



Photo Illustration by The Daily Beast

CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP 10.08.15 1:00 AM ET



## China Cyberspying on U.S.—After No-Hacking Deal

Three days after Obama and Xi Jinping signed a historic agreement to curb online economic espionage, the FBI issued a fresh warning about Chinese spies in U.S. corporate networks.

The U.S. and China may have [agreed](#) not to hack each other's companies for commercial advantage. But China's computer spies are still targeting hundreds of American companies working for the U.S. military, prompting an urgent warning from law enforcement officials, The Daily Beast has learned.

On Sept. 28, the FBI sent an alert to at-risk firms, reporting with "high confidence" that hackers based in China "have compromised and stolen sensitive military information" from companies that provide engineering and technical services to the Navy and the Marine Corps.

The FBI described the spying campaign as broad and comprehensive.



"The actors did not target information pertaining to a specific contract but instead stole all information that they accessed via their malicious cyber activities," said the alert, a copy of which was obtained by The Daily Beast.

The FBI sent the warning three days after Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Obama

announced an historic agreement to stop computer hacking aimed at stealing

corporate trade secrets and intellectual property. That agreement, however, doesn’t cover the kinds of spying that the alert describes.

China can still target U.S. military contractors on the grounds that the classified information in their computers—including weapons designs and documents describing military operations and programs—is central to China’s own national security interests. The U.S. also hacks foreign companies for military and political intelligence, but officials say the information is never shared with American companies to give them a leg up in their business dealings.

The hackers have been observed collecting credentials and moving “laterally through the network” of their victims, the alert said, meaning that once inside a company’s systems, they obtained usernames and passwords that allowed them to pose as legitimate users and move around freely. Such intrusions can typically go undetected for months.

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Navy’s SeaPort contracting program, the FBI alert said. That program includes more than 2,4000 companies, from well-known giants to smaller firms that sell engineering, financial management, and other services. More than 85 percent of them are classified as small businesses, according to Navy statistics.



Defense contractors have long been a prime target for hackers, who find it easier to penetrate their often poorly secured networks than to attack the military’s head on.



The alert doesn’t say how many companies have been hit. But it notes the hackers used “infrastructure emanating from China,” the FBI’s preferred method of pointing the finger at the country without offering evidence of the government’s direct involvement.

Security experts disagreed over what other targets the hacker group may have hit, but said they are using tools commonly favored by the Chinese.

One former senior U.S. intelligence official who independently obtained the alert told The Daily Beast it describes the same hackers behind the massive breach at the [Office of Personnel Management](#), in which Chinese spies stole the records of more than 21 million current and former U.S. government employees. The group has also been linked to a major breach at the health insurance company Anthem, he said.



But a second expert who saw the alert said it doesn’t describe the hackers who

**One former senior U.S. intelligence official who independently obtained the alert told The Daily Beast it describes the same hackers behind the massive breach at the Office of Personnel Management.**

breached the OPM. However, he said the particular hacking tool that the group used, known as the “China Chopper Web shell,” is a favorite of many hackers outfits in China who use it to build backdoors into companies’ networks. So even if the hackers who hit the Navy contractors didn’t target the OPM, they’re still part of the same broader complex of hackers who are infiltrating networks important to the U.S. government.

Both experts spoke on condition of anonymity because the FBI labeled the information in the alert as too sensitive

to be shared with those who don’t have a “need to know.”

The timing of the alert suggests that the FBI may have wanted to refrain from drawing attention to Chinese hacking operations while Xi was visiting the U.S., the first expert said. In general, though, the FBI has been eager to implicate Beijing and has been much more aggressive in assigning individual hacking campaigns to Chinese actors than has the White House.

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In July, the bureau [warned](#) companies to be on the lookout for Chinese hackers, including those whom the bureau thinks were responsible for [stealing](#) records from the OPM. The same month, in a rare on-the-record briefing, the FBI’s top counterintelligence officials said they were [tracking](#) “hundreds” of cases of Chinese economic espionage against American firms.

China’s intelligence services are “as aggressive now as they’ve ever been,” said FBI Assistant Director Randall Coleman, who runs the bureau’s counterintelligence division.

In the most recent alert, the FBI said the targeted companies were part of a subset of Navy contractors who’ve been vetted for the “[SeaPort Enhanced](#)” program.

