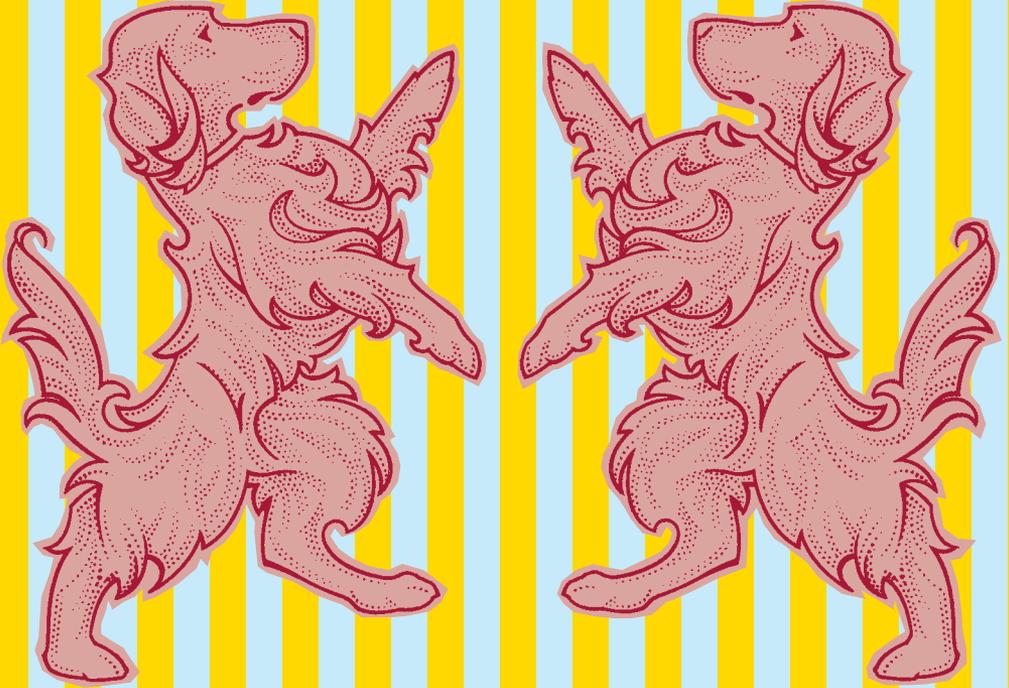


# TRUE PREP



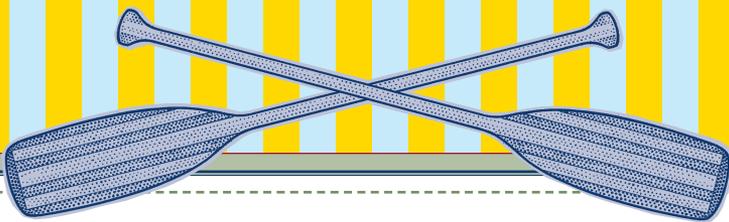
IT'S A WHOLE NEW OLD WORLD

by the author of

THE OFFICIAL PREPPY HANDBOOK

**LISA BIRNBACH**

with **Chip Kidd**



## “Wake up, Muffy. We’re back.”

From the author of *The Official Preppy Handbook* comes a whole new take on the old world that she turned into an international best-selling phenomenon thirty years ago.

*True Prep* is a contemporary look at how the old guard of natural-fiber-loving, dog-worshipping, G&T-soaked preppies adapts to the new order of the Internet, cell phones, rehab, political correctness, Reality TV and . . . polar fleece.

**NO TEXTING AT THE TABLE, PLEASE.**

Accompanied by more than one hundred original illustrations and photographs, and at least one recipe, *True Prep* promises to be a whole new, old, sensation.

**COMING FROM KNOPF FALL 2010**

**Lisa Birnbach** still wears her father’s tennis sweater and her grandmother’s pearls, and flies coach. In the last thirty years, she’s been busy in Old Media, but she managed to meet Chip Kidd through Facebook.

**Chip Kidd** is a designer and writer at Alfred A. Knopf, where he has worked since 1986. In 1980, when he was in the tenth grade, *The Official Preppy Handbook* changed his life. Now he wants to return the favor.

