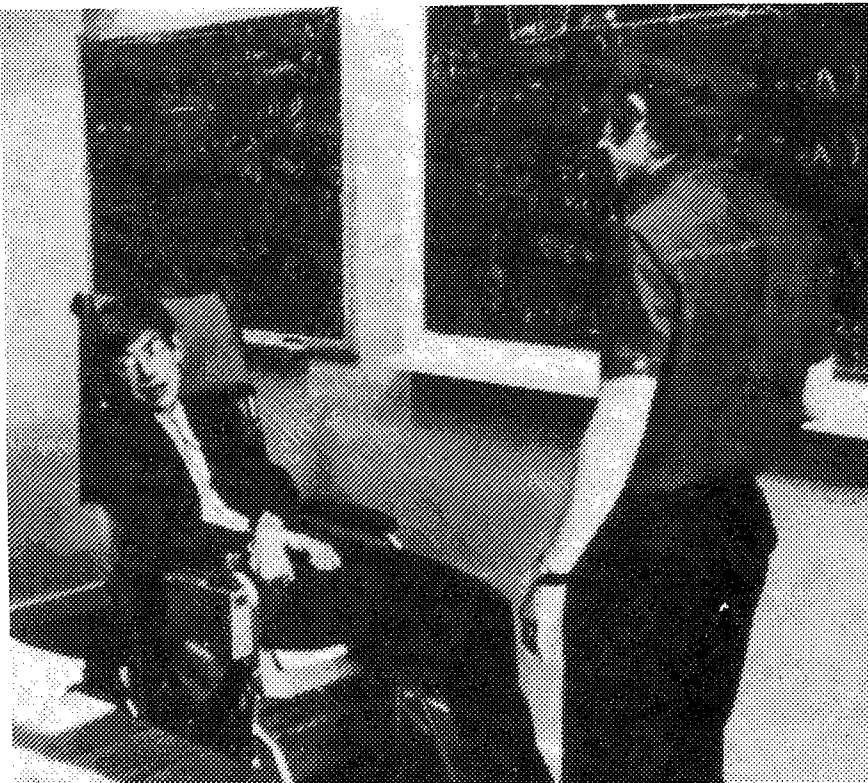
The drive didn't take but an hour, though the trip itself took over three. Between the monster hallucinations, swerving constantly to avoid certain death, and pulling over periodically to snort some coke, I was lucky to have made it there by sundown. Sundown Tuesday, that is.

I eased into the Hawking driveway at a stately 35-miles-per-hour, much to the dismay of Mrs. Hawking. I would have felt terrible about that, had I been anywhere near the planet at the time. There's about a 62% chance that she's a nice woman, and an attractive one, too. I'm a little hazy. I might have fucked-up when I introduced myself to her as Irving R. Levine and told her that I was here to take nude photos of her and her husband's wheelchair for *Oui Magazine*. But then, there's really no way to tell with these stoic New Englanders.

Mrs. Hawking showed me in and quickly shuffled me past her gawking children. She led me into a large, oak-floored study—obviously where her husband does his deepest thinking and crime-solving. It was a cold, vast room. The walls were lined with autographed pictures of Galileo, Newton, Einstein, and Matt Groenig; the bookcases were filled with weighty, leather-bound tomes. I poked my head in a nearby oak door to find a room filled with weighty, leather-bound women. Strange.

There was a giant photo of an amoeba on the wall, right behind the computer desk where the mad genius was slowly working away. And slowly wasting away. Allegedly, Hawking is a paraplegic who suffers from some *horrible, debilitating disease*; lactose intolerance, I think. Anyway, he can't speak or move any of his limbs—except for his right index finger, which he uses to tap on a keypad, *among other things*. (I asked his wife how his finger came to be three inches in diameter and rippled with muscles, but she just turned pale and walked away. There's just *no* figuring out these Puritans). The keypad is wired to a computer, on which he can do his work, and to a voice synthesizer, through which he speaks. The best in Japanese Karaoke technology.

I introduced myself to Hawking. He drooled. At that moment, I almost went to pieces. I had tackled some tough stories before, but trying to interview a gurgling physics genius while under the influence of a kilo of coke and a gut full of whiskey was asking too much. I had two choices, either run out of the room and say to hell with the interview, or stick around on my own terms and see what happens. Paralyzed by fear,



◀Mrs. Hawking snapped this photo just before a crazed Hunter jumped her husband, knocking his chair over and hurling him through a plate-glass window and into the swimming pool out back.

and needing to use the john, it wasn't much of a choice.

I decided to skip the small talk and start asking the hard questions. "Two questions: what's the entire universe made out of this week, and do you and your old lady still get it on regularly?"

I was shocked that such awful, pseudo-intellectual words came out of my mouth, so much so that I blacked out momentarily. I instinctively reached into my coat pocket and grabbed two hits of acid. I stuck one under my tongue and the other under my right eyelid, and began to relax. Then I realized where I was. Ye Gods, two fuck-ups in under a minute!

Not only had I asked the renowned physicist Stephen Hawking whether he still nailed his wife, but I also took illegal drugs in front of him with the ease of an aide to retired General Manuel Noriega. This was not a good start. At this point, feelings of self-loathing overwhelmed me and my cerebellum just shut down....

[Here the manuscript ends. Dr. Thompson refused to finish the story, so we have tried to piece together just what transpired at the Hawking interview. Fortunately, Thompson had somehow remembered to turn on his tape recorder before entering the Hawking home. What you see here is a transcript of the audio tape conversation between the two doctors—ed.]

HUNTER S THOMPSON: So *[lots of coughing, a few long drags on a*

cigarette] do you really believe that you have given us an accurate picture of the universe's development?

STEPHEN HAWKING: So far, my theory on the origin and development of the universe in which we live has yet to meet serious opposition from members of the scientific community.

HST: Our universe? Are you saying that there might be others?

SH: Yes, that is a distinct possibility.

HST: Jesus, professor, you really are a nut. I mean, with all due respect, how the hell can there be more than one universe?

SH: Read my book. It gives, in simple terms for your benefit, an explanation of my theory of the possibility of multiple universes.

HST: *[more coughing]* You have a glass I can borrow? And some ice?

SH: No.

HST: By the way, why is there a giant picture of an amoeba on your wall?

SH: Amoeba? Where?

HST: Right there, behind your desk. That big blue and green blob...

SH: That's Monet's "Waterlilies".

HST: Oh, I see. I hope you don't mind me drinking straight from the bottle. *[a long silence]* Now let's get down to some more of the good stuff. *[slurping noises]* Oh, and what you were talking about, too. Isn't it true that your theory of the possibility of multiple universes is contingent upon the

