

X Charliz Theron

The Powerhouse

X Donna Karan

Style Conscience

X Kathy Griffin

Hell-raiser

X Venus Williams

Pay Crusader

Montgomery McFate

Secret Weapon

Anucha Browne Sanders

Court Warrior



When it comes to killing, "you want somebody who's able to do it but doesn't want to do it."



U.S. troops, guarding the entrance of American offices in Baghdad, argue with ex-Iraqi army protesters in June 2003

ARMY BRAT

How did the child of peace-loving Bay Area parents become the new superstar of national security circles?

By Louisa Kamps



It's a searingly hot, hectic fall afternoon here at the U.S. Army's Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Humvees are rumbling by and helicopters swooping overhead.

But in this dusty, tense, overwhelmingly male environment, nobody commands attention quite like Montgomery McFate. Soldiers scuttling past during combat drills can't resist stealing second and third sheepish glances at this unlikely military adviser, whose chic, close-cropped hair is dyed distinctly non-reg midnight black. Meanwhile, McFate, a wryly alert 42-year-old cultural anthropologist, coolly takes in the action through Chanel sunglasses duct-taped at the temple, one elbow perched on a fence post as she smokes an American Spirit.

With McFate, contradictions abound: She grew up among hippies on a houseboat and married a paratrooper in the Army's

hard-core 82nd Airborne Division. She talks about soldiers with almost religious reverence but ribs military stuffiness on a *Teen Beat*-style blog called *I Luv a Man in a Uniform!* (Sample snippet: "All that muscle! Meeeeeeowow!") She's a liberal Democrat who initially opposed the war in Iraq but is now in the thick of it, teaching grunts on the ground how to better understand the enemy. Oh, and she consults the *I Ching* before making career decisions.

As cocreator of a controversial new Pentagon program that embeds social scientists with soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, McFate is here to help the helpers. Her newest recruits from the world of academia are anthropologists from Columbia and Oxford, and from the look of things, she says, the troops here can use some advice from her "culture and nuance guys," as they're dubbed on the base. Role-playing an encounter in an Afghan village, a flustered young Army captain rushes up to a turbaned man acting the part of the mayor. The story line is that both U.S. soldiers and villagers were wounded in a skirmish with Taliban insurgents, and the captain is telling the mayor why his men were evacuated

first. The captain's error, McFate says, taking a drag on her cigarette and looking just a little bit smug, is that to show proper respect, the soldier should have chatted up the chief of police before even daring to approach the big cheese. His next mistake: When he's spurned, he runs off and retrieves his commander to placate the mayor, which leaves him looking like a schoolboy.

"To influence a population," says Colonel Pete Johnson, who's thrilled, in a brusque, crew-cut way, to have McFate's Human Terrain System (HTS) at his disposal, "you've got to understand the interrelations and the conflicts." Otherwise, he says, "We misdiagnose. There is no cookie cutter for this."

Six years into the war on terror—with enormous violence erupting out of our supposedly swift and decisive invasion of Iraq; U.S. forces stretched to their limits there and in Afghanistan; and, according to intelligence reports, more terrorists itching to harm Americans than before 9/11—many military leaders have tuned in to McFate's "evangelical" belief that gathering "granular" knowledge of local populations is the

best way to stabilize both countries. With General David Petraeus and other military scholars, McFate helped write the Army and Marine Corps' new *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, published last summer by the

University of Chicago Press (more than a million people had already downloaded it off the Internet). The first revision of counterinsurgency strategy in 20 years, the volume is the official playbook behind the "surge." Stressing nation-building and protecting civilians, it has quickly translated into a new drive to restore infrastructure, health care, and education in Iraq and Afghanistan, a program McFate's scholars are trained to assist. The long-term hope for this style of counterinsurgency—often called, however counterintuitively, a "kinder, gentler war"—is that it will reduce the social unrest that breeds terrorism in the first place.

Soon, McFate may broaden her portfolio: She's been in discussions with the Department of Homeland Security about using her cultural know-how to help disrupt terrorist

the boat was never hooked to the city sewer system while McFate was there. Her dad lived down the shore in a tinfoil shack. When McFate was 10, he committed suicide by, as she's said, "rather flamboyantly" throwing himself off the Golden Gate Bridge.

In a 2006 *New Yorker* story, McFate was quoted saying, "only half-joking," that she decided to join the war effort "[b]ecause I'm engaged in a massive act of rebellion against my hippie parents." Yet for all her flippant comments about her girlhood, she avoids discussing it in any detail, perhaps understandably. Mitzy's best friend since third grade and her fellow teenage punk-rock devotee, *New York Times* style writer Cintra Wilson, helps to fill in some of the blanks. "Academia has been her Beatrice through hell her whole life," says Wilson, with whom McFate did homework in bus shelters because they were quieter than the barge. "Her mother was a sweet woman but not a terrific parent. Mitzy was always extremely self-directed—and just brilliant. All the accolades and points and favors she got always came through learning." On McFate's first day at UC-Berkeley, her mother died suddenly of a stroke. She finished the semester, earning a B-plus average; when I ask how she managed that, McFate, holding in a mouthful of smoke, shakes her head, like she herself has no idea. She exhales, then says quietly, "You just keep going."