**Humor • 5-1/2 x 8-1/4 • 256 pages**

**\$19.95 (Can. \$23.95) • ISBN/EAN: 978-0-307-59398-6**

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- Interactive Web Page: [www.trueprep.com](http://www.trueprep.com) • Promotional Video
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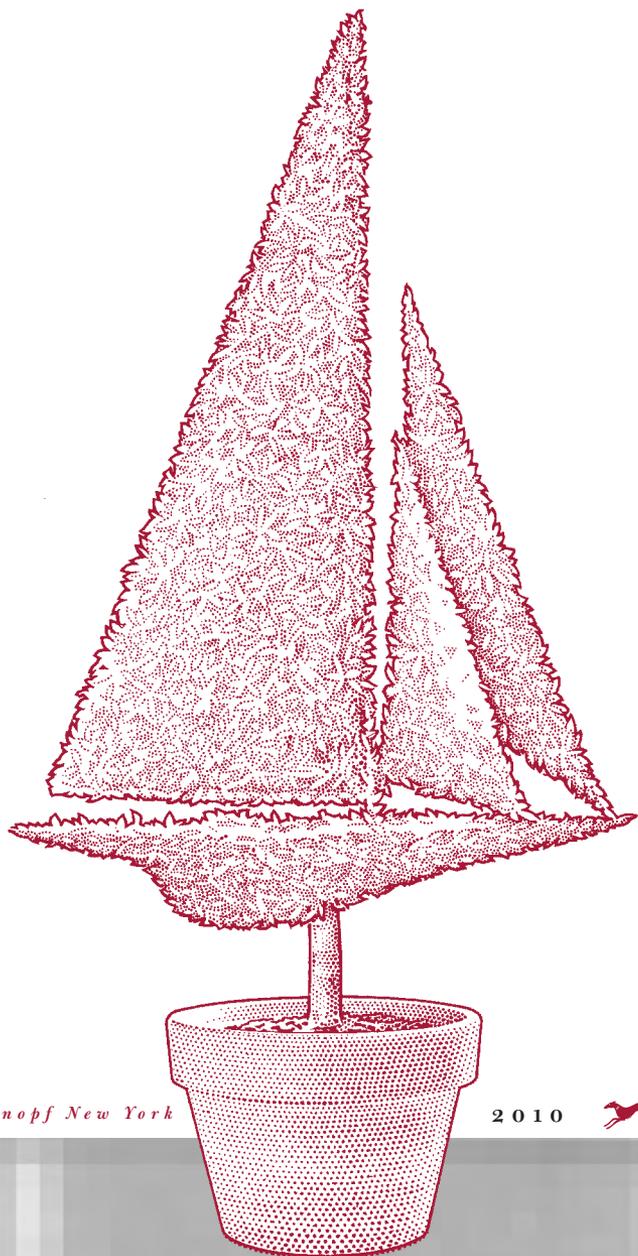
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# TRUE PREP

It's a whole new old world



*Alfred A. Knopf New York*

2010



LISA BIRNBACH

Chip Kidd

DRAWINGS BY RANDY GLASS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFF SPEAR

# C O N T E N T S

## INTRODUCTION

Where were we? Oh, yes. It was thirty years ago . . .

### 1. **PASS IT ON: THE PREP MANIFESTO.**

What is all this fuss about? All about Mummy, Daddy, Daddy's Girlfriend, Grandmother, and Grandfather. Henry, the dog. Some Four-Legged Preps & the Two-Legged Preps Who Love Them. Just like family. An American map. The view of Oak Bluffs (and Sag Harbor.) We are: gay, black, multiethnic. We represent all religions (especially those recognized by the IRS). We value diversity (though we actually prefer homogeneity). "Which Is Preppier: Red or Blue?" by Christopher Buckley. The True Prep Pantheon.

### 2. **WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT.**

The truth about money: What we value—education, travel, and a summer house. Cheapness of all kinds. Preppy math. Frugal do's and don'ts. The building at school with Grandmother's maiden name. Prep travel commandments. T. Anthony. Inherited vs. self-made money. There's money; then there's Big Money. Caring about money again. Hairy Preppies: Silicon Valley billionaires. Because we are givers.

