AUG. 5, 2024

TIME

time.com

TIME Magazine

[Aug 5, 2024]

- **Articles**

Articles

- **Why Joe Biden Dropped Out**
- **It’s Trump’s Race to Lose**
- **How America Can Still Come Together**
- **How We Chose the 2024 World’s Greatest Places**
- **The Jarring Opulence of Anant Ambani’s Big Fat Indian Wedding**
- **Backward Walking Is the Best Workout You’re Not Doing**
- **Why Modi and Putin Are Friends**
- **Remembering Shannen Doherty, the Quintessential Gen X Girl**
- **People Still Misunderstand Trauma, Says ‘Body Keeps the Score’ Author Bessel van der Kolk**
- **Hip-Hop Needs a #MeToo Reckoning**
- **Why Voters Everywhere Are Fed Up With Incumbents**
- **Why Are COVID-19 Cases Spiking Again?**
- **The Border Is Not the Problem**

- **America’s Political Violence Crisis**
- **‘We’re Living in a Nightmare:’ Inside the Health Crisis of a Texas Bitcoin Town**
- **The Rise of a New Kind of Parenting Guru**
- **Why We All Have a Stake in Twisters’ Success**
- **Netflix’s Audacious Riff on The Decameron Is Tons of Fun. But Is It Really The Decameron?**
- **The 36 Best Celebrity Memoirs**
- **Snoop Dogg on His Olympic Gig, the Horse He Wants to Meet, and Being a ‘Very Legal Guy’**

Why Joe Biden Dropped Out

Brian Bennett is the senior White House correspondent at TIME, based in the Washington, D.C. bureau. He has covered wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, interviewed world leaders, traveled across the globe with President Trump and President Biden, and written extensively about intelligence, immigration and the fallout of major disasters.

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.

It took nearly a half-century for Joe Biden to rise to the pinnacle of American politics, an ascent haunted by tragedy and capped by triumph. The fall, in comparison, felt brutally fast.

Just weeks after a disastrous debate spurred a dramatic revolt within his own party, Joseph R. Biden Jr., the 46th President of the United States, caved on July 21 to concerns among Democrats about his dwindling re-election chances, dropping out of the contest against former President Donald Trump. The dramatic decision upends the 2024 race and sets the stage for a frantic scramble to Election Day.

“It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President,” Biden wrote in a letter posted on social media a little before 2 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. “While it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.” In a separate post issued minutes later, Biden threw his support for the Democratic nomination behind Vice President Kamala Harris.

Order your copy of this issue of TIME here

Since the June 27 debate against Trump deepened questions about the President's mental acuity and his ability to campaign and govern, dozens of the party's elected officials had urged Biden, 81, to withdraw. Biden stubbornly defied those calls, bristling at the uprising and determined to forge ahead. He was 100% all in, aides insisted—until suddenly he wasn't.

[video id=xebter6w autostart="viewable" no_rec vertical]

The historic decision makes Biden the first sitting President to cancel his re-election campaign in over half a century, when

Lyndon Johnson announced in March 1968 he would not accept the Democratic Party's nomination amid disapproval over his handling of the Vietnam War. Biden's departure opens the door for Harris or another younger Democratic leader to vie for the top job against the 78-year-old Trump, depending upon how Democrats decide to replace him. And while Biden's preference still carries influence among many party loyalists, there's hardly a guarantee that a party willing to defenestrate its leader will take its cues from the President any longer.

Read More: *Trump and Other Leaders React to Biden Dropping Out*

It cannot have been easy for a man who fought most of his life for the power of the presidency to relinquish it now, in a diminished state and under difficult conditions. Biden did not want to go. Pushing through adversity had become a defining characteristic of his identity. He saw the mounting concerns about his age as another hurdle to get over.

To understand the deliberations of the President as he weighed whether to step aside, it helps to trace the path that led him here. No sooner had Biden been elected to the Senate in 1972 than he suffered the death of his wife and daughter in a car crash. Fifteen years later, his first run for the White House ended abruptly after he delivered a debate argument pilfered from a British politician. As the plagiarism scandal snowballed, Biden's inner circle—many of whom still occupy positions in his orbit today—urged him to exit. Even now, Biden has regrets that he heeded his advisers over his family, who urged him not to quit.

The experience colored Biden's contempt for both the press and his critics. He sees the elitists in Washington working against him. To bow to the calls for him to end a storied career would be tantamount to admitting he wasn't up for the task, and he believed he was. For Biden, it meant reliving 1987 all over again.

But Biden's dismissal of the Democrats' doubts as a Beltway phenomenon was inaccurate. Americans long had doubts about Biden's age. An Associated Press–NORC poll last summer found 77% of adults believed Biden was too old to govern effectively through a second term. The debate with Trump cemented that perception. Democrats were shaken to watch Biden stumble his way through, mixing up names and figures, losing his train of thought, failing to parry Trump's lies or give coherent descriptions of his own accomplishments and vision for a second term.

- **Biden Endorses Kamala Harris**
- **Biden's Letter on His Historic Decision**
- **Trump and Other Leaders React**
- **What Happens Now**
- **Why Biden Dropped Out**

Unable to push him out, many frustrated Democrats stayed silent, either too timid to declare the President could no longer lead the ticket or unsure whether Harris would fare better. But in the days and weeks that followed, a growing chorus of Democratic lawmakers and donors sounded the alarm, warning that Biden was likely to lose in November, potentially dragging down the party's candidates across the country and handing the House and Senate to Republicans.

Biden insisted he would stay in the race and worked overtime to shore up pillars of support within the party, from union leaders to the Congressional Black Caucus. For a moment, it looked like Biden had quelled the dissent. Then his longtime ally Nancy Pelosi gave the ditch-Biden effort fresh momentum. “It’s up to the President to decide if he is going to run. We’re all encouraging him to make that decision, because time is running short,” the 84-year-old former House Speaker said of her 81-year-old President, speaking as if Biden hadn’t been promising to stay in the race. It was a remarkable diptych—one octogenarian determined to cling to power, even when his capabilities had flagged; another who had voluntarily surrendered it, and yet retained the clout to clip the President of the United States’ campaign when he became a political liability.

As the party fretted, a string of appearances designed to showcase Biden’s strength did little to quell doubts. Polls showed him trailing across battleground states. Prominent donors began abandoning him or recalibrating their investments. Discussion of his apparent cognitive decline dominated the news. Stan Greenberg, who was Bill Clinton’s pollster and who had previously touted Biden’s re-election chances, repeatedly petitioned the White House to take his current peril more seriously. Other party strategists were similarly concerned that the campaign was ignoring a crisis situation for both the President and the down-ballot candidates across the country whose fortunes were tethered to his. Reliably Democratic states were suddenly trending purple.

Then shots rang out across a fairground in Butler, Pa., on July 13, and a gunman’s attempt to kill Donald Trump sent shock waves through the country.

Moments before Trump was shot, Biden had slipped into St. Edmond Catholic Church near Delaware’s Rehoboth Beach boardwalk just as Saturday-evening services were slated to start.

Soon, news broke of the shooting. Biden was hustled out of the building, a black baseball hat over his shock of white hair, to receive word that his predecessor had been the target of an apparent assassination attempt.

Biden sprang into action and set into motion his return to Washington. He got his national-security team on the phone and peppered aides with questions. He soon spoke with Trump, and had addressed the nation three times by the following night. His campaign halted political activities in deference to the sensitivity of the moment, even as aides acknowledged that his opponent's staring down a bullet would only intensify the MAGA movement's ardor and maybe strengthen Trump's advantage in the race.

The Trump shooting barely put the debate over Biden's age on pause. Both House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries and his Senate counterpart, Chuck Schumer, had told Biden directly that their caucuses harbored deep concerns about his candidacy. Pelosi, too, told Biden that his refusal to bow out jeopardized Democrats' ability to hold the Senate and retake the House.

Then, during a campaign swing through Nevada, Biden was diagnosed with COVID-19, and retreated to his beach house in Rehoboth to convalesce. To a tightened circle of advisers, he blasted Democratic donors for trying to push him out of the race, stewed at the lack of credit accorded to his achievements, seethed at the disrespect from purported allies and old friends. But even close allies knew he had all but run out of road, and was beginning to mull an exit in earnest.

Buoyed by the iconic images of his near assassination and show of strength in response, Trump emerged from the Republican convention ascendant. An Associated Press poll released that same day found that 7 in 10 voters thought Biden should withdraw from the race—including 65% of Democrats. Party leaders were no longer willing to muffle their panic.

Now Biden's decision to bow out resets the race. Trump's campaign, tooled to mock, deride, and defeat Biden, is scrambling to rethink their approach to the electoral map. Democrats will try to capitalize on the fresh start, banking that a new candidate at the top of their ticket will energize the base. But who that might be is an open question.

Even before Biden endorsed his running mate to top the new Democratic ticket, the easiest path forward for the party was to swap in Harris, who quickly announced that she would seek the nomination. Passing over the first woman and first person of color to fill the vice presidency would be politically tricky for a party that relies on those constituencies at the ballot box. Unlike other replacements, Harris would face no trouble tapping into the ticket's war chest. Biden has said he wouldn't have picked Harris for Vice President if he didn't think she would make a strong President.

More from TIME

[video id=iCnsL5CU]

But party bigwigs are eager to start fresh. For weeks, some have been drawing up and circulating notional plans for a truncated nominating contest that would culminate at the party's convention in Chicago in August. The Democrats, and America, are in uncharted territory now.

With reporting by Eric Cortellessa

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/7001028

It’s Trump’s Race to Lose

Eric Cortellessa is a staff writer at TIME, based in the Washington, D.C. bureau. He covers Congress, Donald Trump, and national politics.

Brian Bennett is the senior White House correspondent at TIME, based in the Washington, D.C. bureau. He has covered wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, interviewed world leaders, traveled across the globe with President Trump and President Biden, and written extensively about intelligence, immigration and the fallout of major disasters.

An hour after Donald Trump was shot at a Pennsylvania rally, he called his son Eric from his room at Butler Memorial Hospital and asked him to conference in other family members. When they all got on the phone, Trump was lighthearted about his brush with death, and the mood shifted from collective shock to hopeful levity. Eric and Don Jr. joked that their father, now missing a chunk of his ear thanks to one of the would-be assassin’s bullets, would have something in common with Evander Holyfield, the heavyweight boxing champion who lost part of his when Mike Tyson bit it off.

“You always wanna be like the great ones,” the elder Trump quipped. Then he got down to business. He would fly back to his home in Bedminster, N.J., that night, but he wouldn’t be there for long. “We’re not changing anything about Milwaukee,” Trump told them. “We’re going to the convention. Not a single thing changes.”

In fact, much had. The shooting on July 13 capped an extraordinary run of luck for the former President. Despite multiple lost elections for the GOP under his leadership, two impeachments, and the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, attack by his supporters on the U.S. Capitol, the Republican Party had fallen into total obeisance behind him. Beset by an unprecedented 88 state and federal criminal charges, Trump had watched as one case seized up after a prosecutor’s indiscretion, another was dismissed by a conservative judge, and a third was postponed. The convictions on 34 felony counts that he received in a fourth ended up boosting his poll numbers rather than tanking them. The hot streak gained pace in late June and early July as the Supreme Court first weakened the prosecutions of the Jan. 6 rioters, and then granted Trump and all other Presidents immunity from some crimes. Trump’s opponent, President Joe Biden, imploded in their debate, prompting a Democratic effort to push Biden out of the race. His feeble performance put new states into play at the top of the ticket and increased the chances of total Republican control of government in 2025.

For all that, Trump’s luck on July 13 was of another order, the kind of confluence of events and political circumstance that can change the world. A slight turn of Trump’s head as the sniper pulled the trigger meant the bullet cut his ear instead of killing him. “Holy sh-t, I got lucky,” Trump told his family. “If I turned my head one more second later, it would have gone straight through my head.” After he ducked to the ground, he emerged amid a wall of Secret Service agents, blood on his cheek, pumping his fist and exhorting the cheering crowd, “Fight!” It was among the most powerful

scenes in recent American history, and it resonated with the central messages of Trump's campaign: victimhood, strength, defiance.

Riding that breathtaking moment, Trump arrived in Milwaukee holding history in his hands, in a stronger political position than he had ever been in. The question was what he would do with it. For the first time, he may be able to break beyond his hardcore base of supporters and build a political coalition that could not only carry him into a second term but also give him a broad mandate to govern. As the curtain went up in Milwaukee, there were signs he might actually do it. Trump handed speaking roles to former rivals, invited a union leader to deliver a prime-time address, and embraced onetime enemies in the tech world who were calling in with well-wishes. "Everyone's reaching out to him," says one person close to Trump. "He's letting them back in, which is not his nature, which is usually full of revenge."

Being Trump, that remains the other possibility. Despite his recent show of discipline, he contains the same vindictive streak that has often led him to scupper his own successes with self-destructive and petty behavior. People close to him call it "the bad Donald Trump." Trump's combative instincts are often the enemy of his interests. The burst of momentum he enjoys now could be the prelude to hubristic overreach. "It's very critical for Trump, in the

wake of this, not to revert to that side of himself," says GOP Representative Wesley Hunt of Texas, who sat with Trump at the convention.

The near future of the nation may depend on how Trump seizes the moment. For his opponents, who have argued that Trump is a power-hungry potential dictator, the attempted assassination and Trump's gathering strength sent an already desperate effort to stop him into an accelerating panic. They saw a brand of strongman populism that could long outlast Trump in his choice for his running mate, Ohio Senator J.D. Vance, who has said he would have followed through on the scheme to reinstall Trump as President after he lost the 2020 election. For Trump's supporters, the possibility of an unbridled leader with maximum power was a thrilling vision coming into view.

Only five minutes into his speech in Butler on Saturday, Trump called an audible. Abandoning the teleprompter, he asked technicians to post on two giant screens his favorite chart, which tracks border crossings over the past 12 years. It wasn't new to the "front-row Joes" and MAGA faithful familiar with Trump's routine. But it usually comes later on during Trump's rallies. This time, on a spontaneous whim, he moved it up to the beginning. It was, he recalled to family after he landed in Bedminster that evening, the reason he turned his head just as the shooter pulled the trigger on his AR-15 and sent the bullet toward him.

Read More: *Six Takeaways From Donald Trump's Convention Speech*

Family who spoke to him after the near-death experience said Trump was upbeat and grateful to be alive. Former critics called to show goodwill. So did President Biden. The outreach has apparently had a positive effect on Trump. "What's happening now is more and more people are treating him with respect," says the

person close to Trump. “What you’re seeing is, instead of people treating him bad and then getting the bad Donald Trump, people are treating him nice and we’re getting the nice Donald.”

How long that lasts, given Trump’s record, is an open question. Aides say Trump is focused on one thing only—winning—and his current mood had been building before the Pennsylvania rally, as Biden sputtered through a miserable post-debate stretch that saw his polls sag and Democrats openly question whether he should remain the party’s standard bearer. In planning his coronation in Milwaukee, Trump had already demonstrated an unusual willingness to heed his campaign advisers’ admonitions to build as broad a tent as possible.

Trump had signed off on inviting former primary rivals Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley to give speeches at the convention. He'd also helped choreograph a speech by Teamsters president Sean O'Brien, a striking pro-labor play that would have been unthinkable in past GOP conventions. "Trump has his hand in everything," says his daughter-in-law and handpicked RNC co-chair Lara Trump. "Some of our big, exciting speakers, he's been very involved in talks about that."

Trump's rewrite of the official GOP policy document, making it shorter and less detailed, revealed his efforts to extend the party's appeal as well as his own. The week before the shooting, according to three sources, Trump spent hours with his top campaign brass in Bedminster to craft the RNC's 2024 platform, a list of 20 priorities for a second term. Among the long-standing GOP planks removed: the party no longer says life begins at conception or expresses any opposition to same-sex marriage. Trump's heavy involvement also stemmed from his frustration over media speculation that outside groups like the Heritage Foundation—which, along with over 100 conservative organizations, crafted a 900-page policy prescription called Project 2025—were preparing to be the policy puppet masters of a future Trump Administration. "People point to this Project 2025 and all this other nonsense," the official tells TIME. "The American people can look at the Trump-RNC platform. That is the agenda for the next term."

The biggest decision still in front of Trump after the shooting was his running mate. To many, the vice-presidential selection represented a proxy war on the right. On one side, many Republicans pushed for a conventional pick: perhaps Florida Senator Marco Rubio, a Reaganite neoconservative who might aid the party's push for Hispanic voters, or North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, a wealthy former entrepreneur and a favorite of the Chamber of Commerce crowd. On the other were MAGA true

believers, who wanted Trump to choose an avatar of America First populist nationalism. Trump fielded calls on the Monday morning after the shooting from Republican mainstays, including Rupert Murdoch and Kellyanne Conway, pushing Burgum or Rubio. Several of Trump's confidants rushed to convince him otherwise; Don Jr., the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, and the right-wing provocateur Charlie Kirk were all pushing Vance.

