



sonalities don't explode again this year. Instead, we are adults who try like hell to understand how we are all related to one another.

I mean, as a side note, my Mother (now brace yourselves, because this is rough) voted for Ruth Dwyer, Barbara Snelling, and Mark Candon. Now are you getting a better reception of Tommy World? Well hold on because there are no commercials.

Even when escaping to the solitude of the washroom, I can hear my adorable Greek mother with the thick accents call out "Tommy, Tommy we need to set the table. What tablecloth should I use? Tommy, come on, the guests will be here and I need help with arranging the food. Are you trying to upset me? Are you trying to ruin this holiday for me. No really, it's fine. I'm never doing this again. From now on, you kids can find another way of celebrating on the holidays, because my heart can't deal with this anymore."

All the while my other two brothers are sitting down watching professional wrestling. When I have the nerve, the unadulterated and unabashed gall to ask why they are not lifting a finger (after flushing and washing my hands of course) I am hit with "Mom wants your help, you're better at these things." Of course, that gay gene gives me the superhuman power to coordinate flatware and glassware to ideally accent the glistening breast of turkey better than the mere hetero-humans.

With the parents being divorced, the siblings can now look forward to strategizing how best to incorporate both parents and their partners into this extravaganza.

We invariable are disgrun-

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bled about something or another and end up telling each other exactly what the other could have done better with their lives. I mean almost to the point of flip charts. By the time the whole thing is over, I feel like Bette Davis in All About Eve, when she is downing the martini in the aquarium-sized glass just looking to pick a fight.

I always take a deep breath right before the season begins and wish for the best. I hope that it will snow Christmas morning and that my family will be together with warm smiles and open hearts. I pray that everyone will be able to enjoy this season and that it is everything that they would like it to be.

I wish for better furniture and a more flattering wardrobe and secretly I yearn that this year I will be able to see a little more of that holiday magic I had as a child but miss as an adult.

I try to do little things for myself to help relieve the stress of the holidays. I know how worked up I can get. I try to be less obsessive and controlling around the holidays. Last year I pitched a fit that would of put Shannon Doherty to shame because I could not find the right shade of silver organza ribbon to offset my silver wrapping paper and toy soldier accent (I have finally just been let back into Pier 1).

Lastly, I try to remember that this season is as crazy as I make it. My family is mine and nobody else's and I acknowledge how fortunate I am to be able to have family to spend the holidays with.

I miss my brother Sam, I miss him awful. I close my eyes, when the world gets crazy freaky and imagine that morning all over again. That is what the holidays are to me. This time when, if you're really lucky, memories are created that will stay with you forever. That affords you the privilege of truly appreciating the smile on a child's face or the warm embrace of a couple as they walk up Church St. with the snow falling and the white lights dancing over head.

The stress comes and goes, but those memories, even the harsh ones, stay with you forever and believe me, it would be a lonely existence if they didn't. I hope that everyone has a great holiday season full of love, laughter, and gift certificates to your favorite stores.

Pumpkins, that is my advice to you eat, drink, and get Mary. I mean really if Santa wasn't family would he have dressed in red velvet and snow leopard trim with patent leather boots? I'll say no more, really; you make your own conclusions. ▼

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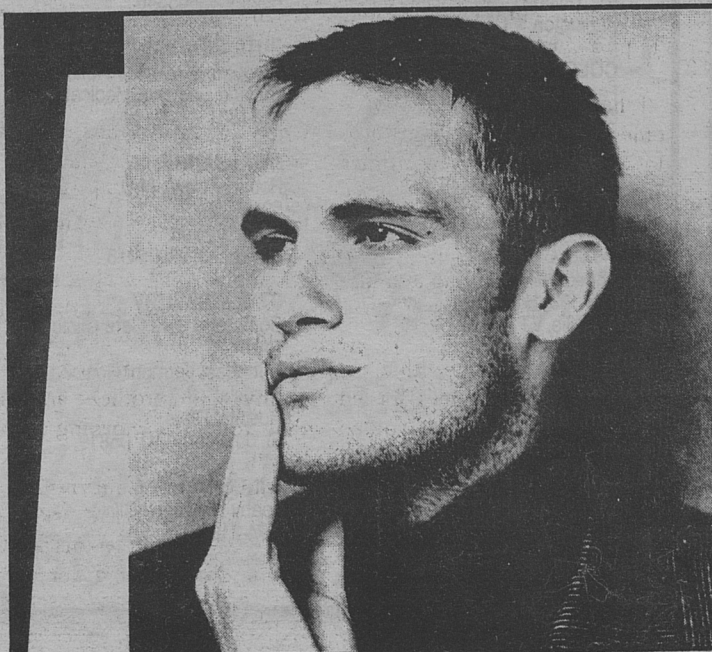


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