



FALL 2021

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*magazine*



SCIENCE OF PAIN:  
**First Female National Geographic  
Explorer Shares Her Origins**

THE REALITY OF TELEVISION:  
**A Ghost Brothers Story**

FROM A LOG CABIN TO THE ARCTIC:  
**How Being Alone In The Wild Took Me Home**

GET OUT OF NORMAL!  
**How Imagination Transforms Our World**

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COVER PHOTO: DR. MIREYA MAYOR ON  
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Three days ago, after four hours and twenty-five minutes of hiking, I stood on the summit of Mount of the Holy Cross.*

The hot alpine sun was too bright to shed my sunglasses for long, but the thin breeze blew cold enough to make my sweat-soaked shirt feel icy. I was surrounded by summits in all directions—the jagged, striped Gore Range to the east, the Maroon Bells looking little larger than a pair of knuckles far off to the west. Just north of them an acres-wide snowfield on Snowmass Mountain seemed no more than a dab of white paint, with the tall aspen and pine forests in the valley below appearing to form the stubbly chins of the sheer faces around us. Visibility was so clear, I could make out the profile of Long's Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park, a good four-hour drive away.

Right now, my calves and shins still ache from that adventure. Holy Cross is one of 54 Colorado “fourteeners”—mountains that break 14,000 feet in elevation—and while it's the third-lowest peak in the state at 14,005 ft., it's also one of the biggest hikes. The trail out of the Grand Canyon rises 4,478 ft.; Holy Cross does 5,531 ft. out and back. That's a lot of gain.

Holy Cross was my 22nd mountain. Like Pokémon, I want to catch them all, but

my obsession with peak-bagging has nothing to do with conquering Mother Nature or mastering the wilderness. As a writer, I must escape this desk, this screen, and the labor of letters simply to feel normal. Mountaineering is my sport, but being in the outdoors is my medicine, my inspiration, my religion. I've come to regard wildlife as friends and neighbors, and the mountains themselves as god-like in their ability to both bring life and end it, in their incredible age and uncaring stoicism. And I never would have won this indispensable enrichment had I never taken risks or put in the sweat equity to push myself uphill and into the backcountry. I do none of this to punish myself; I do it as a reward. Pain is the price, but strength is the product.

I'm not sharing this to brag, but because I find the stories in this edition of *ciMagazine* all too familiar. Survivalist Nikki van Schnydel forages in the frigid Arctic to compete on the television show *Alone*; anthropologist Dr. Mireya Mayor, the first female *National Geographic* explorer, suffers for science in the water-logged Amazon, and African-American ghost hunter Dalen Spratt and his colleagues navigate the darkest places in the city

and the prejudices of Hollywood to get *Ghost Brothers* off the ground. Pain is uncomfortable, but as Dr. Tony Paustian advises in his article about the daydreams that took humanity to the stars, tolerance to adversity and the willingness to pursue your vision even in the most daunting circumstances nearly always bear fruit.

In both the literal and the metaphorical sense, people climb mountains not to die, but to live.

I'll see you at the top.



**JASON BRANDT SCHAEFER, CO-EDITOR**  
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THE INFAMOUS "ALLEN HOUSE" IN MONTICELLO, ARKANSAS. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY DALEN L. SPRATT

# THE REALITY OF TELEVISION:

## *A Ghost Brothers Story*

*The majority of people learn the old adage, "Good things come to those who wait," at a very early age, but for most, that sense of childhood patience becomes lost along the way. Although the mantra is true in most cases, its close cousin is what we've always lived by— "Good things come to those who wait, but great things come to those who work hard."*



DURING THE TEAM'S FIRST INVESTIGATION THEY DID FOR TELEVISION AT PROSPECT PLACE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

*Ghost Brothers* is the brainchild of an idea birthed in 2011. Back then, there wasn't much diversity in the "paranormal industry," something I quickly realized. During that time I was living in Atlanta with my college friend and fraternity brother Juwan. We were both employed by BET and working in the wardrobe department of *The Monique Show*. While most people working there were focused on their daily tasks, I was enamored with the concept of making television. Working on *The Monique Show* was crash course

in television production for me. We were fortunate enough to film two episodes a day three days of the week. During my time there, I would go from department to department, learning everyone's job description, all the way from catering up to the executives.

One night changed everything. I was asleep in my room, and I vividly remember waking up around 3 am, ironically what I now know is called the "witching hour." When I opened my eyes, I noticed that

I had left the television on before I had dozed off. On the television was one of the few paranormal investigative shows of that era. For some reason, I couldn't go back to sleep. My eyes were glued to the television.

I've always been a fan of horror movies, spanning all the way back to the days of "*Candyman*" and "*Nightmare on Elm Street*," but for some reason, I never really got into the paranormal shows. That was seriously about to change. After watching about an hour of the show, it dropped on me like a ton of bricks. Never in my life had I ever seen anyone that looked like me on any of these shows. Now my mind started running. Why was that? Why were there never any young black people searching for answers to the afterlife, at least on television anyway? A thousand different reasons started running through my mind.

I was raised in the church. My mother had been my head pastor since I was in the third grade. I watched her start the journey—a small Bible study on Tuesdays in our living room—and, in only a few years, grow her congregation to more than 500 people in her own free-standing church. Being a child growing up in the church, you see and hear everything. I've watched my mother pray for people with all kinds of ailments. I've seen her cast spirits out of people. I've heard stories of her praying for people and trash cans literally getting up by themselves to fly across the room into the walls, so I've always in some way believed in spirits. But growing up in a Southern church, you are taught that these "spirits" or demons are not to be played with.

*Why were there never any young black people searching for answers to the afterlife, at least on television anyway?*





FIRST SEASON OF *GHOST BROTHERS* AT THE "ALLEN HOUSE" IN MONTICELLO, ARKANSAS. THIS WAS THE FIRST INHABITED HOME THE TEAM INVESTIGATED (WHICH LED TO THEIR SERIES). USED WITH PERMISSION.



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GHOST BROTHERS ON THE DELTA QUEEN. USED WITH PERMISSION.

As an adult, I had questions. I'd always studied demonic spirits, but could there possibly be *anything* else out there? So after my brief trip down memory lane, I did what any other rational person would do who had questions at 3 a.m.—I Googled it. I searched, "Are there any good spirits?" and "Are there any black ghost hunters?" One

search turned up countless articles; the other, almost none. I figured there had to be a reason for this. I mean, was it because most black people had the same mentality as me? Like my good friend Marcus Harvey always says, "The only ghost Black people acknowledge is the Holy Ghost!"

I had so many thoughts and ideas running through my mind, all I could do was hop out of my bed and run across the hall to Juwan's room. I remember vividly his door being shut, and I did not even attempt to knock. I burst into his room like someone was chasing me. You would have thought Juwan had seen a ghost. No pun intended.

Juwan hopped up and screamed, "Man, what the hell is wrong with you?"

I looked him square in his eyes and said, "We need to hunt ghosts!"

Juwan pushed me out of his room and locked the door. It wasn't until the next morning that I heard a tap at my door. I opened it, and there stood Juwan. Clearly, he had way better manners than I did. Juwan told me that he had slept on what I'd said the night before and thought it was a brilliant idea. We decided at that moment that we had to explore the afterlife. The only problem was we didn't know where to start.

So again, we headed straight to Google. We realized that we needed equipment that we couldn't afford and a camera we didn't have. So like any other forward-thinking explorers on a tight budget, we went to Craigslist. If nothing else, we knew we could find someone with a camera who could use a few bucks. Never in a million years did we think that our ad would be answered by someone named "Spike Spielberg." You read that right, Spike as in Spike Lee and Spielberg as in Steven Spielberg. This man had taken the names of two of the greats and composed his own moniker. We should have known then that it would be a problem, but when you're on a budget, sometimes you have to take what you can get, or at least what you can afford.