### 3. **THAT'S WHERE MY BROTHER WENT.**

Admission secrets from a real authority. Yes, they are. The corrections: how to use alumna, alumnus, alumnae, alumni. Profile of Hampden-Sydney College, the preppiest in America. The kids' table: a Thanksgiving tradition. Four years in hair.

### 4. **I JUST FOUND IT IN MY CLOSET.**

All about wardrobe. Old is better than new. Making the transition from Casual Friday to Saturday. Ralph's page. Caroline Milbank on stretching the look. The story of polar fleece. The Boys of Vineyard Vines. Online shopping: a very useful list. Caroline Milbank on Breton stripes. How to integrate vintage into your prep wardrobe. Check the thriftshops: a list of the best vintage shops in Barrington, IL; McLean, VA; any town called Greenville. Jewelry: when enough is enough. One man and his outerwear. The right suntan and how to get it. Trench coats. The leaning of the silhouette: A visit with Thom Browne.

## 5. UNHAPPY HOURS.

List of prep professions. List of unprep professions. Jobs we won't see anytime soon. Photo of Jim Abernathy behind his desk. "Bankers: what in the world do they really do?" by William Cohen. Graduate Programs that last forever. Why not-for-profits are more prep than private sector jobs. Uh, oh #1: Mummy is now a decorator. Uh, oh #2: Mummy just passed her real estate exam. Where the girls are: nursery school and kindergarten. Also, the girls at parties checking guest lists. Uh, oh #3: Mummy is now a docent. Writing ambitions, as a career for all. Cookbooks, dog books, garden books. Uh, oh #4: Mummy is now a yogini/healer/therapist.

## 6. WE CALL IT HOUSE.

Why a house is not a "home." Starter apartments. The real house. The weekend house. The mudroom. Weekend house in a better community. Why we all want to live near one another. What to do with all the beautiful family photographs: buy a piano. Where to use your family crest. Monogram shop. Monogrammania. How much of the house belongs to the dog. When to hire a decorator; when to use Mummy. The Christmas tree list. Collections.

## 7. POOR MRS. ASTOR.

Scandals Hit Prepdom! Details at eleven! Prep Crime Watch: lying, white lies, shoplifting, drugs, forgery, sex scandals, adultery. The Nouveau Riche. Crime Hall of Fame: Mrs. Jean Struven Harris, Robert Chambers, Anthony Marshall, Martha Stewart, Claus von Bulow, David Duchovny, Roxanne Pulitzer, Renée Richards, Ann Woodard. Lovely alibis for where you've been the last three to five years. Rehab & the big house: the new boarding schools. Insider trading. The Johnson and Astor wills. Uh, oh #5: what happened to Mummy's face?

## 8. DRINKS BEFORE DINNER.

How we think about food: what we've learned—Asian, pesto, fusion, squid. Why alcohol? Two perfect preppy drinks you've never heard of. The perfect martini. The perfect bloody. Best G&T. Preppiest beer. What to eat when you are hungover. What's in the fridge? What to do on the cook's night off. Shooting your own dinner: a quail recipe. Shepherd's pie. Codfish cakes. Lipton's meatloaf. Maisie's apple pudding. Brownies, Berocca, magic tablets. A tribute to the Lemon. Knorr Dip. Old Bay.

## 9. HAPPY HOURS, PART I: WHAT WE DO.

Entertaining our way. Weekend as a gerund. City clubs and country clubs. Sports we play. The book club. Books we like. Can you have a library if you don't read books? Buying books by the yard: an interview with the Strand Bookstore. Showers and weddings. James Collins on love. The second wedding. Destination weddings. Destination divorces. A city by city guide to events we like. How to dance. "The Internet: How we use it." Preppies & Internet porn. The First Wives Club. Shopping, a hobby.

## 10. HAPPY HOURS, PART II: WHAT WE WATCH AND WHERE WE GO.

Team sports. What we watch, and how: TV vs. in person. Drinking in the bleachers. Why no true preppey will ever appear on a reality show, except for Tim Gunn. Advice to "Gossip Girl" from a real girl. A tribute to Thurston Howell, III. Miss Jane Hathaway, and others from "our set" on TV. Where we go: Skiing. Fishing. Beach. Shooting Trips. Newport. Nantucket. Martha's Vineyard. Napa Valley. Litchfield County. The Hamptons. Italy. France. Austria. Dominican Republic. Argentina. Holiday matching quiz: ranch, cabin, cottages, chalet, finca, condo, bungalow. What to do about Florida. Where we don't go: Las Vegas and Disneyworld (24 hour rule.) Rip's Road Rules. What to pack.

