

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

May 2016

Nothing is Impossible

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS

Gary Sinise and Robert Step Up For Our Military

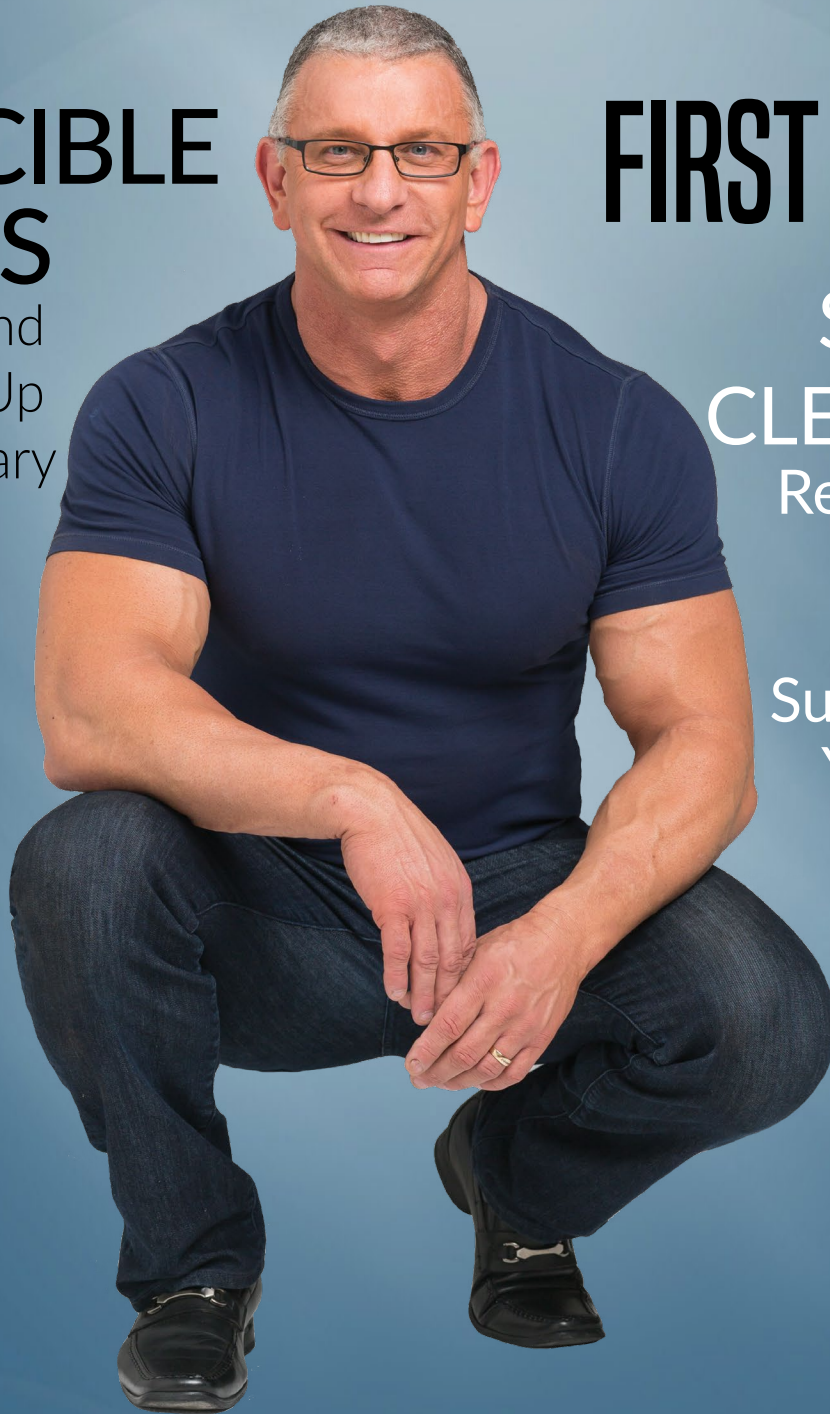
FIRST ISSUE!

SPRING CLEANING

Recipes and Workouts That Will Supercharge Your Body

DO IT RIGHT

THE FOOLPROOF GAME PLAN TO WIN IN THE KITCHEN, IN THE GYM, AND IN LIFE



FIGHT SMART AGAINST:

Body Fat
Diabetes
Low Energy
Allergies

INTERVIEW

Filmmaker Chris Bell Tackles America's Prescription Drug Addiction

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TAG TEAM: Robert joined forces with Gary Sinise and his foundation at the Invincible Spirit Festival in February for a day of food and music to support our troops. The cover story on page 12 digs into why that day was much more than just a barbecue.

NO EXCUSES

There's no such thing as waiting for the right moment to make a change.
I want you to get the most you can out of life—starting right now.



Welcome to the very first issue of Robert Irvine Magazine. I created this new digital publication as a way to connect with you on a regular basis and share information and inspiration that I believe can help make your life better.

You'll learn how to cook better food here, but this isn't a recipe magazine. I'll share training tips and advice, but this isn't a fitness magazine. In short: All of the content in these pages is centered around a healthy, balanced lifestyle. I want to help you get the most out of all aspects of life: body, mind, and spirit.

In each issue, in addition to finding delicious, healthy recipes, and new training tips and routines, you'll find gear recommendations (for the kitchen and the gym), get advice from nationally-recognized experts on all matters of general health and fitness, and read stories and interviews that will motivate and inspire you to succeed in all facets of life.

First and foremost, I want to give you a simple plan of action so you can take charge of your health. But moreover, I want to help you find your why—as in, the reason why you want to live the best life you can. Because even the perfect plan will fall apart if you're not doing it for the right reasons.

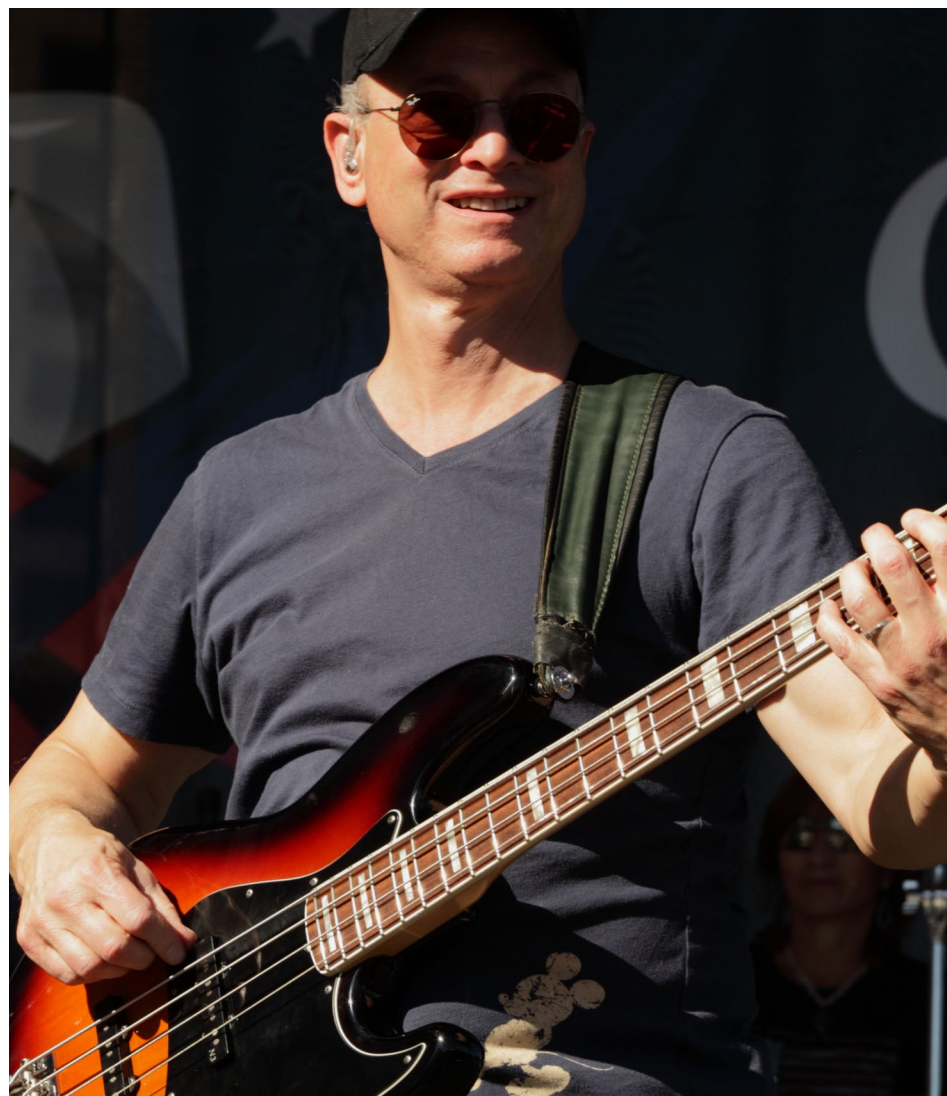
Follow Robert on Twitter: [@RobertIrvine](#), Instagram: [@ChefIrvine](#), and [Facebook](#).

