

TIME

THE  
**100**  
MOST  
INFLUENTIAL  
COMPANIES

RARE BEAUTY  
FOUNDER  
**SELENA GOMEZ**  
ON FINDING  
HER PURPOSE



# TIME Magazine

[Jun 10, 2024]

- [Articles](#)

# Articles

- [\*\*How Selena Gomez Is Revolutionizing the Celebrity Beauty Business\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Inside Anthropic, the AI Company Betting That Safety Can Be a Winning Strategy\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Javier Milei’s Radical Plan to Transform Argentina\*\*](#)
- [\*\*How We Choose the TIME100 Companies of 2024\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Question the World Needs to Ask About the Middle East Right Now\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The State Department Just Issued a Worldwide Travel Advisory for U.S. Citizens. Here’s Why\*\*](#)
- [\*\*We Dodged Disaster With This Solar Storm. Here’s What to Know for the Next One\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Alice Munro, Who Shaped the Modern Short Story, Dies at 92\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Thailand Celebrates Return of ‘Golden Boy’ in Rare Repatriation of Southeast Asian Artifacts\*\*](#)
- [\*\*20 Years After Same-Sex Marriage Was First Legalized, Queer Couples Reflect on How Their Lives Changed\*\*](#)

- **Call Her Mother: How A Term with Queer Origins Became an Internet Sensation**
- **Northern Ireland Is Steeped in Its Past. Michelle O'Neill Has a Vision for Its Future**
- **6 Tricks to Try to Calm Your Fear of Flying**
- **The Demonization of Rural America**
- **Long Dismissed, Chronic Lyme Disease Is Finally Getting Its Moment**
- **Donald Trump Could Still Scuttle the Debates**
- **The Parents Who Regret Having Children**
- **Babes Creators Say the Pregnancy Comedy Is Not ‘Raunchy.’ It’s ‘Realistic’**
- **The Decades-Long Journey to Publishing Michael Crichton and James Patterson’s Eruption**
- **The 29 Most Anticipated TV Shows of Summer 2024**
- **ASU President Michael Crow on Campus Protests, AI and the Future of College Sports**

## How Selena Gomez Is Revolutionizing the Celebrity Beauty Business

Lucy Feldman is a senior editor at TIME, where she oversees coverage of books and authors. She is co-editor of TIME's Women of the Year franchise and a member of the TIME100 editorial team.



You would not think the most-followed woman on Instagram would be able to walk through one of New York City's biggest tourist attractions unbothered. Yet here she is, strolling in a pair of cozy booties through Central Park with a travel mug of tea tucked

in her arm, very nearly blending in. If not for the security guard and personal assistant trailing discreetly behind, [Selena Gomez](#) might be any other person out for fresh air on a drizzly May morning.

This is, to put it mildly, surprising. But she shrugs it off. “I don’t really have anything impressive going on at all times,” she deadpans, gesturing to her casual getup. “Or anytime, really.”

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

It’s a funny thing to hear from someone who has been on TV since she was 10 years old, found success as an actor and pop star, and is now the founder of a business reportedly worth [\\$2 billion](#). Gomez, 31, is [one of the most recognizable people in the world](#), and yet she’s right—as we meander down a pedestrian path and into the mud, most of the people around us seem not to notice her.



Gomez has cultivated an everywoman quality and a mastery of public vulnerability—hers is the kind of fame that comes from growing up alongside your fans, offering an example of what it's like to fall in love, try things, and make mistakes. Her [openness about her mental health](#) has endeared her to millions of young people coping with the isolating experiences of [anxiety](#), depression, and other disorders. And she has channeled all of that into her company, [Rare Beauty](#), a rising player she bills as a beauty brand that, instead of selling an unattainable image, aims to help people feel good about themselves.

Mental health and makeup may not seem like an obvious pairing, but Gomez's vision has paid off. Rare Beauty, not yet four years

old, is a top seller at Sephora and available in 36 countries, according to the company. After launching in 2020, annual sales grew 100% from 2021 to 2022, and 200% the following year; they hit \$400 million for the 12 months ending in May.

Rare Beauty's products, from a liquid highlighter to a body and hair mist with names like Positive Light and Find Comfort, are designed to be inclusive in terms of shade range and easy-to-use packaging (crucial to Gomez herself, who takes a drug for [lupus](#) that can cause her hands to shake). Gomez says Rare began not with her ideas for specific makeup products but instead with her hope to support people struggling with their mental health. So she launched the company with a philanthropic arm, the [Rare Impact Fund](#), with the goal of raising \$100 million in the brand's first 10 years, and pledged that 1% of all product sales would be funneled into the foundation. With \$13 million raised to date, the Rare Impact Fund has given grants to 26 organizations across five continents working to improve mental health.

[video id=OBtFZObN autostart="viewable"]

Gomez and her team are managing to sell millions of dollars worth of product while also promoting the idea that no one *needs* makeup. “I hope I don’t, and I hope Rare Beauty doesn’t, give off the vibe that you have to do anything,” she says. I ask what she makes of a common double standard, how people can be judged for leaving imperfections uncovered, but also deemed insecure if they wear too much makeup. She points out that she’s gone nearly barefaced today, wearing only some under-eye brightener. “I think it’s bullsh-t,” she says. “If you want my opinion on that.”

---

When you’re as famous as Gomez is, your personal life becomes global fodder. The Texas native broke out on Disney’s 2007–12 series *Wizards of Waverly Place*, went on to launch a music career, and built her résumé in film and TV with projects like *Spring*

*Breakers* and *13 Reasons Why*. All the while, interest in her relationships and inner life only grew. In 2016, she was in the middle of a worldwide tour for her album *Revival* when she suddenly pulled out, revealing she had been struggling with anxiety and depression as side effects from lupus, which in 2017 necessitated a [kidney transplant](#). She says now that she's "50-50" on whether she'll ever go on a major tour again. "Nothing makes me happier than 90 minutes of being with my fans and just celebrating together," she says. On the other hand, "It is very emotionally draining for me. And then you realize you're just surrounded by a bunch of people that you're paying."

In April 2020, just months before she launched Rare Beauty, Gomez disclosed that she'd been diagnosed with [bipolar disorder](#). She shared with *Rolling Stone* two years later that she had suffered from suicidal ideation and been to four treatment centers. Her 2022 documentary, *My Mind and Me*, offered a raw look at her mental health over a six-year period, filling in new details of a story that had been told in headlines.

Gomez often laments the impact of social media on her own health and encourages others to get offline. (She has declared at least five times since 2018 that she's [taking a break from Instagram](#), where her current follower count is 427 million.) An assistant maintained her accounts for four years. She's back to posting most of her content herself now, which includes promo for Rare Beauty and her film and TV projects, but she tries not to linger on the apps. And she's deliberate about who she chooses to spend her time with IRL. "It's a cliché, but girls are mean," she says. "It's a very weird competition, being in the cool girls area—and then I'm just kind of like, there. I don't know where I'm meant to belong." Her best friends are a real estate agent, a producer, and a casting director, she says. "I love having levelheaded people around that couldn't give two f-cks about what I do."

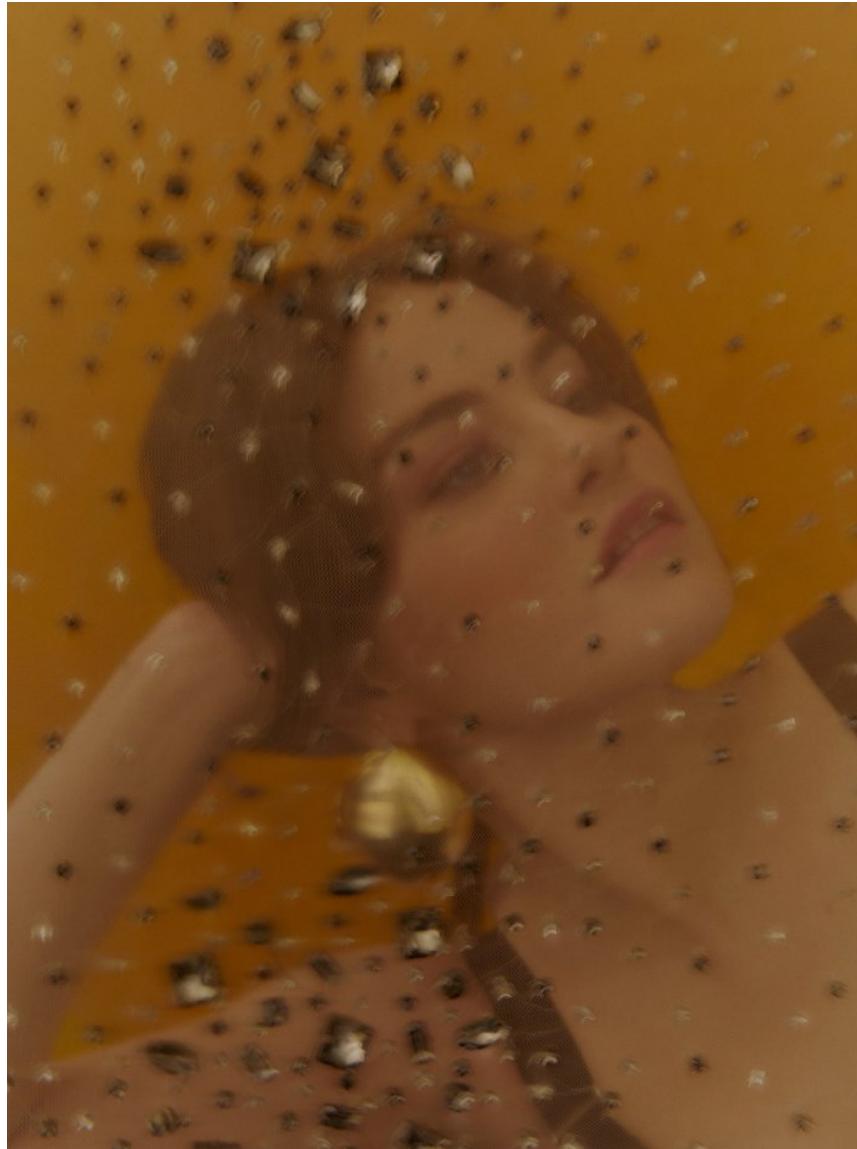


The importance of building meaningful relationships is something Gomez talks about a lot in her work with Rare Beauty. The U.S. Surgeon General, [Dr. Vivek Murthy](#), has become a frequent conversation partner with her at events, where they discuss his research on the loneliness epidemic. “It’s hard,” she says. “You could be in a crowd of people and still feel alone. I still deal with that.”

She’s a proponent of feeling your feelings. A younger friend of hers [going through a breakup](#) recently asked how anyone manages the pain of heartbreak. “You have to go through it. You can distract yourself and you can deny and deny all you want, but it’ll still be there,” Gomez advised. Covering it up is not the answer. “I just allow myself to have those days.”

I ask if having a partner is helpful when it comes to the big feelings we’re talking about, now that she’s openly sharing her relationship with producer and songwriter Benny Blanco—or if it’s irrelevant. “It’s a little irrelevant, only because he isn’t my only source of happiness,” Gomez says. “I was alone for five years, and I got really used to it. A lot of people are afraid of being alone and I probably tortured myself in my head for like two years being alone, and then I kind of accepted it. Then I came up with my plan, which was I was going to adopt at 35 if I had not met anyone.” Enter

Blanco, who Gomez says she'd first thought of as a friend—she even asked him if he knew anyone he could set her up with. But when he brought her to meet his friend at a birthday party, she realized she liked him. “It just happens when you least expect it,” she says.



Blanco recently told [Howard Stern](#) he wants to marry and have kids with Gomez. She laughs when I bring it up: “He can’t lie to save his life. If he’s asked a question, he’ll answer it.” She, on the other hand, has a lifetime of experience that has taught her to be more cautious. “I know what people can do to people I love. My own fans, who I adore and feel like have shaped who I am, will say the most hurtful things to me about how I live my life. But he has the

strength in him that none of that noise fazes him. It's really impressive, and I just cherish every moment with him. I don't know what the future holds, but I do know that he's not going anywhere any time soon."

For now, she's trying to be present. Acting is one part of life that affords her the chance to be fully focused. Her film *Emilia Perez* premiered at the [Cannes Film Festival](#) in May—she and her co-stars received the festival's best actress award—and she'll soon wrap the fourth season of [Only Murders in the Building](#), a working environment she describes as feeling like home. ([Meryl Streep](#) walks around the set barefoot, singing! Sitting with [Steve Martin](#), [Martin Short](#), Streep, and guest star [Eugene Levy](#) recently made Gomez want to cry for the way they made her feel like she belongs. "I'll ask them, When did you stop caring about what people said?" she says. "And they'll all just ring off these one liners that'll just kill me.")

And she is well. Her lupus is in remission, blood pressure is good, the kidney is working like it's supposed to. I ask if she ever feels like it's unfair—she's 31 years old, living with bipolar and an incurable autoimmune disease, and knows what it's like to spend weeks in the ICU. She responds with a story about a boy she met during a hospital visit when she was 18. He wouldn't look her in the eye until she shared that she, too, suffered from lupus. "It was so sweet," she says. "In a weird way, I turned the bad things into a good thing."

---

Celebrity beauty brands abound, from [Ariana Grande's](#) r.e.m. to [Lady Gaga's](#) Haus Labs to Jennifer Lopez's JLo Beauty. Creating a line of consumer products is an age-old way for entertainers to diversify their revenue streams in a fickle industry, but stamping an über-famous name on a lipstick is no longer enough to make consumers want to buy it. The formulas still have to be good, and there needs to be a reason for the brand to exist. Kylie Jenner

repeatedly sold out of her Kylie Cosmetics Lip Kits, with customers hoping to achieve the same plumped look she had. (She eventually disclosed that she has received filler.) [Rihanna's Fenty Beauty](#), the top-selling celebrity brand reportedly at roughly \$600 million in annual sales, differentiated itself when it launched in 2017 by emphasizing its inclusive products for darker skin tones—a priority that aligned with Rihanna's values.

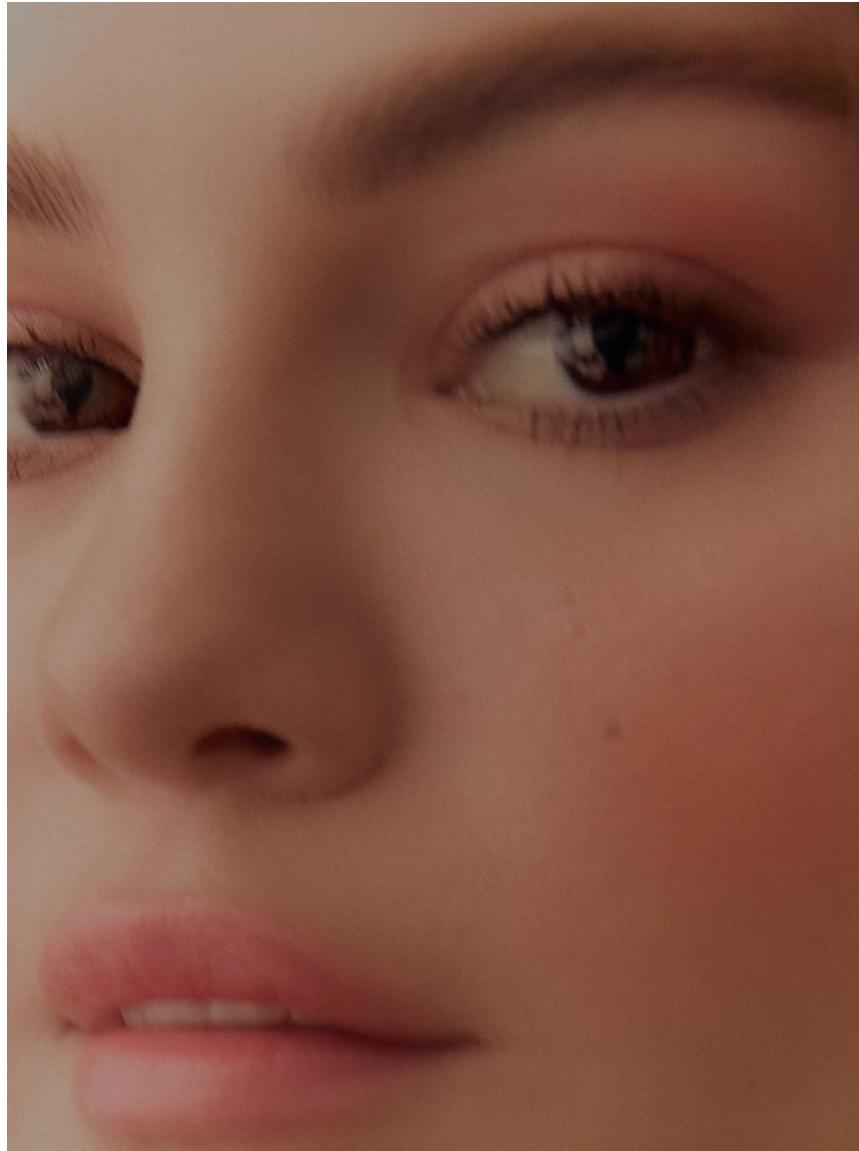


Gomez wants Rare Beauty to be a place where customers can go for affordable luxury products (compare Rare's \$30 foundation with Fenty's \$40 or Chantecaille's \$90 product, which went viral when the [Euphoria](#) makeup artist revealed she used it on the cast), but stay for a community of like-minded people who are comforted by the affirming ethos of the brand Gomez has created by emphasizing her own struggles. “That means a lot to the mental-health community, when someone is willing to be super honest,” says [Rudi Berry](#), a beauty influencer who also posts about living with OCD. “When you deal with mental health issues, it can feel really isolating, like you’re the only one on earth going through it.”

Rare's focus on mental health, and its investment in the cause through the Rare Impact Fund, not only fulfills its founder's vision

—it's also good business. In a 2023 study of Gen Z and millennial consumers in the U.S., 80% said they were more likely to purchase from a brand based on its mission. Another 2023 study found that Gen Z wants brands to focus on mental health more than any other issue, including climate. “We’re at a really exciting turning point in the private sector, where brands can be leveraged in a powerful and meaningful way to contribute to society,” says Elyse Cohen, Rare Beauty’s executive vice president of social impact. As president of the Rare Impact Fund, Cohen and her team identify and vet potential grantees, from well-known organizations like the [Trevor Project](#), a suicide-prevention and crisis-intervention organization for [LGBTQ youth](#), to smaller, grassroots groups like the [Mindful Life Project](#), a California nonprofit that places mental-health coaches in schools.

For Mindful Life founder JG Larochette, two \$150,000 grants have meant the ability to expand full-time services from 28 schools in six cities to 50 schools in 13 cities. The exposure Larochette has received through partnering with the brand online and at events has opened more doors to more potential funding, which can be a struggle for lesser-known nonprofits. “There’s a lot to be said when Selena Gomez and her team put a stamp of approval on you,” he says. And his work with Rare Beauty has helped him understand the way his student population is interacting with makeup: “If you look at the social media, it’s about authenticity. It’s about creativity. It’s about expression. You’re beautiful as you are, *and* you can express yourself as you want.”



---

Of all the parts of Rare Beauty, Gomez is primarily focused on the impact fund and product development. She relies on her managers, her lawyer, and the company's executives to help run the business. "I will admit it overwhelms me sometimes. I have this weird thing in my head where if I focus on the numbers, I'll lose whatever it is that made Rare Beauty Rare Beauty," she says. "I never wanted it to be about making a lot of money and that's it."

But it is making a lot of money. In 2023, sales of its most popular product, a \$23 liquid blush, reached \$70 million. Earlier this year, rumors swirled when Bloomberg reported Gomez had brought on financial advisers to [weigh a sale or IPO](#). On our walk, she's quick to shut down the idea that she's selling. "I don't have any plans on

that, genuinely,” she says, adding that she’s working on products for the next few years.

CEO Scott Friedman says it took a few years to build the company’s infrastructure while navigating a COVID-19-era launch and managing [supply-chain](#) issues; with things more settled, they recently retained investment banks to help envision the future. “We’re going to decide what’s the best way for us to become one of the largest, if not the largest, prestige beauty brands in the world, and it’s not a rush,” he says. “We are making our decisions to grow in the long run.”

Gomez says she gets more comments from strangers about Rare than anything else, and it means a lot that people enjoy the products for what they are, not because she made them. “That’s what makes me most proud,” she says. “When I’m able to have something like Rare or a single that people can relate to, I get so much joy when people say, ‘Hey, that helped me through a difficult time.’”



This is what we’re talking about—the value of real connection with other people—when we run out of trail. Suddenly, we’re deposited on the street, the noise of midday Manhattan a smack in the face. The bubble has burst and Gomez is spotted by a man dressed in all

black. He holds his phone up to her face and walks backward to match her stride as he films her, saying nothing.

“You don’t feel real sometimes,” Gomez says, continuing on. Half a block later, the guy is gone, and she’s back to observing the people on the street, rather than the other way around. New York is a place where a person can move freely, she notes. She can envision her 10-year-old sister being happy here, like the kids she sees walking themselves to school. “They’re completely fine on their own. They have an ownership—you have to own your life, you have to make a way for yourself,” Gomez says. “I kind of appreciate the realness.”

*If you or someone you know may be experiencing a mental-health crisis or contemplating suicide, call or text 988. In emergencies, call 911, or seek care from a local hospital or mental health provider.*

*Set design by Jenny Correa; styling by Erin Walsh; hair by Orlando Pita; makeup by Hung Vanngo*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6979619>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Inside Anthropic, the AI Company Betting That Safety Can Be a Winning Strategy

Billy Perrigo is a correspondent at TIME based in the London bureau. He covers the tech industry, focusing the companies reshaping our world in strange and unexpected ways. His investigation ‘Inside Facebook’s African Sweatshop’ was shortlisted for the 2022 Orwell Prize.



In the summer of 2022, [Dario Amodei](#) had a difficult decision to make. Anthropic, the AI company where he is co-founder and

CEO, had just finished training a new chatbot that was far more powerful than anything he had seen before. The team working on it at Anthropic's San Francisco headquarters were in awe of their creation, which they christened Claude.

Releasing Claude, Amodei knew, could earn fame and fortune for Anthropic, a roughly 50-person startup that had only launched the previous year. But he was worried about the potential consequences of unleashing the AI upon the world—so worried, in fact, that he ultimately decided not to, opting instead to continue internal safety testing. Some three months later, a rival lab, OpenAI, launched a similar product called [ChatGPT](#). It set off a frenzy of hype and investment that has reshaped the entire tech industry.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Many [Silicon Valley](#) entrepreneurs would see that kind of missed opportunity as the regret of a lifetime. But for Amodei, it was about more than business: he wanted to avoid triggering a race to build bigger, and perhaps more dangerous, AI systems. “I suspect it was the right thing to do,” says Amodei, 41, twirling a lock of curly dark hair between his fingers during a two-hour interview in May. “But it’s not totally clear-cut.”



His uncertainty is understandable, given that a race began anyway and that his decision likely cost Anthropic billions of dollars. But ChatGPT woke regulators up to something Amodei had been worrying about for years: that advanced AI could, if handled poorly, be catastrophically risky. Last July, Amodei testified in front of Senators in Washington, D.C.—arguing that systems powerful enough to “create large-scale destruction” and change the balance of power between nations could exist as soon as 2025.

Others, including OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, had made similar warnings. But many in the AI-safety community felt Amodei had greater credibility, viewing Anthropic’s decision to withhold Claude as a signal of its commitment to prioritizing safety over

money and acclaim. The lab was an underdog: the smallest of all the companies building “frontier” AI systems, the youngest, the least well-financed, and the most expressly committed to safety. This reputation has mostly endured, even as Anthropic has raised more than \$7 billion from [investors](#) including Amazon and Google, expanded to around 500 employees, and launched three generations of its Claude chatbot. (Salesforce, where TIME co-chair and owner Marc Benioff is CEO, has also invested.)

Claude 3, which Anthropic released in March, was by some measures the most capable publicly available AI system at the time, outperforming OpenAI’s GPT-4 and Google’s [Gemini](#). That put Anthropic in the curious position of having a reputation as the most cautious AI company, while also owning—and selling access to—one of today’s most advanced versions of the technology. Three days spent at Anthropic’s headquarters, and interviews with Amodei and nine senior employees, made it clear they don’t see that as a contradiction. “We’re not a company that believes a certain set of things about the dangers that AI systems are going to have,” Amodei says. Figuring out what those dangers really are is “an empirical question”—one he sees as Anthropic’s mission to answer with evidence. That, he says, requires building and studying powerful systems.

Amodei makes the case that the way Anthropic competes in the market can spark what it sees as an essential “race to the top” on safety. To this end, the company has voluntarily constrained itself: pledging not to release AIs above certain capability levels until it can develop sufficiently robust safety measures. Amodei hopes this approach—known as the Responsible Scaling Policy—will pressure competitors to make similar commitments, and eventually inspire binding government regulations. (Anthropic’s main competitors OpenAI and Google [DeepMind](#) have since released similar policies.) “We’re not trying to say we’re the good guys and

the others are the bad guys,” Amodei says. “We’re trying to pull the ecosystem in a direction where everyone can be the good guy.”

\*\*\*

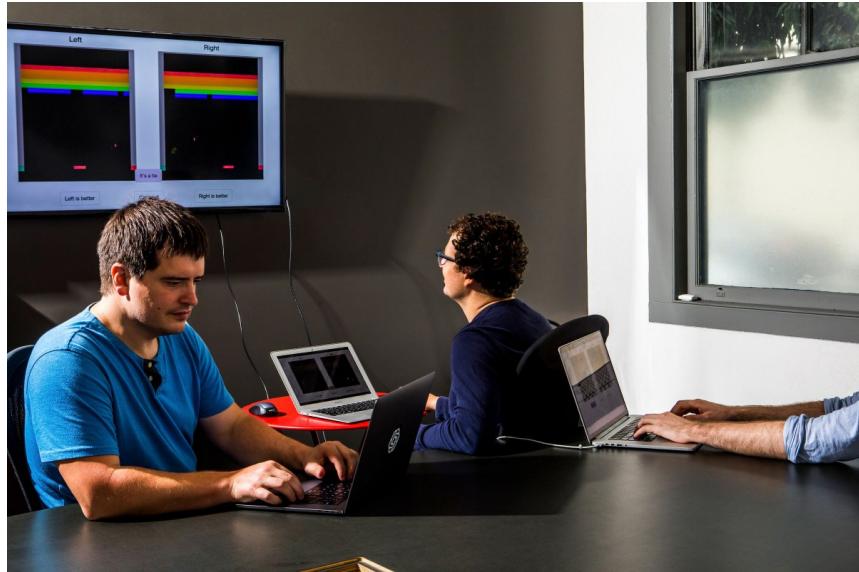
**Growing up in** an Italian-American family in San Francisco, Amodei displayed precocious talent from an early age. As a toddler, he would declare “counting days” and strive to count as high as he could, his sister Daniela recalls their mother saying. By the 11th grade, Dario was taking undergrad math classes at the University of California, Berkeley—but unlike many kids who excel at quantitative subjects, he “was equally interested in the arc of human events,” says Daniela, who is Anthropic’s president and co-founder. The young siblings grew up hearing stories of how, in the 1930s, their maternal grandmother had chained herself to the Italian embassy in Chicago to protest the country’s invasion of Ethiopia. “We thought about and cared about: do people in other parts of the world have what we have?” Daniela says of the family’s attitude. The pair “both felt this immense responsibility for wanting to make the world better,” she recalls.