McFate first became intrigued by "how people legitimate their use of violence" dur-

How to...
Save the World

Samantha Power,
human-rights champion



Samantha Power is on leave from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government to serve as an adviser to Barack Obama. The 37-year-old author of the award-winning *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* has also just published her second 500-plus-page book, *Chasing the Flame: Sergio Vieira de Mello and the Fight to Save the World*, about the charismatic Brazilian-born United Nations peacemaker who died in the first major suicide bombing in Baghdad in 2003.—BEN DICKINSON

Individually

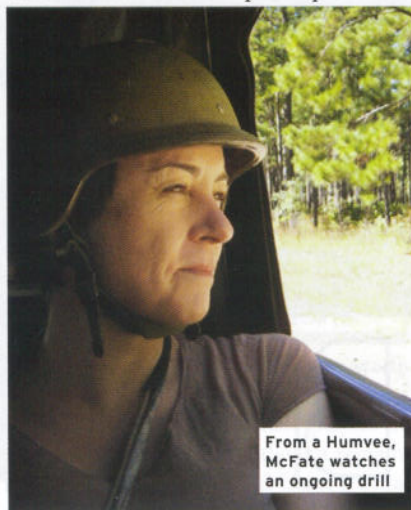
"Part of what Sergio's life teaches us is that we need more Sergios—people who are self-critical, who care about dignity, who are patient, who are humble, who know something about other places. I'm not saying that if we had a million of those people operating around the world, somehow we'd become peaceful and happy overnight—but our odds would improve."

Collectively

"If we put dignity in place of democracy-promotion, it would inspire democracy in certain places and place a check on some of our worst excesses in fighting terrorism—for example, we might have thought twice before setting up Guantanamo or using torture....Broken people and broken places are where the threats lie, and if we're serious about global stability and American security, we've got to go where the breaks are. That doesn't mean we go alone, and God knows it doesn't mean we go militarily. But those places have to be the subject of our concern."

Globally

"When it comes to dealing with problems, America is all for teamwork—but we want to be team captain. We've got to become team players to gain the respect of our teammates. With the rise of China and the resurgence of Russia, there's a lot that Americans aren't really prepared for. Now's the time to play by the rules, to change the rules in some cases—but change them now, while we're a leading superpower. If we want China to play by them, we're going to have to get used to playing by them ourselves. That's another tough conversation our leaders need to have with us."



From a Humvee, McFate watches an ongoing drill

"I've been accused of prostituting the science...and being fat."

cells operating in the United States. How this unconventional, audacious, self-described "fire-starter" even got a foot in the door of the national security complex is a story in itself. "She's very intrepid," says Jacki Lyden, a National Public Radio reporter and friend of McFate's. "For a funky, feisty woman like her to come from the outside and get as far as she has with the military is fascinating."

McFate's parents were Frances Poynter, an artist who hung out with Jack Kerouac and carved "pseudo-Polynesian sculptures that she sold to Trader Vic's," and Martin Curlough, a Marine who came home from the Korean War on a mental-health discharge. They divorced when she was two, and "Mitzy" McFate lived with her mother on a discarded WWII ammunition barge. When in the early '70s there was a move to gentrify their dock, the houseboat denizens rioted against the local police, successfully—

ing a course on the rhetoric of terrorism. This led her to Yale, where, after studying the Irish Republican Army and the British counterinsurgency in Ireland, she earned her PhD (on full scholarship) with a dissertation examining how cultural narratives, handed down from generation to generation, contribute to war. Turned off by the insularity of academia and hoping law would let her indulge her passion for solving "nonlinear puzzles," McFate enrolled at Harvard Law School. After graduation, she worked for several months as a litigator in San Francisco. Then, walking to work one day with a cappuccino—feeling every bit the yuppie cliché—she spotted an old boyfriend who was living in his car. (Like other friends McFate knew from the local music scene, this man went on to die young himself, of a cause she's never learned.) Overwhelmed by the "archaeological strata" of heavy

Clockwise from top left: courtesy of Samantha Power; courtesy of Montgomery McFate; Martin Poole/Getty Images

Beer: courtesy of Comedy Central

memories that being back in her hometown uncovered, she quit the law firm and joined her husband, Sean, in Germany, on the military base where he was posted soon after they married in 1997. Sean McFate (a bit of a contradiction in terms himself: Since leaving the Army, he has earned a master's from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, worked for Amnesty International and a defense contractor, and blogs about opera in his spare time) once told a San Francisco newspaper that, after hanging out with him for three years in Germany, his wife "spoke and understood Army."