## 11. WE DON'T DO THAT.

Why Etiquette Counts. Correspondence course: in praise of handwritten letters on engraved or letterpress stationery. Thank-you notes for all occasions. The right present. How to distinguish between you and your cell phone. Cell phone discipline. You vs. your online self. How to deal with twenty-first-century technology. Prep vs. unprep gadgets. How to choose an avatar. Note to Junior: No texting at the table! What to call your new, um, stepparents. What to call your new, um, stepparents when you are the same age.

## 12. WE'RE OUT OF HERE!

Prep health: looking good vs. feeling good. How to select your lawyers and doctors. Trusts & estates (hint: make your signature illegible *now*). The right obituary. Planning your memorial service. Preppey funeral readings. Spending vs. leaving. When to insist your name is public and when to give anonymously. The Sunny Lessons: what we can all learn from Mrs. von Bulow. Writing your autobiography: a cautionary tale. Should you be interred at your alma mater? What to do with your pets if you predecease them. A list of acceptable euphemisms for death.

## THE TIMELINE: WHAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS?

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# CASUAL FRIDAY

*J. Crew head to ankle.*

*Ray-Ban Clubmaster shades*

*Take-out double-shot latte.*

*Father's hand-me-down briefcase.  
Contents:  
Friday/Weekend section of Wall Street Journal, train schedule, iPod, ticket from shoe repair.*

14

*Cole Haan penny loafers.*

*BlackBerry; "If I lost this, I would have to shoot myself. My whole life is in it."*

*Pearl stud earrings, a present from Bunny to all her bridesmaids.*

*Pearl necklace, a gift from Grandma Prudence.*

*J. Crew striped shirt.  
Mummy's Scottish sweater-vest—  
"Love, love, love!"*

*J. Crew handbag: wallet, credit card case, business card case, sunglasses, almost empty Stila lip gloss, half-used bottle of Purell, keys on a Mercedes fob, used handkerchief.*

*J. Crew khakis, no belt.*

*L.L. Bean mono-grammed boat tote: notebook, extra cardigan, other pair of flats, bottle of water.*

*Cole Haan penny loafers.*

**It just seems wrong** to have to go to work on Friday. There are only a few hours before the weekend officially begins (at noon, Prep Standard Time), and it will take the morning to get packed, finalize plans, have coffee with Pip, and then get on the road. Yes, you are correct in assuming that what the world regards as "summer hours" we regard as "prep hours." Friday afternoons year-round are redundant.

They are useless. We cannot concentrate. They're like the second half of senior year in high school after we've been admitted to Middlebury.

Thus, a wise person invented "Casual Friday," to raise employee morale. Many give credit to the carelessly dressed denizens of the Dot Com bubble, which, before it burst, left tie-less shirts and khakis in its wake.

# SATURDAY

*In total relaxation mode.  
Work is just a memory.*

*Hair:  
Deliberately uncombed.*

*Sunglasses: I'm out-  
doors or on my way  
outdoors.*

*Tennis  
racquet: For  
weekly  
doubles  
game at  
club. Have  
a back-up  
racquet in  
my locker, too.*

*G&T: I'm  
taking a  
break from  
my break.*

*J. Crew head  
to ankle.*

*Cole Haan  
penny loafers.*

*BlackBerry: "If I  
lost this, I would  
have to shoot  
myself. My  
whole life  
is in it."*

*Pearl stud earrings, a present from  
Bunny to all her bridesmaids,  
etc., etc., etc.*

**PORTABLE CHILD**  
*Four-year-old son, Clay-  
ton.*

*Lacoste heather grey  
traditional polo.*

*Crewcuts khaki shorts  
and leather belt.*

*Tiny desert boots, un-  
laced because. That's.  
How. Clayton likes them.*

*Vintage  
LEGO.*

*Cole Haan  
penny loafers.*

One doesn't have to work in the high-tech world to appreciate a dressed-down work day. In fact, many people in service industries choose to dress casually on days when meeting with customers isn't on the schedule. In truth, preppies are well-supplied with Casual Fridayabilia. This is what we wear anyway when we're not at the office. Dressing this way makes us more comfortable, as we recognize the sweater with the hole at

the elbow as an old friend, and we enjoy our shoes even more when we're not wearing socks with them.

