

## BILL, STARS ENJOY AFRICAN TREK

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### Abstract (Document Summary)

JASON Mewes is alive and well. Mewes, who played the long-haired, drug-loving "Jay" in Kevin Smith's "Clerks," "Mall Rats," "Chasing Amy" and "Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back," was reportedly on the lam or even feared dead after his friends told the Chicago Sun-Times they hadn't seen him in 10 months. An arrest warrant had been issued for him after he violated probation on a heroin conviction. But last month, Mewes made an appearance at a film festival in Malibu to promote his new indie movie "RSVP," and he'll host a talent show Oct. 17 at Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. "The rumors of his death are greatly exaggerated," chuckled Mewes' agent, Nancy Oeswein. "I just got off the phone with him. He's certainly not in hiding. He just moved to L.A." For some folks, living on the Left Coast is as good as being dead.

IS Sen. John McCain going to quit the Republican Party and become the running mate of Sen. John Kerry in the 2004 presidential race? McCain's chief political adviser, John Weaver, has become a Democrat and is now working for Dick Gephardt. McCain's new legislative director, Christine Dodd, last worked for a liberal congressman - a Democrat. Now Kerry of Massachusetts, who has made clear his plans to run in 2004, is making overtures towards McCain. A rumored head-to-head between Kerry and McCain is said to be scheduled at McCain's cabin in Sedona, Ariz., next month. And for "Man of the People," the new McCain biography by Paul Alexander, Kerry provided a blurb that reads more like a love letter. After noting that McCain's 2000 presidential campaign "set the standard for honor, dignity, courage, and truth," Kerry declares: "I have had no greater privilege in all my life than finding and then standing on common ground with John McCain, and I look forward to fighting side by side with him on yet another day to make our country stronger."

### Full Text (1634 words)

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CALL it "The Three Amigos' Most Excellent African Adventure."

Former President Bill Clinton is on a trip through Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Mozambique and South Africa with Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey and Chris Tucker, the star of "Rush Hour" and its sequel.

The three are being flown around Africa on the private plane of financial wizard Jeffrey Epstein. The secretive Epstein handles the billions of Leslie Wexner, head of the retail empire that includes The Limited, Victoria's Secret and Express.

How Clinton, who took off on Saturday, hooked up with his traveling companions is a mystery - as is his relationship to Epstein. Little is known about Epstein except that his offices are in the landmarked Villard House across from Le Cirque, and he once employed Ghislaine Maxwell, daughter of the late British press lord Robert Maxwell, in an unspecified capacity.

But Tucker is playing America's first black president in "Mr. President," a movie he's been working on since 1999. Tucker has already shot footage of Clinton, Nelson Mandela, and Bahrain's crown prince endorsing his candidacy, and the comic accompanied U2 frontman Bono and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill on their debt-relief tour of Africa this summer.

At the Congressional Black Caucus' annual awards dinner earlier this month, Clinton mentioned that Tucker had asked to visit him in the Oval Office to prepare for playing the first black president.

"I didn't have the heart to tell him that I've already taken the position," Clinton joked. In an October 1998 essay in The New Yorker, author Toni Morrison argued that Clinton, "white skin notwithstanding, [is] our first black president."

Kevin Spacey has no presidential aspirations we know of. Last we heard, he wanted to portray Bobby Darin. He might be bored during some parts of the trip.

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In Ghana, Clinton will launch a new initiative with Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto to give deeds and land titles to poor people who now have no legal status and are considered squatters.

In South Africa, Clinton will deliver a speech and join Mandela in promoting prevention of AIDS. Clinton will also meet in that country with the first class of Clinton Democracy Fellows - 11 young South African men and women who just completed three months in the U.S.

Clinton will also meet with the presidents of the other nations on his itinerary.

#### Perfect angel

THE producer of Tara Reid's latest flick says she's a perfect angel and that Us Weekly misquoted him as saying that he and the bar-friendly hellcat "went out drinking all the time." J. Todd Harris, producer of "Heaven's Pond," blasts Us in a letter to the editor: "I specifically said that our working relationship with the actress was nothing short of spectacular." He also shoots down the mag's source who claims Reid needed to have a baby sitter escort her out every night to make sure she didn't wake up with any regrets.

We hear . . .

THAT eyebrows are flexing over tonight's U.N. black-tie dinner honoring Muhammad Ali, Mayor Bloomberg and Paul and Heather Mills McCartney. Seems Heather insists on being referred to as "Lady Heather Mills McCartney" . . . THAT Steve Martin, Paul Morrissey, Glenda Bailey and Elizabeth Kieselstein-Cord attended last night's 15th anniversary party of Modern Painters magazine at the Cheim and Read Gallery.

#### Headlines heal

SARAH Ferguson, the former Duchess of York, credits the media for keeping her weight down. Once dubbed the "Duchess of Pork" by the British press, the now stunning and skinny Weight Watchers rep says every time she thinks of pigging out, she remembers the old headlines. Among those she cited during an appearance at an Albany Weight Watchers seminar, according to The Post's Kenneth Lovett: "Fat, Selfish, Greedy Fergie" and "82 Percent Would Rather Sleep With a Goat." "It does help me when I read articles that [say] the 'slim svelte Fergie,'" Ferguson said. "I don't want them to have a go at me again. I'm tired of that."