Following a round-the-world trip on which they stopped in Hanoi to see John McCain's POW cell, the McFates returned to the States in 2000 and settled in Washing-

ton, DC. Montgomery was already homing in on what she wanted to do: Help the U.S. military—stuck in a Cold War mentality of fighting big, obvious enemies with overwhelming force—get back to investigating the social origins of guerrilla movements. This was a sore subject post-Vietnam, but with Islamic extremism on the rise, she wasn't the only one who thought it was important to understand why people turn to violent revolt. September 11 cemented McFate's conviction, and shortly thereafter—having long since shed her nose ring, realizing "there were certain semiotic cues" that would unnerve "paranoid old white men," as Wilson puts it—McFate got a fellowship at the Office of Naval Research. There, she initiated a project interviewing soldiers and Marines returning from war in 2003. Repeatedly she heard stories of startling ill-preparedness, from working with old data that showed 12 tribes in a region when there turned out to be 83, to, as one Marine Corps general recounted, arriving in Afghanistan with no one in his unit speaking a word of Pashtu. (Fortunately, the ship's cook spoke it; "without him," the general told McFate, "the entire mission would have failed.") This got McFate thinking, Boy, if we can send a man to the moon, why can't we fix this problem? At first, she and colleagues created a laptop database, but feedback from commanders was "nice doorstop." The Department of Defense (DoD) is filled with "tool-building monkeys," she says. "But soldiers already have too many technological tools." What they needed was human expertise, what

she calls an "angel on their shoulders" to advise them 24/7. Her idea to put social scientists alongside troops wasn't an easy sell within the DoD. McFate jokes that she had to put on her "Hillary Clinton" business suit and individually brief each one of its 30,000 employees. "In the Pentagon, there are a lot of different tribes, you can believe it," she says in anthropological. She managed to hook up with a network of like-minded people by drawing on a lesson she learned from punk rock—"irony and playfulness," not just "anger and negativity," can lead to creative change. And actually, she says, grinning, the spirit of "insurgency about counterinsurgency" that she stirred up at the Pentagon mimics the rebelliousness of San Francisco's punk-rock

“These guys know you're not going to win with a bullet. You're going to win with a kiss.”

crowd. "People dress differently in the military, but they're not all that different." Retired Admiral Jay Cohen, McFate's boss at the naval office and now an undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security, is an ardent admirer and himself a reminder that the military is full of people who fly against the tamped-down, talking-point-addicted stereotype. "The greatest leaders, the greatest tacticians, like Napoleon and MacArthur, are able to figuratively leave their body and look down on the bigger picture," Cohen says. "Montgomery [can] go to that ethereal place where your mind and dreams are stretched, and she also has the ability to get down and jive," or translate counterinsurgency theory for callow soldiers. "I enjoy her intellect, her enthusiasm—and her naïveté that by our efforts we can make a difference." Watching McFate navigate Fort Polk is indeed fascinating. With a young female guard who nervously admires her hair, she commiserates over the humidity and recommends her favorite pomade. With soldiers of every rank, after a quick glance to decipher their patches, she addresses them by their official titles—as in, Master Sergeant Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Jones. Now and then, she can't resist tweaking the pious adoration that so often hovers around soldiers, even among themselves. Last winter, she wrote on her blog, as she recaps now, "Why is David Petraeus so totally hot?... Is it because he's one of the most powerful men in the world? No! It's because he has excellent posture." When a heavily

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How to... Ask Anybody Anything

Samantha Bee, *Daily Show* correspondent



Samantha Bee walks like a reporter. She talks like a reporter. She has shiny hair, wears boxy shoulder pads, makes laser-pointer eye contact. She'll cock her head, raise an eyebrow, and overannunciate a singsong word like "Real-ly?!" with such incredulity, you'd swear the future of investigative journalism is safe in her hands. Only, she's faking it. As the lone female correspondent on *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*, Bee has no qualms looking a U.S. Marine sergeant square in the eye and asking, "How do you know I'm not an insurgent? Would you have to search me with your big dirty meat paws?" When met with military-grade silence, she giggles and says, "You're funny. We should get an iced coffee after this." Bee, who has a two-year-old daughter with husband and fellow *Daily Show* correspondent Jason Jones, gives up the jig long enough to explain how she fires off questions that mostly sound like she's making good on a double-dog dare. —RACHEL ROSENBLIT

ELLE: You'll ask anybody anything. Do subjects ever walk out during an interview?

SB: Nobody ever does. I think people have an appreciation for how bad they will look if they walk away—because there's that lingering moment when they're awkwardly pulling at the wires of their microphone.

ELLE: What do you do when an interview subject just won't bite?

SB: That definitely happens. Nobody is ever expecting the questions we deliver—we inundate them with every ridiculous thing we can think of—so even the most straight-up professional can be thrown. Interviews constantly go awry.

ELLE: How do you rein it back in?

SB: You have to guide the subject where you want to go or go with them where they want to go. It's not easy, but I try to take it really seriously—because if I start cracking up, it's going to take 10 times longer.

ELLE: Do you get anxious before interviews?

SB: Totally! When I'm putting on my powder, I'm like, "Oh, my God, what am I doing? This person is going to punch me!"