ROBERT'S LETTER

Trying to impress other people or live up to a standard set by someone else can only end in disappointment. You have to want it because it feels good, because it will give you confidence, and because it will foster success in every area of your life. In short, you have to want it for yourself. You can't expect to lead an extraordinary life unless you prioritize your own well-being.

The cover story in this issue, which you can read starting on page 12, is about the Invincible Spirit Festival, an event run by the Gary Sinise Foundation (GSF) to benefit our men and women in uniform. The foundation's namesake, my good friend Gary Sinise, has dedicated himself to raising money and awareness for our wounded veterans. One such man who was on hand at the festival is Jason Ross, who lost both of his legs to an IED in Afghanistan. Jason had every reason to give up, but never even considered it. When you read Jason's story, I hope it will help put things in perspective—and then inspire you to pursue all your life's goals. Jason met all of his difficulties with an unbreakable attitude, and, spoiler alert: with the help of the GSF, was able to move into a state-of-the-art handicap accessible home where he and his family can get back to living the American Dream.

Jason represents the best among us, and I share his story not to shame you if you've been feeling badly about something that's gone wrong in your life. I share it because I think all of us reach a point where we face a situation that makes us want to quit rather than



[Gary Sinise](#), who became an icon for wounded veterans when he took on the role of Lt. Dan in *Forrest Gump*, plays with the Lt. Dan Band at a recent charity event to support our military.

carry on. The thought of pouring out effort only to meet with failure seems like too bitter a pill to swallow, so we quit as a way of trying to avoid that pain. But when we quit, we're too shortsighted to see that the pain of quitting—and never even knowing what we were really capable of—is actually much worse than failing at full effort.

No matter what trouble you face in life—if you're trying to lose weight, overcome disease, or get back on your feet after financial

hardship—remember that quitting is the only surefire way to fail.

In all my travels around the world, I've learned a lot about people, and today I can say I am absolutely certain of this truth: the only limits we really have are those we place upon ourselves. To that end, I say nothing is impossible.

Yours in health,

TRAIN SMARTER

Simple fixes to make your workouts better—and safer.

TIP #1: OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Training one muscle makes the opposite muscle momentarily stronger. Here's how to take advantage.

Exercise scientists have shown that when you train one muscle group, such as the biceps, the antagonist muscle group—in this case, the triceps—are momentarily stronger and primed for activity. This is a natural way for your body to try to maintain balance. It's also why supersets for biceps and triceps and other antagonist muscle groups, hamstrings and quads or chest and back are so popular amongst fitness enthusiasts.

Here's a great way to reap the benefits of this effect on chest day: the next time you bench press, do a set of band pull aparts first. Grab an exercise band with both hands and hold it at arm's length in front of you. Pull the band apart as far as you can; the band should stretch across your chest with your arms fully outstretched. This will give a little bit of work to your lats and to your rhomboids—the muscles in



ONE-TWO PUNCH: Training chest temporarily makes your back muscles stronger. Take advantage by supersetting chest and back exercises.

between your shoulder blades—and have the ancillary effect of warming up your shoulders. After a quick set of 10, lie down to bench. Your pressing power will temporarily increase.

TIP #2: SCULPT YOUR TRICEPS DOING PUSHDOWNS THE RIGHT WAY

HOW THE MOVE WORKS: Attach a rope attachment to a high cable pulley. Grasp the rope at both ends and press the weight down, flaring your hands out at the bot-

tom of the movement. This is one of the best exercises for working the triceps muscles—on the back of your upper arms. Do 3-4 sets of 12-15 reps. Choose a weight that makes getting the total number difficult.

MAKE THE MOVE BETTER: Try doing them on your knees. It's a lot harder to use momentum and cheat when you can't bend your knees and put your weight into the move. For added effect, imagine that your elbows are bolted to your

IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS

rib cage as you press down. Keeping your elbows fixed in space will prevent the shoulders from getting in on the move and taking emphasis away from your triceps.

TIP #3: GET LOOSE

Every desk jockey gets tight hip flexors, quads, and hamstrings from sitting most of the day, and this condition doesn't just impede one's ability to train, but also to run, squat, and sometimes, walk properly. Keeping loose isn't only important for athletes. It's important for everyone's quality of life. Here are four ways to do it right.

A) SQUAT-TO-STAND: Bend at the waist and grab your toes, wrapping your right hand over the front of your right shoe and your left hand over the front of your left shoe. Keeping your hands on your toes throughout the move, extend your knees to lift your butt up in

the air. You'll feel a stretch in your hamstrings as you do this. Do 1-2 sets of 10 reps.

B) HIP FLEXOR STRETCH: Drop to one knee and lean forward. You'll feel a stretch in the hip flexor on the side that the knee is down. Stretch for 10 seconds and then switch sides. Do an equal number of reps on each side.

C) QUAD STRETCH: Bend your right knee and grab your right foot with your right hand. (You'll want to support yourself against a wall or other sturdy object.) Slightly extend your hip until you feel a stretch in your right quad. Hold the position for 10 seconds and repeat on the other side. Do an equal number of reps on each side.

D) HAMSTRING STRETCH: Prop up one foot on a stable object such as a bench (see photo

below), keep your knee straight and lean forward, reaching for your toe until you feel a stretch in your hamstring. Hold for 10 seconds and then switch sides.

TIP #4 GET MORE POWER

If your squatting routine tends to drag from a lack of energy or strength, try adding a light, explosive move before the main move. For instance, before barbell squats, do 10 unweighted squat jumps. Simply squat low to the floor, then explosively come back to the starting position, jumping as high as you can at the top. The explosive movement utilizes fast-twitch muscle fibers, which might stay dormant during a standard set of barbell squats. Move from the explosive exercise straight into the regular exercise and, rather than feel fatigued, your set will feel fresh and stronger than before.



EASY DOES IT: A standard hamstring stretch is a good daily practice for everyone. Tight hamstrings can create tight hips, back, and even shoulders. You can save yourself a lot of aches and pains by staying on top of daily stretching.

IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

SUN'S OUT, GUNS OUT

The weather is calling for short sleeves. Hit this workout hard and be proud of what you're showing off.



MAIN SQUEEZE:
At the peak contraction of every rep, squeeze hard. Even if you lose steam and need to back off on the amount of weight you're using, getting a good contraction at the peak of the movement is better than going through the motions just to try to get to the end.

THE SHORT SLEEVES WORKOUT

Directions: Do the following workout twice per week. Do not rest between sets of a superset. After both sets of a superset are complete, keep rest until the next superset to a minimum—about 60 seconds. As the workout wears on, you can up the rest time to a maximum of 90 seconds between supersets.

Wait at least two days before repeating the workout, doing other activities and workouts—such as the Spring Cleaning Workout on Pg. 26 and cardio—on other days of the week.

Select weights for each exercise that makes it difficult to get to the prescribed number of reps. If you're not sweating, it's not working.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Barbell Curl	4	10
SUPERSET WITH		
Lying Triceps Extension	4	10
EZ Bar Curl	3	12
SUPERSET WITH		
Overhead Triceps Extension	3	12
Hammer Curl	3	12
SUPERSET WITH		
Diamond Pushup	3	12
Rope Curl	3	15-20
SUPERSET WITH		
Rope Pressdown	3	15-20

TRAINING UPGRADES

Add intensity to your workouts and recover faster with these picks.



COMPEX WIRELESS MUSCLE STIMULATOR

No, this machine doesn't replace exercise. And no, it won't magically shock your beer gut into a six pack. What it will do: Help you recover a bit faster, especially if you've suffered an injury that has led to muscle loss in a particular body part. Compex electronic stimulation devices deliver a charge on par with the kind offered at many physical therapy clinics. Simply attach the electrode pads to your muscles, select a program, and let the machine take over. Aside from waking up dormant muscle fibers with strength and endurance programs, the Compex Wireless has a massage feature that will soothe aching muscles while you relax. The wireless version is Compex's latest creation, but comes with a hefty price tag of \$1,149. If you don't mind the

wires, go for the Sport Elite (with 9 programs, \$649), Performance (5 programs, \$449) or the Edge (3 programs, \$249). The cheaper options offer less variety, but all the devices pack the same power. Shop at CompexUSA.com



HARBINGER HUMANX WEIGHTED VEST

Add intensity to any activity with Harbinger's weighted vest, adjustable in one-pound increments up to 20 pounds. Go for a walk or a bike ride with the loaded vest and

experience strength training and conditioning that will put your cardiovascular system and core muscles (just keeping good posture will be its own workout) to the test. While we wouldn't run with the vest on, hiking or climbing a flight of stairs with this bad boy will leave you dripping in sweat and melt fat off your frame.

