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AMERICAN WAY

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MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME

ONE OF LOUISVILLE'S OLDEST
AND MOST RECOGNIZABLE
BEVERAGES IS REJUVENATING
THE ENTIRE STATE'S ECONOMY

Homecoming



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One book I keep close to my heart (and close to my fingertips as a reference guide) is Thomas Wolfe's *You Can't Go Home Again*. It was published in 1940, but it serves as a timeless allegory for those of us whose career paths have put us in other parts of the country or world. Leaving home is the hardest part, both for Wolfe's character George Webber and for me. Once you leave, the exploits of the world are enchanting

and exhilarating, yet knowing you left a piece of yourself back home makes the idea of home all the more tempting for your return. Problem is, home isn't always how you left it.

That was my story. I lived in Cleveland from the time I was 3 until I left for college. My folks moved away, my sister finished her schooling in Arizona and my friends fled, only some of them returning. Time passed on, and with it, beloved friends and family members as well. I returned as an adult in 2007, but the city had changed. I suppose I'd changed too. So I left. And I haven't been back since.

I've heard stories like this from you, our readers, all over the world in the last year and a half. You and I chose lives that took us far from our childhood homes. And while we're certainly happy with the lives we've rebooted in other cities, pangs of regret rise in our voices as we recount yesteryear. After all, yesteryear is what made us who we are today.

But here's a happy note: Three people recently re-educated me on my literary and literal take on Wolfe's classic. Three people

have demonstrated that you can go home again, and you can thrive.

Bryan Massey moved to Hollywood in 1997. He went home to Dallas four years later. Jeff Hoferer moved to Hollywood in 2002. He went home to Dallas six years later. Both went away to become big-shot actors. As Bryan puts it, "That Hollywood sign is very enticing." He made a small splash before returning to Dallas for a "real" job.

Jeff had a similar revelation: "LA was exactly like I thought it would be for about the first year. After that, I realized there was a good chance the 'Hollywood dream' wasn't just going to fall into my lap." That's understandable, since I'm sure that before Jeff moved out to SoCal, his pre-eminent "Hollywood dream" didn't include dressing head-to-toe in a flesh-colored suit to do a streaking promotion for a movie at the Rose Bowl. That dream probably didn't include doing a similar clothesless appearance at the NBA All-Star Game either.

Back home in Dallas, the two have paired up to chronicle their

journeys in *Entourage*-esque webisodes at TheDallywood.com. Aside from attracting thousands of hits from around the world, they're finally booking some heady gigs in their old stomping grounds. Jeff and Bryan have both landed roles in blockbuster movies, and the phone is actually ringing these days. All from the comforts of home.

And then there's the Ali-like return to the ring of Jim Shahin, who was the backpage *American Way* columnist for 15 years. Jim always has a story to tell and a unique way of telling it, so we welcome him home and into the rotation with Carlton Stowers and Cathy Booth Thomas.

Wolfe is an American literary icon, and he pegged me and my ilk to a T. But there are others out there — others like Bryan, Jeff and Jim — who prove that you can indeed go home again.

Adam Pitluk
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