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HARLEM, NEW YORK, USA

# AMERICAN WAY

OCTOBER 2016

## NOT A KID ANYMORE

**Dakota Fanning's** acting career —  
and her striking personality —  
have matured right in front of us

By Adam Pitluk

## Moon Shadow



As the design of the covers changed over the years, the magazine remained a consistent reflection of passengers' travel experiences.

Fifteen years ago, my girlfriend, Kimberly, and I were walking hand-in-hand along Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and casually gazing at the street vendors' interesting wares. We approached one vendor's kiosk and marveled at his hand-painted conch shells as he sat there and worked diligently. As we walked away, I heard the vendor call out.

"Hey, Papi," he said in a heavily accented baritone. I pivoted, and the dreadlocked man smiled at me. "Enjoy the moon."

"That's an interesting thing to say," I said as Kimberly and I walked back toward him. "What does it mean?" He stopped working and addressed me like a sage professor.

"It means nothing more than what it says: Look at the moon. It's beautiful tonight. You and your lady should be sure to enjoy it. After all, the moon is meant to be enjoyed with friends," he said.

The response made Kimberly and me smile. It also made us realize that we'd been so intent on the goods of Las Olas Boulevard that we'd completely neglected the massive orange-hued harvest moon high in the night's sky. Still, despite my surprise, there was something inviting, even something familiar about his words.

That was 15 years ago this past summer. From then on, when my job as a reporter sent me to lands near and far, I found myself staring at the moon each night — a grounding reminder of the vendor's

weighty comment. And even now, as I write this, my final column as the outgoing editor of *American Way* — eight years to the month that I wrote my first column titled "Moon Shadow" — I think back on the vendor's memorable remark as a way of saying goodbye, because:

We have met before, you and I. We crossed paths in Fort Lauderdale when I did a turn as a newspaper reporter. We met at White Rock Lake in Dallas while jogging on a March afternoon. I waited on your table back in 1996 at the Hard Rock Cafe in Hollywood, and then again in 1999 at the Hard Rock in New York City. I carried your golf bag for 18 holes at Chagrin Valley Country Club in Cleveland as a teen. We studied together in Sharon Harl's journalism class at the University of Missouri and then again in Sam Freedman's book seminar at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. We shared some great times at Wrigley Field that summer I spent in Chicago, and we also collectively cried when I sat next to you on that Chinook helicopter as the 4th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, whom I was embedded with as a *Time* magazine reporter, evacuated the Louisiana Superdome

after Hurricane Katrina. All the while, that constant and invariable satellite loomed bright overhead.

Eight years and one month ago, when I learned I'd be the new editor, Kimberly (now my wife) and I walked hand-in-hand around our neighborhood in Dallas as our

2-year-old daughter blazed a path before us. When we stopped near the playground, I squeezed Kimberly's hand and pointed to the moon with my other one. And I smiled.

"Adam, you'll do a great job," she said. "You share a passion for life and travel with every one of your readers. Just do what you have always done; listen to their needs, wants and desires, and enable them to truly enjoy their time on American Airlines."

I listened to Kimberly. Time marched on and we added a second daughter to our family. I've been heeding both the vendor's and my wife's advice for all that time. In the process, I've listened to you, our readers. I've listened to you: traveled among you; learned from you — we've been through a lot together in these eight years. I am truly blessed to have had the opportunity to get to know you. You have been my family, and like my wife and two daughters (now 7 and 10 years old), you have enriched my life and made me genuinely happy. Even now, as I write this, the thought of you is making me smile.

As you read this issue of *American Way*, which is full of stories that address your travel needs, wants and desires, stop for a moment, won't you, and look out your window. Enjoy the moon. Then look at the person sitting next to you: The moon is meant to be enjoyed with friends. I am honored to have been on board with you, and I wish you well while we continue to write our life stories and make new friends.

Until the next time we meet ...



Adam's first "Editor's Note" photo, taken September 2008; his last "Editor's Note" photo, taken September 2016



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Editor

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