\$75, Amazon.com



CROSSROPE

Rocky Balboa's favorite form of cardio is time-tested to burn fat and doesn't require any machinery or even much space. So how do you improve upon a classic? The CrossRope weighted jump rope system allows you to choose what kind of workout you want to have—start with featherlight speed ropes, then move up to the ¼-pound agility rope, the ½-pound energy rope, the 1-pound intensity rope, and then try your hand at the monstrous, 2-pound fury rope to put not just your cardio into overdrive, but work your calves, shoulders, and arms, as well. Starter sets begin at \$69, Crossrope.com

IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE

SALMON & POTATO HASH

YOU'LL NEED

4 salmon fillets (5-6 oz. each)
1 onion, small dice
1 large potato, pre-cooked (boiled or baked), then diced
1 medium red pepper, roasted
½ cup fresh spinach
2 tbsp low sodium Cajun spice blend
¼ cup apple juice
2 tbsp grape seed oil
2 tbsp goat cheese
Fresh chives and parsley
Salt
Pepper

MAKE IT

1) Sauce: Add the red pepper, apple juice, cheese, and spinach to a blender and purée until smooth. Set aside.
2) Potatoes: Place a medium sauté pan over high heat and add the remaining oil, onions, and potatoes. Cook for about 7 to 8 minutes, or until potatoes have browned. Reduce heat to low. Add fresh herbs and stir.
3) Salmon: Evenly sprinkle Cajun spices on both sides of all salmon fillets. Add oil to a heavy bottom pan and place over high heat. When the oil is on the verge of smoking, reduce the heat to medium and add



the salmon. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes, then flip. Continue cooking the fillet on the second side for an additional 4 to 5 minutes.
4) Portion the potatoes onto the center of each plate, top with salmon, and drizzle with warm sauce.

THE MACROS

Per serving
(Serves 4)
CALORIES: 513
PROTEIN: 38 g
CARBS: 22 g
FAT: 30 g

ROBERT'S TIP

Get the pan very hot before you add the salmon. If you jump the gun, the fish will absorb a lot of the oil, get soggy, and stick to the pan. Hot oil acts as somewhat of a barrier and creates a nice, crispy texture.

IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE

GRILLED HERB FLANK STEAK

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 ½-2 lbs flank steak
- ¼ cup white balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup light soy sauce
- 2 tbsp parsley, minced
- 1 tbsp rosemary, minced
- 1 tbsp garlic, minced

MAKE IT

- 1) Combine balsamic vinegar, soy sauce, parsley, rosemary, and garlic in a bowl. Whisk together to create a marinade.
- 2) Place steak in a shallow pan or glass dish and cover with marinade. Refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours, flipping midway.
- 3) Preheat grill or set your broiler to low. Cook 7-8 minutes per side for medium-rare. Remove from heat and allow to rest for 5 minutes before cutting against the grain. Pair with a vegetable of your choice, or serve on rolls for a savory steak sandwich.

ROBERT'S TIP

Because the flank steak comes from a well-exercised muscle, it often cooks up tough. Marinating it is essential to keep it tender.

THE MACROS

Per Serving (Serves 4)

CALORIES: 618

PROTEIN: 63 g

CARBS: 4 g

FAT: 37 g



IN THE KITCHEN: GEAR

EASY DOES IT

Kitchen essentials that make life simple.



◀ ROBERT IRVINE PERSONAL BLENDER

Pulverize fruits and veggies to make healthy juices and smoothies with Robert's own personal blender. Of course, any high-powered blender would do the trick for a smoothie, so what's the difference here? This unit comes with three ultra durable mixing bottles that double as on-the-go shaker cups to take the hassle out of cleanup. Just add your ingredients, blend, and get going.

\$59.95, HSN.com

JOHN BOOS & Co. MAPLE END-GRAIN CHOPPING BLOCK ▶

Looking for a chopping block that can double as a presentation piece? Look no further than this John Boos & Co. 15-inch chopping block. Ringed in a stainless steel band with handles that add heft and durability for the years to come, this chopping block is a triumph of form and function. Plus, it's made from maple, which naturally repels bacteria that can build up over time.



\$249, SurLaTable.com



▲ 5-BLADE HERB SCISSORS

A time-saver even for the most skilled home cook, these five-blade herb scissors will mince any fresh herb in less than half the time of doing it with a chef's knife. Cuts cleanly without the herb "wilting" between the blades. And for the price, they're a no-brainer.

\$9.95, Amazon.com

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS



HATS OFF: Robert and Gary Sinise accept official "covers" from the commanding officer of Naval Medical Center San Diego.

Robert recently teamed up with the Gary Sinise Foundation, whose mission is to honor and serve the men and women of our military. February's Invincible Spirit Festival at Naval Medical Center San Diego fed and entertained thousands of troops and their families, but that day of giving back was much more than a party. It was just the start of a story of how the Gary Sinise Foundation is changing the lives of wounded veterans everywhere.

Words by Matt Tuthill /// Photos by Josh James

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS

The sun-drenched lawn of Naval Medical Center San Diego is abuzz with activity as families file through the gates and begin to scatter across the grounds. The 11th Invincible Spirit Festival, a program of the Gary Sinise Foundation—the fourth here—promises to be a day to remember for all families on base. Kids are getting their faces painted, balloons in tow, and a classic car show in the adjacent parking lot is just getting underway. Robert Irvine, with the help of his own chefs and some 90 volunteers from Sysco, have fired up a half dozen barbecue pits and many more ovens for a massive feast to come: Burgers, dogs, wings, chicken breast, and a plethora of sides and desserts—for about 3,000 troops, their families, and hospital staff. (Everything on the menu—tens of thousands of dollars' worth of food—was donated by one of Robert's business partners, Sysco.) The main stage at the center of the lawn is swarmed with roadies, prepping the sound equipment for Gary Sinise & Lt. Dan Band, who will perform that afternoon. A drone mounted with a camera hovers above the property, capturing the scene.

Before the two perform—Gary with his band, Robert by inciting a wing-eating contest (and then a pushup contest to balance things out)—they begin a tour of the hospital that will introduce them to many of the patients there—some recovering well from injuries or sickness, some terminally ill. It's the most important part of the visit, and the crowd waiting outside won't get to see it, which is appro-



MOSH PIT: Gary Sinise comes down from the stage to play for some of his youngest fans at the Invincible Spirit Festival.

priate because as the two men reach each room, the scenes become intensely emotional. Gary, whose Lt. Dan character from *Forrest Gump* became synonymous with the plight of wounded veterans, is chased by an echo as he moves through the halls, as hospital staff exclaim in hushed tones, “It’s Lt. Dan!” He’s also recognized for his work with veterans, which has become a second career after acting. Captain Jose Acosta, commanding officer of the base, says that Sinise’s reputation as “the new Bob Hope” is well-earned.

One veteran, who has undergone multiple back surgeries and is currently recovering at NMCS D, breaks down in tears when Gary and Robert enter his room. “I’m just a regular guy and I love what you do,” he sobs. Similar scenes play out when Gary and Robert

visit a terminal cancer patient, and then one veteran who was thrown from a helicopter during a combat exercise. The latter actually brightens for a moment when he describes the incident, in which the helicopter tail landed on his legs after the fall. “I didn’t die, so that was awesome,” he says.

The hospital tour lasts a little over 90 minutes, but it leaves an impact—and offers a better glimpse into the lasting work of the Gary Sinise Foundation than the party outside, which will last just a day. Because the truth is there are a lot of celebrities who go on USO tours and visit with wounded veterans. Not to belittle those efforts, but the Gary Sinise Foundation, created in 2011, is on a mission to change the lives of wounded vets in a very real way, as one of the Marines in attendance at the festival can attest.

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IT'S ABOUT MEN LIKE JASON

Jason Ross rolls across the lawn in his motorized wheelchair, flanked by his dogs—Gracie, a German Shepherd, and Kojak, a Shepherd-Husky mix. When Gary sees Jason, he stops everything to speak to him. At this point, they know each other well. Today's event—indeed, the entirety of the work that the Gary Sinise Foundation does—is all about men like Jason.

