

**The**  
**Chris Farley**  
**SHOW**

**A BIOGRAPHY IN THREE ACTS**

**Tom Farley, Jr.**  
**and Tanner Colby**

VIKING



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*For my brother, whom I love and miss;  
my dad, who gave us all he had to give;  
my kids, Mary Kate, Emma, and Tommy,  
the most inspiring, funny, caring, and wonderful kids anyone could have;  
and most important,  
my wife and deepest friend, Laura, whom I love with all my heart  
For Gus, a great writer of stories and chapter books*

---

Nothing you can make that can't be made,  
No one you can save that can't be saved,  
Nothing you can do, but you can learn how to be you in time.  
It's easy.  
All you need is love.

—**JOHN LENNON/PAUL MCCARTNEY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Irish brothers share one of the strangest relationships on earth. We fight like hell among ourselves on a daily basis, but one word or action against one brother brings the wrath of God down upon you from the others. That was Chris and me. We were always competing, whether it was driveway basketball, touch football, or Monopoly. Most of the time, those games would end in a brawl. Nothing blood on your mind you. Drawing blood would bring the fury of Mom or Dad down on all of us. No, most of the time we'd strike a few blows and then run like hell. And let me tell you, nothing was more terrifying than being chased through the neighborhood by a crazy, mad Irish sibling who outweighed you by twenty-five pounds and had a brick in his hand!

But rare was the time that I wouldn't come running if Chris was in trouble. I was the older brother, that was my job. And, Chris being Chris, it was a job that put me in harm's way more times than I would have liked. One such time, when I was in eighth grade and Chris was in sixth, he got into a fight with a classmate. He tackled the kid and threw him to the ground, landing on top of him and breaking his collarbone. Word got around school that the kid's seventh-grade brother was gunning for Chris. Naturally, I had to step in. I put the word out that the brother would have to get through me first. I found out later that day that the kid's brother was named Rocky. No shit: Rocky! The guy was massive (a future all-city lineman in high school, no less). No fight ensued, but I did learn that I possessed a real gift of what the Irish call "the gab." I talked my way out of it. It was my only defense, without which Chris would have certainly gotten me killed several times over. Life with Chris was exciting; he brought drama and danger into our lives. But no matter what he put you through, he could always just give you a look and make you laugh. Boy, did he make us laugh.

We always loved to tell "Chris stories." I've heard them from friends, relatives, teachers, coaches—even priests and nuns. You could be the funniest guy in the room just by describing some of the stuff Chris did. For every hilarious thing he did on camera, there were twenty things he did offscreen that just blew it away. He lived to make others laugh, and he was fearless about it. In the years since Chris passed away, there have been countless times when Chris's buddies would find themselves huddled together, sharing these crazy stories. At one time, I even thought that a collection of those stories would make a fantastic book. I still do. But I now believe that those funny stories alone would not paint the right picture of who this kid was. Chris had far too much depth and way too much pain. We all enjoyed Chris so much, and it's hard to put those things into words.

I began this project by listing all the people who either knew Chris the best or were there at the important moments in his life. I spoke to most of them and gave them assurances that this was a project that our family was behind all the way. I wanted them to be open and honest about their memories, opinions, and feelings about being part of what, for most, was an unforgettable relationship. I'm not sure I was totally prepared for the story that Tanner and I ended up with. The funny stories and outrageous moments are definitely in there, but what emerged was this amazing picture of the multifaceted character traits that Chris possessed. He was hilarious, yes, but he was also a very religious, very caring—and very troubled and addicted person. It's a sad story, no question about it. But it's Chris.

Soon after Chris died, I told my wife that my greatest fear was being sixty years old and trying hard to remember this kid who was my brother. I guess anyone who's lost someone close can say that. Being able to watch the fun movies and video clips only gets you so far; it's not the full picture. I'

pleased that this book will be something I can pick up when I'm older, remember Chris and his wife, and be once more amazed that I had such an unbelievable person in my life.

