

# UNRAVELING an enigma

**Steve Jobs:**  
Everyone knew  
the genius, few  
knew the man

**STEVE JOBS**, by Walter Isaacson. Simon & Schuster, 630 pp., \$35

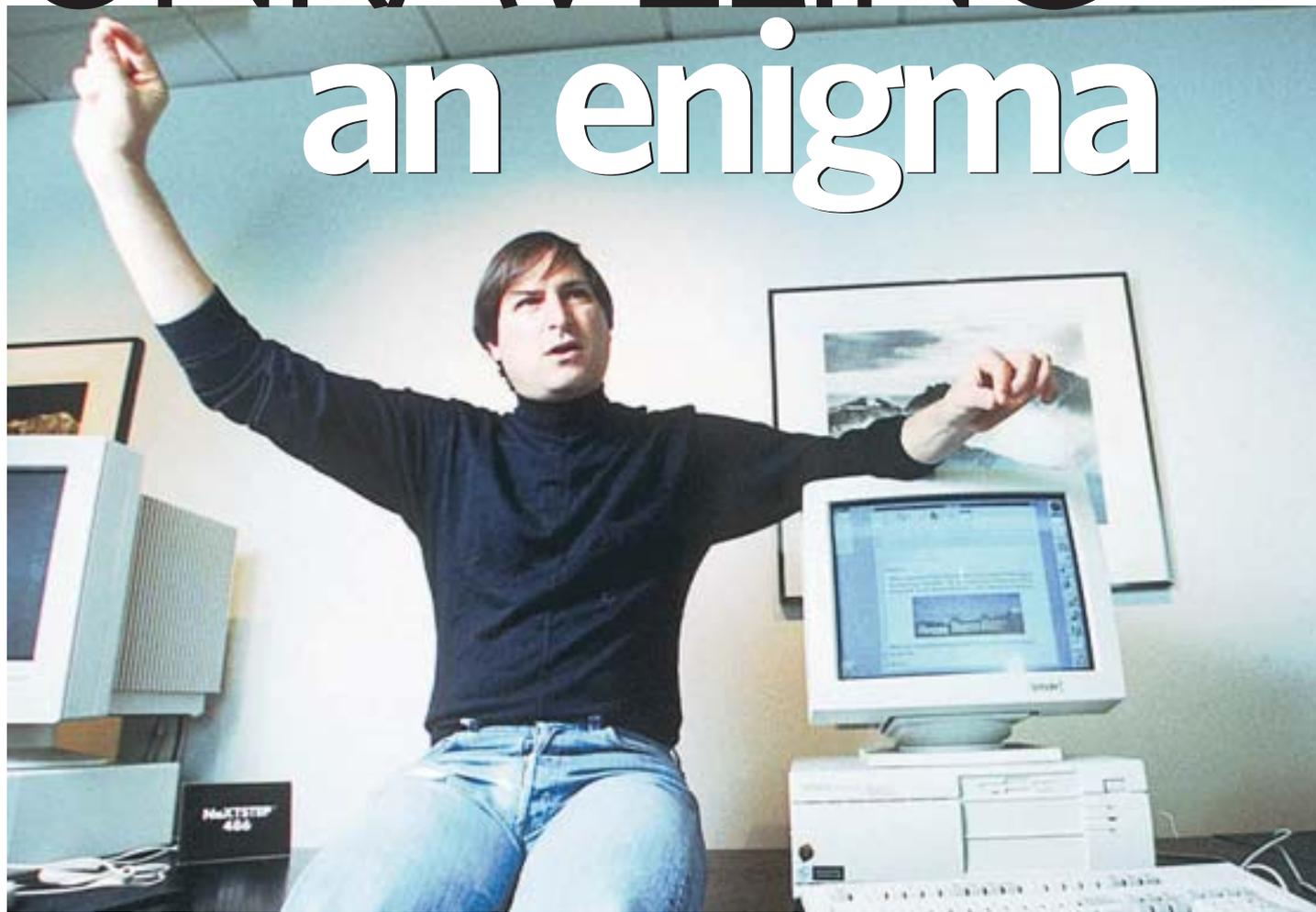
BY MARION WINIK  
Special to Newsday

**A**mid the carpet-bomb-style publicity for Walter Isaacson's new biography of Steve Jobs, it's starting to seem as if Jobs' death earlier this month was just part of the rollout.