ELLE: So where do you get the nerve?

SB: You know when you're driving your car, and you're about to execute a maneuver that seems dangerous but you go for it anyway? You feel this heavy feeling down in your vagina just for a second, but you take a deep breath and press the gas pedal and go? That's how I feel, pretty much every time. I know it's going to be a good question if I feel it in my vagina. I swear to God that I get this little "Oh, no!"—and then I press the gas and see what happens.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR

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the oozing and crusting of the recovery had been for her. But still, she said I'd regret it if I didn't do it. The lines would only worsen. I wouldn't want to go back for another surgery. So, before going under anesthesia, I abided the echo of her last words: "Get it over with, Daughter!"

"There must be drugs in the cookies," Brandt's chubby-lobed patient said. "I keep coming back here. You just want more."

But there was little else Brandt could do, since her previous visit only a few months earlier had involved a major renovation, from scalp to neckline, requiring so many syringes that the total cost could have bought a car, she said (well, maybe just a used one). And judging by her face, which looked round, smooth, and 10 years younger than her age, she'd gotten her money's worth.

"Look again!" she insisted. "Should I add more to my lips?"

"No!" Brandt, the daughter, and I cried out in unison.

"Can you lift up my brow?" the mother asked.

"I've already done that," Brandt said.

"Shoot me some more," she begged. "How could you be finished so soon?"

Brandt didn't answer. Defeated, the mother offered up her daughter.

The fact that the mother had confessed to jonesing for still more sticks made me question her motives. Perhaps they were less pure than I had thought. Maybe the psychodynamic I was witnessing was that of a mother looking for a Dina Lohan-like vicarious thrill.

"Show him the crease," the mother said.

The daughter pointed to a small horizontal line under her left eye.

"It's a sleep line," was Brandt's diagnosis. "Botox won't work. If you fill in a fine line with collagen, it'll only last a few months. It's not worth it."

"How about her bunny lines?" the mother pressed on. She was pushing hard now, referring to the barely visible diagonal wrinkles at the top of her daughter's nose that came from squinting in the sun.

"No one sees them but you," Brandt says.

"She definitely needs her 11s injected," the mother said stiffly.

Brandt took a look at the daughter's "11s," the two parallel lines between her eyebrows that came from frowning.

"Those I can inject," he conceded.

With that, the mother catapulted herself from the examining chair, grabbed two fistfuls of gauze pads from the counter, and, waving them like a pair of pom poms, cheered, "B-O-T-O-X! Go, Botox! Go!"

The Primal Scene

Being a terminal narcissist, I could only remain behind the mirror for so long. After a whole morning of watching Brandt's Manhattan patients getting poked and plumped, stuck and smoothed, I was wracked with envy. So, during my lunch, I raced upstairs to dermatologist Roy Geronemus (he's in the same building as Brandt) and had him laser away all the broken capillaries on my face. Brandt was too booked to zap me—besides, I was supposed to be "working for" him! It just wouldn't have been professional. Still, I just had to get in on

all the action I was witnessing.

Then, at Brandt's Miami office, I greedily accepted Lady Germaine's offer to analyze my complexion. The results confirmed that my face was almost wrinkle-free (the needles, the lasers, the peels, the creams—all working! Yippee!), but the UV damage beneath the surface (otherwise known as the biological half-life of adolescent sunbathing with an aluminum-wrapped album cover during the '70s) was so severe that I wanted to check myself into a crypt. Permanently.

The Visia results left me with no choice: On my way home, the minute the airplane began its descent into LaGuardia I flipped open my cell phone, shrugging off a flight attendant who furiously tapped at my shoulder, insisting that I was interfering with the navigation system. How could that matter, now that I knew of the latent wrinkling I was facing?

Because Brandt wasn't due in town for another two weeks—a duration seemingly so interminable that the mere thought of it caused me to hyperventilate in a brown paper lunch bag—I once again yielded to my inner Hester Prynne and made an appointment with another dermatologist, my longtime friend David Colbert, MD. The time had come for Fraxel laser treatments, the last hope for the hopelessly sun-damaged, or so I've been told—and, more importantly, want to believe.

Because really, to believe, no matter how blindly, is the fundamental trait of the cosmetic dermatology client: She believes that looking younger will make her feel better about herself; that her boosted self-confidence, plus the luster of her cosmeceutically infused skin, will sustain her sexual desirability; that lip plumpers aren't just an antidote to shriveling up in old age but an affirmation of life and a subconscious (okay, maybe not so sub) denial of death, especially when a bright lipstick is applied.

Of course, the "she" I'm speaking of is me. But when I held up the looking glass to the women in Dr. Brandt's office, their reflections (no matter the postprocedural bleeding, bruising, and swelling) bore an unmistakably beatific expression.

That said, I've got to tell you a truth you might not want to hear: All this talk about "maintenance" is pure dissimulation. Honestly, I have never reached a point where my pursuit of being bright-eyed and pink-cheeked has leveled off. No matter what I do to myself, or how much I have done, the five or 10 years that a dermatologist initially succeeds in sloughing off will come back in proportion to my increasing age. The climb just keeps getting steeper, the comeliness harder to reach.