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# ACT I

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## CHAPTER 1

### A Motivated Speaker

**MIKE CLEARY**, friend, Edgewood High School:

*Freshman year of college we're heading out on a road trip to Milwaukee to see a big game. We're in the car. We've got the fifth of vodka, the gallon of orange juice. We're ready to get loaded and party. Just as we start to drive, Chris says, "Stop!"*

*We stop the car, and he pulls out a rosary. We have to sit there in the car and say one decade of the rosary—ten Hail Marys and an Our Father—before we can leave. Then he balls the rosary up in his hand, tosses it in the glove compartment, slams it shut, looks at all of us, and says, "Well, it's in God's hands now." And we hit the road.*

On June 24, 1994, life for Chris Farley was good. He had just finished his fourth season on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* and was coming into his own as one of the most promising stars in American comedy. As the earnest, sad-sack Chippendales dancer and the swaggering, van-dwelling Motivation Speaker, Chris was bringing a kind of energy and anarchy to the show not seen since its seventies heyday. Dana Carvey, Mike Myers, and Phil Hartman were stepping down as the show's reliable go-to players, and Chris was leading the charge—alongside Adam Sandler, Tim Meadows, David Spade, and Rob Schneider—in the next cycle of revitalizing and redefining the late-night institution for a new generation. Chris was also about to take on his first starring role in a feature film, *Tommy Boy*. The following year, *Tommy Boy* would open at the top of the North American box office and solidify Chris's status as a bankable movie star.

From his very first days onstage—starting in plays at summer camp and eventually at Chicago's Second City—Chris had possessed a singular talent for capturing and relating to an audience. In the words of *SNL* creator Lorne Michaels, "People liked Chris Farley, they trusted Chris Farley, and they thought they knew Chris Farley." In his lifetime, that likability translated to a huge following on television and three straight number one box-office hits. And since his death at the age of thirty-three, Chris's appeal persists. In the past ten years, *Saturday Night Live's Best of Chris Farley* DVD has sold over a million copies, making it the second-best-selling title in the show's entire history. *Tommy Boy*, for its part, has gone on to become one of Paramount Studios' top-selling DVDs of all time.

But Chris's success had not come easily. His rise at *SNL* had been marred by a constant struggle with alcohol and drug addiction. High school and college drinking had given way, eventually, to cocaine and heroin use. Through the intervention of friends and family, Chris had attempted several different recovery programs, all of them eventually ineffective.

But on June 24, 1994, Chris was clean and sober and standing onstage in a large auditorium at Hazelden, a nationally renowned drug rehabilitation facility in Center City, Minnesota. Chris had visited Hazelden twice before, both times as a rather unwilling and uncooperative resident. This time he walked through its doors of his own free will, as a guest, invited to share his recovery experience with other addicts struggling in their own battles with the disease.

Chris's presence filled the auditorium; he knew how to work a room. Only this time, abandoning his popular, manic persona, he held the audience captive by simply standing at center stage and speaking in calm, measured tones. It was a Chris Farley that only a handful of close friends and family

members ever knew. Dressed in a blue button-down shirt and stone-colored khakis, he paced a small circle, nervously fidgeting with his hands and running them through his slicked-back hair. At no point did he fall down or remove his pants. And there, alone on the stage that day with no crazy characters to hide behind, no wild-man stunts to impress, Chris gave a “motivational speech” quite unlike anything he’d ever delivered on television.

## CHRIS FARLEY:

Good to be here. Um, pretty nervous. I was here a couple times, so I know what it’s like to be sitting where you are, full of fear and anxiety. Kinda how I’m feeling tonight! Heh heh heh!

Anyhoo.

I’m supposed to share my experience, strength, and hope with you, and so I’ll start. I remember my first drink. I was seventeen years old, almost eighteen. My friend Patrick was a year above me and I admired him quite a bit, looked up to him. He was a great football player, all-state and everything like that. I went to a party with him one night. We went down in the basement. The guys started drinking and they went, “C’mon and take a drink, Chris.”