As fate would have it, Jason didn't join the Marines because of 9/11; rather, he joined on 9/11 itself. While standing in the processing center to join, the news came through. Rather than give him pause, Jason said, "I guess we're going to war."

Nearly 10 years later, on March

7, 2011, during his second deployment to Afghanistan, Jason was sent out to raid an area known for Taliban presence. By the time Jason and his patrol arrived in the town, the Taliban had "ghosted," though evidence of improvised explosive device (IED) construction littered the premises.

"When we were coming back, we were crossing through a field," Jason recalls, "and I was the fourth guy through. I guess I was the lucky one."

He uses the term facetiously, but it is, in fact, pure luck that Jason wasn't killed on the spot. An IED blew off his left leg below the knee and his right leg above the knee, collapsed his left lung, broke his pelvis in five places, covered both of his hands in burns, and broke

his right hand in five places, his left in three. When he was airlifted to the forward operating medical base, he had a 2% chance of survival.

When doctors stabilized him, they bumped him up to 10%, then moved him to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland where he stayed in critical condition for the next four months. When he came to from his medically-induced coma and realized the extent of his injuries, his matter-of-fact attitude would stagger even the most hardened Marine.

"When I woke up in Bethesda, my first memory was watching lights go over my head and realizing, 'Ok, you're in a hospital. That's a good sign,'" Jason recalls. "I knew



A DEVOTED FATHER: Jason Ross shares a moment with his oldest daughter, Stacy, shortly after she was born.

All Jason Ross photos courtesy of George Ross.

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS

I had been hit, but I didn't know how bad it was so I looked under the covers to see. I saw that my legs were gone, then realized I had both hands and all my fingers and I said, 'I'm good. I can move forward.'"

Jason credits the desire to be present for his two young daughters and the unwavering support of his parents, George and Linda Ross, with playing a major role in hardening his resolve to carry on. If any doctors were unsurprised by his determination, his sense of humor certainly caught them off guard.

"They had the head shrink come and talk to me," Jason says, "and he goes through the basic battery of questions for all head trauma injuries. He asks me to identify different objects, say my name, and so on."

When the shrink asked Jason what day it was, he was surprised Jason knew it was St. Patrick's Day. When the shrink pressed him further and asked what year it was, Jason turned to him stone-faced and said, "It's 1729."

"I really wish there was a camera there to record that," Jason says, laughing at his own story. "The look on his face was priceless."

The Commandant of the Marines personally pinned on Jason's purple heart. President Obama visited Jason on four separate occasions in the hospital, eventually referring to him as his "favorite staff sergeant." The initial outpouring of support and recognition from men in high places is typical for veterans in Jason's situation, but the business of surviving and getting on with life is done far away from any photo opportunities. In Jason's case, it has



THEN AND NOW:
(Left) Jason Ross gets ready to deploy with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to Afghanistan in 2010.

(Below) Jason as he is today, sharing a moment with his daughters Stacy, 7, and Jackie, 5. To date, Jason has undergone a staggering 247 surgeries to treat injuries sustained from an IED.



INVINCIBLE SPIRITS

dragged on for years. To date, he has undergone an absolutely staggering 247 surgeries to deal with his IED injuries—with more planned. This is a big reason Gary Sinise created his charity, and when the Gary Sinise Foundation got wind of Jason's story, they didn't want him to just survive. They wanted him to thrive.

Jason qualified for the foundation's specially-adapted smart home building project through their R.I.S.E. program (Restoring Independence, Supporting Empowerment) and at the foundation's request, he supplied them with a plan for his ideal home. The foundation's drafters returned it to him in the form of blue prints, and after some back and forth, the plans were finalized. In August 2015, Jason moved into his new specially-adapted smart home, constructed by the Gary Sinise Foundation.

The crux of this home is accessibility. An ultra-wide floor plan and wide door frames make it easy for anyone in a wheelchair to navigate without having to make a tight turn or require assistance from someone else. Cameras positioned throughout the house allow Jason to keep tabs on his kids, now ages 7 and 5, without having to physically follow them around the house. Remote controls allow him to flip light switches and lock doors. Adjustable shelves can be moved down to his level, and counters are built low so Jason can easily get to the sink and fix his own meals.

Moreover, the house is big enough for not only Jason's daughters, but his parents to live in, too. This is key



(Top) Robert with his wife Gail in the wing eating contest (Gail beat him). (Middle) Gary Sinise & The Lt. Dan Band perform. (Bottom) Robert, Gary, and some 90 Sysco volunteers who cooked for the event.

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS



FLIPPING OUT: (Above) Robert challenges Gary to a burger flipping contest—with charity money at stake. (Below) Robert's challenger in the pushup contest leaves a little worse for wear.



because even though the new home makes life much easier for Jason, he still requires assistance with some daily activities.

"It's amazing," Jason says of the new features of his home. "It's been a big relief. I can get around. I still need help, but not as much help as I did."

George, a Vietnam veteran who served in the Air Force, says he had initially preferred that Jason join the Air Force because it tends to be less hazardous than the other branches. However, George adds that he's never second-guessed his son. "We are very happy and proud that he did it," George says. "He had a good run and we are not with regret at all."

Being a Vietnam veteran gives George a unique perspective on the situation. When George came home from war, there was nothing like the Gary Sinise Foundation to help wounded veterans transition to normal life. Veterans lucky enough to survive Vietnam were either totally forgotten or met with scorn and ridicule. Such was the highly-polarizing nature of that conflict, with the resulting challenges so poignantly illustrated by Lt. Dan's character. Today, the reversal of sentiment isn't lost on George.

"I'm glad the attitudes have changed," George says. "People, society... somewhere along the line it changed and I'm glad it changed very much for the positive."

NOT JUST A BARBECUE

"There is a bond between sailors," Captain Acosta, the NMCSO commanding officer says, noting that Robert served in the British Royal Navy. "Whether it's the British Navy or the U.S. Navy, absolutely there's a bond. There are a lot of sailors here and we all look forward to this... The chef and Gary Sinise are part of our family. Gary could have taken this festival anywhere, but every year he comes back here. That's because he knows us and he's con

INVINCIBLE SPIRITS

nected to us.”

When Robert is done hosting the wing-eating and pushup contests, he seats himself at a table between Lou Berger and Tom Crosby, captivated by the story of the two men. During WWII, Tom lived in the Philippines, where his mother worked at the U.S. consulate. When the Japanese occupied the islands, a then 8-year-old Tom was interned along with other Americans at the University of Santo Tomas for over three years. Lou, serving in the 1st Cavalry, liberated the camp, and found a friend for life.

“Lou and Tom do a lot of work with POWs here in town,” says Tom’s daughter Cari Hogan. “And Gary just sent them down to New Orleans to share their story at the WWII museum... The best thing: My father holds no ill will toward the Japanese. I wasn’t raised knowing they were any different than anyone else. He’s the most gracious man I’ve ever met in my life.”

Lou, now 91 years old, and Tom, 83, have kept in touch through the years, and over a couple of cheeseburgers and Cokes, they share more of the story with Robert. Among other things, Robert learns that Lou was, and remains, an avid rock n’ roll drummer.

Some minutes later, Robert escorts Lou to the side of the stage, where the Lt. Dan Band’s performance is now in full swing. Robert runs up on stage to have a word with Gary in between songs. Gary nods and smiles, and a moment later, Robert brings Lou onstage and seats him behind the drum kit. Lou has no trouble keeping time during the next few songs, and can’t help but gush with pride when Gary demands an

ovation for his guest drummer.

Afterward, Lou sums up his experience succinctly. “This is the greatest day of my life,” he beams.

“These are two heroes of mine right here,” Robert adds. “We need to teach our children what these guys went through. We can thank them all we like, but it will never be enough.”

At the end of the day, before the Lt. Dan Band’s final song, Gary said as much to the crowd in his parting speech.

“We’ve been at war for a long time, and it doesn’t look like things are going to get any better any time soon,” Gary began. “So we’ve got to do everything we can to make sure our defenders and their families know that we appreciate everything they do for us. That’s why we come out and that’s why my foundation’s there, and that’s why Robert goes around to help our military—just to make sure that you know that what you do each and every day to defend us all around the world is appreciated...”

“We can never do enough to raise awareness about the importance of freedom. Freedom around the world

is not something that everybody just has. It’s something that has to be defended and protected. So a little day like this – where my team can come out and our volunteers can come out and we can just say a little thank you and have some fun, that means a lot to us because there’s something we can do to serve you—those who serve us.”

As Gary wrapped up the speech, his tone became more measured to counter the lump in his throat.