But what's the alternative? To pull a Greta Garbo, becoming a recluse at 36, leaving the world an illusion of eternal pulchritude but never getting out of your pj's? Better to coat all the mirrors in the house with Vaseline and cover the lightbulbs, Blanche DuBois-style, with paper lanterns (pink ones are the most flattering, should you need to know).

I refuse to buy into growing old gracefully, whether in hiding or in plain sight. My mother is my inspiration: At 71, she has pledged to stick with Brandt until the day she needs a walker and is too frail to maneuver it through his office door. As her daughter, I am adding a codicil to my living will: Skip the DNR and send me out, instead, on a final Botox Bender. ●

ARMY BRAT

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decorated general arrives for a visit and many, many boots suddenly go thumping in his direction, she rolls her eyes at this "rock-star-itis." More often, though, McFate sincerely tells me how much she respects the politeness and competency service breeds. "These guys are so dedicated, so smart, and they try so hard. They're Americans, you know? To be an American is to believe in some fairly simple yet difficult-to-attain virtues: freedom, fairness, patriotism, rendering assistance when it's required. You may think they're deluded, but more than anything, these guys want to win, and they know you're not going to win with a bullet—you're going to win with a kiss. They're trying so hard to learn a new way to fight in the middle of a war."

These days, nothing provokes McFate's own pugnaciousness like anthropologists who think her angel-on-the-shoulder, "win with a kiss" rhetoric is nonsense—and that cozing up with the military is her own weird way of working out issues with her bohemian upbringing. "I've been accused of prostituting the science. I've been accused of being in this for the money. I've been accused of being unethical. I've been accused of being stupid. I've been accused of being fat—all kinds of things," McFate says, her normally low-key patter sharpening. It's true that these charges have all been made on Savage Minds and other blogs where anthropologists go to blow steam—with, yes, sometimes surprising savagery—and that the American Anthropological Association has issued a statement disapproving of the Human Terrain Teams (HTT).

But it's also true that McFate has a knack for inflaming the debate she sits atop, giving as good as she gets. With bile that Rush Limbaugh would admire, she charges that these "Ivory Tower academics" are unduly "concerned with keeping their hands clean," that they're just trying to claim "a political and moral higher ground." Defending her choice to work with armed forces to *The Wall Street Journal* last summer, she suggested that her brand of in-the-system activism was better than "waving a big sign outside the Pentagon saying 'You suck.'" At the anthropological group's 2006 meeting, after George Mason University professor Hugh Gusterson disparaged McFate in a talk, she reportedly approached him and whispered in his ear, "Hugh, I know why you're so cruel to me. It's because you want me." (Though this story has "spread like wildfire in the community," one anthropologist told me, McFate insists she merely said, "You must have a crush on me, Hugh, if you're this mean to me.")

Anthropology, as McFate well knows, is a discipline struggling with its own identity. As funding for long-term study of indigenous cultures dwindles, anthropologists are increasingly taking their research skills to corporations, foundations, and government, where they're largely free (unlike doctors and lawyers, who need licenses to ply their trades) to operate by whatever ethical codes they choose. Even academic anthropologists realize that in this Internet age there's something poignantly antique about their desire to control how their scholarship is applied. So it's tempting to write off their objections as the embittered gnashing of "a moribund discipline" that, in fact, has a long history of engagement with the military, as McFate says. (Anthropology's embarrassing nickname—"the handmaid of colonialism"—springs from the British

government's practice, starting in the early twentieth century, of using ethnographic research to stabilize occupied African colonies.) One irate anthropologist floats the perfectly unprovable theory that the Pentagon positions McFate as a bad girl to give that square (okay, pentagonal) institution fresh street cred to counter acute war fatigue. Others tell me, with audible sniffs, that anthropologists who join human terrain teams aren't smart enough to hack it in academia, or they're just doing it for money (which at \$100,000 a year is quite good, especially compared with the measly sums beginning professors command).

Yet some concerns anthropologists raise about McFate—about the risks her program poses for civilians in war zones and for the field's reputation as a whole—do give one pause. Catherine Lutz, a Brown University anthropology professor who helped start a petition against projects like McFate's, says it's "very seductive" to want to serve the humanitarian aspects of counterinsurgency: to listen to the Iraqis' hearts and minds, to help armed forces deliver school supplies and vaccinations. But those who buy that by bringing scholars into the war we're somehow "fighting smarter" are "extremely nearsighted," she says. That's because, in her opinion, the Bush administration's real reason for invading Iraq was to secure long-term access to the country's oil; the professed interest in exploring the souls of the people is just a "PR line" to pretty up the picture for an enduring occupation, she says. "There is no evidence [the human terrain program] does anything but prolong the war, and to the extent that it prolongs the war even a day, it creates more deaths."