So I took a shot, and I remember going, “Man, this sucks. I can’t believe you do this.”

“Just take it down like medicine,” they said.

So I wolfed down about ten of ’em, no problem. And I remember hearing stuff like, “Man, I thought he was wild before, and now he’s *really* gonna be a *wild* man!”

So that kind of planted in my cranium what I’d always wanted, and that was to fit in, or to be like everyone. Everyone seemed to love it. When I went upstairs, I remember the girls were like, “Great! Chris *finally!*”

And I was like, “Yeah! Maybe I’ll even get a chick now!”

So that night I got blind drunk and threw up in my bed. Then I called Patrick the next day and said, “Man, this was great! When are we gonna do it again?” And I got blind drunk every weekend until I graduated high school.

Then I went on to college at Marquette University. I was away from home and that meant I could party every night. I did. Each year I got worse and worse. Freshman year I’d party Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Sophomore year it’d be Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then it started on Tuesdays, and by the time I was a senior it was every night.

Every drug that I tried I couldn’t wait to try more. Sophomore year I tried marijuana and fell completely in love with it. I went home and watched *Love Connection* and was like, “Oooooohhhh man...” You know? I couldn’t understand why everyone wasn’t getting high. It was the best way to live. My God, how boring it must be for you poor sober people. So I got high every day from that day on. I’d try psychedelics and I’d have a really bad trip and still couldn’t wait to do it again. “Maybe this one’ll be different.” And that was the way it was. I just wanted to escape.

And so I remember reading about John Belushi in the book *Wired*. A lot of people read *Wired* and I thought, “Man, that poor guy! I never wanna do drugs again!” But I was like, “Yeah! If that’s what it takes, I wanna do it!” ’Cause I wanted to be like him in every way, like all those guys from that show. I thought that’s what you had to do.

When I got outta school, I didn't know what I was gonna do with my life. I knew I didn't have much in the grades department, and so I was very fearful. A whole lot of fear. I remember drinking was the only time I felt, you know, good. I went and worked for my dad after school. I'd show up late and stuff like that. He was the boss, and so I was his screw-up son. I didn't get in too much trouble. He'd let me slide.

The one thing I knew was that I wanted to go into acting. I went down to Chicago to try to go into a place called Second City. I auditioned for that and got in pretty quickly, but I couldn't stop partying. They gave me a warning: "If you do it again, we're gonna kick you off the main stage."

I wanted to continue performing, so I only got high for the performance, on marijuana. The next day afterward I couldn't wait to get ripped. I remember one time my director was giving me notes, and I drank a pint of Bacardi in about ten minutes, before he was done talking. He asked me a question, and I was slurring my words. He said, "Oh, you're no good. I'll talk to you tomorrow." But it was kind of tolerated. My lifestyle cradled it, because I didn't have to wake up in the morning. I could get blind drunk every night, and that's what I did.

Then I went to New York and started working on *Saturday Night Live*. That was, I thought, a dream come true. I'd read all about my idols and how they partied back then. I thought, man, this is gonna be great! I am gonna get *ripped*!

Well, that just wasn't the case. It wasn't hip anymore. I stuck out like a sore thumb, taking my clothes off at parties and making a fool of myself, which I had learned to do pretty good because I thought people would like me. Nobody's afraid of the fool. "Hi! C'mon, idiot! C'mon aboard!" I was totally full of fear. I'd do anything for you to like me, including doing things that I didn't want to do. As long as I had my substance, I was okay.

I went back to Second City after my first year on *Saturday Night Live* and took a bunch of acid and cocaine and a ton of liquor and went onstage and made a complete ass of myself. They booed. I remember during a blackout between scenes someone yelled, "Get the drunk off the stage!" That kind of rang true.

I had to cover my ass so they'd hire me back at *SNL* again next year. So I came here to the Shoemaker Unit at Hazelden. I hated every minute of it. I complied and kissed ass until the counselor went home and then screwed around and tried to make everybody on the unit laugh, and didn't take me serious one bit. Got outta there and thought I was cured. "All right, I did twenty-eight days sober, no problem."