#### Lost actor pops up in L.A.

JASON Mewes is alive and well. Mewes, who played the long-haired, drug-loving "Jay" in Kevin Smith's "Clerks," "Mall Rats," "Chasing Amy" and "Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back," was reportedly on the lam or even feared dead after his friends told the Chicago Sun-Times they hadn't seen him in 10 months. An arrest warrant had been issued for him after he violated probation on a heroin conviction. But last month, Mewes made an appearance at a film festival in Malibu to promote his new indie movie "RSVP," and he'll host a talent show Oct. 17 at Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. "The rumors of his death are greatly exaggerated," chuckled Mewes' agent, Nancy Oeswein. "I just got off the phone with him. He's certainly not in hiding. He just moved to L.A." For some folks, living on the Left Coast is as good as being dead.

#### Sex sells

ABERCROMBIE & Fitch has outdone itself. The store chain's new "magalog," a catalog disguised as a magazine, is even more salacious than past efforts, with a naked Heidi Klum on the cover - one hand hiding her nipples, the other holding a Santa hat over a naked man's crotch. The tag line reads: "180 pages of sex and Xmas fun! Heidi Klum adds inches, Spike Lee catches it on tape, Larry Flynt breaks tapes, Heidi Fleiss gets what she wants, streetcorner Santa brawls and more!" One spy said: "There is a ton of bums and breasts inside. Everyone is naked." The quarterly, targeted at teens and college students, will be featured on "Entertainment Tonight" later this week.

#### Janney's' jam

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THE ex-fianc of Emmy-winning "West Wing" star Allison Janney (above) is being evicted from her Central Park West pad. Janney has been illegally subletting the rent-stabilized, \$1,100- a-month apartment to former beau Dennis Gagoiros, says Keith Rubenstein, a lawyer for landlord Michael Tauber. "We are starting the eviction process," says Rubenstein, who estimated the "fair market" value of Janney's joint at \$3,000 a month. Janney's lawyer, Sam Himmelstein, insists Janney "surrendered possession" of her pad several weeks ago to the landlord. "Her ex-fianc believes that he has the succession rights to the apartment, but she has nothing to do with that," he said.

#### Flasher chic

WONDER why Stella McCartney never took her black satin coat off during the opening of her boutique last Friday? She had nothing under it but a very sexy bra and satin knickers. The highlight of the afterparty at Gaslight was Stella, Gwyneth Paltrow and Usher singing karaoke for the likes of Bono, Britney Spears, Liv Tyler, Debbie Harry, Russell Simmons, Graydon Carter, Christy Turlington, Karolina Kurkova, Helena Christensen and others too fashionable to mention.

#### Dueling Dems

DON'T invite Ed Koch and Pete Grannis to the same political party. The former mayor has no use for the assemblyman who has represented the Upper East Side for 28 years. The feud began with Koch's endorsement of Andrew Eristoff, a Republican challenger for the State Senate seat currently occupied by Democrat Liz Krueger. Grannis observed in community weekly Our Town: "Our former mayor seems to have a thing for Republicans and an aversion to endorsing women of either party." Now Koch has responded in a letter to Our Town to Grannis' "gutter attack" and "vile comments." Koch lists no fewer than 9 women he's endorsed for election over the years, plus seven women he appointed to office, and concludes, "I am sure Grannis has harbored thoughts of higher office, indeed ran for Congress and lost. I doubt that he will ever attain higher office, and I truly believe he does not deserve the office he currently holds and has held for 28 years."

#### Single again

THIS year's ladies' man, Matthew Perry, is single again. After squiring around Amanda Peet, Jennifer Capriati and a host of other hot young things this summer, the "Friends" star was on the prowl Sunday night. After losing the Emmy to his co-star Matt LeBlanc, Perry and Hank Azaria showed up in fine spirits to the Glamour/Entertainment Weekly post-Emmy party at the Mondrian in Los Angeles and flirted with a gaggle of girls. "He was so excited he started to sweat and had to massage his head," said our spy. Perry eventually left alone.

#### MCCAIN MUTINY IN WORKS?

IS Sen. John McCain going to quit the Republican Party and become the running mate of Sen. John Kerry in the 2004 presidential race? McCain's chief political adviser, John Weaver, has become a Democrat and is now working for Dick Gephardt. McCain's new legislative director, Christine Dodd, last worked for a liberal congressman - a Democrat. Now Kerry of Massachusetts, who has made clear his plans to run in 2004, is making overtures towards McCain. A rumored head-to-head between Kerry and McCain is said to be scheduled at McCain's cabin in Sedona, Ariz., next month. And for "Man of the People," the new McCain biography by Paul Alexander, Kerry provided a blurb that reads more like a love letter. After noting that McCain's 2000 presidential campaign "set the standard for honor, dignity, courage, and truth," Kerry declares: "I have had no greater privilege in all my life than finding and then standing on common ground with John McCain, and I look forward to fighting side by side with him on yet another day to make our country stronger."

#### [Illustration]

-Allison Janney, Stella McCartney -Just call him David Cop-a-feel. Modelizing magician David Copperfield seems to have cast his spell over two babealicious blondes. We caught Copperfield holding hands with Marilyn Gurna (above), 21, an Estonian-born assistant manager at Nello's. Copperfield has been wooing the gorgeous Gurna for a few weeks now, but it didn't stop him from stepping out with another squeeze (below) on Madison Avenue just a week earlier. Lawrence Schwartzwald (above); Adam Nemser/PHOTOLink (below) [color] - Matthew Perry. LFI [color]

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