A spokesperson for the Naval Sea Systems Command, which runs the contractor program, told The Daily Beast that officials are reviewing the FBI’s alert but could provide no additional information about it.

An FBI spokesman likewise declined to comment about the specific information in the alert, but said that the bureau “routinely advises private industry of various cyber threat indicators observed during the course of our investigations. This data is provided in order to help systems administrators guard against the actions of persistent cyber criminals.”

The Navy command also has a connection to the OPM hack: It [selected](#) the company that’s providing identity monitoring services to the millions of victims.

The firm was not selected from the list of contractors who may have been hit by the Chinese hackers, the Navy spokesman said. It's not clear from the FBI alert whether the Navy command itself was targeted or compromised.

Identity monitoring may do little to counteract the OPM hack, which some U.S. officials have described as the most significant intelligence loss the government has suffered in years. The monitoring company will keep tabs on whether any information that was stolen is being used for financial fraud, such as opening credit card accounts in the victims' names.

"Credit monitoring is not remediation for espionage," said Michael Adams, a computer security expert who served more than two decades in the U.S. Special Operations Command. The more significant threat is that the Chinese will use the information they stole from OPM to identify U.S. intelligence officers working overseas or to try to recruit or coerce potential agents. The *Washington Post* [reported](#) that the CIA pulled some intelligence officers from the U.S. embassy in Beijing as a precautionary measure following the OPM hack.

Adams said that giving the monitoring company access to millions of victims' personal records and financial information only increases the risk of exposure for those who've already seen the most intimate details of their personal lives plundered by Chinese hackers. The OPM files contain information from background investigations that can reveal past struggles with alcohol or drugs, marital strife, and financial troubles—all material that could be used for blackmail or coercion.

Another computer security expert who monitors the sale of personal information on the so-called "dark Web" told The Daily Beast that no information from the OPM hack has been found there. That indicates that the information isn't being used for financial crimes or identity fraud, but more likely for Chinese intelligence and security operations.



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LOST IT? 10.11.15 11:41 AM ET



Ben Carson Gives New Meaning to  
Crazy

His various answers this week leave one perplexed as how he has so much support.

For more than a few months many campaign experts and pundits have been trying to figure out how and why semi-prominent surgeon and political nut-boy Ben Carson has been doing so well in the Republican race for president. He has maintained healthy numbers in the polls and seems locked into a strong second place position in a field of candidates where experience and common sense are viewed as huge liabilities.

But it wasn't until last week that Carson managed to prove he has lost more than a few shingles off his roof. Ben has his own space program going and he's out there on the fringe talking nonsense in a soft, non threatening manner that is quite similar to the voice level heard among so many sitting sadly by themselves today in Day-Rooms of mental institutions, off in a corner, wearing paper slippers, slowly eating apple sauce, unaware that nobody is listening.

Somewhat incredibly though, a small percentage of people are listening to Gentle Ben. And he is indeed running for President of the United States. And each day he takes the field and gives new meaning to crazy.

A few days ago, Ben was asked about the latest mass shooting on a college campus in Oregon where nine died because a mentally deranged young guy had 14 guns and no girl friend. WWBD: What would Ben do?

"I'm glad you asked that question," one of the two leading presidential candidates of the Republican party replied. "because not only would I not probably not co-operate with him, I would not just stand there and let him shoot me. I would say, 'Hey guys, everybody attack him. He may shoot me, but he can't get us all.'"

And there it is. Ben is clearly a movie buff.

Ben probably saw himself as Little Bill in 'Unforgiven' who was confronted by William Munny in a saloon show-down. Little Bill was a bad-ass sheriff, a bully who had beaten to death Munny's only friend, Ned, and hung the body outside the saloon.

In the scene that perhaps excited Ben, Little Bill is promising free drinks and prattling an empty-headed moron, a guy the crowd listens to because he's wearing a badge. Little Bill is surprised though as Munny arrives, rifle in hand and shoots the skinny bar owner. Then Little Bill and William Munny, confront one another.

"Well sir, " Little Bill says, "You are a cowardly son of a bitch because you have just shot down an unarmed man."

"He should have armed himself if he was gonna' decorate his saloon with the body of my friend," Munny tells Little Bill.

At that moment, Little Bill seems to recognize Munny and says, "I guess you are three fingered Jack out of Missouri, killer of women and children," And Munny tells him, "I have done that...killed women and children. I have killed most everything that walks or crawls and now I have come to kill you Little Bill for what you done to Ned."

