

books ZACK ROSEN

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New novel re-imagines James Bond as a gay, hairdressing, wisecracking environmental hero

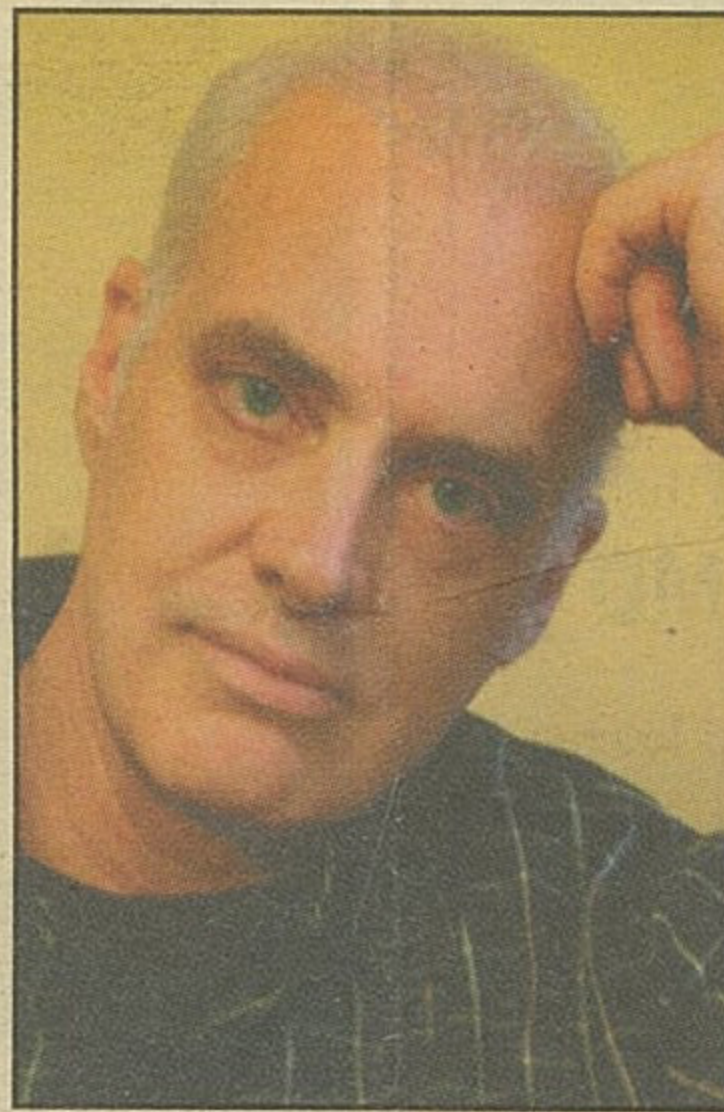
NEW YORK-BASED HUMORIST Robert W. Cabell's latest book, "The Hair-Raising Adventures of Jayms Blonde," tells the story of a cheeky hairdresser who moonlights as a pro-environmental secret agent. The Oregon-born Cabell has always had an interest in the environment, but the main push to create Jayms Blonde came from an unwitting Rupert Everett.

Cabell conceived of the book in 2002 when he spotted Everett in a Greenwich Village restaurant and started chatting with the actor about his chocolate lab. Remembering that Everett had, in the past, expressed a desire to play a gay James Bond, Cabell combined that notion with his own environmental idealism and the first seeds of Jayms Blonde began to germinate.

"I thought 'I would love to do a gay James Bond, what would be a fun way of writing it?' says Cabell. "My lover of 13 years was a hairdresser. I created my own world of Jayms Blonde, a hairdresser turned hero."

The basic plot of "Jayms Blonde" is of two warring organizations. STOP (Stop Terrorizing Our Planet) is the environmental espionage group, led by the RuPaul-like Mama, that employs Jayms. STOP's arch nemesis is ZENRON (Zealot Environmental Nazis Ruthlessly Obliterating Nature), a sinister cabal of billionaires who refuse to use their money to help Mother Nature. The action is accompanied by illustrations of comically proportioned men and women whose breast and muscle bulk would never be found in real life.

Nothing about this book is subtle, but the over-the-top nature of the storytelling is the novel's biggest advantage. The pun ratio is sky-high, as are the Octopussy-esque risqué character names. Jaym's sidekick is



Humorist ROBERT W. CABELL'S 'JAYMS BLONDE: A HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURE' uses comic-book conventions to tell the story of a gay secret agent. (Photo by Jorge Silva)

named Precious Needmore, the equipment man is dubbed Harry Hardware, and in the books later chapters Jayms beds a young man name Kummalot. The only restraint used in "Jayms Blonde" is in regards to the sex. Amorous

scenes are alluded to, not elucidated, and the most salacious thing you'll see in an illustration is the occasional bare bottom.

"The definition of the book is 'the lights go off before the dicks come out,'" says Cabell. "It's salacious, but not X-rated. There's only one picture where you see Jayms' ass and I used a stunt double for it, if you look at the back of the head you can see it's more Brunette than blonde."

COMIC BOOK IRREVERENCE aside, Cabell's other aim with the book was to spread a message of ecological awareness. He has been recycling since second grade, spent five summers working at a cattle ranch and almost majored in marine biology. The author makes glib references in his book to the new wave of celebrity activists, though he insists his intentions are not entirely judgmental.

"I'm not taking shots at them, I'm just saying, 'Back it up,'" Cabell says. "An actor is simply an adult who is excessively paid for an over-

active imagination, and I admire someone like Angelina Jolie who admits she's excessively paid and tries to make a difference with that excess. They can make you believe that instead of going to the grocery store and carrying 10 bags, they can put a net bag in their purse and help save the planet from pollution."

"Jayms Blonde" is dedicated to Marvin E. Gardens, Elton John's former next-door neighbor and successful party planner and philanthropist who died from Lou Gehrig's disease in 2000. Gardens planned the presidential ball, as well as parties for stars like Whitney Houston, Celine Dion and Toni Braxton. Even more impressive were his fundraising skills — he once raised \$8 million for Elton John's charities in one season. Cabell spent most of 1999 taking care of Gardens in Panama City and acknowledges a debt of gratitude to his friend.

"He inspired me in so many ways, he was my guiding light on this," says Cabell. "He would've had this book in every celebrity lap in the country."

Curl up with an apple & a good book this Autumn!

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