So I got outta here, didn't go to meetings, didn't get a sponsor, didn't do anything that they told me to. And guess what? I got back to New York and started doing a lot of drugs. I thought, if I don't drink in front of people, they're not gonna know I'm high. I thought I was fooling everyone, and I was fooling no one.

That Christmas, after a real bad bender, my apartment was just totally ripped out. I'd ripped apart the drawers, everything was on the floor, because I'd been looking for something. "Oh, what's this? Is this in here? No?" *Crash!* "Where's this?! What's that?! Oh fuck!" So Christmas, coming home to surprise my parents, what a lovely gift I was. They put me in a detox for a couple of days.

The whole rest of that season I did the outpatient thing, which was a complete joke. I would comply with them and say, "I'm really trying hard." Meanwhile I always had a thing of urine in my pocket just in case they tested me. God, what an ass, asking my friends for their urine. "Kevin, yeah, you got that uh, urine?" Jesus. Everyone knew I was using. I just remember a horrible dismay. I was crying all the

time, because I could not stop. I couldn't imagine a life with sobriety, because drugs and alcohol were the only thing that was my friend. I knew I was in trouble.

I came back to Shoemaker. I decided to make sure they *knew* that I was trying. "By God, I'm your boy, boss. I'm *trying*. Pluggin' away!" So I screwed around and complied in treatment again, and didn't take it serious. I wasn't listening, and that's what you gotta do about this disease, because it's hell to stop.

I got outta there thinkin' I was cured. La di da! Didn't last even as long as I did the first time out, and by that time I had almost thrown in the towel. I went out to California to do some work the next summer. I got into another rehab out there. It was like every time I turned around I was in friggin' rehab. God, it sucks! But I kinda started takin' this one serious, because I was like, "I don't want to come back here, man." The door was open just a little bit. I was sick of using, and I knew I was gonna be fired very soon. I didn't want that because *SNL* was everything I'd worked for.

They told me to go to Fellowship New York, a halfway house that had just opened. So I went there, and this time I was gonna finish it, you know, give it a real shot. I was frightened of going to recovery meetings. Because what if I couldn't do it? That's what would really suck.

I was glad to be sober, but after ninety days people weren't patting me on the back anymore, saying "Good job on that sobriety! Go get 'em!" People just expected it. And why shouldn't they expect me to be sober? I'm working for them. But I wanted the pats on the back, and they weren't doing that.

That ninety-day mark was a real tough one for me. After a bad day at read-through, the writer didn't write me into the show, and I was going back and forth. I used. I did five bags of heroin. Then I came back and told my boss. I thought if I was honest with him, you know? That's another manipulating tool. "I'm being honest with you, so you won't fire me, right? Because I'm *trying*. Can you see I'm trying?" All that bullshit.

So, I lost my job for about a week. I kept begging and crying, the same manipulative things. Finally he gave me my job back, but he sent me to this place in Alabama, which was kind of like a boot camp. It was exactly what I needed, a good kick in the rear end. They told me stuff like "You're arrogant. You're complying." They made me cry every single day. They'd say that if you pick up drugs and alcohol, you're a baby. I didn't like to be called a baby. I didn't like to be called arrogant. I didn't like to be called all those things that I was.

It was around Christmas time, too. Man, what a horrible place to be over Christmas, you know? Hearing "Have yourself a merry little Christmas . . ." when I'm in a stinky hospital ward. But I did things in this treatment that I didn't do before, like making sure I made my bed every day. I practiced what I would be doing on the outside. I prayed to God in the morning to please keep me sober that day, and then I'd thank Him for keeping me sober every night.