This is where the story gets entertaining. Juwan and I embarked on a four-hour road trip with Spike to one of the country's most haunted cities: Savannah, Georgia. None of us could have imagined the lesson we were about to become well-versed in regarding "the afterlife," but we were prepared to learn on the job. As soon as we arrived in downtown Savannah, we parked and began walking around, scoping out the area. Mind you, this was a first for all three of us. As we were walking through downtown, this random lady stopped us and asked what our plans were while in the city. It was weird because how did this lady know that we weren't from the area? It was almost like someone had warned her about us, and she'd been patiently waiting. Out of politeness, we told the lady that we were in Savannah in hopes of finding a ghost. Expecting her to laugh in our faces, we casually smiled after telling her our plans. The lady just stared at us, almost as if she were contemplating a life-altering decision. She looked us dead in our eyes and said, "Come to this address tonight at 10 p.m." I typed it into my phone, and as quickly as she'd stopped us, she'd left us even faster.

We stood there in shock for a moment, then we all laughed at the pure randomness that had just occurred. We didn't even talk about what had just happened. We just chalked it up as a normal downtown city phenomenon. We continued on our exploration throughout Savannah, but around 9:30 p.m., we all had the same feeling. Maybe we should go to the address and at least scope out the area. I mean, a quick drive-by wouldn't hurt anyone, right?

All three of us piled into our car and headed to the address. The GPS led us right outside this bar in the heart of downtown Savannah, directly across from the river. When we exited the vehicle

*She replied, "You have to tell the spirits to stay where they are and to not follow you because they are not welcome on your journey."*

and walked toward the bar, we noticed about 20 people waiting outside. We asked a few people in the crowd what they were waiting in line for, and someone immediately spoke up and informed us that we'd arrived at a walking haunted pub crawl. A guide was there to walk us through downtown Savannah from bar to bar, telling us all about the creepy happenings along the way.

Honestly, we didn't know what to think. I mean, we came all the way to Savannah to find some spirits, but who knew that actual "spirits" were going to be a part of the story? Hey, looking back at it now, we might have needed the liquid courage. This is where things started to take a weird turn.

Out of all 20 people present, there just so happened to be one single lady dressed in 1800s garb standing off to the side by herself. What was strange was the fact that no one in our group spoke to her or even acknowledged her. I remember thinking to myself, *Dang, someone could at least compliment her on her wardrobe. It seems as if she put a lot of time and effort into it.* The tour began abruptly with the guide blowing his whistle to get everyone's attention. He introduced himself and began his stories. The tour lasted about two hours, and we probably walked to about six or seven bars in the area. The ghost stories ranged from a guy killed in a shootout in the attic of one of the bars to a young lady jumping off a balcony due to a jilted lover. Out of everything that was going on, the

only thing that kept catching my attention was that during this whole two-hour excursion, no one ever took the time to acknowledge this woman dressed in period clothing, even though she was following behind us after every stop we made. It was as if she was lurking in the shadows.

After the tour was over, we stayed around for a few minutes talking to everyone as they left. Soon we were the only ones left outside on the corner, talking and plotting what we should do next. I noticed it was about midnight when I felt a soft tap on my shoulder. It was the woman who had been following us all night. She looked at me and asked us if we were done for the night or if we wanted to hear some more haunted history. Well, we hadn't driven more than four hours to chicken out, so we chose the latter option. The lady told us to follow her. For the next hour and a half, this older white woman dressed in 1800s attire walked us three black guys all through the courtyards and back alleys of downtown Savannah, stopping every few blocks to point to a specific window or door or tree and explain to us the stories of each haunting that had taken place there. What was extremely off-putting about the woman and the experience was that her stories seemed less like your typical ghost stories, and more like someone pointing out where their friends lived or hung out.

It wasn't until the end that everything changed for us. As she was telling us about the spirit of a little boy that tended to play hide and seek on the third floor of some building, she boldly told us, "You *must* make sure that no spirits ever follow you home." Us not knowing any spirit rules, we naively asked her how we could ensure that. She replied, "You have to tell the spirits to stay where they are and to *not* follow you because they are not welcome on your journey." We all nervously smiled but made sure to repeat after her word-for-word.



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DURING THE TEAM'S FIRST INVESTIGATION FOR TELEVISION AT PROSPECT PLACE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

After we finished, she asked us one final question. As we walked toward a dead end where you could only turn right or left at the end of a block, she asked us if we wanted to see one last thing. Of course I immediately said yes. The lady replied, "Good. It's in this cemetery not too far from here."

Juwan immediately jumped into the conversation and squashed that idea by telling the woman it was late and that we had a busy morning the next day. The woman seemed to understand and said okay. At that moment, without even saying goodbye, the lady turned left at the dead-end, and we turned right. We took no more than five steps down the

street, and when we all turned around, we noticed the woman had disappeared. We looked up and down the street. There was nowhere for her to go that fast. It had only been a matter of two or three seconds, and this woman had seemingly vanished into thin air. I'm not going to lie to you; we were *terrified*, but we remembered our lesson. We immediately began to say out loud in unison, "Any spirits that are here, you are *not* welcome to follow us home!" We immediately ran to our car and drove back to our hotel.

We ended up exploring a few more haunted locations, doing our best to imitate the paranormal investigations that we

had seen on television. We caught some pretty compelling footage for it being our first time. Ecstatic at what we thought was evidence, we hopped on the road and headed back to Atlanta. Juwan and I parted ways with Spike and waited for our edited video to be returned to us. Weeks went by, and we hadn't heard anything from Spike. I felt my stomach drop. I just knew what had happened. Spike had stolen our footage. I mean, he changed his number and everything. Till this day I don't know what his plan was, and I haven't spoken to him since to even ask.

Now Juwan and I were back at square one, a really cool idea with absolutely nothing



to show for it. At this time, Marcus was making a name for himself in and around Atlanta as a talented barber. I met Marcus while working around the city, and we became close friends. Out of all the times I'd hung out with Marcus, we'd never had a single conversation about the afterlife, so I never really knew his stance. Marcus had the personality that would light up any room, and I had been to a lot of his stand-up comedy shows to better understand his sense of humor.

Time passed, and Juwan and I finally made another attempt at filming a paranormal investigation. This time, it went much more smoothly, and more important, we

got our footage back! Armed with a new one-minute trailer, we set out to pitch this great new idea. Every meeting we took ended in one of two ways: either people felt that because Black people don't mess with ghosts, White people wouldn't want to watch the show, or that because Black people don't mess with ghosts, Black people wouldn't want to watch it either. Maybe they both were right at the time, but it wasn't about a year later that I took the leap of faith and decided to move to Los Angeles.

I lived in LA for about four years until an unexpected email changed my life forever. At the time, I was a full-time Uber driver and a part-time show-pitcher. Well, technically, I just put the little trailer that I affectionately named *Ghost Brothers* on YouTube and would show the clip to anyone who would listen. One day as I was driving Uber, I reviewed an email. I was at a pretty long red light with a customer in the backseat, so I quickly opened the email and read the first few lines. It was a television production company that had found my clip and wanted to see if my friends and I were a fit for a new TV show a network was trying to make.