After a physics Ph.D. at Princeton, Amodei became a machine-learning researcher. In 2016 he joined OpenAI, where he helped discover the so-called scaling laws—which essentially proved that better performance could be achieved by training [AI systems](#) with more data and computing power, rather than relying on new algorithms. Amodei grew concerned that those factors, combined with market incentives, could undermine safety. “We’re building a technology that’s powerful and potentially dangerous,” he says. “It’s built from simple components. And anyone can build it if they have enough money.”

In 2020, Amodei and several colleagues discussed leaving OpenAI, which had just signed a \$1 billion deal with [Microsoft](#). Amodei, then vice president for research, distrusted Altman and president Greg Brockman, according to one person who spoke with Amodei

at the time. In late 2020, he and six senior staff resigned, and founded Anthropic in early 2021. Seven more OpenAI staff joined soon after. Asked about his reasons for leaving, Amodei is diplomatic. “It all comes down to trust, and having the same values and the same mission alignments,” he says of his co-founders. “We were on the same page. We trusted each other. We were doing this for the right reasons.” Asked if this means he did not trust others at OpenAI, Amodei declines to comment.

Several of Anthropic’s initial employees and funders had ties to effective altruism (EA), a philosophy and movement popular in Silicon Valley that aims to do the most good in the world by using quantitative methods. Effective altruists were some of the earliest people to take seriously the study of catastrophic risks from AI, and many in the AI safety community—though not all—subscribe to the philosophy to varying degrees. EA has become more controversial in the last 18 months, in part because of disgraced cryptocurrency mogul Sam Bankman Fried, who identified as an EA and is currently serving a 25-year jail sentence for fraud. Through his firm FTX, Bankman Fried invested \$500 million in Anthropic. (The majority of FTX’s stake was sold in March to a [consortium of investors](#); the rest is held by the FTX estate, which has a mandate to make defrauded investors whole.) Some of Anthropic’s earliest funding came from other EA-affiliated investors, including Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and Skype co-founder Jaan Tallinn. Ties to effective altruism probably go deeper at Anthropic than they do at rival AI labs, though the movement’s stamp on the company appears to have waned as Anthropic has grown to more than 500 people. Neither Dario nor Daniela Amodei have ever personally identified as EAs, a company spokesperson said, but added that the siblings are “clearly sympathetic to some of the ideas that underpin effective altruism.”



In any case, their belief in the transformative nature of AI led Anthropic's co-founders to structure their new company differently from the one they'd departed. Anthropic is a public benefit corporation, meaning its board is legally empowered to balance returns for investors with a separate mission to ensure that "transformative AI helps people and society flourish." A separate body of experts in international development, AI safety, and national security, called the Long Term Benefit Trust, has the power to elect and fire a subset of the board: currently one out of five, rising to three out of five by November. (The trust's members have no equity in the company.) Amodei argues this system aligns the interests of the public, employees, and shareholders, in a way that doesn't compromise Anthropic's stability, giving it greater leeway to sacrifice profits if it judges doing so is necessary for safety. "We mostly run the business like normal," Amodei says, "but when we run into something that affects people outside the market transaction who didn't consent to that transaction, we're able to do the right thing." Still, while the structure is different from OpenAI's, power ultimately lies with a small, unaccountable group. And while board members are somewhat shielded from shareholder lawsuits, it's unclear whether the public could sue Anthropic's board members for *not* prioritizing safety.

## [\*\*Read More: How Anthropic Designed Itself to Avoid OpenAI's Mistakes\*\*](#)

A fundamental fact underpins most worries about today’s machine-learning systems: they are *grown*, not designed. Instead of writing explicit code, computer scientists feed huge amounts of data into [neural networks](#), which are pattern-matching systems. With enough data and computing power, neural networks learn—nobody knows exactly how—to speak, do arithmetic, recognize concepts, and make logical connections. But look inside, and all you see is a bunch of inscrutable numbers. “People are often surprised that we don’t understand these systems,” says Chris Olah, an Anthropic co-founder who leads the lab’s interpretability team. “The core reason is because we grow them, rather than create them directly.”

AI companies including Anthropic are now scaling at a breakneck pace, raising the question of what new capabilities might emerge. Today, researchers seeking to assess if an AI is safe chat with it and examine the outputs. But that approach fails to address the concern that future systems could conceal their dangerous capabilities from humans. “What we’d like to be able to do is look inside the model as an object—like scanning the brain instead of interviewing someone,” Amodei says. In a major breakthrough toward that goal, Anthropic announced in May that researchers had identified millions of “features”—combinations of artificial neurons representing individual concepts—inside a version of Claude. By toggling those features on and off, they could alter Claude’s behavior. This new strategy for addressing both current and hypothetical risks has sparked a wave of optimism at Anthropic. Olah says Anthropic’s bet that this research could be useful for safety is “now starting to pay off.”

\*\*\*

**On the day** of our interview, Amodei apologizes for being late, explaining that he had to take a call from a “senior government

official.” Over the past 18 months he and Jack Clark, another co-founder and Anthropic’s policy chief, have nurtured closer ties with the Executive Branch, lawmakers, and the national-security establishment in Washington, urging the U.S. to [stay ahead in AI](#), especially to counter [China](#). (Several Anthropic staff have security clearances allowing them to access confidential information, according to the company’s head of security and global affairs, who declined to share their names. Clark, who is originally British, recently obtained U.S. citizenship.) During a recent forum at the U.S. Capitol, Clark argued it would be “a chronically stupid thing” for the U.S. to underestimate [China on AI](#), and called for the government to invest in computing infrastructure. “The U.S. needs to stay ahead of its adversaries in this technology,” Amodei says. “But also we need to provide reasonable safeguards.”

**Read More:** [\*No One Truly Knows How AI Systems Work. A New Discovery Could Change That\*](#)

Not everyone believes Anthropic’s narrative about itself. Some critics say that while the lab is doing important safety research, its creation of frontier AI models still heightens dangerous competitive pressures. Others—both skeptics of AI hype and “accelerationists” who want to see AI built as fast as possible—argue that its calls for regulation are a bid for regulatory capture by Big Tech. (Amodei flatly rejects that claim: “It’s just not true that a lot of what we’re advocating for is going to help the large companies.”) Some worry that its relentless focus on so-called “existential” risks is a distraction from nearer-term worries like bias, copyright infringement, and the environmental costs of training new AI models.

And even if Anthropic succeeds in encouraging an industry-wide “race to the top” on safety, its commitments thus far—including the one to not release unsafe models—have all been voluntary. “What they’ve set up is a process that could easily fall by the wayside to the profit motive,” says Andrew Strait, an associate director at the

Ada Lovelace Institute, an AI think tank, referring to Anthropic and its competitors who have made similar commitments. “It’s not a bad thing for companies to be putting these [policies] out, but it’s now on governments to come up with the surrounding regulatory infrastructure to bolster that, and make it so they’re not the ones setting their own thresholds.”

But where others see contradictions, Amodei sees nuance. He envisions different paths depending on what Anthropic learns about the difficulty of making AI safe. If it turns out that the task of aligning AI systems to human values is easy, he wants Anthropic to forge ahead, with a focus on minimizing harms like misuse. If it’s technically difficult, he wants to focus on the breakthroughs necessary to reduce catastrophic risks. And if it’s near impossible, he would want Anthropic to gather “very strong evidence” that would allow him to say to government officials, “There is a clear and present danger.” He simply couldn’t do that today. “I don’t think it would be credible,” he says.

The question remains whether Anthropic can survive long enough to get to that point. Claude 3 cost somewhere between \$30 million and \$300 million to train, Amodei says, declining to be more specific. He predicts training frontier models in 2024 will cost on the order of \$1 billion; the trend suggests the generation after that would cost more like \$10 billion. If those models fail to meet expectations, investment could dry up and AI progress would stall. If the exponential trend holds, Anthropic will need more funding to keep up with [Google](#), Microsoft, and Amazon. All are now training their own models in-house, and have far more cash than Anthropic to spend on the computing power demanded by modern AI.

It’s unclear where this money will come from, and what concessions new investors might seek in return. Big tech companies might stump up more cash, perhaps on the condition of a change to Anthropic’s public benefit structure. Anthropic could raise the money itself by selling Claude more aggressively, thus

further exposing itself to the perverse incentives of the market. It could turn to the government for funding—an option Amodei says he is open to. If none of those options works, a larger competitor may attempt to acquire Anthropic. But the lab's executives are confident that its combination of talented staff, proprietary algorithms, and reputation for safety will keep Anthropic independent and at the frontier for years to come. "The essential bet of Anthropic is, we will show in business that a safer technology makes more money," says policy chief Clark. "So whenever I see competition, I'm like: Cool. Bring it on."

Anthropic employees trade in metaphors: brain scanners, "grown" neural networks, races to both top and bottom. Amodei offers one more, comparing his decision not to release Claude in 2022 to the prisoner's dilemma. In this famous game-theory experiment, two prisoners face a choice: betray the other for a chance at freedom, or stay silent and cooperate for a reduced sentence. If both betray, they each fare worse than if they'd cooperated. It's a situation where individual incentives lead to worse collective outcomes—a dynamic Amodei sees playing out in the AI industry today. Companies taking risks are rewarded by the market, while responsible actions are punished. "I don't want us to be in this impossible prisoner's dilemma," Amodei says. "I want to change the ecosystem *so there is no* prisoner's dilemma, and everyone's incentivized to do the right thing."

—With reporting by Will Henshall/Washington

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6980000>

## Javier Milei's Radical Plan to Transform Argentina

Vera Bergengruen is a senior correspondent at TIME, based in the Washington, D.C. bureau. She covers the overlap of national security, politics, and technology. Her work at TIME has won the Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi Award and a New York Press Club Award.



President Javier Milei hates his new office. The Casa Rosada, with its historic blue chair and ornate paneled walls, feels tainted by his predecessors, who he believes drove Argentina into ruin. But there is one detail Milei loves. Engraved into a fireplace mantle is a bronze lion, the animal he adopted as a symbol during his dizzying rise to power. Showing me around the vast second-floor space, Milei gestures to a blown-up photo of the lion, propped on his desk as a totem of his destiny. “He was waiting for me here,” he says.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Milei may be the world's most eccentric head of state. Not long ago, he was a libertarian economist and TV pundit known as *El*

*Loco*—the madman—for his profane outbursts. The oddities of his campaign often overshadowed the stark austerity program he promoted to pull the country out of its economic crisis. Milei, who has bragged about being a tantric sex guru, brandished a chainsaw at rallies to symbolize his plans to slash government spending, dressed up as a superhero who sang about fiscal policy, and told voters that his five cloned English mastiffs, which he reportedly consults in telepathic conversations, are his “best strategists.” He pledged to eliminate the nation’s central bank, derided climate change as a socialist conspiracy, and assailed Pope Francis, the first Argentine Pontiff, as a “leftist son of a bitch.” Last November, he won in a landslide.

The unlikely ascendance of a self-described “anarcho-capitalist” reflects the strength of a right-wing populist movement that has won elections around the world in recent years. Like his counterparts from Italy to Hungary, Brazil to Peru, the U.S. to India, Milei vowed to dismantle a corruption-riddled state ruled by shadowy elites. “Let it all blow up, let the economy blow up, and take this entire garbage political caste down with it,” he said during the campaign. But none of his counterparts is quite like Milei, with his volcanic temper, mad scientist’s bearing—he claims not to comb his wild mop of hair because the “invisible hand of the market” does it for him—and messianic streak. And none of them leads a nation like Argentina, a resource-rich regional power plagued by decades of political mismanagement and economic instability, which has now become a test case for the governing theories of a radical ideologue. “Crossing from the laboratory into the real world is marvelous,” he says with a broad grin. “It’s fantastic!”



Since taking office, Milei, 53, has frozen public-works projects, devalued the peso by more than 50%, and announced plans to lay off more than 70,000 government workers. So far, he sees signs that his economic “shock therapy” is working. Inflation has slowed for four months in a row. The International Monetary Fund has hailed Argentina’s “impressive” progress. Two days before we sat down on April 25 for an hour-long interview, he had given an address to the nation celebrating the “economic miracle” of the country’s first quarterly budget surplus since 2008. Milei thinks he is pioneering an approach that will become a global blueprint. “Argentina will become a model for how to transform a country into a prosperous nation,” he tells me. “I have no doubt.”

Others do. While Milei vowed the “political caste” would bear the brunt, his austerity measures have pummeled ordinary Argentines. The annual inflation rate is still nearly 300%, among the highest in the world. Many Argentines have been forced to carry bags of cash for even small transactions; some stores have given up on price stickers entirely. Milei’s moves—cutting federal aid, transport and energy subsidies, and getting rid of price controls—have caused living costs to spike. More than 55% of Argentines are mired in poverty, up from 45% in December. Milei may be running out of time before his popular support crumbles. “Everybody knew the cost would be huge,” says Argentina’s Foreign Minister Diana Mondino, a close adviser. “What we’re experiencing, nobody likes it. But there’s no other way.”

Argentina’s economy has been bad enough for long enough that polls show a majority of the nation’s 46 million people remain willing to give Milei a chance. Yet it’s not clear the iconoclastic new President is interested in forging the political alliances required to push his sweeping structural reforms through Argentina’s legislature. There are also signs that Milei has misread the scope of his mandate. He won by presenting himself as an antidote to political and economic mismanagement. But it’s clear he also sees himself as part of a broader cultural battle. He has embarked on an international speaking tour, casting himself as a global crusader against socialism, attacking everything from gender-equity laws to climate activists. And in a nation still haunted by the legacy of its brutal military dictatorship of the 1970s and ’80s, Milei’s broadsides against the press and threats against political “traitors” can take on an authoritarian cast. “Much of the support for Milei was for his economic program, not his libertarian vision or anti-woke agenda,” says Benjamin Gedan, director of the Wilson Center’s Latin America Program. “But his view is, ‘You wanted me, and you got me. And I’ll plow ahead.’”

---

**To meet with Milei**, you have to go through the person he calls *El Jefe*, the boss: his sister. On the day of our interview, Karina Milei, sporting silver sequined flip-flops, guarded the door to the President's office before allowing me in. Karina, 52, is a former tarot reader who until a few years ago was selling cakes on Instagram. Now she controls which journalists her brother speaks with, which photos of him are released, and, reportedly, what Cabinet ministers are hired and fired. (She declined to be interviewed for this article.) One of Milei's first acts as President was to change a decree barring relatives from Cabinet positions in order to appoint her General Secretary of the Presidency.



Milei's tight relationship with his sister is an exception. He is said to have few close friends, and is recently single after breaking off a relationship with a glamorous TV actress. Instead, he moved into the presidential residence at Los Olivos with the 200-lb. cloned dogs he calls his "little four-legged children," each of them named after a famous economist.

Raised in a Buenos Aires suburb, Milei had a troubled childhood. He has said he was physically abused by his father, and declared in TV interviews that he regards his parents as "dead to me." While he played goalkeeper in a soccer club and sang in a Rolling Stones

cover band, classmates mainly remembered him for the furious outbursts that first earned him his nickname.

Milei became interested in economic theory during Argentina's bout with hyperinflation in the 1980s. He spent the next 20 years as an economics professor, publishing dozens of academic papers and serving as a financial analyst for think tanks, banks, and private companies. In 2015, he began to appear on TV as a pundit, becoming notorious for expletive-ridden tirades against the "political caste." He emerged as a national figure during the COVID-19 pandemic, going viral on TikTok for his rants against government lockdowns. In 2021, he decided to jump into politics. Karina managed his successful campaign for a seat in the lower house of the legislature, which included an ad that showed him destroying a model of the Central Bank with Thor's hammer.

Later that year, the Milei siblings created La Libertad Avanza, a new political coalition, to allow him to run for the presidency. At the time, people close to him said in interviews that Milei, who was rumored to hire mediums to communicate with his deceased pet and dead philosophers, believed that God had told him to run for the presidency. "Milei's driving force is that he truly believes he's on a divine mission," says his biographer Juan Luis González. At rallies, fans wore hats with the words "The strengths of the heavens," a reference to a favorite Bible verse. "I didn't come here to lead lambs, but to awaken lions," a leather-clad Milei roared at his events.



He also drew inspiration from outside the country. He pledged to “Make Argentina Great Again,” and his campaign rallies featured posters of Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, along with the Gadsden flags once ubiquitous at Tea Party rallies. Milei channeled widespread anger at Peronism, the left-leaning political movement that has dominated Argentine politics since the 1940s, which championed social justice and workers’ rights but produced an economy that has defaulted on its sovereign debt nine times and owes a staggering \$44 billion to the IMF. “He capitalized on the crisis in the old political order,” says Argentine political consultant Sergio Berensztein.

“*Viva la libertad, carajo!*” became Milei’s famous rallying cry: “Long live freedom, damn it!” Milei has an absolutist’s faith in free markets: he favors loosening gun restrictions to “maximize the cost of robbery,” and has said he would support the sale of human organs. “At first, I told him he would have to take it down a couple of gears,” says Luis Caputo, his Economy Minister. “But it was amazing how the people responded. After a few months, I told him, ‘Never mind—actually, take it up even further!’”

As a running mate, Milei chose Victoria Villarruel, a conservative from a military family involved in Argentina’s “Dirty War” in the 1970s and ’80s. During that period, the ruling junta forcibly

disappeared, imprisoned, tortured, or killed tens of thousands of suspected dissidents—a dark chapter in the nation’s history that both Villarruel and Milei have downplayed. Milei vowed he would not bow to “cultural Marxism” and criticized public education as “brainwashing.” The ticket at first drew support from young men who liked his diatribes and social media persona. But faced with the choice between Milei and then Economy Minister Sergio Massa, millions of Argentines were so weary of the economic morass that they were willing to give the outsider a chance. He won with 56% of the vote. “Today one way of doing politics has ended and another begins,” he told supporters. “There is no way back.”



---

**The new way** of politics in Argentina is playing out on Milei’s social media feed. The President often stays up until the early morning hours, scrolling on X, formerly Twitter. He’s so prolific on the platform that an Argentine programmer set up a popular website called “How many tweets has our President liked today?” On the day we spoke, he liked or retweeted 336 posts, much of it delirious all-caps praise of himself. “It doesn’t interfere with my job,” says Milei, who tells me he is “addicted to work” and takes breaks only to eat, travel, read economic texts, and play with his dogs in the specially made kennels he had built at the presidential residence.

The administration's early motto has been "*No hay plata*"—There is no money. Milei's austerity measures caused prices to soar, from transportation and food to health care costs. He told Argentines that the effects of his plan would look like the letter V—a steep economic descent before hitting rock bottom, followed by a sharp rebound. In his interview with TIME, Milei declared the worst part was over. "I said that the road would be tough, but that this time it would be worth it," he tells me, referring to his inauguration speech, in which he asked the public for patience.

But for many, patience is hard to come by. "It's easy to have patience when you have enough to eat," said Jorge Alvarez, a 62-year-old street vendor who says the rise in bus fare has made it almost pointless to commute to his jewelry stall in central Buenos Aires. "We all desperately want this to work, but I can't buy meat anymore," says Alvarez. "My son can't go to physical therapy. I can't travel to see my parents. These are our lives, and there's a limit to how much we can take at a time."

The real test, according to both domestic and foreign analysts and officials, will be whether Milei can advance long-term structural reforms while minimizing the social disruptions and backlash that have sunk previous attempts. Milei's party represents a small minority in both chambers of Argentina's legislature. Emergency decrees can go only so far; lasting change will require winning elections and making new allies. That, in turn, requires a deft political touch, which is still not Milei's strong suit. Since taking office, he has branded lawmakers who disagree with him "traitors"; called Colombian President Gustavo Petro a "terrorist murderer," leading Colombia to expel Argentine diplomats; and blasted Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's wife as "corrupt" at a far-right rally in Madrid, prompting the country to recall its ambassador.

Milei's first 100 days came and went without any legislative achievements. An omnibus bill that would have given him

sweeping executive powers and included measures ranging from the privatization of state entities to penalties for protesters stalled in committee. “If they expected that the President would change the way he is, that’s never going to happen,” Manuel Adorni, his exhausted-looking spokesman, told me in his small office in the Casa Rosada, sipping maté. Earlier in the day, Adorni had spent his press briefing shooting down questions from reporters about his boss’s mental health, spurred by Milei’s repeated reference to having five dogs, even though one is known to have died years ago. (“If the President says there are five dogs, there are five dogs, and that’s the end of it.”)

[video id=sQy69LSI autostart="viewable"]

The media is among Milei’s favorite targets. He has shuttered Argentine state news agency Télam, the only service that covers and reaches into the country’s provinces, accusing it of being a mouthpiece for leftist propaganda. His open hostility to critical journalists, whom he derided in our interview as “extortionists” and “liars,” is amplified by an aggressive network of online supporters. Many who interact with Milei say he sees the world through the lens of right-wing memes. “The place in the world where he is comfortable is social media,” says Lucía Vincent, a political scientist at the National University of San Martín. Milei divides the public into two camps, Vincent adds. The first is “supporters who only see your actions as a crusade for good,” she says, “and anyone beyond that border as an enemy who must be exterminated.”

---

**One day in** late April, more than a million Argentines took to the streets in what turned into the largest protests of Milei’s presidency. Tens of thousands crowded into the Plaza de Mayo in central Buenos Aires, lifting books above their heads in opposition to the drastic budget cuts to public universities. The sunny day had the atmosphere of a festival, with vendors selling *choripán* and ice cream, and young demonstrators dancing to Latin rock.

Among the most common signs hoisted by protesters was a simple plea: “*Cuidemos lo que funciona*” (Let’s protect what is working). Budget cuts and ongoing inflation had led university officials to declare a financial emergency, warning they would soon run out of money. At the renowned University of Buenos Aires, hallways were dark; classrooms went without air-conditioning in an effort to save on energy bills. “We have never experienced this situation before in the last 40 years of democracy,” says the university’s chancellor, Ricardo Gelpi, calling the cuts an “extremely grave situation compromising the future of hundreds of thousands of Argentines.”

It was clear that Milei had touched a third rail of Argentine society, which prides itself on its public higher education. But the President lashed back. In posts on X, he accused the universities of “indoctrination” and tweeted a cartoon of a lion drinking a mug of “leftist tears.” When I raise the protests during our interview, he immediately flashes the fury that first made him famous on television. “Are you then in favor of a group that, because they lost the elections, tries to stage a coup?” Milei asks me, leaning over the table and raising his voice. “They made up a lie, which led society to march,” he tells me, dismissing the student protests as a cynical ploy by left-wing opponents. “Those people complaining are the same ones who sank Argentina.” Then he leans back with a placid smile, as if a switch had been flicked. “Everything we’re accused of is false.”

The realities of the office have prompted Milei to ease off a few of the targets of his ire. Backpedaling from his broadsides against Pope Francis, who is widely beloved in the predominantly Catholic country, Milei visited him in Rome with *alfajores* cookies. During our interview, Milei seemed to soften several key campaign positions, including plans to replace the peso with the dollar and refuse to do business with China’s “communist assassin” regime—

a policy evolution that likely owes to Argentina's dependence on Chinese investment and trade.

Milei's antipathy toward Beijing, which invested heavily in Argentina over the past two decades as part of its bid to exert influence in the region, is a break from his predecessors. He withdrew Argentina from a plan to enter the BRICS alliance, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and instead asked to join NATO as a global partner. Despite their obvious differences, the Biden Administration has scrambled to seize the opportunity to forge ties in a region where China has been ascendant. A parade of high-ranking officials have trekked to Buenos Aires, from Secretary of State Antony Blinken to General Laura Richardson, the U.S. Southern Command chief. In April, the U.S. announced \$40 million in foreign military financing. American officials say Milei is surprisingly easy to work with. He is reachable directly on WhatsApp, where he swaps messages freely, exchanging lion emojis with U.S. Ambassador Marc Stanley.

Milei has also tempered his prior criticism of President Joe Biden, whom he once labeled a socialist. "Given my current role, I handle things cautiously," he says. Yet it's clear whom he favors in the 2024 elections. In addition to aping Trump's campaign slogan, Milei has spoken at CPAC and given interviews to right-wing media figures like Tucker Carlson and Ben Shapiro. "President!" he shrieked in a video posted of a February encounter with Trump, enveloping him in an ecstatic hug. "I hope to see you again, and the next time I hope you will be President." For his part, Trump—as he is wont to do—took credit for Milei's victory. "He ran as Trump," the Republican said in December. "Make Argentina Great Again. It was perfect."

But in important ways, the two men are very different. "Milei is a rigid ideologue, a true believer," a senior U.S. diplomat told me, "and Trump only believes in himself." Milei believes he was elected for his promises of a broader cultural revolution, not in

spite of them, and he is intent on realizing that mission no matter the political costs. Making the nation “Great Again” means “returning to those libertarian values that made Argentina a leading global power,” he told me. “That is my vision.”



Instead of traveling to meet other heads of state, Milei has been appearing at international conferences to rail against socialism. At Davos, Switzerland, he warned “the West is in danger” and accused its leaders of being “co-opted” by “radical feminism” and “neo-Marxists.” He has met twice with Tesla CEO Elon Musk, whom he sees as a prominent ideological ally. “There’s an economic battle, a political battle, and a cultural battle,” Milei says. “We believe post-Marxism … could lead the world to ruin.” But while he relishes his rising international profile, Milei knows his success will be determined at home. On April 30, he notched his first legislative win when a curtailed version of his omnibus bill was approved by the lower house of Congress. “We strongly believe this is the only way,” Mondino, the Foreign Minister, says of Milei’s severe austerity program. “When the French Revolution started, lots of people died. It was chaos. But 15 other countries opened up within 60 years.”

Success will require Milei to make new allies, including members of the political “caste” he has spent years railing against, and to

maintain public support amid brutal cost-cutting. Unlike perhaps any other leader elected in the wave of right-wing populism that carried Argentina's anarcho-capitalist leader to power, Milei has shown he will follow through on the radical plans he campaigned on. "The world is watching," says Caputo, the Economy Minister. "Because if Argentina manages to reverse this, it means that anyone can."

[video id=4NNg3tLb]

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6980600>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## How We Choose the TIME100 Companies of 2024

Sam Jacobs is Editor in Chief at TIME where he leads TIME's global newsroom and its journalism across all platforms. Since joining TIME in 2013, Jacobs has held a variety of senior editorial leadership positions. Previously, he was national political correspondent at Reuters, associate editor at Newsweek and staff reporter for The Daily Beast. His writing has appeared in the Boston Globe and New York Observer.



