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A NEW YORKER'S SENSIBILITY

New York magazine's editor-in-chief David Haskell takes a lunch break to talk publishing, politics, and TikTok lines with *Interview*'s own Mel Ottenberg

MEL OTTENBERG: I brought you a magazine. **DAVID HASKELL:** Oh, great. I do subscribe, but they haven't arrived yet. **OTTENBERG:** Do you want Liza or Alex Conant? **HASKELL:** I'll go Liza. **OTTENBERG:** That's what I figured. **HASKELL:** And I'm also going to try to have a Shawn Mendes cover, because I have a thing with friends who think I look like him. **OTTENBERG:** Oh, really? **HASKELL:** Yeah. Can I get an American, please? With some regular milk on the side. **SPEAKER 1:** Okay. **HASKELL:** Thank you. Before we start, can you tell me what you think makes a good *Interview* magazine interview? **OTTENBERG:** What makes a good *Interview* magazine interview is an actual conversation where you get a vibe about who this person is, a living, breathing moment between people. There's something revealing, but it also just feels like a time capsule of the moment, without trying too hard. **HASKELL:** How often do you do the interview? **OTTENBERG:** I don't know. I just like doing the interview once in a while because I like talking to people. What about you? What's your process? **HASKELL:** I mean, the kind of dangerous, live-wire aspect of how you do it is part of what makes the magazine feel so alive right now. And it's so different from how I do it as editor-in-chief. I'm rarely writing with a byline, and I don't do that many interviews. I like shaping material. It's more exciting to me. I basically feel like my role is director of a movie. You're casting, and you're working towards a big picture, but then you're also in the editors room shaping the material. You're putting on a show, and all that stuff feels easier for me than to sit down and interview somebody in front of a live audience, or have that kind of social media presence where you're always on. **OTTENBERG:** I like reading your movie cover to cover, in print. **HASKELL:** I love my job and I think it shows up in the magazine. Whenever we see each other and we're trading war stories and compliments, I think it's because we're both having fun and editing from a place of confidence. That confidence allows you to be bally; it allows you to be creative and switch things up. I'm often pushing the staff towards a weirder direction. **SPEAKER 1:** Can I take your order? **OTTENBERG:** We didn't look at the menu yet. Do you know what you want? **HASKELL:** I'm interested in that egg and artichoke thing. **OTTENBERG:** It's good. **HASKELL:** I've worked at *New York* magazine for 16 years now, and for 10 of those, I was an editor working for the boss. But yeah, giving people permission to follow their gut and not censor their own brains—we hire interesting weirdos, for the most part. There's something unusual about everybody that we employ, but the tendency when you work at a larger organization is to try to flatten yourself out to figure out how to succeed. **OTTENBERG:** One hundred percent. Wait, but did your training for the first 10 years give you the full idea of what the magazine is supposed to be in an ever-changing world? **HASKELL:** Yeah. My predecessor was a fantastic editor and saw it through a big transition from a print magazine to a magazine that was both print and digital. It was a sort of restoration project to make *New York* magazine as great as it was in its first decade. By around 2008, it was kind of a shell of itself. And so one of the things we did was create all these verticals like *Vulture*, *The Cut*, and *Curbed*, as places to double down on all of our obsessive enthusiasm around different subjects. **OTTENBERG:** Right. **HASKELL:** And then the big irony—my phone, literally right before I got here, popped up this article from Bloomberg about the great print revival of 2024. That's what I've been saying to my colleagues and bosses for the last year or so, which is that the print magazine is an incredibly thrilling, contemporary product, and the world is catching up to why it's a smart business move. We publish a magazine every two weeks, publish about 80 stories a day on the website, and publish six episodes of a podcast each week. There's so much different stuff coming out in the cinematic universe of *New York* magazine, and I think it all creates an environment you want to be in if you're a certain kind of person. We're not for everybody, and that's really important to own and be confident about, but there's a handful of a million people who are oriented around that same sensibility—a *New Yorker's* sensibility. **OTTENBERG:** How does the print issue come together? How many issues are you doing a year? **HASKELL:** We do 26 issues a year and plot far in advance. I already know what the theme of the anniversary issue for next spring will be. **OTTENBERG:** Excuse me. He's going to have the age thing. I'm going to have the *svizorina* and we'll share an insulate verde. And may I have an *iodine*? **SPEAKER 1:** Sure. And would you like another coffee? **HASKELL:** Yes, thank you. So it's fun because we can have some things that take six months to make, and then we're nimble enough to make a new cover. Even though it also adds a ton of anxiety and stress, it's

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Photographed by
ROE
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YEEHAW!