Right here is where Ben Carson starts taking notes. He must have been mesmerized because, clearly, it has had a huge impact on his outlook.

“He’s got one barrel left, gentlemen, “ Little Bill announces to his saloon pals who are either cowering or heading for the nearest exit. “After he has used it, pull your pistols and shoot him down like the cowardly, drunken scoundrel he is.”

Ben wanted the students at that Oregon Community College to charge the shooter. After all, he only had four weapons on him. If Ben had more time to think he probably would have woven a few scenes from ‘Saving Private Ryan’ into his answer. After all, the Germans on the bluff above Omaha Beach had multiple weapons but they were beaten back because we charged them.

A few days later, Ben was on CNN where he insisted that the number of Holocaust victims would have been greatly reduced if more Jewish people in Europe owned guns. Here he is on that topic: “I think the likelihood of Hitler being able to accomplish his goals would have been greatly diminished if the people had been armed.”

(We pause here for a quick, commercial free reminder: This guy, Ben Carson, is running for President of the United States and according to many polls is placing second to Donald Trump as the potential candidate of one of two major American political parties, the Republican party.)

His supporters list several reasons why they would consider voting for him: “He seems like a nice man. He speaks softly. He is a fine Christian. He speaks his mind.”

He is also a few quarts short of a gallon. But when it comes to Ben Carson’s preposterous campaign, count me in with Chauncey Gardiner who said in ‘Being There.’: I like to watch.





Kristin Bishop

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**THE NEAREST FARAWAY PLACE** 10.06.15 12:47 PM ET

## Take A Trip Up To The Highlands Without Ever Crossing An Ocean

The Virginia Scottish Games includes highland competition, haggis and whiskey, bagpipes and plenty of kilts right outside DC.

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*Within your own backyard lies adventure that will transport you to a place that feels miles from home. So leave your passport behind and start exploring The Nearest Faraway Place.*

It's fair to say that very few of us will ever toss a nearly 20 foot, 175 pound pole into the air, have it land on its top, wobble for a moment, and then finally flip over. Which is to say, very few of us will ever experience the true joy of competing in the Virginia Scottish Games.

"I am telling you it feels really, really good to flip that thing," says Highland athlete Heather McKenzie. "There is no feeling like it, honestly."



*Loralei Gilliam*

McKenzie would know. She has been tossing that thing, called a caber, since she was 16 years-old and was yanked away from her scorekeeping duties to compete in the Virginia Scottish Games, an annual event that her grandfather co-founded and her father helped run. At the time, they needed McKenzie—who back then had played a little field hockey and basketball but had never competitively thrown trees—to participate so they would have enough athletes to make that year’s games official.

Now a nearly 40 year institution, the Virginia Scottish Games, which take place September 5th and 6th, no longer has such problems. More than 60 athletes from around the country and the world—15 of them women—gather at the Great Meadow in The Plains, Virginia to toss cabers, 19-pound Braemar stones, and 50-plus pound weights in what has become one of the biggest events in the Highland games calendar.

Even though all of this takes place less than an hour drive west of Alexandria, where the games originally began as part of the DC suburb’s bicentennial celebrations, you will feel like you are an ocean away.

“The setting is much like the Scottish Highlands,” explains Alexandra L. Duncan, vice president of the Virginia Scottish Games, “only with better parking.”

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While the Highland athletics competition has remained the center piece and namesake of the Virginia Scottish Games, they are only one of the many ways that the event—which depending on the weather can attract as many as 20,000 people—celebrates Scottish heritage and the impact that the Scottish people had on both the state and the country. Indeed, one can have a fully immersive Highland experience at the games and not see anyone throw anything.

For starters, a number of traditional Scottish clans hold their annual general meetings at the games, often led by a

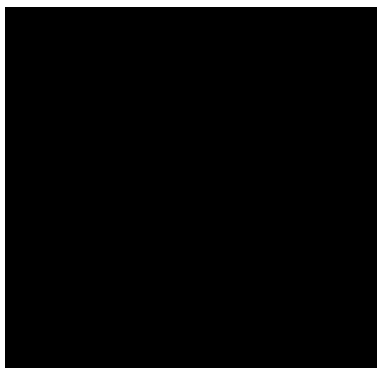
Clan Chief or representative who has flown in from Scotland. The honored clans at this years games include MacKay, MacIntyre, MacCullum-Malcom, Kennedy, and Ross.