In May, *TIME*'s Billy Perrigo traveled to San Francisco to meet with Dario Amodei, the CEO and co-founder of [Anthropic](#), one of the most important artificial intelligence startups in the world. Anthropic and TIME100 Companies, our annual list of the world's most influential businesses, both were started three years ago. Having Amodei and his company on the cover of this issue speaks loudly about how quickly AI has moved to the top of the agenda of the world's leading companies, even those that are not in the business of developing it themselves. The rise of Anthropic, valued at \$15 billion, also reveals how quickly influence can take shape. A lot can change and fast: only seven companies on [this year's TIME100 Companies list](#) appeared in the [2023 edition](#).

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

*[See the list here](#)*

Amodei and his colleagues have become both the creators of some of today's most powerful AI technology and at the same time perhaps the leading advocates within their field for taking a cautious approach to AI development and exploration. "We're not trying to say we're the good guys and the others are the bad guys," Amodei tells TIME. "We're trying to pull the ecosystem in a direction where everyone can be the good guy."

The second business featured on the cover of our [TIME100 Companies](#) is also a relatively new one. In 2020, entertainer Selena Gomez launched [Rare Beauty](#). In the short time since, Gomez has led the cosmetics company to a \$2 billion valuation, as it has become a regular subject of acquisition rumors ("I don't have any plans on that, genuinely," Gomez tells TIME's Lucy Feldman) and a powerful example of how individuals with vision and strong followings can continue to disrupt consumer businesses. (If you need another example, please see our cover profile of MrBeast from earlier this year.) Gomez's message is one that values contentment over beauty, and Rare boasts having raised millions that support mental health initiatives.

To select the list, our editors, led by Emma Barker, request suggestions and applications from across sectors, survey our contributors and correspondents around the world, and seek advice from outside experts. No single data point or financial metric makes a TIME100 Company. Instead, we are looking at a mosaic of qualities, studying impact, innovation, ambition, and success, all in the many different forms that take shape today. And as we say for our other TIME100 projects, we know influence comes in many forms, for better and for worse.

TIME100 Companies is more than an index of business success. It is an argument for what business influence looks like in 2024. At a time when leadership in other sectors is battered, surveys suggest that many look to corporate leaders first for direction. Whether it is José Andrés at [World Central Kitchen](#), Cathy Engelbert at the [WNBA](#), or Jensen Huang at [Nvidia](#), each shows us how companies can provide new models and new inspiration for the future of humanity.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6981599>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

# The Question the World Needs to Ask About the Middle East Right Now

Karl Vick is an editor at large at TIME. He has also served as TIME's Jerusalem bureau chief. He has reported from 60 countries and in 2001 was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for coverage of the spread of AIDS in Africa.



If the Middle East is a puzzle, it's one that grew even harder to imagine ever clicking together as the evening of May 19 gave way to May 20. In the space of 24 hours, the President of Iran was killed, and the Prime Minister of Israel learned that a warrant for his arrest for war crimes and crimes against humanity were sought by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), who also wanted warrants for leaders of Hamas. Even before Saudi Arabia announced its elderly King was gravely ill, the point had come home: nearly eight months after Oct. 7, the essential question in the Middle East is leadership.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

## Iran's status quo

In Iran, more than fog obscured the [helicopter crash](#) that left President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others dead. Though the default explanation traced the cause to an aviation fleet stunted by decades of U.S. sanctions, [conspiracy theories](#) regarded that as a handy cover for either Mossad—in retaliation for Iran’s April 13 assault on Israel—or bloody-minded rivals of Raisi in the competition to succeed 85-year-old Ali Khamenei in in Iran’s top job. His title, Supreme Leader, says it all.

Unlike Gen. Qasem Soleimani, whose [popularity](#) across Iranian society made his 2020 assassination [by U.S. drone](#) a profound loss to the regime, [Raisi](#) left no void. [Khamenei](#) will decide which hardline apparatchik appears on the ballot to replace him. He vowed “no disruption in the country’s work.” Iran will continue waging war on Israel by arming Hamas in Gaza and Hizballah in Lebanon.

## Netanyahu besieged

Israel’s conviction that not only those enemies but also the world is against them feeds a bristling solidarity that may have been the only comfort to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after the news that, with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, [his arrest was sought](#) by the prosecutor of the ICC. The charges, which await approval by a panel of judges, allege deliberately killing civilians and starvation as a weapon in Israel’s war against Hamas in [Gaza](#), where 35,000 have been killed, per [the count](#) of the Hamas-run health ministry, which is accepted by the U.S. and the U.N.

Prosecutor Karim Khan also seeks the arrest of Yahya Sinwar, who [organized](#) the Oct. 7 attack; Mohammed Deif, who leads Hamas’ armed wing; and Ismail Haniyeh, its political chief, based in Qatar. Sinwar and Deif are thought to be in Gaza, where Israel has been trying to kill them. The charges—including rape, torture, taking hostages—serve to reinforce Israel’s efforts to direct global

attention to the 1,200 Israelis killed in the worst attack on Jews since the Holocaust. But Hamas made its name with suicide bombings and has little to lose from the ICC's accusations, whereas Israel—a society built around [what it calls](#) “the most moral army in the world”—has historically sought to claim the high ground. The ICC move was a body blow to a state that, despite defiant statements about going it alone, relies heavily on the support of Western allies, especially the U.S. To wit: As many as half of those 300 Iranian missiles and drones knocked out of the sky in April [were downed by](#) the U.S. and others.

**Read more:** [What ICC Arrest Warrants Would Mean for Israel and Hamas Leaders](#)

The risk to Netanyahu is both personal—he might be arrested if he travels to any of the 124 nations that signed the treaty creating the court—and political. Already blamed by Israelis for the security lapses that allowed Oct. 7, he [also owns](#) all that has followed, including the fate of the [remaining 128 hostages](#). Days before the ICC news, [Gallant berated Netanyahu](#) for refusing to formulate a “day after” plan for Gaza, beyond leaving troops there indefinitely. Former military chief of staff Benny Gantz, the only other member of Israel’s war cabinet, then gave Netanyahu a June 8 deadline to come up with an endgame, [arguing](#) that progress was impaired by Netanyahu’s “personal interest” in refusing to defy the far right, which he brought into the mainstream in order to win office. “If you choose the path of the zealots and lead the whole state into the abyss, we will be forced to leave,” Gantz said, threatening to force an election.

## The Saudi question

Saudi Arabia, of course, makes no pretense of democracy. Even King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, 88, routinely defers to Crown Prince [Mohammed bin Salman](#), who on May 20 [delayed](#) a foreign

trip as the monarch's health took a turn. Along with the [execution](#) of Jamal Khashoggi, MBS might be best known for his keenness to establish relations with Israel. To confront rival Iran, the Saudi was prepared to let Israel have its way with Palestinians. A [pact](#) on those terms was getting closer when Oct. 7 returned the matter of a Palestinian state to center stage.

To much of the world, such a state seems inevitable. Spain, Norway, and Ireland [declared](#) May 22 that they would recognize one. But in Israel, the debate is whether to establish what Gantz termed "an international civilian governance mechanism for Gaza, including American, European, Arab, and Palestinian elements." What exactly the "Palestinian elements" would be was not identified, and so qualifies as a missing piece. But hardly the only one.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6981521>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

# The State Department Just Issued a Worldwide Travel Advisory for U.S. Citizens. Here's Why

Solcyré (Sol) Burga is a general assignment reporter at TIME. She covers U.S. news with a focus on student loans and LGBTQ+ issues.



The U.S. Department of State issued a worldwide travel advisory on Friday due to a “potential for terrorist attacks, demonstrations, or violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests,” the agency [announced](#).

The State Department specifically pointed to increased violence against LGBTQ+ people and pride-related events as a reason for the advisory. The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 2022 crime report showed that anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes in the U.S. had steadily risen from the year prior, with a [near 33% increase](#) in reported hate crimes based on gender identity.

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

LGBTQ+ protections largely vary worldwide, with regions like Latin America seeing [greater gains in marriage equality](#), while in

Europe, countries like Russia have gone so far as to target the queer community [as an extremist organization](#).

It is not the first time the State Department has issued such an alert. In October 2023, the agency [also put out a](#) worldwide caution advisory, asking Americans overseas to be careful due to “the potential for violence and increased tensions” worldwide. A similar alert was also issued in August 2022 after the death of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Citizens should stay alert during pride celebrations and LGBTQ+ venues abroad, the Department suggested. It also asked people to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) program, which shares information regarding safety conditions in the country people are traveling to. The STEP program notifies travelers of any pertinent alerts while they are then out of the country.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6979635>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## We Dodged Disaster With This Solar Storm. Here's What to Know for the Next One

Jeffrey Kluger is an editor at large at TIME. He covers space, climate, and science. He is the author of 12 books, including *Apollo 13*, which served as the basis for the 1995 film, and was nominated for an Emmy Award for TIME's series *A Year in Space*.



It has been a season of sky pageants. March 24 and 25 [saw a lunar eclipse](#) across the Americas, Europe, and North and East Asia. April 8 featured the [total solar eclipse](#) in North America. March and April also brought the appearance of the evocatively named [Devil Comet](#). And last weekend, earthlings were treated to a spectacular light show when a geomagnetic explosion on the sun, known as a [coronal mass ejection](#), produced a colorful display of the aurora borealis, a phenomenon usually limited to the north polar region, but visible this time around as far south as Alabama in the U.S. and at similar latitudes around the world.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Coronal mass ejections produce not just spectacle, but potentially deadly mischief. When the energy from the sun collides with Earth, it can disrupt satellites, send GPS systems awry, knock power plants offline, and shut down telecommunications. Like hurricanes, solar storms are [ranked in five categories](#) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), from minor to moderate to strong to severe to extreme.

On May 12, NOAA issued [a rare severe-to-extreme warning](#) for the unfolding event, though even at its peak, from May 10 to 12, there were no reports of power or satellite disruption. But if the Earth dodged a bullet this time, we face a potentially rough year or so, as the sun goes through one of its cycles of peak activity.

So what's going on out there, how great is the danger to us here on Earth, and how can we prepare?

## What causes solar storms?

In the same way the Earth has its seasons, the sun does too. Solar seasons play out not over the course of months, however, but in 11-year cycles that produce times of high activity, known as the solar maximum, and low activity known as the solar minimum. The cycles are due to the fact that the sun is not solid, which means that different parts of its surface rotate at different rates—[taking 25 days to complete a single rotation at the equator and 33 days at the poles](#). This causes the sun's magnetic field [to become tangled](#), slowly building up energy until it snaps. When that happens, the north and south magnetic poles [switch places with each other](#), releasing the energy that creates the solar maximum. Once that energy is expended, the sun returns to a less volatile solar minimum.

One telltale sign of high solar activity is sunspots, small patches of twisted magnetic fields on the sun. [The greater the number of spots, the greater the solar volatility](#). The current eruption was associated

with a sunspot 16 times the diameter of Earth, and gave off billions of tons of plasma—superheated gas made up of charged particles.

### **Read More:** *Can You Eat Cicadas?*

Not every solar maximum or solar minimum is equal, however. “The main cycle of the sun is the 11-year one, but people have noticed longer trends in the sunspot activity,” says Michael Liemohn, professor of climate and space sciences and engineering at the University of Michigan. “There seems to be a century-long cycle for which the number of sunspots at solar maximum is smaller for a cycle or two and then returns to a more normal level.”

The last period of solar maximum, which ended about ten years ago, was at the lower end of the energy spectrum. The one that ended 20 years ago was higher. “We expect this current solar maximum to be bigger than the previous one, and more similar to the solar activity peak 20 years ago,” says Liemohn.

## **How do coronal mass ejections endanger Earth?**

The best way to understand the effect solar storms have on our planet is to think of the atmosphere as akin to the gas in a fluorescent light bulb. In the bulb, Liemohn explains, electrodes at either end accelerate electrons, which interact with the gas, imparting energy to it and causing it to give off light. High in the atmosphere—50 to 200 miles up—a similar process creates the aurora. Closer to the surface of the Earth, the effect is not so benign.

“Like in the bulb, there is an electric current associated with the fast electrons, and these space currents can induce other electric currents in ... conducting loops here on the ground,” says Liemohn. “The loops have to be very long, many miles, but high voltage power lines are susceptible to this effect.”

Damage to satellites is more direct and done in a number of ways. As [NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center explains](#), geomagnetic storms heat the outer atmosphere, causing it to expand. This increases the drag on satellites and can degrade their orbits. The charged particles streaming from the sun during a solar storm can also penetrate a satellite or electrify its surface, damaging its components. The problem is especially acute in satellites in high orbits, [more than 22,000 miles above the Earth](#)—which is the altitude at which most communications satellites fly.

### **Read More:** [\*We Still Don't Fully Understand Time\*](#)

Crewed spacecraft like the International Space Station orbit much lower—[typically about 250 miles up](#). That [affords astronauts some protection from the Earth's magnetosphere](#)—which shields us from solar and cosmic rays on the ground. Still, astronauts receive more of a radiation dose than earthbound people and animals do, especially during a solar storm. The station or spacecraft themselves provide additional protection—but an unprotected astronaut on the surface of the moon or Mars would be in serious trouble during a solar storm. [According to](#) Space.com, a coronal mass ejection “shock wave” would expose the astronaut to the equivalent of 300,000 simultaneous chest x-rays, much more than the 45,000 that would prove lethal.

## **Getting ready for the next one**

Typically, a solar storm takes a day or so to reach and pass Earth. The recent one lasted several days, Liemohn explains, because the sun released several storms in quick succession. “Earth is in the recovery phase of the storm now, which will last a few more days,” he said on May 12. “But now the aurora will be confined to its usual location at higher latitudes, across Alaska and Canada.”

More big storms are likelier than not during this powerful solar maximum. The solar weather could take until mid 2025 to start to

subside, according to NOAA. So how can we prepare?

In 2019, Congress took a stab at hardening America's defenses against space weather events when it passed the [PROSWIFT Act](#), for Promoting Research and Observations of Space Weather to Improve the Forecasting of Tomorrow. Under the act, Washington empowered NOAA, NASA, the [National Science Foundation](#), industry, academia and more to research how to prepare for adverse space weather events and to prioritize appropriate funding to that end.

"Basically," says Daniel Welling, assistant professor in climate and space sciences at the University of Michigan, "the law is to have these bodies advise the nation on how to proceed in trying to understand and set benchmarks for space weather forecasting."

At the moment, that's not easy to do. For one thing, space weather is still something of a black box for researchers. For another, even if we could predict it as reliably as we can predict terrestrial weather, the U.S. power grid is so sprawling and regionalized that it's hard to put protocols in place to protect everything.

**Read More:** [\*Google DeepMind's Latest AI Model Is Poised to Revolutionize Drug Discovery\*](#)

A proof-of-concept example of what that kind of command and control system would look like, however, does exist in New Zealand.

Just over a year ago, Welling worked with a team at [Transpower](#), the [owner and operator](#) of the country's national grid,

to model an extreme solar storm estimate and then change the grid configuration until it was stable. That was distilled down to a PDF procedure that sits on the desks of the Transpower operators. "They

activated it this [past] weekend,” says Welling, “which is really cool.”

But a nation of 5.1 million covering a land mass of 103,500 square miles is different from a nation like the U.S., with its 333 million people and its 3.8 million square miles. And if a grid-killing storm hit, our power systems would likely go down. That’s not for lack of machinery and protocols in development, however. Power plant transformers operate on alternating current, but during solar storms may receive surges of direct current.

“Those transformers are not meant to handle that, so they can heat up, sometimes quite quickly,” says Welling.

A piece of hardware known as a geomagnetically induced current (GIC) blocker could be installed on the transformers to protect them from destructive pulses of power. The problem is the GIC blockers are still in development, and when they *are* installed, they can have what Welling calls a Whac-A-Mole effect. “You shut down the current [from the solar storm] over here, and it doubles over there,” he says.

That leaves transformers vulnerable—and vulnerable transformers are a very bad thing. “Transformers are the size of your living room, they’re custom-made and they’re shipped from overseas,” says Welling. If they are damaged or destroyed during a storm, it can take “weeks or longer to recover,” he adds.

Managing potential satellite damage is easier. One of the big risks here is phantom commands that cause the satellites to behave anomalously. The solution is to send them repeated “spam commands,” basically reminding them over and over again simply to continue functioning as they’re supposed to. Careful monitoring of trajectory can allow operators to fire the satellites’ thrusters in appropriate bursts, preventing orbits from decaying due to atmospheric drag.

Both oil pipelines and railroad systems can present problems as well since any long, metal, ground-based conductor can carry current during a geomagnetic storm. In the case of pipelines, there's not much controllers can do but monitor them, looking for damage that can be done by the current. In the case of trains, says Welling, railway traffic controllers know not to trust automatic signals during a geomagnetic storm, and will instead take over manually. A similar rule applies to the oil industry and some aspects of the military that are heavily dependent on GPS systems.

“Those sectors will suspend operations until they get the all clear,” Welling says.

Air traffic controllers must also react, diverting airplanes from places that are experiencing communications blackouts, or grounding planes entirely if the absence of comms is more global. And passenger health will call for avoiding areas where high levels of dangerous radiation are present.

Last weekend, says Welling, “there were flights that normally fly over the pole being diverted to lower latitudes because of the radiation risk.”

For now, these decidedly imperfect protocols are the best measures the U.S. and most of the rest of the world have. Not only do better preventive and corrective solutions have to be developed, but the business of space weather prediction has to improve dramatically. And that could take a lot of time.

“There’s this saying that space weather is 50 years behind meteorology in terms of forecasting and statistics,” says Welling. “The events of [last] weekend really made that saying resonate with me.”

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Alice Munro, Who Shaped the Modern Short Story, Dies at 92

Annabel Guterman is a content strategy editor at TIME. She also covers books.



[Alice Munro](#), the Nobel Prize-winning Canadian author who perfected the art of the contemporary [short story](#), died on Monday, May 13, Penguin Random House Canada has confirmed. She was 92 years old.

In 14 short story collections, including *The Beggar Maid; Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*; and *Dear Life*, the author captured the familiar quandaries and complications of everyday life. Children leave home and return to find it changed. Family units unravel when they are hit with unexpected and tremendous loss. Lovers become partners, then parents, then people

they don't quite recognize. Munro depicted these narratives with masterful levels of wit, humor, and care, and in doing so, challenged the tenets of fiction writing to showcase the power of the short story.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

"Thank you, [Alice Munro](#), for one glittering jewel of a story after another. Thank you for the many days and nights I spent lost in your work," Jane Smiley wrote in a tribute to the author in [the Guardian](#) in 2013. "Thank you for your unembarrassed woman's perspective on the lives of girls and women, but also the lives of boys and men. Thank you for your cruelty as well as your kindness, because the one plus the other is the essence of truthfulness."

Munro's first book of short stories, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, was published in 1968 and received Canada's Governor General Award for Literary Merit that year. In the decades that followed, Munro went on to win two additional Governor General Awards for Literary Merit. Her work was celebrated through a number of prizes, including a 1997 PEN/Malamud Award and a 2005 Medal of Honor for Literature from the U.S. National Arts Club. In 2009, she was awarded the Man Booker International Prize for her lifetime body of work. Four years later, Munro became the second Canadian author to win the [Nobel Prize for Literature](#).

"There's a kind of tension that if I'm getting a story right I can feel right away, and I don't feel that when I try to write a novel," [Munro told the New York Times in 1986](#). "I kind of want a moment that's explosive, and I want everything gathered into that."



## Life in Canada

Munro was born Alice Ann Laidlaw on July 10, 1931 in Wingham, Ontario to Anne Clarke (née Chamney), a schoolteacher, and Robert Eric Laidlaw, a farmer. Munro's father built their family home, a red-brick farmhouse flanked by trees on a country road, where he raised foxes and mink.

Much of Munro's work is anchored in the towns of Western Ontario, giving readers glimpses into the author's upbringing and family life. In the introduction to her 1996 collection, *Selected Stories*, Munro described why she loved to set her narratives in the areas of her youth: "I am intoxicated by this landscape, by the almost flat fields, the swamps, the hardwood bush, by the continental climate with its extravagant winters."

Munro fell in love with reading as a young girl, and started writing poetry after she discovered Alfred Tennyson's work. One of her favorite books was *Wuthering Heights*. By the time she was 14, Munro aspired to become a writer. "But back then you didn't go around announcing something like that," she told the [New York Times](#) in 2013.

When she wasn't reading, Munro's adolescence was spent tending to chores around the house as her father struggled with his business and her mother grappled with the symptoms of early onset [Parkinson's disease](#). She explores this time at the end of her last collection, *Dear Life*, through four narratives that she writes are "autobiographical in feeling, though not, sometimes, entirely so in fact." In the revealing pieces, she reflects on growing up as her parents suffered financially and physically. "The strange thing is that I don't remember that time as unhappy," Munro wrote in the titular story in *Dear Life*. "There wasn't a particularly depressing mood around the house. Maybe it was not understood then that my mother wouldn't get any better, only worse."

As a high school student, Munro's passion for literature catapulted her to academic success. In 1949, she became her high school class valedictorian and she received a scholarship to study at the University of Western Ontario as a result of her achievements in English. But when the money from her scholarship ran out in 1951, Munro could no longer afford to stay enrolled. Instead of returning home, she married her first husband, James Munro, a history student from an upper-class family, whom she met at college.

James Munro was supportive of his wife's ambitions as a writer. In 2006, [Munro spoke to the Virginia Quarterly Review](#) about starting out at a time when she did not know of many women who wanted to write professionally, and noted she was lucky to be married to a man who supported her career. "I was so fortunate that way," she said. "Because I don't know anybody else who would have wanted the wife to do something that took away from her 'normal' role—or might have been seen as competition."



## Finding the short story form

Alice and James Munro moved to Vancouver in 1951. Between 1953 and 1966, the couple had four daughters: Sheila, Catherine, Jenny and Andrea, although Catherine died shortly after she was born. While her husband went to work, Munro found pockets of time to write while caring for their children, which meant writing in short spurts during nap times and at odd hours of the day.

This, [she explained to the \*Atlantic\* in 2001](#), contributed to her use of the short story form—she simply did not have the time to dedicate to writing a novel. “I couldn’t look ahead and say, this is going to take me a year, because I thought every moment something might happen that would take all time away from me.”

Though she likely didn’t know it then, those years Munro spent as a housewife and young mother would become guiding forces in her fiction. She would spin stories rooted in domestic drama, from daughters who didn’t understand their mothers to partners pulled apart due to their different upbringings. Munro also experienced her share of romantic strife—she and James Munro divorced in 1972. Four years later, she married geographer Gerald Fremlin, and it was then that her career finally started to take off.

Munro was 37 when her first short story collection was published in 1968. *Dance of the Happy Shades* won the most prestigious literary prize in Canada, the Governor's General Award, and was a defining first step in building her reputation as an accomplished writer. She then published *Lives of Girls and Women* in 1971 and *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You* in 1974.

In the late 1970s, Munro gained even wider acclaim through the publication of her stories in the *New Yorker*. In 1977, she published "Royal Beatings," which centered on the complicated relationship between a young girl and her step-mother. A year later, the same story appeared in Munro's collection *Who Do You Think You Are?* (published outside of Canada as *The Beggar Maid*), which followed the two women over several decades in 10 interconnected stories. The book received the 1978 Governor's General Award and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 1980.

As more of Munro's stories were published in the *New Yorker*, her prominence as a writer grew. She crafted narratives on realistic female characters and their relationships with growing up, growing old, and the losses that accompany entering different stages of life. These themes are often the backbones of lengthy novels, but Munro was able to render her characters' struggles in aching specificity in just a single story.

In the 1980s, Munro began debuting stories and books with greater frequency. Her stories appeared in the pages of the *Paris Review*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and more. As the years passed, Munro continued writing books of short stories to critical acclaim. Each built on the momentum of the last, culminating in Munro's last five collections in the 2000s that comprise what could be considered her best work.

In novelist [Jonathan Franzen's New York Times review](#) of Munro's 2004 collection, *Runaway*, he wrote that Munro kept writing the same story, with the same fundamental elements of love, loss, and

dislocation, but was able to reveal more about the human condition with each one. “Reading Munro puts me in that state of quiet reflection in which I think about my own life: about the decisions I’ve made, the things I’ve done and haven’t done, the kind of person I am, the prospect of death.”



## Her lasting legacy

In 2013, Munro won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Typically, the prize is awarded to novelists, but Munro’s win further elevated the power of the short story form. The award capped off her massive contribution to how authors think about the architecture of a story, and she was quick to acknowledge the importance of the win for the genre she nearly perfected. She told Nobel Media after accepting her prize that she hoped it would help raise the status of the short story for all authors—advancing the form beyond what many writers work on before they launch their careers as novelists.

Her devotion to the short story structure has influenced some of the most celebrated contemporary fiction writers. [Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri told the New Yorker](#) that Munro’s work felt revolutionary for her: “She taught me that a short story can do

anything. She turned the form on its head. She inspired me to probe deeper, to knock down walls.”

Kristin Cochrane, CEO of Penguin Random House Canada, which has long published Munro’s work under its McClelland & Stewart imprint, responded to news of her death in a statement: “Alice Munro is a national treasure—a writer of enormous depth, empathy, and humanity whose work is read, admired, and cherished by readers throughout Canada and around the world,” she said. “Alice’s writing inspired countless writers too, and her work leaves an indelible mark on our literary landscape.”

After winning the Nobel Prize, Munro continued living a quiet life in Canada. She had announced her retirement from writing a few months before winning the Nobel Prize—and remained true to her word. *Dear Life*, published in 2012, was her last collection. When discussing her retirement with the [National Post in June of 2013](#), editor Mark Medley remarked that her fans would be disappointed. Munro responded in her typical, forthright fashion: “Well, tell them to go read the old ones over again. There’s lots of them.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6977937>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

# Thailand Celebrates Return of ‘Golden Boy’ in Rare Repatriation of Southeast Asian Artifacts

Koh Ewe (Koyu) is a reporter for TIME based in Singapore. She covers the Asia-Pacific region and global overnight news.



Thai and American officials celebrated the arrival of the so-called Golden Boy—a 4-ft. tall, about 900-year-old bronze statue—to the National Museum in Bangkok on Tuesday, after years of negotiations to repatriate the sculpture along with other artifacts that had been misappropriated abroad.

The return of the Golden Boy and the Kneeling Lady, another statue linked to the same alleged smuggler, was welcomed by Thai Minister of Culture Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol as well as U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Robert F. Godec, who [described](#) the pieces as “symbols of Thailand’s rich heritage.”

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

They are “evidence of the prosperity of the land of Thailand in the past” and are “extremely important national cultural heritage,”

Sudawan [said on X](#).

Amid a wave of scrutiny over the potentially illicit provenance of artifacts sitting in the world's largest museums, Southeast Asian governments have been trying to retrieve as many as thousands of items that they believe were looted or trafficked from their lands, though the repatriation process is often stalled or blocked by legal and logistical hurdles.

The return of the Golden Boy and the Kneeling Lady, which had spent the last three decades in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, has been hailed as a rare success story.

Here's what to know.

