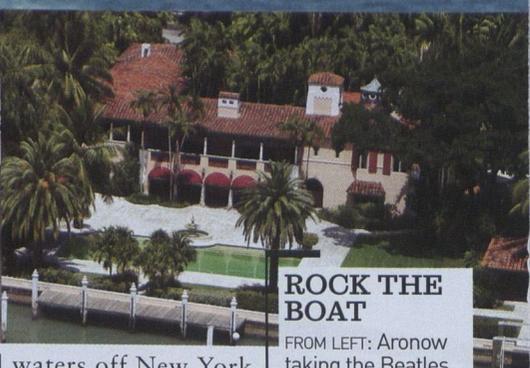
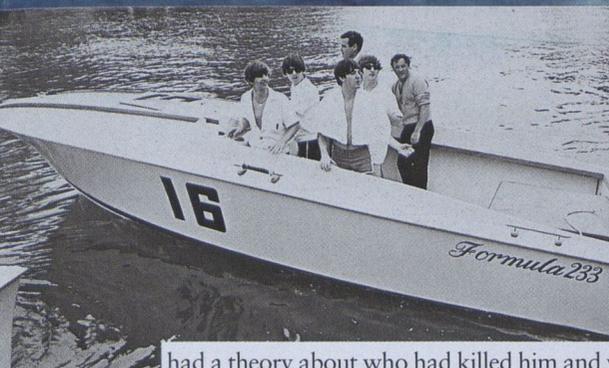




steered Cigarette to glory. But 20 years ago Don Aronow—friend of presidents and captain of his own empire—was tragically run aground by forces beyond his control. By David Samuels



# LIQUID SMOKE



## ROCK THE BOAT

FROM LEFT: Aronow taking the Beatles out for a cruise before their *Ed Sullivan* appearance in Miami, 1964; powerboating pioneer Sir Max Aitken, 1964; Aronow's manse, which later belonged to Jennifer Lopez, overlooking the Biscayne Bay.

had a theory about who had killed him and why. "My first thought was that it was probably a jealous husband or boyfriend," remembered John Crouse, the Texan who worked as Aronow's publicist for two decades. Aronow's appetite for women, like his thirst for speed, went way beyond what most men are capable of sustaining. He had a false wall built in a closet in his office on Thunderboat Row, Crouse told me, which led to a hidden suite complete with a bed and custom-made shower. Friends said that he sometimes slept with three or four different women a day.

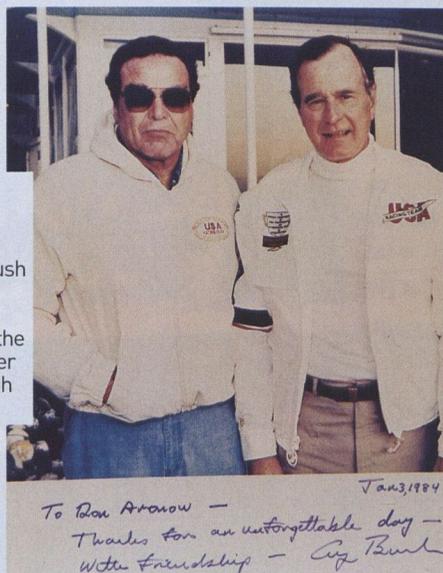
Husbands weren't the only people whose feelings were bruised by Aronow's outsize competitive appetites. "I found him to be a difficult person to deal with," Ted Theodoli, the boat dealer who bought *Magnum* from Aronow, said after the boat designer was murdered. Aronow's genius for designing innovative speedboats was matched by his proclivity for starting new companies, building them up, and then selling them. His habit of manipulating the non-compete agreements that invariably came with these deals—which prohibited Aronow from creating similar designs—left his buyers feeling humiliated. Playing both sides of the street was part of the boat builder's nature. At the height of the drug wars, some of South Florida's most notorious drug smugglers bought Aronow's fast boats, as did the United States Customs Service in order to run the smugglers down. Nearly everyone in Miami, it seemed, knew him, loved him, or had a reason to want him dead.