“Meeting someone from your clan is amazing—it’s sort of like having an ‘instafriend,’” says McKenzie.



*Kristin Bishop*

The place will be equally enchanting for lovers of dogs. There will be Border Collies giving sheepherding demonstrations, rescued West Highland White Terriers leading pipe and drum marches, and most other Scottish breeds on display. But if cars are more your speed, the Classic British Car & Motorcycle Show takes place during the games and will feature upwards of 100 perfectly polished vintage Bentleys, Jaguars, Rolls Royces, MG’s, Minis, Morgans, and Triumphs.



“I love the cars,” says Duncan. “My parents’ first date was in a white MGB convertible so I am a bit biased.”

If you’re worried about your wee ones around the car show, you can ease your fears with plenty of activities for children. Near the entrance, there will be kid-sized versions of the games—they’ll throw bricks as opposed to huge

**Live, traditional Scottish music has come to define the Virginia Scottish Games every bit as much as the athletic events have.**

stones—as well as face painters. But what will really leave both kids and their parents agog is what's up the hill: a living history encampment that promises to transport you not just to a different place, but a different time altogether.

There will be as many as six groups of historical re-enactors depicting a different era of Scottish and European history. Expect to encounter first century AD Roman soldiers, Highland

warriors from the Jacobite Rising of 1746, the infantrymen who fought for King and Country during the Revolutionary War, and members of a Scottish reconnaissance regiment that campaigned in Europe during World War II.

Glenfiddich recently signed on as a sponsor for the games, which means that visitors over the age of 21 can unwind with whiskey tastings. This year's featured Scotch is the Gran Solera 21 Year Old, which is finished in casks used to age Caribbean rum. There are plenty of food vendors and, yes, that does include haggis—which despite what your great Scottish uncle might tell you, might not mix so well with whiskey.

Don't forget the music. Live, traditional Scottish music has come to define the Virginia Scottish Games every bit as much as the athletic events have.



*Kristin Bishop*

As many as 20 bagpiping bands show up at the games every year, and nearly that many fiddle bands. Fiddlers, drummers and pipers will also compete against each other in front of judges that come from across the country and Canada. These musical showdowns are known to get every bit as heated as the athletic games, and only slightly less dangerous.

The Virginia Scottish Games cost \$20 per adult for a one day ticket and \$30 for both days. Children 5-12 are \$5 on Saturday and free on Sunday; children under 5 are free. The whisky tastings are \$25 each.

It tends to get hot so pack plenty of water and sunscreen. A fold-up chair or picnic blanket is a good idea, and while there's plenty of parking, it's still a good idea to get there early, especially on Saturday. As for wearing a kilt in



your clan's tartan, well, that's entirely up to you.

Really, the most important thing to bring is the desire to be transported to the Highlands, whether your people hail from there or not. "The hills, the valley, the meadow— it all reminds everyone of Scotland," says Duncan. "We just add the wandering pipers to set the musical tone."



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**BRAINS!** 10.11.15 10:30 PM ET



# 'The Walking Dead' Season 6

## Premiere: Creator Robert Kirkman on Rick's 'Horrifying' Decision

The creator of AMC's hit zombie series opens up about the impressive Season 6 premiere and Rick Grimes's turn to the dark side. [Warning: Spoilers]



[Rick Grimes](#) has, so far, survived five years of the zombie apocalypse without totally losing his mind (except for one time when he started seeing ghosts, but who's counting). That's five years of cannibals, eyepatch-clad dictators, corrupt cops, a best friend who tried to murder him, a self-sabotaging wife—and yet, Rick has seemingly never faced more insurmountable odds than during Sunday's Season 6 premiere of *The Walking Dead*, "First Time Again," when he came face-to-face with a massive quarry crawling with thousands upon thousands of undead flesh-eaters on the verge of busting loose and ravaging the town of Alexandria.

Containing the masses would have been challenge enough for Rick ([Andrew Lincoln](#)) but, on top of that, he also had to deal with the constant, fatal screw-ups of his greenest allies. Between half-treacherous Carter's (short-lived newcomer Ethan Embry) unfortunate zombie run-in and whichever loon back home decided to start blaring a horn in the middle of Rick's plan to divert the walkers away from town, Alexandria is now hopelessly doomed—and there's not a thing Rick can do about it.