## Why were the artifacts returned now?

A woman in northeastern Buriram province claims to have [discovered](#) the Golden Boy—which is believed by some to represent Hindu god Shiva and others to be Khmer King Jayavarman VI—about 50 years ago while digging for sweet potatoes. She says that when she brought the statue to a local police station, officers took her to Bangkok, where they sold it to a foreigner for 1.2 million baht (about \$33,000).

When the Golden Boy was added to the Met's collection in 1988, it was [described](#) by the museum as “certainly the most important gift of a Southeast Asian sculpture ever made to our collection.”

In December, the Met said that it would return the Golden Boy and the Kneeling Lady to Thailand, as well as 14 artifacts to Cambodia (including a [metal sculpture](#) of a sitting Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and a 7th-century [stone Buddha head](#)).

The pieces were associated with late art dealer Douglas Latchford, who was [indicted](#) in 2019 for trafficking and selling looted

Cambodian antiquities to auction houses and museums around the world since the 1970s.

Until his [death](#) in 2020, Latchford had denied his involvement in smuggling, though his daughter agreed last year to [forfeit \\$12 million](#) from his estate to settle a civil lawsuit accusing him of profiting off stolen Cambodian artifacts.

“The Museum welcomes and takes very seriously any new information about objects in the collection and is dedicated to seeking resolutions as appropriate,” [says](#) the Met, which previously returned artifacts to [Nepal](#) and [India](#) after acknowledging that they were taken from ancient sites.

The Met agreeing to return the statue “is not a common occurrence,” Thai archaeologist Thanongsak Hanwong, a member of the government committee for the repatriation of stolen artifacts who says he spent more than three years working on the Golden Boy’s repatriation, told [Benar News](#).

The Thai government has formally requested the return of about 30 artifacts that are scattered around the world, and its embassies are negotiating the return of 10 more items, Thanongsak added, as “some museums are reluctant to publicize these repatriations.”

## What are other museums doing?

In recent years, calls have grown for Western museums—from the U.S. to the U.K., Australia, and Europe—to return artifacts that were allegedly looted from strife-torn regions across the world. According to prosecutors, Latchford started [supplying](#) major auction houses and museums with Cambodian antiquities during the country’s oppressive Khmer Rouge regime—and at times falsified the provenance of items to conceal the fact that they were illicitly obtained.

A 1970 UNESCO Convention lays down the legal basis to repatriate illegally exported cultural objects. However, critics have noted that the convention, which does not apply retroactively to cases before 1970, fails to protect items looted at the height of colonialism—a point that UNESCO has also acknowledged “remains a source of tension between countries with rich museum collections and those that demand the return of objects that contribute to their identity.”

The British Museum, dubbed “the world’s largest receivers of stolen property,” has dealt with yearslong allegations of housing pilfered antiquities and questions over its apparent secretiveness over certain artifacts. In April, the museum returned dozens of artifacts looted 150 years ago from the region of modern-day Ghana.

Museums across Europe, including the Netherlands, France, and Germany have also been repatriating stolen artifacts to their countries of origin in Southeast Asia. Observers say that the return of artifacts is a way for Europe to rehabilitate its controversial colonial legacy in the region. French President Emmanuel Macron, who has said that he would “do everything possible” to return the symbols of cultural heritage France has looted—from Asia to Africa—pledged in January to return more Khmer artifacts to Cambodia.

But there’s still a long way to go, as museums and officials chip away at verifying the sources of a vast body of artifacts. (Reports say that the Met contains more than 1,000 items that may have been looted or trafficked.)

It’s also not just museums that have come under scrutiny. When photos made the rounds on social media earlier this year of oriental furniture, which online sleuths suspected had been pillaged from China in the 19th century, in British aristocrat Rose Hanbury’s house, calls erupted demanding their return.

“We are continuing to investigate the wide-ranging trafficking networks that … target Southeast Asian antiquities,” Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg [said](#) in April, while announcing that 30 pieces of looted artifacts that authorities seized from museums and private collectors, estimated to be worth \$3 million, would be returned to Cambodia and Indonesia. “There is clearly still much more work to do.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6980550>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 20 Years After Same-Sex Marriage Was First Legalized, Queer Couples Reflect on How Their Lives Changed

Solcyré (Sol) Burga is a general assignment reporter at TIME. She covers U.S. news with a focus on student loans and LGBTQ+ issues.



To Gina Nortonsmith, the most memorable moment from her wedding day was not walking down the aisle, but rather, a conversation she shared with her two sons. “You came out as Nortonsmith. We had to earn it,” she recalls telling her children on May 17, 2004. The roots of her family had been in the making for nearly 15 years, but Heidi Norton and Gina Smith, as they were then-known, were unable to marry until the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s (SJC) 4-3 ruling in favor of same-sex marriage was officially in motion. The women were two of the fourteen plaintiffs in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*.

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

The decision, announced on Nov. 18, 2003, was monumental. “We were all on entirely new ground here. No state in the nation had done this before,” Mary Bonauto, the GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) attorney behind *Goodridge* tells TIME. It took more than 900 days after the case’s initial filing for plaintiffs to learn that they won, and the SJC gave the legislature half a year until the decision went into effect.

Problems were quick to manifest. Within [hours of the decision](#), then-Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney called for changes to the state’s constitution to bar the ruling from going through. Former President George W. Bush also [spoke out against](#) same-sex marriage, saying he was “troubled” by the landmark decision, and calling for a constitutional amendment in his 2004 State of the Union address. Multiple lawsuits were filed between November 2003 and May 2004, with the last case against *Goodridge* settled just three days prior to May 17, the day the SJC had declared same-sex couples could apply for a marriage license. “The issue was viewed as toxic to Democrats and an opportunity to attack by Republicans,” said Marc Solomon, one of the key political strategists of the marriage equality movement. “It was incredibly intense.”

Many recollect different memories of that day. Some speak of the sharpshooters on roofs across Boston, and increased police presence meant to protect them. Most mention being unaware of what was happening around them outside of the great fanfare and support they felt. “As soon as I sat down in the pew, I just couldn’t repress the tears,” says Bonauto. “I think it was tears of relief and joy.”

While many young people have grown up in a country that on its face, seems much more LGBTQ+-friendly, acceptance is still fairly recent. It took the U.S. 14 years to catch up to the Netherlands—the first country to legalize same-sex marriage—through the 2015 Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Seventy-one percent of Americans think same-sex marriage should be legal, according to the [latest Gallup figures](#) released in 2023. That rate of approval is the highest Gallup has recorded since 1996, when just over 1 in 4 Americans approved. Part of that pivot might be due to the fact that an increasing number of Americans aged 18 to 29 [identify as LGBTQ+](#).

Still, many advocates express fear that the constitutional right to same-sex marriage could be in danger, with [Justice Clarence Thomas](#) referencing the [possibility of overturning \*Obergefell\*](#) in his [\*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization\*](#) concurring opinion.

“When I think about the possibility of *Obergefell* being overturned, I want to say it would be outrageous because the ruling is based on mainstream law, under equal protection and due process,” says Bonauto, who also argued *Obergefell*. “Anything is possible. I’m going to bet on it not being reversed. The minute I say that, I have to say not for a second do I think we should be complacent.”

Below are the love and wedding stories of couples who legally married in Massachusetts, thanks to *Goodridge*, and the challenges that came before then.

*These interviews have been edited for clarity and brevity.*

**Mike Horgan and Ed Balmelli, both 64, were plaintiffs in *Goodridge v. Dept. Public Health*. They met at a Christmas party in Lowell, Mass. in 1994 and got married on May 17, 2004.**

**Mike:** We knew that the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts was about to announce their decision. So, at that time, you would go to your computer and bring up a browser and keep hitting refresh every morning to see if the Supreme Judicial Court had decided. And when they did, we didn’t really know what to do at

that point. We got dressed, put our suits on, and went downtown to GLAD's office. On the street, we were jumping up and down, doing high fives. We just couldn't believe that the case was decided.

Governor Romney was not happy about this. He was trying to do everything he could, from his viewpoint, to stop this. We also had a civil union in Vermont in 2000. One of the things that the administration was thinking of doing was making people who had civil unions dissolve them, so that would have taken some time. We didn't know if we were going to be able to get married on May 17, 2004. Actually, we only had about two or three weeks to plan the wedding by the time we found out that they had dropped that notion of making people with civil unions dissolve them.

**Ed:** On the day of our wedding, we were [one of] three [plaintiff] couples in Boston that got married that first day. We had all these news cameras and media talking to us and whatnot. And I think they thought that maybe one of us was going to show up in a dress or something because when they saw it all happening, they saw our parents there, our siblings, and the minister—and they were kind of, almost bored. It's like, 'why is this news? It's just a wedding.' And so that was kind of like an Aha! moment. It was kind of special.

Now, it's so nice that people have grown up with [it] being legal all this time. It used to be anytime there's anything in the news about same-sex marriage, they would call one of us seven couples.

**Linda and Gloria Bailey-Davies were plaintiffs in *Goodridge*. The couple, ages 78 and 83, have been together for 53 years. The couple had a legal wedding on May 17, 2004, followed by a church wedding two months later in July.**

**Gloria:** We got involved [with *Goodridge*] because Linda had been facing some health challenges and we became aware that, legally,

we had no relationship at all even though we had been together for 33 years. And no one could really guarantee us that I could be there with her because I wasn't her legal next of kin, so that frightened us enough.

**Linda:** We also wanted to get married. We never in a million years thought we would be able to be married when we first got together. [That] wasn't even a question. The question was, are we lesbians? That was hard enough to come to grips with back in those days, coming out to ourselves and each other. But then the concept of maybe being able to be married was just over the top for us. But we decided, if there was any chance, we'd like to help with the cause.

Gloria would not say that she would marry me all that whole two-and-a-half years [that the case was in limbo]. I kept asking. She said, 'Don't ask me until it's legal.' So on the day we were riding up to Boston to hear the decision, it came out over the radio that we had won the case and Gloria just burst into tears, and she's not a big crier. And I had to say, 'you have to stop crying. I want to ask you, will you marry me?'

**Gloria:** Finally, it was a legal question that I could answer, and I happily said, 'Of course.'

Marriage was a very different process. I mean, people say, 'Well, you've been together all those years, did it change?' It changed for me, unbelievably, because I felt like we were finally able to hold our heads up high and be in the world and be just like everybody else.

**Heidi and Gina Nortonsmith, both 59, were plaintiffs in Goodridge. They met in 1990 at a National Lesbian and Gay Law Association gathering in Atlanta. They had a commitment ceremony in 1993, before getting legally married on May 17, 2004. The couple says that the main reason they joined the lawsuit was to protect their family.**

**Gina:** We already had our oldest son, and had been working with our lawyer to draw whatever legal papers we could to show that we were family, and that if something happened to Heidi, as the birth mom, I was the other parent. There was only so much that our lawyer could do for us at that point because we couldn't get legally married. Heidi was pregnant with our second son when our lawyer said, 'Hey, I know about this thing that GLAD is planning to do, would you be interested in talking to them?'

**Heidi:** Reflecting on it, 20 years later, I think, 'Oh, my God, we were so young, we had so much energy.' Imagine parenting small children, being career people, and then there were weeks when every single evening we were meeting with reporters, talking to reporters on the phone, sometimes multiple interactions like that. But more importantly than that, there was just so much joy around having a portion of our lives that was dedicated, literally every single day, to talking about our love, our relationship, our wonderful families.

**Gina:** We had been told that the Supreme Judicial Court usually takes 90 days to issue an opinion. And so after the hearing, in our case, at the Supreme Judicial Court, the 90 days were set to expire in July. But we didn't get a decision until November. So between July and November [2003], there was lots of tension. So many people that we interacted with would also express their tension and nervousness. And so it was like we became a container for all of that and that was a lot. That was really heavy to hold and carry.

We [ended up] hear[ing] the decision announced on the radio while we were on the highway on our way to Boston. So when we figured out that we had won, Heidi and I started banging on the ceiling of the car, and Avery and Quinn [our children] started banging on the ceiling too. We were just out of our minds with excitement.

**Robert Compton, 75, and David Wilson, 80, were a plaintiff couple in the *Goodridge* case. Compton first moved to Massachusetts, one of the few states that then-had workplace protections for LGBTQ+ people, after being fired in the mid ‘90s for being gay. The two men met through the organization Gay Fathers of Greater Boston, a support group for gay dads. They married on May 17, 2004.**

**Robert:** I came to Massachusetts because it had individual protections for the gay community, but after David and I entered into a relationship and eventually moved in together, I had an [unexpected health] episode in the middle of the night and David rushed me to the hospital. I was in excruciating pain just doubled over. I didn't know what was happening. I got to the hospital, they rushed me to the back right away, [and] were doing tests on me and asking me all these questions about insurance and all this other stuff. And I didn't realize at first that David wasn't with me until I started trying to answer the questions. I realized they wouldn't let him come back because we weren't legally related. Obviously, I can't say he's my brother because we're an interracial couple, and so, I became acutely aware of the fact that we don't have protections as families, just as individuals.

Back when we started the marriage lawsuit in 2001, actually, only about 35% of even the LGBTQ community supported [same-sex] marriage. We had just won civil unions in Vermont and even the gay community was pushing back and they were telling us, ‘we're winning all of these great advancements—we have individual rights, we have workplace protections, we're getting adoption rights, we're getting domestic partner benefits, we get health care.’ And they're telling us, ‘you're going to cause a backlash, and we're going to lose all of these things.’ But they didn't realize that there were over 1000 protections in the federal law that civil unions, which were state-based, wouldn't afford you.

So today, it's a very different environment. We sometimes worry [about LGBTQ+ protections] because states are starting to push back on abortion rights and we're concerned about marriage rights.

**David:** I remember that Rob and I started off wanting to have this moment of fighting for our rights, very personal to us. So we thought, well, when we get to the end [of the lawsuit], we'll have a nice, quiet wedding, just our family and friends. Obviously we had to share it with the world—500 plus people showed up. And we were together, but we were really part of this huge celebration and we actually couldn't even get out of the church because there were so many people on the steps and going across the street. So it was an exciting day, but it was a bit overwhelming just because there were so many people. But it's a memory that we'll always have and we have a [news clip] video, which is a great memory for us because it is intimate in that it focuses on us, it focuses on our pastor, Kim Crawford Harvey, focuses on the Gay Men's Chorus that was singing, so there are some very intimate moments but around us with hundreds of people cheering for us.

**Bette Jo Green and Jo Ann Whitehead, both 82, were plaintiffs in the *Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), Gill v. OPM*, which was decided by the Supreme Court in 2013. The case challenged section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as a legal union between a man and woman. The Act, under its previous language, only allowed heterosexual couples to access federal benefits, such as income taxation, social security benefits, etc. The couple was married on June 7, 2004.**

**Bette Jo:** In November of 2003, [when the *Goodridge* decision came out] we couldn't believe it. We decided that we weren't going to make any plans until the six months was up. [But] there was smiling in our neighborhood, down the street all around. We were so happy. It was very hard to find somebody to marry us—they were so busy! It's not like people didn't want to, but all of a sudden there was a marriage boom in Massachusetts. We were a committed

couple beforehand, it wasn't the committed part [that changed after our marriage]. But it's the acceptance part by the world.

We decided to elope, and then that kind of went by the wayside because people but we knew said, 'What?! Can I come?' and so we got married in our backyard garden and ended up with a few friends and had a wonderful time. Then, we were contacted by GLAD. Over the years, [GLAD] sent out questionnaires to all the couples that got married in 2004 and asked how that changed our lives. For a long time, it didn't change our lives because it didn't change our health insurance. And when it got close to retirement, I realized that it didn't change our lives because normally, when married couples retire, they have choices in terms of social security, whether one person keeps their social security as a couple, or if one person abstains from getting their social security after retirement, until age 70, it accrues over that time. And they wrote back and said, 'Well, how would you like to be the Social Security part of the DOMA lawsuit?' And we talked about it for a while, and they said, 'Yeah, why don't we just check this out?'

**Pam Waterman, 58, and Michelle Colemon, 63, met when they were both working at New York University's School of Medicine. After six years together, the couple married on October 10, 2004.**

**Pam:** We don't even remember who asked who to get married. I think once [marriage] was a thing, we were like, 'okay, so when?' There was no formal proposal. There was nothing like that. It was just already in our heads.

Our wedding day was phenomenal. It was solemn. We wanted it to feel sacred, and we wanted it to be a celebration. When we were walking down the aisle, we had a friend with a shekere (a West African percussion instrument), and we gave everyone musical instruments, percussion instruments. Just before we jumped the broom, we talked about marriage equality. We talked about the fact

that even though the judiciary had decided on marriage equality, the people had the opportunity in the fall to vote against it and to say they didn't want it. And so we felt that there was a way that our wedding might have become unraveled, which made us feel more tied to the ceremony of jumping the broom, just like our ancestors might have had to jump the broom to have their weddings valid. That gave us extra meaning.

**Michelle:** The day was great, the day was joyous, but I also felt this feeling of like, we have to hurry up and do this before they change their minds. There was that sense, always, that it was remarkable that it had been given and it would not have been unremarkable if it was taken away, and so let's just have our joy in this minute. Let's just do this. And harkening back to the idea of everybody in that room who was supporting us touching this broom, sending us their good vibes because who knew what was going to come in the months following, and at least we had this blessing of our nearest and dearest.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6979082>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Call Her Mother: How A Term with Queer Origins Became an Internet Sensation

Solcyré (Sol) Burga is a general assignment reporter at TIME. She covers U.S. news with a focus on student loans and LGBTQ+ issues.



Mary. Madonna. Matriarch. *Mamá*. Mother. It's an endearing term colloquially used to refer to a female figure who brings forth new life. But the word—which has been adopted by Gen Z and others who are up-to-date with internet jargon—is also a slang term that has been bestowed upon the biggest names in show business, be it Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, or Zendaya.

The term mother (or at least, in its online vernacular) derives from New York City's Black and Latino ballroom scene. Social media users often use the word as a synonym for icon and legend—though those titles themselves [hold a different status](#) in ball culture. The ballroom house system follows a kinship structure, where trans women, trans and queer men and drag artists become mothers and fathers, creating their own families or 'houses.' Many credit Crystal LaBeija, a Black, transgender woman and drag queen [who was](#)

[angered](#) by the colorism and racism affecting drag pageants in the late ‘60s, as the creator of the [first ballroom house](#). “You have mothers, gay mothers, gay fathers, gay siblings, gay uncles, etc. There are actual lineages that you can track and these are in lieu of biological families who have often disowned kids,” says Ricky Tucker, author of the book *And The Category Is...: Inside New York’s Vogue, House, And Ballroom Community*.

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

It’s difficult to put an exact date on when the term mother came to fruition within the community. Part of that is because ball culture has historically been under-documented and strongly relies on [oral histories](#), according to Tucker. Drag balls themselves predate World War I, with one of the [first balls hosted](#) in Harlem’s Hamilton Lodge in 1869, per the National Museum of American History’s Behring Center. Tucker personally first heard the word in reference to activist and drag queen Flawless Sabrina, the subject of the 1968 documentary *The Queen*, who he describes as the “mother hen of New York drag pageants.”

Today, many can thank FX’s [Pose](#) and [RuPaul’s Drag Race](#) for the word’s thrust into the limelight, the latter of which has become a cult phenomenon: generating 16 seasons (with its [highest-rated premiere](#) this year) and inspiring a plethora of spin-offs and international adaptations. “We’ve got everyone’s straight boyfriend with their girlfriend watching, so these words come into popular vernacular,” says Tucker. Mother—including other iterations like [motha](#) and [muva](#)—has permeated [online fan accounts](#). It’s seen under Instagram posts and in tweets on X. It’s the premise of Meghan Trainor’s 2023 tune, “Mother,” which starts with a snippet of a fan saying “that Meghan Trainor is literally mother right now.” But for many in the LGBTQ+ community, the word holds a different significance.



“I love that word, because I really do feel like a mother,” says Iman Le Caire, founder of Trans Asylas, an organization working since 2021 to relocate transgender and nonbinary asylum seekers abroad. Le Caire, a refugee herself, was first called mother when she went to Fire Island Pines, a well-known LGBTQ+ friendly beachfront community tucked some 70 miles away from New York City, while working at her husband’s store.

But the title really became meaningful after Le Caire participated in Black Lives Matter protests and began posting on social media about her efforts. Eventually, her work was noticed by others.

“Middle Eastern transgender people connected [with] me on social media, asking, ‘Hey, can you help me,’ ‘Can you please do this?’” Le Caire started as a case manager and Arabic translator for her first client, a Yemeni woman, though the two eventually developed a mother-daughter relationship after talking on the phone everyday.

“The meaning of motherhood to me is to give, to help people, and to focus on providing them with access to a new life, and navigating a new life,” Le Caire says when speaking about the people she’s met through her organization. “They’re my family and I cannot leave them.”

In her own life, Le Caire felt that she was [New York City transgender activist](#) Cecilia Gentili's daughter, who she met through her line of work. "She was an example of survival," says Le Caire. "She always told me, 'don't worry,' 'do the work,' 'you're doing great work, don't give up.' That's a mother. That's a person that wants you to succeed."

Rio Sofia, another one of Gentili's daughters, feels similarly about her mother. Sofia, 31, first met Gentili at a local health clinic. The two connected almost immediately. "She just made herself, very immediately, a supportive figure to me and a maternal figure," she says. "She had such a unique way of just being able to establish intimacy with people right away and I think that that's why so many people claim [they are] her children."



Sofia has a strong relationship with her biological mother, but adds that Gentili's personal experiences as a trans woman made their bond special. "I think that that's real for a lot of trans people. We don't always have the luxury of having biological parents that meet all of our needs."

Now, Sofia is the mother to a young woman named Flower, who she, in turn, helped transition. "It's such big shoes to fill," she says. "I feel like within the trans community those sort of lines that divide generations are much, much shorter. I started to be seen as an old soul by the time I was 28 and had transitioned for five years.

People also die pretty young in the trans community, so I think that's also a part of it."

To some, the addition of mother to the internet's lexicon has detracted from the meaning it bears in the greater LGBTQ+ community and ballroom scene. Tucker says that is part of the natural evolution of words. "The definition of a word is never fixed. Hence, the multiple definitions we have for every word," he says. But, "even if you think of the actual word mother, that's nothing to be taken lightly. To a lot of people, their mothers—that is their God, especially if they're secular, then that is their creator."

Others, like Sofia, recognize that the word is being appropriated by those outside of the queer community, but take no issue with the internet's use of mother. "Language is messy and with how often I see people using mother when talking about women that they idolize, I'm fine with it. I think that it's fun. What I appreciate about it is the reverence for the goddess that we see in people," she says. Le Caire has a notably more complex relationship with the term because she says she only experienced "conditional love" from her biological mother.

Most people online agree that drag queens like RuPaul are undeniably mother—a subject RuPaul even sang about in the 2023 tune "Call Me Mother." Sasha Colby, the first trans performer to win a regular season of *Drag Race* has also been given the title by many, with Daily show correspondent Dulcé Sloan writing that she is Colby's daughter in her Instagram bio. "There are mothers that we all share," says Tucker, who mentions that disputes between fans about [which artists have earned](#) the title of mother remains a point of conversation. "And then there might be an instance where it's like, okay, that's your mother, not mine."

Regardless of who is bestowed the title, Tucker calls it "a shame" when words with such important meaning to a particular community become diluted. "Now, I don't think ballroom is going

to stop using them. And I think ultimately, the world might just move on...But I think it has its greatest function in the queer community when it comes to the adoption of queer youth who have been displaced, or disowned by their family. That's the real kinship structure. That's the real everyday value of it.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6976939>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Northern Ireland Is Steeped in Its Past. Michelle O'Neill Has a Vision for Its Future

Yasmeen Serhan is a staff writer at TIME, based in the London Bureau. She covers foreign affairs with an emphasis on the future of democracies and rising authoritarianism around the world.



Michelle O'Neill was never supposed to be here. When the Northern Ireland Assembly was established following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended 30 years of sectarian

bloodshed known as “[The Troubles](#),” it established a delicate system of power sharing. Traditionally Protestant British unionists, who want to preserve Northern Ireland’s status within the U.K., and traditionally Catholic Irish nationalists, who aspire to reunify with the independent Republic of Ireland, would govern together. But even at the time of that historic compromise, no one imagined that a nationalist party could become the legislative body’s largest—or that anyone other than a unionist might one day hold its top office.

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

And yet here stands O’Neill, a 47-year-old Catholic woman and the first nationalist leader of Northern Ireland—a province she one day hopes to abolish. O’Neill, who is from a prominent Irish republican family, represents Sinn Féin, the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)—and tells TIME nothing about her political ascent was inevitable.

“The North of Ireland was built in such a way that someone from my background would never be First Minister,” she says during an hour-long interview in Belfast’s Parliament Buildings at Stormont, a towering neoclassical building where the Northern Ireland Assembly sits. Like most nationalists, she often refers to Northern Ireland as “the north” as a tacit rejection of [the 1921 partition](#) that created it. “It was built in such a way that my parents and grandparents would never have imagined that a nationalist, let alone a republican woman, would be First Minister.”

While O’Neill doesn’t downplay her republican credentials, she noticeably doesn’t overstate them either. That’s because O’Neill wants to lead, and to be seen, as a “[First Minister for all](#)” who will represent everyone in Northern Ireland equally—be they unionist, nationalist, or neither. She has won plaudits for her willingness to transcend sectarian divides by going where no previous Sinn Féin leader has gone before, including attending royal events such as the coronation of King Charles III and standing for the U.K. national

anthem at a soccer match. In a society as steeped in history as Northern Ireland, O'Neill says this inclusive style of politics is necessary to ensure the continued success of the Good Friday Agreement and the political arrangement it helped create. This hasn't always been a given: Northern Ireland's devolved government has been functional for less than 60% of its existence, says Katy Hayward, a political sociologist at Queen's University Belfast, owing to the fact that it requires the cooperation of both nationalist and unionist parties to work. If one side opts against participating—as has been the case [on numerous occasions](#), most recently in 2022 when the leading unionist party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), staged a two-year boycott of the Assembly in protest of post-Brexit trading rules—the whole system collapses. O'Neill, who shares equal power with her deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly of the DUP, is committed to ensuring that their nascent administration lasts.



As sensitive as O'Neill is to the past, her attentions are trained on the future. In the short term, that means addressing acute challenges such as a [cost-of-living crisis](#) that has left public services crumbling and many struggling to make ends meet. In the long term, it means continuing to push for a referendum on Irish reunification—a campaign that could gain greater traction should Sinn Féin win power south of the border, as [polls](#) project it could, when the Republic of Ireland holds its next general election.

“This is the decade where I believe the question should be put to the people,” O’Neill says of [a border poll](#), which the Good Friday Agreement stipulates must be conducted both in Northern Ireland

and the Republic of Ireland “if at any time it appears likely” that a majority would favor Northern Ireland seceding from the U.K. and becoming a part of a united Irish state. While that time hasn’t yet materialized, O’Neill is confident that it will—with her help.