I immediately dumped the Uber passenger (don't worry; it was a safe area) and called the guy from the email. This was right smack in the middle of the #OscarsSoWhite movement in Hollywood. People were livid at the lack of minority representation on television and in film. Now networks were scrambling to find new minority talent and shows. Enter *Ghost Brothers*. We were fresh, unique, and had a different perspective than our counterparts. The only issue was we were still missing something or someone. I reached out to Marcus and explained to him everything that had been going on and asked him whether he believed in ghosts. Marcus took a long breath and

These brothers "ain't afraid of no ghosts," so much so they travel the country from their hometown in Atlanta to prove ghosts are real. The Ghost Brothers are best friends Dalen Spratt, Juwan Mass, and Marcus Harvey and are considered Atlanta's premier ghost hunting team. This all African-American trio's first show, *Ghost Brothers*, ran on Destination America and TLC for two seasons. Their current show, *Ghost Brothers: Haunted Houseguests*, appears on The Travel Channel, blending comedy with a straightforward approach to the paranormal. Their tagline is "It's time to pop the trunk on these ghosts."

thought about it before explaining his position on the afterlife. The conversation took a lot of twists and turns with many great laughs and ended with him jumping in with both feet.

After a few months of meetings and talks, everyone agreed on the vision for the show, and we ended with the truth—three friends taking on the journey of a lifetime to answer two questions. Are ghosts real, and why is *every one* of them white?

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WALKING ACROSS THE RIVER WITH MAASAI. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY DR. MIREYA MAYOR

## SCIENCE OF PAIN:

*First Female National Geographic Explorer Shares Her Origins*

*Nearly died from cholera. – Succumbed to malaria. – Drank blood with Maasai. – Chewed cassava with Amerindian women while spitting out the juice in unison “into a brew we would later toast and imbibe” . . . It tasted like sour skim milk. – Lying in tent for days with fever and harrowing pain from an insect bite. Surviving a plane crash alongside some nuns. Staying in a brothel.*



IN MADAGASCAR WITH A NEWLY DISCOVERED RUSS'S MOUSE LEMUR MICROCEBUS MITTERMEIERI. USED WITH PERMISSION

These are direct quotes from my journals. This is exploration.

Before there were rock stars, there were explorers—those who traveled into the unknown on expeditions of varying risk simply to discover new knowledge. Modern-day explorers are rare, largely unknown, and typically uncelebrated. Many still set off for months and years, only to share their research and findings with the world through some obscure journal only a handful will understand or see. But it isn't that exploration is dead; it's just silent, buried under the noise of the information we do know (and think we know). I like to think the Age of Exploration is infinite.

For two decades, I have explored

the most remote pockets of our natural world in search of little-known, sometimes undescribed, animals that are critically endangered.

I have come close to death more times than seems statistically possible. The media has coined me “the female Indiana

*Before there were rock stars,  
there were explorers—  
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unknown on expeditions  
of varying risk simply to  
discover new knowledge.*

Jones,” and I am hailed an “audacious explorer.” My journals read eerily similarly to those of pioneering explorers like Dr. David Livingstone, Sir Richard Burton, and John Hanning Speke. While landscapes have changed in the last hundred years, and technology has vastly improved, the same challenges, life-threatening diseases, and risks faced by the pioneering explorers of the past persist.

It may shock people to learn that I grew up as an only child with three overprotective guardians—my mother, my grandmother, and my aunt—who, when I asked to join the Girl Scouts, were all ready to say, “No, that's too dangerous.” I was the kid who would never venture from the safe and predictable, even in the culinary world. (I



TALKING WITH MAASAI. USED WITH PERMISSION

only ate things I could dip in ketchup.) So, eviscerating and eating raw goat liver or snacking on a plate of grubs big enough that 10 could fill you up, but 11 could send you into chills and vomiting, seemed very unlikely. Yet here we are.

With daily brushes with death, tropical disease, nauseating food, and dangerous wild animals: exploration can be equated to the science of pain while cheating mortal injury. But I have never for a single moment questioned my exploratory instincts nor been deterred from indulging them. Exploration, I think, courses through my veins.

When I set off on my first expedition to the Amazon at the ripe old age of 22, I had never been camping. I had no idea

just how ill-equipped I was. And perhaps because of that, I set off into a foreboding green abyss teeming with poisonous snakes and lived out of a dugout canoe for months with nothing more than a teddy bear backpack, wide eyes, and hope to see me through.

But it wasn't just a lack of camping experience that should have given me pause.

I had never been out of the country. Mine was a tight-knit family with little means. Summer vacations consisted of four-hour car rides to Disney World. Until I reached adulthood, Epcot was the closest I'd come to visiting a foreign country, and the giant landfills I observed from the backseat

window were the only "mountains" I'd see for many years to come.

Adding to the many reasons that perhaps exploration was a surprising, if not altogether terrible, career choice for me: I was a former NFL cheerleader, with a terrible sense of direction.

Exploration isn't the career path I dreamed of from childhood. Initially, I was a pre-law student at the University of Miami. Growing up in a house full of Cuban women inspired me to argue for a living (and I trained with the very best). If you know anything about Cuban women, then you understand this tendency to argue is no stereotype, but an innate skill inherited at birth. But in my pursuit of a law degree, I, like all



IN NAMIBIA WORKING ON A LEOPARD STORY AS A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILDLIFE CORRESPONDENT. USED WITH PERMISSION.

undergrads, was obliged to take a science requirement. I opted for an anthropology class. I wasn't sure exactly what I was signing up for, but it worked well with my schedule and would fulfill the obligation.

Anthropology means "the study of man." While we humans like to think of ourselves as superior, top-of-the-food-chain beings, the truth is we are all just habitually bipedal, tailless monkeys with slightly larger cranial capacities, who buy coats rather than grow them. There was an entire section in my textbook devoted to primates. As the end of the semester approached, I watched *Gorillas in the Mist*, and read about Dian Fossey,

a primatologist, who bravely studied mountain gorillas and protected them. (Until she was murdered, that is.) I finished the movie, threw on my sneakers, and headed to cheerleading practice, knowing I had found my calling.

Life would never be the same.

That summer, I set out on my very first expedition to a remote, unexplored region of the Amazon in Guyana, South America. I was excited and scared, mostly excited. I also felt confident, having been brought up in a home where Spanish was the only language we spoke, that at least I had that going for me. Imagine

my disappointment when I arrived in the capital of Georgetown and learned that Guyana was one of only three countries in South America that did not speak Spanish. This is how my journey would begin. After spending weeks reading up on many tents of different shapes and sizes and finally selecting one, I was to leave my carefully chosen temporary home behind. A local handed me a colorful Amerindian hammock that was more suitable for rainforest environments, where sleeping on the ground with some of the world's deadliest snakes wasn't advisable.

Weeks and months went by. Every day began with me collecting my damp, if

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IN MADAGASCAR WITH NEWLY DISCOVERED RUSS'S MOUSE LEMUR *MICROCEBUS MITTERMEIERI*. USED WITH PERMISSION.

not thoroughly wet, belongings, stuffing them into my backpack and shoving what remained of my makeshift camp into the dugout canoe. The day then consisted of juggling the jobs of paddling and glassing the trees through binoculars to observe monkeys that crashed through the canopy alongside, taking field notes, and bailing water out of the canoe, until the sky grew dark. Then it was time to make camp again.

One evening, I found myself seeking a place to stash my canoe and hide more deeply in the forest after being spotted and followed by what the locals refer to as

“pork-knockers,” Guyanese prospectors who mine for gold and diamonds in the country’s interior. They have a dangerous reputation with a history of drunkenness and violence. In searching for refuge, I came across a village that generously took me in. It turned out that several men in this village were engaged in wildlife trade. I was invited to join them on a small expedition to “collect” animals that would later be sold as meat and pets. At first, I was horrified at the thought and nearly declined. But I decided to join them in hopes of learning what species were being taken as well as how many and by what method.

