



JULY 2014

# AMERICAN WAY

AMERICAN AIRLINES + AMERICAN EAGLE

## Movies For the People

### MARK WAHLBERG

has been a pop culture icon for almost a quarter-century, and his latest film, ***Transformers: Age of Extinction***, bolsters his legacy



After you watch the **MLB All-Star Game**, spend a long weekend in

## COOPERSTOWN, N.Y.

MONTHLY

### ALSO

Exploring the **Lake Tahoe Water Trail**  
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AW's Road Warrior Contest  
(Turn the Page)



For details on this year's contest and information about entering, look inside the front cover of this issue.



# Feel the Vibration

**THERE MUST BE** something delightful and enchanting about a place that stays at the forefront of your memory year after year, for decades. For me, it's a place called Emerald Bay on the southwest shore of Lake Tahoe. The area isn't easily accessible, which makes it all the more rewarding once you get there. And once there, you are treated to a divine collage of azure-meets-sapphire-meets-cobalt-colored water. The glacier-carved granite crags are blanketed in fir trees that, when taken in measure with the lapping waters on your right flank, produce Edenic imagery that would fit nicely in the pages of Genesis.

When considering a personal or family getaway, I think I've been subconsciously measuring my options against my memory of Emerald Bay. Of course, it'd make the most sense to simply return to Emerald Bay. But then again, no one's ever accused me of having good sense. That's why, as we were putting this issue together, reading about the Lake Tahoe Water Trail (page 76) was like a fire hose to the face.

I was last there in 1991, the summer of my freshman year of high school. The memories are still strong though, as is the memory of the music that was playing in my Sony Outback cassette player. I was cool, you see, in 1991, and, like all the other cool kids, I had Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch cued up as I hiked the trail around Emerald Bay to Maggie's Peak. I was working out like a madman — to moderate avail, mind you — to achieve Marky Mark's physique. So high school.

I'm almost embarrassed to write this qualifier — and you should be embarrassed if you need it — but I'm doing

it for the children: Marky Mark's real name is Mark Wahlberg, the international acting sensation who, I submit, has never done a bad movie, and who is about to star in the much-anticipated *Transformers: Age of Extinction* (page 60).

Like you, I've seen every Wahlberg movie. My personal favorite is last year's *Lone Survivor*, which is tied, in my opinion, with *Saving Private Ryan* for the most accurate depiction of the hell of war. Wahlberg played the role of **Marcus Luttrell**, the real-life hero from the movie-adapted book *Lone Survivor*. In the real-life firefight, Luttrell was the only man left standing from SEAL Team 10 after Operation Redwing in Afghanistan in 2005. I read the book before the movie was made and, as one of those people who struggles to find Hollywood adequately doing accurate adaptations of books, I was cautiously optimistic that Wahlberg could pull off the grit, bravery, sympathy and bravado that is Texas-born-and-raised Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell. In my opinion, he did. But my opinion, truth be told, doesn't matter. The only person whose opinion really matters as it pertains to that role and that movie is the opinion of the Lone Survivor himself.

So I reached out to Marcus Luttrell to get his take on what it was like to work with Mark Wahlberg, as well as his other Hollywood musings.

"Hollywood was definitely a lot of hard work," Luttrell told me in an email. "Everyone involved with making the film sincerely respected the story and worked hard at making the experience as real as possible. There really wasn't any glitz and glam other than a well-stocked snack cart on set and a man who brought protein smoothies out to the actors during breaks. My teammates and I looked at each other and said, 'We should have a smoothie man in the teams!' We surrounded the set with SEALs and we were all there to work."

On working with Mark Wahlberg:

"Mark was great. He's professional; he's a great actor and a great man. It was easy to work with him. I formed a friendship with everyone involved. Mark, Taylor [Kitsch], Ben [Foster], Emile [Hirsch], Eric [Bana], Alexander

[Ludwig], and even the behind-the-scenes crew. It was an experience I will never forget. My wife and I had the chance to go to Boston with Mark for his charity screening of the movie. It was nice being in his hometown with his closest friends and family. They are all good people, and it was good to see how dedicated he is to his charities."

On whether, when he was a teenager like me watching Marky Mark sing "Good Vibrations" on MTV, he ever thought the leader of the Funky Bunch would play him in a movie 22 years later: "Hell no. But my wife sure is happy about it."

I'm a stranger to Wahlberg and Luttrell, even though I feel as if I know them both because of their body of work (and because of Marky Mark's body of body). I'm sure my wife, like Melanie Luttrell, wouldn't mind either if the Hollywood reaction to the question, "Who should play Adam Pitluk in a movie?" was a resounding, "Oh, Wahlberg. All day. All Day."

The law of probability indicates that I have a much better chance of sitting next to Wahlberg on an American Airlines flight than I do of him playing me in a Hollywood blockbuster. Same goes for ever getting to sit down and have a beer with a tried-and-true American hero like Luttrell. I'm much more likely to meet the Texan on a plane. But for now, as Flight 1462 cruises from Dallas/Fort Worth to Miami International, I'm more than content — having taken Rob Britton's advice (page 50) — to speak with the stranger seated next to me in 26E: Sister Angela Wagner from the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, a Franciscan order in Amarillo, Texas. Not sure Sister Angela remembers the Marky Mark days, but our conversation leads me to believe that she knows the fine work our servicemen and women are doing. And she's praying for them.



  
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