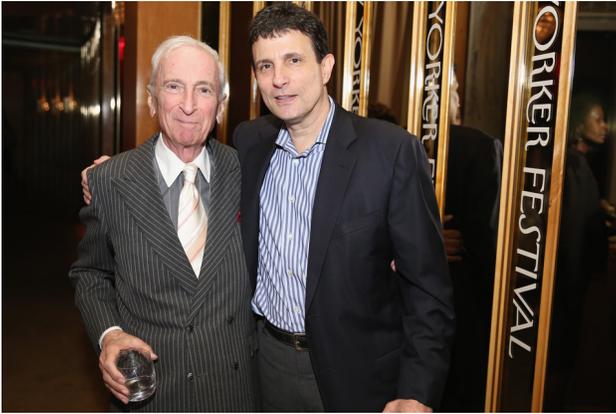


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Star Struck by the Literati

David Remnick, Gay Talese, Zadie Smith and Jelani Cobb at the New Yorker festival wrap party



Writer Gay Talese and New Yorker Editor David Remnick at the 2015 New Yorker Festival wrap party *PHOTO: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES*

By **REBECCA BRATBURD**

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What happens when you get Gay Talese (“Honor Thy Father”), Jeffrey Eugenides (“Middlesex”), George Saunders (“Tenth of December”), Zadie Smith (“White Teeth”) and Roxane Gay (“Bad Feminist”) together in a dazzling room with an open bar?

“They drink,” David Remnick, the editor of the New Yorker, said Saturday night at a party he was hosting to wrap up the weekend’s 16th annual New Yorker festival.

Indeed, when we approached the impeccably dressed Mr. Talese at the Standard near the High Line, he offered Cointreau served in a short tumbler.

Many New Yorker writers like Jelani Cobb, Michael Schulman, Emily Nussbaum and Malcolm Gladwell, cartoon editor Bob Mankoff and cartoonists Roz Chast and Matthew Diffee, and publisher Lisa Hughes also mingled.

Mr. Mankoff said a party where you’re having a good time—namely, this party—is no place for cartoon inspiration.

“The better of a time you have, the worse it is for humor,” he said. “What’s funny is when things go wrong.”

Still, “usually any comment you make at a party only seems funny because you’re drunk. That would be OK if you could get everybody reading the magazine drunk at the same time,” he said, though he doesn’t recommend reading the magazine after consuming alcohol. Instead, try coffee.



Zadie Smith PHOTO: SEAN ZANNI/PATRICKMCMULLAN.COM



Jelani Cobb PHOTO: SEAN ZANNI/PATRICKMCMULLAN.COM



Members of the rock band Sleater-Kinney—Janet Weiss, Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker PHOTO: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES

Around the room, Mr. Cobb and actress Danai Gurira (“The Walking Dead”) debriefed for their talk on Sunday about black identity in America, especially since the Obama administration. Comedian Reggie Watts chatted about his festival discussion earlier in the day with New Yorker staffer Emma Allen. The members of the rock band Sleater-Kinney—Corin Tucker, Janet Weiss and Carrie Brownstein (also of “Portlandia”)—made the rounds after their talk with Dana Goodyear earlier in the day.

It was a great party to be star struck by the literati. Mr. Saunders, who had a talk with Jonathan Safran Foer (“Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close”) for the festival, said he was star struck by Mr. Eugenides, who happened to be standing next to him.

Mr. Saunders said he once saw Steve Martin, David Carr and Norman Mailer sitting at the same table at this party in years past.

“There was one year when I left early, and I should have stuck around because I was told Robin Williams came and he was dancing with everybody,” Mr. Saunders said.

“I can guarantee that Robin Williams won’t show up this year,” Mr. Cobb later said.

Guests enjoyed passed canapés like tuna ceviche tacos, mini grilled cheese, avocado toast, mini fried chicken and waffles, and for dessert, apricot tarte tatin and chocolate cupcakes.

People shimmied through the crowd, including Mr. Remnick.

“I just came from the craziest thing I’ve ever done at the festival. I interviewed Patti Smith and I played guitar behind her, playing ‘Because the Night,’” Mr. Remnick said. “Remember what George Bush did at the [1992] state dinner in Japan? He threw up in the middle of the dinner. I thought I was possibly going to do that.”

Corrections & Amplifications:

An earlier version of this article misspelled Michael Schulman’s surname. (Oct. 6, 2015)

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