I was shocked to see just how many beautiful and endangered macaws were suddenly on the boat. Lizards and snakes by the hundreds—species I had only seen in books. But most horrifying was how the monkeys were captured. Traps were set, and men would move into position. A monkey would be chased toward a tree that had been cut and as the monkey jumped to it, expecting escape, the tree would be pulled causing the monkey to plummet into a net. Adult monkeys are strong, with large canines and a vicious bite, so they are not wanted as pets, but for meat. The females will fight to the death protecting their infants, who are the prize as the hunt, as they are highly sought after as pets (and bring in the most dollars). Sadly, while baby monkeys are cute and tame during those early years, it isn’t long until they reach sexual maturity, at which point they become aggressive and are no longer wanted. They then either spend the rest of their days attached to a metal chain or end up in someone’s cookpot.

This wasn’t something I wanted to witness. But it is what set me on my current path as a conservationist. It’s vital to study animals and their behavior, understand their social structures and how they use home ranges. But knowing these things isn’t more important than protecting them. Any data collected is useless if those animals cease to exist. That experience changed me and how I approached every expedition going forward. I remained curious, but I wanted nothing more than to ensure their survival.

Months later, my hands swelled grotesquely due to a systemic blood infection. I had clumsily hacked my way out of the jungle, hardly able to hold the machete. Luckily, a bush pilot ensured that I made it onto his flight, though it was already full, and by the time I had made the arduous journey back home to Miami,



WALKING WITH MAASAI. USED WITH PERMISSION.

almost a week had passed. The doctor told my nervously waiting mother that one more day, and I would have been dead. She gave me “the look.” I remained in the hospital for weeks.

Since that first expedition nearly 25 years ago, I have been charged by 400-pound silverback gorillas, chased by forest elephants, swam with hungry great white sharks, and survived a plane crash, but my career actually began as a little girl in my backyard, in Little Havana. This vibrant Latin neighborhood is the heart of Miami’s Cuban diaspora. It is where my immigrant family, like thousands of others, found refuge as exiles in their search for freedom.

I turned my small, cramped house in the concrete jungle into nothing short of a zoo. I kept dozens of birds, cats, dogs, snapping turtles, and a pet chicken named Margarita. I loved animals. (My mother would argue that I was obsessed.) I spent countless hours climbing trees, particularly the mango tree that sat triumphantly in the center of our yard in front of the sugar cane my grandmother had planted, perhaps a stark reminder of the time she spent in a labor camp. This mango tree housed an unusually large population of Cuban anoles. Safe to say, I observed and captured every one of them so that I could study their curious habits. This included their ability to drop their tails and grow

a new one if I didn’t grab them just right. Little did I know these catch-and-release skills would be critical years later while capturing critically endangered lemurs in Madagascar for DNA samples. And yes, Little Havana was that homogeneous—even the reptiles were Cuban.

Aside from magnificent lizards, Cuba also breeds determination and stubbornness. The entire time I was in the hospital listening to Mom list the many reasons I shouldn’t go back, I was planning my next expedition. I found an article that listed the world’s 25 most endangered primates. There were beautiful photographs of all of them. All but two, that is, both lemurs in Madagascar.



IN NAMIBIA WORKING ON A LEOPARD STORY AS A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILDLIFE CORRESPONDENT. USED WITH PERMISSION.

Soon after, I set off to the mysterious red island where animals look like something out of a Dr. Seuss book. My mission was to find, study, and photograph Perrier's sifaka, and the silky sifaka, the only primates *Time Magazine* had no pictures of. None existed; there were only line drawings. And it was these line drawings that fueled my curiosity to learn more about these rare and elusive creatures.

After two separate expeditions and months in the field, I managed to find both of these rare beauties. I photographed them and conducted the first-ever study on these highly endangered lemurs. But that didn't seem enough. I realized they had also never been a part of a genetic analysis. This seemed important because they looked completely different from one another, one all black, the other all white. They were geographically isolated, yet they were listed merely as two subspecies. By collecting DNA samples, I thought I might be able to declare them as fully distinct species. That could lead to more funding, protection, and higher conservation priority. I would spend the next several years of my life doing just that, and my efforts would prove my suspicion. It would also lead to what most scientists would consider a dream come true. Exploration, of course, is also about discovery.

During a routine expedition to collect more samples of these lemurs, my colleague Dr. Ed Louis and I set out an array of small mammal traps. This is an additional way of measuring biodiversity in an area. But it rained for weeks. The forest seemed still. Animals generally hunker down during heavy rains, and nothing took shelter in our little baited houses until one particular morning—a drab, rainy morning that didn't seem any different from the last. My clothes were still wet, we had little food left, and the rain was not letting up. We peered into each of our traps, but with



waning interest as they yielded nothing at all. Then, from the bottom of the very last trap, a pair of huge brown eyes, taking up most of a tiny creature's little face, peered up at us. We excitedly brought the little lemur to base camp and under a soaked blue tarp, we photographed it, weighed it, measured it, and collected a small sample of DNA.

The next day, we packed up our camp knowing that we might have just discovered a new species. Initial results from that lone sample confirmed our suspicion, but solid proof required further investigation. One sample wasn't going to cut it. I planned another large-scale expedition back to northern Madagascar in hopes that I could find this tiny creature again. This time around, a *National Geographic* photographer and film crew would be in tow. This wouldn't be the first time a film crew accompanied me on an expedition. A NatGeo team had already documented my earlier work in Madagascar just before I completed my Ph.D., when I was still a graduate student at Stony Brook University. That documentary had led to an offer from the company whose yellow border represented everything exploration. I became their first female wildlife correspondent, a role that would take me all over the world to work with animals I'd only seen in zoos on land and underwater. Most importantly, it gave me a platform to talk about pertinent habitat issues and the plight of animals on the verge of extinction. It also meant that for once, it wasn't a white, khaki-clad male doing this at the televised forefront.

The expedition did not go as planned. Weeks of rain set in. Somehow, we had managed to leave the traps behind in Madagascar's capital. We were up on a mountain looking for the world's smallest primate, a nocturnal creature that weighed less than two ounces, in a monsoon at night.

With only a few days left, our luck turned. It was nearly 2 a.m., and one of my local guides spotted one in the trees. The next day, another. And so on. We collected the samples we needed, and the rest is history. Through *National Geographic* images and footage, the newly described "Russ's mouse lemur," made its world debut.

Then I set my sights higher.

Armed with all of this information and some maps, I met with the Prime Minister of Madagascar, who would excitedly declare the area a national park, an amazing commitment in a country where less than 10 percent of the original forest remains, and where biological diversity is arguably unsurpassed. This meant that not only would this tiny creature be protected, but so would the habitat it needed to survive along with the thousands of other species sharing this same forest.

I realize I'm somewhat of an enigma wrapped in paradox: a former NFL cheerleader turned *National Geographic* explorer. My life has been filled with unexpected twists leading down unusual paths. I embraced them despite the risks and uncertainty and especially in spite of naysayers. I wrote a book, *Pink Boots and a Machete*, chronicling my unusual path and gave it an equally unusual title. I have become very passionate about sharing my journeys and the wonders of the natural world in hopes that it inspires people to care more about these remote wild places and emboldens future generations of explorers to pursue their dreams, no matter how unlikely. My love for science communication has taken me back to Miami where I am now the Director of Exploration and Science Communications at Florida International University. And perhaps more so now because I am the mother of six, I continue to rappel off cliffs, trek across Africa, and search for that next

Dr. Mireya Mayor is a world-renowned primatologist, explorer, and Emmy-Award-nominated wildlife correspondent for the National Geographic Channel. Dr. Mayor's adventures have taken her—armed with little more than



a backpack, notebooks and hiking boots—to some of the wildest and most remote places on earth. Hailed as a “female Indiana Jones” and as an inspiration to young women who are interested in science and exploration, she has survived poisonous insect bites, been charged by gorillas and chased by elephants, and keeps going back for more. Her latest project is Travel Channel's hit series *Expedition Bigfoot*, and her signature book, *Pink Boots and a Machete*, continues to thrill readers around the world.

big discovery. I'm simply trying to leave a healthier planet behind.

