

LIFESTYLE+TECH+DVD+OBSESSION+MUSIC+MON CALAMARI

geek

MONTHLY™

30 YEARS OF
**STAR
WARS**

HEROES'
**GREG
GRUNBERG**
KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE THINKING!

ISSUE 4
GEEKMONTHLY.COM



PLUS

MAKING SPIDER-MAN 3 • AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE
ROBERT KIRKMAN • SIMON PEGG COPS AN ATTITUDE
BUFFY GETS METAPHYSICAL • GRINDHOUSE GALORE



Kraft work

Soundtrack nerd Richard Kraft builds his own Disneyland // WORDS: JEFF BOND // PICS: NICK GILL

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING that you should never meet your heroes. But if you have to meet them, you might as well consider working for them. That's kind of the approach film music agent and collectibles kingpin Richard Kraft took. "I was the geeky kid who got obsessed with movies and film music at a really young age when I saw *Adventures of Robin Hood* and noticed how great the symphonic music was," Kraft says. "When I was seven years old I started loading up on soundtracks and by the time I was out of high school I had several thousand."

Kraft and his brother David took their obsession one step further, writing for a xeroxed fan magazine and interviewing their favorite composers. "When we were ten years old we would go to Elmer Bernstein's house with an index card stack of questions and for some strange reason he would answer them."

Kraft kept collecting and talking to composers into young adulthood, nabbing a job as head of music at Cannon Films: "I was a minimum wage head of music at a crappy film company, but I was getting to work with people I always idolized. Elmer Bernstein one day told me I knew more about film music than his agent did, so I should go work for them. I got a job working at an agency and eventually I got to sign my own clients and Danny Elfman was my first client." Jerry Goldsmith was Kraft's second client and now that list includes Philip Glass, Jon Brion, John Barry, Alexandre Desplat and many others.

As an agent of some of the most successful musicians in Hollywood, Kraft found himself with the kind of money for his collecting hobby that he

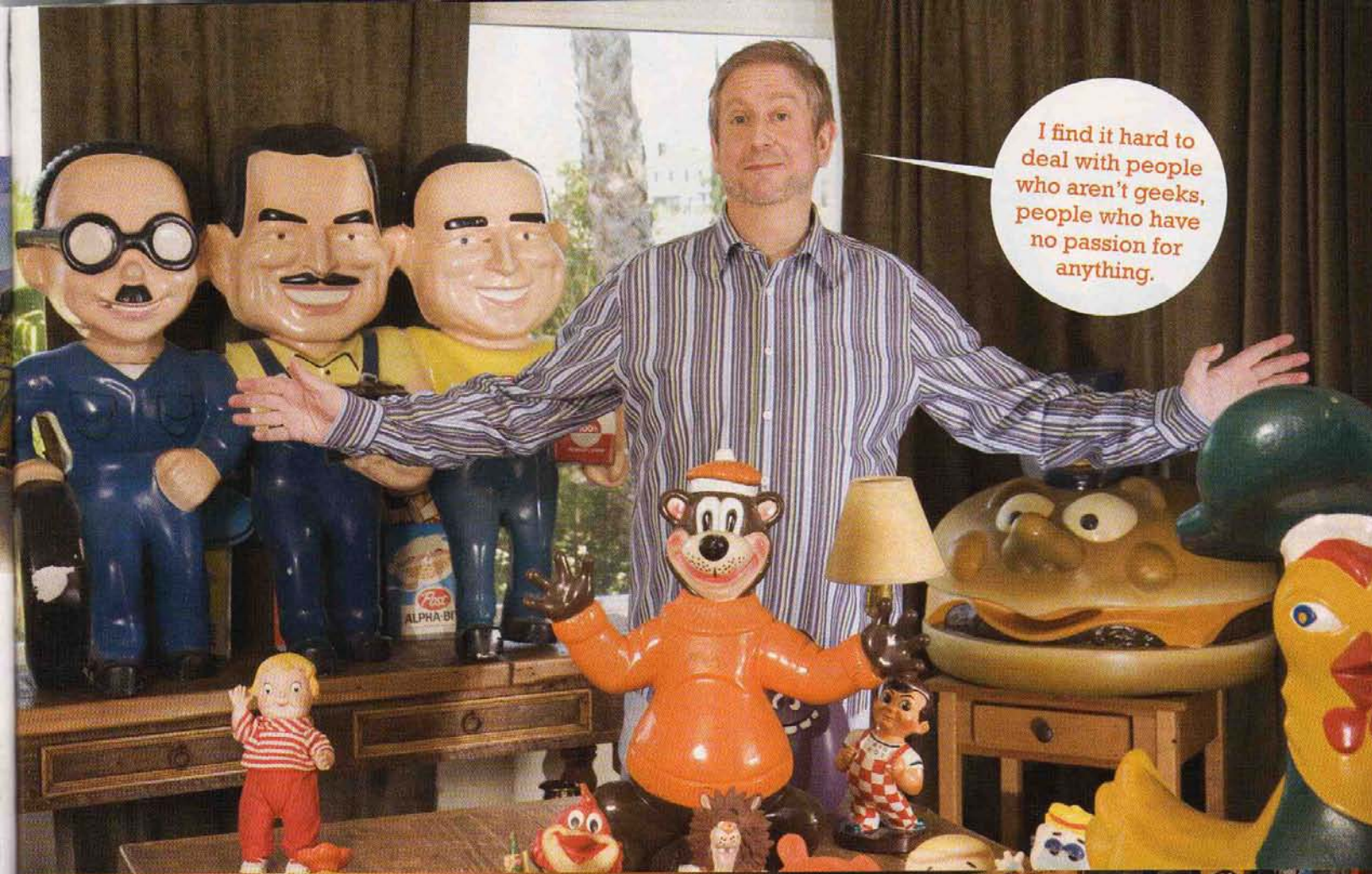
never quite dreamed of as a kid. But other concerns and obsessions held sway, and as Kraft later discovered, collecting had been incontrovertibly bound up in his close relationship with his brother David, who had suffered from Crohn's Disease since the age of 10. "Having a brother that was sick from the time he was 10 until the time he died at 35 made all the things we collected the focal point of our conversation," Kraft says. "We didn't want to talk about his next surgery, but talking about this great new score called *Jaws* and playing it a hundred times was a form of escapism. When David was healthy we'd run to Disneyland and we'd talk about the anticipation of that trip when he was in the hospital for months—we'd have a map of Disneyland and plan it all out and argue endlessly the pros and cons of the submarine ride vs. the Matterhorn. Making lists of things to collect that were in sets gave us our own sense of purpose and it was certainly more fun than hanging out in Bakersfield and talking about being sick."