Read More: *Why Trump Chose J.D. Vance*

Trump was already leaning toward Vance, then 39, his advisers say. He was impressed with the Senator's trajectory: growing up poor in Ohio, joining the military, graduating from Yale Law School, serving a stint in Silicon Valley, becoming a U.S. Senator. Trump had gotten over Vance's initial harsh criticisms of him in 2016—Vance once called him "America's Hitler"—and the two had forged a relationship over the past two years. Trump also liked Vance's vigorous defense of him during hostile interviews on network television. The clincher, those close to Trump say, came after the Butler shooting, when Trump began to think of Vance's youth as an asset. "One of the discussions after the assassination attempt was a real reflection on the future," says a source close to Trump, and "the idea that one day, the movement will go on."

The choice is also a play to win over voters in the so-called Blue Wall states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, which are all but must-wins for Biden. Because of Vance's roots and story of self-invention, the thinking goes, working-class voters and some Democrats may respond to a youthful Senator who is skilled at articulating the ideological pillars of Trumpism: an aversion to foreign entanglements and American adventurism overseas; a deep skepticism of free-trade agreements; and a hostility to immigration. "He's somebody who will be very, very, very effective in the Rust Belt," says senior campaign official Brian Hughes.

Trump's final move ahead of the convention was rewriting his speech to tone down his attacks on Biden and craft a message that could expand his realm of support. "It'd be awfully easy for him to take a middle road, or even low road and not be nice," says Eric Trump. By all accounts, the speech Trump had prepared before the shooting was not. Says the younger Trump of the rewritten version, "the tone is different, the cadence is different."

Read More: *America Met a New, Kinder Trump—Then Came the Rest of the Speech*

If the question hanging over America after the assassination attempt was which Trump would emerge, the answer, judging from the speech he ended up delivering, seemed to be both. He started with some 15 minutes recounting his near miss days earlier, speaking in an uncharacteristically quiet, almost reflective tone. But soon enough he reverted to his defensive, angry default, attacking Biden and "crazy Nancy Pelosi," pushing the falsehood that the 2020 election was stolen, and describing gruesome killings allegedly committed by undocumented immigrants. Some of the red-meat riffing was Trump going off script, but plenty of it had been written into the speech as well. The former President seemed to feel the stakes, even as the rambling speech ticked toward a

record 90 minutes. “I better finish strong,” he said. “Otherwise we’ll blow it and I can’t let it happen.”

Trump’s ability to win new voters remains in question, but he is coming out of the convention with momentum. For months, some polls have suggested that he was eating away at some of the pillars of Biden’s political coalition, including young voters and Black and Hispanic voters, especially men. Now his team began to detect a softening in the social stigma that had long kept Trump from gathering support in certain circles. “In the 2016 campaign, it started becoming socially very hard for people to say publicly they were for Trump,” says the source close to Trump, who speaks with him frequently. “Privately, in places like Hollywood and Silicon Valley and New York,” the person says, “people are reaching out and trying to restart the relationship with him because they see an inevitability of his winning.”

The campaign believes that the boost Trump got from his reaction to the shooting and Biden’s struggles has opened up the electoral map. Advisers think all seven battleground states—Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada, and North Carolina—are theirs for the taking. Meanwhile, the list of states the campaign hopes to flip red has expanded to include Virginia—which Biden won by 10 points in 2020—as well as Minnesota, Maine, New Mexico, and New Hampshire. “We’re in a position to be expanding the map,” says a top campaign lieutenant.

The former President can now run up the score, agrees Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia and a vocal Trump critic. “It’s almost impossible for me to imagine Trump getting a majority of the popular vote, though given all the factors, it’s a lot more possible than it ever has been. But the Electoral College right now, and maybe for the foreseeable future, isn’t going to be particularly close,” Sabato says. Trump is likely to get “way over 300 electoral votes,” he says. “Which swing state isn’t going for Trump now? I can’t think of one.”

In recent weeks, the Biden campaign has sought to reverse its losing streak by sounding the alarm about Project 2025. The document, and the people behind it, calls for sweeping abortion restrictions and massive deportations of people living in the U.S. Trump has distanced himself from the group, and Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation, tells TIME that he understands why Trump doesn't want to embrace the project. "He exists in a lane right now that's political," Roberts says. "When we get to the season of policymaking and President Trump deciding who his key personnel are, we will stand ready to be of service."

Read More: Column: *How America Can Still Come Together*

If it's now Trump's race to lose, he's still perfectly capable of doing so. Polling shows that a significant section of America is dug in on their dislike for Trump. An AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research analysis found that 6 in 10 Americans have a very or somewhat unfavorable opinion of him, a proportion that has remained steady since 2021. Fresh examples of his disregard for the law, recklessness on the foreign stage, or elevation of personal interests above all else could rapidly undermine any progress he is making with those voters willing to give him a second look. Despite Trump's highs and Biden's lows, most surveys show it still to be a close race.

How long will the beneficent, big-tent-building Trump last? The person close to Trump says he's in a good place: "A happy Trump is a winning Trump." But his family says he is unlikely to abandon his pugilistic impulses. Says Eric Trump: "It's very hard to take the right hook out of the boxer." —With reporting by Leslie Dickstein, Simmone Shah, and Julia Zorthian

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/7000530

How America Can Still Come Together

Gibbs, a former writer and editor in chief at TIME, is the director of the Shorenstein Center and the Edward R. Murrow Professor of the Practice of Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School. She is the co-author, along with Michael Duffy, of two best-selling presidential histories: *The President's Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity* and *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House*.

A country born by breaking with a king inherits dissent as a birthright. Generation after generation faces its test of conflict management: crafting the Constitution itself, with all its convictions and compromises; balancing local vs. federal power centers; a Civil War exposing fissures in democracy's bedrock; and on and on, battles over rights and responsibilities, suffrage, prohibition, isolation vs. intervention, and then the serial upheavals over justice for multiple marginalized groups—Black, female, gay, trans. Each era is tasked with not only choosing its fights but also deciding how to fight them.

Our current crisis of division, once again manifest as violence, feels shocking but not sudden; the dread has been deepening for years, a defining quality of this century that began with an election that ended in a tie. As our information streams fill with acid, it eats at grace and trust. Americans have always disagreed, exercised muscles of reason and passion to press for progress and a vision for the common good that we don’t necessarily hold in common. Do we care more about freedom or equality? Privacy or security? Being a leader in the world or tucked in safely at home with oceans to buffer us? Figuring that out was the heart of the democratic challenge, but the information technologies allegedly designed to connect the world conspire to dismantle the values that process depends on.

The tragedy, but maybe also the opportunity, of *this* moment is that relative to past brawls, Americans are largely united on key issues—even if you would never know it from the temperature of the debate. “Red states” from Arkansas to Missouri to Florida pass minimum-wage referendums by fat majorities; Kansas votes to protect access to abortion. Two-thirds of Democrats agree that the situation at the border is a problem; more than 60% of people think it’s too easy to get a gun, and about 80% worry about the solvency of Social Security and Medicare.

And in one last flicker of unity, 4 out of 5 people told Georgetown University pollsters that they fear that democracy is under threat. This was echoed in an Ipsos poll of 2024 voters that found that while economy, immigration, crime, and climate ranked high on the list of concerns, “political extremism or threats to democracy” topped them.

But this is where shared purpose runs into the shredder of profit and power. People disagree profoundly about the source of the threat to democracy, with voters on the left and right viewing each other as uniquely, historically dangerous—immoral, dishonest, and closed-minded. In that dark vision, gaining and holding onto power, and denying it to the opposition, is more important than any single issue.

And now comes the assassination attempt on Donald Trump, instantly cast by his most bare-knuckled allies as the culmination of the Democrats’ campaign to stop him at all costs. Ignorance about the shooter or his motive did not deter reckless speculation; it inflamed it. “Well of course they tried to keep him off the ballot, they tried to put him in jail, and now you see this…” campaign manager Chris LaCivita tweeted and then deleted. “The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs,” wrote Trump’s vice-presidential nominee J.D. Vance. “That rhetoric led directly to President Trump’s attempted assassination.” Naturally

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene went further: “The Democrat party is flat out evil, and yesterday they tried to murder President Trump.”

[video id=Fd1X5U6M autostart="viewable"]

Read More: *What We Know—and Don’t Know—So Far About the Trump Rally Gunman*

You can call this working the refs, trying to pre-emptively silence criticism, hypocrisy from the partisans who menace their rivals while mocking violence aimed at them. But because X is a reliably squalid place, some Democrats dove into the “Blue-Anon” fever swamps as well: “The last thing America needed was sympathy for the devil but here we are,” Colorado state representative Steven Woodrow tweeted, then deleted. Even as calls came in from across the spectrum for calm, prayers, perspective, peace, the furies channeled by the platforms’ amoral algorithms ensured that poisonous rumors would find a million minds to infect. It was all #staged; the Secret Service was complicit; it was a false-flag operation, just the latest effort of shadowy forces to ensure Trump’s re-election by any means necessary.

According to the Pew Research Center, 8 in 10 Americans think people get different facts depending on where they get their news. This all but guarantees that crises and conspiracies travel in packs. We watched the shooting but didn’t know what we were seeing, so in the face of novel facts we relied on familiar frames. People who already distrust the media, or the Deep State, or law enforcement, were primed to see in the drama of Butler, Pa., a confirmation of their deepest suspicions. The act of “collective sense-making,” as University of Washington professor Kate Starbird explains, is how people interpret events in a shared social exercise—and a way that partisan players can twist an event to suit their agendas. The target

himself seized the moment: “Fear Not. I Am Donald Trump And I Will Make America Great Again,” read the fundraising appeal.

But here too is a possible path to safer, higher ground. Our discourse amplifies the most radical voices and alienates the rest. Actual news avoidance is at all-time highs, not just in the U.S. but in other deeply polarized countries, as people want nothing to do with the vitriol that they associate with political engagement. According to Pew, 70% of adult social media users say they rarely or never post about political or social issues. So we are left looking in a fun-house mirror, as misunderstanding about actual beliefs drives us further apart. The nonprofit group Starts With Us found that 9 out of 10 Americans agree on core principles—a government accountable to the people, respect and compassion across difference, the rule of law applied fairly to all people—but only around 1 in 3 Democrats and Republicans thinks the other side cares about these values.

Social media companies must be accountable for the harms they create, the addictions they feed, and the lies they promote as they dismantle their trust and safety teams just when they are needed most. This is not a call for censorship; no amount of content moderation can police the posts of a billion users in real time. But like other forms of media, they should be responsible for the content they intentionally choose to amplify and monetize.

And we are each free agents of understanding. We can seek out reliable information sources, ones that try to get at the truth and hold themselves accountable if they fail—or we can choose to soak in the comfort of confirmation. Even as overall trust in the media reaches all-time lows, people tend to trust their own news sources. So I urge my students to be intentional about their media diets; omnivorous curiosity is a civic duty. Watch the networks you normally avoid, read writers you disagree with, seek out the perspectives you instinctively reject. The goal is not to change your mind; it is to widen the lens. “Understanding is a two-way street,”

Eleanor Roosevelt observed, and when we don’t see and hear the truth of our fellow citizens, we stand little chance of appreciating all that we actually hold in common, even now.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6999339

How We Chose the 2024 World's Greatest Places

Travel industry trends often reflect the id of humanity: what the collective *we* desires most when unburdened from daily stressors and responsibilities. In 2024, that includes other-worldly art and design, like at China's Aranya; active travel, like Natural Selection's Guided Cycling Safari in Botswana; learning more deeply about the communities and areas we're traveling to, like at Antarctica's White Desert, Maui Cultural Lands in Hawaii, and Kamba in Republic of the Congo; and learning more deeply about ourselves, like at New Mexico's Modern Elder Academy.

[video id=HlwBiNPC autostart="viewable"]

To compile the 2024 list, TIME solicited nominations of places—including hotels, cruises, restaurants, attractions, museums, parks, and more—from its international network of correspondents and contributors, as well as through an application process, with an eye toward those offering new and exciting experiences. While last year's list featured 50 cities, this year we decided to explore even more—and more specific—establishments that stand out in their

field, and the world. The result: 100 extraordinary destinations to visit and stay this year.

Browse the entire list and fulfill your wanderlust here. Bon voyage!

Buy your copy of the World's Greatest Places issue here

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/7000434

The Jarring Opulence of Anant Ambani's Big Fat Indian Wedding

Astha Rajvanshi is a staff writer at TIME based in the London bureau. She covers international news and affairs with an eye on India and neighboring countries. She received the Matthew Power Literary Reporting Award and a Fellowship from the Institute of Current World Affairs.

One would be forgiven for thinking that Anant Ambani, the youngest son of Asia's richest man, had already gotten married to pharmaceutical heiress Radhika Merchant months ago. After all, the billionaire Ambanis—who run Reliance Industries, India's largest conglomerate—have hosted several lavish wedding festivities since December.

There was an engagement party in January, followed by a three-day pre-wedding celebration in March in the family's refinery township of Jamnagar in the state of Gujarat. The star-studded bash caught the world's attention with its 1,200-person guest list, which included tech billionaires Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, and an exclusive performance by

Rihanna. In May, the Ambanis set off on a four-day European cruise starting in the Italian city of Palermo, featuring on-deck concerts from the Backstreet Boys, Pitbull, and David Guetta. A masquerade ball at the Chateau de la Croix des Gardes mansion in France that month had a performance by Katy Perry, while an evening event in Portofino on the Italian Riviera, also in May, featured Andrea Bocelli. In July, a musical night traditionally known as the *sangeet*, saw Justin Beiber perform at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Center, an arts venue founded by the groom's mother, Nita Ambani. Earlier this week, there was also a private *haldi* ceremony, a Hindu wedding ritual where friends and family typically bless a couple by applying turmeric paste to the bride and groom.

Read More: *What to Know About Anant Ambani's Star-Studded Indian Billionaire Pre-Wedding*

But the mammoth celebrations are yet to culminate in an actual wedding ceremony where Anant Ambani will finally tie the knot with Merchant. The event, which will be held from July 12 at the Jio World Convention Center in Mumbai, is promised to be the most lavish wedding of the year, with festivities extending until July 14.

By most accounts, an extravagant Ambani affair was expected from Mukesh Ambani, the father of the groom, who has an estimated net worth of over $122 billion. For India's business elite, big Indian weddings are not only for creating memorable moments, but also a

way to display their wealth, status, and social capital. The Indian luxury wedding market has grown so big in recent years that wealthy Indians now spend over $75 billion annually on weddings that attract the country's biggest celebrities, fashion designers, and entertainment influencers, according to a report by *WedMeGood*, an Indian wedding planner.

Nor is this the first time that the Ambanis have made headlines for throwing a bash: in 2018, the family hosted the most expensive Indian wedding to date for Mukesh Ambani's daughter, Isha, at a reported cost of almost $100 million. The wedding was spread across Udaipur, Mumbai, and Lake Como, and featured Beyoncé as the headliner.

Yet, the opulence of the latest Ambani wedding has caused discomfort for those who find the display of wealth jarring in a country with soaring income inequality under the rise of Indian billionaires. "The magnificence of this wedding is evocative of existing, and widening, inequality in India and the cultural ease with which this privilege is sometimes flaunted," says Anuradha Sajjanhar, author of *The New Experts: Populist Elites and Technocratic Promises in Modi's India*.

Today, India's richest 1% own around 40% of the country's wealth, according to Credit Suisse data cited by a 2023 Oxfam report, while more than 200 million people continue to live in poverty. One study by the World Inequality Lab in March found that the gap between India's rich and poor is now so wide that by some measures, there was more equality in India under British colonial rule than today. The report goes on to call it a "Billionaire Raj."

Read More: *India's Income Inequality Is Now Worse Than Under British Rule, New Report Says*

While the Ambanis' display of wealth has "always bordered on caricature, both real and unreal," Sajjanhar says the family's particular aesthetic of corporate wealth "works hand in hand, both symbolically and economically, with the BJP government." That's largely due to Mukesh Ambani's long-held close ties with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During a development summit held in Gujarat earlier this year, the Reliance Chairman praised Modi for his "vision and consistency" and called him "the greatest global leader of our times." Ambani's youngest son also paid tribute to the Prime Minister during his pre-wedding celebrations in March, telling a local TV channel that the venue in Jamnagar was inspired by Modi's "Wed in India" campaign. "It's a matter of pride and happiness when our PM said that one should get married in India," 28-year-old Ambani said. Many outlets have even speculated on whether the Prime Minister himself will make a fleeting appearance at the July 12 wedding.

Critics who allege that this close relationship between India's leader and India's richest man has led to crony capitalism—a system under which business leaders benefit from strong relationships with bureaucrats and politicians—were particularly incensed when the Indian government temporarily upgraded the Jamnagar airport's status from domestic to international overnight in March for the pre-wedding festivities, with staff, military, and air

force personnel deployed in service of the Ambanis. The government's civil aviation office later stated that it did not have any information about which rules and provisions were followed to designate new status to an airport rarely used otherwise. Similarly, this weekend will see restricted access to roads leading up to the wedding venue in Mumbai, with residents slamming officials online for calling the Ambani wedding a "public event."