Dozens of expeditions later, I found a newspaper clipping from 1965 with a picture of the first boat and people to flee Cuba after Castro shockingly announced that anyone wishing to leave Cuba could do so. Stepping into the small boat was a woman, eyes filled with both excitement and fear, no experience on the tumultuous ocean, heading to an unfamiliar place where the people spoke a language she didn't know, armed with nothing more than the clothes on her back, leaving everything she knew and the many she loved behind.

It was a picture of my mother. Exploration does indeed run in my blood.

# GO BOLDLY!

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FOLLOWING ANIMAL TRACKS IN THE SNOW HELPED ME LEARN ABOUT THEIR PATTERNS, LIKES, DISLIKES, BEHAVIORS AND SECRETS TO ARCTIC SURVIVAL. USED WITH PERMISSION



BY NIKKI VAN SCHYNDEL

# FROM A LOG CABIN TO THE ARCTIC:

*How Being Alone In The Wild  
Took Me Home*

*I'm a forest dweller. To immerse myself in nature and study its forgotten secrets, I've lived in everything from bark-roofed lean-tos to grass-thatched earthen lodges and tiny abandoned shacks surrounded by wildwood. I even survived off the land and sea with primitive tools and technology for 18 months. I became wild in the purest sense of the word.*

In my book, *Becoming Wild*, I wrote, “I abandoned a life of pedicured toes, Thai restaurants, and diamond rings—for dirty nails, roasted mice, and bear-claw necklaces. I tested my abilities beyond what I believed I was capable of, reawakened lost senses and intuitive abilities, and rediscovered the truths of survival for a modern world.”

Twenty years later, after finally discovering the balance for myself between the wisdom of the old ways and the best of technology, I’ve upgraded. I live in an idyllic log cabin in the wilderness that I built from a how-to book, a couple of YouTube videos, and my usual miscalculated start-up philosophy of “How hard can it be?”

A row of solar panels lines my front porch, a black hose snakes along the hill carrying water from a distant creek, while a welcoming trail of smoke billows from the stovepipe. I’m perched atop a cliff surrounded by scented cedar trees and hemlocks draped in long, flowing strands of yellow-hued lichen. Bald eagles come to my call for fish scraps. I feel the *whoosh* of their wings on my face as their outstretched claws snatch up the salmon carcass beside me. Nothing goes to waste.

The misty breath of humpback whales and white-sided dolphins sends me dashing to my boat, and at night, my neighbor, flying squirrel Babaji, glides down to my windowsill and ventures in my home looking for his usual late-night nut buffet.

For all the beauty and adventure of an off-grid life, you pay heavily for it, with an endless to-do list of back-breaking chores, repairs, and building projects. Feeling like a mule dragging and pulling things around becomes the norm. You raise your hands and face to the sky, calling out in an exasperated voice, “Why am I living here?” with the same frequency as,



WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST DREAM? ARE YOU FOLLOWING IT? (PHOTO CREDIT SARAH LEE). USED WITH PERMISSION.





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"I am so grateful to be living in such a paradise." Digging deep becomes natural for a solo off-gridder.

I know my wilderness lifestyle prepared me well for my time spent surviving in the wild on the TV show, *Alone*. The History Channel's casting crew had been calling me for five years to ask whether I wanted to be a part of the show, and every year, I had politely turned them down. But something changed for Season 6.

The phone rings. "Hello?"

"Hi, Nikki. This is Molly from *Alone*. We're closing applications for the show tomorrow, but I just wanted to reach out last-minute to see if you'd like to participate this year?"

"Oh, hey, Molly. Hmmm . . . I don't know. Probably not, but thanks for calling."

She pauses. "Are you sure you don't want to try and win the \$500,000?"

My jaw drops open. "What?!" I exclaim. "I could win \$500,000 for surviving in the woods? I had no idea! I'm sorry. I'm embarrassed to say I've never watched your show, but heck yeah, I'm interested! Where are we going?"

"The Arctic."

Visions of a snowy tundra, capable of freezing spit before it hits the ground, and blackened frostbitten feet trying to outrun a polar bear flashed through my mind. At this point, any normal person would have ended the phone conversation right there, but not me. After thinking for a few seconds, I said, "Are there going to be trees? If there's trees, I'll probably go."

Logically speaking, having a helicopter abandon someone in an unknown



**NIKKI**

**10 ITEMS**  
KNIFE  
LARGE POT  
AX  
SLEEPING BAG  
SAW  
PARACORD  
BOW & ARROWS  
FISHING LINE & HOOKS  
FERRO ROD  
TRAPPING WIRE

**AGE**  
44

**HOMETOWN**  
ECHO BAY, BC, CANADA

**OCCUPATION**  
WILDERNESS GUIDE

PARTICIPANTS ARE ALLOWED ONLY 10 ITEMS AND A TARP TO SURVIVE ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS FOR AS LONG AS THEY CAN. (PHOTO CREDIT HISTORY CHANNEL). USED WITH PERMISSION.

landscape in negative-thirty-degree weather with only 10 items and a camera sounded like a really dumb idea, but my heart kept telling me to go. I had to be sure. I never make a major life decision without asking nature first, especially when it comes to signing my life away for a reality TV show that measures success through ratings. I wanted to make sure I wasn't suffering from some form of modern gold rush fever like those ill-prepared prospectors who launched onto the Oregon trail and resorted to eating their own fingers.

I hiked off into the forest, sat down under a tree, and asked, "Should I try to survive in the Arctic for a TV show?" I quietly waited for an answer with my senses on high alert. I heard a bird alarm a few minutes later—a robin had detected someone. I followed its

short, piercing call until I came to a large hemlock tree. Looking up, I finally spotted the striped, grey-barred owl sitting on a branch, camouflaged next to the trunk of the tree. The owl is one of my dearest friends of the forest. It has come to me in many auspicious ways. It has even saved my life.

In that instant, my first memory of seeing an owl flashed through my mind. I was a small child. I didn't know the names of all the colors yet. All I knew was my dad worked at the North Pole where Santa Claus lived, and we were visiting him. I'll never forget seeing the yellow eyes of that snowy owl fly up to our car window one night and then disappear in an instant. I still have the plush stuffed owl my father gave me after that night. His name was Ookpik, the Inuit word for owl. I knew in an instant I



had to leave for this quest, even if it turned out to be a barren, snowy landscape that wanted nothing more than to turn me into a human popsicle.

I didn't know a thing about surviving in the Arctic, but I wasn't really afraid or worried because the maddening truth about survival is that our experience, training, and equipment can all betray us. It's not always what's in your pack that separates the hero from the dead; it's what's in your heart, mind, and spirit. The ability to control your emotions, the strength of your mind, and the trust you have in listening to your intuition are skills often overlooked on this show. I wasn't under the illusion it would be easy winning, though. *Alone* is the toughest show on television, so I spent the next month trying to learn everything I could about winter survival and how to hunt the animals and birds who lived where I was going.

Wandering over that ancient, icy, unforgiving landscape for more than 50 days, feeling like the last nomad on Earth, was one of the best decisions of my life. Every night, I went to bed feeling like I was six years old, and it was Christmas the next morning. I loved every minute out there. And I shouldn't have.