Aronow's particular gift as a boat designer lay in his determined marriage of form and function: His passionate attention to detail ensured that nothing about his boats was ever ordinary or extraneous to their purpose, which was to go faster than anything else on the water. "To me, speed is the product of beauty," Aronow said in 1983. "They were beautiful because they were fast." His first important boat, the *Formula*, a 24-foot beauty that could go upward of 50 miles an hour, was acclaimed by *Esquire* in 1964 as an instant classic of maritime design. Aronow personally took all four Beatles for a ride in a *Formula* when they visited Miami. His second boat, the *Donzi*, a bantamweight 19-foot version of the *Formula*, went even faster. The *Cigarette*, the rakish 32-foot speedboat that Aronow introduced in 1969, was named after a famous liquor-hijacking boat that

ruled the coastal waters off New York during Prohibition, and could reach 80 miles an hour on the high seas. The *Cigarette* became the favorite offshore speedboat of King Hussein and Bush, as well as the generic term for the fast vessels preferred by smugglers who raced cargoes of marijuana and cocaine to shore from freighters parked in the Gulf of Mexico.

Those who saw Aronow's murder as a parable for the degeneration of the speedboat industry that he built didn't have far to

look. Across the street from the spot where Aronow was shot was the home of *Apache*, the powerboat company built by Ben Kramer, a young racer who idolized Aronow. But lately, animosity between the two men had been running high. As Aronow lay dying, a worker from *Apache* named Tony Palmisano rushed to the scene and pocketed Aronow's treasured gold Rolex Presidential. Later, after failing to find a buyer for the watch, which Aronow had won in a race, Palmisano melted it down and sold the metal for \$600.



## FAST FRIENDS

Aronow with George H.W. Bush in a snapshot that then Vice President sent the boat builder after a day on the high seas, 1984.

Before I went down to Miami, I met Aronow's eldest son, Michael, a practicing attorney and former horse-breeder, for lunch at a restaurant in Long Island. I wanted to know how his father had gone from being a successful contractor in New Jersey to designing and racing the world's fastest boats, becoming arguably the greatest ocean racer of all time and the father of the modern speedboat industry. (Most of the companies he founded during his prime are still doing business today.) As Michael described it, the life that Aronow built for his family in South Orange was a picture-perfect example of the suburban dream. It was so perfect that his father's business was featured in *Suburban Life* magazine, in a lavish spread that showed Aronow in a cowl-neck sweater with his arms crossed over his broad chest, looking every inch the proud suburban dad.

Michael traces his father's evolution to the miserable winter of 1960–61. "The snow was terrible that year. My father said, 'If we get another storm, we're out of here.'" Finally, one day in August 1961, Aronow, who was still new to boating, sailed his pleasure craft, the *Tainted Lady*, up the Hudson to retrieve Michael, his little brother, David,

Aronow survived dozens of crashes, broken bones, and crippling

# He was the larger-than-life Speedboat King who

On February 3, 1987, a well-built man a month shy of his sixtieth birthday lay bleeding to death in the front seat of his white Mercedes coupe in a scruffy, weed-choked stretch of Northeast 188th Street in North Miami Beach known to ocean-racing fans around the world as Thunderboat Row. The dying man, Don

Aronow, had survived dozens of fearsome crashes, broken bones, and crippling internal injuries incurred while racing faster and harder than any of his competitors in the high-performance boats he designed and built himself under the brand names that, for 25 years, defined the powerboat industry: Formula, Donzi, Magnum, and, most notably, Cigarette. Aronow's Christmas-card list included such friends as King Hussein of Jordan, King Juan Carlos of Spain, the Prince of Kuwait, the King of Sweden, and George H. W. Bush, as well as a louche assortment of organized-crime figures and South Florida drug smugglers.

Even in such company, Aronow stood out. A former Coney Island lifeguard who was once invited to take a screen test for the role of Tarzan, Aronow was 6'2", weighed 215 pounds, and had the slightly dented good looks of a handsome prizefighter. His unruly dark hair and bushy eyebrows contrasted with the softness of his brown eyes and a smile that could ignite a room. Aronow's many friends bought his stylish, impeccably designed boats, learned to drive them fast, and found new girlfriends while vying for the favor of his companionship. His rivals hated him for the fierce drive that propelled him to a record two world racing championships and three American championships before he retired in 1970, and for his aggressive, in-your-face business practices.