“Remember what the song says: There ain’t no mountain high enough, there ain’t no valley low enough, there ain’t no river wide enough... to keep us from getting to you.”

Get involved and learn how you can support our wounded vets.

Learn more about the Gary Sinise Foundation at:

GarySiniseFoundation.org

Learn more about the Robert Irvine Foundation at:

RobertIrvineFoundation.org

See Jason Ross in his specially adapted smart home, at the Gary Sinise Foundation’s [YouTube page](#).



Gary Sinise, whose Lt. Dan character in *Forrest Gump* epitomized the plight of wounded veterans, honors our military through his foundation. Follow the foundation on [Twitter](#).

INTERVIEW: NATASHA CLEMENT

A STAR IS BORN

All-Star Academy Season 2 champion Natasha Clement opens up about her big win, why she chose to team up with Robert, and what she's cooking up next.



New Orleans native Natasha Clement stormed into Season 2 of Food Network's *All-Star Academy* riding a wave of competitive adrenaline that somehow sustained over all eight weeks of the show. *All-Star Academy* pitted eight super-talented home chefs against one another and allowed them to select one celebrity mentor—Alex Guarnaschelli, Curtis Stone, Andrew Zimmern, or Robert Irvine—to guide them through the challenges. Natasha chose Robert, cooked her way through a marathon of nail-biting challenges, and was eventually crowned champion, earning \$50,000 in prize money. Here, she explains how life hardships made her a fierce competitor, what she learned from Robert, and more.

RI Magazine: Has life really started to change for you since the finale?

[Natasha Clement](#): A little bit so far. I've been working a lot, so I haven't been out too much.

RI: What is work for you right now?

NC: I'm a bartender and server at La Petite Grocery, which is a little French restaurant in New Orleans off Magazine Street.

RI: What was the lag time between filming and it airing? How long did you have to keep it a secret?

NC: Since November.

INTERVIEW: NATASHA CLEMENT

RI: Wow.

NC: I know. It was difficult.

RI: Where did you see the casting call and what made you think you could do it?

NC: Well, I tried out for *Master Chef* the previous year. There were over 40,000 people that tried out for the show. I actually made the cut. I went to LA for a little over three weeks. They narrowed it down to the top 100 and the top 40, and then they narrowed it down to the top 22, and that's when I got booted out. To go that far on such a massive show, I realized maybe I could do something else. I've always loved the Food Network. I had tried out for *Food Network Star* in 2009 and it was just too tough. I was going against people that were trained professionally and worked in kitchens. I didn't get in that one either.

Finally I had enough nerve to find one that I thought suited me. A friend of mine saw in the paper that they were coming to New Orleans. The casting call was literally a block down from the restaurant.

RI: You got to choose your mentor and you picked Robert. He didn't pick you. What factored into that decision?

NC: Well, I've always been obsessed with *Restaurant: Impossible* and just everything Robert does on Food Network, because he's so intense. You read about him, and he is a very selfless and giving person. He does a lot of things that most people don't think he can pull off. That's where he resonated with me, having gone through everything I've gone through. People think that you just can't get back on your feet and do better when you've been knocked down so many times. I've always had an admiration for how strong of a personality he is. Actually going into the show, they made us write down who we would pick. At first, my first choice was Alex Guarnaschelli—right after her comment to me when we had to cook our first challenge. But then when they stood there and sold themselves, I retracted and went back to what I really felt in my heart, and I went for Robert.

RI: She recognized that you had talent, and she was very effusive in her praise. So you started to waffle.

NC: Right. She told me I reminded her a lot of herself, and that's a huge compliment for somebody like that to say to you after only seeing you cook once. Robert was very interested in what I did. He was very straightforward and he said, "You need to work with me so we can make this better." It was between the two. Then they got on stage and they each had a moment to sell themselves to all nine of us. Robert just really said a lot of things that were more true to how I felt about life, which is why he resonated with me and I decided to pick him.

RI: If you go behind the scenes of *Restaurant: Impossible*, you see that he continues to coach when the cameras are off. Did he do that with you and what are some of the



INTERVIEW: NATASHA CLEMENT

biggest lessons he had for you?

NC: Basically, he recognized the level of intensity I had and how determined I was; then he just taught me a way to focus and channel that into a successful outcome. You know, when you're a person like me, who goes 100,000 miles a minute and you don't stop and you're very intense, you tend to lose focus on what you're doing, and that's when errors happen. The biggest lesson I learned with him was to calm down, focus, have a plan, execute the plan, and then make sure that it's technically proficient. That's basically what he taught me. It was very by the book. Be methodical.

RI: The other mentors seemed to help their protégés along quite well. When they shook the teams up for one round, Andrew Zimmern mentored you and you won the round. So do you think it ultimately mattered who your mentor was, or did Robert really help you secure the victory?

NC: I think that I was a good cook on the show, and I think that I could have learned from each one of them. Do I think I could have won with anybody else besides Robert? No. Robert and I were like this crazy, strained husband-and-wife team that could yell at each other and be totally fine with it. Our chemistry was just, "Hey, get the job done. No matter how many times you fall, get back up. Okay, that's gone. Move on to the next thing." Some of the other mentors tend to get a little too mushy with their contestants. Robert and I have a huge admiration for each other on the show, but it was never to the point where it colored our judgment on why we were there. We were there to win. We weren't there to just do our best.

RI: He does have a way of motivating where people really want to please him. You see that in *Restaurant: Impossible*.

NC: Right. I would have handled disappointing my family better than disappointing him. I guess that's how much of an influence his training and his mentoring skills were on me. The last person I wanted to let down was not necessarily my son, because we would have just gone back to life as normal and I would have found another way to do the best thing I could do for him. But to let Robert down would have

been really hard. It's something I probably wouldn't have gotten over easily, because he put so much of himself into what we did on the show...

I was the oldest of three girls. I was always the one that had the rules. Everyone was strict on me. I was punished more. The other two sisters got away with everything. After resenting them for so long, I brought that back into my life and decided that I didn't want to do things without trying to execute them the right way. Then I thought I had it all figured out. I had a marriage and I had a son and we had a house and you think things are good, and then divorce comes along and everything falls apart. You realize you don't have it figured out, and then you forget what it's like to actually be in control of your life again, because everything is spinning out of control.

To pick Robert and to be with a personality like him, it was almost like rebirth for me. "Hey, let's get back to where you used to be, because you used to be hard on yourself, just like this guy is." It was a wake up call.

RI: You mention hard times and you're from New Orleans—were you hit hard by Katrina?

NC: Hurricane Katrina didn't necessarily affect the suburb that I lived in, but it affected my ex-husband's entire family, so they lived with us for awhile. Hurricane Andrew hit my hometown. A lot of my friends lost their homes. That was in '92. Then in Hurricane Isaac three years ago, my husband now—we were just dating at the time—his dad, his brother, all lost homes due to 2 to 4 feet of water. It is a rebuilding process and it's sad, because we did lose everything that was on the ground floor of the house. It was flooded. We were homeless for six months, just living around with people, relatives and friends. Then having to purchase new cars based on a new budget because you've lost everything. You need to save money in a different way. That was a journey.

I've been through a lot of different things, but Isaac for me was rock bottom as far as having to rebuild, being recently divorced and newly dating a good man and then having to raise a kid in the middle of all that mess. It was a really difficult time. So to come around and have this victory, it feels incredible.

INTERVIEW: NATASHA CLEMENT

RI: One of your final challenges was to revisit your first challenge and do it again because the judges wanted to see how much you had grown. What specifically did you get better at?

NC: Learning how to execute something in a completely different way than what you had planned. So if something's not working you just find a different way. If something were to start to go wrong or overcook or whatever it would be, I've learned how to manipulate that situation and turn it into something successful, which all goes back to learning how to focus and having a plan and not worrying if everybody is going to like the dish.

RI: Did you have a lot of interaction with the other contestants?

NC: We had a lot of time together— a lot of time in the green room, waiting to be on set. Anna and I definitely went out and got some much needed glasses of wine after some of the rounds. We studied together. We became really close. We kind of relate to each other. We both love French food and French-influenced foods. She's extremely mature for her age. She's very smart. Becoming friends with her, not only was it a bonus because we get along, but she was also someone where I could pick her brain. We could throw ideas back and forth. It was sad to see her go.

RI: Were there any rivalries we didn't know about?

NC: No. A lot of people tended to make the episode with Jermaine (Robert's second protégé) as if it was a rivalry, but it was not. He wasn't getting the job done, and I wasn't there to go home. My anger came out as if I was cocky or I thought I was better than him. I think he was overwhelmed. Robert yelling at him maybe didn't help. He's a nice kid. Off camera, he and I joked a lot. He thought I was hilarious. I think he's a really great person. There are no hard feelings.