I uncharacteristically injured myself in the most careless of ways. I sliced my knuckle to the bone with my knife. I stabbed myself with my own blood-stained arrow, pulling up my pants. Despite managing my fire with strict rules and maintenance schedules, I burned down my shelter. In the mayhem and panic of shooting a squirrel with my bow and arrow, I realized my camera was off, and I was bitten through the hand—a potential for rabies. I found five fireweed leaves and six rosehips the entire time, and it was the best-tasting tea I've ever had. I had to wait till freeze-up to fish in my shallow bay, and while I waited,

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WITHOUT EVER SEEING A MOOSE OR MUSKOX, VAN SCHYNDEL RELIED ON THE SMALLER GAME ANIMALS TO SUSTAIN HER. USED WITH PERMISSION.



THERE IS SOMETHING INCREDIBLY SACRED IN CATCHING A FISH WITH A BONE HOOK, IT CONNECTS US TO AN ANCESTRAL PAST WE ALL SHARE. (PHOTO CREDIT SARAH LEE). USED WITH PERMISSION.



SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES CAN TURN AN OVERLOOKED STUMP INTO A COMFY LOUNGE CHAIR. (PHOTO CREDIT CHARLIE SNEED). USED WITH PERMISSION.

Nikki van Schyndel is one of North America's top wilderness survivalists, as well as a best-selling author and star of the self-filming survival show *Alone* on the History Channel. She also tested her skills by spending a year and a half surviving in the wilderness, using primitive ways of the past such as trapping and spearing bears, fishing with bone hooks and hunting with stone-tipped arrows. She recounts the adventure in her best-selling memoir, *Becoming Wild*. Today, she lives off-the-grid on an island in the middle of nowhere, in a log cabin she built herself from a how-to book, with her "how hard can it be" motto leading the way.



it took me 19 days to trap my first hare, and that first dessert of rabbit tongue and eyeballs reminded me of savoring the icing from the inside of an Oreo cookie, eaten last. Some days my fingers nearly froze to my camera's tripod, and when I had the beginning signs of frostbite on two of my toes, I was pretty sure I was willing to lose them for \$500,000. And then there are all the rules to follow, but the one ingrained in my head the most was "film first, survive second." I'm pretty sure there were moments when I risked both my life and the money trying to film a great show.

Despite my mother always saying I must have been born with a horseshoe up my butt, from watching my story it would seem like I was the unluckiest kid in the world. Instead, all of those disasters and the hardships I faced on a daily basis somehow brought out more of who I truly am inside. Instead of freezing me more solidly into the fears, patterns, and belief systems that hold us all back, the Arctic melted those away. The more I filmed my mistakes and bared my soul to that camera, the freer I became.

Instead of day-by-day losing more and more energy and enthusiasm, I found that with every step and every breath, I became happier and happier. I could somehow absorb new reserves from the landscape and stories surrounding the ancestors of the land. My energy certainly wasn't from the meager amounts of mushrooms and shish-kabob mice I was roasting over the fire for breakfast, yet I never experienced the pains of hunger or the sheer exhaustion one feels on long and difficult survival treks. My wounds healed miraculously fast, and though I wanted to, I never experienced true loneliness. I actually felt bad because I didn't miss a single person. The minute I stepped off that helicopter, I was overcome with this incredible feeling of connection. I had never felt more connected to my family, my teachers, and my loved ones in all my life. I could ask a question and receive an answer; I could feel a hug. I would sit by my fire at night and know my mother and grandma were right there with me. One night, I was struck down to the core of my being with this intense love of life and humanity that is hard to describe, and it has never left me.

The Arctic not only empowered me in extraordinary ways, it fundamentally transformed me into a person I did not recognize. It took me more than a year to learn to navigate the world through this new lens. My journey on *Alone* will always inspire me to defy my fears and walk toward the unknown, for it's in this uncomfortable place our dreams can be manifested and the person we long to become can be found.

I might have been pulled from the show before I was ready to leave, but I respect the rules of the game. I think I had more compassion for the production team making that hard decision than sadness for leaving my snowy home. I didn't win the money, but I had found the gold. May the call of the wild lead you to the treasure of home too.



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STAR TREK CREATOR GENE RODDENBERRY HOLDING A MODEL OF THE U.S.S. ENTERPRISE. PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY DR. ANTHONY PAUSTIAN

# GET OUT OF NORMAL!

## *How Imagination Transforms Our World*

*In Star Trek, Captain James T. Kirk would close his voice over at the beginning of each episode with the phrase “to boldly go where no man has gone before.” These words inspired a generation of engineers, scientists, mathematicians, and designers—including people of color—who took greater risks to achieve success. They also inspired some people to envision a world living in peace and striving to understand its place in the larger scope of the universe.*

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GETTING OUT OF NORMAL AT COMIC-CON DES MOINES IN 2015. USED WITH PERMISSION.

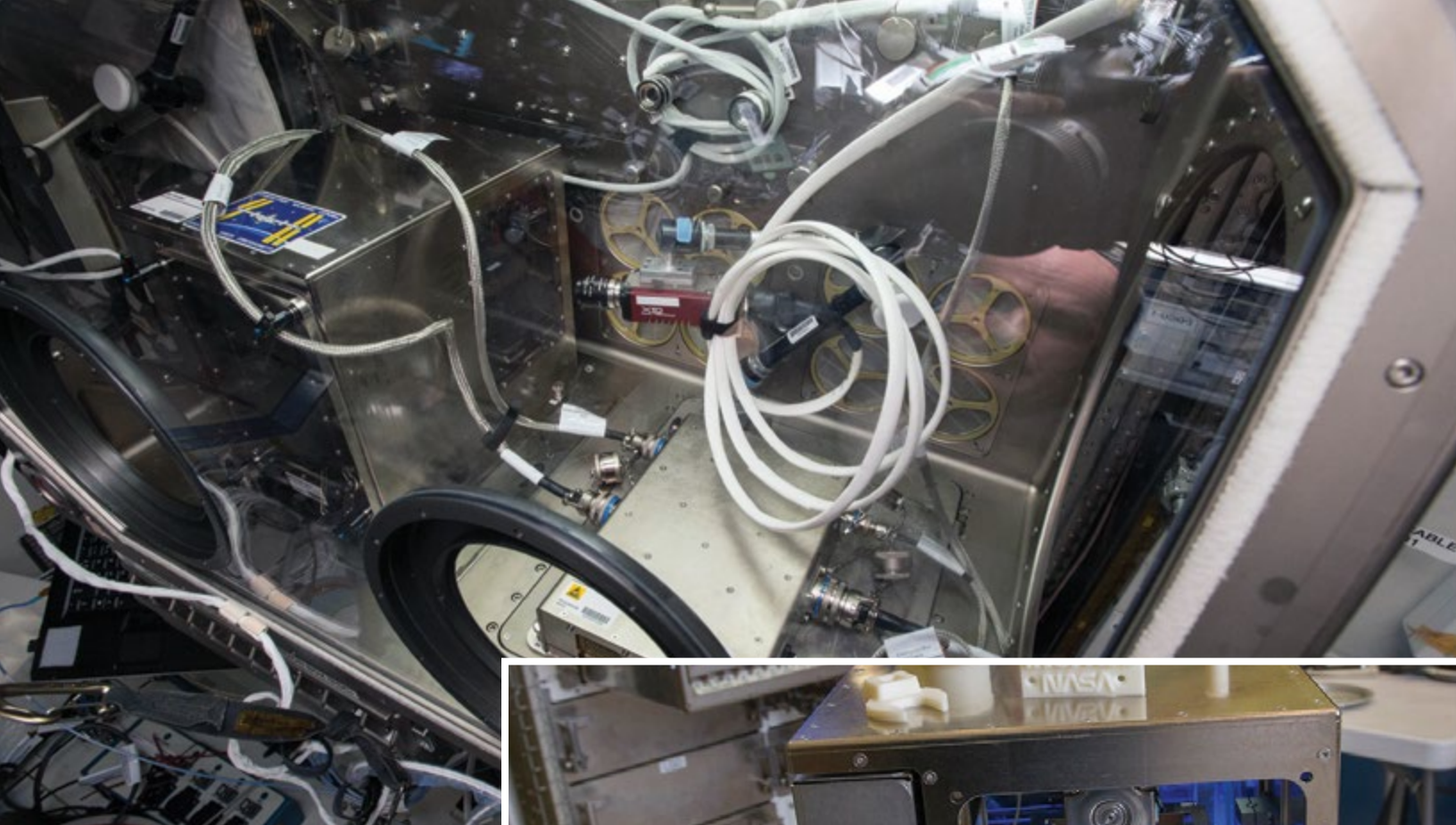
*Star Trek* was the brainchild of Gene Roddenberry. Unlike many creators of science fiction, who tend to look at the future through the lens of the present, Roddenberry imagined an entirely different universe, one where people have put their differences aside and come together for the betterment of all. In contrast to his contemporaries, instead of asking, “What can we do?” he posited a different question: “What *should* we do?” For Roddenberry, it was important to imagine not only what society could look like once people lived together in peace, but also a future based on scientific concepts that were somewhat plausible extensions of existing 1960s technology.