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MASON RAMSEY RIDES AGAIN

Six years after he first appeared in this magazine (back when he was the viral sensation known as Yodel Boy), the 18-year-old country singer is back, this time with a new Christmas EP, a brand-new whip, and answers to some pretty personal questions

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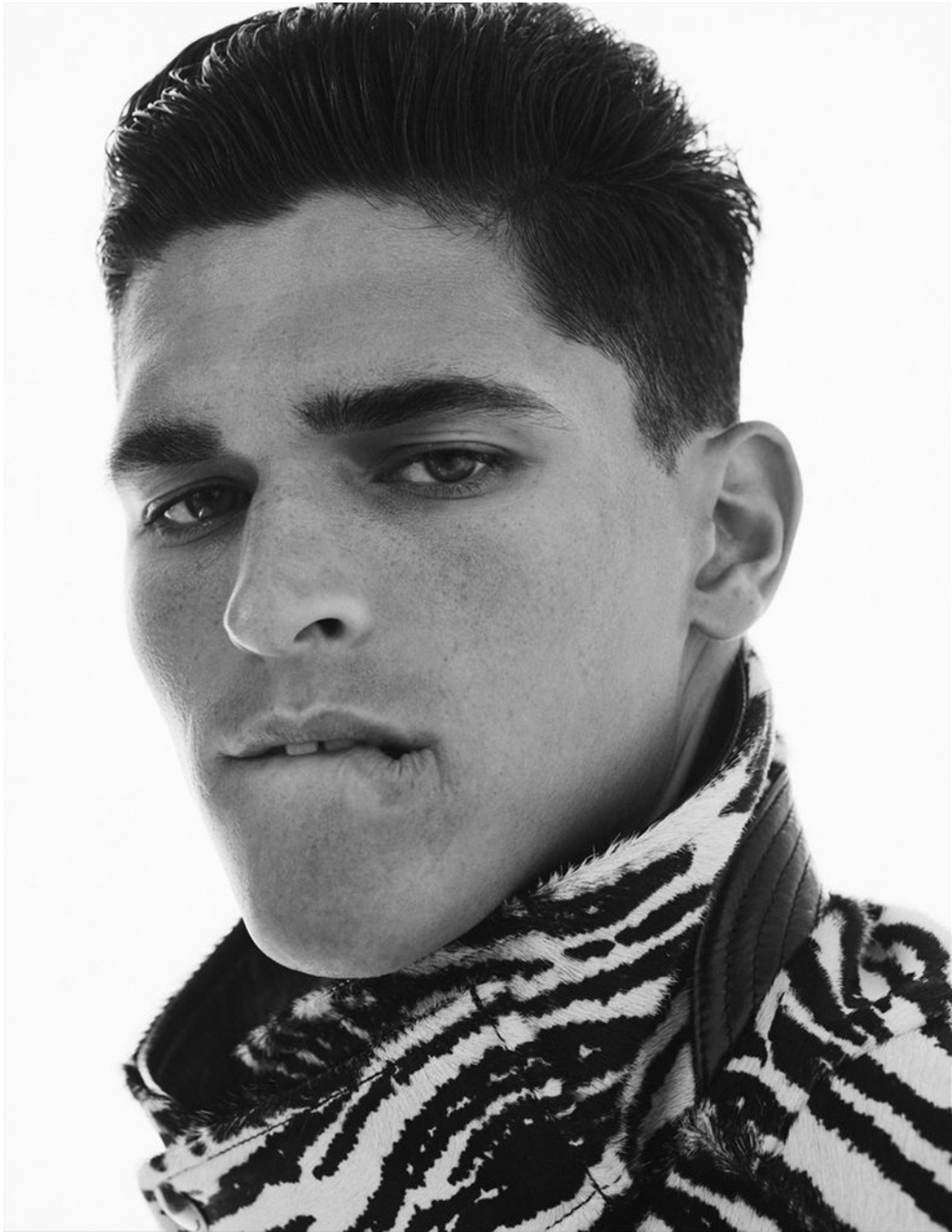