Sajjanhar says Indian billionaires like Ambani have for years benefitted from their associations with Modi, as evidenced by state contracts awarded to Reliance to build India's infrastructure, digital connectivity, and commerce. During the first four years under the Modi government, Mukesh Ambani saw his wealth more than double—from $23 billion to $55 billion. At the same time, India's billionaires have also emerged as political tools for Indian politicians. In February, India's Supreme Court scrapped electoral bonds, a seven-year-old election funding system introduced by the Modi government, which allowed the ruling party to receive $635 million in corporate donations.

Read More: *Why India's Supreme Court Eliminated Anonymous Political Donations*

But in a country where millions of middle-class and poor Indians strive to save for their children's weddings throughout their lives and aspire to have a glitzy wedding celebration of their own, some see an upside to the Ambanis' ostentatious wedding bash. "To a certain extent, there's an aspirational and entrepreneurial glory attached to their level of wealth," says Sajjanhar, nodding to popular Bollywood films like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* and *Guru*, which have portrayed ultra-rich families and rags-to-riches stories like the Ambanis.

The billionaire family has itself helped boost these aspirations: On July 2, for example, it hosted a mass wedding, also known as "Samuh Vivah," on the outskirts of Mumbai, giving their blessing to more than 50 underprivileged couples who received gifts ranging from gold ornaments to a year's worth of groceries.

Some also view it as a sign of India's rising power on the global stage: "This is, in a vicarious way, the world paying obeisance to India," writes Indian academic Pratap Bhanu Mehta. "So what if India is not rich. At least it has the world's richest."

As photos of the Ambani wedding events—replete with grand destinations, high-end designer outfits, expensive jewelry, and celebrity glamor—continue to flood social media feeds, however, that aspiration has also bordered on a "fiery, widespread resentment of privilege," says Sajjanhar, with some Indians criticizing the blatant display of wealth. When videos of Anant Ambani's wedding card—an ornate orange and gold box designed by Indian craftsmen—went viral last month, one incredulous user posted on the social media platform *X*: "When you are just clueless how to spend the money and wealth you have accumulated," before adding, "Hence we need wealth redistribution, tax the rich."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6997573

Backward Walking Is the Best Workout You're Not Doing

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

I've spent my whole life happily walking in one direction: forward. It was, I believed, the only way to go, so I dutifully logged dozens of miles a month looking like every other person out for a morning stroll.

No more. Thanks to TikTok, I discovered a new (to me, at least) spin on walking: backward walking, also known as "retro-walking." Though it's trending on social-media platforms right now, physical therapists and fitness trainers have been touting its benefits for years. It's a low-impact way to burn calories, strengthen your legs, test your coordination, and even improve pain, experts say—all of which lured me onto my quiet, rural street one afternoon to give it a whirl.

After about 50 steps, I realized going in reverse was no walk in the park. It *burned*. I could feel the switch-up in my lower legs in a

way I don’t with ordinary walking unless I’m powering up a hill. There was a mental challenge, too (beyond ignoring the strange looks from my neighbors). I had no idea what was behind me, so I had to engage all my senses to ensure I stayed upright and didn’t trip over any unexpected obstacles—including my walking partner, who was slightly faster and, therefore, a couple steps behind me.

When I told a handful of experts about my surprisingly fun retro-walking expedition, they agreed more people should make it part of their routine. Here’s a look at why.

It’s great for older people

Backward walking is an underrated way to engage your glutes, shins, and the muscles in your feet and ankles, says Joe Meier, a Minnesota-based personal trainer and author of *Lift for Life*. Plus, it mitigates the impact of each step, reducing the force exerted on the knees and lower back. Part of its appeal, he adds, is that it’s so accessible—and suitable for people of any age and fitness level.

Read More: *Why Walking Isn’t Enough When It Comes to Exercise*

Meier has noticed that older people, in particular, are drawn to backward walking as a no-frills way to spice up their fitness routine. “If you look around a gym that has tons of treadmills, you’ll see at least one or two people walking backward at any given time,” Meier says. “There are always older individuals walking backward on the ground, too, and you can tell someone has told them, ‘Hey, you should try doing this because it’s great for your balance and coordination—just don’t trip over anything.’” He points out that many pickleball players have adopted the practice: It can help strengthen their knees and ensure they don’t take a (metaphorical) step back on the courts.

You’ll engage different muscles

Walking backward requires you to stand up straighter than you do when walking forward, Meier says. By reversing your stride, you'll create a new challenge for the muscles in the abdomen, lower limbs, and back. "You might notice your glute muscles—your big butt muscles—are doing more work," Meier says. (Author's note: You'll definitely notice.) Meanwhile, your calf muscles will need to work opposite of how they usually do. When you walk forward, your calf contracts concentrically, which means the muscle gets shorter, he explains. When you're going in reverse, your calf muscle contracts the opposite way and gets longer as it bears your body weight. That switch-up can be a valuable way to improve your fitness.

You'll also be targeting the quad muscles on the front of your thighs. According to one study—yes, scientists have studied this—people who walked backward three times a week for six weeks ended up with improved quadriceps muscle strength, compared to those who walked forward for their exercise. The quads are responsible for knee extension and straightening your leg, Meier explains—so they, too, work differently when you're walking backward. "That's one of the reasons why people say it helps their knee pain improve," he says. "You're essentially strengthening your quads by doing this backward walking trick."

It can be good for people with injuries

When New York City-based Peloton Tread instructor Marcel Dinkins had patella issues, she took up backward walking. She returned to it recently after tearing her ACL. "You get to push off," she says, describing the motion required to launch into walking in reverse. "When you have running or knee issues, you usually have a little pain right underneath your patella. Running backward gives you some respite and relief."'

Read More: *Why Hiking Is the Perfect Mind-Body Workout*

Retro-walking has a long history of being used in a clinical or rehabilitation sense, says Janet Dufek, a biomechanist and professor in the School of Integrated Health Sciences at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who has researched backward walking. One study, for example, found that after a six-week retro-walking program, participants with osteoarthritis in the knee experienced greater reduction in pain and functional disability compared to those who walked in the typical way. Another found that backward walking down a steep slope alleviated symptoms of plantar fasciitis. And in a study led by Dufek, walking backward reduced lower back pain and enhanced function among athletes.

Retro-walking is also used in occupational therapy. Older people might practice walking up to a kitchen sink, for example, and then walking backward away from it. The ability to move in reverse can enhance "practical activities of daily living," Dufek says.

It could make you more flexible

Many of us sit all day long—which leads to coiled-up, restricted muscles. "Our hip flexors, or the muscles at the front of the thigh and the front of the hip, get tighter," says Kristyn Holc, a physical therapist with Atlantic Sports Health Physical Therapy in Morristown, N.J. When we walk backward, we're stretching that tissue—leading to greater flexibility, which is linked to improved physical performance, increased muscle blood flow, and a reduced risk of injuries. "You'll notice a lot of people, especially as they get older, hinge at the hips—they get a little bit of a bend there," she says. "That's because their hip flexors are tight. So if we can stretch those out, it helps us be able to get that upright posture."

Your gait and balance might improve

Elizabeth Stroot, a physical therapist with Core Wellness & Physical Therapy in Alexandria, Va., uses retro-walking to help

people normalize their gait pattern, or how they walk. “It’s a way to tap into our neuromuscular programming and get people to work through a little limp or a range-of-motion restriction,” she says. Walking backward for just 20 or 30 feet at a time is often enough to help some patients, she adds.

Read More: *Your Brain Doesn’t Want You to Exercise*

It can also improve balance control, especially among older adults, who are at a higher risk of falls. That’s because we maintain our balance through three big systems, Holc says: our eyes, our muscles and joints, and the vestibular system, or inner ear. When we walk backward, we can’t see what’s behind us, which means we have to rely on the other two systems instead, sharpening their ability to keep us upright. “You’re having to feel where you are in space, and that information is being sent to the brain,” she says.

But you need to do it safely

Many people experiment with retro-walking on their treadmill, which is free of hazards like rocks, uneven ground, and other people. You don’t even have to turn it on, Dinkins points out: Simply step onto the machine backward, grasp the handrails, and use your own power to move the belt. “If you’re pushing it, you’re going to get more of that resistance,” she says—leading to a better workout. If you do decide to turn on the treadmill, start at a low speed and keep the safety key clipped to you at all times, Dinkins advises.

Read More: *The Best Walking Shoes*

No treadmill? No problem: Choose a safe spot indoors or outside, like a hallway, walking track, or empty field. Dufek encourages people to partner up: “Two people face each other and hold hands, and one of them walks backward while the other one’s walking

forward," she says. "That person can be the eyes for the other one, so it's very safe, and then you just switch places."

No matter where you start backward walking, keep in mind that you won't go as fast backward as you do going forward. There's a learning curve, Dufek stresses: "If you can walk 4 miles per hour forward, don't expect to be able to walk that fast backward," she says. "At least initially, if you can walk 1 mile per hour backward, you're in a good place." As with any new exercise, ease in gradually. You might walk backward for 5 or 10 minutes three times a week, and then after a few weeks, add 5 more minutes to each session, Dufek suggests. "As your body neurologically learns the movement pattern, you'll be able to walk faster," she says. "And of course, walking faster burns more calories, and then you can be out in public and get laughed out for even longer. It's fun." How's that for forward progress?

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6975058

Why Modi and Putin Are Friends

Astha Rajvanshi is a staff writer at TIME based in the London bureau. She covers international news and affairs with an eye on India and neighboring countries. She received the Matthew Power Literary Reporting Award and a Fellowship from the Institute of Current World Affairs.

Hours before India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Moscow on July 8, Russia fired missiles on Ukraine that killed at least 41 people, including four children at a children's hospital in Kyiv. The attack sparked widespread global condemnation, yet Modi was smiling as he posed for photos with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

During Modi's two-day visit to the Kremlin—his first trip to Russia since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022— the two leaders hugged each other outside Putin's suburban residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, before holding informal talks over tea and taking a tour of the grounds. Putin told Modi he was "very happy" to see his "dear friend," according to Russia's TASS state news agency, while

Modi called the visit a “wonderful opportunity to deepen ties” between the two countries in a post on the social media platform *X*.

In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called Modi’s visit “a huge disappointment” on X, saying it was “a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world’s largest democracy hug the world’s most bloody criminal in Moscow.”

It became clear, however, that Modi did not plan on challenging Putin over his actions in Ukraine during the visit, and instead used the trip to affirm longstanding strategic and economic ties between the two countries. The Indian leader’s engagement appears to be in part an attempt to stem the Kremlin’s dependence on regional rival China while he continues to walk a tightrope between the East and the West. “As the first state visit of his third term, Modi’s visit to Russia seeks to reassure Putin of the importance of the bilateral relationship at a time when India is deepening relations with the West,” says Chietigj Bajpaee, a senior research fellow for South Asia at Chatham House.

Read More: *Indian Prime Minister Modi’s Visit to Washington Is His Most Important So Far. Here’s What to Know*

Last June, Modi met with U.S. President Joe Biden during a state visit to Washington, where the two leaders struck a defense, trade, and technology partnership and deepened relations over shared concerns about China’s influence in the region. Still, India has refused to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and abstained from all resolutions on Ukraine at the United Nations, despite facing pressure to distance itself from Moscow. Instead, Modi has opted for a softer approach to the conflict, telling Putin that “today’s era is not an era of war” during the sidelines of a regional summit in Uzbekistan in 2022. Putin did not attend the G-20 summit hosted by New Delhi last year, where world leaders criticized the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Experts say Modi's visit, which occurred at the same time as NATO meetings in Washington, is focused primarily on defense cooperation. It comes after Putin's return from Kazakhstan last week, where the Russian President claimed during a regional summit that Moscow-Beijing relations were experiencing "the best period in their history." This relationship has raised concerns for India as tensions with neighboring China have heated up in recent years over a disputed Himalayan border, which has resulted in India becoming increasingly estranged in forums where Russia and China play a prominent role.

As such, Russia's stance on India-China hostilities in the future will be critical, says Bajpaee, especially given India's heavy reliance on Russia for military equipment that dates back to the height of the Cold War. "Historically, Moscow has taken a relatively neutral position, but if this were to change, it would prompt New Delhi to rethink its relations with Russia," he says.

India has also continued to purchase large quantities of Russian crude oil at steep discounts despite Russia facing sanctions and isolation from the West. India is a major financial lifeline for Russia, with trade between the two countries amounting to nearly $65 billion in the last year. Most of that money has flowed toward Russia, however, a trade imbalance that Modi hoped to address during his talks with Putin, according to India's foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, who spoke to reporters ahead of the trip.

On Tuesday, the two leaders continued talks over Russian imports vital for Indian power plants. "Energy cooperation is an important issue, arising not only from India's dependence on Russian crude oil, but also civil nuclear cooperation," says Bajpaee.

Still, Delhi-Moscow relations were not without contention, as Modi sought to secure the early discharge of dozens of Indian nationals

who were lured to join the Russian Army in recent years to fight Ukraine, with at least four dying on the battlefield so far.

But as India seeks to promote a worldview that is “non-western, but not explicitly anti-western,” according to Bajpee, it’s likely the friendship between India and Russia will endure. “For India, Modi’s meeting with Putin in Russia is just a continuation of longstanding strategic ties dating back to the Cold War, but for the U.S. and West, it reminds everyone how difficult it is to enlist New Delhi in a coalition to counter Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,” says Derek Grossman, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation. “In short, it won’t happen.”

Correction, July 9

The original version of this story misstated the year that Russia invaded Ukraine. It was 2022, not 2019.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6996536

Remembering Shannen Doherty, the Quintessential Gen X Girl

Judy Berman is the TV critic at TIME. Along with reviewing current television, she writes about the ways in which entertainment and pop culture intersect with our larger social and political realities. Her TIME essay on *Ted Lasso* and modern masculinity won a New York Press Club award in 2022.

Shannen Doherty epitomized the experience of growing up female in the ’90s. Like her iconic *Beverly Hills, 90210* character, Brenda Walsh, she contained a volatile mix of Gen X angst, teen fragility and feminist grit. She thrived as a porcelain-skinned, dark-haired drama queen in a world of tan, blonde valley girls, and owned her identity as an angry young woman before Courtney Love and Elizabeth Wurtzel made it a trend. She wasn’t for everyone, but that was part of her appeal.

Celebrity was not always kind to Doherty, who died on July 13 at age 53 after a nine-year struggle with breast cancer. Though she’d been acting professionally for a decade when Fox’s *90210* debuted in 1990, the actor rocketed to full-on fame as the pioneering teen soap about social politics at West Beverly High slowly rose in the ratings. Tabloids sank their fangs into the young, photogenic cast, slotting Doherty—who was still 19 when the show premiered—into the role of villain. Called out for her partying, her tumultuous romantic relationships and her reportedly imperious behavior on set, she was let go from the long-running drama after four seasons.

“I was 21 years old, trying to grow up and figure out who I was,” Doherty explained to TIME in 1998. “I didn’t consciously think, ‘Maybe I should be real low-key and stay in my house.’ Instead I was like, ‘I’m 21 and I can go out and have a great time and experience the whole college life.’” In retrospect, the typically self-aware actor concluded that she had made herself an “easy target.” With the hindsight of a few additional decades, it also seems clear that the media had been excessively hard on a young woman coming of age in front of paparazzi flashbulbs.

Despite producer Aaron Spelling and creator Darren Star’s attempts to replace Brenda with other brunette troublemakers, the show was never the same without Doherty. *90210*’s teenage characters had begun their lives as antiquated teen-movie stereotypes: Brenda’s twin brother, Brandon, was the all-American golden boy; Kelly, the pretty queen bee; Steve, the fratty bro; Donna, the sweetheart;

David, the annoying little brother. Luke Perry's motorcycle-riding bad boy was James Dean with a trust fund. Doherty was the first to make her character—conceived as a self-conscious Midwestern transplant—into something more authentic and contemporary.

Infused with Doherty's preternatural fire, Brenda became a moody brat, yes, but also an earnest romantic who channeled her overabundance of feelings into a love affair with theater. Her self-righteous smirk, withering glare and wide, mischievous grin captured the emotional extremes of adolescence to an extent that words could never quite express. In the early '90s, after a decade that saw a massive right-wing backlash to the gains of second-wave feminism, America was waking up to the rage of a new generation of women. Not long after *90210* emerged, female-dominated punk bands like L7, Bikini Kill and Hole stormed the rock mainstream—and Doherty's performance began to look not just inspired, but also prescient.

Those girl-power undertones didn't stop Brenda from battling Kelly (Jennie Garth, also rumored to be Doherty's biggest behind-the-scenes rival) for Dylan in one of the show's most memorable storylines. When she lost her virginity with him at the end of Season 1, local affiliates blasted the producers over the consequence-free depiction of teen sex. Looking back on the characters' relationship in a 2008 interview with the New York *Times*, Doherty recalled "how messed up, sometimes, it could be, but ultimately there was love between them, and then eventually they grew apart." For her, their romance was a funny, ultimately humane tale of a girl trying too hard to become the person she thinks her boyfriend wants her to be. "It's kind of a good lesson," she noted, "just be yourself and be comfortable in your own skin." Four decades in Hollywood seemed to have led the actor, who was open about her mistakes, to a similar conclusion.