As with Roddenberry’s *Star Trek*, virtually everything in our lives outside of nature itself was conceived through someone’s imagination. Through the art of abstraction and elaboration, imagination allows one to visualize that which doesn’t exist. Unlike creativity, which is connecting what already exists in new ways, or innovation, which is the useful application of that creativity, imagination is the underlying current or mental “flow” that ultimately moves ideas through the creative and innovative processes.

As a construct, science fiction often disrupts the status quo and requires audiences to reject current reality along with its accepted ideas and methods. For example, in the decades prior to the

Apollo missions, traveling to the Moon was imagined only by writers of science fiction. Years later, science fiction became fact when Neil Armstrong took his “giant leap for mankind” onto the lunar surface. In similar fashion, based on what Roddenberry and his team imagined with *Star Trek*, an inspired fan base would go on to turn many of the technologies imagined in the series into reality.

The cell phones of the late 1990s look strikingly similar to the handheld “communicators” used by Captain Kirk and his crew. GPS systems and the voice features of Apple’s Siri, Amazon’s Alexa, and Google’s Assistant sound a lot like the female computer voice on the show. Video-based communication between



THE 3D PRINTER USED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA. USED WITH PERMISSION.

people on the bridge of the U.S.S. Enterprise with those from other worlds or ships is prescient of FaceTime or Skype. The earpiece that Lieutenant Uhura used at her communication station closely resembles early Bluetooth headsets. *Star Trek's* color, flat video screens were introduced when large, black-and-white "tube" televisions were the norm. Spock frequently inserted memory cards into bridge consoles decades before compact flash cards existed. One could even argue that "beaming" has existed for some time now—paper documents have been "beamed" throughout the world through fax machines since the 1970s and through the use of 3-D printers, tangible items including mechanical parts, food, and even artificial human organs are now "beamed" through the air. In fact, this is how many replacement parts are currently sent to the International Space Station.



However, imagination isn't just in the purview of science fiction writers. To have any chance of returning to the Moon and reaching Mars and beyond, imaginative thinking and the subsequent creativity and innovation that come with it will require everyone involved to begin looking at things differently and visualize new plans to achieve the goals of human space exploration and settlement.

I frequently talk with people who profess that they aren't very imaginative or have difficulty with visualization. I believe the problem is more a matter of "don't" rather than "can't." Just as the average person cannot roll off the sofa and run a marathon without proper training, the ability to visualize requires preparation, practice, and the discipline to push yourself further. A number of strategies and activities can help to improve your ability to visualize new solutions:





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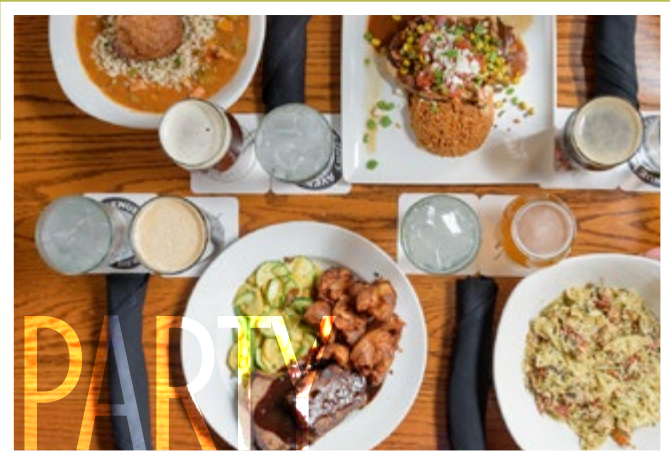
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• **ALLOW YOURSELF TO DAYDREAM:** In a *Psychology Today* article discussing brain-scanning technology, researchers found a correlation between robust daydreaming and intelligence. In other words, allowing one's thoughts to bounce around while accessing stored knowledge creates stronger memories and experiences. Those with higher intelligence allow this process to occur, enabling them to yield greater insights as a result. Some of history's most brilliant people—from Mozart to Einstein—have credited their imaginations as the source of their intelligence. To enhance the benefits of daydreaming, one must allow time for it, acknowledge when it's happening, and even have paper nearby to take notes for later reference.

• **LEARN NEW THINGS:** The process of creativity or “sticky thinking” requires an ever-growing base of knowledge available for one to access and make new connections. Imagination and visualization are no different. Since visualizing things often depends on mentally altering things you already know, a large base of knowledge and personal experience will greatly enhance the ability to see new things in the abstract. It's not difficult to visualize a red elephant if you have already seen elephants and various shades of the color red.

• **TRY TO FOCUS:** I'll never forget when I took my daughter to see the IMAX movie *Hubble*. The movie featured one of the space shuttle's missions to repair Hubble while in orbit and displayed a number of the breathtaking images taken by the telescope. When viewed on the immense OMNIMAX screen, the movie seemed larger than life and captivated my then 17-year-old daughter's attention. She was engaged and asked questions for about 15 minutes until she received a text message and some Facebook updates. Today, when it seems many of us lack the inclination

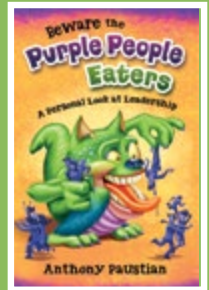
to focus on one thing for very long, it's no wonder people struggle to visualize new worlds or complex concepts.

• **ASK QUESTIONS:** The great educational theorist John Dewey once said that a problem properly defined is half-solved. When one applies “sticky thinking” to a properly defined problem, the odds are greatly improved for developing better solutions. However, properly defining a problem is typically more difficult than it sounds. It requires stimulating, open-ended questions that facilitate making new connections. Questions like why, what if, what would that look like, and what would it take can help one see the larger context surrounding the problem and better visualize how to solve it. A simple question led to the invention of the Polaroid camera, after a 3-year-old girl asked to see a photo of her that had just been taken. A group of watermelon farmers in Zentsuji, Japan came up with a more efficient way to ship and store them when they asked the question, “What if we made the fruit square?”