Even schools have adopted Casual Friday as part of their sartorial agenda. Schools with dress codes or uniforms routinely either lift them or charge students \$1.00 to wear blue jeans on Fridays, with the money going to charity.

Is Casual Thursday next?

# HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL HUNTER

We confess to spending hours in the thrall of our wondrous English setter, Henry. What does he think about? Is he happy? Does he dream? And—frankly—does he like us?

We are prepared for unrequited love; we were sent to boarding school, after all. But we would never send Henry away. He is too dear, too affectionate for us to be without him for more than the annual two-week biking trip to France. Otherwise, where we go, he goes.

Constance and Prudence, the twins, came up with this, the phrenological diagram of Henry for their biology class. (Their assignment was on the respiratory system, so we're not holding out hope for an A). And yes, though we raised gentle daughters, our son (Henry) likes a good hunt now and . . . now.

---

## **SOME FOUR-LEGGED PREPS & THE TWO- LEGGED PREPS WHO LOVE THEM**

**Widgeon**, gun dog

**PRINCE WILLIAM OF ENGLAND**  
(Eton College)

**Bocci**, Italian greyhound

**SIGOURNEY WEAVER**  
(The Chapin School;  
The Ethel Walker School)

**Atticus Finch**, German shepherd;

**Boo Radley**, puggle

**JAKE GYLLENHAAL** (Harvard-Westlake School)

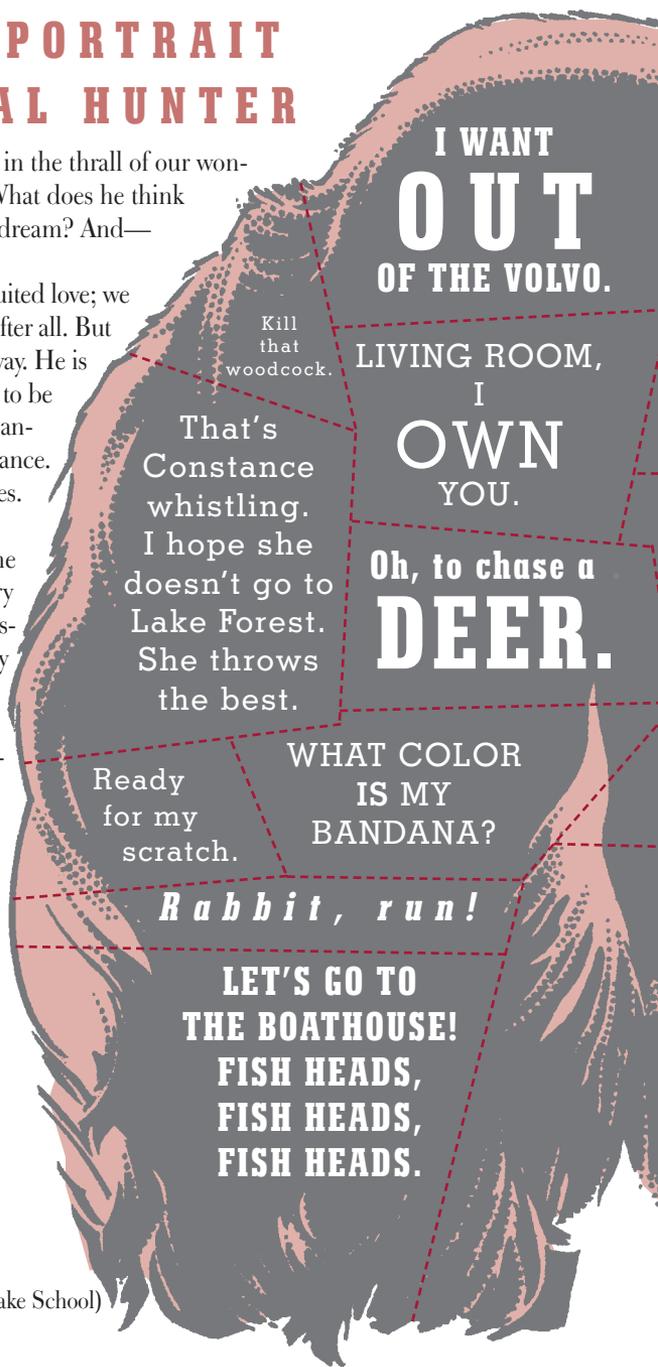
**Garcia**, Australian cattle dog

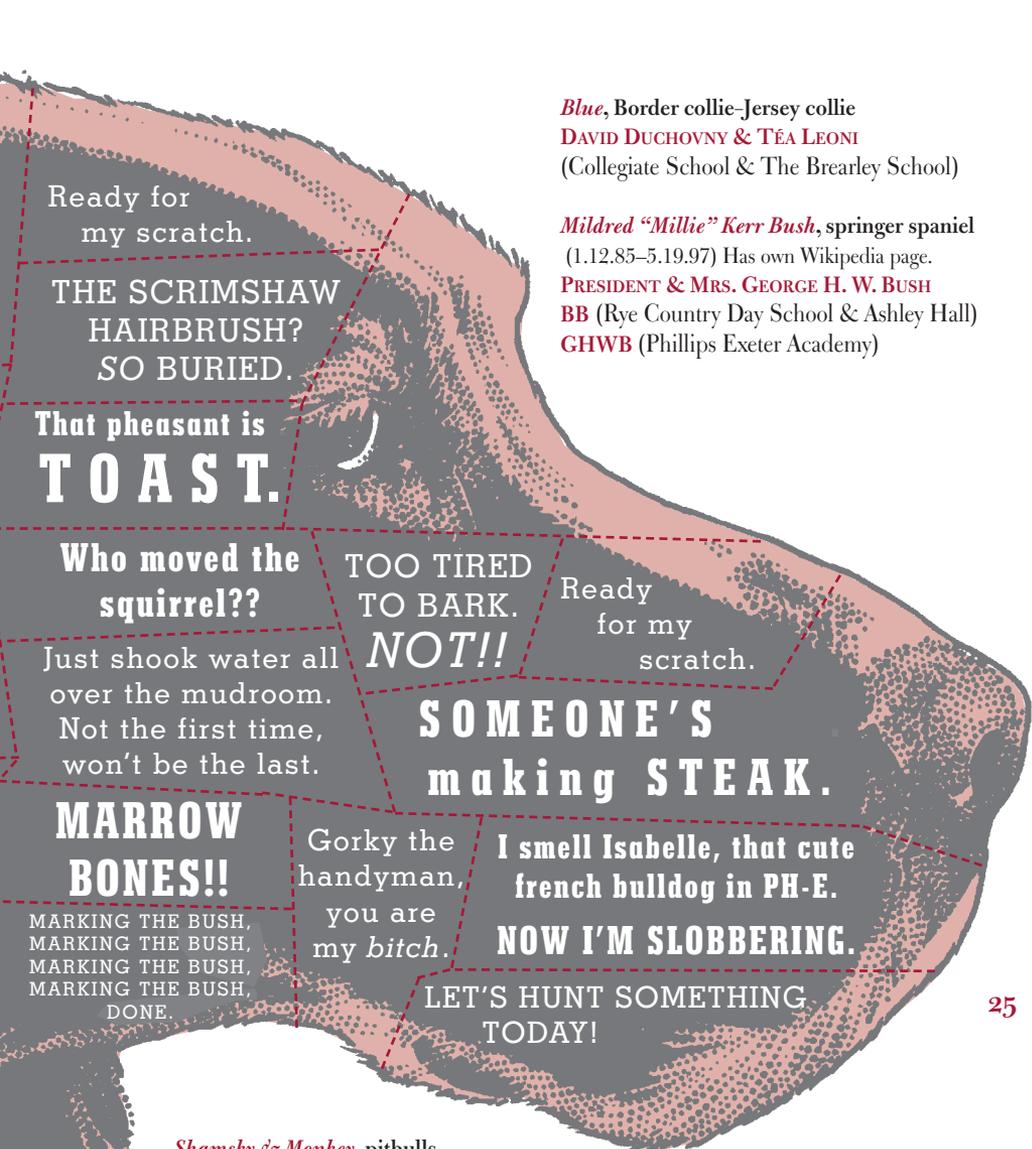
**OWEN WILSON**

(St. Mark's School of Texas, expelled)

**Holden**, Labrador retriever

**GWYNETH PALTROW** (The Spence School)





Ready for  
my scratch.