So I got outta that thing in Alabama. I got a sponsor. I got a home group. I was reading from the Bible. Book. I went to a morning meeting every day at seven-thirty. I got involved, because I know I can stay sober without these things, without going one hundred percent. But I can stay sober when I do. And sobriety's good, man. Sobriety's not carrying around urine jars—that's a real treat. It's not waking up in a horrible apartment with everything broken in it. I have a nice apartment now that's been taken care of. I make my bed every day. I do the things that I did in treatment. I have a very healthy fear of getting high, and I have to take it serious, man. Because if I don't, I'm gonna use, and I can't use again. I hate that shit. God, I hate it. I hate being a slave to that shit.

The ninety-day mark was a real kicker for me, again. I remember it was on St. Patrick's Day. I liked

to have an icy cold Guinness on St. Patrick's Day. I'm Irish! I have to drink, right? And I remember ~~pacing back and forth in the rain outside a bar, crying. I was so scared, and I was just crying and crying and praying to God to help me. Then I stopped. I remembered that I don't have to drink.~~ called the halfway house, went to a meeting, and I did what I had to do. And today I have one year, six months, and six days. That's the most time I've ever had. And I can do this. I know I can do it.

We all can do it.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Madison, Wisconsin

**GREG MEYER**, friend:

*We were all sitting in the library one afternoon—me, Chris, Dan Healy, Mike Cleary, a bunch of guys. We're sitting at this table, and Chris is just cracking us up. Finally, he gets up to go to class, and as he's leaving somebody says, "He's going to be on Saturday Night Live."*

*Everyone at the table just nodded. "Definitely."*

Chris Farley's grandfather Donald Stephen Farley worked as an executive with the A&P supermarket company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He lost everything he had in the 1930s Depression and returned to his family's home in Madison, Wisconsin. There he joined his brothers in a hardware business that sold machine parts and services. One of those services was laying asphalt roads, a lucrative field in the booming infrastructure build-out following World War II. Hanging out the shingle as Farley Oil, the brothers bought and sold road-paving contracts. They were middlemen and salesmen. They bid on contracts with state and county officials and in turn brokered the services of the crews that laid the actual roads.

Donald's son Tom Farley, the second-youngest of six, applied for a special driver's license and began driving for the family business at the age of fourteen. Later, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he discovered his calling in the game of politics. He soon found himself president of the campus Young Republicans and a frequent dinner guest of Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy.

During his senior year, Tom met Mary Anne Crosby, the daughter of an established Boston family and a student at Marymount College. Upon graduation, he moved back to Madison to attend law school at the University of Wisconsin, the first step in his plans to seek a career in law and a future in elected office. Mary Anne followed him to the Midwest, and they married in 1959.

The following year, Donald Farley suffered two massive heart attacks. He could no longer run the family business or support a family. With two parents, several siblings, a wife, and a new daughter depending on him, Tom had little choice. With only one year of law school remaining, he quit, shelved his dreams, and for the next thirty years plowed his expensive East Coast education and considerable personal charm into selling asphalt.

He sold a lot of it.

As a partner in Farley Oil—and later owner of his own company, Scotch Oil—Tom Farley was very successful. He became well known across the state, thriving in a business run entirely on his boisterous laugh and hearty handshake. His success gave him the means to provide for his family, which in the Irish Catholic tradition would soon grow quite large. Tom and Mary Anne's daughter Barbara, was born in 1960; Tom Jr. a year after that. Two years later, on February 15, 1964, at 3:30 P.M., Mary Anne gave birth to her second son, Christopher Crosby Farley. He weighed eight pounds and fifteen ounces. Next came Kevin Farley in 1965, and then finally John, the youngest, in 1968.

Although Tom Farley, Sr., had grown up in a middle-class pocket of Madison proper, when it came time to make a home of his own, he moved to the Village of Maple Bluff. Maple Bluff was, and is, an idyllic slice of affluent twentieth-century suburbia. Clustered on the eastern shore of Madison's Lake

Mendota, it is home to the governor's executive mansion as well as the stately residence of one Oscar Mayer, proprietor of a local luncheon meat and hot dog concern. There, among Maple Bluff tree-canopied lanes and rolling green lawns, Tom and Mary Anne raised their children. Over the next fifteen years they lived in four different homes, each one bigger than the one before. The last had a commanding lake-front view. Growing up, Chris would lack for little in the way of material comfort. The Farleys lived well. On paper, at least, it looked like the American Dream.