Born in Memphis, Tenn. on April 12, 1971, Doherty lived below the Mason-Dixon line for long enough to absorb Southern Baptist

values fostered by her mother Rosa's side of the family. When she was six, her parents moved Shannen and her older brother, Sean, to Los Angeles, where her father, Tom, had bought a trucking company. Though their fortunes fluctuated throughout her childhood, she soon discovered her talent for acting in a church production of Snow White. In 1982, the same year she voiced Teresa Brisby in the animated classic *The Secret of NIMH*, she nabbed the role of Jenny Wilder in *Little House on the Prairie*. "That show changed my life," Doherty told *People* in a 1992 cover story, recalling the advice its executive producer and star Michael Landon gave her: "Always stick up for yourself. Never let anybody walk all over you."

By the mid-'80s, Doherty had aged into the decade's booming teen culture, racking up Young Artist Award nominations for roles in long-forgotten shows like *Our House*, as well as starring in the silly flick *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* alongside Sarah Jessica Parker and Helen Hunt. Viewers got their first glimpse of her mean-girl swagger in 1989's *Heathers*, the cult black comedy that cast her as one of three identically named preppies who rule their high school with manicured fists. A wickedly funny funeral scene finds Doherty's Heather Duke, decked out in a big hat and opera gloves, grinning beatifically as she thanks Jesus for the death of her friend.

For better or worse, it was *90210* that defined her public life after 1990, spawning anti-fanzines and punk singles that proclaimed their hatred of Brenda and earning Doherty a "difficult" reputation that she never lived down. But she did have fun with her image in the indie movies she made after leaving the show; Doherty is incandescent as an aggrieved girlfriend in Kevin Smith's *Mallrats* and hilarious in a brief role as a day-glo ditz in Gregg Araki's *Nowhere*.

Controversy followed her to the WB's *Charmed*, a breezy supernatural drama also produced by Spelling, where for three seasons beginning in 1998 she turned in feisty performances as the

eldest of three unfeasibly attractive witch sisters. Amid reports of clashes with co-star Alyssa Milano, Doherty's character was killed off and Rose McGowan signed on to replace her.

Doherty was in and out of the spotlight after that, appearing in the short-lived 2004 Fox soap *North Shore* and, two years later, hosting an Oxygen reality show called *Breaking Up With Shannen Doherty,* in which she helped wannabe singles dump their significant others. Despite her abrupt exit from Beverly Hills, the franchise came calling again in 2008, with the CW reboot *90210*. And she agreed to reprise the role of Brenda—now a famous stage actor—in a guest arc. "I didn't want it to be like she was still stuck in high school with the same attitude," Doherty told the *Times* in 2008, explaining that she had vetted the producers' new vision for Brenda to ensure that the character had evolved. "Although I don't think Brenda was mean, she reacted to the things that were happening around her, and she reacted as a teenager does."

Following brief marriages to Ashley Hamilton (the son of George Hamilton) in 1993 and Rick Salomon (the poker pro best known for co-starring in Paris Hilton's sex tape) in 2002, Doherty settled down with photographer Kurt Iswarienko in 2011; WE tv reality show *Shannen Says* chronicled their wedding preparations. Yet tragedy struck in 2015, when Doherty was diagnosed with breast cancer. After a brief remission, she revealed on *Good Morning America* in February 2020 that her cancer was back and she'd been living with a stage 4 diagnosis for a year. "I don't think that I've processed it yet. It's a bitter pill to swallow," she said in the tearful interview. "There are definitely days where I say, 'Why me?' And then I go, 'Well, why not me? Who else?'" Still going strong that fall, Doherty reflected on her life with unprecedented vulnerability in a widely read *Elle* profile. After an honest internal reckoning, she explained, "what I came out with was, I have good karma. It may not seem like it, but I've been a really good human being."

Doherty got a final opportunity to revisit Brenda Walsh—and prove she could laugh at herself—in 2019's deeply self-aware *BH90210*, a silly but mostly fun meta-revival on Fox that had the original cast playing exaggerated versions of themselves. In storylines caricatured from real life, Shannen was the free-spirited, post-fame holdout, and the one whose paycheck was the envy of her castmates. On *Entertainment Tonight*, Doherty explained that she'd decided to participate as a tribute to Luke Perry, who had died following a stroke that March. "Replaying Brenda was something I said I wouldn't do twice and I've replayed her now twice, so I guess I could never say I'm never going to do something again because I end up doing it," she said. "As [Perry's] on-set family, I felt like it was an important time for all of us to come together to honor him."

That both actors would die young feels tragic enough to come from the melodramatic mind of the character from whom Doherty's identity proved so inextricable. It's a small consolation that we'll remember them at their most romantic, as two teenage rebels with the world at their feet.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/5959161

People Still Misunderstand Trauma, Says ‘Body Keeps the Score’ Author Bessel van der Kolk

Belinda Luscombe is an editor at large at TIME, where she has covered a wide swath of topics, but specializes in interviews, profiles, and essays. In 2010, she won the Council on Contemporary Families Media Award for her stories on the ways marriage is changing. She is also author of *Marriageology: the Art and Science of Staying Together*.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk has spent 30 years figuring out why people behave so strangely. His specialty is treating those who have endured traumas so horrific—war, carnage, incredible pain that they couldn’t stop—that their brains have not been able to fully process them, and their bodies have reacted to their brain’s precarious state in ways they could not explain or control. But many human behaviors still puzzle van der Kolk, 82. He doesn’t understand why the medical community doesn’t take childhood trauma more seriously. He doesn’t understand why leaders still send citizens to war without factoring in how it will deplete their capacity to live normally for decades. And he’s not quite sure why a woman recently came up to him on the street and kissed his feet.

“I said, ‘What are you doing?’” says van der Kolk via video call from his home in the Berkshires. Van der Kolk’s is a specific type of fame. Most people haven’t heard of him, but for those who began to understand why they—or someone they loved—behaved the way they did via his 2014 book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, he’s a miracle worker. Hence the feet-kissing.

In the book, the psychiatrist, who was born to Holocaust survivors in the Netherlands, makes the case that trauma is more present and more powerful than people realize. He argues that while trauma injures the brain, its effects go much deeper. “Trauma victims cannot recover,” he writes, “until they become familiar with and befriend the sensations in their bodies.” *The Body Keeps the Score* is not a self-help book; it is a summary of the scientific advances in understanding and treating trauma in the past century and why van der Kolk believes medicine is still not grappling with it effectively. But for many readers, it was an epiphany. As the book has lingered atop best-seller lists for the past five years, trauma has been elevated from a subject discussed mostly in the medical and military communities to a feature of the national conversation.

In fact, many people—including the book’s author—have begun to caution that trauma is being redefined in unhelpful ways. “People are inflating the whole trauma notion and now apply it to everything,” says van der Kolk. “When somebody breaks up with you in a love relationship, that’s part of life, but that is not a trauma. What’s happening in Gaza, that’s a trauma.” He also dismisses the notion that his book became popular five years after it was published because of the trauma of the pandemic. “My take on this is that I owe a lot of it to President Trump,” he says. “When we saw brutality enter our political arena, a lot of people got triggered and [felt] like, ‘Oh, that’s what my upbringing was about; somebody treated me very badly and hurt me.’”

As the book climbed the charts, van der Kolk—who has also run the Trauma Research Foundation in Massachusetts since 2018—

has noticed that he's invited to more speaking engagements, but fewer hospitals or universities. "Institutions, by and large, have not embraced the book," he says. Clinicians, however, have. Laurie Marcellin, a therapist in Colorado, says it's one of the four top books she recommends as a supervisor for new therapists. "It's amazing, given the amount of years it's been out, that the book is still considered foundational," Marcellin says. She's more cautious about recommending it to clients because it can be triggering in its specificity. "I once heard someone say, 'It's like someone opened my mail,'" she says.

Van der Kolk parts company with established medical tradition on several key issues. Some of the treatments he recommends are unconventional. He's a proponent of using MDMA—also known as the street drugs ecstasy or Molly—to help people debilitated by trauma. (He currently uses ketamine instead, because unlike MDMA, it's legal to prescribe.) "When you get traumatized, you live in a very narrowed reality, and your fear and your rage really determine your reaction to everything," he says. "Psychedelics have the capacity to open up people's minds to live in a much larger reality."

In his most recent study, published in January, van der Kolk treated 46 traumatized people with psychotherapy and MDMA and 44 with

psychotherapy and a placebo. He says he was shocked by the results. “After the MDMA, people were much better able to both articulate their own point of view and understand other people’s point of view, and to not get into fights but find the ability to compromise,” he says. Best-seller influence can get you only so far, however. While Australia and the Netherlands have announced MDMA programs, the experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are advising against recommending it.

Other less-than-orthodox treatments he recommends include activities that can help people feel in step with others, including dancing, drumming, and choir, as well as in step with themselves, such as yoga and breathwork. The current system, he says, “where you talk about how bad you feel or you take drugs, needs to be vastly expanded [to be like] the way we raise small kids, which is to have the experiences of discovery and pleasure and connection, not talking about your trauma, just to be in sync with other people.” He’s a big fan of dramatherapy. “It is really good for people to inhabit different creatures than who they usually are,” he says.

For some clinicians, the book’s out-of-the-box thinking is what makes it appealing. “I think that we’re pretty stuck in psychiatry for some things,” says Dr. Chuck Weber, co-founder and chief medical officer of Family Care Center, a national chain of mental-health providers that treats a lot of ex-military PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) sufferers. One of the book’s techniques he has seen used is therapeutic massage for people whose trauma means they can’t bear to be touched. The hope is that it can retrain the brain to associate touch with different memories.

While the health industry has yet to fully embrace many of these treatments, van der Kolk is seeing progress on the front line, including in schools and prisons; San Quentin has a program based loosely on the practices encouraged by *The Body Keeps the Score*. “It’s an astounding thing to see the criminal-justice system actually

having a trauma model," says van der Kolk. "It made me very optimistic."

It's entirely plausible that van der Kolk's views of health care institutions have been colored by events in his own history. In 2018, he was dismissed from the first trauma center he founded, amid allegations of bullying, which he strongly denied. He also bristles at the mention of the highly influential Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The DSM describes and encodes all known psychiatric disorders. It's often key to getting health insurers to pay for a treatment. Despite what van der Kolk believes is overwhelming evidence that children who suffer from persistent trauma because of an absent, abusive, or unwell parent need particular help, the only trauma in the DSM is PTSD. "I have spent too much time in my life trying to change the DSM," he says, ruefully. "Innumerable research papers—I'm not doing it anymore." Instead, he is writing a workbook based on his theories.

He's also hoping his work has an impact on an institution close to children: schools. His recommendations for how to make up for pandemic losses are, unsurprisingly, mildly heretical. Most school systems are leaning into extra instruction time and tests to catch kids up in reading and math. Van der Kolk says that's all wrong. "The main thing you learn in school is to be a member of a group, to collaborate, to have fun and to create things together," he says. "So I would focus on theater groups, I would focus on athletics, because the pandemic really made people physically very isolated and alienated from each other."

It's hard to imagine a world in which such activities might be prescribed and paid for by health insurers, or educational systems for that matter. There are no double-blind peer-reviewed studies to establish that they make people feel better. Van der Kolk is not at all put off by this. People surprise him all the time.

Correction, 7/19

The original version of this story misstated Dr. Chuck Weber's techniques. He has seen therapeutic massage used on PTSD sufferers. He does not use it in his clinic.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://ti.me/3Y6O2JC

Hip-Hop Needs a #MeToo Reckoning

Crumpton is a music, pop culture, and politics writer from Dallas. In her work—which can be found in outlets like *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar*, The Guardian, NPR, and many other platforms—Crumpton writes about a range of topics from Black Queer advocacy to the underrepresented hip-hop scenes in the southern United States to pop analysis on releases like "WAP" and "Black Is King"

Cassie Ventura is not the first survivor of hip-hop's abuse. Unfortunately, she will not be the last. In the months since Ventura filed a federal lawsuit against Sean 'Diddy' Combs for rape and abuse in November 2023, six women survivors and one male survivor have come out against the hip-hop mogul with stories of alleged abuse and harm. Ventura's brutal account, coupled with surveillance video released on May 17 by CNN of the singer being physically assaulted by Combs in 2016, has also reignited discussions about why hip-hop needs its own #MeToo movement. (Combs apologized for his actions on the video, but denied all other allegations. On June 22, *People* reported that Combs deleted

all of his social media posts on Instagram, including his apology video to Ventura.)

Since Ventura's initial filing against Combs, other people have come forward about the sexual and physical assault at the hands of other men in hip-hop. Musician and record producer The-Dream, for instance, was accused of sexual and physical assault by Chanaaz Mangroe, his former protege. (In a statement to *The New York Times*, The-Dream said "These claims are untrue and defamatory.") But the pushback Ventura received by hip-hop's elder statesman—like Akon, Uncle Luke, Slim Thug, and Stevie J, to name a few who chose to stand by Combs and discredit her claims— proved why, while Hollywood and other industries have broken some ground since the Harvey Weinstein allegations in 2017, a reckoning of gender violence has yet to transpire in the genre.

It seems a culture of fear is governing hip-hop. And it's about time we recognize it.

After the release of the footage, Slim Thug and Uncle Luke rescinded their support for Combs. But the majority of prominent men in hip-hop have remained silent about the truth—that their cowardly refusal to hold their peers accountable has resulted in the continued degradation of Black women's safety and their lives. That their silence has become complicity.

"Why is it so hard to believe Black women?," ask Patrice Tillery and Christina M. Jones, Esq. in an article for BWJP, The Battered Women's Justice Project. "Even in situations where sharing our truth benefits us in no visible way, and in many cases, makes something that is already incredibly challenging, exponentially harder. Why do we have to beg for the bare minimum?"

Misogynoir is, of course, not unique to hip-hop. These universal systems of oppression are prevalent in the lives of Black women.

But what is unique about the hip-hop industry is that its leaders feel the need to defend the genre that made them—to protect it and gate-keep it, even at the cost of sweeping violence under the rug. This, as a result, has interwoven gender-based oppression into its DNA.

From its inception half a century ago, hip-hop has had to protect itself from law enforcement, the media, and political leaders. Oftentimes, those seen as its protectors were men. Hip-hop gave Black men access to wealth and resources that they had never seen. In turn, the Black women, who also helped to create the music and safeguard the culture, were subjected to dehumanization and humiliation from their male peers. That dangerous bargain has not only remained the same, but proved itself to be profitable for the men in charge.

Some of the genre's earliest titans—like Russell Simmons, Dr. Dre, and L.A. Reid— were able to accumulate economic and social capital throughout the years, while reportedly assaulting the women who worked around them. On Feb. 13, for instance, a former Def Jam senior executive alleged that Simmons sexually assaulted her in the 1990s, after she went to his residence for approval on a music video. Model Keri Claussen Khalighi, writer Jenny Lumet, hip-hop pioneer Sherri Hines, music journalist Toni Sallie, actress Alexia Norton Jones, fashion publicist Kelly Cutrone, and former Def Jam Recordings executive Drew Dixon have also accused Simmons of sexual assault and harassment. (In an episode of In Depth With Graham Bensinger, Simmons said, "I've never been violent to anybody." He continued, "Of course, I've been insensitive, but certainly never been forceful in any of my relationships, all of which I've had have been consensual.") In November 2023, Dixon also accused Reid of sexual assault. (Reid denied her claims.) A few years before, in 2017, she accused the music executive of misconduct.

> It seems a culture of fear is governing hip-hop. And it's about time we recognize it.

In 1991, Dr. Dre allegedly physically assaulted hip-hop journalist Dee Barnes at an industry party. Barnes sued Dre that same year and the lawsuit was settled out of court. In 2015, singer Michel'le Toussaint, Dr. Dre's ex-fiancee, also alleged that Dre physically abused her during their relationship. Nicole Young, Dr. Dre's ex-wife, alleged in 2021 that Dre was abusive to her throughout their marriage. (Dr. Dre denied Young's claims of abuse. He also denies Michel'le's claims. He spoke about Barnes' alleged assault in The Defiant Ones, "Any man who puts his hands on a female is a f—ing idiot. He's out of his f—ing mind, and I was out of my f—ing mind at the time. I f—ed up, I paid for it, I'm sorry for it, and I apologize for it.") In spite of the accusations, Dr. Dre continues to be feted and held up in music and entertainment—from headlining the Super Bowl LVI halftime show in 2022, to receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in March 2024, to performing alongside Kendrick Lamar at The Pop Out: Ken & Friends show this Juneteenth.