Today Kraft's house in the San Fernando Valley is a miniature homage to Disneyland decorated with actual ride cars including the Mr. Toad Car, Submarine Voyage Sea Serpent, Dumbo Ride vehicle, Skyway bucket, Davey Crockett Canoe, Snow White mine car, Space Mountain car and a 30 foot Keel Boat, props and posters from the park, plus ruthlessly organized racks and shelves of Kraft's other collectible obsessions. It's a monument not only to the agent's childhood, but also to his lost brother. "When my brother was dying was when I started collecting games again. It had never struck me to do that but the idea of getting back what I'd

had as a kid, and even more importantly getting what I never had, was a big deal."

Kraft is known for throwing elaborate birthdays each year for himself and his son Nicky, whose birthday is one day from his dad's. Their last one actually resulted in a film that initially just explored the agent's collectibles and home in the vein of the Disneyland promotional films, but as the project developed Kraft found it evolving into a journey of self discovery. "As a movie, staring at somebody else's toys is not that interesting, and Adam Schell, the person making the movie with me kept asking me why I collected this crap, and we realized the story of why this stuff exists is as interesting as the stuff itself. So we edited a movie that ended up being about my obsessions and my relationship with Nicky. I think Nicky was less interesting to me when he was a baby than my collectibles, and somewhere along the line I realized that Nicky was much more interesting."

In its present form Kraft's movie *Finding Kraftland* is hitting festivals in April, including the Oxford Film Festival, Sonoma Film Festival and Newport Beach Film Festival. And ultimately the film's theme is that obsessiveness can be therapeutic if put to the right use. "It's always bothered me that if you're a geek about certain acceptable things it's different—if you're into wine you're not a geek, you're a connoisseur. If you're into food you're a gourmet, if you're into cigars you're an aficionado. When you think about cigars, it has to be just as esoteric and unimportant as *Star Trek*, but the cigar guys get laid more." ■ findingkraftland.com



I find it hard to deal with people who aren't geeks, people who have no passion for anything.

