

## Junior Barons Go High-Definition

By Rebecca Dana 10/23/06 12:00am

 Twitter
  Facebook
  Reddit
  StumbleUpon
  Email
  Print



When Timothy Sykes arrived for lunch at the Spotted Pig on Oct. 15—his sixth visit to the West Village gastro-pub in as many days—he was still a little drunk from the night before. Mr. Sykes is 25, a multimillionaire and the manager of his own hedge fund. He had been out until 6 a.m., he explained, dancing with some models at Tenjune.

“I really wanted to be sober for this,” he said, ruefully but not apologetically, a black baseball cap from his brokerage house pulled low over his eyes. Why? “I’m attention-starved. I really love talking about myself.”

Mr. Sykes is the star of *Wall Street Warriors*, a documentary series premiering Oct. 22 on INHD, a little-seen high-definition cable network targeted at the sort of people who, like Mr. Sykes,

keep HDTV’s in their \$4,200-a-month apartments downtown. (Our hero also keeps a friend in his apartment, a younger banker who cooks, cleans, pays him \$1,000 a month in rent and whom he playfully calls “the butler.”) There are 21 million American homes with high-definition televisions, if not also with butlers.

*Wall Street Warriors* follows Mr. Sykes and a dozen other modern-day Batemans through the colorful world of high finance. Painstakingly subtle, the series avoids any Mark Burnett–style reality-show flourishes yet doesn’t do much to spare its subjects from themselves. The result is a devastating study of extravagance, aspiration and inanity—a bonfire of the vain.

In one typical scene, Alex Gerchik, a Russian émigré who dreamed of coming to the United States to work on Wall Street, is driving his young son Mitchel to school. Mitchel, squirming in the backseat, manages to articulate the strange value system of *Wall Street Warriors*:

Father: “You wanna be like daddy, a day trader?”

Son: “Yeah, I want a million dollars.”

Father: “You want a million dollars? That’s a good one. How about two million?”

Son: “Uh oh. Five million!”

Other episodes feature late-night drinking and business-card-swapping functions at various embassies and midtown bars, as well as plenty of tense exchanges on the trading floor—all magnified to a pore-diving 1080i resolution.

“There are some stressful moments for these people, and we love capturing that in high definition,” said In Demand Networks executive vice president of programming David Asch. “Stress comes across much better in H.D.”

*Wall Street Warriors* is the newest addition to an INHD lineup called MOJO, which launched in June. The premise, according to the INHD marketing department, is a “recalibration of masculinity” for those stressed-out members of the nation’s top income brackets.

Over the summer, the network commissioned an in-depth study of its target audience. The resultant online survey of 1,000 men, aged 25 to 54 and with incomes over \$50,000, found that these gentlemen are not

### NEXT ON OBSERVER

The Belfer Declaration

### CONNECT WITH NEW YORK OBSERVER

Enter your email for updates

SIG

Send an anonymous tip

S

### POPULAR ON THE OBSERVER

The Chain Gang: Django Unchained

New York Media Power Couples: T Varsity Lineup and the Incoming CI

The Crispy Crimes of Guy Fieri: Ju Food T.V. Star Takes Times Square

Tyler Perry ‘Presents’ Kim Kardashian in Confessions of a Marriage Counselor [Video]

Cartoon Blues: The Life of The New Yorker’s Favorite Depressive Is Drawn Out in New Bio

• very  
• short  
• list

a thematically curated  
daily email to help you

use  
smarter  
apps






exclusively interested in “macho pursuits, sports, ‘chicks’ and explosions.” Au contraire! They like to cook and share in the housework. They admire celebrities especially: Tom Brady, Sean Connery, George Clooney and Will Smith, who, it so happens, lives across the street from Mr. Sykes.

MOJO is prime-time programming for this rising tide of alpha emo-men. The invitation to an Oct. 17 MOJO party at Sky Studios featured an artful black-and-white side-view photo of a woman’s naked posterior.