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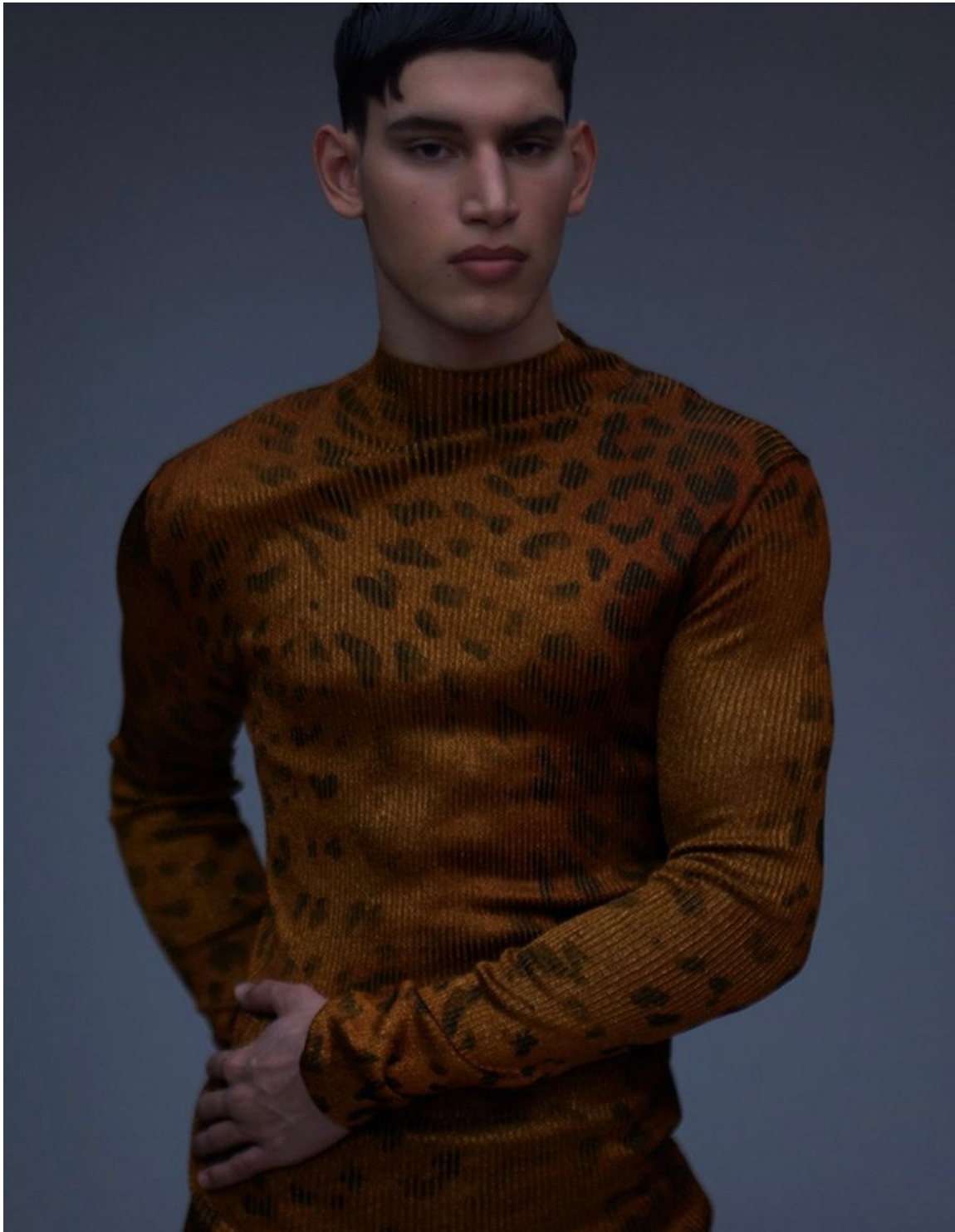
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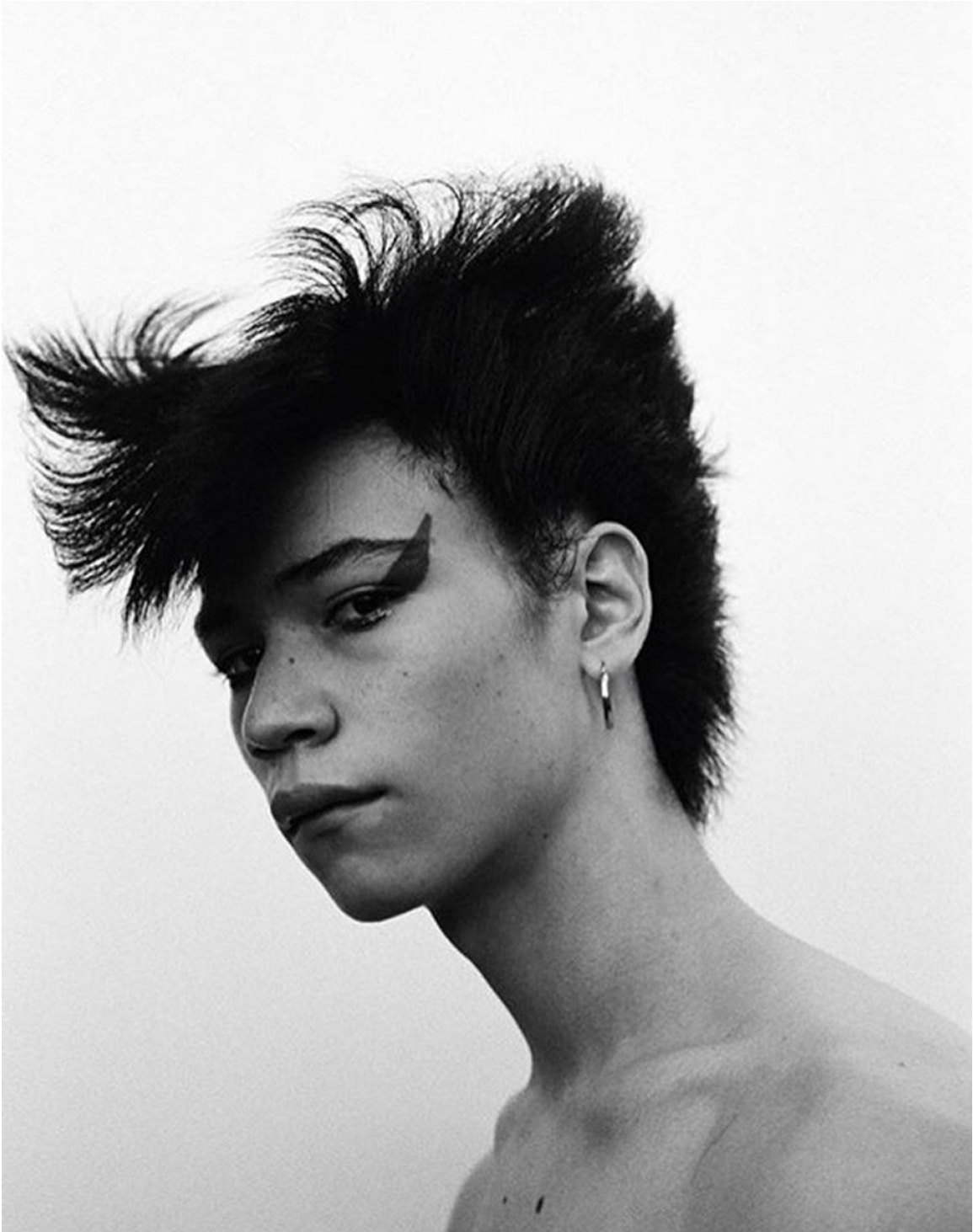
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