The Speedboat King had been wounded by a drive-by assassin who rolled down the windows of a black Lincoln Town Car and exchanged a few words with him before whipping out a .45-caliber pistol and firing six shots at close range. Miami-Dade Homicide Detective Greg Smith arrived on the scene while Aronow was still alive.

"It was total chaos," Smith told me during a recent visit to Miami, which I spent tracking down Aronow's old racing associates, rivals, and romantic companions. The avatar of a vanishing breed of tough Jews, Aronow was also a boat designer with a love for clean lines and a streak of poetry in his heart—an unlikely amalgam that attracted my attention and admiration from the very first time I saw a Cigarette boat.

Like many of the people I spoke with, Detective Smith found it hard to believe that we were approaching the twentieth anniversary of Aronow's murder. He remembered the scene on 188th Street like it happened yesterday. "They had just pulled him out of the car, and one guy was administering first aid," Smith told me. "There was a lot of blood, especially around his chest." A circle of about 10 to 20 people formed around Aronow, while behind them a crowd of onlookers, many of them in T-shirts and windbreakers bearing the names of Aronow's powerboat companies, continued to grow as the police closed off the street.

Nearly everyone in the crowd had a personal story to tell about the man who had built Thunderboat Row. And everyone who knew Aronow

## VICE SQUAD

Aronow revs up Blue Thunder, the 39-foot catamaran he built for U.S. Customs to interdict drug runners in the mid-eighties.



## GOLDEN GAIT

"You think you control the horse, but you don't. You think that you're tough, but the horse is tougher. That's why I like it," Cambiaso says. La Dolfina polo shirt, pants, and boots; [ladolfina.com](http://ladolfina.com). Produced on location by Ivan de Pineda and Manuel Bereciartua for IMOD. Fashion Editor: Alvaro Salazar. Sittings Editor: Russell Labosky.



A loss of balance can be deadly. At full speed, the players bump one another like Pontiacs at a demolition derby.



## IN HIS WAKE

FROM LEFT: Testing out the Blue Thunder; a Cigarette Top Gun model from the late nineties; a Miami billboard announcing the \$100,000 reward for tips leading to the arrest of Aronow's murderer.

stars and racers, you name it. Guys would bet on tennis games and then race their Cigarette boats in Biscayne Bay. Every one of them wanted to be Don Aronow. He had style, he was handsome, women adored him, he had money, and he went 100 miles an hour." Malnik told me that when King Hussein came to visit Miami, Aronow set him up with available women and sold him 14 boats.

Later, Aronow married Lillian Crawford, one of Hussein's ex-girlfriends and a former Wilhelmina model.

As Aronow's list of high-profile international clients continued to grow, the CIA apparently grew curious about his meetings with King Hussein and other Middle Eastern leaders who liked fast boats. The FBI, the Coast Guard, and the IRS were more interested in Aronow's customers at home. The Cigarette had quickly become the Ferrari of drug smugglers who regularly outran the poky Coast Guard patrol boats along the Florida coast. In public, Aronow didn't exactly discourage the idea that selling fast boats to smugglers was part of the business. Speaking to *Sports Illustrated* in 1979, Aronow offered what sounded suspiciously like a sales pitch. "I would estimate that for \$65,000—or maybe less," he told the magazine, "you could put together a top drug-running racing boat, a 35- to 40-footer fully equipped with twin 454-cubic-inch MerCruiser engines, outsized 350- to 400-gallon fuel tanks, sophisticated navigation and radio gear, the works."

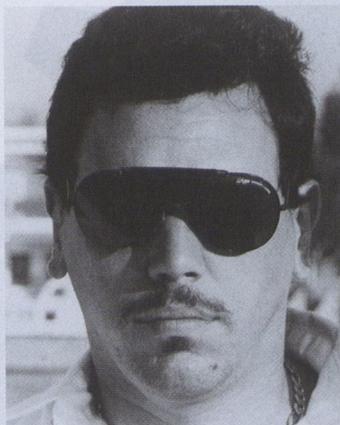
**T**hroughout the 1970s, the smugglers bought fast boats, and hired some of the best racers in the world to drive them. On December 19, 1982, the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* ran an exposé naming 13 drivers who were involved in distributing drugs. In the next few years, the champion speedboater George Morales would become one of the biggest cocaine smugglers in the United States while winning race after race. A young powerboater named Ben Kramer smuggled pot, a less profitable drug, but on an even larger scale. "The drug business that he was in just boggles the imagination," says Albert Krieger, a veteran Miami attorney who defended Kramer on federal smuggling and conspiracy charges. "Now, 100 kilos, that's a lot of contraband. But suddenly in this case you're talking about seagoing barges, double-hulled, as big as football fields. One shipment, in one barge, was 70 tons—