Read more: *Dee Barnes: Women Are 'Casualties' of Straight Outta Compton's 'Revisionist History'*

Journalists, A&R executives, models; all of these women were seen as expendable. In the case of Barnes, her abuse was turned into profit by Dre and his associates. In the years that followed the alleged assault, Eminem and Dr. Dre turned her name into a punchline in their music. On "Guilty Conscience," a single from the 1999 *The Slim Shady LP*, the hip-hop duo said, "You gonna take advice from somebody who slapped Dee Barnes?/ What you say?/ What's wrong? Didn't think I'd remember?/ I'ma kill you, motherf-cker." Then, in 2007, fellow rapper Redman made another reference to Barnes on "Get 'Em," a track from *Red Gone Wild: Thee Album.* "You get slapped like Dee Barnes, Doctor, not Dre, And eating – but, I'm after the entrée!," said the rapper.

This cycle of abuse laid the groundwork for what was to come when Tory Lanez assaulted and shot Megan Thee Stallion in 2020. Shortly after news of her assault was made public, Megan Thee Stallion was ostracized. Internet bloggers, podcasters, and content creators promoted and distributed false narratives regarding the assault, accusing her of lying. To boot, hip-hop superstar Drake's lyrics about the Houston rapper on "Circo Loco"— "This bitch lie 'bout gettin' shots, but she still a stallion"—contributed to the narrative. The shooting was referenced again by Eminem on "Houdini":"If I was to ask for Megan Thee Stallion if she would collab with me, Would I really have a shot at a feat? (Ha!), I don't know, but I'm glad to be back, like"

Hip-hop and the people who support the industry have long used the harm and violence enacted on Black women as a way to promote their newest song for attention-grabbing headlines. But in the social and digital media age, that same harm and violence has turned into content. Only now, Black women aren't the only ones subjugated to this type of harassment and mistreatment.

When producer Rodney 'Lil Rod' Jones filed a lawsuit against Combs for sexual harassment and sexual assault in February 2024, the response on social media was an influx of homophobic content, with the "No Homo" slur replaced by "No Diddy." Some people used Jones' lawsuit—and the vitriolic response it inspired—to downplay the other lawsuits filed by women.

Because misogynoir is rooted in the devaluation of femininity at large, LGBTQIA+ people are also susceptible to gender-based violence. And in a genre where Black toxic masculinity is a key to success, hip-hop does not create space for the Black queer experience to be celebrated. Despite the accomplishments of openly queer rappers such as Young M.A, Lil Nas X, and Saucy Santana, their success is often viewed as an anomaly, instead of the norm.

Oftentimes, in fact, men in hip-hop enforce strict boundaries around race, gender, and femininity through their music. From the homophobic first verse on “Dior” by Pop Smoke to the reported mistreatment of artist ILoveMakonnen by Drake’s record label OVO Sound because of his sexuality, homophobia and masculinity are strictly enforced by hip-hop’s gatekeepers.

> Hip-hop gave Black men access to wealth and resources that they had never seen.

Despite the efforts of many top artists, from Ice Cube to Killer Mike, to critique white supremacy, capitalism, and mass incarceration, there is a conspicuous silence when it comes to sexuality and gender. Even when artists like Kendrick Lamar feel as if they are protecting hip-hop from “colonizers” (in a recent case, Drake), Black women become the inevitable casualties. During their weeks-long rap beef, both Lamar and Drake hurled allegations of gender-based violence against one another. From intimate partner violence to inappropriate conduct with minors, every woman and child that was affiliated with the pair became subjugated to intense scrutiny and surveillance online. Although it was the men who were being accused of physical and sexual abuse, that did not stop the public from turning their scrutiny to the women they allegedly abused.

Read more: *A Recent Timeline of the Drake vs. Kendrick Lamar Beef*

It’s interesting that a through-line in their exchange of diss records was the bold proclamation of who inflicted more harm toward women and which harm was greater—like points on a scoreboard. This laissez faire approach to violence against Black women and girls in hip-hop is the reason why some people still believe Lanez. Why people still *don’t* believe Ventura.

A common refrain when survivors like Ventura come forward is that the woman in question is doing this for financial gain. That the easiest way to make money as a woman in hip-hop (outside of producing a child) is to accuse a man of sexual assault. But this couldn't be farther from the truth. In a recent *Rolling Stone* article, the majority of Combs' survivors said they were pursuing legal action against him not for financial exploitation, but for themselves—to find some semblance of peace and warn other women and girls currently in Combs' life.

Journalist August Brown, who has reported on Combs for the Los Angeles *Times*, spoke about the financial and legal implications that prevent survivors from coming forward on a March 2024 episode of the podcast *What A Day*: "One thing that he [Combs] was very effective at, that we learned in our reporting, is using NDAs to kind of lock people into his ecosystem and feel like they can't speak up," he said. "Someone with that much money and that much power within the industry, it takes a lot of gumption to go up against him and either break an NDA or find a way to speak out in spite of one. Up until the Cassie suits, I think a lot of people still to this day probably remain afraid of him in some capacity."

Troubling, too, is the release of Ventura's video via CNN, which poses other questions about the cyclical nature of gender-based violence. Did Combs not receive an influx of followers after his apology video was published on Instagram following the release of the video? Did he not receive engagement from every click, like, and subscribe off of this video–off of a survivor's pain? Was the video not re-traumatizing for Ventura and other survivors of Combs' violence? That is misogynoir in practice, adapted for the digital age.

So, what drives survivors to come forward? Why would Ventura, Jones, Liza Gardner, Joie Dickerson-Neal, and a woman who identified as Jane Doe break their silence at a point when Combs remains so powerful not just in hip-hop, but pop culture at large?

It is the humanistic belief that there is a better way forward. After the release of the surveillance video by CNN in May, Ventura said the following in a statement on Instagram: “My only ask is that EVERYONE open your heart to believing victims the first time…It takes a lot of heart to tell the truth out of a situation that you were powerless in.”

It is possible for a reality to exist where Combs and men like him are not in power to inflict harm and violence. There is no golden rule that states that hip-hop, and men in hip-hop, must operate like this and continue the proliferation of violent attitudes and behaviors. But it must be done in unison. Change cannot be enacted or sustained by a singular artist, fan, or critic. Change requires multiple artists, fans, and critics to bring forth equitable policies and practices in hip-hop to create a healthier environment for everyone.

With intention, hip-hop can dismantle racial and gender oppression. But in order to make this a reality, we must abolish the very systems that encourage men like Combs to perpetuate them in the first place. If hip-hop is meant to survive another 50 years, it cannot continue like this. This is the watershed moment we’ve been waiting for.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6992188

Why Voters Everywhere Are Fed Up With Incumbents

Ian Bremmer is a foreign affairs columnist and editor-at-large at TIME. He is the president of Eurasia Group, a political-risk consultancy, and GZERO Media, a company dedicated to providing intelligent and engaging coverage of international affairs. He teaches applied geopolitics at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, and his most recent book is The Power of Crisis.

With so many elections in big countries this year, it's a good time to look at how the politics of democracies are shifting. But this is no simple turn to the left or right. In France, Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally scored big gains in the first round of this year's legislative elections, but it was an alliance of leftist parties that surged in the second round. In Britain, the center-left Labour Party won a landslide victory over the center-right Conservatives. In Germany, the U.S., and Canada, it's the right that registers major gains in current polling.

If we look deeper than ideological labels—and beyond voters in Europe and the United States—an undeniable trend comes into focus: Voters are fed up with incumbents. In India, the party of still-popular Prime Minister Narendra Modi expected an easy win with a record number of parliamentary seats earlier this year. Instead, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party lost its parliamentary majority and must rely on partners in other parties to continue his reforms. In South Africa, the African National Congress lost its majority for the first time in the country's post-apartheid history, falling from 57.9% of the vote in 2019 to a stunning 40.2% this year. To form a government, the humbled ANC has been forced to turn to the Democratic Alliance, its main opposition.

[video id=eX1ZR0hF autostart="viewable"]

In short, the global democratic trend this year is a resounding rejection of the status quo. French elections were less a victory for the left or right than a noisy repudiation of the center—namely, the increasingly unpopular President Emmanuel Macron. In the U.K., voters handed victory to Labour not because new PM Keir Starmer's party made a compelling case for a specific set of reforms, but because so many British voters rejected the Conservative Party after 14 years in power under five prime ministers.

Read More: *Macron's Disastrous Election*

In the United States, President Biden's campaign was in serious trouble well before his stumbling debate performance and the attempted assassination of Donald Trump. Canada's Liberal Party, led by third-term prime minister Justin Trudeau, trails opposition Conservatives by 18 points. The approval rating for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has spiraled from 73% in March 2022 to just 28% last month. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida scored a July approval rating of 15.5%. His Liberal Democratic Party will remain in power, but only after replacing Kishida.

There are exceptions to the trend. Handpicked successors won elections this year in Taiwan and Mexico, but that may be because fear of China makes Taiwan the most special of special cases, and Mexico's presidents are limited by law to a single term. (Claudia Sheinbaum does represent landmark change, however, because she will be Mexico's first female and first Jewish president.)

The political cultures and dynamics in these countries vary widely. American voters worry Biden is too old to continue the job. Kishida is blamed for a party fundraising scandal. French voters tell pollsters that Macron is arrogant and aloof. India is roiled by accusations that Modi has become too powerful. South Africa's ANC is riven by internal rivalries between President Cyril Ramaphosa and his predecessor Jacob Zuma.

But though every democracy is different, they share a common problem. The aftereffects of the pandemic have touched the lives and livelihoods of billions of people. Local economies continue to suffer as supply chains remain knotted, and inflation is stubbornly high. Government subsidies are drying up, and economic contractions, particularly in poor countries, feed migration, which fuels anger at governments in richer countries for failing to manage it.

It's tough times for incumbents no matter where they govern—and voters have still more anger to vent.

Correction, July 19

The original version of this story misstated Cyril Ramaphosa's and Jacobs Zuma's roles in South Africa's government. Ramaphosa is President, not Prime Minister, and Zuma is a former President, not former Prime Minister.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6999625

Why Are COVID-19 Cases Spiking Again?

Alice Park is a senior health correspondent at TIME. She covers the COVID-19 pandemic, new drug developments in cancer and Alzheimer's disease, mental health, HIV, CRISPR, and advances in gene therapy, among other issues in health and science. She also covers the Olympics, and co-chaired TIME's inaugural TIME 100 Health Summit in 2019. Her work has won awards from the New York Press Club, and recognition from the Deadline Club. In addition, she is the author of *The Stem Cell Hope: How Stem Cell Medicine Can Change Our Lives*. Follow her on Instagram at @aliceparktime.

It’s summer, and RSV and flu have come and gone. But, as ever, COVID-19 is different. Even though the pandemic may be behind us, the virus is once again surging in the U.S.

Here’s what to know about the current spike in COVID-19.

How serious is it?

COVID-19 seems to be settling into a pattern of two peaks a year: one in the winter and one in the summer. According to the latest data from the end of June, rates of positive COVID-19 tests from labs (which represent only a small fraction of overall cases), increased by nearly 1% from June 23-29. Emergency room visits for COVID-19 jumped 23% during that same time period, and hospitalizations for the disease increased by 13% from June 9-15. Signs of the COVID-19 virus in wastewater—which provides among the most accurate, real-time snapshots of cases—have been increasing since May. Just before July 4, four states—Florida, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah—reported very high levels of the virus in wastewater samples collected from sewage facilities.

The good news is that while the number of cases is climbing, deaths from COVID-19 continue to drop. In the last week of June, deaths from COVID-19 declined by 25%.

Why are COVID-19 cases increasing?

The rise in cases is due to a number of factors. First, people's immunity to the virus is waning; only 22% of people in the U.S. received the most updated vaccine, which became available in the fall. Second, the newest variants are mutating to spread more easily between people. That means more people are likely to get infected.

Read More: *The Vaccines You'll Need This Fall and Winter*

But so far, the virus does not seem to be causing more severe disease. "The latest data on COVID-19 show that it is now starting to settle in and have similar kinds of statistics to influenza, meaning hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths every year," says Dr. Paul Offit, director of the vaccine education center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's vaccine expert committee. And similar to flu, the people most severely affected are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

Which variants do I need to worry about now?

With a virus that mutates as quickly as SARS-CoV-2 does, keeping up with the alphabet-soup names of the newest variants is a daunting task. The latest strains are still from the Omicron family, and KP.2, and KP.3—two examples of the circulating 'FLiRT' variants, named for the locations of their particular mutations in the virus' spike protein—are dominating new infections in the U.S. right now. Since June, FLiRT variants have accounted for more than 60% of COVID-19 infections in the U.S. The newest data from WastewaterSCAN found that FLiRT variants account for 55% of the COVID-19 variants found in wastewater samples from across the country, and the concentration of the virus in samples is more than double what it was in June 2023.

For now, it doesn't appear that these mutations are making the virus more dangerous to human health or enabling the virus to cause more severe disease. But health experts are monitoring cases to learn more about these latest changes.

My recent bout with COVID-19 was worse than my previous infections. Is the virus getting stronger?

People who have been infected recently have experienced symptoms of fever, coughing, malaise, and even intestinal discomfort. But having more severe symptoms than you may be used to doesn't necessarily mean you've encountered a more virulent strain. Dr. Robert Murphy, professor of infectious diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, says that worse-than-usual bouts with COVID-19 could be due to the fact that their immunity is much lower now than what it was in previous years when more people were more recently vaccinated. The low uptake of the newest vaccine means fewer people have the strongest possible protection against the latest variants. "Vaccines

gives you better immunity than getting the disease," says Murphy. "Vaccines provide a controlled exposure that gives you a stronger immunologic response than from an infection."

Is it still worth getting vaccinated?

Offit says vaccines are critical for people who are at high risk of developing complications from COVID-19, and staying up to date can protect them from being hospitalized. But it's important to set realistic expectations. "The goal of the vaccine is to keep you out of the hospital, to keep you out of the intensive care unit, and to keep you out of the morgue," he says. "That's the goal—it's not to protect you against mild disease."

Read More: *A Combined Flu and COVID-19 Shot May Be Coming*

The CDC's expert vaccine committee recently recommended an updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone six months and older for the coming fall and winter season. The shot will be revised to target the KP variant currently circulating, which should improve the shot's ability to minimize symptoms and severe COVID-19 disease.

Should I start wearing masks again in public?

With a more transmissible virus circulating, some people should consider it. "If I were in a high-risk group, such as being older or having a high-risk medical condition, and I'm in a large group of people I didn't know—like on an airplane—I think it's reasonable to wear a mask," says Murphy. That consideration should also apply to people who are sick. "I think anyone who has a respiratory illness should stay at home," says Offit. "And if you can't stay at home, you should wear a mask. If you're in a high-risk group, get tested,—and if you have COVID-19, take an antiviral [like Paxlovid]."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6996203

The Border Is Not the Problem

Mengestu is an Ethiopian American novelist, and is a 2012 MacArthur Fellow. He is recipient of a Lannan Literary Fellowship for Fiction, a National Book Foundation 5 Under 35 Prize, Guardian First Book Award, and the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. His latest book is *Someone Like Us*

When my father arrived in America from Ethiopia in 1978, he was resettled, with the help of an immigration agency, to Peoria, Ill. He found a job working on the factory floor of a Caterpillar Inc. plant, and by the time my mother, sister, and I joined him two years later, he'd already found a two-bedroom apartment two blocks from the Catholic school my sister and I would attend.

It was a startlingly American childhood, made more so by the fact that we spent our weekends at a Southern Baptist church on the other side of town. My parents, raised in the Ethiopian Orthodox church, had never heard of Southern Baptists before coming to America. But every Sunday, there we were, in the front pews, the first and only Black family to have ever attended the church.

On a recent cross-country road trip, my wife and I decided to take our two children on a detour to Peoria. My family had left the city at the tail end of the 1980s recession, when unemployment hovered near 20%. I wanted to see if we could find Sharon, one of the members of the church my family had been especially close to. I hadn't spoken to Sharon in at least 10 years. We arrived unannounced at her doorstep just in time to take her to lunch. It was the first and most likely the last time she would meet my family. On the drive to the restaurant, Sharon pointed out the Greek Orthodox church near her home.

"Your mom and dad tried to go there," she said, "but the priest or pastor told them not to come back. He said they would be more comfortable somewhere else."

When I told Sharon I had never heard that story before she didn't seem surprised. She shrugged.

"That sort of thing happened a lot back then," she said. "Your parents had a hard time fitting in."

I was about to ask Sharon how they were able to do so at a Southern Baptist church, but she saw the question coming.

"Your mom and dad met with Brother Gene, and he saw that they were good people and told them they would be welcome in his church," she explained. "Before you all came, though, he went around and called every single person. He said if anyone gave your family a hard time, they'd have hell to pay for it. And that was it. I don't think anyone bothered you at all."

[video id=uPVIlsSZ autostart="viewable"]

It felt like a confession when Sharon told the story, and I suppose to some degree it was. If no one at the church ever told us to our face that we didn't belong—if no one ever explicitly asked us to

leave—it was because the good people of the church had been compelled, even threatened, into accepting us. Had they not been, it's unlikely we would have ever lasted more than a week at the church.