So it’s not a *drastic* recalibration. The MOJO lineup, launched in June, included *Three Sheets*, a show about foreign drinking customs; *Technical Difficulties*, a race to “master the coolest tech toys”; and *After Hours with Daniel*, a glimpse into the “rarefied late night world of top chefs.”

“We’re very much trying to cater to—I don’t know if ‘hip’ is the right word, but a contemporary, affluent audience,” said Mr. Asch.

Mr. Sykes planned to attend the Sky Studios party. He’s also throwing his own, at his Leroy Street apartment, for his *Wall Street Warriors* debut appearance in episode 2, in which he conducts business in a bathrobe. The bathrobe was a gift from his grandmother; on the left breast pocket is an embroidered “Timmy.”

Timmy made his fortune day-trading during his senior year in high school and his freshman year at Tufts. The son of a jewelry merchant and a financier, he turned \$10,000 in bar mitzvah gifts into \$1.5 million and then transferred to Tulane, where he majored in philosophy and endowed an academic award. In a tribute to the movie *Zoolander* (“I like the humor of the absurd,” he said), he wanted to call it the “Timothy Sykes scholarship for kids who can’t read good and who want to learn to do other stuff good, too.”

“I told them I would double the amount of the scholarship if they would let me call it that,” he said, “and they said, ‘Timothy, you’re gonna make us look stupid.’”

With lunch, Mr. Sykes was drinking lemon-lime Gatorade, his favorite beverage. He has never tasted coffee, he said.

After college he moved to Soho, where he spent six months partying until dawn and trying to raise \$50 million for his hedge fund. He developed a taste for the finer things and a \$500-a-week “sushi habit,” but came up roughly \$50 million short.

Worn down, he spent two years bouncing among group houses of friends in Orlando, on the fringes of college campuses. He stayed in at night and read business books.

Mr. Sykes returned to New York a year ago, to make another go of building his hedge fund. Inspired by a love of fine dining, he called it Cilantro Fund Partners L.P. He has 14 investors, mostly family and friends, each worth at least \$1 million.

“I think many people might have a view of Wall Streeters from the outside as being bigger-than-life,” said Scott Gill, one of two producers of the series. Before *Wall Street Warriors*, Mr. Gill made the well-received documentary *Porn Star: The Legend of Ron Jeremy*.

“They’ve got yachts and helicopters,” Mr. Gill continued. “They have, you know, sort of that Gordon Gekko image.” Mr. Gill sought to avoid such caricature. To find his subjects, he turned to *Trader Monthly*, the publishing world’s glossy homage to the unrestrained pursuit of wealth, featuring many colorful photo spreads of thick-necked, cigar-smoking Lehman Brothers associates and the women who love them. This year, Mr. Sykes was named one of *Trader Monthly*’s “30 Under 30.” His willingness to show off for the cameras won over Messrs. Gill and Skelton immediately.

In upcoming episodes, viewers will learn that Mr. Sykes’ mother still does his laundry, that he’s not much of a clotheshorse, that he works out on a rowing machine in his apartment, that he has a library stocked with 600 business books, and that he recently threw a rooftop party for all his friends and encouraged them to tell childhood stories about him to the *Wall Street Warriors* cameraman.

Even in high definition, television can only draw a partial portrait. What else is there to know about Mr. Sykes? He thinks there should be an Oscar ceremony for teachers instead of actors; he hopes someday to design a futuristic, aerodynamic, lapel-free version of the traditional business suit; and he doesn’t plan on running a hedge fund forever.

“I’ve been in MarketWatch, *Business Week*, *Institutional Investor*,” he said of his early self-promotional success. “I love this stuff—it’s so much more fun than trading.”

## BETABEAT

Blogger Doxes Journal-News Staff After Paper Publishes Map of Westchester Gun Permit He

Gun Debate Plays Out in White House Online Petition Portal, Where ... Nobody Likes Piers Morgan?