RI: What do you want to do next? Do you want to try more TV?



WINNING COMBINATION: With Robert by her side, Natasha won All-Star Academy Season 2. You can watch highlights from her victory-clinching performance [HERE](#).

NC: I would love to do more TV. I'd love to work with Robert again, too; on TV or just at a food and wine festival. I really love to be in front of people and in front of an audience. It drives me. I think that's one of the reasons why I did so well on the show. Eventually, yes, I'd like to own something for myself.

But as a mom of a teenage boy now and step twins, I have three kids to get through high school and I don't want to miss out on those moments. It's going to be a sacrificial balance for me, but one that'll be well worth it, because like I told Robert on the show and I might have even mentioned in a commentary, what good is your success without theirs? As a parent, if they're not successful, then you failed.

RI: What will the prize money help with?

NC: My savings were depleted between divorce and hurricanes and custody battles and everything else. The plan has always been to put my son through the best private school that he could get into, based on his academic excellence. It would have been very difficult for me to do that without winning this money. This money is dedicated to him and his education. If Mom can get some new pots, maybe, that would be good. Maybe a weekend getaway, but it was definitely reserved for him, for his education, for his success.

SPRING CLEANING

Time to put away the comfort food recipes and supercharge your body with the nutrients it needs to boost metabolism, build muscle, and get more energy. These quick and easy smoothie and juice recipes will help you do it all. Then try the Spring Cleaning Workout to put the finishing touches on everything.



SPRING CLEANING

OATS & BRAN SHAKE



SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

¼ cup protein powder (vanilla, chocolate, or plain)
1 banana
¼ cup rolled oats
¼ cup bran flakes
1 ¼ cup low-fat milk

MAKE IT

Blend all ingredients until smooth.
Add ice if desired.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 323
PROTEIN: 27
FAT: 3
CARBS: 49

ROBERT SAYS:

“The **Oats & Bran Shake** is a great recipe because there’s enough protein to support your muscles, and the complex carbs will keep you well satisfied between meals. Putting raw oats and bran into a shake usually gives people pause, but it shouldn’t. After it’s been in the blender for about a minute, just give it a taste; if you wind up with even a hint of a gritty texture, give it a little more time. The right consistency will be thick and rich, not sandy.”

“The **Super Green Detox Juice** gives you a great shot of quick energy and helps keep unhealthy cravings at bay. It’s also incredibly flexible; use the recipe below as a base and then get creative. Try adding some fresh ginger, a quarter of an avocado, or some lime juice for a bit of a twist.”

SUPER GREEN DETOX JUICE

SERVES 1

YOU'LL NEED

2 celery stalks, chopped
1 cucumber, chopped
2 leaves kale, deveined
1 handful spinach
1 handful cilantro or parsley, fresh
1 lemon, peeled
1 apple, cored and chopped

MAKE IT

If using a juicer, run all ingredients through.
If using a blender, add 1 cup water and blend until smooth.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 260
PROTEIN: 14
FAT: 1
CARBS: 58



PEANUT BUTTER PROTEIN SHAKE

SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

½ cup whey protein powder (vanilla, chocolate, or plain)
1 tbsp slivered almonds
2 tbsp peanut butter
1 cup low-fat milk
½ banana

MAKE IT

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 426
PROTEIN: 44
FAT: 12
CARBS: 41

ROBERT SAYS:

“I love this one for an easy post-workout meal. It’s got plenty of protein from the whey, plus the peanut butter and almonds give you even more protein and healthy fats. The carbs come from the sugar in the banana and the milk (lactose), which helps restore depleted glycogen levels after a particularly tough training session.”



SPRING CLEANING



COOL MINT CUCUMBER

SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

1 cup cucumber, chopped
1 kiwi, peeled
½ cup apple cider
½ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
1 tbsp fresh mint leaves

MAKE IT

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 183
PROTEIN: 14
FAT: 0
CARBS: 31

BEET-VEGGIE CLEANSE



ROBERT SAYS: “The Beet-Veggie Cleanse is great to have before you hit the gym. Beets contain betaine, an amino acid that has been shown to promote fat loss and muscle gain.

SERVES 1

YOU'LL NEED

1 beetroot, large
1 bunch kale, small
1 piece ginger root, small
1 cucumber
2 stalks celery

MAKE IT

If using a juicer, run all ingredients through. If using a blender, add 1 cup water and blend until smooth.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 161
PROTEIN: 8 g
FAT: 1 g
CARBS: 34 g

SPRING CLEANING

THE SPRING CLEANING WORKOUT

The best way to get the most for your efforts is to support your dietary changes with high-intensity training. Pair the Spring Cleaning Juices with the Spring Cleaning Workout, presented here.

CIRCUIT I

Directions: Do three rounds of the following exercises without resting between rounds or exercises. Record your time for reference.

Rest 3-4 minutes between Circuits I and II.

EXERCISE	REPS
Bodyweight Squat	25
Pushup	15
Pullup*	5
Sprint**	30 seconds

*If you can't do a regular pullup, use the assisted pullup machine or hang a resistance band from the pullup bar and place both knees inside it.

**You can use a treadmill or, if you're fortunate to have an outside setup, do a real sprint.

CIRCUIT II

Directions: Do three rounds of the circuit, resting 30-60 seconds between exercises and 2-3 minutes at the end of each round.

EXERCISE	REPS
Barbell Squat	12
Bench Press	12
Barbell Row	12

SCALING THE WORKOUT:

Circuit I requires no scaling for men and women. However, when it comes to lifting weights in Circuit II, some scaling is helpful. As a general rule, everyone should choose a weight that makes getting 12 reps difficult. As a more specific rule, men should aim for at least 135 pounds on the squat, 185 on the bench, and 95 on the barbell row. Women should aim to use at least 95 pounds on the squat, 75 on the bench, and 75 on the barbell row—with more preferred if you're capable.



Can't do a regular pushup? Drop to your knees. Regular pushups are too easy? Do them explosively and add a clap at the top.



Squats have rightly been called the "King of Exercises" because of the high demand they place on so many muscles in the body. They are essential for men and women.



A treadmill can get the job done, but there's nothing like actually moving your body through space the old-fashioned way. Take your runs outside whenever possible.

INTERVIEW: CHRIS BELL

SEEKING TRUTH



From prescription drug addiction to our obsession with youth sports, documentary filmmaker Chris Bell has painted an unsettling portrait of life in America. In an interview with *RI Magazine*, he says his camera is a mirror for society—and sometimes, the truth hurts.

INTERVIEW: CHRIS BELL

Chris Bell's films have addressed steroid use (Bigger Stronger Faster), pushing our children too far in youth sports (Trophy Kids), and in his latest film, America's addiction to painkillers and other pharmaceuticals (Prescription Thugs). Together, these movies form a compelling trilogy about physical and mental health in America. But if the documentarian has been able to keep his finger on the pulse of some of the biggest issues facing our nation today, it's because many of these issues affected him and his family directly. In an interview with*

RI Magazine, Chris Bell talks about the most disturbing things he witnessed in the course of making these films, what gives him hope for the future, and how he broke the bonds of alcoholism and prescription painkiller addiction, lost 60 pounds, and took charge of his own health.

RI Magazine: Your documentaries—*Bigger Stronger Faster, *Trophy Kids*, and *Prescription Thugs*—form a loose trilogy about life in America and our misplaced priorities. Did you plan them that way or was it more organic than that?**

Chris Bell: It was more organic than that. We did *Bigger Stronger Faster** (BSF) and I was looking for something to do after that. My brother Mike “Mad Dog” (who died after the film was released in 2008) had gone through prescription drug addiction. I had gone through it, too.

Right toward the end of BSF I had double hip replacement surgery. I was put on a lot of painkillers and I realized there might be a problem with them, that I might be addicted. So I decided to stop taking them for a while. While I did that, I met Tom Farrey from ESPN and he was telling me about this book he had written and how out of control youth sports were. It's called *Game On*. So I went out and got the book and I read it. It had a big impact.



A father drives his son to tears while pushing him to excel in high school football in a scene from *Trophy Kids*.

At the same time, my best friend, Leland, was an AAU basketball coach and he was dealing with these kids who had been pushed so hard by their parents that they didn't even want to play anymore. So I decided to just start filming it.

RI: Why did you need double hip replacement surgery?