### **TOM FARLEY, brother:**

When Chris came along, my grandmother insisted that my mom wasn't going to be able to handle three kids at once, so this Spanish woman came to help the family. My first memory is this woman coming into our lives because of Chris. I always remember that Chris got special attention.

### **KEVIN FARLEY, brother:**

Maple Bluff was a great neighborhood. We were always outside playing, jumping in the leaves, riding our bikes, like kids do.

Chris was always popular, right off the bat. He always wanted to start up a game, get everyone together. We'd play kick the can or ghost in the graveyard, which was what we called hide-and-seek. I was the shy kid, and I was amazed at how he could make friends so easily. We changed schools a good bit, but no matter what school Chris went to, he always instantly had a new group of friends. Making people laugh was just instinctive. And also he looked to Dad. Dad was very outgoing. My parents always had parties, were very involved in the community. A lot of that carried over for Chris.

What I remember most from the earliest years are the Christmases we used to have. That was always a big event. Whenever the relatives came over we were sort of made to dress up and look nice, basically put on a show for the rest of the family, talking to all the aunts and uncles. Dad insisted on that.

### **TOM FARLEY:**

It's been explained to me by more than a few therapists that we exhibited a typical Irish Family Syndrome. The father is the bullhorn and the head of the family, but not really the head of the family. It's really the mother who keeps everything together, and Mom always did. Our life was straight out of *Angela's Ashes*, only, you know, with plenty of money. Dad always drove the big Cadillac. We were certainly well off by Wisconsin standards, or at least gave the impression that we were. There was a point when we were all taken out of the parochial schools and sent to public schools for a year. Dad had some excuse that, looking back, didn't really hold water. But this was 1974, and Dad was in the construction business. He'd had a bad year and couldn't keep up with the tuition. But he always kept up appearances that everything was fine.

## KEVIN FARLEY:

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Dad loved politics. He ran for school board at one point, but didn't win. That was probably because I had all his kids in private school. They sort of hammered him on that. But we went out and put up signs for the race. Dad joined the board for Maple Bluff. It was a subdivision, but it had its own councils and so on. He enjoyed that immensely. He was a conservative man, politically, and very civic-minded.

## TOM FARLEY:

Dad's voice was a sonic boom. All he'd say was, "*It's time to go to mass! Everybody in the car!*" and you'd scramble like it was a DEFCON 4 siren from the Strategic Air Command. You didn't want to get on his bad side. He was very lenient, but with four hyperactive boys, somebody's got to crack the whip sometimes. And when the whip would crack, it would crack hard.

## KEVIN FARLEY:

He was very strict, but if you could get a laugh out of him, you were okay. And Chris knew that. One time Chris walked into Mrs. Jennings's class at Edgewood Grade School and said, "Excuse me, Mrs. Jennings, where do I 'shit' down?"

She hit the roof and called my dad in for a conference. She told him what happened, and said Chris needed to be suspended. Chris was like, "I didn't say it, honest."

And Dad said, "Well, Chris says he didn't say that. And if my son says he didn't do it, then I believe him. You must have heard him wrong."

So she backed down. Then, on the way home, Dad turned to Chris and went, "You said it, didn't you?"

"Yeah."

"I knew it."

They both had a laugh over it, and that was it. He knew Chris had done it, but it was okay to laugh as long as nobody got hurt. Those kinds of incidents cropped up all the time.

As strict as Dad could be, when he decided it was time to have fun, it was time to have fun. We would pile into the station wagon and go shopping or out to mass. Sometimes we'd go out to the apple orchards to pick apples. The church bazaars my dad loved. He'd come in and say, "There's a church bazaar out in Lodi!"

And we'd go, "Aw, jeez . . ."