Given the current apocalyptic narrative surrounding immigration, it's hard to imagine the leader of a conservative Southern Baptist church making a similar kind of phone call today. Whether or not Brother Gene knew my parents to be good people, he knew they were refugees, and in the early 1980s, the political and cultural framework had yet to solidify into the often dehumanizing imagery that's common today.

Read More: *Welcome to the Immigration Election*

As a writer whose work is rooted in stories of asylum, I've sat in on numerous discussions in which immigration experts debated the best alternate stories to cast immigration in a more positive, humane light: immigration as an economic necessity, immigration as a moral and ethical obligation, immigration as part of our cultural heritage. The idea that the story can be changed, however, sits on a precarious premise, one that reinforces the idea that the dominant narrative being told is actually about migration, or the border, when in fact, that's never been the case.

A year before Brother Gene called the members of his congregation and told them to welcome us, another Southern Baptist, President Jimmy Carter, signed the Refugee Act of 1980. That transformative piece of legislation defined a refugee as any person unable or unwilling to return home because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution—the same terms as the ones adopted by the U.N. in 1951. More important, the act established an annual refugee–admission limit free of race-based geographic quotas and created the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which helped families like mine establish new lives in places like Peoria, Ill.

That the Refugee Act of 1980 passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in an era of double–digit inflation and negative economic growth says something critical about how we frame and imagine the competing narratives surrounding immigration. Despite the economic challenges, the relatively open-armed embrace of immigrants that defined that act was part of a larger story the country needed to tell in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. In that story, the global refugee crisis that followed the end of the war became an opportunity for the U.S. to recast itself as a land of hope and opportunity, particularly for those fleeing the tyranny of political repression.

The current narrative framework when it comes to immigration couldn't be more different. Today, the voices of authority on the other end of the line insist at every opportunity that the refugees at our border and in our communities represent nothing less than an existential threat to the country. They are criminals, terrorists, and drug dealers, many from hostile or "sh-t-hole" countries, armed with fraudulent claims of persecution.

It's a damning and obviously racist narrative, at odds with both the current and historical facts of migration. The number of migrant encounters (which includes apprehensions and expulsions) at the southern border in 1986 was roughly the same as in 2023 when adjusted for population growth in the U.S., while the total number of global refugees admitted into the country fell from a high of 207,116 in 1980 to just over 25,000 in 2022. The numbers on their own, however, mean little, even when paired with numerous other statistics that prove that immigration is a net gain to the economy and that immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than people born in the country. The narrative persists, indifferent to facts, because it allows us to point to something other than ourselves.

It's no coincidence that today's border narrative mirrors some of our country's most intractable issues. Addiction, and the

incalculable toll it has taken on our country's most vulnerable communities, is a "border crisis" rather than the product of a broken health care system. Decades of political dysfunction and neglect have created a system of horribly underfunded agencies at both the state and federal levels, and so our asylum process is overwhelmed because of the devious immigrants sneaking into the country—not because U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which processes asylum applications for refugees currently in the U.S., is a fee-funded agency within Homeland Security, financially unable to process the more than 10 million pending asylum cases in its backlog.

When the Office of Refugee Resettlement was created under the Department of Health and Human Services in 1980, more than 90% of its $416 million budget was allocated to help state agencies cover the medical and educational expenses of their refugee populations. That amount is more than triple what Congress allocated to the agency two decades later, making it that much easier for Americans to imagine that a wall would fix what we broke.

While it may be hard to change the current narrative, it doesn't mean we shouldn't imagine what those other stories might look like. They would have nothing to do with better, or fewer, or less economically vulnerable individuals and families attempting to enter the country. Those stories would instead consider what our borders might look like if we saw them as an integral part of our country rather than the end, and they would imagine what our immigration system might look like if we devoted the resources necessary to creating a just asylum process rather than the ineffective militarized frontier that currently exists.

Tell those stories enough, and we might see that both the problem and the solution is us.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/7004943

America’s Political Violence Crisis

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.

One night in January, 15 people trudged into an arts center in Nazareth, Pa., for a political focus group. Democrats and Republicans, grandmothers and high school teachers, they gathered in a room still decorated with Christmas lights to discuss their concerns about the democratic process with a group called Keep Our Republic, a non-partisan civic organization that focuses on threats to the election system. Ari Mittleman, the organization’s executive director, has observed similar events across the battleground states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, so he expected the participants in Nazareth to express negative views about the 2024 elections, the candidates, and even the voting process itself. What Mittleman was not prepared for was a dark prediction that the panelists shared.

“The one thing that unified Democrats and Republicans,” says Mittleman, was the strong sense that “this election will see political violence.” In a recording of the Nazareth session shared with TIME, many participants said they believed it was a matter of when, not if, someone would be seriously injured or killed during the 2024 election cycle. “It was beyond unsettling,” Mittleman recalls. “Almost to a person, they were saying that political violence was going to happen.”

[video id=Fd1X5U6M autostart="viewable"]

When it did happen on July 13 in Butler, Pa., the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump shocked the nation. But to many, it did not come as a surprise. The harrowing scene was surreal yet predictable, and not only because the U.S. has an ugly history of attacks against Presidents and presidential candidates. The gunshots fired by a skinny 20-year-old perched on a roof overlooking the Butler Farm Show grounds were a reminder of America’s political reality in 2024, which has been warped by increasingly violent rhetoric, threats, and attacks.

Read More: *The United States of American Violence*

For years, polls have traced a sharp rise in the share of Americans who believe violence is a valid means to achieve their political goals. In a December 2021 survey by the Washington *Post* and the University of Maryland, 1 in 3 respondents said they thought violent action against the government can be justified, compared with fewer than 1 in 10 in the 1990s. In an April PBS/Marist poll, 28% of Republicans and 12% of Democrats said they believe Americans may “have to resort to violence to get the country back on track.” In June, 10% of respondents surveyed by the University of Chicago’s Project on Security and Threats said that the “use of force is justified to prevent Donald Trump from becoming President.”

This trend has coincided with a documented surge in violent threats, harassment, and physical attacks targeting elected and civic officials, from prominent legislators and governors to small-town election clerks and school-board members. The wave of invective and intimidation has hollowed out local institutions, disrupted systems of law and government, drummed dedicated public servants out of office, and deterred others from running, especially women and people of color.

Read More: *Public Officials Face Surge of Threats Ahead of 2024 Election*

To many Americans, the prospect of political violence has become immediate and visible. More people are bringing guns to demonstrations. Every politically charged event, from Supreme Court decisions to Trump's trials to congressional hearings, elicits menacing warnings and talk of "civil war." The last presidential election ended in a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by an angry mob that left five people dead and 140 injured. The vibes feel even darker this time, with the same two candidates describing one another as an existential threat to the nation.

Experts in political extremism expected these combustible factors to finally ignite with a high-profile attack. "It's the manifestation of

the political environment we're in," says Daryl Johnson, a former senior intelligence analyst who tracked domestic extremism at the Department of Homeland Security. "And there's gonna be more."

Thomas Matthew Crooks, the suspect identified as the assailant who shot at Trump, remained a puzzle to investigators in the days after the shooting. Unlike most 20-year-olds, he seems to have had no public digital presence. He had no previous criminal record or documented history of mental illness, and used no threatening language on his private social media accounts, according to FBI investigators. He was a registered Republican, according to Pennsylvania voter data, but Federal Election Commission records show he made a $15 donation to a progressive political action committee in 2021. It is not even clear that his purpose in firing shots at Trump's rally— which, in addition to wounding the former President, killed a rallygoer and seriously wounded two others— was primarily political.

Crooks was living with his parents, who are both licensed professional counselors, in a middle-class Pittsburgh suburb. Two years out of high school, he worked in the kitchen of a local nursing home. He used an AR-style semiautomatic rifle legally purchased by his father, according to local law enforcement.

Investigators also found “rudimentary” explosive devices and bombmaking material inside his car and home.

If the mystery surrounding Crooks’ motive is unusual, his normal background is not. Most perpetrators of political violence are not people with a history of criminality. They are seemingly ordinary Americans, off the radar of the authorities, for whom the idea of taking violent action privately crystallizes. “They seem to just come out of the blue,” says Johnson, the former Homeland Security analyst.

What is clear, experts say, is that the political environment plays a role. Crooks grew up in a nation where high-profile attacks against elected officials have become increasingly common. He was 7 when Democratic Representative Gabby Giffords was shot while meeting with constituents in a supermarket parking lot in Tucson, Ariz., in 2011. He was 13 when Representative Steve Scalise was shot by a left-wing extremist during a GOP congressional baseball team practice in Virginia in 2017. When Crooks was 17, federal authorities foiled a plot to kidnap Michigan’s Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer that was hatched by a right-wing militia group that posted violent antigovernment screeds. Crooks was a junior in high school when the country was rocked by the attack on the U.S. Capitol. As he graduated, the news was dominated by a disrupted plot to assassinate conservative Supreme Court Justices and an attack on former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband, whose skull was fractured by a conspiracy theorist wielding a hammer and zip ties and planning to kidnap the Democratic legislator.

“Since they were young adolescents, there has been a skyrocketing of political threats and political violence,” says Rachel Kleinfeld, an analyst who focuses on polarization and violence at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “That coarsening of political life, the normalization of incendiary and violent rhetoric, the sense that violence is a legitimate way to solve political

problems," she says, adding that this is "the background noise to this generation's political rise."

Threats against members of Congress are up nearly tenfold since 2015, with more than 8,000 reported last year, according to the U.S. Capitol Police. Serious threats against federal judges that trigger an investigation rose from 179 in 2019 to 457 in 2023. In a survey conducted earlier this year, more than 40% of state legislators reported being threatened or attacked during the past three years; nearly 90% said they had suffered other forms of abuse, including harassment, intimidation, and stalking. "It's not registering for Americans that the general tenor of political life has become one in which you can expect to be threatened," says Kleinfeld. Now, she says, "that is the cost of running for office."

In the past, experts say, ideology tended to be the main motivator for violent political attackers, from ecoterrorists to antiabortion extremists. The recent surge has been more partisan, tied to

Americans' strong identification as Democrats or Republicans. Social media platforms and diffuse online communications have radicalized more people and made it easier for them to threaten political opponents or to target members of their own parties they see as traitors.

Language plays a role too. Trump pledged to "root out the communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical-left thugs that live like vermin" and warned that "if I don't get elected, it's going to be a bloodbath for the whole country." During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden has condemned Trump's "assault on democracy," telling supporters that their "freedom is on the ballot."

"The state of American politics is so miserable, so ugly, that it's almost unrecognizable," says former Pennsylvania Republican Representative Charlie Dent, who is involved in the Keep Our Republic organization and was alarmed by the Nazareth focus group's anticipation of political violence. "One side says the elections are rigged, and we won't have a country if we don't win," Dent says. "The other side says democracy will cease to exist and the country will lapse into a fascist authoritarian society like *The Handmaid's Tale*. Both see the other as evil and illegitimate." Adds Dent: "At this rate, the country could experience civil disorder after the election regardless of the outcome."

The footage of the assassination attempt on Trump, against the backdrop of violent threats at every level of government, could radicalize even more Americans, security analysts fear. Each prominent act of political violence adds to a cycle of "continued violent mobilization and countermobilization" by far-right and far-left individuals and groups, who may use these events to radicalize and recruit more followers, according to a new report by Washington-based New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy. "Neither likely outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential election is expected to stem the heightened activity of domestic extremists,

including those willing to use violence, for the next four years or more," analysts conclude in the July 10 report.

In their most recent threat assessment, DHS officials flagged domestic extremists motivated by partisan grievances or antigovernment conspiracies as a top national-security risk. Individuals or organized groups could target candidates, government officials, voters, and campaign events as well as election infrastructure such as polling places or ballot drops, analysts say. In contrast with much of the past two decades, when U.S. officials focused on larger terrorist groups, the highest threat now comes from self-radicalized Americans and "lone offenders," DHS concluded.

Taking office after the Jan. 6 attack, the Biden Administration vowed to fight the "rising tide" of domestic extremism. The U.S. government shifted resources from foreign terrorism to understanding homegrown radicalization and released a national strategy to address the problem. The plan included improved information sharing among law-enforcement agencies, investigating and understanding extremist ideologies, and preventing recruitment by these groups. The FBI distributed 40,000 booklets to partners on how to spot the signs of violent extremism.

Read More: *Inside the Biden Administration's Uphill Battle Against Far-Right Extremism*

While the Administration succeeded in dismantling some organized groups and militias, self-radicalized "lone wolf" actors continue to be the major driver of political violence. They are able to engage "in lethal attacks and acts of violence against targets of opportunity, using rudimentary tactics and readily accessible weapons," according to a 2021 FBI analysis. The normalization of apocalyptic and menacing language online has also made it difficult to gauge whether a threat is imminent. In one recent case, authorities found an extensive, chilling trail of threats posted by a failed candidate for the New Mexico state legislature only after he was charged with orchestrating a scheme to shoot at the homes of several elected Democratic officials.

Far-right online communities, where talk of "civil war" and armed retaliation has become commonplace since the 2020 election, were flooded with angry messages after the attempted assassination of Trump. Some said they were taking his exhortation to "Fight! Fight! Fight!" literally. "They tried to kill my President," one person posted on a pro-Trump forum. "I want revenge." The FBI says threats of political violence have spiked since the Pennsylvania shooting, with individuals online mimicking or posing as the shooter and spurring fears of copycats, according to Deputy Director Paul Abbate.

Read More: *Accused 'Mastermind' of New Mexico Political Shootings Left A Chilling Digital Trail*

In the aftermath, Trump issued a rare call for unity. "This is a chance to bring the whole country, even the whole world, together," he said. But it's unclear how long the former President, whose campaigning leans heavily into incendiary speeches and often violent imagery, will stick to that subdued tone. It's also unclear if Biden, who condemned the attack and called on Americans to "cool it down," will dial back his campaign's core theme that Trump represents an existential threat to American democracy.

There are already signs that a new tone from the top is unlikely. Republicans have blamed the shooting on Biden and his claim that Trump is a dangerous autocrat who needs to be stopped. Trump's running mate, Ohio Senator J.D. Vance, said the Biden campaign's messaging "led directly to President Trump's attempted assassination." Both sides have trafficked in baseless conspiracy theories. Georgia Republican Representative Mike Collins tweeted, "Joe Biden sent the orders." Some on the left suggest that the Trump campaign faked the shooting with the help of the Secret Service, and that the blood on Trump's ear came from gel capsules. Dmitri Mehlhorn, a Democratic fundraiser and strategist, sent an email questioning whether "this 'shooting' was encouraged and maybe even staged so Trump could get the photos and benefit from the backlash," calling it a "classic Russian tactic."

It's possible for Americans to stop the cycle, experts say. "Americans could look in the mirror, be shocked by what they see, and stop normalizing the incendiary rhetoric and violence that is leading to these sorts of events," says Kleinfeld. Or, she says, "they will point fingers, as is already happening, and use the opportunity to try to score political points. And if they do, it will continue to get worse."

More from TIME

[video id=eX1ZR0hF]

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6999810

‘We’re Living in a Nightmare:’ Inside the Health Crisis of a Texas Bitcoin Town

Andrew R. Chow is a technology correspondent at TIME. His covers crypto, AI, tech regulation, and culture.

On an evening in December 2023, 43-year-old small business owner Sarah Rosenkranz collapsed in her home in Granbury, Texas and was rushed to the emergency room. Her heart pounded 200 beats per minute; her blood pressure spiked into hypertensive crisis; her skull throbbed. “It felt like my head was in a pressure vise being crushed,” she says. “That pain was worse than childbirth.”

Rosenkranz’s migraine lasted for five days. Doctors gave her several rounds of IV medication and painkiller shots, but nothing seemed to knock down the pain, she says. This was odd, especially because local doctors were similarly vexed when Indigo, Rosenkranz’s 5-year-old daughter, was taken to urgent care earlier that year, screaming that she felt a “red beam behind her eardrums.”

[video id=lWdzueXo autostart="viewable"]

It didn’t occur to Sarah that these symptoms could be linked. But in January 2024, she walked into a town hall in Granbury and found a room full of people worn thin from strange, debilitating illnesses. A mother said her 8-year-old daughter was losing her hearing and fluids were leaking from her ears. Several women said they experienced fainting spells, including while driving on the highway. Others said they were wracked by debilitating vertigo and nausea, waking up in the middle of the night mid-vomit.

None of them knew what, exactly, was causing these symptoms. But they all shared a singular grievance: a dull aural hum had crept into their lives, which growled or roared depending on the time of day, rattling their windows and rendering them unable to sleep. The hum, local law enforcement had learned, was emanating from a Bitcoin mining facility that had recently moved into the area—and was exceeding legal noise ordinances on a daily basis.