TELL US WHO SHOT DON ARONOW  
**\$100,000 Reward**  
 leading to arrest  
**MURDERER APPX. 6, WHITE, SANDY HAIR**  
 Driving Lincoln Town Car / Blue or Black  
 CALL ARONOW TIP LINE  
**823-2569**

that's 63,450 kilos. It's kind of tough to say that's for personal use."

Kramer's hero was Don Aronow. As his father, Jack Kramer (not the tennis player), remembers, "Aronow was a man's man—and Ben wanted to emulate him completely." Kramer grew up in Hollywood, Florida, and was first busted for dealing marijuana when he was 17; his first smuggling boat was a secondhand yellow Cigarette he named *Mellow Yellow*. Kramer went to jail in 1977 and emerged in 1980 with connections to the Colombian drug cartels and a thing for speedboat racing. He went directly to Aronow, who had just sold Cigarette, and asked him for help. Aronow gave Kramer the design the younger racer then used to make the powerful Apache Warpath, which Kramer rode to victory in 1984 at the Offshore Power Boat World Championships at Key West. Approaching 60, Aronow had yet again found a way to beat the competition and to remind the world that he was still the king of Thunderboat Row.



## DEAD AHEAD

Ben Kramer—speedboat champion, drug smuggler, and the man who contracted Aronow's murder for \$60,000.

Krieger and others who represented or associated with Kramer recall rumors that Aronow, meanwhile, was providing information about the smugglers who bought his boats to law-enforcement authorities. In part, the rumors may have started because of Aronow's decision to testify in a drug-

related trial in Virginia. His friendship with Vice President Bush, who ran the War on Drugs, didn't help either; if you wanted a favor from Bush, it was said in Miami, the person to ask was Aronow. In 1985, Aronow's company, USA Racing Team, won a contract to build a catamaran that would help Customs chase down smugglers who were driving the fast Cigarettes that he had created. Nicknamed Blue Thunder, the high-performance cats were test-driven by Bush, who told me about that day. "The seas were huge," the former president remembered, "but Don kept saying, 'Put those throttles forward. Let's get up on top of the waves.' It seemed like a bad idea."

With its twin prows, the Blue Thunder could handle the roughest seas, but reviews were mixed. "It had twin 540 racing engines and went 54 miles an hour. You could paddle faster," Allan Brown told me. "It was the worst dog in history." Aronow knew little about catamarans, and appears to have taken on the assignment with something less than his usual intensity. But the mix of high-level government officials and high-octane drug smugglers that had come to dominate his life was enough, perhaps, to scramble anyone's brain. George Morales, the (continued on page 144)

saying, 'Put those throttles forward.' It seemed like a bad idea."

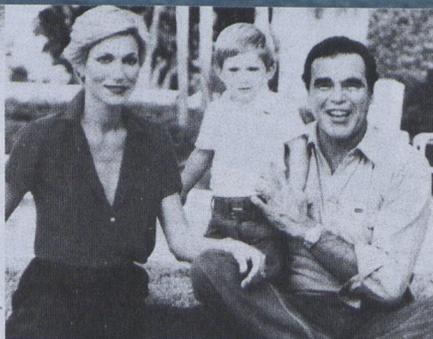
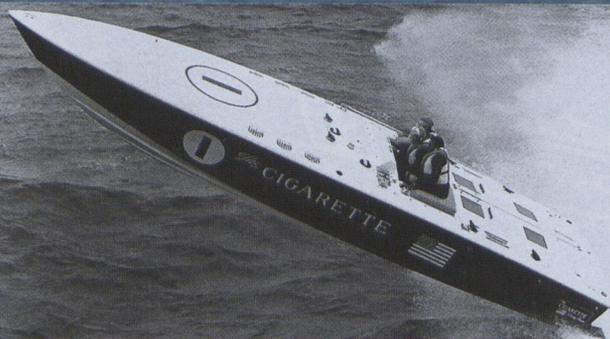


**SEEING GREEN**

With water-repellent leather, a glove-like fit, and anatomical insoles, the Stadio FG is the striker of Lotto's line. The shoe's fluorescent detailing was originally designed to make it more visible during practices in Italy's early-morning fog. **Lotto Stadio** shoes, \$120; [lottosportamerica.com](http://lottosportamerica.com).