CB: I have a genetic condition where I lose cartilage in my body. I don't have any cartilage in my knees, hips, and ankles, so it's difficult to deal with and I'm in a lot of pain all the time, even now. In my lower back there's no cartilage. It's at a point where some days I think about it, like, “Oh man, I wish I just had a pain killer.” But then I remember that the painkillers kill the pain, but they almost killed me.

I also found out through my research that maybe opioids are not the best medicine for pain. What is the most effective? It's actually an ibuprofen and Tylenol combination. It's way more effective than OxyContin at dealing with long-term chronic pain. OxyContin isn't good at dealing with chronic pain. It's good for acute pain.

RI: What do you want people to take away from your movies?

CB: If you look at the life of an athlete, it's a lot like

INTERVIEW: CHRIS BELL

these movies in the issues that they face: In *BSF*, it's about what you'd be willing to risk to be the best. Then if you look at *Trophy Kids* and the pressures that are placed on young athletes and we ask, "Do we really want what's best for our children? Or do we just want our children to be the best?" I want parents to reflect on that and understand that what they want and what the child wants don't always line up. The third film, *Prescription Thugs*, is intended to be an homage to *Mad Dog*—and the way that fits into the puzzle is *Mad Dog* was a college athlete who got done with sports and became a drug addict. We see that transition becoming more and more common. My film starts out with five or six athletes who are now drug addicts. And the reason I started it out that way is because it's the answer to one of the questions from *Trophy Kids*: "When they're done with sports, what happens then?"

We've got to teach kids that what you learn on the court or on the field, has to transfer to real life, like learning to be good teammates. What you learn about the actual game doesn't help you with anything.

RI: You've uncovered a lot of disturbing material in these films. Can you point to a moment in any of the three that was the single-most troubling thing?

CB: Anything to do with the children in *Trophy Kids*. When you're dealing with children, you're dealing with kids—their brains are still developing. Any form of abuse, any form of negligence—that affects kids forever. I wanted to show parent that you could never touch your kid and still abuse them. A lot of people don't understand that.

RI: Do you know what your next film will be?

We were talking about doing *Insurance Frauds* where the companies are the frauds and not us. You're dealing with a multi-billion dollar organization that's taking your money and then when you go to ask them for the product they're like, "Sorry, we don't cover that."

But the next one out of the gate is going to be a documentary called *Strong*. We're going to follow the world's strongest man, Brian Shaw, along with up to six of the other world's strongest men. We're hoping to partner with the World's Strongest Man competition.



TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE: In *Bigger Stronger Faster**, Bell skewered many of the shady practices of the supplement industry, including misleading before-and-after photos. To illustrate his point, he took these photos in the same day, using Photoshop to exaggerate both photos.

INTERVIEW: CHRIS BELL

RI: One of the things that came out of *Prescription Thugs* is that there's now a law against advertising prescription drugs for sale on Craigslist.

CB: The positive things—helping people change their lives and make better decisions, stay alive, and get sober—that always trumps the negative things I've covered. That's my mission now. I see a lot of hope. Making documentaries: It's me taking a camera—that holds the mirror up to society—and we just show you what's

happening. We show you and that's your warning. You've been informed. If people are better informed, they make better decisions, and if they make better decisions, everyone's better off.

RI: Drug companies who can market directly to consumers helps to create a huge market demand, but the other half of that is most doctors don't seem to have the wherewithal to deal with nonstop re-

quests for all these different drugs. If you ask your doctor for something, you're probably going to get it, aren't you?

CB: Yes. There's a stat that 75% of the people who walk into a doctor's office and ask for a prescription by name will get that drug. And the reason they ask is because they've been advertised to. So they watch these ads and they don't know anything about it except what it's meant to treat. Then they go ask their doctor and their doctor says, "Yeah, that might be good for you." That's kind of crazy because we send people to medical school and require them to have degrees... but the biggest problem with the pharmaceutical industry is there's not a lot of unbiased information. Most of the studies are funded by the companies. You're getting ghost-written articles.

RI: You were fair to point out that the pharmaceutical industry has helped to cure a lot of diseases. But in the same breath, the



Carl Lewis
Olympic Gold Medalist

MAN AT WORK: Above, Bell speaks with Carl Lewis during a revelatory scene in *Bigger Stronger Faster**. Below, Bell reveals his own struggles with addiction to his parents. Next up, Bell is working on documentaries about the world's strongest man, Brian Shaw, and an in-depth look at the insurance industry. Follow him on Twitter: [@BigStrongFast](https://twitter.com/BigStrongFast)



INTERVIEW: CHRIS BELL

monster money doesn't come from curing a disease, it comes from treatments for symptoms that last for life, like erectile dysfunction or depression or chronic pain. These things require a pill every single day.

CB: Yeah, or they can just make up diseases, like metabolic syndrome. If you have metabolic syndrome, that's just another term for "you're fat." People don't want to accept that. It's more palatable to say, "I have metabolic syndrome." But the truth is, you have a slow metabolism now because you got fat. You're not fat because you have a slow metabolism.

RI: You've lost a ton of weight since you made your last film. How much did you weigh at your heaviest and how did you lose the weight?

CB: I ballooned up to 260 pounds at one point. I just didn't care about myself. I'm only 5'6" and my normal bodyweight had always been around 200.

To lose the weight, I did my own thing, "The War on Carbs." I kept it under 30 carbs and the only carbs will be incidental carbs, like from vegetables. Just by doing that I lost weight. I wasn't even working out. Initially, I went from 260 down to 247. Then I cut carbs even more and I lost about 15 pounds in two weeks. I went from 247 to 232. All I really ate the whole time was grass-fed beef and Bulletproof Coffee. I ate at a place called Burger Loft – no bun, every day. I made it easy and fun and would cheat one meal a week.

RI: You never counted calories?

CB: No. I didn't count one calorie. I didn't weigh one gram of food. You don't need to when you do a ketogenic diet. When they process food, they remove all the fiber from it, a lot of the vitamins and minerals, and they add sugar to it. It's just a different story when processed food doesn't get inside your body. Today I weigh 205. I hover right around 200. In 12 months I lost 60 pounds. Getting sober was a huge part of all this. I was drinking a lot. I've been sober for 21 months. I've gotten all my creativity back. I was robbed of all that. I couldn't write. I couldn't do anything. I used to dream big. I used to think I could do anything. I used to think whatever I set out in life to do I would do it. And then for the past eight years while I was drinking, I couldn't do anything. I had no energy.

RI: Your job as a documentarian is to hold up the mirror and ask the question and present the reality, not necessarily supply the answer. But between the three films, have you been able to put your finger on where our misplaced priorities in this country come from? European nations don't seem to have this obsession with getting huge and muscular and dominating sports. And in terms of developed countries with prescription drug addicts—the U.S. is unrivaled.

CB: Yeah. I feel like we're the world's frat party or something. Other countries are so buttoned up and dialed in to their healthcare and their government and what they want to do with themselves.

Why are we this way? Why do we want to win and be the best? I feel answers like that, you can't get.

Look at all the people that came to this country. People will say they want to be great and they want to be famous and they never really know why. They'll say they want to be famous because they want to help save the animals. That's not a real reason. There's always a root reason.

The problem is I don't know if the truth is something that really exists—the full truth of everything. Something very simple, yes, but when we get into talking about things this complex, there are so many potential causes.

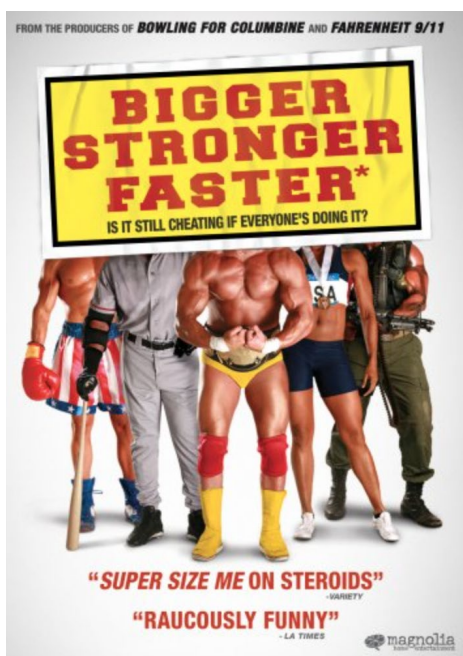
However, I do think one of the reasons America got to be so wild and rowdy—why we want to be pumped up on steroids, why we want to be the biggest and the best—I think that came from our founding fathers. This nation was created by the hands of men who sought to build and that's a different feeling than you get in different parts of the world. In other parts of the world, everything in that country has been around forever. So I think it's something like that, where we took cues from very ambitious men and it snowballed.