THE SCRIMSHAW  
HAIRBRUSH?  
SO BURIED.

That pheasant is  
**TOAST.**

Who moved the  
squirrel??

Just shook water all  
over the mudroom.  
Not the first time,  
won't be the last.

**MARROW  
BONES!!**

MARKING THE BUSH,  
MARKING THE BUSH,  
MARKING THE BUSH,  
MARKING THE BUSH,  
DONE.

Gorky the  
handyman,  
you are  
my *bitch*.

TOO TIRED  
TO BARK.  
**NOT!!**

Ready  
for my  
scratch.

**SOMEONE'S  
making STEAK.**

I smell Isabelle, that cute  
french bulldog in PH-E.

**NOW I'M SLOBBERING.**

LET'S HUNT SOMETHING  
TODAY!

*Blue*, Border collie-Jersey collie  
DAVID DUCHOVNY & TÉA LEONI  
(Collegiate School & The Brearley School)

*Mildred "Millie" Kerr Bush*, springer spaniel  
(1.12.85-5.19.97) Has own Wikipedia page.  
PRESIDENT & MRS. GEORGE H. W. BUSH  
BB (Rye Country Day School & Ashley Hall)  
GHWB (Phillips Exeter Academy)

*Shamsky & Monkey*, pitbulls  
JON STEWART  
(Lawrence High School, Lawrenceville,  
N.J.)

*Splash, Sunny, & Cappy*,  
Portuguese water dogs  
SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY  
(Milton Academy)

*Fala*, Scottie  
PRES. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT  
(Groton School)

*Harvey, George, Baby*, boxers  
HUMPHREY BOGART  
(Phillips Exeter Academy, expelled)

*Polar Bear*, a cat  
CLEVELAND AMORY  
(Milton Academy)

*Edgar & Casiopiea*, golden retrievers  
JOHN CHEEVER  
(Thayer Academy, expelled, readmitted)

# THE COOK'S DAY OFF

Poor Mrs. Gibbs, she's just called in and suddenly has to go with her husband to get his green card. Of course we understand, and we wouldn't *dream* of docking her (she's heaven, really), but that's not the issue. Dinner's in only a matter of hours, and now it's an emergency.

We'd been meaning for *ages* to get her recipe for that lovely thing she does with the peas and the pearl onions and the bits of meat, all swimming in that divine sauce. But she's

not answering her cell. I can't order pizza—again.

Let's see what she keeps in the cupboard. Oops, that's the liquor cabinet—well, serendipity! We need inspiration, so why not? What's in the fridge? Lemons. An excellent start. Limes! My, there's all *sorts* of things in here. And there's the *Junior League Cookbook* to the rescue! We're all set. We may not exactly be Martha, but even *she* had to start somewhere. Come to think of it, it was near here, wasn't it?

One thing we know for sure: No meal was *ever* ruined by mayonnaise. Or martinis.

*"Do I slice the lime first, or the lemon? It doesn't say, dammit."*

124



## THE ULTIMATE NEW CANAAN NIBBLE

### INGREDIENTS

ONE BOX OF RITZ CRACKERS, OPENED.

ONE KRAFT INDIVIDUAL CHEDDAR SINGLE, CELLOPHANE REMOVED.

FRENCH'S MUSTARD (OPTIONAL).

KNIFE, FOR CUTTING.

Place the sheet of cheddar on a flat, clean surface. Using a shot glass, set the rim flat on the cheese square and trace around it carefully with the knife. Lift, and voilà! A perfect circle. Place perfect disc of cheese on one Ritz cracker and serve. If you're feeling especially festive, affix flawless dairy coin to the cracker with a dab of mustard.\*

Six sheets yields a dozen, which ought to be enough for anybody. We eat to live, not vice versa.

*"Hmm. If I crumble these in the salad, that's like croutons, right?"*



\*Tip: if it's a special occasion, say, a holiday or a funeral, top with a thin slice of olive, perhaps from your martini glass.