Another petition author, David Price, an associate professor of anthropology at Saint Martin's University in Washington, has written extensively about the history of anthropologists' engagement with the military, for better and worse. He tells me that HTT members wearing uniforms—and carrying guns if they choose—inevitably create a coercive dynamic in which ordinary Iraqis and Afghans will feel pressured to speak. Anthropologists also know from previous experience that cultural knowledge is not always used benignly in battle, most egregiously during the Vietnam War, when U.S. Special Forces employed social science research to identify and assassinate suspected Viet Cong sympathizers. Fast-forward 46 years, and Price says that while HTTs are supposedly all about the "soft," nation-building aspects of counterinsurgency, there is always the danger that their information can cross over to the "hard" side of the effort. To wit, anthropologists could end up helping the military figure out who's against us—at worst, help soldiers "delinate who should be a target."

When I meet with McFate in DC in early December, she's just back from South Africa, where Sean was delivering a paper at a security conference, and she's still jet-lagged. She takes me to a restaurant near her apartment in Adams Morgan where transvestites suddenly bust out of the back room for a long, loud floor show. She forgot all about this Sunday brunch spectacular, she says with a Cheshire smile. Could she have chosen this discombobulating spot because I told her up front that I had some tough questions? Nah, not Mitzy.

Back at her apartment—a series of elegant rooms decorated with antiques; Persian and

Afghan rugs; and a select few artifacts from her past, including a gorgeous, glowing red glass ship's lamp from the boat on which she grew up—we finally begin. McFate tells me the decision to put scholars in uniform was made out of concern for their safety. (Since Western civilians have become high-value targets for insurgents, the uniforms are "discouragement to the sniper.") Sure, she shrugs, the military garb might compel people to speak to her teams, but she insists that by this time Iraqis and Afghans are so accustomed to the military that they can distinguish who wants to sit and chat from who has deadlier business in mind.

Maybe so. As for the risk that the academics might actually get ordinary people killed, McFate denied "vehemently" to *The New York Times* that her teams contribute to intelligence-gathering—tagging insurgents for elimination, that is. She has also told me repeatedly that one U.S. commander in Afghanistan says the HTT embedded in his unit last spring (there are now nine in Iraq and two in Afghanistan) helped reduce combat operations by 60 percent, with military and civilian deaths dropping correspondingly. To me, however, she admits that control is not perfect. Yes, the data her teams collect go "into the intelligence lane, the logistics lane," she says, with rising irritation, but that's better than the alternative. "If you're sitting in your little office, at your little university, what opportunity do you have to influence how the brigade does business? Absolutely none!... Not that I'm advocating taking over countries, but that's the situation we find ourselves in now, and to pretend otherwise is to hide your head under a blanket and say, 'Naanananana.'"

If an anthropologist discovers that someone is, say, working with the Taliban planting roadside bombs, he or she will work with soldiers to see if the insurgent can be persuaded to come over to the other side: "Why is this person a member of the Taliban? Are they ideologically committed?" McFate says, ticking off the kinds of questions her people will explore. "Are they doing it because their family is threatened? Do they need the money?" Commanders are increasingly willing to consider options other than elimination because they now appreciate that when the military offs one guy, it's likely to trigger a chain of killings—on both sides.

As we run through the battery of charges leveled at her (Price, for instance, has accused McFate of plagiarizing portions of her chapter in the counterinsurgency manual; but she included footnotes—it was her editors who decided to cut them), McFate sinks down in her seat. "I'm tired of it. I'm trying to be honest, and I'm trying to be fair. But it's very alarming to suddenly find you're a public figure, and people expect you should do this and that," she says, looking genuinely whipped. After McFate says she's finished for the day, I speak with Sean, who's taking a break from writing in his office. A brawny, thoughtful guy, he takes up where his wife left off. The anthropologists' uproar over the HTTs is "a proxy for their antiwar sentiments," he says, "which, ironically, [Mitzy and I] share."

The real issue is that for all her subtlety of mind, McFate can't seem to grasp that *anybody* could fail to see the wisdom of embedding scholars with soldiers. If her at times bitter incredulosity toward her opponents weren't so deeply felt, it might, in fact, seem disingenuous. "In Washington," says Jacki Lyden, "for every position, there's an opposite. One has to hold back a

little of oneself. It's that old saw: 'If you can't take the heat, don't stand in the kitchen.'"

The next morning, I meet McFate for coffee at Starbucks and—perhaps after a good night's sleep—she seems less defensive and more reflective. When I ask what really explains her military calling, she pauses. "I guess in some ways it was my father's having lost his mind after the Korean War," she says, for the first time seeming willing to earnestly grapple with her family's legacy. His death, she says, prodded her to want to reduce "the deep personal consequences" for "individuals in extreme situations that involve violence." Marrying a soldier was another push factor, she says. "In the best relationships, you incorporate the experiences of people you love."