“My election as First Minister speaks to the change that’s happening across the island.”

---

For a small province roughly the size of Connecticut, Northern Ireland bears plenty of scars. “Peace walls” separating Belfast’s predominantly Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods still tower over the city. Colorful murals pay homage to slain nationalist and unionist paramilitary fighters. Relics of the past can even be found in the city’s pubs, some of which retain the security cages and door buzzers installed during the Troubles. Even in contemporary Northern Irish politics, the past feels ever-present. On the day O’Neill is scheduled to sit down with TIME, the conversation is delayed by an Assembly debate on how to deal with flags of proscribed paramilitary groups. The day before, the chamber discussed the potential fallout of the U.K. government’s [Legacy Act](#), which as of May 1 halts all Troubles-era civil cases and inquests, directing them instead to an independent commission.

“We’re a society that still needs a lot of healing,” O’Neill says, noting that the Legacy Act “does absolutely nothing—not one thing—to help heal any wounds of the past. All it does is pull down the shutter on truth and justice; all it does is cover up and protect the British government’s role in the conflict here.” (Of the 3,600 people killed during the Troubles, some 1,200 cases remain unresolved. While the majority of those are attributed to republican or loyalist paramilitary forces, more than a quarter are thought to have been committed by U.K. security forces, according to [a 2018 report](#) by *The Detail*.)

O'Neill is part of the Good Friday generation that came of age with the peace agreement, but the first half of her life was dominated by the sectarian violence of the past. Born Michelle Doris on Jan. 10, 1977, she spent her earliest years in the Republic of Ireland's County Cork, where her family had moved from their native rural village of Clonoe, in Northern Ireland's County Tyrone. Her grandmother, Kathleen Doris, was a well known civil rights campaigner while her father, Brendan "Basil" Doris, was a member of the IRA and a former prisoner; he later went on to become a Sinn Féin politician. The family returned to Clonoe when she was four years old.

Like most children of that era, O'Neill didn't understand that what she was experiencing—the militarized environment, the violence, the [marginalization of her community](#)—was unusual. Her earliest memories are not of British soldiers patrolling the streets (though they were certainly there), but of Sunday lunches with her grandparents. All in all, she says her family life was a happy one. "I think it's the nature of Irish people," she says. "We just managed."



When the Good Friday Agreement was signed in the spring of 1998, O'Neill was 21 years old. By that point, she had already become a young mother to her daughter Saoirse, whom she had at 16. "Everybody knew it was a huge moment," she says of the day

the accord was signed—one she remembers marking by driving around Clonoe, “tooting horns and celebrating.” The moment made her think of her child’s future, as well as her own. That same year, she joined Sinn Féin—first as an adviser to Assembly lawmaker Francie Molloy, and then as a local councilor when, in 2005, she was elected to the seat vacated by her father. Two years later, she was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly, eventually becoming the province’s agricultural minister and health minister. But her biggest break came in 2017, when she was appointed to succeed Martin McGuinness, the former IRA commander and deputy first minister, as Sinn Féin’s leader in Northern Ireland. The move was seen as a generational shift—one that transferred the party from the hands of those who waged, and ultimately ended, the Troubles to those who inherited the peace that followed. Suddenly, Sinn Féin went from being led by two men (McGuinness and former Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams) to two women, with O’Neill in the north and Adams’ successor, Mary Lou McDonald, in the south.

“The Sinn Féin leadership recognized that whatever talents they brought, a new set of talents was needed for a post-conflict generation,” says Jonathan Tonge, a professor of politics at the University of Liverpool, noting that both women helped to soften and modernize the party’s image. They also made it a more socially progressive one. As health minister, one of O’Neill’s first acts was to lift the province’s ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood. She has also backed calls for [expanding abortion services](#) in Northern Ireland, where access has trailed that of the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. On perhaps the most salient issue of recent years—the U.K.’s withdrawal from the E.U., which [a majority](#) in Northern Ireland opposed and which has [inflamed sectarian tensions](#)—Sinn Féin was able to draw an even starker contrast between itself and the Brexit-backing DUP.

It paid off. During O’Neill’s first year leading the party in Northern Ireland, she oversaw two of Sinn Féin’s best electoral performances

at that point, making gains in both [Stormont](#) and [Westminster](#). (While Sinn Féin contests U.K. general elections, it does not take up its parliamentary seats in observance of its longstanding rejection of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland.) In the last Northern Ireland Assembly election of May 2022, Sinn Féin won 29% of the first-preference vote, increasing its vote share by 1.1% from 2017. Though a modest increase, it was enough to overtake the DUP as the largest party, pushing the once-dominant unionist party into second place for the first time. A province designed to be a unionist stronghold would no longer be led by one, though it would be another two years of Stormont paralysis before O'Neill would be able to claim her new title.

---

With a 53% approval rating, O'Neill is the most popular political leader in Northern Ireland—and perhaps the most personable, too. Over the course of a conversation in a nondescript meeting room overlooking Stormont's expansive estate, she talks openly about her family, being “a granny,” and her experience sharing an office with a deputy whose vision for the future is so different to hers, but with whom she gets on “quite well.” (Like O'Neill, Little-Pengelly was born during the Troubles to a family steeped in the conflict; her father, Noel Little, was the leader of the loyalist paramilitary group Ulster Resistance.)

Though her words are considered, they don't seem canned in the way politicians' can be. She concedes that while escapes from politics are rare—“somebody always finds you”—her favorite comes in the form of cooking. “I love to barbecue,” she says. She glances out the window towards the gray Belfast sky and adds: “But all year round. In the depth of winter, I could be out in my back garden barbecuing. I'm the queen of the barbecue.”

Party colleagues and political opponents alike describe O'Neill as smart, hard-working, and compassionate. Many see her outreach to

the unionist community in particular as genuine, though some critics counter that it doesn't go far enough.

"Symbolically, I think a lot of what she's done has actually been very welcome," Matthew O'Toole, a nationalist politician with the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the leader of the opposition in the Northern Ireland Assembly, tells TIME, noting that O'Neill "handled herself with patience and maturity" during the two-year period when she was unable to take up her duly-elected role as First Minister. He noted, however, that such gestures —important as they are in a place like Northern Ireland—can't be a substitute for delivering on the everyday needs of people, for whom issues such as healthcare and the economy are top of mind. "So far in the Assembly and the Executive, we haven't really seen any clear signs of a plan for delivery," O'Toole says.

But O'Neill's cause isn't as popular as she is. Though Irish unity is seen as more plausible than it ever has been in the aftermath of Brexit, which has left the U.K. less prosperous and wealthy than the Republic of Ireland (an E.U. member), only 39% of people in Northern Ireland support reunification, according to [a recent poll](#), compared to 49% who don't. The figures reverse, however, when you ask the Northern Irish public whether they expect to see a united Ireland in the coming decades, as [this 2022 study](#) did: 45% said yes, while 38% said no.



O'Neill believes that there are people—particularly [the plurality](#) of those who don't identify with unionists or nationalists—who are willing to be persuaded, and says that there's as much an economic case for Irish reunification as there is an ideological one.

“You look at the economy in the south versus the economy in the north; you look at the challenges we have here with austerity, with our public services being so challenged; and then you look at all the opportunities,” she says. Her vision for a united Ireland is one “built on prosperity for everybody, on fairness and equality” where “everybody gets a fair crack at the whip.” To British unionists who fear marginalization in a united Ireland, she says: “Never on my watch would it ever be done on to any community what was done on to the community that I came from. I think it's important that we find ways to assure anybody that thinks like that that we will absolutely ensure that British identity and Irish identity lives side by side.”

---

While maintaining political stability in Northern Ireland will primarily fall to O'Neill and Little-Pengelly, it will also depend on the outcome of a number of key elections—in the U.K., in the Republic of Ireland, and perhaps even in the U.S., too. All three

had a hand in the Good Friday Agreement, to which both London and Dublin are co-guarantors.

O'Neill makes no secret of her disdain for the ruling Conservatives in the U.K. government (“These people can’t be trusted,” she says, pointing to the political dysfunction of the last 14 years) or her desire to see Sinn Féin win power in the Republic (“One of the biggest failings of the government of the day is the fact that they haven’t done any of the preparation work around constitutional change”). But she says that the U.S.’s relationship with Northern Ireland defies party politics. “There’s a lot of influential people on the Hill that we have strong, strong relationships with, and that always continues regardless of who holds the POTUS position,” O’Neill says. “It’s that practical, pragmatic support that we’ve had through the years that’s made the difference for the peace process here.”

It’s too soon to say what O’Neill’s legacy as First Minister will be, but in a place as turbulent as Northern Ireland, the stability of a functioning government might be enough. “I want to see Irish unity —I’m sure that’d be a great legacy I could leave, if we could get to that point,” she says, laughing. “But I won’t do that by myself, of course. That’ll be a collective will.”

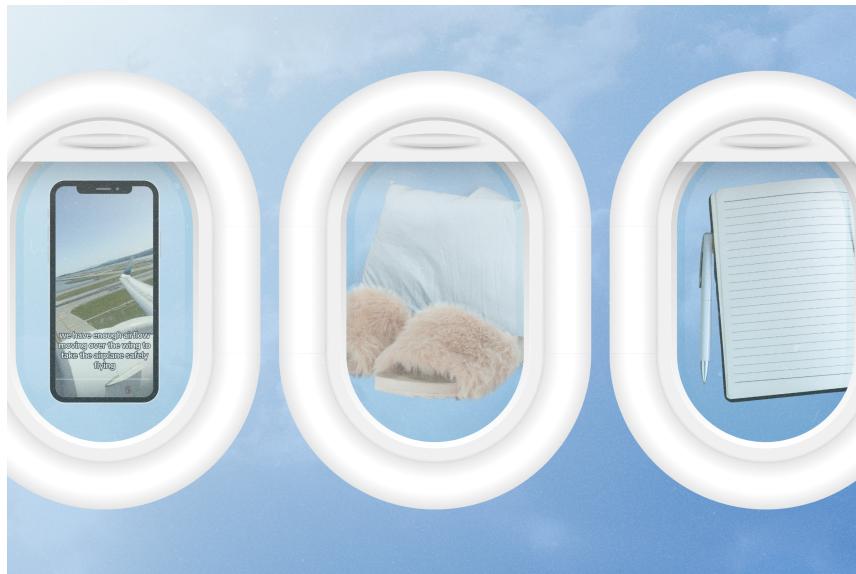
For now, O’Neill says she’s striving for the same feeling that she felt all those decades ago driving around her native Clonoe. “That hope and opportunity, it’s that same feeling that people had in 1998,” she says. “It’s about prosperity, it’s about lifting people up. If I can leave even some of those things in my legacy, then I think that will be a good thing to do.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6983213>

## 6 Tricks to Try to Calm Your Fear of Flying

Angela Haupt is a health and wellness editor at TIME. She covers happiness and actionable ways to live well.



Gina Moffa's fear of flying took off early. When she was 10, her mother—overwhelmed by bad turbulence on a flight to Italy—clambered to the emergency exit and tried to get out of the plane. A fellow passenger offered her Valium, and a nun onboard prayed the Rosary with her. “And then she was OK,” says Moffa, now a grief therapist based in New York City. “But it taught me there was something to be afraid of.”

That hasn't lessened over the years. Moffa recently returned from a “precarious adventure” to the Portuguese island Madeira that involved flying in a tiny 12-seater plane for nearly three hours over the Atlantic. She almost didn't board. “They were like, ‘Ma'am, you're going to make us late—we have to get on before the winds come,’” she recalls.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

If your heart also takes a nosedive while flying—especially recently—you’re not alone. Research suggests about [25 million adults](#) in the U.S. experience aerophobia, and who can blame them? Door plugs are [dropping off](#) of Boeing 737 and [small planes](#) alike. Engines are [catching on fire midair](#), and [tires are falling off](#).

### **Read More:** [\*How to Be Mindful If You Hate Meditating\*](#)

But the truth remains: Flying is safe. Even now. [According to the National Safety Council](#), the lifetime odds of dying on a plane in the U.S. are “too small to calculate.” That’s part of the reason Moffa hasn’t allowed herself to be grounded. On her recent rickety flight, “I was terrified to the point of palpitations, but I didn’t cause a scene,” she says. “It’s a very common fear, and it can be immobilizing, but you can’t let that fear get in the way of witnessing the beauty in the world.”

We asked experts to share the psychological tricks that help them conquer their flight anxiety.

### **Check out pilot TikTok**

Moffa has learned that she’s able to cope with her fear of flying best if she understands everything about her trip—including what type of plane she’ll be on, the forecast, and [expected turbulence](#). “If I know that I think catastrophic thoughts around flying, which I do, then I can say, ‘OK, so what are the facts?’”

That philosophy led her to the aviation corner of TikTok, where pilots post video explainers of how they [prepare for take-off](#) and [landing](#), strategies to [avoid thunderstorms](#), and navigating worst-case issues like [engine failure](#). “They’ll show you what they’re doing in the cockpit, and what the noises are,” Moffa says. “That way if you’re sitting near the wing and you see part of it go down, you’re not like, ‘Wow, we’re going to lose our wing.’ It’s actually

just part of what it's supposed to do to keep you in the air.” Knowledge is power, she says—and, in this case, peace.

## **Establish some sense of control over your environment**

After years of flying without any issues, Los Angeles psychologist Carder Stout developed aerophobia in his 30s. Now, he has an action plan that he shares with his clients and uses himself. Step one: Ensure you feel some sense of control over your environment. That means bringing your own pillow, blanket, and slippers. “I pull down the window shades in my aisle, or ask the other passengers to do so,” he says. (No one has declined the request yet.) During take off, he puts on Pink Floyd, closes his eyes, and visualizes a peaceful, tranquil, and safe place that he’s visited before. That image, he says, helps calm his jittery nerves.

## **Journal positive phrases**

Once the plane levels off and is cruising through the air, Stout starts journaling positive phrases. For example: “I’m going to be fine. I’m safe. Planes aren’t so bad, after all.” They become his mantras for the flight, he says, anchors he can return to whenever he needs to settle back down. If the plane suddenly feels like it’s falling, or turbulence jolts you out of your seat, repeat after him: “I am going to be fine.”

## **Try the Havening Technique**

When Dr. Christine Gibson, a family doctor and trauma therapist in Calgary, Canada, treats people with specific anxieties, she focuses on teaching them that they have control over their own body. “We *can* slow our heart rate down,” she says, and let our sympathetic nervous system know there’s nothing to fear. “We’re not just a giant reflex. We can consciously say to our mind-body system,

“You’re OK. You’re safe right now, even though your brain is trying to tell you you’re in danger.””

### **Read More:** *7 Ways to Deal With Climate Despair*

One way to do that is through the [Havening Technique](#), which aims to shift emotions; its name is a nod to finding a safe space, or a “haven.” It involves using one hand to gently brush your palms, shoulders, and face in an up-and-down motion. Start by lightly rubbing your right hand across the palm of your opposite hand, then gently stroking from your shoulder down to your elbow, and across your forehead and cheekbones. You might rub both arms at once, for example, which mimics hugging yourself. After a few repetitions, you should feel calmer, Gibson says.

## **Practice tapping**

Another one of Gibson’s favorite ways to calm down is the [Emotional Freedom Technique](#), also known as “tapping.” It derives from traditional Chinese medicine, and she likes to think of it as self-acupuncture. First, you’ll need a “set-up statement,” which Gibson suggests might sound like this: “Even though there is anxiety when I think about flying, and I’m noticing my heart’s pounding right now, I’m actually safe.” Repeat that as you use two fingers to tap on the acupressure points on your body that are associated with stress relief. Among them: the top of your head, the spot between your eyebrows, the middle of the cheekbones, and the spot between the nose and the lip.

You can subtly practice tapping while you’re in your airplane seat, Gibson points out. “If you have anxiety and it’s like an eight out of 10, and it’s causing you a lot of distress, you do tapping over and over again until the distress is at a three,” she says. “It’s still there, but it’s shrunk and not really bothering you.”

## Consider exposure therapy

If you can't shake your fear of flying, it might be time to enlist a therapist who specializes in treating phobias. Exposure therapy can be highly effective, says psychologist Shmaya Krinsky, founder of Anxiety and Behavioral Health Psychotherapy, which provides telehealth in New York and New Jersey. It involves systematically and gradually "exposing people to the source of their fear in a safe and controlled environment," he says. With one technique, for example—called imaginal exposure—you might be asked to visualize the process of going to the airport, boarding the plane, and experiencing a bad bout of turbulence. Another technique, *in vivo* exposure, forces you to directly face the object of your fear; perhaps climbing onto a stationary plane. Virtual reality can also play a helpful role in exposure therapy, Krinsky points out. It might be a bumpy ride, but after a few months, you'll arrive at the other side—no fear-of-flying baggage in tow.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6973162>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## The Demonization of Rural America

Conn is a Kentucky author of memoir and fiction. Her new novel *Someplace Like Home* explores the resilience of women living in Appalachia and rural America



By the time I was seven or eight years old, I was keenly aware of my father's drug use. He didn't snort pills in front of me yet—he saved that for my teen years—but he talked about pills freely and I knew he took them. He was meaner than usual when he couldn't get his pills, and I learned to recognize the signs of withdrawal long before I ever heard that term. Any hope for stability in our lives probably vanished before I could walk. And by the time I became an adult, everyone in my nuclear family—and plenty of my extended family members—was struggling to cope with the impacts of violence, incarceration, and addiction.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

I grew up in Appalachian Eastern Kentucky, where [systemic poverty](#) has been a challenge for many decades. We always joked that Kentucky was 20 years behind the rest of the country but as a

kid, I didn't understand what we really faced: underfunded schools, inadequate transportation systems, poor healthcare, unreliable utilities. Prescription pain pills flooded into our region and did nothing to cure our collective pain, but instead exacerbated the personal and social struggles that the region is often associated with.



I was born in 1979, so most of this unraveling and destruction took place during the [1980s and 1990s](#). But it was sometime in the early 2000s when I read about the opioid epidemic online for the first time. At first, I was shocked to learn prescription pills had become a mainstream problem. But next, I was angry. By this time, pain pill manufacturers had changed their formulas so pills could no longer be crushed and snorted or injected; right away, heroin became widely available, which shocked me. When I was little, heroin was a city drug, scary and distant. Someone must have known that opiate-addicted hillbillies were a ripe market for a replacement opiate, just as someone had first found a way to saturate the Appalachian region with highly addictive pills without drawing attention to their crime.

But why wasn't it talked about until now? Why wasn't it an epidemic when it was ravaging my family for the last 20 years? Why wasn't it newsworthy when my father chose pain pills over

feeding his family, or when the same thing happened to families all around me?

I already knew the answer to those questions, though. Eastern Kentucky had been a throwaway place for a long time. Through a wide range of experiences, I learned at a young age that we were poor white trash. The stereotypes about us were, and continue to be, disdainful and dismissive, mixed with a potent disgust for good measure. Our accents are signs of ignorance and stupidity; we're presumed to be shoeless and perpetually pregnant, sometimes—repulsively—even as a result of incest. Lawless and toothless, who would decry a manmade epidemic that wiped out thousands of hillbillies and their worthless children?

***Read More: [Kentucky Floods Destroyed Homes That Had Been Safe for Generations. Nobody's Sure What to Do Next](#)***

Americans have discarded and scapegoated various socioeconomic groups throughout our history—this is not a new phenomenon. Unlike many biases that we have reckoned with, though, the vitriolic view of Appalachia—and to some extent, other areas of rural America—stems from an entrenched classism that remains unchallenged in our collective moral consciousness.

The most popular Mexican restaurant in our small town of Berea, Kentucky, has several machines where you can buy gumballs, small toys, and even temporary tattoos. When they were little, my kids always begged for a quarter or two so they could buy something after we ate there. But there was one novelty that made me cringe each time and I forbade my children from spending quarters on it: the [hillbilly teeth](#), which are “the first line of fake teeth purposefully designed to look trashy, hillbilly-like, and downright gross.”

The teeth didn’t offend my sensibilities as a young mother; they publicized my shame. I grew up in a holler and the well my father

dug for our house never functioned quite right. My parents often had to pump creek water into the well so we would have water pressure and I knew we weren't supposed to drink it. But we still mixed it into Kool-Aid and coffee, cooked with it, and brushed our teeth with it. Most of the time, we drank milk or pop.

My brother and I both had visible black cavities on our baby teeth and I looked forward to the day they would fall out. But when my permanent teeth grew in, they were spaced too far apart on top and crowded against each other on the bottom; my gums bled at humiliating moments. Somehow, I always knew my teeth were a sign of the particular kind of poverty I came from.

Why didn't my parents get us clean drinking water and ensure we had proper dental care? The first reason for these oversights was my father's drug addiction; the second was his relentless abuse of my mother, my brother, and me. Visits to the dentist, fixing the well, braces for my permanent teeth—those concerns fade into the background for both the drug-addicted and traumatized minds.



When I moved away from my hometown, I found a way to hide my accent at college and work, as so many Appalachians do. But I couldn't hide my teeth or fix them until I was well into adulthood. The hillbilly teeth at the Mexican restaurant served as a cruel

reminder that it's socially acceptable to mock the socioeconomic class I was born into; our problems are a joke.

Another popular, insidious sentiment loomed large in the 2016 election, and I suspect it was infused into early conversations about our opioid problem: "They deserve what they get."

The 2024 book, *White Rural Rage*, highlights the problematic conversations around Appalachia in interesting ways. Early in the book, the authors claim that rural America poses "a quadruple threat to democracy" and they begin their critique with Mingo County, West Virginia. The authors decry the fact that [this county's majority vote went to Trump](#) in both 2016 and 2020, but fail to acknowledge an important fact in Appalachian voting and indeed, in voting among many vulnerable populations: [less than half of the registered voters](#) cast a ballot in either election.

Even though this book doesn't claim to focus on Appalachia, Mary Jo Murphy at [The Washington Post](#) suggests early in her review of it that "Someone write a new elegy for the bilious hillbilly, because these authors went for his jugular." She addresses rural Americans from that point after. "Hillbillies" are historically associated with Appalachia, but the poor, white inhabitants of this handful of states don't represent rural America as a whole. They're used as an easy target—a convenient stand-in for the diverse population that actually comprises rural America—because they're considered to be poor, ignorant, white trash that no one will defend.

There will be no social backlash against overt and covert claims that rural Americans deserve everything they get. Poor whites remain a safe target for political commentary and cheap humor alike.

Classism is not just a problem when someone writes a book about it. And it's not just a problem when people take to social media to blame election results on some of our most disenfranchised

citizens. Classism distracts us from solving our collective problems because it keeps us from asking the right questions. Classism tells us to blame rural whites for our country's ills—just like other populations have been blamed in the past—demonizing our neighbors instead of the dysfunctional systems and perhaps even individuals who hold incredible power over our political and financial wellbeing.

Whether they are poor or not, white or not, rural Americans grapple with the same issues as everyone else: poverty, violence, addiction, and social decay are obviously not unique to rural areas. But this population faces those problems with fewer resources than their urban and suburban neighbors. Just as there is no excuse for bigotry, we cannot justify blaming our country's challenges on a disempowered socioeconomic group. Placing blame fuels divide. We need to do some collective soul-searching to understand our biases and find a way to move past them.

Finding solutions is the harder work and the *right* work. That work requires that everyone has a voice and a seat at the table—especially the people who have historically been excluded. If we can find the courage to set aside classist prejudice, we might discover that there are no throwaway places and more importantly, no throwaway people. Not even hillbillies like me.



*Photographer [Stacy Kranitz](#) has been documenting life in Appalachia for over 13 years to challenge stereotypes and provide an honest look at a complex region.*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6980243>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Long Dismissed, Chronic Lyme Disease Is Finally Getting Its Moment

Jamie Ducharme is a health correspondent at TIME. She covers the COVID-19 pandemic, Long COVID, mental health, vaping, psychedelics, and more. Her work for TIME has won awards from the Deadline Club, the New York Press Club, and the Newswomen's Club of New York. Additionally, she is the author of *[Big Vape: The Incendiary Rise of Juul](#)*, which was adapted for a forthcoming Netflix docuseries.



Sue Gray, 59, has been sick half her life. But it took two decades to confirm why.

When Gray was 30 and living with her then-husband in the middle of the woods in upstate New York, she [felt a tick](#) on her scalp one day after taking a shower. Her former husband plucked it off with tweezers, and “that was the end of that—for that day,” Gray says.

Over the next few months, however, Gray's health began to decline. She suffered frequent respiratory infections and developed a twitch in her eye. Then, a few weeks after the twitch began, she felt the sensation of ants crawling up and down her legs, even though nothing was there. That made Gray nervous enough to book an appointment with a neurologist. Remembering her recent tick bite, Gray asked to be tested for Lyme disease—but the results came back negative. Looking back, knowing what she does now about [the faultiness of Lyme tests](#), she wishes she'd been retested. But her doctor just sent her on her way.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Over the next two decades, Gray's neurological issues continued and she progressively developed new symptoms: numbness and tingling in her back, chronic pain, anxiety, and an uncontrollable rage that made her feel like an entirely different person. She knew something was seriously wrong, but she didn't know what. "I was scared to death," she says.

In 2007, Gray was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She was stable for a while, but in 2014, her symptoms took a turn for the worse and she was hospitalized. Doctors ran a battery of tests, and one for Lyme came back positive, confirming Gray's initial hunch from decades earlier. Between scouring the internet for information and visiting countless doctors, getting to that point felt like having an unpaid full-time job for most of her adult life. "It's been hell," Gray says.

Thousands, if not millions, of people in the U.S. have lived through versions of that hell. Nearly [half a million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with Lyme disease](#) every year after being bitten by ticks typically carrying the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. In its acute phase, Lyme disease causes symptoms including fatigue, headaches, and muscle aches. As the infection proliferates in the

body, it can spiral into arthritis, chronic pain, heart palpitations, inflammation of the brain, neurological issues, and more.

Most people who are treated with a two- to four-week course of antibiotics get better. But the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [estimates that treatment fails for up to 10% of patients](#), who develop what is officially known as post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome (PTLDS), a lingering condition that comes with symptoms like profound fatigue, body aches, and cognitive impairment. A [small 2022 study](#) put the number a little higher, finding that about 14% of patients properly treated for Lyme experienced prolonged symptoms. And those figures don't even include people like Gray, who were either never treated for acute Lyme or treated too late. (Many patients prefer the term "chronic Lyme disease," which is more inclusive of people who were treated late, inadequately, or not at all.)

**Read More:** [We Used to Have a Lyme Disease Vaccine. Are We Ready to Bring One Back?](#)

For years, much of the medical establishment has downplayed or outright dismissed the idea of chronic Lyme disease, for which there is no definitive diagnostic test or treatment. Kim Lewis, a biology professor at Northeastern University who researches Lyme disease, thinks that's because the medical system isn't comfortable with uncertainty. "It is much easier, psychologically, to conclude that chronic Lyme doesn't exist" than to say that it does but no one knows what to do about it, Lewis says. "The best way to solve a problem is to announce that it doesn't exist."

