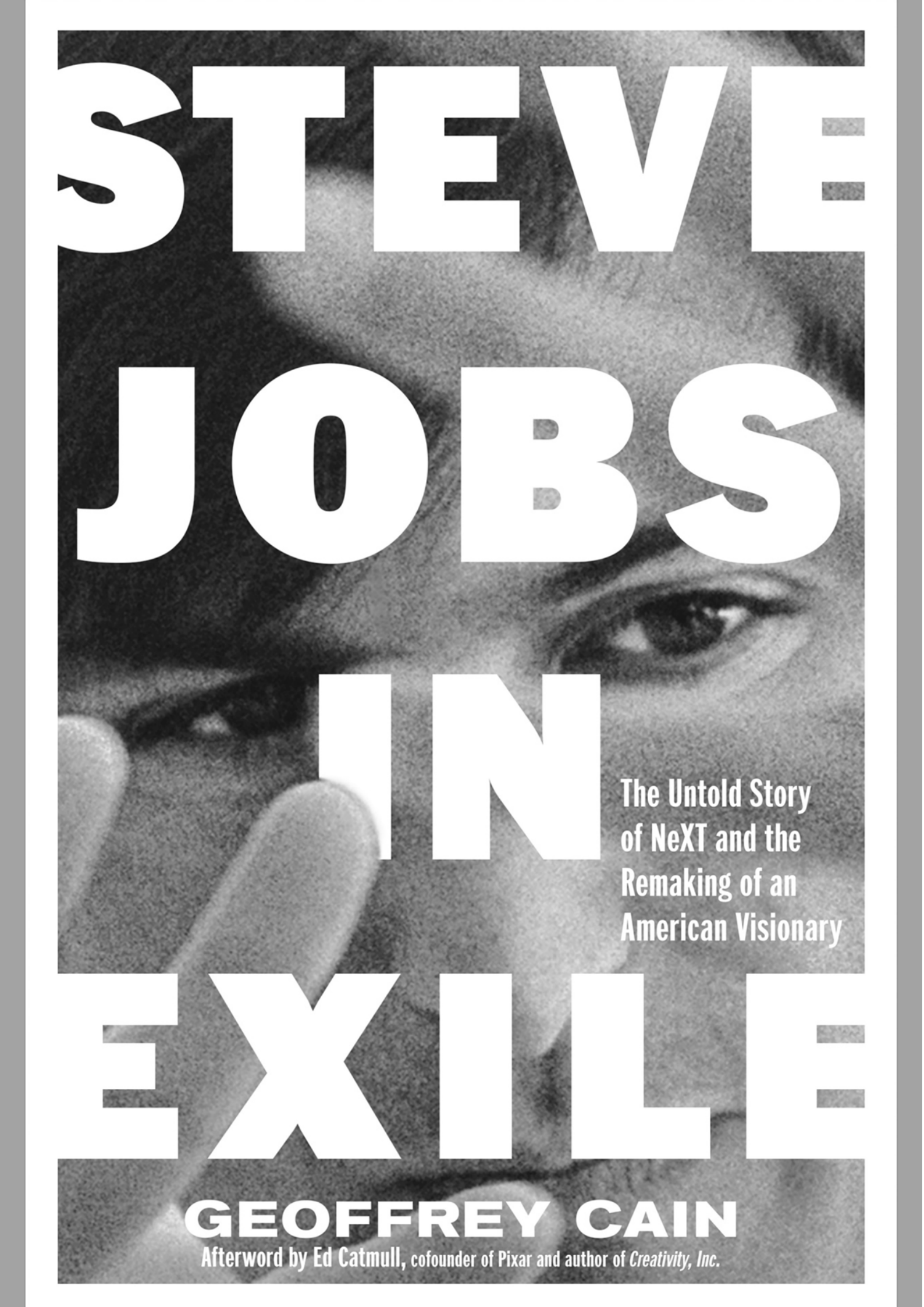




STEVE JOBS IN EXILE

The Untold Story
of NeXT and the
Remaking of an
American Visionary

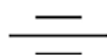
GEOFFREY CAIN

Afterword by Ed Catmull, cofounder of Pixar and author of *Creativity, Inc.*

Michael worried that the night would be over before it even began. As he scurried to make a vegetable paella, he glanced outside his window. Under the stars, the Buddhist monk had arrived in flowing ocher-brown robes. He held a cigarette in one hand and a champagne glass in the other as he stood laughing with the small crowd.

Monks from most Buddhist traditions were expected to abstain from life's excesses—smoking, drinking—and to live austere and separate from the laypeople who revered them. But Steve's monk followed his own code of enlightenment, refusing to be called by religious honorifics such as "Venerable" and not letting traditions get in the way of a good party.

Michael served what they had frantically prepared—paella with vegetables, the chicken and shellfish removed.



Steve's dedication to Japanese Zen, with its emphasis on simplicity and minimalism, informed his approach to design as well as to life. At meetings, Steve was already beginning to sketch out the form of the company's computer with his hands in the air. He kept making the same shape: a cube.

Steve had been inspired by a five-foot black cube called the Connection Machine, unveiled in 1985. It stood like the black monolith from the opening scene of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, its translucent panels revealing thousands of red LEDs blinking like synapses in a giant brain.

The machine was the brainchild of MIT computer scientist Danny Hillis, who wanted to build artificial intelligence by connecting sixty-four thousand processors in what he called a "20-dimensional hypercube." "Someday, perhaps soon, we will build

a machine that will be able to perform the function of a human mind, a thinking machine,” he wrote about his idea. Working with designer Tamiko Thiel, he transformed this mathematical concept into a striking physical form: eight smaller cubes fused into one large cube. Though it looked like a museum piece, and was later shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Connection Machine actually functioned as a supercomputer for scientific experiments.

Steve discovered the Connection Machine through Joanna Hoffman and became obsessed—here was proof that a computer’s form could deliver emotional satisfaction alongside raw functionality. The cube shape also solved a legal problem: Apple’s lawsuit settlement forbade Next from putting a monitor on top of the computer box. This pushed Steve toward designing a perfect cube that would sit next to, rather than under, the display.

Steve asked Joanna to find out who designed the Connection Machine. He wanted her to design the Next computer. By the time Joanna tracked down Tamiko, she had left for Germany to become an artist.

Instead, Steve hired a European design firm and tasked it with designing a perfect cube. “They called us and said, ‘You’ve got to get on the next plane to Europe and see what we’ve come up with. We’ve done the obligatory cube,’” Steve recounted. “‘But we have something far better that’s going to change the shape of computing forever!’”

Steve flew to Europe and sat through “a really fantastic buildup.” Every computer was going to look like this in five years, the designers promised.

“And they pulled off the curtain,” Steve said. “And it was in the shape of a human head.”



Tamiko Thiel and Danny Hillis with CM-1/CM-2 (1986/1987),
Photo: „Thinking Machines“ exhibit, MoMA New York, 2017



Steve Jobs with NeXT Cube, 1988



Geoffrey Cain with book „Steve Jobs in Exile,“ 2026