McFate also says something that may explain why she's so quick to draw bright lines around who's with her and who's against her. "My father died when I was very young. My mom was an iconoclastic artist," she says. There is pride in her voice when she talks of the person her mother was, yet "she was disengaged," McFate says, undoubtedly putting it kindly. And so, she continues, "I think it's very important that the people you love stand with you rather than outside. What really matters is that the people you respect and love respect and admire you—that matters much more than public approbation."

McFate tells me her greatest hope for teaching soldiers to study culture now is that one day, when they're military leaders—and, who knows, maybe even defense secretaries—they'll "fully comprehend" the costs of going to war before they plunge in. "If they don't, that's a failure of the American political and executive system," she says, though she cops to the "sad fact" that we often haven't learned from history: "These mistakes have been made by the U.S. again and again and again."

Whether the Human Terrain System will succeed in the near term depends on many things—including Americans' will for committing troops to the painstaking work of counterinsurgency (lo so many years after "Mission Accomplished"), as well as how closely our leaders decide to heed the message of people who, in Iraq at least, are telling pollsters they want us out. Skeptics in the DoD also need to continue to be convinced that the "culture and nuance" corps is worth its price (to date, it has cost American taxpayers close to \$60 million), and, of course, McFate will need to keep drawing on her diplomatic skills, not to mention her charm. Because if any anthro-embeds come forth to describe moral dilemmas they couldn't stomach, you can bet her opponents will spread the bad news far and wide.

Part of me wishes I could come at this thorny debate from the side, tackle it, and take it apart to clarify absolutely where the clearest voices of conscience lie. But I can't, and I'm not sure anybody can just yet. As Jay Cohen notes, "Montgomery at this point in her life is an applied pragmatist, as opposed to a theoretical idealist. There is no right or wrong. These are shades of gray, and there are roles for all these different attitudes."

What does seem indisputable, however, is that the passions underlying McFate's, her allies', and her opponents' arguments all stem from essentially the same place: a deep, collective well of shame over the havoc we wreaked going to war as hubristically unprepared as we were. Since then, many of us have been too complacent, confused, or frightened to voice our

anger and sorrow over the violence that has been perpetrated in our names. At times, the storm raging in the anthropology world can seem like a tempest in a teapot. But for all its aching, groaning, vivid feeling, I think we owe McFate—and her sworn enemies—a debt of gratitude for refusing to go gently forth. ●

GAME ON

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not to appeal, the Garden continues to call the jury verdict a “travesty of justice,” and Thomas, through his publicist, suggests that Anucha’s story was impossible: He’d spent maybe two or three hours with her since he joined the Knicks.

It was Dolan, while aboard the company helicopter, who gave the order to fire Anucha, later saying that she’d been dismissed for tampering with the internal inquiry of her complaint. One piece of indisputable evidence weakened Anucha’s credibility, and it had nothing to do with her on-the-job behavior: From 2001 to 2004, she made false statements to the IRS regarding various deductions, her explanation being that she’d failed to check her accountant’s work.

One of the most incendiary moments in the case came when it was revealed, in a deposition, that Thomas said that he wouldn’t stand for a white man calling a black woman a “bitch.” As for whether it bothered him for a black man to do the same? “Not as much,” Thomas answered. “I’m sorry to say, I do make a distinction.” (During the actual trial, he amended that to say it was “very offensive for any man—black, white, green, or purple—to call a woman a ‘bitch.’”)

Race played an important, though rarely overtly discussed role in *Browne Sanders v. MSG*—as did class, which is not unusual in sexual harassment cases. African-American women file a disproportionate number of claims with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, for example, though studies suggest that typically the plaintiffs are blue- or pink-collar workers. In this instance, race, class, and gender tensions intersected more subtly.

By her own and others’ accounts, Anucha is like her parents: no-nonsense and strong-willed. “I would never say I wasn’t tough,” says Anucha, describing her demeanor at work. “We had high standards for people; my management had high standards for me. It was a tough business environment, but it wasn’t mean.”

Anucha certainly felt free to briskly chide me when she thought I was asking a silly question, and her assistant Brown and fellow executive Nix, while calling her an “outstanding leader,” allowed that her directness rubbed some the wrong way. “She carries herself with confidence, and [colleagues] sometimes misinterpreted that as her being stuck-up,” Brown said. “Basically, if she asked them for a document, and they came to her with half a document and she asked for the whole thing, they took that personally.”

The substance of the conflict between Anucha and Thomas was that she expected him to participate in the marketing program, and he—who, it must be said, was under incredible pressure to improve the (still) frightfully bad Knicks—wasn’t interested. The match seemed

to have been lit when Anucha kept pushing Thomas, when she wasn’t blown back by his profanity-laden tirades. “He can’t in his mind get along with Anucha, because here’s someone who’s not only an equal but in some respects needs to dictate what he does,” says George Washington University law professor Tanya Hernandez, who closely followed the case. Hernandez also wonders if Anucha, with her proper speech and bearing, at some level embodied for Thomas a “white corporate presence” that rankled or intimidated him. Once, Anucha testified, when she reminded Thomas that the league required the team to hold certain events for season-ticket holders, he replied, “Bitch, I don’t give a fuck about the season subscribers. I don’t give a fuck about these white people.”