That's not for lack of trying, of course. After the events of Season 5—when the group came upon the sanctuary town and Rick met and [fell in sorta-love with Jessie](#), then shot her drunkard of a husband in the face in a heated blast of revenge, jealousy, and self-righteous heroism—Rick now functions like a well-oiled survival machine. He is decisive, efficient, and an innovative planner, but being responsible for an entire town's survival is tipping Rick back to the naughty end of the spectrum between Farmer Rick and Ricktatorship—that is, he is ruthless about the realistic value of a life like Carter's. If that dude won't give up part of his cushy daily routine to enhance his town's chances of survival, what good is keeping him alive?

In a rare admission of his darkest impulses, Rick tells Morgan—another consummate survivor, but one who values human life so much that he even shows mercy to his enemies, like the Wolves—what he *should* have done after finding Carter plotting against him: "I wanted to kill him so it would be easier," Rick says. "So I wouldn't have to worry about how he could screw up or what stupid thing he'd do next. Because that's just who he is...just somebody who shouldn't be alive now."

*The Walking Dead's* world doesn't have room for spoiled crybabies. Rick acknowledges this fully: "I realized I didn't have to do it. He [Carter] doesn't get it. Somebody like that, they're gonna die no matter what." Minutes later, after a walker takes a meaty chunk out of Carter's screaming (and screaming and screaming) face, Rick puts a bullet in his head to shut him up. One less screw-up to worry about.





Rick's cold decision was, of course, necessary—yet what he revealed about how little he valued Carter's life to begin with felt disturbing. [Robert Kirkman](#), writer of *The Walking Dead* comics and co-creator of AMC's monster show, says this shift in Rick is “one of the more interesting things about the series.”

“Because we've lived with Rick Grimes and we've seen him experience all these horrible things over these multiple seasons, you can say, ‘Oh, [Rick was] right. Carter did mess up,’” Kirkman says. “He was correct in saying that but you have to also recognize that that's an absolutely horrifying statement for a human being to make about another human being.”

“Because the world of *The Walking Dead* is so crazy and because the things they have to do to stay alive are so intense, there is kind of a buy-in—we do recognize that there's an unequal value to lives,” he continues. “It's such a weird situation to find yourself in where someone like Rick Grimes, who is very capable, has saved many people, and is clearly a good guy, says, ‘I provide a value. I need to survive. The other person? Not so much.’ And the audience can actually identify with that. It's pretty fascinating.”

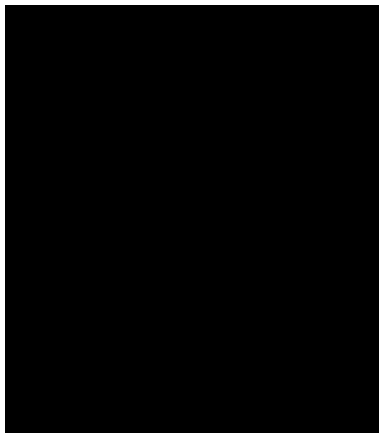
The audience, as Kirkman says, can see in hindsight that Carter was always more trouble than he was worth. While the would-be Brutus tried making up for his betrayal (he even admitted to Rick that the diversion plan was working), Carter was simply never meant to survive. How *could* he be, after a post-apocalypse life lived in relatively untouched first-world luxury...? Wait.

**“He was correct in saying that but you have to also recognize that that's an absolutely horrifying statement for a human being to make about another human being.”**

Are *we* the Carters here?

Condemning Carter's lack of survival skills from our own cushy spots on the couch, in our own first-world cozy homes, is the ultimate case of the pot calling the kettle black. We might look down on him for being too slow to catch up with the brutal reality of his world, but would most of us really fare much better?

Kirkman agrees. Coming down too hard on Carter, he says, is “kind of like acting outside of your own best



interests. Like, ‘Yeah, Carter, he’s terrible! The poor guy, he’s awful!’ No, he’s exactly like me. I’d say that about myself.”

That’s part of the beauty of zombie tales: when we imagine ourselves in them, the stories can act as “a shared emotional preparation—a collective therapy—for facing bad things to come,” as military historian Michael Vlahos [once wrote](#). As fun as it is to

imagine that we’re preparing ourselves for some inevitable, apocalyptic doom though, the truth is we’re probably all Carters—and that’s okay. After all, a zombie apocalypse won’t ever really happen. Right?



