

**BEN'S BIG BIRTHDAY**  
Inside the party

**CELEBS AND THE BLACKOUT**  
Rosie to the rescue

**BRITNEY & CAMERON**  
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NOVEMBER 1, 2003

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up front



# Where Were You

INSTEAD OF PANIC, THERE WERE PARTIES—AND PITCHING IN.  
HOW CELEBS AND REGULAR FOLKS COPE WITH THE BLACKOUT OF 2003

Kelly Ripa was on location in Queens shooting scenes for her fall sitcom *Hope & Faith*. Retired maintenance worker Steven Richardson, 59, was being prepped for a liver transplant at a hospital in Detroit. Bob Chiarelli, the mayor of Ottawa, was teeing up on a local golf course. Aretha Franklin was in her hairdresser's chair in Southfield, Mich.,

getting a perm. Then, just after 4 p.m. on Aug. 14, the antiquated electrical grid that stretches across the Great Lakes and Northeast came abruptly unplugged, plunging them—and 50 million others—into darkness.

The Blackout of 2003—the largest power outage in American history—will be infamous for the havoc it wrought



# When the Lights Went Out?

## Hilary Swank

"I thought, 'Wow, what a great moment to take a nap—the phone isn't going to ring,'" says Swank, who lives in downtown Manhattan with husband Chad Lowe. When the sun went down, they had a lucky escape: "We had a friend who had spent a few years building his boat, and he had invited us out on it that night. His boat was powered by a generator and so we had air conditioning and dinner. We were spoiled. We stayed in the boat in the harbor."

## Kelly Ripa

"I walked home in my five-dollar Chinatown slippers that no civilized person should be without," says Ripa, who trekked three hours from a Queens TV studio to her Manhattan home. "What shocked me was the number of people [walking]. It was like a big huge block party. When I got home, we learned that none of our flashlights had batteries!"



## CLEVELAND

"The mood around the hotel was great. Everybody pitched in. Guests stood in the lobby, hung around the restaurant. We provided what food and beverages we could."

—CHET WALKER, a bellman at the Ritz Carlton Hotel



## DETROIT

"He never gave anybody any grief. He gave homeless people food. He gave people bus money. He always did the right thing by the neighborhood, and this is how they repay him."—A police officer speaking of RADWAN AKIL (pictured), manager of a Quik Mart that was one of the few stores looted during the blackout



## BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

"Our clients said they knew we didn't have any power, but they still wanted their hair cut. I said, 'Sure, come on in, but you won't get your hair blown dry.'" —KENNY ZERELLA, owner, Kenny Z Barbershop (snipping Mark Evans, while Debby Strick tends to Jeremy Stewart)

gridlock at failed traffic lights, frayed cell-phone networks, shuttered factories and offices that cost the economy at least \$6 billion. But it will also be remembered for what it did not cause: no real spike in crime, no rioting in the streets and no favoritism. In Manhattan, Hugh Jackman, who had to walk the 40-odd blocks home from a Broadway hall where he was rehearsing the musical *The Boy from Oz* to his Greenwich Village apartment, marveled at the spirit of his fellow Gothamites. "Hugh just kept going on and on, saying, 'My God, New York is so wonderful! They're such survivors!'" says *Oz* director Philip McKinley. "Everyone takes it in stride!"

It wasn't just New Yorkers. In Ottawa, workers at Pure Gelato gave out free treats. In Cleveland, Wal-Mart employees and a hospital lawyer loaded a truck with flashlights, fans and other supplies and headed for the city's University Hospitals, taking an IOU for it all. In Ann Arbor, Mich., 36-year-old hospital courier Robert Moore ditched his car in heavy traffic, borrowed a bike from a friendly store manager and speed-cycled eight miles to deliver blood platelets to doctors at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, which prevented life-threatening complication for a cancer patient. He shrugged it off: "I was just doing my part."

Of course, the news wasn't all good. In Cleveland and Detroit, citizens were without clean drinking water—some for days. Many were trapped in elevators, including Bettie Lloyd, an auditor for Detroit's public schools. Lloyd calmed herself by praying out loud and pacing, used her purse as a pillow, and was finally rescued 19 hours later. And elsewhere in Detroit, Steven Richardson was left to wait for another liver transplant; doctors weren't sure hospital generators would hold out during surgery. "Maybe it wasn't meant to be," he says. When the light returned, millions sighed with relief switched on their air conditioners and vowed to stock up on flashlights and batteries for next time.