Over the course of several months in 2024, TIME spoke to more than 40 people in the Granbury area who reported a medical ailment that they believe is connected to the arrival of the Bitcoin mine: hypertension, heart palpitations, chest pain, vertigo, tinnitus, migraines, panic attacks. At least 10 people went to urgent care or the emergency room with these symptoms. The development of large-scale Bitcoin mines and data centers is quite new, and most of them are housed in extremely remote places. There have been no major medical studies on the impacts of living near one. But there is an increasing body of scientific studies linking prolonged exposure to noise pollution with cardiovascular damage. And one local doctor—ears, nose, and throat specialist Salim Bhaloo—says he sees patients with symptoms potentially stemming from the Bitcoin mine’s noise on an almost weekly basis.

“I’m sure it increases their cortisol and sugar levels, so you’re getting headaches, vertigo, and it snowballs from there,” Bhaloo says. “This thing is definitely causing a tremendous amount of stress. Everyone is just miserable about it.”

Not all data centers make noise. And industry insiders say they have a technical fix for the ones that do, which involves replacing their facilities’ loud air fans with much quieter liquid-based cooling solutions. But some of their touted methods, including “immersion cooling” in oil, are expensive and untested on a large scale.

A representative for Marathon Digital Holdings, the company that owns the mine, did not answer questions about health impacts, but told TIME that it is working to remove the noisy fans from the site. “By the end of 2024, we intend to have replaced the majority of air-cooled containers with immersion cooling, with no expansion required. Initial sound readings on immersion containers indicate favorable results in sound reduction and compliance with all relevant state noise ordinances,” they wrote in an email.

The number of commercial-scale Bitcoin mining operations in the U.S. has increased sharply over the last few years; there are now at least 137. Similar medical complaints have been registered near

facilities in Arkansas and North Dakota. And the Bitcoin mining industry is urgently trying to push bills through state legislatures, including in Indiana and Missouri, which would exempt Bitcoin mines from local zoning or noise ordinances. In May, Oklahoma governor Kevin Stitt signed a "Bitcoin Rights" bill to protect miners and prevent any future attempts to ban the industry.

While some Granbury residents are fiercely protesting the mine, many others feel powerless to alter the will of a company with legal, political, and financial might. And the data center industry at large is only growing more dominant, thanks to the twin forces of Bitcoin mining and AI, the latter which spends a vast amount of energy training generative models to find patterns in data sets. According to a recent report, data centers will use 8% of total U.S. power by 2030, up from 3% in 2022. And if operators continue to locate the centers near existing communities and prioritize profits above all else, then the story of Granbury could become the story of countless small towns across America.

Granbury sits about an hour southwest of Fort Worth in Hood County, which houses a mostly rural and Republican population of about 65,000 people. About a 15-minute drive south of Granbury's charming historic town center—which includes a 19th-century opera house—lies a gas plant called Wolf Hollow II. Driving toward the plant on a windy, predawn morning in May, it rises out of the sky like an oil rig in a pitch-black ocean, lights ablaze.

But the glowing gas plant never caused substantial issues for the local residents. Rather, the problems started when Constellation Energy, which operated the plant, signed a deal in 2021 to power a new Bitcoin mining facility that would sit directly on its lot. The new facility consisted of 163 squat metal boxes resembling shipping containers, which housed a total of over 30,000 computers. These computers started running in the summer of 2022, and seemed to be switched on all day and night. As of

December 2023, the Granbury mine is owned by Marathon, one of the largest Bitcoin holders in the world.

The computers power a process called proof-of-work mining. Rather than relying on a central bank or governmental agency, Bitcoin is created, maintained, and guarded by watchdogs around the world known as miners, who prevent tampering through a complex cryptographic process and are rewarded with bitcoin for doing so. Bitcoin's first supporters hoped that this new system would support a global digital currency that would bring freedom, financial fairness, and wealth to its adopters.

But the system also requires an immense and ever-increasing amount of electricity. While Bitcoin's first miners were solo operators often working out of their bedrooms, the industry is now dominated by a handful of billion-dollar corporations who operate industrial-size server farms across the globe. In the month of March 2024 alone, the Bitcoin mining industry generated a record $2 billion in revenue.

Much of the American Bitcoin mining industry can now be found in Texas, home to giant power plants, lax regulation, and crypto-friendly politicians. In October 2021, Governor Greg Abbott hosted the lobbying group Texas Blockchain Council at the governor's mansion. The group insisted that their industry would help the state's overtaxed energy grid; that during energy crises, miners would be one of the few energy customers able to shut off upon request, provided that they were paid in exchange. After meeting with the lobbyists, Abbott tweeted that Texas would soon be the "#1 [state] for blockchain & cryptocurrency." The following month, the Commissioners Court of Hood County approved the development of a cryptocurrency operation at Wolf Hollow. The owners promised local jobs and said that they would mostly use "stranded energy" that would otherwise go unused.

For months during 2022, Granbury residents Nick and Virginia Browning sat in their front yard watching the new metal boxes of the massive facility be installed in the dirt across the road. “It layered our houses with dust. We haven’t gotten it all out yet,” Nick Browning, 82, says.

The dust, it turns out, was just a prelude to the noise. In order to cool the machines, the site’s operators attached thousands of fans to the containers, which churned constantly, emitting a vicious buzz. As more machines were switched on, the noise sounded like a ceiling fan, then a leaf blower, then a jet engine. It consumed afternoon dog walks and revved through cloudless nights, vibrating the trailer homes of many of the low-income residents who live blocks from the facility. The noise floated miles down the winding Brazos river, through the lush golf courses in the gated community Pecan Plantation and past county lines.

At first, residents responded to the intrusion by vacating their porches, retreating inside, and turning up their fans and air conditioners to the max. But many still felt tremors in their beds—including Larry Potts, a 77-year-old retired pastor who lives up the road from the plant. Potts says he stopped sleeping and started losing hearing in both ears. In February, his heart gave out after another sleepless night; he was rushed to the hospital and kept alive by an external pacemaker. There, he was diagnosed with third degree atrioventricular block, hypertension, and depression.

“I’m sick of this world and all this mess around here,” he says he told his wife that day, referring to the Bitcoin mine’s noise. “We moved out here for the peace and quiet. But this has made me want to go.”

Some nearby residents say they haven’t been affected. But the number of strange medical emergencies in the area have piled up. In addition to Potts’ discharge papers, TIME reviewed medical records provided by several Granbury residents. Hospital notes from 72-year-old Geraldine Lathers’ three-day stay document new prescriptions for high blood pressure and vertigo. Jenna Hornbuckle, 38, lost hearing in her right ear and was diagnosed with heart failure; ear exams document her hearing loss along with

that of her 8-year-old daughter Victoria, who contracted ear infections that forced doctors to place a tube in her ear. And Avari Burns, a 19-year-old cancer patient, says she suffered from crippling migraines at home—but whenever she went to a Fort Worth hospital for chemotherapy, the migraines subsided.

Virginia Browning, 81, who can see the Bitcoin mine from her front yard, says she was taken to urgent care with violent vertigo after waking up one night mid-vomit. Browning says she gets so dizzy she can barely walk in a straight line, and that she rarely sleeps through the night. “When they crank this thing,” she says shakily, “I’m wide awake.”

“We’re living in a nightmare,” Sarah Rosenkranz says, sitting at a barbecue restaurant in downtown Granbury on an evening in May. As rock music blares from the speakers and other patrons chatter away, Rosenkranz pulls out her phone and clocks 72 decibels on a sound meter app—the same level that she records in Indigo’s bedroom in the dead of night. In early 2023, her daughter began waking up, yelling and holding her ears. Indigo’s room directly faces the mine, which sits about a mile and a half away. She soon refused to sleep in her own room. She then developed so many ear infections that Rosenkranz pulled her from school in March and learned how to homeschool her for the rest of the semester.

Over grilled salmon and hush puppies, Rosenkranz shares that her family has been sleeping peacefully at an inn downtown for the last three days in order to get away from the noise. But the next morning, after returning home, she contracts yet another migraine that lands her in urgent care.

Dr. Bhaloo, the ENT doctor in Granbury, says he’s seen an uptick since the new year in patients whose ailments—including ringing in their ears, vertigo, and headaches—could be related to the mine. “These people here, they’re good country folks, and Bitcoin, to

them, is almost a foreign alien thing," he says. "They don't understand it. And [the noise] is detrimental to their health and anxiety." Dr. Stephen Krzeminski, another Granbury ENT, agrees. "Sonic damage is real, there's no disputing that," he says. Krzeminski says he believes the mine is causing "mental and physical" health issues. "Imagine if I had vuvuzela in your ear all the time," he says.

The level of noise is appalling to Dr. Thomas Münzel, a German cardiologist who is a leader in the growing field of scientific researchers measuring the impact of urban and industrial noise on humans. For the last 15 years, Münzel has studied how transportation and urban noise, especially at night, can be debilitating stressors on the heart, brain, and cardiovascular systems. In one study, he exposed young, healthy students to noise events up to 63 decibels, and found that their vascular function diminished after just a single night. In other studies, he's found that nighttime noise pollution directly leads to heart failure and molecular changes in the brain, which may lead to impaired cognitive development of children and make some people more prone to developing dementia.

“The European Environmental Agency tells us that everything above 55 decibels is making us sick,” he says. The fact that the Granbury Bitcoin mine is emitting 70 or even 90 decibels on a nightly basis is “like torture,” he says. “The most spectacular cardiovascular diseases will develop. They have to stop the machines.”

Health effects have the potential to extend past the human residents of Granbury. Studies have shown that man-made noise pollution harms animals and wildlife, causing oxidative stress and memory loss in rodents, acute anxiety in dogs, and a decrease in forest growth. Shenice Copenhaver’s dog, Persephone, started going bald and developed debilitating anxiety shortly after the Bitcoin mine began operating four blocks away. Directly next door, Tom Weeks’ dog Jack Rabbit Slim started shaking and hyperventilating uncontrollably for hours on end; a vet placed him on the seizure medication Gabapentin. Rosenkranz’s chickens stopped laying eggs for months. And Jerry and Patricia Campbell’s centuries-old oak tree, which had served as the family’s hub and protector for generations of backyard family reunions and even a wedding, died suddenly three months ago.

It’s nearly impossible to prove the Bitcoin mine directly caused the afflictions of these specific animals and plants. But as the strange anecdotes collect, they’ve added to the stress of a town that feels under siege from all directions.

“I’ve lived in Texas all my life and I’ve never seen an oak tree be beautiful one year and die the next,” Jerry Campbell says on his lawn, beneath the tree’s gnarled, blackened limbs. “It’s so strange.”

Hood County Constable John Shirley has spent months trying to find his own solutions to a problem that at times seems supernatural. As a former member of the Oath Keepers, a far-right militia whose leaders were convicted of seditious conspiracy

against the U.S. government, Shirley is a somewhat divisive figure in the town. But lately Shirley has been laser-focused on the mine—an issue he considers apolitical. “When you’ve got Greenpeace supporting the same cause as a former Oath Keeper, what weird episode of the *Twilight Zone* are we in?” he says, chuckling darkly. (Shirley resigned from the Oath Keepers before Jan. 6, 2021, due to “serious concerns” with the direction of the organization, he says.)

On a listless May morning before the sun has risen, Shirley is sitting in his truck across the road from the mine. He is used to getting up at this hour, as he’s been taking decibel readings of the plant around the clock in order to write tickets against the mine’s operators for disorderly conduct. Shirley sticks his recorder out the

window and the numbers on it flicker up and down as the roar washes over it. Eventually, the recorder caps out at 91 decibels, which the CDC estimates as roughly in between the output of a lawnmower and a chainsaw.

This level of noise, the CDC writes, can cause hearing damage after two hours of exposure. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration advises that employees can only work in 90-decibel settings for eight hours a day and are required to wear ear protection. And Texas state penal code deems any noise above 85 decibels unreasonable. Over the course of 2024, Shirley has recorded a noise above 85 decibels coming from the plant more than 35 times.

Technically there is federal mandate to regulate noise, which stems from the 1972 Noise Control Act—but it was essentially de-funded during the Reagan administration. This leaves noise regulation up to states, cities, and counties. New York City, for instance, has a noise code which officially caps restaurant music and air conditioning at 42 decibels (as measured within a nearby residence). Texas's 85 decibels, in contrast, is by far the loudest state limit in the nation, says Les Blomberg, the executive director of the nonprofit Noise Pollution Clearinghouse. "It is a level that protects noise polluters, not the noise polluted," he says.

Ultimately, Constable John Shirley can't stop the machines, because there is no state law forcing the operator of a noisy machine to turn it off. When Shirley writes a ticket for disorderly conduct, it merely triggers a $500 fine, as opposed to jail time or another punitive measure. Hood County can't even pass a relevant noise ordinance law: only Texas cities, not counties, have the ability to do so.

Shirley's tickets now add up to a theoretical fine of $17,500 and counting. But that number is chump change for Marathon, which earned $165 million in revenue in the first quarter of 2024 and

bragged to shareholders about “record earnings.” And the company is fighting back: They have requested a jury trial to overturn this low-level misdemeanor, which starts July 8. At a pre-trial hearing in May, the company arrived with a full team of lawyers. “To bring two or three full-suited attorneys to a justice of the peace court citation issue: I’ve never seen that,” says Patrick Ryan, a local lawyer who has consulted with Granbury community members about the possibility of a civil nuisance lawsuit. “They’re coming with both barrels.”

A representative for Marathon declined several interview requests with TIME, saying that the company would refrain from commenting publicly until Constable Shirley’s “unwarranted” citations against the plant had been resolved. As Shirley sits outside the facility recording the pulsating drone, his nostrils flare, and his voice rises with impatience. “When I was a murder investigator and someone killed somebody, I had the law on my side,” he says. “With this, it’s like I’m swatting at a rhinoceros.” As he reads the decibel levels on his sound meter, a security guard from the facility steps out of his car and snaps pictures of Shirley’s truck in the dark.

The residents of Granbury feel they've been lied to. In 2023, the site's previous operators, US Bitcoin Corp, constructed a wall around the mine almost 2,000 feet long and claimed that they had "solved the concern." But Shirley says that the complaints from the community about the sound actually increased when the wall was nearing completion last fall. Since Marathon bought the facility outright in December, its hash rate, or potential computational power expended, has doubled. A Marathon representative, however, says that their rate of energy consumption has decreased from 225 megawatts of capacity to 115 since the company took ownership of the site.

As complaints mounted at the top of 2024, the company contended it did not know about the extent of the sound issues. “We are now the owners, but we are not the operator. USBTC is still the operator. Prior to the purchase, we were not aware of the noise issues,” a Marathon representative wrote to TIME in an email in January. “Now that we own the site and have been made aware of the issue, we are working to gather information and address the situation.”

But documents show that Marathon provided a $67 million loan in May 2021 to the site’s first formal owners, Compute North, to build out the site’s infrastructure, and Marathon’s purchase agreement of the site, dated December 15, 2023, clearly mentions the existence of the $1.9 million “sound wall” built several months prior.

As community complaints reached a fever pitch earlier this year, Marathon held a meet-and-greet on March 29—Good Friday, which rubbed many people in Granbury’s deeply religious community the wrong way. For the handful of people that did show up, Marathon laid out a noise mitigation plan which included turning off idle fans, moving some containers into liquid cooling by April 2024, and installing vegetation and trees around the perimeter.

In an emailed statement to TIME in late June, Marathon said that 58 air-cooled containers have been removed from the site, and pointed to a roadmap which vows to convert 50% of the site’s containers to immersion cooling by the end of the year. A representative for Constellation Energy, which owns the power plant that Marathon connects to, said in a statement that the company is “staying updated on [Marathon’s] efforts to respond to the concerns raised by neighbors… We will continue working closely with Marathon as they take actions to reduce their impacts.”

Marathon says that immersion cooling, in which computers are placed in tubs of oil, will largely fix the noise problem. But the

technique has potential drawbacks, including the difficulty of regularly performing maintenance on a computer submerged in oil, says Kent Draper, the chief commercial officer of the Bitcoin and AI data center operator IREN. “Although it’s been around for a long time in the industry, it’s just not that widely adopted,” he says.

Even Marathon expressed skepticism about its ability to convert its many machines to immersion technology in a 2023 year-end SEC Report. “There is a risk we may not succeed in developing or deploying immersion-cooling at such a large scale to achieve sufficient cooling performance,” the company wrote.

In an email to TIME, Marathon wrote: “While we are confident in our ability to scale this new technology, it is our obligation, as a publicly traded company, to identify any potential risks from a financial perspective.”

Granbury community members are exploring political and legal avenues. A petition against the mine in Granbury and its “excessive and unhealthy noise” garnered 800 in-person signatures, and was brought by representatives to the Texas Republican state

convention in San Antonio in May, with the hopes of gaining statewide support for some sort of ban. But two local elected officials, Nannette Samuelson and Shannon Wolf, say they tried to take the floor to stump for the issue, but weren't given time to speak. Samuelson's goal is now to pass resolutions in commissioners court prompting state senators to draft legislation.