And then we'd all get in the car and go all the way out to Lodi for homemade pies and such at the bazaar out in a farm field somewhere. The rituals of our house when we were young all centered around the family. There was never a time when we wanted to rebel and get away from it.

## JOHN FARLEY, brother:

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Family dinners were very important. We had a dinner bell. Anything we were doing anywhere in the neighborhood, we could hear this giant bell outside our kitchen. We'd stop what we were doing—setting fires, whatever—our heads would pop up like deer and we'd run home.

There were actually two bells. There was our dinner bell at six-thirty, and there was also a giant whistle that would blow through the entire neighborhood at five o'clock. It wasn't from a factory. It wasn't the emergency broadcast system. It was just a whistle that the town of Maple Bluff had. Why it went off every day at five we still don't know. We assumed it meant it was time for all the families to start their cocktail hour.

## KEVIN FARLEY:

Other than family, the one thing that was important to my parents was education, in particular Catholic education. Some parents are really hard on good grades, but our parents cared more that we learned how to be good people, that we had big hearts and were kind. I don't know of any better guy in the world than my dad, just in terms of being a strong, moral person. He always stressed that in us.

## TOM FARLEY:

If Dad instilled anything in Chris it was this love of the underdog, for the kid that's getting picked on. If we were driving down the road and you made a joke about some strange-looking homeless person sitting out on the sidewalk, man, he'd lock those brakes up and the hand would come back. You didn't dare do that.

My dad was very Catholic, and in Catholicism that whole idea of right and wrong, good and evil was very important. Chris was very aware of that from an early age. It all stemmed from *The Exorcist*. The mere fact that we'd seen that movie brought the devil into our house, and that started this whole superstition in Chris, not just of good and evil, but the literal, physical devil. He and I shared a bedroom for a time, and he was next to the closet; that just freaked the hell out of him. "Tommy, we gotta change beds," he'd say. "Tommy, please. The devil's in the closet."

## KEVIN FARLEY:

Every night for months after *The Exorcist* came out, he'd just show up in our room with a sleeping bag and crash on the floor between Johnny and me. It was sort of an unspoken thing. If you asked him why, he'd say, "Shut up, okay? I'm just sleeping here." Chris was afraid of the dark, and he hated sleeping alone.

He was a very spiritual person, instinctively spiritual, and he'd always talk about it, so much so that he'd scare the crap out of you. As you grow up, even though you still call the devil by name, you begin to understand him as a spiritual idea, and a lot of people stop believing in the devil altogether, which

of course, is exactly what the devil wants. But Chris, he believed in the devil. He believed in hell, and it scared him.

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## **TOM FARLEY:**

He prayed to St. Michael the Archangel every night, because Michael was the one who'd throw Lucifer out of heaven. It was more superstition than spirituality, to be honest. He read something once about the different ways your shoes land after you take them off means different kinds of luck. If your shoe was to one side, it was bad luck. If it was upright it was good luck, and so on. So every night I'd kick off my shoes, not caring where they landed, and Chris would say, "Tommy, pick up your shoe and set it right."

"No."

"C'mon."

"No."

"Please."

"Do it yourself."

And he'd get out of bed and go and move my shoes; he felt that strongly about it.

## **KEVIN FARLEY:**

Growing up, Chris was wild and crazy and liked to have fun, and Tommy was more reserved. It really reflected, more than anything, the two sides of our dad. Dad would carry himself as this very professional gentleman, but he could also be this boisterous, crazy, laugh-out-loud kind of guy. And Tom and Chris were the two sides of that personality. To the extreme, really. John and I are somewhere in the middle.

## **TOM FARLEY:**

Kevin was very focused, got decent grades. We called him Silent Sam, Steady Eddie. He just did his thing and did it well. John was the gopher. He was so much younger than the rest of us. He was always pleasing people, doing what it took to tag along. Still is to this day. As for myself, I was the brains of the family, which is really kind of sad. But I was Tom Farley, Jr., and everything that that entailed. My dad went to Georgetown, and so from day one the pressure was on me as the oldest son to live up to Dad's expectations.