Whether you're trailblazing the Adirondacks, fly-fishing the Snake River, on a morning run that extends to midday, or at a grudge match in the park—this high-performance footwear puts the world at your feet.

adventurous



## SMOKE ON THE WATER

FROM LEFT: Aronow manning his trademark deep-V hull Cigarette to victory in the 1969 Long Beach-Ensenada Race; Aronow with son Gavin and wife Lillian in a 1983 Christmas-card photo; Aronow's Magnum in flames after a fuel tank ruptured while he and Knocky House vied for the lead in the 1968 Miami-Nassau Race.

and his sister, Claudia, from summer camp and announced that they would not be returning home. With the money from his construction business, Aronow bought a house in Bay Harbor, Florida, across the causeway from the gentiles-only community of Bal Harbour. At the age of 34, the prospering contractor who grew up in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, and built houses and supermarkets across the burgeoning suburbs of New Jersey was officially retired. In Miami, he began hanging out at the local marinas and talking to men who raced boats.

"He knew nothing about nautical stuff. He wasn't a seaman at all," remembers Allan Brown, a racer who helped launch the *Tainted Lady* into Biscayne Bay and later became one of Aronow's leading drivers and competitors. In 1962, Aronow entered the *Claudia*, a speedboat powered by two custom Chevy 409s, in the Miami-Nassau ocean race and finished a surprising fourth.

"He was very ballsy and athletic, and he could drive a boat in a race as good or better than any of us," Brown adds. Aronow, who had been named the most outstanding high school athlete in Brooklyn, had the strength of a wrestler and an indomitable will. His way with women was equally impressive, if a bit scary. Traveling to the New York Boat Show with Aronow and his wife, Brown was cornered by the boat designer, who asked for the key to Brown's room. "I asked him, 'What are you going to do in my room?' He says, 'Guess.' I give him the key, and he walks up to this pretty girl on the floor. Two hours later, he gives me the key back. He also hands me 50 dollars and says, 'Give this to the maid.' He didn't have to waste time with small talk."

One of Aronow's best friends in Miami was a young attorney named Al Malnik. Now a multimillionaire who owns the largest title loan business in the United States, Malnik built a multi-layered corporate empire that reputedly enabled organized crime figures affiliated with the legendary Jewish rackets boss Meyer Lansky to put their money into licit investments.

Malnik first met Aronow in the early sixties. "Don became part of our group," the preternaturally youthful investor told me when I visited his seaside mansion in

South Florida. "We were all married, and had kids the same age. We would go to the Mona Lisa Room at the Eden Roc. We all had this wonderful 'let's pretend' life—'let's pretend we're happy,'" Malnik remembers with a smile. "The guys would sit together and talk about women, and how we were all going to get rich like Bobby Rautbord, our friend who inherited 20 million dollars from his dad. The first one to leave his wife was Bobby, then Don, and then me."

The ocean-racing fraternity that Aronow would lead throughout the sixties was made up of a cinematic assortment of ex-fighter pilots, professional roughnecks, race car drivers, horse jockeys, dissolute European

royals who had cheated death during World War II, and rich hotshots from across the Atlantic. United by their love of speed, this seafaring rat pack torqued their engines and took off over Biscayne Bay with little regard for the weather or the white-glove niceties that governed sailboat racing. The leading organizer of the sport in Europe was Sir Max Aitken, the British fighter ace whose father was the Canadian press baron Lord Beaverbrook, one of Winston Churchill's closest

advisers. Having shot down 16 German planes during the Battle of Britain, Aitken was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and he later inherited his father's newspapers, including the *Daily Express*. In 1961 the *Daily Express* sponsored the first Cowes-Torquay race, which would become the most prestigious speedboat race in the world. Among the competitors were Tommy Sopwith, a race car driver whose father made the Sopwith Camel, one of the deadliest Allied fighter planes in World War I; Billy Shand Kydd, a steeplechase rider and the future step-uncle of Princess Diana; and Lord Lucan, a tall, charming man whose great-great-grandfather, the third Lord Lucan, had ordered the Charge of the Light Brigade.