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FAITH 10.11.15 12:01 AM ET

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## Inside The Jewish Lives of Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe

Marriage linked the two film stars to Judaism—but how profound did the connection stay after those relationships ended?



“I, Mrs. Michael Todd, née Elizabeth Taylor, do declare in the presence of God I seek the fellowships of the people of Israel,” she softly states.

There is something precious, even spiritual, about listening in on [Elizabeth Taylor’s](#) conversion to [Judaism](#). While not accompanied by a visual image or footage from the 1959 conversion at Temple Israel in Hollywood, the recording of Taylor reciting “*Sh’ma Yis’ra’eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad*” (“Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One”) is strikingly emotional—even if you worship celebrities rather than the Almighty.

Both sets of congregants will find inspiration and fulfillment at [Becoming Jewish: Warhol’s Liz and Marilyn](#) at New York’s [Jewish Museum](#).

Anchored by Andy Warhol’s iconic paintings and prints of Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, the exhibition explores the private details of two movie goddesses’ adoption of Judaism in the context of their very public celebrity personas.

While Taylor joined the Tribe in 1959, Monroe converted just a few years earlier in 1956—in fact, it was mere hours before her July 1 wedding to playwright Arthur Miller (that was a Jewish ceremony, they had legally married at a courthouse two days prior to that).

The exhibition features soundless footage of Monroe as a glowing bride in a relatively informal white dress and short veil enjoying a small reception at the home of Miller’s agent, Kay Brown, in Katonah, New York, hours after that

ceremony.

“It was really crucial to see the contrast between what the public saw and what was happening behind the scenes in their personal lives,” the exhibition’s curator, Joanna Montoya Robotham, told The Daily Beast.



© The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

*Becoming Jewish* does a fantastic job of immersing visitors in the Golden Age of Hollywood celebrity culture that obsessed Warhol.

Issues of *Movieland*, *Photoplay*, *Screen Stories*, and *Modern Screen* magazines, all with covers of Taylor or Monroe, line a wall of the exhibition.

**“I have always felt that she was an extremely lovely person who was not able to overcome the terrible emotional burdens, which were a part of her childhood and which were aggravated by her tremendous fame.”**

By today’s standards of paparazzi invading Bora Bora bungalows to snap full-frontal shots of Justin Bieber, the Hollywood fan magazines from the 1950s and 1960s are downright quaint.

Still, one gets a sense of how the celebrity obsession was turning invasive and toxic with headlines like “Is Liz Afraid to Have Eddie’s Baby?” and “The Tragic Facts About Liz and Debbie’s Fatherless Children.”

That underside of fame and celebrity deeply fascinated Warhol, and it’s why he was drawn to Monroe and Taylor in the first place. His iconic renderings of the two stars were part of his *Death*

and *Disaster* series: he began working on the *Marilyn* images shortly after her



August 5, 1962 death and the *Liz* ones were prompted by her near-fatal bout of pneumonia during the filming of *Cleopatra*.

The larger-than-life, colorful-to-the-point-of-almost-garish images of Monroe and Taylor pose the perfect juxtaposition to the private slivers of insight into their religious lives, which is the true core of *Becoming Jewish*.

The exhibition is rather small, a single room that takes no more than 30 to 40 minutes to fully explore. But the space fosters a sense of intimacy, enhancing the deeply personal revelations about two of the most famous and photographed women in American history.

Listening to the recording of Taylor's conversion illustrates one of the few moments in her life that hasn't been unearthed in the obsessive tabloid coverage, nor the many biographies about her.

Taylor's voice is perfectly clear and utterly demure, a striking comparison to her brash Southern vocals a year earlier as Maggie in the 1958 movie of the Tennessee Williams play, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

That same year the movie was released, 26-year-old Taylor became a widow after her beloved Mike Todd died in a plane crash.

Todd was actually born Avrom Hirsch Goldbogen, one of nine children in a Minneapolis family headed by a Polish Orthodox rabbi. With a handful of carefully selected clips, *Becoming Jewish* does a wonderful job of illustrating why Todd is considered the great love in Taylor's long line of beaus.