• **GET OUT OF NORMAL:** I bought a ticket to my first Comic-Con in 2015 with only one purpose in mind: to meet William Shatner, the “original” Captain Kirk. What I witnessed was amazing. Many of the participants were deeply involved in costume play (cosplay). Bright colors abounded, merchandise changed hands at a furious pace, comic book illustrators had their works on full, brightly-lit display, and gaming was in play everywhere. I began the weekend as an outsider who had only engaged in the outer fringe of this world. I got a taste of what it was like to immerse myself in a unique subculture, one where the focus was imagination and the willingness to immerse yourself in worlds that don't exist anywhere except in the minds of the people who created them. People need to “get out of normal”

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and allow themselves to see things differently and adapting to a life with COVID has certainly demonstrated that. Comic Con was anything but normal for me, but I found it incredibly motivating. We all need a place to “escape” to that opens our minds to new things and inspires us to greater levels of imagination and creativity.

As throughout much of history, imagination transforms the world at record speed and shows no signs of slowing. Just as the Apollo program forced us to visualize our planet in a new way, returning to the Moon could ultimately seem like a “tiny step for mankind” once we're standing on Mars and other, more distant worlds. Imagination is the single most important attribute to creating the future—possibly one thus far unimagined today.



# DMACC WEST CAMPUS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS:

Twenty years ago, in 2001, Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) seized an idea: innovation in technology should drive innovation in education and prepare today's students for jobs in tomorrow's economy. So, the DMACC West Campus came into being—a campus focused on Information Technology (IT) and bringing people together in an environment of creativity and fresh thinking. Things common in education today, like delivering course content through mobile, handheld devices and paperless textbooks (or eBooks), we piloted. We were among the first campuses nationwide—the only one in the Midwest—to use wireless technology. Textbooks delivered to handheld devices (PocketPCs) didn't exist, so our instructors wrote them. We developed quizzing software delivered wirelessly in real-time to students' PocketPCs.

Our forward-thinking approach attracted partnerships with big IT firms interested in developing these new technologies using DMACC West as a case study. Compaq (HP), Apple, Palm, and Microsoft were eager to partner with us. We received a lot of national media coverage for our efforts by CNN, USA Today, NPR, Wired Magazine, and others. In 2003, InfoWorld magazine named us as # 51 of the top 100 innovation companies in the country. Only four colleges were included—Harvard, MIT, Penn, and DMACC West Campus.

Now, in 2021, DMACC West remains committed to this ideal. Everything about the campus centers on the notion of innovation and partnership—from the classes to the space to the players involved.

While the campus has had to pivot many times over the years, we continue to employ the hallmark of our approach—innovation—to enhance our learning environment, creating:

- **Celebrate! Innovation™ Exhibition**  
[ [www.dmacc.edu/ci/Pages/about.aspx](http://www.dmacc.edu/ci/Pages/about.aspx) ],  
a museum used as a teaching tool. It

includes exhibits and artifacts, digital video, large photos and diagrams, and story panels integrated into classrooms, labs, and common spaces. Current exhibits include 200 Plus Years of American Innovators, 20 Years of Personal Computing, and 150 Years of Telecom.

- **ciLive! (Celebrate Innovation Live)**  
[ [www.ci.Live](http://www.ci.Live) ] in 2010 to link famous innovators and pioneers with students and the public. What began with just one speaker—Captain Alan Bean, Apollo 12 and Skylab 3 astronaut and the fourth man to walk on the moon—now features more than a dozen keynoters each year. Our live



# ANIMATION AND RICH MEDIA



*Now at the DMACC West Des Moines Campus.*

TWO YEARS

The Animation and Rich Media AAS prepares students for positions in the animation industry. Throughout the program, you will create your own characters, personify objects, generate dynamic motion graphics and more. Apply the Principles of Animation to your unique ideas!



***FINISH YOUR AAS DEGREE IN TWO YEARS!***

## HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Students in this program learn from faculty with industry experience in storyboarding, motion graphics and video game animation.

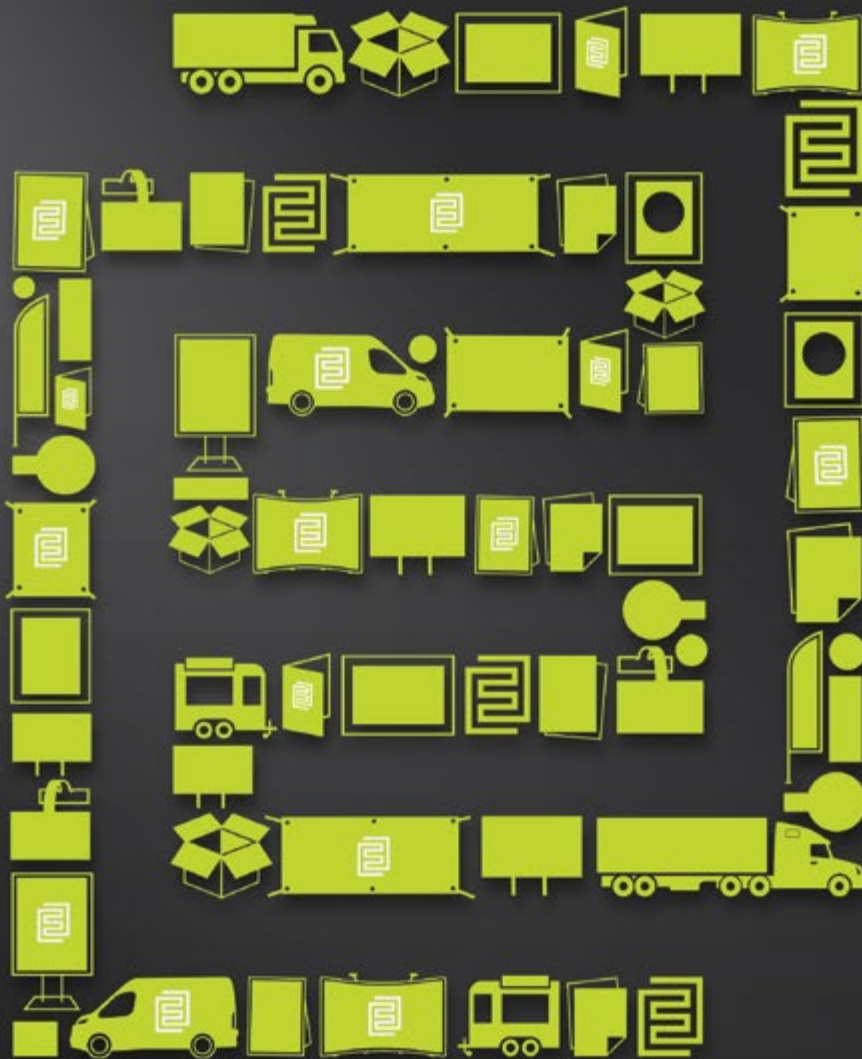
DMACC's Animation program teaches three main animation software packages: Autodesk 3D Studio Max, Autodesk Maya and Maxon Cinema 4D.

The Adobe Creative Suite is also used to create and prepare assets for animation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

[ANIMATION.DMACC.EDU](http://ANIMATION.DMACC.EDU)

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**“I just didn’t know  
how I was going to  
afford college. That  
is where the DMACC  
Foundation came  
in. They made it  
possible.”**

Sarah Macbeth-Nuzum  
Iowa Culinary Institute  
Ankeny Campus

# OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY

Helping others chase their dreams as a marketing consultant spurred Sarah Macbeth-Nuzum to give thought to starting a business of her own. When she decided it was time to take the leap, she turned to the Iowa Culinary Institute on DMACC’s Ankeny Campus. Sarah has leaned on scholarships from the DMACC Foundation to make ends meet and is now excitedly looking forward to her future—and giving back to others through food and fellowship.

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Your gifts to the DMACC Foundation open doors for students who may not otherwise have the financial means to pursue a college education. Your gifts are making a difference in the lives of the next generation of Iowa’s leaders.

**LEARN MORE: [DMACC.edu/Foundation](https://DMACC.edu/Foundation)**

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