My brother Mike used to say, "I'd rather be dead than average." But my dad said something that really stuck with me: Being average is great. Your normal everyday person who goes to work every day and takes care of his family—that's greatness.

A lot of people can't do that. They want attention, fame, and money, but they can't take care of what's right in front of them. And so they miss out on life.

THE MOVIES

Bell's essential filmography, available on Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, and on demand.



BIGGER STRONGER FASTER*

Medically speaking, it turns out that steroids might not be the demons they've been made out to be in the press. But in coming to that conclusion, Bell uncovers more unsettling truths about what drives so many young men in America to be larger than life. Bell highlights hypocrisy in our government, the ease with which hucksters can exploit an unregulated supplement industry, and the lack of an informed press as he dissects our irrational fear of performance-enhancing drugs. The critics' consensus is that this is Bell's best work and it's hard to argue.

Eight years after its release, *BSF* holds up, every frame still relevant.



TROPHY KIDS

We all say we want what's best for our children, but Bell turns his camera on parents who just want their children to be the best. Almost inexplicably, the subjects of this film remain self-righteous and oblivious throughout—both to the damage their tactics might cause as they drive their kids to tears, and to how they're perceived by the outside world. *Trophy Kids* contains the most disturbing footage Bell has ever captured as parents live vicariously through their young, trying to create the next Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods—with predictably heart-breaking results.



PRESCRIPTION THUGS

No matter what the symptom, American pharmaceutical companies have a drug for it. Bell examines the game-changing law that allowed the pharmaceutical industry to advertise directly to consumers and the devastating impact it has had throughout the country. Opioids like OxyContin, which are powerful derivatives of opium, have become the go-to prescription painkiller for doctors everywhere, and people are dropping dead as a result. Putting his own struggles with addiction in focus, Bell makes it clear that as long as big pharma continues to influence government, no one is safe.

Click on any of the movie posters above to rent or buy that movie on Amazon.

ASK US ANYTHING

QUICK FIXES

Our experts provide the answers to the health and fitness questions that are keeping you up at night.

Q: My doctor says I'm pre-diabetic and that I need to back off of sugar and other simple carbs. What else can I do to reverse the situation?

—Ben R.,
via Facebook



A: Exercise regularly, get your weight down, and lay off the booze, says Dr. Michael Schutz of [Jersey Urology Group](#) in Somers Point, New Jersey.

“Diabetes occurs when you do not make enough insulin, or when your body becomes resistant to insulin, or you make less insulin as you get older,” Dr. Schutz says. “This reduces the movement of glucose into the cells and the glucose stays in the blood stream.

“One of the biggest risk factors for diabetes is obesity. Getting down to a healthy weight allows your body to better manage blood glucose

levels.”

If left unchecked, diabetes can cause a host of health problems that can do irreparable harm to your body.

“Over the long term, the high blood sugar levels damage the blood vessels and nerves and cause permanent damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, brain, heart, and extremities and erectile dysfunction,” warns Dr. Schutz. “High blood pressure, smoking and high cholesterol are other risk factors for damaging blood vessels and increase the risk of injury from high blood sugar.”

Too much muscle?

Q: I'm afraid of building too much muscle because a friend of mine told me that if I have to stop for any reason, my muscle will turn into fat. Is this true? — Sam D., via Twitter

A: Your muscle will never “turn into fat,” according to [Jay Cardiello](#), a highly sought-after celebrity trainer seen on ABC's *My Diet Is Better Than Yours*. “There's muscle loss and then there's fat gain—and while the two often go hand-in-hand due

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to lack of activity, muscle and fat can't transform into one another," Cardiello says.

In short, worrying about gaining "too much" muscle is like worrying about having too much money. It's silly because it's very hard to gain muscle and you'd never become as big as a bodybuilder without years of constant work, eating, and yes some anabolic drugs.

"Remember the magic happens away from the gym," Cardiello continues. "Focus on healthy eating, getting proper sleep, and keeping your stress levels low. Combining these three factors with continuous exercise will make a tremendous impact with sustainable outcomes."

Burn fat without running

Q: A trainer told me that to burn fat I need to do sprints. But I have bad knees. What can I do?

— Sunil R., via the web

A: "As long as you're still breathing you are burning fat while reading this," says [Mike Geremia](#), a master trainer at New York Sports Club in Rego Park, Queens. "I think the trainer at your gym has made the common mistake of confusing HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) with sprints. HIIT is short bouts of hard work followed by periods of rest. HIIT is one of the most efficient ways to burn fat,

but it does NOT have to incorporate sprinting (which is, of course, a wonderful variant of HIIT) or any type of running for that matter. The beautiful thing about HIIT is that you can make it your own, choosing exercises (preferably compound movements) that are comfortable for you to do with your "bad knees" done at higher intensities. Your HIIT could start off as simple as light jogging for 60 seconds followed by 60 seconds of rest for 6 cycles, a total of 12 minutes. Sled work and battle ropes are also some of the great HIIT alternatives to sprinting that will provide you with the metabolic disturbance you are looking for."



ANY WAY YOU CAN: High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) doesn't have to include running. Pushing weighted sleds and using battle ropes (left) can all be great forms of HIIT.

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TIS THE SEASON: Don't automatically head to the drugstore for an antihistamine. There are a number of natural remedies for fighting off allergies.

Beat allergies this season

Q: I have bad seasonal allergies to grass and pollen. Aside from prescription medication, are there any foods I should eat to combat this?

— *Chelsea T., via the web*

A: “The first idea is to limit exposure to the allergen,” says Amy Rothenberg, a naturopathic physician based in Enfield, CT (nhcmed.com). And no, she says that doesn't mean closing yourself indoors all summer. “By showering at night and washing your hair, you can re-

move pollens; similarly, using an air purifier, especially in the bedroom where so many hours are spent, can be helpful.

“Getting the hang of using a neti-pot, to help rinse the nasal passages of inhaled pollen can also reduce allergy symptoms.” She adds that if you like to line dry your clothes in the summer to reconsider; wet clothes act as a magnet for pollen.

“When we are allergic there is a histamine response to the perceived threatening pollen,” Rothenberg says. “In our blood system, histamine travels in the mast cells. To help stabilize the mast cell membranes so they will release less histamine, take the supplements

vitamin C and bioflavonoid. The plant-based supplement bromelain, an enzyme derived from pineapple, can also be useful; it helps to thin mucous and reduce inflammation.

“I also recommend fish oil to my seasonal allergy patients, which helps to balance immune system function so that the person actually becomes less allergic.”

Finally, Rothenberg says some dietary changes can help. A teaspoon a day of local honey can help reduce sensitivity to pollen, and if you're sensitive to dairy or eggs, try not to eat them during allergy season; continuing to eat them at this time can exacerbate allergy symptoms.

ASK US ANYTHING

Women, supplements, and building muscle

Q: My husband takes a pre-workout powder before he goes to the gym and says I should take it too because it'll give me energy. But his supplement has creatine in it. Won't that make me bloated? Plus, I'm not trying to lift heavy weights like he is. I do pilates, cardio, and occasionally, some light weights. Is there any reason I should take what he's taking?

— Rosanna P., via Facebook

A: First, concern yourself with the ingredients in the supplement that can give you energy and help build muscle. Amino acids like carnitine, tyrosine, and leucine work synergistically to give you a boost of strength, energy, and initiate protein synthesis. A little bit of caffeine for added kick doesn't hurt, either, provided you're not overly sensitive to it.

Now to address the concern of creatine: Just because it has creatine in it doesn't mean it's automatically off the list, says [Amber Day](#), a fitness coach and former Ms. Bikini Universe. "Creatine is essential for muscle growth and recovery," Day says. "It can help a women improve strength in the gym, which can increase muscle and, in turn, help burn fat."

Creatine does cause some water retention, but Day says

those concerns are overstated. If your diet is otherwise clean, you won't look bloated if you start taking creatine.

"Women avoid creatine supplementation because they fear it causing heavy bloat. However, I have seen that women who supplement with creatine tend to be leaner because they carry more muscle... Even if you only do Pilates and light weights this will enhance not only your workouts but also your results."

Lastly, the worst mistake any woman serious about getting in shape can make is to think that lifting heavy will make you big. You can't get big unless you're concentrating on getting big and eating a lot of extra calories to make it happen.

Pilates and cardio are wonderful tools to help you get in shape and stay that way. But weights are also key, especially as you get older; nothing is better at keeping bone density high.



TRUE POWER: The benefits of weight lifting are not gender-specific. In both sexes, weight training is a powerful weapon to stay lean and keep bones dense with age.

WORDS TO LIVE BY



*“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”
— Vince Lombardi*