Over the last few years, though, there's been a renaissance in Lyme research. Buoyed by widespread [acceptance of Long COVID](#)—which similarly results in chronic symptoms after what "should" be a short-lived illness—the medical establishment is looking anew at post-Lyme complications. The U.S. National Institutes of Health [expects to grant](#) more than \$50 million for the study of Lyme

disease this year, doubling its 2015 budget for the condition, and the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) [last year awarded \\$3 million in first-year grants](#) for PTLDs research. As interest in the condition grows, scientists across the country have reported promising findings related to diagnosis and treatment of chronic Lyme, bringing patients closer to mainstream acceptance—and hopefully, eventually, a cure.

“Lyme impacts so many people, and it has never had its moment in the spotlight,” says Lindsay Keys, a patient advocate who directed *The Quiet Epidemic*, a 2022 documentary on the subject. “I am optimistic that this could be chronic Lyme’s moment.”

---

First identified in Lyme, Conn., in 1975, [Lyme disease cases have exploded in recent decades](#), as climate change and real-estate expansion push Americans into closer contact with the blacklegged ticks that carry Lyme bacterium. In the 1980s, [the CDC received about 1,500 annual reports of Lyme disease](#). Now, nearly half a million people are diagnosed annually—and that’s probably an undercount.

Lyme disease is notoriously difficult to diagnose. While many people develop a telltale bullseye-shaped rash after being bitten by an infected tick, [up to 30% of people don’t](#), and others may never notice a rash that forms on a hard-to-see body part. Other early Lyme symptoms—like headaches, muscle aches, and fatigue—can be easily mistaken for those of different conditions.

Tests are also limited in what they can detect. [Standard Lyme tests look for antibodies](#) that the body produces in response to an infection, rather than the bacterium itself. Some companies sell tests using alternative diagnostic methods, and these are widely used among patients and “Lyme-literate” doctors, but [federal health officials caution that they may not be reliable](#) since they [haven’t gone through the full regulatory review process](#).

It's hard to blame patients for turning to these methods, when approved tests are not 100% accurate even during the acute phase of a Lyme illness. [False negatives are common](#), especially when people are tested early in their infections, since it can take weeks for the body to mount an antibody response strong enough to register on tests. But the situation is even more complex when symptoms have dragged on for months or years, since someone may have antibodies long after an acute infection is gone. "The antibody tests that we're using currently cannot tell the difference between an active infection and a long-time-ago exposure," says Michal Tal, an immunoengineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who studies Lyme.

**Read More:** [\*Ticks Carry More Diseases Than Lyme. Here's What You Need to Know\*](#)

At the moment, there's no other objective biomarker that clinicians can use to tell whether someone's ongoing symptoms are related to Lyme. Researchers have found some clues, including differences in the [genes](#), [health histories](#), and [microbiomes](#) of people who develop chronic symptoms relative to those who don't, but there is not yet a surefire way to detect the condition, which leads some doctors to conclude that it's not real. Many patients also report symptoms that fall outside what the CDC recognizes as signs of PTLDS—namely fatigue, body aches, and difficulty thinking—which also complicates the diagnostic process.



Cody Mode, 30, learned that the hard way. He's lived with symptoms including chronic pain, insomnia, brain fog, and sensory and temperature-regulation issues since he was a kid—in retrospect, he believes, tracing back to tick bites he sustained as a child in Alaska. These issues went unexplained for years; he recalls one doctor shaking him by the shoulders, shouting that everything was in his head. But finally, in his mid-twenties, he was diagnosed with Lyme on a test from a private laboratory that he took after moving to New England with his family.

Today, Mode's wife, Rose, and two of his five children have also been diagnosed. The other three kids have Lyme-like symptoms, but haven't officially been diagnosed.

The Modes aren't able to work full-time jobs because their symptoms are unpredictable and can leave them unable to function. They also decided to homeschool their children, since the kids were missing so many classes due to health issues. But despite the massive toll Lyme has taken on his family, Mode says they regularly encounter physicians who don't believe there's anything wrong with them and wave off their diagnoses, saying they're

based on quack tests. “Every time I go to the doctor, I’m worried,” he says.

**Read More:** *Scientists Have Identified the Lyme Disease Genes Responsible for Severe Symptoms*

NIAID has called for more research on Lyme diagnostics, and some scientists are working toward innovations like [at-home tests](#), [urine tests](#), and [better antibody tests](#). In addition, Akiko Iwasaki, an immunobiologist at the Yale University School of Medicine, is working with Tal to map an immune profile of chronic Lyme, analyzing patients’ blood and saliva samples to search for biological markers that may differentiate people who have long-term symptoms from those who don’t. And Dr. John Aucott, director of the Johns Hopkins Lyme Disease Clinical Research Center, is studying whether functional MRIs can detect changes in the brains of PTLDs patients, relative to healthy people.

“I have spent the last 15 years trying to prove that [chronic Lyme] is real,” Aucott says. Only when the medical and scientific establishments believe that it is, he says, will anyone be willing to fund major treatment trials.

---

Treatment for both acute and chronic Lyme is a puzzle. For most patients who are accurately diagnosed with acute Lyme, a course of antibiotics (often doxycycline) wipes out the infection. But about 10% of the time, that approach doesn’t work, leaving a small-but-significant minority of patients with PTLDs. Tal is studying the immune systems of people for whom treatment works versus those for whom it doesn’t, in hopes of predicting who will go on to develop chronic symptoms so that doctors could intervene early with immune-system-altering drugs and better monitor patients’ recoveries.

But right now, doctors don't know why treatment sometimes fails, or for whom it will; some outright reject the idea that treatments don't always work. "Instead of admitting that it fails 10% of the time, we have just been sweeping this under the rug and calling these people crazy," Tal says.

But at least PTLDS is a CDC-recognized diagnosis. The term "chronic Lyme" is even less accepted within the medical establishment. The Infectious Disease Society of America has been sued by patients for rejecting it as a legitimate medical diagnosis, allegedly leading to insurance-coverage denials. (A judge [dismissed those claims in 2021](#), but [patients have continued to fight](#) to move the case forward.) The CDC discourages use of the term "chronic Lyme" because, [as the agency says](#), "it implies that prolonged symptoms are caused by an ongoing bacterial infection when, in fact, the cause is not currently known."

It's true that researchers don't know what causes post-Lyme symptoms. It's possible that bacterial fragments stubbornly linger in the body, either causing ongoing infection or interacting with other pathogens, Tal says. Or, she says, it's possible that the bacterium causes the immune system to attack itself, or triggers another kind of abnormal immune response that outlasts the initial infection. But no one really knows, because a relatively small number of scientists have researched Lyme's chronic symptoms over the past several decades, Aucott says.

However, there are signs of progress. Columbia University in 2021 [launched a Lyme-focused treatment clinic](#), and Yale followed suit last year with [a new research center](#) dedicated to [post-infectious illnesses](#) including chronic Lyme. The NIH's PTLDS grants have also brought new scientists into the field, Aucott says.

Patient advocates have also been effective at pushing for change and raising awareness, including by appearing in recent documentaries including *The Quiet Epidemic* and *I'm Not Crazy*,

*I'm Sick*, which came out in 2023. In April, Keys, director of *The Quiet Epidemic*, met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to call for a public-awareness campaign and more research funding related to Lyme, winning support from representatives in states including Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. “The research is finally happening, exploring the questions that patients have been asking all along,” Keys says.

That wave of support stems in part from a newfound respect for post-infectious illnesses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, she says. “People have had to reckon with the fact that we’re living amongst infectious diseases and anyone can be impacted,” Keys says.

**Read More:** [\*A Hotter World Means More Disease Outbreaks in Our Future\*](#)

An estimated 7% of U.S. adults have [chronic post-COVID-19 symptoms](#) known as Long COVID—a patient group too large to ignore and one that has granted newfound credibility to people with other long-discounted post-infectious illnesses, such as [myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome](#) and chronic Lyme. Long COVID is also subject to many of the same limitations and knowledge gaps as chronic Lyme—there’s no agreed-upon biomarker for diagnosing it, no clear reason why some people have long-term symptoms and others don’t, and a significant group of patients who never tested positive for acute COVID-19—but it has become an accepted diagnosis anyway, with more than \$1 billion of federal research funding poured into it.

“The chronic Lyme community is trying to grasp onto what’s happening right now with Long COVID and hold on for dear life,” Tal says. “If Long COVID is real, and Long COVID looks [almost] exactly like chronic Lyme, then do we need to go back and reassess some of our assumptions about chronic Lyme?”



---

There have already been promising research breakthroughs. Timothy Haystead, a professor of pharmacology at the Duke University School of Medicine, is working on an approach borrowed from oncology that he describes as a “theranostic,” combining therapy and diagnostics. Haystead’s team is studying a cancer drug that targets proteins in the *Borrelia* bacterium, enters its cells, and then destroys the bacterium from within, all while sparing healthy surrounding tissue. “The same molecule that you use to detect the disease is also used to kill it,” he explains.

Haystead is hopeful that clinical trials in mammals, and then humans, will move forward within the next few years. [Another research team](#), this one at the University of Massachusetts,

Amherst, is also testing cancer drugs for use against Lyme bacteria, following some preliminary but promising findings in lab studies.

Meanwhile, at Northeastern, Lewis is studying an “old, abandoned antibiotic” that’s “lousy” against most pathogens, but in animal trials appears to be “exceptionally potent” against *Borrelia*. Lewis’ team partnered with a drug-development company that recently began preliminary human trials of the antibiotic. Research will start with patients who have acute Lyme, and if the drug works well in this population and cuts down on the percentage of people who develop lingering symptoms, it could feasibly then be tested among people who already have chronic illness, Lewis says.

Other labs, [including one at Stanford University](#), are also taking a second look at existing antibiotics, searching for answers in medications that are already approved and available—and, thus, that could relatively quickly make it to patients if they prove effective.

Still, much more research is required before doctors get anywhere close to prescribing these potential therapies to chronic Lyme patients. The road is long, but Lewis says it’s important to look for new treatments, even as other researchers continue to study the root causes and underlying biology of chronic Lyme. Believing it exists is only the first battle.

Right now, a diagnosis may do more to soothe the mind than the body. Shivani, 37, has lived much of much of her life with symptoms—ranging from physical tics to gastrointestinal issues—that she thinks were likely related to Lyme disease contracted while growing up on Long Island. Then, at age 33, a tick bite preceded a “neurological explosion” that made her body and brain feel like they were on fire and resulted in hallucinations, rage, and insomnia. Shivani, who asked to use only her first name, tested negative for Lyme using the CDC-recommended testing protocol but positive

on a test from a private laboratory—a result that she says some doctors still reject.

The diagnosis offered some clarity but little else. Shivani says she initially felt some improvement after taking antibiotics, but the results didn't stick. None of the mainstream treatments her doctors have prescribed have made a meaningful, lasting difference—and some, she says, have been actively harmful, including a prolonged course of benzodiazepines that she says caused cognitive injury and antibiotics that she says made it nearly impossible to eat. Too sick to work or live independently, she has relied heavily on the care of her parents and friends.

Facing massive pain and little hope, Shivani says she has often felt suicidal. She remains alive in large part, she says, due to her spiritual beliefs and her deep-seated sense that “there’s something to fight for,” whether that’s sharing her story, serving as a voice for those who are suffering, or simply getting better so she can spread love and positivity in the years to come.

Moving forward isn’t easy; sometimes she wonders how long she can stand the suffering she faces every day. But, she says, “I’m pretty undefeatable, when it comes down to it.”

---

*Jiatong Lu is a mixed-media artist and photographer based in New York. Her work focuses on exploring individual and collective dilemmas, delving deep into the connections between personal and shared experiences, societal culture, and social policies.*

*After being diagnosed with neurological Lyme disease in 2021, Jiatong Lu started her documentary project “Nowhere Land,” photographs from which are included throughout this piece. Through intimate narratives, the project captures the silent suffering, daily battles, and emotional isolation endured by individuals living with this invisible and debilitating condition,*

*aiming to shed light on the plights encountered by numerous chronic Lyme disease patients.*

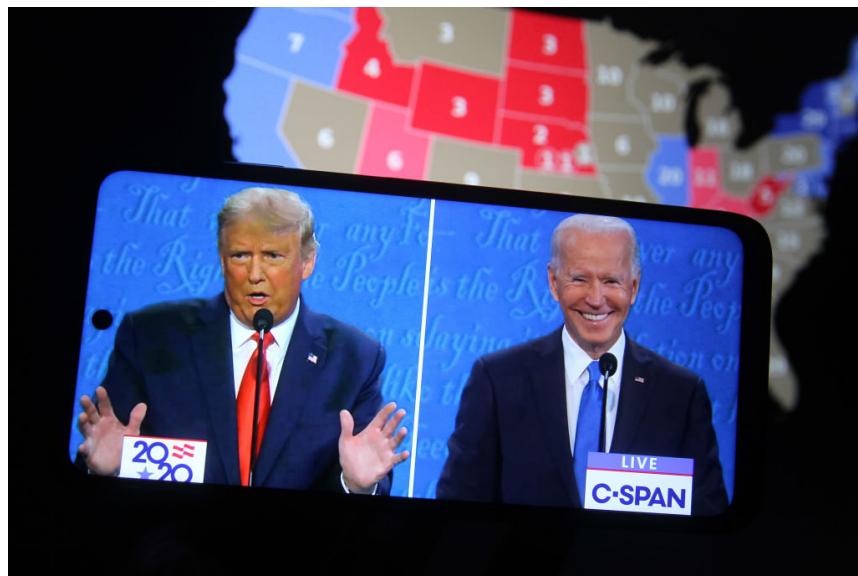
---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6974403>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Donald Trump Could Still Scuttle the Debates

Philip Elliott is a senior correspondent at TIME, based in the Washington, D.C. bureau, where he covers national campaigns, elections, and government. He also writes TIME's politics newsletter, [The D.C. Brief](#).



*This article is part of [The D.C. Brief](#), TIME's politics newsletter. Sign up [here](#) to get stories like this sent to your inbox.*

Two years ago, former President Donald Trump [bullied](#) the Republican National Committee into passing a resolution declaring zero cooperation with the non-partisan Commission on Presidential Debates. Trump was convinced the group that has run the events since 1988 was stacked against him. He also wanted the debates to start sooner, well before the early-vote window opened. Trump insisted to anyone who would listen that he was far from afraid of sharing a stage with President Joe Biden, and would welcome as many as [20](#) such encounters.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Well, the double-digit double dates remains a long shot, but it looks like the ex-President is getting much of what he wanted in facing the current one. Wednesday morning, Biden and his campaign [issued](#) their own terms for a pair of one-on-one debates, and most of them matched up nicely with Trump's red-line demands. The Commission on Presidential Debates is left out in the cold, the first session could come as early as next month, and the whole thing would be captured for a national television audience.

Within minutes, Trump responded with a hearty yes, seemingly ending [months](#) of will-they-or-won't-they speculation that, inside political circles, rivaled the [Ross and Rachel](#) question. And, not long after, Biden [announced](#) that he had accepted an invitation from CNN to debate Trump on June 27. Trump followed in quick order. A September debate hosted by ABC News may also be penciled in by the end of the day.

The comity seemed an easy and mutually useful way to close this [sideshow](#) of the ongoing 2024 campaign and a debate over the borders of the battlefield. But here it's worth remembering this truth: nothing involving Trump is ever this easy, and even when handled an ostensible win, the former President can still find a reason to reopen a victory to extract another petty point of pride. He is a [Reality Show President](#). If there's [drama](#) left on the [sidelines](#), it's always a good bet that Trump will risk a scoreboard lead to drag an extraneous piece of theater into play.

For instance, even in accepting Biden's topline terms, Trump was still holding out hopes that there would be an audience, something the Biden proposal explicitly excluded. "I would strongly recommend more than two debates and, for excitement purposes, a very large venue," Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social. Trump is also likely to raise objections to Biden's term that would mute a candidate's microphone when it is not their turn—essentially silencing Trump's constant interjections that, four years ago, resulted in an exasperated Biden [muttering](#) with disdain: "Will

you shut up, man?” And no one has yet said where, physically, the TBD host would stage these events, regardless of whether megadonors and hardcore activists are in the room or not.

Later Wednesday, Trump’s top advisers seemed unwilling to take yes for an answer and proposed debates in June, July, August, and September. “We believe there should be more than just two opportunities for the American people to hear from the candidates,” Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles [wrote](#) in a memo to the Biden campaign.

Then there is the perennial quibble over the exact moderator or moderators. Biden has said he wants a broadcaster who has done primary debates with both parties that included the two nominees. (The networks that fulfill that quirk include ABC News, CBS News, CNN, and Telemundo.) As Biden campaign chief Jen O’Malley Dillon wrote in a memo released Wednesday, the anchors “should be selected by the broadcast host from among their regular personnel, so as to avoid a ‘ringer’ or partisan.” No doubt Trump would prefer to see Newsmax, OANN, or friendly primetime opinion hosts from Fox News in the mix. Still, working the refs is as much a part of debate prep as any policy discussion. It’s maddening to watch from afar, but there’s always someone in the high command of every campaign who thinks it’s a smart use of time to [badger](#) the anchors and those [covering](#) them with every [crumb](#) of evidence that suggests they’re [unfair](#) arbiters who are effectively boosting one side or the other.

So as audience, antenna, and anchor remain points that could derail the negotiations, at least on the surface it seems like Biden and Trump are heading toward a pre-July 4 clash. Advisers to both camps, however, are all too aware of this high-stakes reality: Neither man has actively debated since the final meeting of the 2020 campaign. That’s a long 1,374-day stretch between such tasks, only made more pronounced because Democrats didn’t entertain any primary challengers to Biden as legitimate, and

Trump refused to accept that any of his GOP rivals merited his attention.

Finally, there are sobering statistics from the latest New York Times/ Sienna College poll of swing states—the must-win set of seven states—released over the weekend: 30% of voters are dissatisfied with their choice of candidates, 19% of voters said they pay attention to politics only some of the time or none at all, and 9% of voters says they're not likely to vote at all.

So maybe these made-for-TV events are not the salve that both campaigns think they need. As much as the Biden campaign insists the in-person-audience-free format would be best to help reprogram the evening as more a source of information than entertainment, the market for persuasion may already be infinitesimally small. Most Americans may look at these two sessions—and maybe a third or a fourth if Trump reopens the terms as he liked to do during his real estate days—as justification of their choices rather than any real mover of voting action. This could be a night to give anxious Americans permission to follow their hearts, not to reset their brains. If that's the case, and if the polling is right, Trump would be wise to take the W, agree to both debates without any additional conditions and refocus on his many, many legal woes.

*Make sense of what matters in Washington. Sign up for the D.C. Brief newsletter.*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6978406>

# The Parents Who Regret Having Children

*Kwon is the author of the novels [Exhibit](#) and [The Incendiaries](#)*



No one regrets having a child, or so it's said. I've heard this logic often, usually after I'm asked if I have children, then, when I say I don't, if I plan to. I tend to evade the question, as I find that the truth—I have no plans to be a parent—is likely to invite swift dissent. I'll be told I'll change my mind, that I'm wrong, and that while I'll regret not having a child, people don't regret the obverse. Close family, acquaintances, and total strangers have said this for years; I let it slide, knowing that, at the very least, the last part is a fiction.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

It is, unsurprisingly, a challenge to get solid data on the number of parents who regret having children. In 1975, the popular advice columnist Ann Landers asked her readers if, given the chance to do it all over again, they'd have children. Seventy percent said they wouldn't; this result, though, came from a group of self-selecting respondents. “The hurt, angry and disenchanted” are more inclined

to write back than contented people, as [Landers observed in a follow-up 1976 column](#). But in 2013, [a Gallup poll](#) asked Americans 45 and older how many kids they'd have if they could go back in time. Seven percent of the respondents with children said zero. And in 2023, [a study](#) estimated that up to 5% to 14% of parents in so-called developed countries, including the United States, regret their decision to have children.

These studies align with what I've found in my personal life: While most parents don't regret having kids, some do. Perhaps in part because I've [written publicly about choosing not to have children](#), I've had people, especially mothers, confide in me about parental regret, and frequently enough I've lost count.

**Read More:** [\*Why So Many Women Are Waiting Longer to Have Kids\*](#)

Most of the time—whether I hear it in passing, quickly, from a stranger at a literary event, or late at night from a beloved friend—this kind of revelation arises from a place of anguish. Some of these parents talk about feeling utterly alone, like villains past all imagining. Several have noted that, afraid of being judged, they decline to be candid with their own therapists. If asked what I think, I reply that, from what I'm hearing, they're not alone. Not at all. I hope it helps; I'm told, at times, it does. It's a physic to which I've devoted my life: asked why I write, I often respond that books, words have provided vital fellowship during spells of harsh isolation, when I thought that solitude and its attendant, life-torquing evils—shame, guilt, the pain of exile—might kill me.

Meanwhile, I'm so often advised that I'll be a parent that, though I'm sure I won't, I still prod at this ghost self, trying on its shape, asking what I'd do if I felt obliged to adopt this spectral, alternate life as mine. For here's the next question people tend to broach if I indicate I don't plan on having kids: what does my husband think? I find this odd, a little prying—do people think I didn't discuss this

topic with him, at length, long before we pledged to share a life?—but the question also rings the alarm bell of one of my own great fears. If I respond with the truth, that he feels exactly as I do, here's the usual follow-up: but what if he changes his mind?

### **Read More:** *Why I Have Zero Regrets About My Childless Life*

I have friends who long for kids, and I know the need to be potent, inarguable, as primal as my desire to go without. I've seen parent friends' faces open with love as they watch their small children sing to living-room karaoke, the adults radiating joy as laughing tots carol and bop. Should my husband's mind change, I can picture the rift that would open wide, dividing us. Either I'd deprive him of what he needs, or I'd give in, birthing a child I don't want. Or, and this prospect is painful enough that it hurts to type the words, our lives would have to diverge. No bridge of compromise can quite traverse the rift: as King Solomon knew, there are no half-children.

This fear is so salient that I turned it into a pivotal tension in my upcoming novel, *Exhibit*: a celebrated photographer and her husband agreed they both don't want children, but he wakes up one day realizing he does, and powerfully so. She's certain she ought not be a parent; he's pining for a child; they love each other very much. Short on joint paths forward, they have no idea what to do next.

---

**Parental regret springs** from a range of origins, not all having to do with privation of choice or means. In and before a post-*Dobbs* U.S., people have given birth against their will. The cost of raising a child runs high; for parents lacking funds and support, dire hardship can result. It's a lack far too typical in the U.S., where there's no federally mandated paid parental leave, and [families are often priced out of childcare](#). But this regret isn't a phenomenon limited to people in grave financial straits, nor to those forced into

parenting. Other parents, all through the world, also wish they'd elected otherwise.

In recent months, as I waited for the publication of the novel I worked on for nine years, I kept returning to the plight I'd explored: I hadn't yet finished wondering what I might do, how I'd live, if. And though I'd heard a range of chronicles of parental regret, as have other friends without kids, the stories were related one-on-one, in private. It's a taboo subject, one made all the more difficult, punitive, by the ubiquitous belief that people who feel as they do either can't or ought not exist.

**Read More:** [\*Does Marriage Really Make People Happier? A Discussion\*](#)

I've also thought about the isolating effect of silence, and what it can cost to live in hiding. I wanted to talk with parents who, if they could go back in time, might make different choices—and who'd also agree to be quoted. It was, again unsurprisingly, hard to find people willing to speak with me on the record about parental regret. I promised to alter the names of each parent I interviewed for this piece. Even so, people were skittish.

"I don't think that everyone is made for children," says Helen, a high school teacher in her 40s. And telling people that their purpose is to reproduce is destructive, she adds. It's what she heard growing up: though Helen wanted to take Latin in high school, her mother forced her to enroll in home economics instead. "I don't think I ever decided to have kids. I was pretty much just told that that's what you do. That's what girls are for," Helen says.

As a result, Helen makes sure to tell her students that having children is an option, one that might not be right for them. She says the same thing to her kids, both girls. "I think that people need to know that just being themselves is enough," she says.

**Read More:** *Why You Should Think Before Telling Mothers ‘They’re Only Little Once’*

At this point, half an hour into a phone call, Helen has cried, briefly, a couple of times. Now, I’m the one tearing up. I tell Helen I grew up in a predominantly Christian Korean American community. The primacy of having kids is built into the Korean language: I knew most Korean adults only as “the mother of x” or “the father of y.” I might have felt less strange if I’d had a Helen at my high school. While I didn’t quite, at any point, decide against being a parent—I didn’t have to, since I had no inkling of the urge in the first place—I also never heard it said that there might be an alternative.

“And if you thought there was any other way to live, there’s something wrong with you,” Helen says.

I ask what she’d do if she had more time to herself. “I would write. I would take walks,” she replies. “I enjoyed writing academic papers. I enjoyed writing them for my master’s.” It used to upset her when classes were too easy. Given the chance, she would think for hours without interruption. She’d take up further studies.

And if she could inhabit the person she was before she became a parent? “I would have stopped that pregnancy before it happened.” But that’s the part Helen’s never said to her daughters, who, after all, didn’t ask to be born. She’s hell-bent on raising them well, not taking out any regrets on the girls. “I love them. I just don’t love the choice I made.”

Each parent I talk to points out this dividing line: it’s possible to have strong, lasting regrets about a life choice while ferociously loving—and caring for—the fruit of that decision. Paul, a Canadian father of young boys, notes that though he could write a book on everything he resents having lost as a result of becoming a parent, he also would do anything for his kids. Paul’s boys are the loves of

his life. Still, overall, fathering has been detrimental to his well-being.

“My body is constantly on standby, waiting for the next disaster,” Paul says. “As an introvert, I also deeply resent having no private time.” He’s fatigued and never at ease, finding all aspects of child-rearing to be stressful. It’s not a problem that would be resolved if he had more caretaking support. “I do have help with the kids from family, and I know if I asked for more help, I’d get it,” he tells me, but he often refuses help because he believes that, as a father, it’s his job to take on the brunt of tasks that attend parenting.

Instead, what Paul lacks, in terms of support, is people with whom he can be honest. “I don’t have anyone to talk to about parental regret,” he says. He wishes he had more spaces where parents aren’t publicly shamed for feeling trapped or stifled. And though he’d felt ambivalent about becoming a father, and it was his husband who first decided he wanted a child, he hasn’t let this initial split in longing drive them apart. With his husband, as with the other people in his life, he’s quiet about his regret: “As much as I might feel his desire to be a parent has led me to my decision, that decision was also my own.”

---

**People have asked how** I learned that not having kids might be an option. I live in San Francisco, where I’m hardly the only person with no kids—out of the major U.S. cities, San Francisco has the [smallest percentage of children](#)—but even so, for some people, having kids can feel so fated that they talk about not having imagined otherwise.

One friend who’s asked this question has told me she felt regret during the first years of her child’s life, but that, as her child got older, the rue left. For other parents, though, the regret proves lasting. Robin, who has adult offspring in their 40s, says that, to this day, if she could reverse time, she would “certainly not have a

baby ever, not under any circumstances.” She notes that she’d had no notion of what being a parent can entail. Having grown up in an affluent, cheerful family, she was glad to have children with her husband, figuring that “it all just looked like a romantic, happy road.”