"Mrs. Todd is my favorite person in the whole world," Todd states in a snippet of black-and-white footage from a 1975 interview. "She doesn't *look* beautiful. She *is* beautiful."

Todd was more than 20 years her senior (and looked it), but viewing the way he treasured Taylor suggests why she loved him so.



*The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*



According to the exhibition, the loss of Todd more than her decision to scandalously marry his best friend, Eddie Fisher, led to her conversion. By all accounts neither Todd nor the also Jewish Fisher cared if Taylor converted before marriage (and the fact that Fisher was married to Christian Debbie Reynolds further supports this).

Following Todd's death, Taylor began seeking spiritual counseling from his rabbi, Max Nussbaum of Hollywood's Temple Israel. She began studying with Nussbaum, who oversaw her conversion and officiated her 1959 marriage to Fisher.

"It was something I had wanted to do for a long time," Taylor said of her decision to convert and adopt Elisheba Rachel as her Hebrew name. She continued her devotion to Judaism and Jewish causes long after her marriages to Jews disintegrated.

The exhibition is filled with shots of the ever-stunning Liz exploring Israel with Richard Burton.

In jeans with a colorful scarf tied around her hair and large gold hoops dangling from her ears, Taylor makes for the most stylish *sabra* (a nickname for a native Israeli) during her 1975 trip to the Western Wall.

In another, she sits beside Simon Wiesenthal, a fitting image since she served on the board of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Taylor even [reportedly](#) offered herself up as an exchange hostage in 1976 when over 100 people, mostly Israeli, were held in Entebbe, Uganda, on the infamous hijacked Air France flight en route from Tel Aviv to Paris.

While the exhibition includes clips of Miller and Monroe arm-in-arm at press conferences and plenty of photos of them, it doesn't capture the same sense of gushing affection that is so apparent between Todd and Taylor.

Fewer markers of Monroe's connection to Judaism are on display, though the ones present are quite special.

One that particular stands out is Monroe's beautiful, simple musical menorah, which played the Israeli national anthem, "Hatikvah."

There is less information or, for that matter, evidence of Monroe's connection to Judaism after her marriage to Miller ended in 1961—though that may very well be a sad consequence of the little life she had left to live.

Nevertheless, according to letters from Rabbi Robert E. Goldberg, who oversaw Monroe's conversion, the blond bombshell told him she had no intention of renouncing Judaism after the divorce.

She also, apparently, remained very close to Miller's children and father until her passing.

*Becoming Jewish* features two detailed letters from Goldberg: one from September 7, 1962, barely a month after Monroe was found dead, and another from August 6, 1986. His descriptions of Monroe provide a new perspective on one of the most iconic and enduring celebrities.

Goldberg wrote about his first time meeting Monroe at her apartment on Sutton Place after Miller invited him and how he was "struck by her personal sweetness and charm."

Unlike Taylor’s draw to Judaism, Monroe’s does not necessarily seem driven by a romantic-related desire.

Goldburg’s letters describe how Marilyn expressed her respect for Jewish individuals. Albert Einstein and his book of essays, *Out of My Later Years*, were especially significant to her.

Goldburg also wrote that she felt no connection to the “Fundamentalist” Christianity she was raised with in her foster home. Instead, she was attracted to Judaism’s “concept of close family life.”

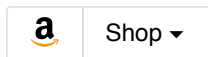
Not everything Goldburg includes in his letter is, shall we say, glowing. Writing of his lessons and assignments for her during the required study for her conversion, Goldburg states: “Marilyn was not an intellectual... It was also clear her ability to concentrate for a long period of time was limited.”

Perhaps most eerily poignant to those of us who have poured over the tragic details of Monroe’s short life—from her tattered childhood to her struggles to be taken seriously as an actress to her failure to conceive the children she so wanted—is Goldburg’s line that Monroe sought Judaism because she “often identified with the ‘underdog.’”

Like so much of America, Goldburg was clearly struck by Monroe’s untimely death and sensed a dark pain and deep tenderness underneath her glowing smiles and traffic-stopping curves.

“I have always felt that she was an extremely lovely person who was not able to overcome the terrible emotional burdens, which were a part of her childhood and which were aggravated by her tremendous fame,” Goldburg wrote.

Monroe may have converted at the height of her celebrity, but as *Becoming Jewish* illustrates, religion couldn’t rescue her from Hollywood.



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