The expectations for Chris were that there were no expectations. He just kind of marched to his own drummer. One day Chris said, "I want to join the hockey team." The next day he had a brand-new set of hockey gear, never mind that he couldn't really skate that well. So there was full support for him to do whatever he wanted to do, but no real expectation that he should fail or succeed.

Chris and I were always together, but I was trying my best to toe the line and he was effortlessly crossing over the line, trampling it with no consequences; it annoyed the crap out of me. And because he was always so funny, my friends would want him to hang around. I hated that.

## **KEVIN FARLEY:**

What was most important to Chris, really, was that he made people laugh. Chris was always the funny kid. Kids can be pretty mean, and humor was his only weapon, from grade school on. He wanted to be a football player, and that meant being part of the popular crowd. He used his humor to do that.

## **TED DONDANVILLE, friend, Red Arrow Camp:**

I met Chris at summer camp, with all the other brothers. Tom was actually my counselor, and John wound up being my best friend. You didn't forget Chris. Even if I'd never seen him again after camp, I'd remember him. During mass, if the priest made the mistake of asking for audience involvement, Chris was right there. His hand would shoot up, and then he'd figure out whether or not he had something to say.

## **DICK WENZELL, play director, Red Arrow Camp:**

Red Arrow Camp was established in 1922, and was named after the Red Arrow Army, Second Division, from Wisconsin. It had originally been built as a logging camp in the nineteenth century. Some of the cabins date back to that time. It was a resident seven-week camp.

## **TIM HENRY, friend, Red Arrow Camp:**

Chris always had some kind of stunt going. On Sundays they'd load all us Catholic boys into this old school bus and drive us into town. The girls' camps would come to Sunday mass, too. Now, you're never allowed to have candy at camp, but somehow one Sunday Chris has gotten ahold of these white tic tacs. He fills his mouth with them, and he's walking up the aisle for communion so prayerfully, and when he gets in front of the girl campers he rolls his eyes back like he's going to pass out and then he falls and hits his mouth on the side of the bench and spits out all the tic tacs. They go clattering across this wooden bench, and Chris is yelling, "Oh my God! My teeth!" The girls were just aghast. We were all laughing hysterically.

## **HAMILTON DAVIS, friend, Red Arrow Camp:**

It was anything for a laugh, absolutely anything. They gave away all these awards for good behavior.

and accomplishments and such. Chris didn't care.

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## **TOM FARLEY:**

He was our windup toy. You said it. He did it.

## **KEVIN FARLEY:**

He didn't win a lot of the awards, but because he was so funny they'd put him in the camp play, and he was the star. Chris would always credit Dick Wenzell with encouraging that in him.

## **DICK WENZELL:**

Chris was strictly a jock, but he had a lot of charisma. Once I got him onstage, his connection with the audience was unbelievable. Not only could he project to the audience, he could also receive from them. Chris could take whatever the audience gave to him and build on it. He just did it naturally. Visiting parents would comment on how magnetic he was. And this was when he was ten years old.

## **TED DONDANVILLE:**

The camp play was really a bunch of skits strung together. One year they did a takeoff on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and Chris played the villain. When they caught him, he told them they could do what they wanted to him as long as they didn't step on his blue suede shoes. Then he launched into this Elvis impersonation that brought the house down.

## **HAMILTON DAVIS:**

Whatever the story was, they'd just drop him in there. He was such a crowd-pleaser that they didn't even have to have a part for him. Just put him up onstage. One time he did "Hound Dog" dressed up like Miss Piggy.

## **FRED ALBRIGHT, counselor, Red Arrow Camp:**

When people ask "Where did Chris Farley get his start?" I say he got it at Red Arrow Camp. As a kid he was just a miniature version of what he would become. Dick Wenzell used the expression "He was always onstage." And that was the case. A lot of it was a diversion, because down deep Chris was on

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