Aronow would soon become notorious on both sides of the Atlantic for racing with a wide-open throttle from the beginning to the end of a race, refusing to wear a protective helmet, and daring his high-powered Mercury engines to burn out or his experimental fiberglass hulls to splinter into pieces, each of which happened at least once. His first vic-

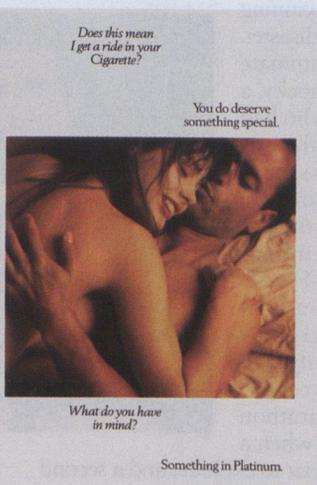
If you were racing here tomorrow



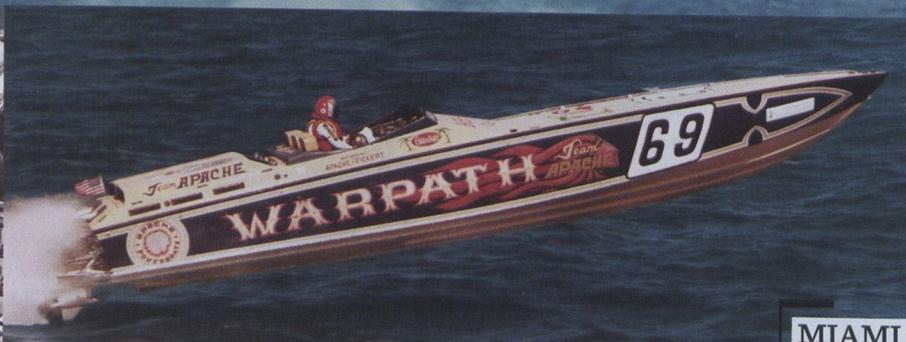
you'd wear a Rolex

### SPEED SELLS

ABOVE LEFT: A Rolex ad featuring Aronow racing a 27-foot Magnum in the late sixties. RIGHT: The Cigarette boat plays on its iconic status in this ad from the seventies.



internal injuries while racing faster and harder than any of his competitors.



tory came in 1964 in a Formula that he raced around the island of New Providence, traveling 52 miles at an average speed of 43.3 miles per hour. Formula boats—which Aronow had begun producing in 1962—also finished second, third, fifth, and sixth.

Aronow then promptly sold Formula for a few hundred thousand dollars—selling companies was virtually the only way to make money in the speedboat business, and it was not unusual for some of the money to change hands under the table. He then started Donzi, whose boats went even faster and attracted more attention from the sun-kissed sectors of mid-sixties America, not to mention from powerful men in Washington and abroad. He sold Donzis to President Johnson and to the Secret Service, as well as to the Israeli Navy, which outfitted them with explosives and used them against Egypt in the Six-Day War.

All the while, Aronow kept winning races—and narrowly avoiding disaster. He found his perfect racing teammate in Norris House, known as Knocky, a former all-American wrestler who had served on a submarine during the war and then joined the professional motorcycle-racing tour in Britain. “He was as strong as an ox, a little guy with Popeye arms,” remembers Michael Aronow, who idolized House. “Nobody else would get into a boat with my father.” Together, Aronow and House failed to finish only two races during their seven-year career: once at the 1967 Gateway Marathon from Florida to the Bahamas, when a leaking fuel tank caused their boat to explode, and a second time in the 1968 Miami–Nassau race, when their boat caught on fire. Racing off the coast of Long Beach, California, in 1967, Aronow jumped a wave, sending his lightweight Donzi 15 feet into the air, where the deck clipped the landing rail of a low-flying press helicopter. Though the boat failed to explode, the accident was scary enough to shock Aronow into speechlessness for nearly a full minute. As House would later recall, “Finally, Don broke the silence. He looked at me and said, ‘What are you gonna do when we get to Morro Bay?’ I said, ‘The first thing I’m gonna do is get in the shower. I just shit in my pants.’” Don answered, “I get the shower first. I own the boat.”