Instead, after electing to be a stay-at-home mother, Robin found herself in what she calls “the domestic gulag,” a life that consisted of being “a chauffeur and an arranger and an appointment setter and a social secretary and a party planner and a chef and a meal planner and a budgeter” and “an emergency nurse and a night nurse and a psychologist and a confidant.”

Robin also, like the other parents I spoke to, felt responsible for raising her children well, teaching them how to lead “good, honorable, happy” lives, striving to instill and model integrity and kindness. It was a daily, 20-year effort all the more crushing since, each morning, waking up, she’d recall the day’s to-do list and know that she didn’t want to do any of it.

Replying to my questions, Robin keeps having to pause to take phone calls from a nurse caring for her ill, elderly aunt. There’s no one else in Robin’s family who’ll fill the role, she says, so it’s up to her to look after her aunt’s well-being. I’m conscious that I’m telling you this because I’m alive to what at least some readers will think about Helen, Paul, and Robin: that the act of admitting to regret ipso facto convicts them as bad, unfit parents. As, that is, evil people. They know it, too, and are as afraid of being recognized as they are intent on telling people what they’re living through—hoping, with a fervor I recognize from my bygone life as an evangelical Christian, to prevent others’ misery.

Hoping to ease others’ solitude, too. Online forums aside, there are almost no spaces where a parent can discuss regret. Some of this is for good reason—no child should have to hear that they’re

regretted—but what other human experience is there about which one will probably be judged a monster for having any regret at all?

---

**One problem is** that our culture wants just one kind of story about parenting, and it's a story of "pure joy," says Yael Goldstein-Love, a writer and psychotherapist in California whose clinical practice focuses on people who are adapting to parenthood. But, Goldstein-Love says, people often experience grief in the transition to being a parent, grief for the life they might have inhabited otherwise. "Part of what makes the grief unspeakable is that there's always a strand of this regret," she adds.

While Goldstein-Love hasn't had patients bring it up, she also has friends who confide in her about parental regret. I mention the alacrity with which people can lunge to say that no parent feels regret, that it's impossible. I ask if, perhaps, this type of remorse poses an existential threat, belying an ideal picture of what we might be to our own parents. Is this an aspect of why people can be so quick to refute the notion that regret can, and does, happen?

Absolutely, she replies: Most people want to believe that our parents felt nothing but delight about raising us. "They never regretted a moment. They never hated us. And that's bullsh-t." I ask Goldstein-Love what she'd tell parents who wish they had made another choice.

"To the extent that you can, and this is much easier said than done, try not to feel ashamed of this." It's tempting, she explains, to judge how we feel about life experiences, asking ourselves, "Does this make me a good person? Does this make me a bad person? Am I doing this right? Am I doing this wrong?"

But feelings aren't inherently "truly ugly," Goldstein-Love says. "They just are." It's what people make of their feelings that might be "ugly or not." Some people don't find joy in parenting, let alone

pure joy, “and that’s also fine.” Regret is not itself a threat to a parent’s love for a child, and it can help to admit, even to oneself, that which might feel unspeakable. “I really would encourage people to realize that you are not alone in this feeling,” she says.

I think of the halting conversations I’ve been having with parents, and the difficulty with which people talk about regret. Few choices are more irreversible than deciding to be a parent: once the child is born, a person is here who didn’t previously exist. But I also wonder who’s being served well by a monolithic idea that no one regrets being a parent. Not these parents; not, as some of the people I’ve spoken with have pointed out, any kids who pick up on parental regret and think it can’t happen, except to them. If more people had the support to make reproductive choices based on their own desires and life situations, and if the monolith were spalled in favor of plural narratives that better reflect the complexities of human experience, what then?

I think of the people who have spoken to me about regret and isolation, including those I haven’t yet mentioned—a mother finishing nursing school in Mississippi, a mother of five in Nebraska, and all the privately confiding parents. One parent asks at the end of our conversation, “What have other parents said? Was it the same thing? Was it the same thing as me?”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6966914>

## Babes Creators Say the Pregnancy Comedy Is Not ‘Raunchy.’ It’s ‘Realistic’

Eliana Dockterman is a correspondent at TIME. She covers culture, society, and gender, including topics from blockbuster movies to the #MeToo movement to how the pandemic pushed moms out of the workplace.



What if the millennials of *Broad City* had kids? In *Babes*, that show's co-creator [Ilana Glazer](#) stars as Eden, a woman who gets pregnant and leans on her lifelong bestie Dawn ([Michelle Buteau](#)), who has two kids of her own, as she prepares for motherhood. Together they endure gigantic amniocentesis needles, unexpected leakages, and pregnancy-related horniness. Glazer co-wrote the movie and enlisted Pamela Adlon, who tackled the complexities of single parenthood in her critically acclaimed FX dramedy *Better Things*, to direct.

The movie brings motherhood in all its joyful messiness to the big screen. It struck a particular cord with this TIME writer who watched the film while her six-month-old baby was down for a nap. Glazer, Buteau, and Adlon spoke with TIME about why

there's so much negative media about motherhood in the world, how to maintain friendships after you have a baby, and the cathartic experience of destroying a breast pump.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

**Read More:** *The Final Season of Better Things Is Pamela Adlon's Masterpiece*

**You all have children of different ages. What was it like revisiting that newborn stage in the movie?**

**Buteau:** Having boy-girl twins, I remember being so tired changing a diaper in the middle of the night, and I started to cry because I was like, "Baby girl, you have a penis now." And my husband was like, "That's the boy." You forget so much of that. Thank God, Pamela was able to draw out the blackout moments.

**Adlon:** I would write down all the cute things the first kid would say, and by the third kid, she was like, "What about all the cute things I say?" And I don't even know. I left that kid twice: once at a birthday party and once in a car when I parked at a valet. That's what happens when you get to your third kid.

**Ilana, you said you've been pleasantly surprised by parenthood because so many books and movies and TV shows focus on how difficult motherhood is.**

**Glazer:** I just taped my stand-up hour that I've been touring for the past year, and that's the theme: I'm shocked by the joy of motherhood. I think it is positive that public discourse has made a space for parents to admit that it's not easy or wonderful all the time. But I also think social media algorithms convince us through

fear to buy sh-t: “Don’t trust your instincts. Buy my dumb thing, and I’ll tell you how to do it.” We’ve also been trained to hold a reductive binary: You’re either a happy mom or an angry mom. Whereas a show like *Better Things*, there’s actually room to hold complexity. I think *Babes* also captures those layers.

**Adlon:** The reality is, we can have the baby in the alley, bite off the umbilical cord, tie it off ourselves, feed it, change it. We’re getting so far away from our humanity when we’re buying 20 of a different thing for our kids. My kids used pacifiers, and with the first one, if it falls on the ground, you’re like, “Kill it! Burn it!” And then by the third one, you take it out of a pile of vomit on the street and are like, “This is fine.”

**Read More:** [\*There’s a New Way for Moms in the U.S. to Recover After Childbirth. Most Can’t Afford It\*](#)

**There seems to be a specific anxiety among the newest generation of parents to “get things right,” to hack your way to the best baby. The momfluencers are all about optimizing sleep, optimizing eating.**

**Glazer:** I think the [mom influencers](#) are benevolent and there can be good information that comes from it. But women also just need to talk to each other. Michelle and I have been friends for 20 years, and we talk like it. These characters speak the way that women talk, which we heard from the industry is seen as “raunchy” or “gory.” I’m like, “I think you mean realistic, but you haven’t spoken to a woman in a minute because this is how we’re talking to each other.”



**Dawn and Eden struggle with how their relationship changes when Dawn has a second baby. This is very real for a lot of new moms: You can't be spontaneous anymore. There's a gulf that opens up between people with kids and people without kids.**

**Glazer:** You really can't know before you have a kid. It's been three years now that I've been a parent, and I'm just finding my footing again being a social member of my community. Watching Eden and Dawn talk it out, that's the healthiest version of the conversation we could conjure. In real life, there's a lot I wish I could say to my best friends, but I can't.

**Adlon:** It's inevitable that you lose people in your life because you're sitting there at dinner with your childless friends, and your children are screaming, and your friends want to finish their story, and you have to do 70 other things. You're like, "Let's take a raincheck on this particular friendship."

With Eden and Dawn, Dawn got the dream. She has the supportive dream husband, the dream house, the dream kids, and she feels like she got slammed into a brick wall. How do you deal with that when you theoretically have every blessing, but you feel like you're

walking through molasses? The idea that you could actually have a conversation with your friend and find a way through it—that's what I hope for your generation.

## **It's sometimes easier to be honest with a partner than a friend.**

**Buteau:** I've been married for 15 years. I'm constantly working on communication with my husband through therapy and patience. But to have a hard conversation with my friend, the confrontation —will we still be friends afterwards? It spins me out just thinking about it.

**Glazer:** It's true. With your partner, you're locked in, especially once you have kids. You take that leap of faith constantly. There's more trust that you'll stay together because there's an infrastructure to stay together. That doesn't happen with friends. These two friends draw boundaries, and that takes effort. But the relationship is stronger and healthier for it.



**There is a set piece in the movie in which Dawn and Eden destroy Dawn's breast pump because pumping has become this physical and mental burden for her. At the time I watched the film, my**

**6-month-old daughter had started biting me while breastfeeding. I was pushing myself to keep going through weeks of pain. And after watching that scene, I was like, “Why am I doing this to myself?”**

**Glazer:** That scene actually came from my co-writer Josh Rabinowitz's experience. Before that scene, Dawn's husband Marty, played by the totally delicious [Hasan Minhaj](#), tries to be so supportive by telling her it's OK to stop. And she is resenting him for his support. But I think Marty's support is what teed her up to finally let go and destroy that breast pump.

I cannot imagine being the partner of the pregnant or breastfeeding person. I am much more comfortable being the one tortured than feeling helpless. What can you do as the partner but give emotional support?

We've been trained to hold a reductive binary: You're either a happy mom or an angry mom.

*Ilana Glazer*

But we have expectations. And again I think this binary thinking about parenthood is so violent: Did you succeed or fail? Are you good or bad? It's so reductive and dehumanizing. We should find joy in what we do for our children and joy in letting go. I'm thrilled it had that effect on you. It sounds like it was empowering.

**Yes, but also I feel sad when she reaches for it and I have to say, “That store is closed.”**

**Buteau:** I had my twins via surrogacy, so I didn't have that experience of breastfeeding. But when I was going to the hospital, I

really wanted to have that first feeding be breastmilk. I had a couple of friends—angels—who were breastfeeding, so they pumped and put it on ice for me. But the twins were so premature that they needed formula anyway to get those extra calories. So as Pamela has said, you can always plan, but life goes a different way. And then you beat yourself up for doing a good job.

**Adlon:** And like, Eliana, you did it. You made it six months. When I had my first daughter it was 1997. I did six months with my first kid, and I felt like a hero. Then I did six months with my second kid. Then the American Association of Pediatric Lactation Nipple Police said a year. So I felt something between shame, knowledge, and challenge—three words you often grapple with when you’re a new mom. So I went 18 months with my third. I was like, I’m going to go *hard*. But I remember being on a bus in New York City in the ‘80s seeing a woman breastfeed her six-year-old who was the size of Steph Curry.

**Roe v. Wade was overturned when you were about to start shooting. In the movie, Eden gets pregnant unexpectedly and makes the choice to keep the baby. Did the new restrictions to abortion access change the way you dealt with that choice?**

**Adlon:** When we were shooting [the scene where Eden and Dawn discuss the pregnancy], we used words that were so simple, like the way you would talk in kindergarten. “It’s your choice. Whatever you choose, I will be there for you.” We have to simplify it to that extent because people have become so manipulated.

**Glazer:** Beyond the horrors of forced labor, forced birth, and forced parenting, besides the sadism that goes into these politicians working to make laws to abuse women and children—the thing that still felt the most important was to see women talking the way they

talk to each other about this choice. I think that can lead us back to policy that protects women.

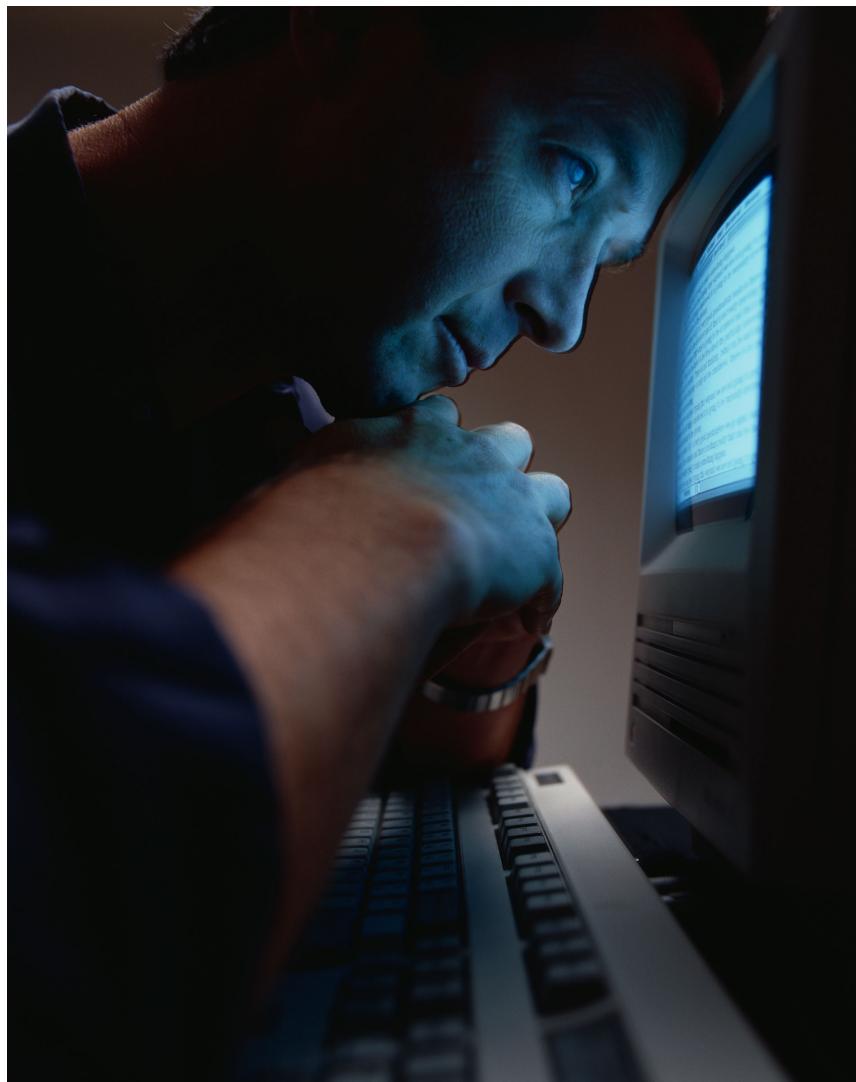
---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6978815>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

# The Decades-Long Journey to Publishing Michael Crichton and James Patterson's Eruption

Annabel Guterman is a content strategy editor at TIME. She also covers books.



When Michael Crichton and his wife Sherri first started dating, all they did was hike. Every weekend there they were, taking in the scenery from the coasts of California to the [mountains of Hawaii](#). The island of Kauai was their favorite place, its rivers carving through volcanic rock and steep, jagged cliffs cutting the sky. The

couple would wake before dawn to be first ones out on the trails, and together they'd take in the sunrise.

Those miles were sacred—and one of the few times that Sherri could get a window into Michael's writing process. It was the early 2000s, and Michael was already a literary phenomenon and bona fide screenwriting machine with novels and movie adaptations that made millions and spun franchises that continue today. Chief among them: *Westworld*, *Twister*, and *Jurassic Park*. At any given moment, he could be in the throes of research on multiple projects. But on those hikes with Sherri, he kept circling in on just one. "It was early in our relationship, when he said he had this book that was set in Hawaii and based on a volcano," she remembers. "He would scratch his head—he was constantly working on it in his mind."

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Now, decades after its inception, that novel will arrive on June 3. Set on the Big Island, *Eruption* is an epic thriller about an [impending volcanic eruption](#), and a government secret with potentially fatal implications. At the center of it all is John MacGregor, or Mac, a 30-something geologist who must lead a team of researchers through increasingly dangerous territory all while trying to save the lives of as many people as he can. It's classic Crichton: a cinematic story rooted in science and infused with plenty of heart, tackling big themes like love and loss. But its journey to publication is unlike anything the author could have ever anticipated. In 2008, only three years into their marriage, Michael died of cancer while Sherri was pregnant with their son. Though the book that would become *Eruption* was the furthest thing from her mind at the time, Sherri knew she'd return to it one day. Eventually, she would enlist the help of another prolific author, [James Patterson](#), to do so. But it would be more than a decade before she was ready to find him.

**After Michael's death**, Sherri's first priority was their son, John Michael. "There wasn't any urgency to do anything right away," she says. "It was day by day. I had this brand-new baby alone, which was never, ever part of our plan." But in the back of her mind, unanswered questions lingered. There was so much about the professional side of Michael that she had only just begun to unlock. She wanted to know more—so she could paint a complete picture of Michael to their son. To do so required the hefty emotional undertaking of sifting through the voluminous archive of work he left behind.

In 2010, Sherri found the first pages of *Eruption*, and her world stopped. She felt it captured Michael's essence perfectly: his passion for nature, his dogged commitment to research, all with an undeniable narrative hook. There had to be more of this book, somewhere. Though he was meticulous in his research, Michael filed his work away in multiple offices on different devices. Sherri dug through paper boxes and converted old floppy discs. Through her hunt, she realized that he'd been researching the book long before they'd met, tracking different volcanoes on trips around the world. She uncovered one of his many work charts from 1994 that set up the novel, then set out to extract information from anywhere she could find it, looking out for any mentions of volcanoes.



In the meantime, Sherri, who would become the CEO of the company CrichtonSun, published four of Michael's books posthumously, some with the help of other writers, including Richard Preston, author of *The Hot Zone*. But she held on to that book about Hawaii, the one that meant so much to them both, unwilling to do anything with it until she was sure that she had all the pieces of this gigantic puzzle. She was certain that he had written an ending, but all her searching never led to one. "It was the ultimate cliffhanger, the one that Michael didn't want, obviously," she says. "I really do feel that everything in him wanted to finish this book, but we just lost him too soon."

For 11 years, she held the book close to her chest. She says she wanted to preserve his legacy—and protect his enormous footprint on pop culture, which just kept growing, even after his death. More than 15 years later, his work lives on. In July, *Twisters*, a sequel to *Twister*, starring [Glen Powell and Daisy Edgar-Jones](#), hits theaters. There's also a new installment in his [Jurassic World franchise](#), slated for release next year. And then there's his beloved medical drama *ER*, which brought in over \$3.2 billion for Warner Bros. after its 1994 debut.

"All of his ideas are like his children," Sherri says. "He took care of them, he was very specific about how he would nurture them, going back to edit, re-edit, reorganize, and fill in new, updated research." This meant that she could proceed with *Eruption* only when she knew that she'd mined every inch of his archive. The next question was who could possibly finish the book. It had to be a writer who could complement Michael—someone with the storytelling skills to weave this gripping narrative together. In 2021, she approached her agent with the only person she had in mind: "What about putting two of the greatest storytellers of our time together? What about James Patterson?"

---

**A collaboration machine**, Patterson, whose books have sold more than 425 million copies, has worked with a former U.S. President and the queen of country. But unlike his books with [Bill Clinton](#) and [Dolly Parton](#), *Eruption* would be the first he'd complete for another writer posthumously. The author, who'd read all of Crichton's books, devoured the available pages, which included the book's protagonist, Mac, and the twin crises driving the plot. He eagerly signed on. "The notion of 'one more [Agatha Christie](#),' 'one more [John le Carré](#), one more [Hitchcock](#),'" he recounts. "We get one more Crichton, isn't that cool?"



Though he was excited about infusing the book with his page-turning style, Patterson was also apprehensive. He has published books in almost every genre, from political thrillers to romance novels, but he wasn't used to dealing with so much science. So he hired a researcher from the University of Alaska Fairbanks to help him with the material. "Sometimes I don't dig deep enough," he admits. "I dug deeper on this because that's the nature of something that Michael Crichton's name would be on." Together, he and Sherri completed *Eruption* in less than a year, with a constant channel of communication as Patterson shared his pages with Sherri for feedback.

The result is a fast-paced and deeply considered story—one that Patterson and Sherri believe is so seamless that readers won't be able to tell where Crichton ends and Patterson begins. They hope to reach a wide audience, which shouldn't be hard to do given the power of their fan bases combined, not to mention a hot Hollywood bidding war over the movie rights. *Variety* reports that it is being set up as a new franchise and A-list actors have reached out about the project. Plus, there's at least one early (and very important) fan: 15-year-old John Michael, who has read all of his father's books, and loved *Eruption*, a book that played a special role in his parents' relationship.

Every year, Sherri takes John Michael to Hawaii so they can spend time in the place his father cherished. If going there brings a certain peace to them both, so too does her decision to finish the work he never got the chance to. "I don't have any hesitation of thinking whether I did the right thing," she says. Knowing that the story he so wanted to tell will finally exist beyond the confines of those boxes? "It feels like freedom."

### ***Correction, May 24***

*The original version of this story misstated where James Patterson's researcher worked. It was at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, not Anchorage.*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6981428>

# The 29 Most Anticipated TV Shows of Summer 2024



The sun is coming out, the days are getting longer, and life somehow just seems that little bit happier. But even as nature beckons us out of doors, the lure of the fluorescent blue-light box remains, especially as a season once associated with reruns and stagnation only seems to get more packed with appointment viewing.

The enticements include the return of shows like *House of the Dragon*, *Bridgerton*, and *The Bear*, small-screen debuts from the likes of Jake Gyllenhaal and Natalie Portman, as well as fond and final farewells to beloved series like *Cobra Kai*. There is so much on the television calendar between Memorial Day and Labor Day that there's reason to believe the seat indent of our sofa cushions might never spring back into shape.

[time-brightcove not-tgx="true"]

Whether you're in it for the discourse or the dragons, here are 29 TV shows to stay inside for [this summer](#).

**Read more:** [The 31 Most Anticipated Movies of Summer 2024](#)

## New Shows

### *Eric*

#### **May 30 on Netflix**

[video id=335vz6W1 autostart="viewable"]

Benedict Cumberbatch and Gaby Hoffman star in this limited series about a puppeteer on a children's TV show whose young son goes missing in a gritty, 1980s New York City. The quest to bring the boy home is a jumping-off point for an exploration of the challenges—crime, racism, AIDS—that plagued the Big Apple during that era. The show is created by Abi Morgan, who wrote the film *Suffragette* and the forever underappreciated series *The Hour*.

### *Ren Faire*

#### **June 2 on HBO**

We all need a bit of escape. For some of us, it involves one too many spicy margs at a questionable hour, for others, it involves diving head-first into a distant past of knights, jousting, and old-timey wares. “Ren Faires,” or Renaissance Faires, where people gather in their greatest 16th Century garb, have been a cultural curiosity for decades. The biggest one in the U.S., in Texas, was founded by George Coulam, who has all the eccentricities of Joe Exotic if he traded tigers for a crown. *Ren Faire*, from *Some Kind of Heaven* and *Spermworld* filmmaker Lance Oppenheim, is a three-part dive into the power grab at the heart of the Texas Renaissance Faire as 85-year-old Coulam looks to step down and name his successor. Seizing glory isn’t just reserved for the jousting ring, it seems.

## ***The Acolyte***

### **June 4 on Disney+**

Who would have guessed, when Disney announced its expansion of the Star Wars legacy back in 2014, that 10 years later, we'd be anticipating our [sixth live-action spin-off series](#)? *The Acolyte* will shed light on the Dark Side, and specifically how its powers came to be. It takes place about 100 years before *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*, carving out a brand new timeline from the already enormous web that's been spun by the galactic behemoth. It's written by *Russian Doll* co-creator Leslye Headland, and in terms of cast, we've got Amandla Stenberg, Lee Jung-jae, Carrie-Anne Moss, Manny Jacinto, and Manny Jacinto's jawline.

## ***Clipped***

### **June 4 on FX/Hulu**

If there's anything we love more than euphoric sports stories, it's sports stories about scandal. *Clipped*, starring Laurence Fishburne and Ed O'Neill, is dribbling behind the scenes on one of the NBA's most shocking moments. Fishburne plays Doc Rivers, the new coach of the L.A. Clippers in 2013, and O'Neill plays [Donald Sterling](#), the team's owner, who was caught making racist remarks on tape. Swirling in the background is Sterling's dysfunctional marriage and the personal assistant who's a little too close, power-hungry, and savvy to be underestimated. The show is based on *The Sterling Affairs*, ESPN's *30 For 30* podcast.

## ***Becoming Karl Lagerfeld***

### **June 7 on Hulu**

Following biographical series about designers like Dior and [Halston](#), it was only a matter of time before [Karl Lagerfeld](#), the enigmatic, iconic, and controversial figurehead of Chanel, got the deep-dive on-screen treatment. The series stars Daniel Brühl as the not-yet-white-ponytailed designer during the heyday of 1970s Paris fashion. It will chronicle his rise in the ranks of high fashion and the catfights and rivalries that weren't just reserved for the tabloid models of the time. Théodore Pellerin will co-star in the French production as Lagerfeld's lover Jacques de Bascher, with Arnaud Valois and Alex Lutz, respectively, as Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé, his greatest competitors.

## ***Fantasmas***

### **June 7 on HBO**

If you happened to see Julio Torres's surrealist comedy [Problemista](#) this year, you might have some insight into what to expect from his next project, HBO's *Fantasmas*. Although there still aren't many details, we do know that it's about a fictionalized version of Torres navigating a "dreamlike New York" looking for a lost gold oyster earring. So far, so surreal. In terms of supporting cast, *Fantasmas* reads like *Avengers* for people who spend too much time on the internet: Julia Fox, Ziwe, Steve Buscemi, Alexa Demie, and Kim Petras.

## ***Queenie***

### **June 7 on Hulu**

Candice Carty-Williams' [2019 novel](#) *Queenie* took home British Book Awards "Book of the Year," so it was only a matter of time before it nabbed a screen adaptation. The show, like the book, follows Queenie (Dionne Brown), a 25-year-old British Jamaican woman trying to navigate life and love in South London. An

authentic and comedic portrait, the series sees Queenie attempting to placate everyone in her life, from her white boyfriend's ignorant family to her own conservative grandparents. And as is wholly relatable, when things start to fall apart, she begins seeking comfort in all the worst places.