Writer: J.D. Heyman Reporters: Ann-Marie Adams, Lisa Arcella, Lorna Grisby, Diane Herbst, Beverly Keel, Molly Lopez, Elizabeth McNeil, Ellen Piliagian, Barbara Sandler, David Searls, Natasha Stoyanoff and Ashley Williams



**BAY RIDGE, BROOKLYN**

"Suddenly, all the lights went out. Of course, we were worried it might have been terrorists at first, but then everyone relaxed a bit. Everyone but me. I couldn't believe this was happening after all of this planning. I cried a lot that day. The cake was melting and my flowers were drooping. But honestly, everyone said they had so much fun and that it was a day they will never forget. I know I certainly won't." —**LORRAINE MURPHY**, a waitress, who wed construction worker Robert Murphy and went through with a candlelight reception for 140

**TIMES SQUARE**

"I don't know if you've ever slept on your back. But it's not the most comfortable position in the world." —tourist **JILL ANSLEY**, San Jose, Calif. (not pictured), who was one of hundreds forced to camp out



**Rosie O'Donnell**

O'Donnell jumped in her power boat and motored around 30 miles down the Hudson River from her home in Nyack, N.Y., to pick up 10 pals stranded in Manhattan and take them back to her place.



**Hugh Jackman**

When the lights went out during a Broadway play rehearsal, Jackman told director Philip McKinley, "Let's keep working." They did, until 7 p.m., when he walked down Eighth Avenue to his Greenwich Village flat.



**Aretha Franklin**

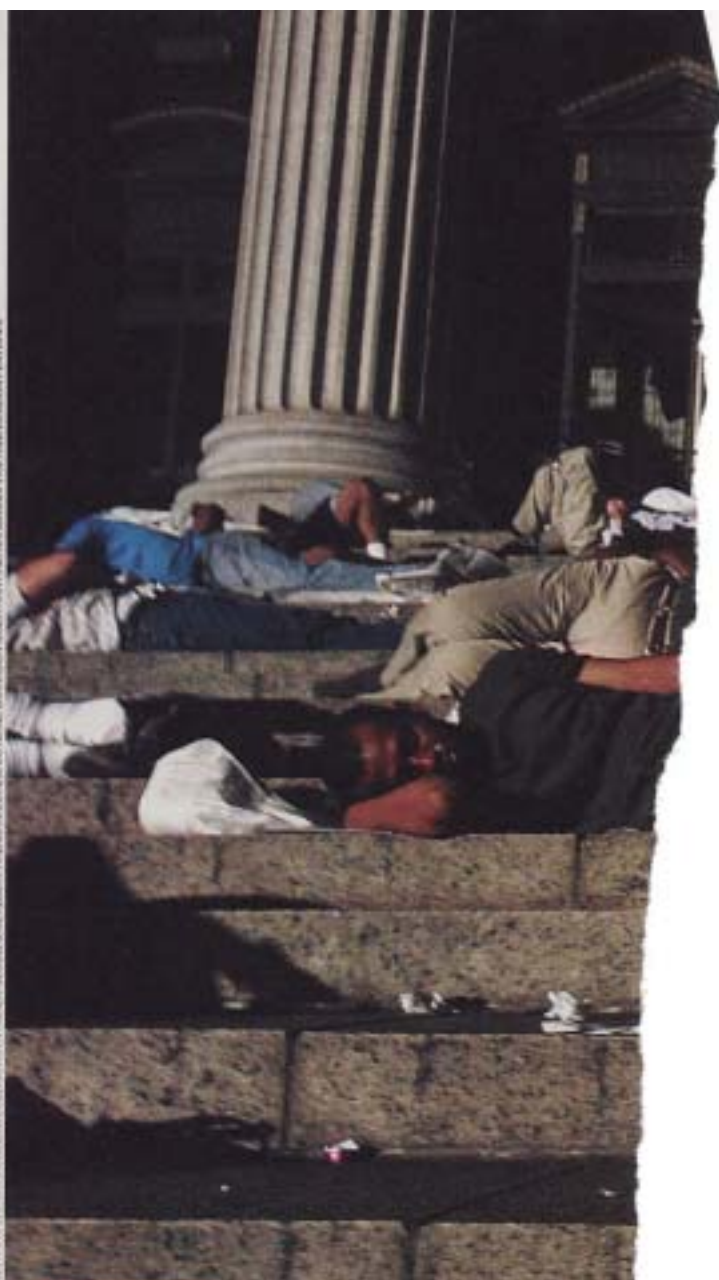
Uncomfortable in her Detroit mansion, Franklin moved into a Westin hotel: "They barbecued everything because there was no power. It was wonderful."

## up front



**BROOKLYN BRIDGE**

"On 9/11, people were in a state of panic. This time people weren't running and they were friendly. A jazz musician was playing a saxophone sitting on a beam. People were stopping and talking and helping each other out." —TOM CALLAHAN, a freelance photographer who crossed the bridge on 9/11 and during the blackout



**MANHATTAN**

"It was a sea of people. There were just thousands of them. But their faces were the same. It was like they were thinking: 'If I can get home, I'd be okay.'" —pastor CARL KEYES of the Glad Tidings Tabernacle church, who gave food and water to commuters on the steps of the Farley Post Office across from Pennsylvania Station