That's not as cynical as it sounds. Once you read about Jobs' obsession with product introductions — think of the MacWorld stage shows at which he introduced each member of the Apple family, sequenced with media and ad campaigns that became famous in their own right — you may suspect that he orchestrated the hoo-ha currently in progress. In fact, it was immediately before his secret cancer operation in 2004 that Jobs contacted Isaacson, biographer of Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein, to write about him. Isaacson couldn't help but wonder if Jobs "saw himself as the natural successor in that sequence."

He probably did, and by the end of this book, you may agree. "History will place him in the pantheon right next to Edison and Ford," writes Isaacson. "[H]e made products that were completely innovative, combining the power of poetry and processors."

And yet Steve Jobs was an absolutely confounding person. It is easy to believe Isaacson's assertion that his subject did



Jobs in 1993: "History will place him in the pantheon right next to Edison and Ford," writes his biographer, Walter Isaacson.

not interfere with this thorough, warts-and-all portrayal, shining a laser beam on the soul of a man who was both intuitive genius and perverse loud.

Raised in California's Santa Clara Valley by adoptive parents, Jobs was steeped in the ferment of the 1970s, that strange brew of technological revolution, hacker subculture, psychedelic drugs and Eastern philosophy. With high school buddy Steve Wozniak, he created and sold something called a Blue Box, which allowed users to rip off the

phone company and make free long-distance calls. Soon after, they worked for Atari to develop a one-player version of Pong. (Jobs may have kept an unfair share of the proceeds, according to Wozniak.) After wandering barefoot in India for a year, he returned to found Apple in his parents' garage, using \$1,300 he and Wozniak raised by selling an HP calculator and a VW bus.

A few years later, Apple went public and the nasty hippie was worth \$256 million. The road that takes Jobs

from there to the amazing triumphs of his 40s and 50s — the iPod, iPhone, iPad and Apple stores — is the most interesting inside-business story you will ever read. The seductions, betrayals and other machinations between Jobs and people like John Sculley, Bill Gates and Michael Eisner are fascinating. More important, the story of how Jobs personally — and Apple as a company — tanked before rising from the ashes is one that every young entrepreneur and midlife stall-out needs to hear.

Jobs' perfectionism and mania for control could be sublime — or ridiculous. At one point, he calls his friend Bono in a fury because an engineer has defected from Apple to Palm (Bono is an investor in a group that funded the latter). "You should chill about this," Bono advises. "This is like the Beatles ringing up because Herman and the Hermits have taken one of their road crew." The only downside to the

book's rushed release is that it can't include the worldwide response to Jobs' death, which recalls the reaction to Princess Di's demise but makes more sense. Is there any consumer product more closely identified with a single person? I have worked on Apple computers since 1983, and this review, like many others, I'd venture, is being written on a MacBook Pro — which, like my iPhone, might as well be welded to my body. I won't be the only reader who finds the most heartbreaking moment in the book to be the one where Jobs is wheeled into the Apple offices in August 2011 to tender his resignation.

He was leaving us all.

## 5 things you didn't know about Jobs

- He was a crybaby, bursting into tears when disappointed, frustrated, happy, in business meetings — anytime.
- He advised Bill Clinton to come clean about Monica Lewinsky, though Jobs himself was an inveterate liar with what Trekkies

would call a powerful "reality distortion field."

- He dated Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jennifer Egan when she was an undergraduate at Penn.
- He had serious B.O. ,

believing his vegan diet eliminated the need for personal hygiene.

- He wanted to call the Mac "the Bicycle," but the Apple development team wouldn't let him.

— MARION WINIK

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