## ***Presumed Innocent***

### **June 12 on Apple TV+**

It's hard to believe that, in the more-than-decade since Hollywood A-listers started decamping to the small screen for prestige projects, Jake Gyllenhaal has never done TV (bar a few comedy bits for the likes of John Mulaney and Amy Schumer and, most recently, hosting *SNL*). He certainly feels like part of the last crop of megastars to hold out—at least, until June, when he finally relents for the Apple TV+ series *Presumed Innocent*. The show is based on the 1987 novel by Scott Turow and revolves around a prosecutor who becomes the main suspect in the death of his colleague. Naturally, with its legal throughline, *Ally McBeal* and *Boston Legal* scribe David E. Kelley has penned the series. If the title sounds familiar, it's because this isn't the book's first adaptation; Harrison Ford starred in the film of the same name in 1990.

## ***America's Sweethearts: Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders***

### **June 20 on Netflix**

Perhaps no squad in sideline history is better known than the Dallas Cowboys' Cheerleaders. After replacing sweaters and kilts for skimpy two-pieces and making the move to hire dancers for their lineup, the crew became a pop-cultural shorthand for the kinds of girls guys wanted, and other girls wanted to be. That legacy

remains today, and in a new docuseries from the creator of the wildly popular *Cheer*, Netflix will take us behind the pom-poms to see what it is actually like to slip into the white knee-high boots and dance for hundreds of thousands of people a year.

## ***Orphan Black: Echoes***

**June 23 on AMC and BBC America**

Seven years after the end of *Orphan Black*, the series about an illegal and secret web of human cloning, a sequel set 37 years later will introduce us to a brand new mystery. It revolves around Lucy (Krysten Ritter), a woman who woke up two years earlier in a strange room with no memory of her life. Also in the mix is Kira (Keely Hawes), the daughter of Sarah Manning, the main character played by Tatiana Maslany in the original series, who is now all grown up. Let's just say, even shrouded in mystery, we already understand why it's called *Echoes*.

## ***Land of Women***

**June 26 on Apple TV+**



*Land of Women*, starring Eva Longoria, is part girls' trip road story, part crime caper. Longoria stars as Gala, a woman whose bougie New York City life is turned upside down when her husband

implicates their family in massive financial debt. Seeing no other option than to run, Gala flees with her mother and college-aged daughter to the small town in Spain her mother ran away from five decades before. While they might have outrun their crimes, gossip about the family's past spreads like wildfire in their new provincial home.

## ***My Lady Jane***

**June 27 on Prime Video**

With [\*Bridgerton\* wrapping up its third season](#), *My Lady Jane* is here to swoop in and fill the void. Set a few hundred years before everyone's favorite regency romp, the series shares similar tropes, like naughty royals, saucy escapades, and modern songs remixed on a lute. It offers an alternate history to Lady Jane Grey, the great-granddaughter of Henry VII, who ascended to the throne for only nine days before she was executed at the age of 17. In this series, Jane gets another shot at life, as she swashbuckles her way through love, romance, and adventure. It stars British actors Rob Brydon, Jim Broadbent, *Sex Education*'s Ed Bluemel and newcomer Emily Bader as the titular lady.

## ***The Decameron***

**July TBA on Netflix**



Transatlantic comedy fans, rejoice, because *The Decameron*, Netflix's comedic take on the Bubonic Plague, will assemble a crew of across-the-pond faves, from the likes of *Veep*'s Tony Hale to *Derry Girls* Saoirse Monica-Jackson, *Girls*' Zosia Mamet to *Sex Education*'s Tanya Reynolds. Giovanni Boccaccio's original story was published in the 14th Century, making it some vintage adaptation goodness. The series follows a group of nobles and their servants trying to outlast a pandemic (relatable!) as societal order descends into chaotic collapse.

## ***Sunny***

**July 10 on Apple TV+**



A24, the only production company with actual stans and merch, continues its cultural power grab with *Sunny*, a new comedic

thriller starring Rashida Jones based on *The Dark Manual* by Colin O’Sullivan. Jones plays Suzie, a woman living in Kyoto whose life is upended by the disappearance of her son and husband in a mysterious plane crash. As consolation for her loss, she’s given “Sunny,” a robot companion made by her husband’s company. While she initially resents the gadget, they end up forming a bond ([M3GAN](#) found dead!), and work to uncover the dangerous secrets behind their joint lives.

## ***Emperor of Ocean Park***

**July 14 on MGM+**

In *Emperor of Ocean Park*, an adaptation of Stephen L. Carter’s bestselling novel, we’ll land in the world of academia, politics, and the lush, moneyed backdrop of Martha’s Vineyard. The story revolves around Talcott Garland (Grantham Coleman), a law professor whose life is upended by the sudden death of his judge father (Forest Whitaker), a tragedy in which Talcott’s sister Mariah (Tiffany Mack), a former journalist, believes something fishy may be at play.

## ***Those About to Die***

**July 18 on Peacock**

Ridley Scott’s *Gladiator* sequel isn’t the only Roman swords-and-sandals epic we can expect this year. *Those About to Die* stars acting legend Anthony Hopkins as the real-life Emperor Vespasian, and the drama centers around the corrupt world of gladiatorial competition, from the glory and the bloodshed to the dirty dealings of the ancient mob. The series is directed by the “master of disaster,” Roland Emmerich, who’s known for films like *Independence Day* and *Godzilla*.

## **Lady in the Lake**

**July 19 on Apple**



Much like Jake Gyllenhaal, Natalie Portman has put off making the jump to the prestige small screen. The project that's finally pulled her over the threshold is *Lady in the Lake*, a seven-part series based on Laura Lippman's bestselling novel of the same name. In it, she'll play a Jewish mother, Maddie Schwartz, in 1960s Baltimore who rebrands as an investigative journalist to work on an unsolved murder case. *The Queen's Gambit* breakout actor Moses Ingram plays Cleo Johnson, a fellow mother who is active in the Civil Rights movement.

## **Time Bandits**

**July 24 on Apple TV+**

Taika Waititi reboots the 1981 movie, directed by Terry Gilliam who co-wrote it alongside fellow *Monty Python* alum Michael Palin, as a 10-episode series. The story is about a young boy who accidentally joins a band of time-traveling dwarves as they jump through space and time looking for treasure, naturally. Considering Waititi's last venture was the cult pirate fave *Our Flag Means Death*, it's safe to say he's got the whole pillaging thing down. Perhaps most exciting, Lisa Kudrow will be starring, continuing her reign as queen of offbeat comedic projects.

## **Returning Shows**

### ***We Are Lady Parts* Season 2**

#### **May 30 on Peacock**

We might be living in a game show that's testing our resolve to see just how long we can go between seasons of a show before absolutely losing it. Luckily, *We Are Lady Parts* is coming back just in time, three years after its first outing. In its second season, the irreverent series about a five-piece all-female Muslim punk band will see the group, headed up by *Black Mirror*'s Anjana Vasan, buoyed by the completion of their UK tour, only to have to field new competition from another band on the scene. And as with all success stories, the big question of "Is this really what we want?" may come knocking.

### ***The Boys* Season 4**

#### **June 13 on Prime Video**

In the landscape of superhero stories, *The Boys* offers something refreshing if not entirely horrifying. The first three seasons continued to ask the question: What if people really had superpowers? Would they be altruistic and good? The overwhelming response was absolutely not. The most nihilistic show on television is coming back for its fourth season, and the stakes are extremely high. We enter this season with a fast-track to the oval office, with Homelander, the most superpowered being on the planet and possibly the most psychopathic, as the silent partner pulling the strings to global domination. It's now more important than ever for the boys to take him down.

## ***Bridgerton* Season 3 Part 2**

### **June 13 on Netflix**

The ton is still abuzz as [Shonda Rhimes](#)' corset-ripper caps off its latest season. In keeping with the recent Netflix tradition of spreading out the episodes of its biggest shows, the final four episodes of *Bridgerton*'s third season will drop on June 13 following the initial drop in May. The show has used each of its seasons to focus on one of the [Bridgerton siblings](#), and this one has been all about Colin (Luke Newton) and his slow-burn friends-to-lovers relationship with [Penelope](#) (Nicola Coughlan), who (spoiler alert) has been fast losing grip on her secret identity as London's premiere gossip queen, Lady Whistledown. While Penelope stifles her love, lust, and everything in between for the newly-preened Colin, he helps her find another suitor (cue the lingering hand brushes, harpsichord covers of pop songs, and not-so-metaphorical pearl clutches). Will 'Polin' be officially endgame by the time the season closes?

## ***House of the Dragon* Season 2**

### **June 16 on HBO**

You wait two years for the arrival of a hotly anticipated second season for a beloved fantasy series costing a gajillion dollars, and two come at once. After going head-to-head the first time around, *House of the Dragon* Season 2, a *Game of Thrones* prequel, will be sharing the summer again with the second outing of *Rings of Power*, Amazon's *Lord of the Rings* spin-off series. Returning in mid-June, *House of the Dragon* will land us back in the simmering early stages of Targaryen civil war, as Matt Smith's Daemon, Emma D'Arcy's Rhaenyra, and Olivia Cooke's Alicent Hightower et al try to seize control. Season 2 will give us the "Dance of the

Dragon,” which is to say we can expect all-out gory bloodshed between the factions as they fight for the Iron Throne. In a trailer for Season 2, we also get a snowy glimpse at a few members of the Night’s Watch. It may be summer, but it looks like winter is coming again.

## ***The Bear* Season 3**

**June 27 on FX/Hulu**

It hasn’t been long since we said our last “[Yes, chef](#),” but, thankfully, we won’t have much more time to wait. In a release schedule that feels almost alien to modern TV production (the young cast of *Stranger Things* is currently figuring out just how long they can feasibly pull off being 15 while in their early twenties), *The Bear*’s third season is heading our way almost exactly a year after the second run finished. (Which is good, because we last left Jeremy Allen White’s Carmy locked in a walk-in freezer, so we should probably let him out soon.) What went from a show with minor buzz to the most lauded and awarded series of last year promises more stakes (and steaks, no doubt) as The Bear, the newly-renovated fine dining restaurant, is ready to open to the public. This run will likely be even more stressful than before, as Carmy pushes himself and his team, including Ayo Edebiri’s Sydney and Ebon Moss-Bachrach’s Richie, harder than ever.

## ***Cobra Kai* Season 6**

**July 18 on Netflix**



*Cobra Kai* is signing off (or, waxing off) for the final time with its sixth season. Compared to other nostalgia grabs, the sequel series to *The Karate Kid*, revolving around the continued rivalry between Ralph Macchio's Daniel LaRusso and William Zabka's Johnny Lawrence and the warring dojos they curate, has stood the test of time, picking up a groundswell of affection throughout its run. With its last season, the show will take us to the Sekai Taikai—the world championships of karate—and bid farewell to Daniel, Johnny, and their ragtag group of students.

## ***The Umbrella Academy* Season 4**

**Aug. 8 on Netflix**

It's time to say goodbye to everyone's favorite dysfunctional family with the final series of *The Umbrella Academy*. The series, based on the graphic novel by My Chemical Romance's Gerard Way, is about a set of estranged, super-powered siblings, who come back together after the death of their slightly megalomaniacal father. When we left last season, the Hargreeves gang were left sans superpowers to face off against their biggest threat yet. As the series embarks on its last adventure, the all-star cast that includes Elliot Page, Justin Min and Robert Sheehan will be joined by the likes of Nick Offerman, Megan Mullally, and David Cross.



## ***Emily in Paris* Season 4 Part 1**

**Aug. 15 on Netflix**

Having taken Paris, Emily is eyeing the rest of Europe. *Emily in Paris*, the series that real life Parisians hate and the rest of us hate to love, has followed Lily Collins' American PR exec in the City of Love. Now, viewers will join her on jaunts to the Alps and Rome, making the most of the continent's transport infrastructure. It is sure to feature more romance, bad decisions, and questionable Frenglish.

## ***Pachinko* Season 2**

**Aug. 23 on Apple TV+**



Min Jin Lee's expansive epic *Pachinko* is no easy feat to adapt to any screen. The book chronicles almost 75 years of a Korean family's story, starting in 1915 and ending in 1989, detailing their plight under Japanese occupation, war, poverty, and racism. That's a lot to fit into one season, so luckily the show is back for its second outing later this summer. Where Season 1 landed us in Osaka under torturous discrimination, Season 2 will likely time-jump to World War II and follow our lead Sunja (played as a child by Yu-Na, a young adult by Kim Min-ha, and an older woman by

Youn Yuh-jung) as she continues to scrape by for her family under disastrous conditions.

## ***Only Murders in the Building* Season 4**

### **Aug. 27 on Hulu**

While its beginnings may have started off humble (well, as humble as a show starring two *SNL* veterans and one of the most famous women on the planet can be), *Only Murders in the Building* has snowballed into one of the biggest A-lister magnets on TV. The show, which follows three amateur true crime podcasters (Steve Martin, Martin Short, and Selena Gomez) who keep stumbling across murders, roped in [Paul Rudd and Meryl Streep](#) last season, and this next installment has an even bigger line-up to look forward to. Streep is back, along with new additions Molly Shannon, Eva Longoria, Eugene Levy, Zack Galifianakis, Melissa McCarthy, and Kumail Nanjiani. Somehow, another murder will land at our footsteps, and somehow, it won't seem at all farfetched!

## ***Rings of Power* Season 2**

### **Aug. 29 on Prime Video**

[\*Rings of Power\*](#), Amazon's first dip into the *Lord of the Rings* estate, is based on *The Silmarillion*, with the prequel series tracing back to the formation of the One Ring and Sauron's rise to power. When we last left the show, it had been revealed that Sauron (Charlie Vickers) had been hiding in plain sight the whole time, deceiving Galadriel (Morfydd Clark) into thinking he was Halbrand, the lost king of the Southlands. Now, as we enter a new season, it looks like we're going to see more of the Dark Lord's villainous quest for power, seemingly taking control of Mordor— orcs and oozy black sentient goo and all—and envisioning the creation of the ring in Mount Doom. He's also ripped off the

shackles of his disguise and goes about Middle-earth in all of his peroxide-laden, long-haired glory.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6979288>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## ASU President Michael Crow on Campus Protests, AI and the Future of College Sports

Sean Gregory is a senior sports correspondent at TIME. His work has been cited in the annual Best American Sports Writing anthology nine times. His stories have won awards from the U.S. Basketball Writers Association, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and his work was named a finalist for Deadline Club and Mirror awards for excellence in magazine writing and reporting on media, respectively.



As protests erupted across college campuses this spring amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, Arizona State University (ASU) president [Michael Crow](#)—who runs a large state institution with nearly 80,000 students enrolled on campus and more than 65,000 online—was not immune from the heat. In late April, pro-Palestinian protesters erected an encampment on the school's Tempe, Ariz. campus; police took it down and arrested more than 70 people, 20 of them Arizona State students. “We protected free speech,” says Crow. “We did not permit hate speech or genocidal speech. We have to continue operating a university. We graduated 20,000 people, our largest spring graduation effort. We had over 250,000

visitors. We held over 30 convocation events. They all went on and people were able to demonstrate. But nothing was interrupted.”

[time-brightcove not-tgx=”true”]

**Read More: *What America’s Student Photojournalists Saw at the Campus Protests***

Crow took over Arizona State back in 2002, when it was largely known as one of the premier party schools in the country. Crow set out to form a “[New American University](#)”—“highly egalitarian, highly innovative, highly adaptive, highly personalized,” he says—and for nine straight years, *U.S. News and World Report* has named Arizona State the most innovative university in America. Crow talked to TIME on May 16 about lessons learned during this highly-charged moment on college campuses, his potentially pioneering collaboration with OpenAI, and the future of the multi-billion-dollar college sports business.

*This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.*

**Since Oct. 7, protests and conflicts over free speech have unspooled on college campuses and beyond. It seems that the job of university president has become one of the more stressful occupations in America. What’s your stress level right now?**

The job has significant amounts of stress to begin with. It’s just not very visible. There are many, many constituents, groups, social issues, political issues, cultural issues—it’s just a normal everyday thing. Then comes October 7. It’s not very stressful to say that an organization intent on annihilating another group because of their religion is not exactly an expression of free speech. The stress

levels have gone up because we have to take leadership positions, we have to make decisions in a very difficult and challenging moment, call hate speech “hate speech” and at the same time protect the right to free speech.

## **What is the biggest challenge running a university in May of 2024?**

I think the toughest job is preparing our college graduates for the complexities that lie ahead. How do we continue to accelerate the kind of unbelievable positive progress that we've had over the last few hundred years and, in particular, the last couple hundred years in the United States? And how do we find a way to best prepare people to deal with high-speed cultural change, high-speed technological change, unbelievable communication changes with social media and AI systems and so forth. I'm not blowing smoke. This is an unbelievably challenging moment. The stress is, how do we do that and not be diverted from our target, not get sucked into political whirlpools that are bent on some kind of negative outcome? And so the biggest stress is to keep playing to the future, in the middle of large amounts of forces that are out there that are not interested in the continued evolution into the future.

## **The pro-Palestinian protests and occupation of a building at [Columbia University](#) generated worldwide attention. What grade would you give Columbia's President, Minouche Shafik, on her handling of the crisis?**

I'm not going to give grades to other university presidents. What I can say is it's important that universities be bastions for free speech, but in being a bastion for free speech, that we not be a bastion for anarchy. Free speech is a protected thing. It just doesn't

include hate speech or speech that's genocidal. Genocidal speech is hate speech. Genocidal speech might be free speech [when] yelling from the street. But not inside the university community.

## **At Arizona State, 72 arrests were made on April 26 and 27, during a pro-Palestinian protest on campus. Why were those arrests made?**

We're very tolerant of the expression of free speech. There was a pro-Palestinian rally that had begun at about 8:30 in the morning of the first day. It was in an inappropriate place. That is, they hadn't registered for the location. We decided to let the demonstration continue. They began setting up tents. We asked them not to. They began to attract lots of people, mostly not students, and then built an encampment and the beginnings of a fortification. We said, "listen, you're free to express your ideas here, but you're not free to have an encampment. So you need to know that by 11pm, you need to be gone. And you can come back the next morning at 5am, and the encampment needs to be gone." At 11pm, most people were gone, but not everyone. And all of the encampment was still there. So we asked the police to come in and help us to take it down. Which we did, with no injuries and no use of weapons.

And the next day there were two additional demonstrations on campus and they were both peaceful and appropriate. The university exists to serve the [ASU] community and within that there are some rules of engagement. Blocking free speech is not one of them. You can still express your free speech but you can't have any encampment, we don't allow tents to be built on campus. There wasn't going to be an encampment overnight, period.

## **Were the 20 students who were arrested on those days allowed to walk in graduation or take finals?**

The answer was no. They can complete [their degrees]. They just have to meet with our student affairs staff and go through a process. And many of them are in that process right now.

*[According to an ASU spokesperson, just two of the students arrested were set to graduate on May 6.]*

## **What did you learn from the experience?**

You can maintain these values all at the same time. You have to be able to maintain safety. We did that. You have to be able to maintain the rights of the students to advance with their programs. We did that. You have to maintain free speech so that they can freely express their views about the war, which they did, which is also fine. And we also said that genocidal speech isn't going to be allowed and we didn't see any of that. We had people showing up who were not pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli. They were pro-trouble. So we made sure that the pro-trouble people couldn't do what they were there to do.

## **The chief of police at Arizona State was placed on paid leave because of complaints about his conduct during the protests. Why was he put on leave, and what's the status of any investigation?**

If people accuse a police officer of conduct that's not appropriate we have to look into it. So we hired the right investigators and they're looking into what these charges are. I don't know the details of the charges. But that's normal procedure.

## **You've said that postdoctoral research scholar, Jonathan Yudelman, “will never” teach at Arizona State again after he confronted a Muslim woman**

**wearing a hijab during a pro-Israel demonstration. The video went viral: Yudelman was heard telling the woman “you disrespect my sense of humanity, bitch.” Why did you cut ties with Yudelman?**

Well, you can't be one of our employees and go up to another person for a religious or ethnic reason and begin threatening them. We can arrest you, or you're just gone. So he's gone.

*[Yudelman did not return a request for comment made through the University of Austin, [where he holds another appointment](#).]*

**You're the first higher education institution to collaborate with OpenAI. What benefits from this partnership are accruing to students and faculty and everybody else at Arizona State?**

Don't think of AI as the Terminator bots that are going to come in and kill everyone. Think of it as this unbelievably intelligent tutor. We've spent the last three years, for example, building a new way to teach biology. Let's say you're at ASU now. You decided to take Biology 100. So in Biology 100, which is science for non-science majors, you take your labs in a virtual reality environment. You're in this thing where you become an avatar. You're learning biology not by listening to lectures, you learn biology by engaging in this virtual reality. We're building an AI tool with OpenAI in which you're flying your little robot and now you're next to a messenger ribonucleic acid, which is what the COVID vaccine was made of. And so you're sitting there and you're looking at this and you're flying around it, and you're studying it and you ask your AI, why are the spikes so long? What are the chemicals on the end of the spikes? And how do they attach? It's going to answer all those

questions for you. What's the speed with which it flows through the bloodstream? All that kind of stuff. You're going to probably become a master biologist, just by asking this machine.

We see it as the most important tool probably since the book, that can enhance the learning outcomes. Right now we're building 1,000 AI tools. We're not viewing it as an existential threat to our species quite yet. We sort of view it as like a computer that can answer our questions.

## **What is the biggest challenge in managing the emergence of AI, whether it's monitoring academic integrity or anything else?**

Cheaters are going to cheat. I suspect there were cheaters back when there were little tablets made of stone. We've had a few of our faculty members give their final exams to an AI system. It answered them all perfectly, which means there's something wrong with the final exam. And so upping our game is the biggest challenge. How do we enhance and accelerate learning? We're trying to work with training our faculty and our students. If they are asking things like, 'please write an essay on this' and some AI system can write the essay, well, then what's being asked isn't complex enough.

## **What do you make of the argument that, after Oct. 7 and the campus uprisings, companies may be less likely to hire students from elite universities.**

The debate is more about the broader cultural context of these institutions. Those institutions that become culturally adrift from some core American values, which not very many have, but if they

do, they're going to find themselves with a less beneficial tax policy, they're going to find themselves with less connection to the American government and so forth. But I don't see this as existential, I see this as instructional.

## **What should students expect to get out of a college degree?**

So the purpose of colleges and universities is to produce people capable of learning anything in accelerated ways. That's really what we're doing. That turns out to be a really important skill set. It turns out to be a thing that produces very adaptable people. And so I see it as increasingly important. We have an Honors College inside ASU called Barrett. And then we have 80,000 other students also. So what we're doing with all of the people, both on campus and online, we're working to create highly adaptable master learners, who in our case are now majoring in two, three, four, and even five subjects, learning across broad fields.

**For nine straight years, U.S. News & World Report has named Arizona State the most innovative university in the United States. If there's been one innovation that you think has had the biggest impact over your tenure, what would it be?**

A faculty highly willing to design new intellectual enterprises and use technology to enhance learning outcomes. Our faculty has built hundreds of new degrees, 85 new academic departments in schools. We are different in that we focus on measuring our success based on our students' outcomes and our community outcomes, not just on the outcome of the faculty itself.

**When you took over at Arizona State in 2002, the school had a bit of a reputation as a party school.**

We were the world's most famous party school!

**Arizona State still shows up in some party school rankings, though lower down the list than in the past. Is Arizona State still a place that a student can go to have a good time and unwind a little?**

A lot of Ivy League folks ask us these questions from time to time. There must be no drinking at Princeton or at Dartmouth. I'm sure of that.

Arizona State is a place where you can choose between literally 450 undergraduate majors. You can live in apartment buildings that have fabulous recreational facilities, pools and workout places and so forth and so on. You can do all of that. You can make your own life choices. The party school thing probably wasn't the best metric back then. It's a very serious institution. You can have fun and do things and also have a great time when you're there. But that's no longer a moniker that describes the institution.

**Turning to athletics for a bit, you recently talked about “doing away with a legacy in the design [of the athletic department] that we think is counterproductive to our success.” What do you mean by that?**

The most important thing that we're doing is restructuring the entire design of our athletic program, so that it will operate in the transformative ways that we've operated the rest of the university,

rather than just being what's called an auxiliary unit. We've restructured the finances, the capitalization, restructured the relationship with the students. We're preparing ourselves for all things that lie ahead. We got through our [NCAA investigation](#). We have the number one recruiting class [in 2025] in Big 12 football. We have Bobby Hurley's best recruiting class for his men's basketball team. Four coaches were Pac-12 coaches of the year and we won the national championship in swimming. A lot of positive things are happening.

**I want to give you a chance to respond to criticism of how you and the school handled the football recruiting scandal. In February 2022, you stood by ex-coach Herman Edwards when word came down that the NCAA was investigating recruiting violations during the COVID-19 no-visit period. You implied that he wasn't responsible for violations. Edwards was let go in September of 2022 with a \$4.4 million severance payment, and in April of this year, the NCAA found that Edwards "extensively participated in impermissible recruiting."**

The day we heard about the cheating scandal, we launched our investigation. The next day, we were told by the NCAA that they had to run the investigation. They ran the investigation. And when we finally decided that we needed to separate from Herman, the NCAA hadn't interviewed him. Let's make note of that. On separation, he got \$4 million out of \$8 million. He gave up \$4 million. So his penalty on separation was \$4 million.

## **So you're saying that when you stood by him in February of 2022, you didn't know that he had a role in the recruiting violations?**

Correct. The NCAA is highly prescriptive on what to say and when we're allowed to say it and so forth. What we're happy with is, we're past it. We worked through it.

## **Why did Arizona State move from the Pac-12 Conference to the Big 12?**

I believed in the regional conferences, as opposed to big national conferences. But at the end of the day, when Oregon and Washington came [into the Big 10] after the offer that was made by [Apple](#) [to keep schools in the Pac-12]—we're talking about events that occurred in less than 24 hours—the conference didn't exist anymore at that point. And so, so the next day, several of us then joined the Big 12. And off we go into the unknown.

The four what are called the corner schools—Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Arizona State—we get to stay together and move over there. Texas is not that far away. We're in strong recruiting areas, with strong competitive teams, and strong athletic traditions. So we're excited. I was a javelin thrower at Iowa State, in the old Big 8 conference. So I've been to all these little towns throwing the javelin. The wind in Oklahoma and Kansas is tough to get it to fly in the right way. But, nonetheless, we're excited about the competition. I think we're going to do very well.

## **It's no secret that with TV rights deals and conference realignment and [name, image, likeness \(NIL\)](#) money is playing a larger and larger role in college athletics. Is the relationship between sports**

## **and academics in colleges where you want it to be?**

It's not. It is seriously messed up. And I think that we need to take a step back as a country and ask ourselves if we want to professionalize all these college sports. Because they're supposed to be a way for young people to get their degrees and move forward with their lives and train for the Olympics and so forth. I'm a fan of taking a step back and looking at all this. There are so many trains in movement right now. There are lawsuits, settlements, NIL activity, pay-the-athletes. I think we can do a better job once we decide what we want college sports to be.

### **Are you in favor of colleges paying their athletes?**

I'm not in favor of paying athletes. I'm for very significant scholarships with significant stipends to help them to be successful in the totality of their lives. But the second we start paying them, once they're an employee, they're no longer a student-athlete. They're now an employee-athlete. That's different.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from  
<https://time.com/6982181>