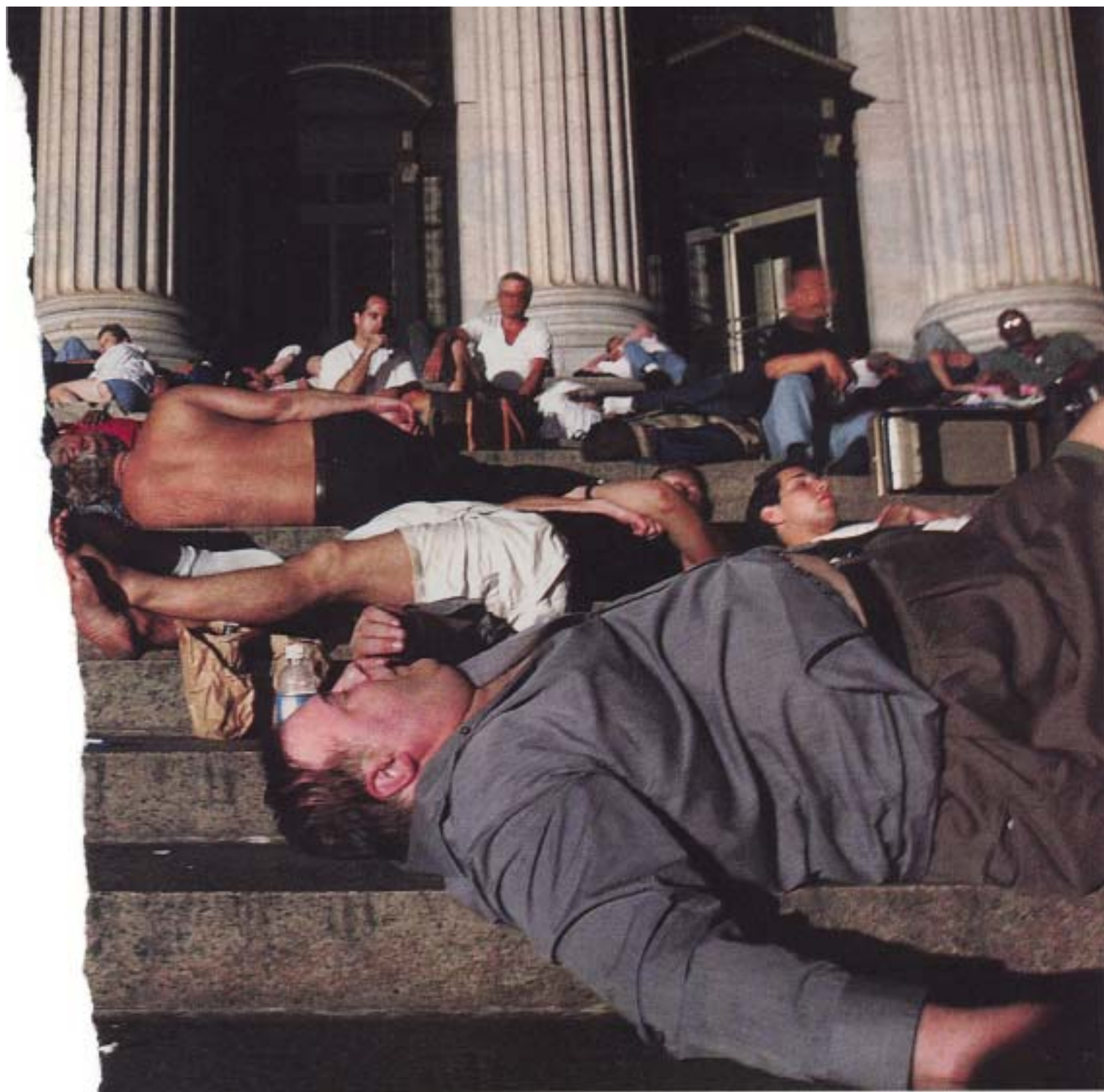
### Brooks & Dunn

The country music duo were in an airplane on a Nashville runway, headed to New York to perform on the *Today* show when they got news of the power outage—but their instruments had already made the trip. "We had a concert in Louisiana on Saturday and everything was in Manhattan," says Ronnie Dunn (right). Eventually he and partner Kix Brooks managed to get the equipment onto a semi headed south. Even so, Dunn is sorry they missed the blackout: "I wish we had been there to see the next day with the sun coming up."



### The Olsen

When the blackout hit their Toronto movie set, "we were right in the middle of a scene," says Mary-Kate. "The cameras went on, and wow, were we nervous—they even wore Better still: So the trailers' air-cooled



**Sean Astin**

"I volunteered for eight hours with an emergency services unit, giving directions and giving old people and children rides to where they were going," says the *Lord of the Rings* star, who was on his way to the airport to catch a flight back to L.A., where he lives, when the power went. "We rescued four people who were stuck in elevators, many who had been stuck two to six hours by the time we got to them. I had a great time with New York's finest."



**Cynthia Nixon**

"We fried up the bacon because we knew that would spoil," says Nixon, who spent the night at home in Manhattan with boyfriend Danny Mozes, daughter Samantha, 6, and son Charles, 8 months. "The kids ate all the yogurt. And then they ate all the ice cream. We had ravioli by candlelight. Then we got out the Beatles songbook and sang a lot of songs because we couldn't watch TV."