Nineteen sixty-seven was also the year that Aronow, at 40, would win his first world racing championship, imposing his will on the growing sport with a ferocity that intimidated his opponents. As Doug Silvera, a leading driver who raced against Aronow, remembered, “We’d be racing in rough seas, taking a terrible pounding. Don would come alongside and grin from ear to ear, then take off. God, he was so demoralizing.”

Aronow’s success as a racer also helped him sell boats. “He charged exactly twice as much as any other boat that size, and there was a year backlog almost immediately,” Brown recalls. Early Formulas sold for \$8,000 each. Donzis sold for \$20,000. Magnums sold for \$30,000. Aronow’s favorite sales technique was to suggest that his client might be better suited to a smaller boat.

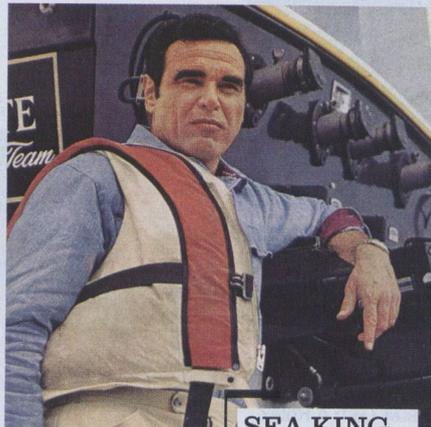
After selling Magnum, Aronow had his friend Elton Cary build the prototype for a fast new 32-foot racing boat, one that would dominate the powerboat circuit for the next 10 years and become an icon of American industrial design. The combination of sex appeal and deep-throated thrills that the Cigarette boat offered made it the perfect toy for a certain kind of guy

over 40. When the Cigarette was unveiled in 1969, orders started pouring in from all over the world—several hundred within the first three years of the boat’s life. Richard Nixon wanted one, as did his friend the fugitive financier Robert Vesco, who had his delivered to the Bahamas. “Baby Doc” Duvalier had his Cigarette delivered to Haiti. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations George H. W. Bush bought a Cigarette that he named the *Fidelity*, which allowed him to relive his own bomber-pilot days while braving the derision of his sailboat-loving neighbors when he ran it full-throttle off the coast of Kennebunkport, Maine.

Where his other boat companies had netted him a few hundred thousand dollars each and served largely as tax shelters, Cigarette would become an international brand name and make Aronow a millionaire many times over. Asked to describe potential buyers for his boats, Aronow showed a keen grasp of his client base: “Older men who have it made, the kind who would drive a Ferrari. And they’re interested in women... womanizers. No clod is going to own one of these.”

### SEA KING

Aronow, following his 1969 World Offshore Powerboat Championship, posing with a Cigarette for a Hennessy ad.



### MIAMI BLUE

FROM LEFT: Thunderboat Row circa 1969, where Aronow manufactured his powerboats and was later gunned down; Ben Kramer racing his Aronow-designed Apache Warpath in the eighties.

Top, from left: Cigarette Racing Team Archives; John Crouser; courtesy of Michael Aronow; Kramer: John Crouser.

“The seas were huge,” George Bush remembered, “but Don kept

## CIGARETTE BOAT

(continued from page 123)

champion powerboater, would later testify before Congress that—at the same time as he had been winning races and smuggling drugs into Miami—he had been smuggling arms to the Contras in Nicaragua at the behest of the CIA, which was flying his planes back to Fort Lauderdale loaded with cocaine. According to *The Miami Herald*, Aronow, on the day of his murder, was working on shipping two boats to Manuel Noriega.

But aside from capturing the imagination of the Vice President, Aronow's Blue Thunder also appealed to Kramer. He made a deal with Aronow to buy USA Racing Team for \$2 million. "Kramer wanted to be King Shit," Detective Smith remembers. "He would be running the dope and making the boats that were trying to catch him." But when the government got wind of the sale, it cancelled the contract. Aronow gave Kramer his money back, yet insisted on keeping an additional sum that Kramer had paid him, which Michael Aronow later described

to police as a million dollars in cash that smelled like pot and was covered in sand. When the government reinstated the Blue Thunder contract with Aronow, Kramer resorted to violent threats.