To prove that Thomas comported himself admirably with women, the Knicks put team doctor Lisa Callahan on the stand to state that she’d never had any conflicts with him. But Callahan was Thomas’ clear subordinate (he hired her), and he was likely to deem an African-American woman tall enough to look him in the eye as far more “emasculating” than a petite white physician, Hernandez believes. “He seemed to buy into the myth that successful black women take something away from black men,” she says, especially those black women who supposedly “act white.”

As far as Anucha knows, she was the highest-ranking African-American woman Thomas had ever worked with (her closest equivalent was a black female vice president whose tenure at the Pacers coincided with Thomas’). Moreover, Anucha said, “Many of the women he’s interacted with in his basketball career were there for a very different reason.” To put it less delicately, professional sports is a world of highest-testosterone men, and basketball, in particular, is known for the groupies who trail players from city to city. Part of NBA training for rookies has been to teach them to inspect condoms proffered by bedmates, lest a woman has pricked a rubber in hopes of scoring a baby. (Which is reminiscent of something else Anucha said when she was telling me and her fellow alumnae about her new job with the Knicks: Right off, she’d noticed how inappropriately some of the female office workers were dressed. Work isn’t a “bootie call,” she said, grinning, adding that she intended to correct the matter.)

Nix summed up the situation between Anucha and Thomas this way: “Because he’s an NBA All-Star and champion, probably every woman he’s ever come across has bowed down to him. He ran into someone who couldn’t care less about who he was.” Seven months after confirming Anucha’s version of events in a deposition, Nix’s contract was not renewed by the Knicks. He’d been with them for 15 years.

Perhaps the two most entrenched popular assumptions about sexual harassment are that cases are always based on a male boss’s campaign to get a female employee into bed, and that the law, as it has developed in the past two decades, has sucked the life out of the office: These days, men are afraid to joke around with women, act too friendly, or even compliment a female coworker on her nice new dress.

As for the first, Anucha says she has no idea whether Thomas actually wanted to sleep with her: “All I know is that I was thinking how uncomfortable this man made me.”

It could be, Hernandez says, that when, at the Christmas party, Thomas got a glimpse of Anucha outside of marketing meetings, he was impressed—as in, “Man, that girl can shoot.” (The male/female protagonists in *Love & Basketball*, by the way, are both top-notch college prospects who, among other things, play strip one-on-one with a Nerf hoop.) Or it could be that Anucha’s prowess in his sport gave Thomas another reason to want to put her in her place. “You find this in field after field,” says Yale law professor Vicki Schultz. “When women try to compete in professions dominated by men, some men can’t stand it—to them, their jobs represent their manliness, and they’re threatened when women can do those same jobs and do them well.”

In other words, sometimes men chat up women because they want to get physical with them; sometimes they just want to humiliate or manipulate them. Whether Thomas was besotted with Anucha, unnerved by her, or both, my friend’s comment during dinner revealed a kind of blinkered sexism: Even studly athletes hit on women who “don’t look like Beyoncé,” as Anucha says.

Schultz, having reviewed hundreds of sexual harassment cases, says that Thomas may have given Anucha a legal gift when he used female-specific sexual invective (“bitch” and “ho,” rather than “asshole,” for instance) and, in particular, started coming on to her. Traditionally, the courts have tended to rule more in favor of women who have been the subject of explicitly sexual treatment rather than discriminatory conduct that doesn’t seem motivated by lust (to give a few examples, putting rats in the lunch box of a newly hired female coworker, refusing to show her the ropes, or shoving a file cabinet at her as a “joke”). Schultz has criticized this legal reasoning, arguing that it misses the equally discriminatory “microlevel interactions designed to undermine a woman’s competence,” such as “denigration, exclusion, isolation, [and] work sabotage.”

Which brings us back to the notion that many workplaces have become almost ridiculously desexualized. Feminist law professor that she is, Schultz believes that this “sanitization” has occurred, for several reasons. For one, liability-phobic companies have overreacted to the courts’ tendency to consider sexual conduct as “real” sexual harassment. For another, rigid regulation of sexual behavior jibes neatly with age-old management philosophies about how to get the most out of workers. “[It was] twentieth-century organization men,” Schultz writes, “who took the lead in creating the asexual imperative: men like Frederick Winslow Taylor, who saw managers as rational ‘heads’ who would control the unruly ‘hands’ and irrational ‘hearts’ of those...in the modern organization.”

Though corporate harassment policies are still fixated on proper touch and talk, Schultz says, courts have begun to more deeply probe the gender-discriminatory context, or lack thereof, in which sexual behavior occurs: How many female workers are there overall? Do women hold powerful positions? Are training and promotions doled out equally? The more women working somewhere, the more “power they have to shape the uses to which sexual conduct is put and to set limits on acceptable behavior,” Schultz observes, which is why sexual jokes can mean an entirely different thing (and may not merit a legal claim) to the mostly female staff