Booting Up: When Zuckerbergs Confront Bre Facebook Privacy

## Politicker

Conspiracy Theorist Jeff Boss Launches May Bid

State Senator Slams ‘Asinine’ Newspaper Editor Who Published Gun Permit Map

Ruben Diaz Rings in the New Year With Jobs : State Senate and ‘Uncle Tom’ Malcolm Smith

## GalleristNY

Morning Links: Bowery Edition

Today’s Links: Warhol Mao Edition

Simon de Pury Hammered in the Morning, Hammered in the Evening

## MEDIA

Sorry, Philip Roth Is Not on Twitter

*Rookie’s* Amy Rose Spiegel is Going to Buzz! Music

*Newsweek’s* #LastPrintIssue

## TRANSOM

HuffPost Figures Out Algorithm for Christmas Traffic Spike: Listing Chain Outlets’ Store Ho

Just Because You Are Paranoid Doesn’t Mean FBI Wasn’t Monitoring You: Occupy Wall Street Edition

Lavish Self-Gifting for Ungenerous Grinchy Urbanites

## CULTURE

Tyler Perry ‘Presents’ Kim Kardashian in *Confessions of a Marriage Counselor* [Video]

Stars Twinkle on Christmas: How the Tweeter Beaters and World Leaders Rubbed Their Holy Spirit All Up in Your Face

Google Analytics Shoots Self in Search Engine Optimized Foot With New Adverts [Video]

## WALL STREET

John Liu Is Wondering Whether a Certain Fac Banker Should Give His Bonus Back

Tech Companies Had a Bumpy Year in Securities Exchange Commission Filings

As Long As We’re Talking About Taxes, Let’s Talk About How We Tax Tech Investors

## REAL ESTATE

Billionaires Go Trophy Hunting: The Biggest Real Estate Deals of 2012

He hopes someday to do something more spiritually satisfying than finance, he said. He plans to go into P.R.

Follow Rebecca Dana [via RSS](#).

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Reddit](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)

See also

**BURP! Sykes Sister Strikes Out! 'Exclusive' Brit Supper Club Lays an Egg On Manhattan**

**Spotted Pig Oinks At Supper Club Founder's Tale of Hangin' With Jay-Z**

**Timothy McVeigh**

**What Does the High Line Mean to You?**

**Bright Young Thing, Plum Sykes, Abandons Vogue , Sort Of**

topics: [Cilantro Fund Partners LP](#), [Gatorade](#), [MarketWatch Inc.](#), [NYTV](#), [Timothy Sykes](#)

**DISQUS** □□□

Art World Hamptons House Swap Puts David Maupin in Janelle Reiring's Old Place

*Elle* Editor in Chief Robbie Myers Gets Gloss Spread on UWS

## OPINION

Bloomberg's New Role: Stopping the Madness

Appoint a Gun Czar Now, Mr. President

Without PlaNYC, Hurricane Sandy's Devastation Would Have Been Much Worse

SPECIALS HOME SCOOTER V

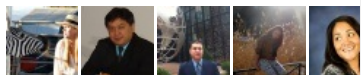


Find us on Facebook

[Sign Up](#) Create an account or [Log In](#) to see



13,816 people like The New York Observer.



Facebook social plugin

## COMMERCIAL

Avison Young Hires Former CBRE Senior Director Walter Blyzniuk

The "King of Greene Street" Sells for \$41.5 M

Holiday Giving, Commercial Real Estate Style

## ACROSS THE WIRE

FAKE TWITTER



Sorry, Philip Roth Is Not on Twitter

2012 IN REVIEW



Billionaires Go Trophy Hunting: The Biggest Real Estate Deals of 2012

John Liu Is Wondering Whether a Certain Facebook Banker Should Give His Bonus Back

MOVIE TRAILERS

Tyler Perry 'Presents' Kim Kardashian in *Confessions of a Marriage Counselor* [Video]

LOADED QUESTIONS



How Negotiating With Gun Advocates Justifies Them More Ammunition

[Classifieds](#) [Legal Advertising](#) [Subscriptions](#) [About Us](#) [Advertising](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Service](#)

 Powered by **WordPress.com** VIP