"This prick I sold the company to is really harassing me," Aronow told Malnik. "That cocksucker stole my money and made me look like an ass," Kramer told his attorney and co-conspirator Melvyn Kessler. "I'll kill the son of a bitch," Kramer told Aronow's longtime secretary, Patty Lezaca. "I'm not afraid of him."

Finally, in 1994, after persistent rumors of gangland rubouts, high-level drug connections, and a rogue CIA assassin's involvement in Aronow's death (and pulpy books that perpetuated these myths), Kramer, confined to a maximum-security federal prison in Indiana after a spectacular failed prison escape by helicopter, pled no contest to ordering his idol's murder for the price of \$60,000. The hit man was an expimp from St. Louis named Bobby

Young, whose cooperation in the case earned him a reduction in his sentence. By then, *Miami Vice* was no longer in prime time, and the industry that Aronow built was a shambles.

Cigarette changed hands five times, as customers fled from a sport that had once seemed like the epitome of glamour and now seemed sleazy. In 1998 the company produced a mere six boats. But today, in the hands of new ownership, Cigarette is making 70 to 80 boats a year, which sell for upward of \$300,000 each, and the powerboat industry has motored back to something resembling respectability. Twenty years after Aronow's death, which former president Bush described to me



as a "terrible ending" to such a rich life, offshore races are once again becoming a familiar sight on American waters.

Before I left Miami, I decided to take one last ride on a Cigarette boat, to experience the thrill that drew Aronow to race loud, fast boats on the open water. It was a sunny weekend afternoon, and the waves off Fort Lauderdale were about three feet high. After 10 minutes of bouncing back and forth in the cockpit with the throttle wide open, going 80 miles an hour with two women in bikinis screaming at the top of their lungs behind me, I was smiling from ear to ear. The roar of the engines made it impossible to hear anything that my companions were saying.

There's nothing harmonious or Zen-like about a Cigarette ride. It's an anarchic kind of rush—the nautical equivalent of Viagra. No wonder Aronow and his friends and rivals loved it so much, leaving their lives as office-bound businessmen behind and

getting caught up in reckless games of competition: The combined effect of sun, sea, and speed goes straight to the lizard part of the brain. By tweaking the throttle, I found I could slam the boat down hard on the waves and send it back up into the air, like a champion powerboater in heavy seas. Racing a Cigarette is a hell of a lot easier than sailing, I decided. It's also more fun. □

See Cigarettes and more powerboats in action at [mensvogue.com/sports](http://mensvogue.com/sports)

## CONNELLY

(continued from page 134)

every scene with her tense, expectant air. Was it hard to display more affection

for her son than her husband (Patrick Wilson)? "The thing about her is that's just what you get to see," she says, bristling. "They don't do her justice. She loves her husband, and does right by him, but he's the grown-up, and he knows how much she loves him." Wilson pinpoints Connelly's appeal on her emerald irises. "Even in the briefest of scenes or moments, she is able to command a vulnerability with her eyes," he

says. "Which is probably why she's a big ol' movie star."

As an actress who growth-spurred under the klieg lights, Connelly copes by a) not watching her movies after they come out, and b) having a sense of humor about her turkeys—which are all the more accessible in the Netflix/YouTube era. "There are a couple real doozies out there," she confesses. "I did an Italian horror movie where I communicate with insects—it's a horrendous performance." Now that she's patented the role of the despairing wife/girlfriend/mother, Connelly is looking for a comedy and might break the taboo of working with one's spouse. "When we find the right thing, we hope to be able to do it together," she says. It might draw scrutiny to their low-pro Park Slope routine, but Connelly will coyly beat it back. Asked what her friends tease her about, she volleys with the skill of an accomplished tease: "What do your friends tease you about?" □

## BEACH COMBER

The gold medalist searches for perfect barrels. O'Neill rash guard, \$34; oneill.com. Oakley board shorts, \$40; oakley.com. Details, see In This Issue. Fashion Editor: David Farber.



When he's in training, Wescott tends to consume 7,000 calories a day, just enough to keep him from losing weight.