Any statewide legislation is sure to hit significant headwinds, because the very idea of regulation runs contrary to many Texans' political beliefs. "As constitutional conservatives, they have taken our core values and used that against us," says Demetra Conrad, a city council member in the nearby town of Glen Rose.

Some community members are also exploring a potential civil nuisance suit against Marathon, in which they would seek an injunction against the company and/or damages. One affected woman, Cheryl Shadden—who has medically-documented hearing loss—has retained the nonprofit Earthjustice to examine potential litigative routes. Deputy managing attorney Mandy DeRoche says Earthjustice is exploring the possibility of taking its own sound readings near the site. The nonprofit has been involved in several lawsuits against crypto mining companies across the country.

"Historically, Bitcoin miners go to the cheapest source of electricity with the least amount of regulation, and they do the cheapest thing possible," DeRoche says. "It's one of the reasons why noise pollution from crypto mining tends to be so much worse than traditionally-operated data center operators."

As Bitcoin continues to gain value, miners are building progressively bigger operations, causing gas plants and other fossil fuel emitters to spring back into action. It is unclear whether states even have the energy capacity to support this new demand: In June, Texas lieutenant governor Dan Patrick tweeted that Texans "will ultimately pay the price" for the growth of crypto and AI data centers, writing that they "produce very few jobs compared to the

incredible demands they place on our grid." Regardless, Bitcoin lobbying groups are attempting to pass pro-Bitcoin-mining bills in state legislatures across the country, which would exempt similar operations from noise ordinances and local zoning laws. People have reported similar symptoms near Bitcoin mines in Arkansas and Williston, North Dakota. Ultimately, Granbury is just one canary of several in the proverbial mine.

In the week before this article's publication, two more Granbury residents suffered from acute health crises. The first was Tom Weeks, the owner of the hyperventilating dog. On July 2, Weeks, 64, rose after another sleepless night of listening to the mine and realized he couldn't breathe. He was rushed to a Fort Worth hospital, where he was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism—a blood clot blocking his lungs—and hooked up to an oxygen tank. Weeks was supposed to testify against Marathon in the jury trial, but is now physically unable to do so. "This whole thing is an eye opener for me into profit over people," Weeks says in a phone call from the ICU.

The second person affected was the five-year-old Indigo Rosenkranz. On July 6, she suffered from a seizure and was taken to the emergency room, before being routed to a childrens' hospital in Fort Worth for further testing. Her mother, Sarah, was terrified and now feels she has no choice but to get a second mortgage to move away from the mine. "A second one would really be a lot," she says. "God will provide, though. He always sees us through."

Correction, July 16

The original version of this story misstated when Marathon started operating the Granbury Bitcoin mine. It bought the mine in December 2023 but did not start operating it until early 2024. The story has also been updated to clarify how the mine's energy consumption has changed.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6982015

The Rise of a New Kind of Parenting Guru

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.

There is an art to laying down a newborn baby. Or, rather, a science. The American Academy of Pediatrics will tell you that babies need to sleep swaddled, on their backs, in an empty bassinet. But what if your infant abhors a crib? If you buy a newborn course offered by Cara Dumaplin, the former NICU and labor-and-delivery nurse who bills herself as a baby and toddler sleep expert, as I did when my daughter was 6 weeks old, you will get a video demonstration of how to make the dreaded chest-to-bassinet transfer. In it, a swaddled baby lies across Dumaplin's forearm, head resting in her palm. Dumaplin's thumb holds a pacifier in the child's mouth. Dumaplin doesn't rock the baby to sleep but rather moves her wrist to subtly jiggle the head back and forth. When the child's eyes begin to flutter, Dumaplin slips her into a crib. She then removes her forearm like a spatula from beneath a pancake.

Dumaplin, a mother of four, likens what she does across her platforms to the work she did translating medical jargon for new moms in the hospital. “When the doctor comes and says, ‘I think we have a prolapsed cord and need a C-section …’ I’m putting it in layman’s terms, like ‘Your baby is telling us he’s in trouble. But I’ve got you. I’m going to walk you step by step through this,’” she says. “I just took what I had been doing for years in the delivery room and did that online. Like ‘These are the recommendations that your pediatrician is telling you in the office. Let me show you how to do it practically.’”

And many, many people would like to learn: Dumaplin’s Instagram account Taking Cara Babies now has 2.7 million followers. But she is hardly the only mom on social media using her professional know-how to share—and sell—parental advice. She’s part of a wave of women marrying the authenticity of a fellow parent with the credentials of a Ph.D., RN, or other distinguished degree, and leveraging Instagram and TikTok to launch newsletters, podcasts, video courses, products, and books. There’s registered dietitian nutritionist Jennifer Anderson (Kids Eat in Color, 2 million followers on Instagram); former kindergarten and first-grade teacher Susie Allison (Busy Toddler, 2.3 M); Kristin Gallant, who has a degree in maternal and child education, and licensed marriage and family therapist Deena Margolin (Big Little Feelings, 3.5 M); clinical psychologist Jazmine McCoy (The Mom Psychologist, 848 K); pelvic-floor physical therapist Sara Reardon (The Vagina Whisperer, 607 K); pediatrician Mona Amin (PedsDocTalk, 343 K); pediatric speech therapists Carly Tulloch and Katie Sterbenz (Wee Talkers, 132 K); postpartum and neonatal nurse and lactation counselor Karrie Locher (786 K); registered dietitian nutritionist Megan McNamee and occupational therapist Judy Delaware (Feeding Littles, 1.8 M); and more. Several have achieved fame offline as well: Becky Kennedy, the clinical psychologist better known as Dr. Becky (2.8 M), was interviewed by Oprah. Brown University economist Emily Oster (402 K), who authored the best-

selling pregnancy-data book *Expecting Better*, appeared on *The Daily Show.*

Read More: *How Dr. Becky Became the Millennial Parenting Whisperer*

If that list feels overwhelming, imagine them all in your feed, giving you tips on everything from dislodging boogers to negotiating over screen time. “When you’re a new mother and exhausted, the last thing you want to do is read a 325-page parenting book,” says Sara Petersen, author of *Momfluenced: Inside the Maddening, Picture-Perfect World of Mommy Influencer Culture*. “It’s really tantalizing to believe that if I just spend five minutes on an expert’s account, that could make a difference.”

But it’s never just five minutes, is it? And when it comes to the high-stakes job of raising a tiny human, it’s never just a mindless scroll. For an anxious generation already trying to optimize every aspect of their lives, like reading dozens of reviews before purchasing *the best* air purifier, it’s easy to fall down a dizzying rabbit hole of advice and wind up feeling more exhausted than enlightened. “Our parents could go to the library or get a referral from your pediatrician for a specialist. That’s it. They didn’t have thousands of experts living in their back pockets at all times,” Petersen says. “The immediacy and availability of the information encourages us to believe that we’re negligent if we don’t pursue it.”

The mothers wielding professional expertise mean well. They want to help fellow parents for whom answers are elusive—even if in the aggregate, it can be a bit much. But stressed-out parents are also a major market. Dumaplin, who began streaming her classes in 2015, now has a website full of courses and a team of 40 to help answer parents’ questions. When I ask just how big her business is, she sighs, emphasizing that her Will I Ever Sleep Again? newborn class still costs $79, despite the rising cost of living. “I will tell you we have over 500,000 families at Taking Cara Babies,” she says after a

moment of hesitation, a figure she later corrects to 700,000. “You can do the math.”

For at least the past half-century, there have been two key sources of parental advice: the Experts and the Moms. Pediatricians like Dr. Spock published best-selling books that parents treated as childcare bibles—outlining how much weight a baby should gain and what to do in case of a fever. For slightly squishier problems, like which noise machine to buy when you’re tired of shushing, friends and, in more recent years, internet-famous moms offered solutions.

But those two sources of information existed largely in separate spheres. Sure, the pediatricians would sometimes tout that they were dads too (and they were almost always dads). They might even invent products like the Snoo, a $1,695 smart crib from the doctor behind *Happiest Baby on the Block*. But they were not answering questions in real time via Instagram stories. They didn’t make lists of products to add to registries or write out scripts of what to say to a toddler during a tantrum.

Mommy bloggers and later momfluencers—terms that can feel dismissive and are not universally adored by those grouped into these categories—shared stories about picky eating or the isolation of motherhood. They offered a window into their own (often beautiful, sometimes messy) homes as a way to establish a relationship with their followers, but their advice was typically rooted in experience, not professional training.

The rise of the Mom Expert speaks to the desire for both credentials and connection. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of these accounts saw their numbers skyrocket during the pandemic. “Parents felt so alone and like they were going crazy,” says McCoy, the Mom Psychologist, whose YouTube channel offers guidance on concerns like aggressive or clingy behavior. She still hears from parents who sign up for her Positive Discipline Academy as a

stopgap while their children wait months to see a therapist in person. “The system is completely broken,” she says.

“I only will partner with a brand that has a product that I would recommend to my patients.”

MONA AMIN, PEDSDOCTALK

Even doctors who kids see more regularly have to rush through appointments. “How much time do you get with your pediatrician? Six minutes?” asks Dumaplin, who is married to a pediatrician. “You better have your questions listed. God forbid that baby cries in the office, and four of your six minutes are cut into, right? But here I’m accessible on your phone. And relatable like ‘Oh, OK, so when Cara’s babies were young, she didn’t have it all together. She’s a nurse, and this was hard for her. Maybe it’s OK that it’s hard for me.’”

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

Big Little Feelings, another pandemic breakout, began after Gallant herself became exasperated by what the Instagram algorithm was feeding her. “It was a lot of perfect little sandwiches cut into shapes and matching outfits,” she says. When she Googled for tips on handling her small kids’ big emotions, “it was really high-level, really clinical, really buttoned-up. There was nothing that was fast and actionable.”

She began texting questions to her best friend Margolin, who studied under Dan Siegel (the famous professor of psychiatry who wrote *No Drama Discipline*). They turned their conversations into social media posts, courses, and, last year, a podcast called *After Bedtime* that debuted at No. 1 on the iTunes charts. The goal is to present science-backed parenting strategies in a way that feels digestible. “In order to have access to this type of information, you needed to have at least a college degree, maybe a master’s degree,” says Gallant. “You needed to have hours at the end of your day to read this information. You couldn’t be walking off a long shift at Walmart and have no help and be a regular person and have access to this information. They don’t necessarily need to hear about the amygdala firing off … though there is a neuroscience section in our course, if you really want to know.”

On an early *After Bedtime* episode titled “My Marriage Sucks After Having Kids—Deena’s on the Brink of Divorce,” Margolin vented about her husband’s working during his parental leave and mused on whether they should separate. “Showing that we are human is so important,” Margolin says. “My husband and I went into it feeling like we are a team and can tackle anything that comes our way—and then, surprise, we’re on different pages at times. We had to really work through the struggle of how to parent together, which a lot of people go through but nobody really talks about. All you see on social media is the happy, smiling photos of couples.” Lately, she’s been posting about trying to get pregnant

again. Gallant, meanwhile, recently shared a picture of a pill in her hand to reveal she'd started taking an antidepressant.

Every Mom Expert must decide how much to disclose about her life—some show their kids, others emoji-out their faces—but given that motherhood is key to their social media presence, and there's a premium on authenticity online, it must be at least enough to build trust with their followers. As a result, people form parasocial relationships with them, feeling like they're friends even though they've never met.

Such perceived intimacy can be lucrative since brands want to work with figures who have devoted followings. Not only have almost 215,000 kids potty trained through Big Little Feelings' course, which costs $34 a pop, Margolin and Gallant have partnered with companies like Fisher-Price. At one point during our conversation, they start singing the praises of Boll & Branch sheets. "My husband literally won't sleep in anything else," gushes Margolin. "Well, he *is* a Virgo," Gallant replies, as if recording an ad for one of their sponsors. She adds that they would never work with a brand they weren't "obsessed with."

Different Mom Experts set different standards when it comes to sponsorships. Dumaplin, who posts affiliate links to items like sleep sacks and blackout curtains, gets a small cut every time someone buys something. But she draws the line at creating sponsored content, which is how most influencers make their money. "I don't want to say this, but I was offered basically a $1 million contract this year for a baby product. And I turned it down," she says. "If I took money from a brand, how does a parent know that I think this is the best swaddle if that company paid me?"

Amin, who goes by Dr. Mona, now sees patients one day a week and spends the rest of her time producing social media content, YouTube videos, and a podcast. She lists 38 products, from baby

clothes to breast pumps, on her site along with discount codes. “I only will partner with a brand that has a product that I would recommend to my patients,” she says.

But the downside of having so many people feel like they know you is that quite a few also form opinions about both your child-rearing philosophy and your life choices. There’s an entire forum on Reddit called r/parentsnark dedicated to mocking mothers in this space, complaining when their tactics don’t work, and venting about the sometimes unrealistic practices they espouse. A weekly thread devoted to the Big Little Feelings women dissects their lives, accusing them of manufacturing drama for the sake of content and questioning how they spend their money. They also receive some pushback in the comments on their Instagram account. “It’s usually just like ‘Wow, your eyebrows look really sh-tty today’ or ‘Wow, your voice is just really annoying,’” says Gallant. “It’s just one of those things that comes with the territory that isn’t the most fun thing. But the good news is it’s rarely about our work.” As Petersen wrote in *Momfluenced*, some of this criticism is rooted in anger over mothers’ monetizing the traditionally unpaid labor of parenting. Some of it is the unfortunate cost of being a woman on the internet.

Anderson, of Kids Eat in Color, started her account in 2017 after her son wasn’t gaining weight and “fell off the growth chart.” She was making adorable bento-box lunches to get him to eat, cutting fruits into star shapes, and a friend suggested she post the pictures on Instagram. “It turned into a really time-consuming hobby,” she says. Eventually she created courses like her Reverse Picky Eating Program as well as recipes and printable meal plans. Now she finds herself the target of criticism from two factions. “I get people who say, ‘If you give your kids sugar, you’re going to give them cancer,’ and people who say, ‘If you tell your kid they can only have two pieces of candy, you’re going to give them an eating disorder,’” she says. “My life’s ambition at this point is to figure out how to run

my business without social media. The comments are not as nice as when I started." In June she became the subject of a thread on the subreddit when she posted watermelon in her Instagram Stories on Juneteenth. "I clearly had not done all my research about Juneteenth and was 100% unaware of the historical piece. I thought I was pulling a food out of a list of foods from a book I read to my kids about the holiday," she says. "It was a complete mistake on my part."

A certain corner of the internet also flew into a tizzy when it was unearthed, in 2021, that Dumaplin had contributed—about $1,000 total from 2016 to 2019—to Donald J. Trump for President Inc. and the Make America Great Again Committee. Dumaplin declined to comment on the donations. When I ask about criticism more broadly, she says, "I very much care about what people think of me. I wish I cared less. I do. But I care about people and I care about their opinions. I care about their feelings, and that's who I am."

Like many a millennial parent, I lived in fear of Getting It Wrong, so I ordered Dumaplin's course preemptively rather than out of desperation. (The head-jiggling trick only sort of worked for me: I'd rock the baby for half an hour just to have her wake up in the bassinet half an hour after I put her down. But who's to say if that was due to the instruction or my execution or my baby liking to power nap?) My daughter, now 8 months old, is a terrific sleeper, often doing an 11-hour stretch in her crib, though sharing that will certainly doom us to a sleep regression. I, on the other hand, do not always sleep through the night. When I wake up with an urgent question about my baby, I use an AI tool on economist Emily Oster's website to offer me a research-backed response. Dewey, as the bot is called, provides citations to Oster's books and blogs, as well as the original studies themselves.

"Do I think this generation is almost paralyzed by all the information? Yes."

CARA DUMAPLIN, TAKING CARA BABIES

"There are more college-educated parents today than there were in the past, so they feel that they have the capacity or the knowledge to collect information and figure out what's best for their kids," says Kei Nomaguchi, a professor of sociology at Bowling Green State University who studies parenthood.

Read More: *Emily Oster Still Thinks Data Can Help Ease (Some) Parental Anxiety*

The question is whether all this information is helpful or ultimately overwhelming. "Parents are now responsible for being experts in so many different areas. You should be your child's registered dietitian and occupational therapist and literacy coach and sleep instructor," says Anderson. "And if your child has a problem, it's your fault."

Dumaplin started her business to ease anxiety. After she had her fourth child, she began working in an ob-gyn's office where she'd treat women at their six-week postpartum appointment. She kept hearing the same refrain: "The baby won't sleep." She wished she could go home with the parents—and then she did, starting with in-home coaching and, as demand grew, group sessions, and, finally, online classes. Over time, she's watched parental anxiety grow. Now with TikTok, she says, parents are fed a new piece of baby-rearing advice every minute: "It's information overload. This expert says this, but this expert says if I don't do it their way, I'm going to damage my baby. Do I think this generation is almost paralyzed by all the information? Yes."

Or as Amin puts it, "We are so obsessed with information and doing it right and what the data show—and we're also obsessed with not f-cking up our kids to a point that we're actually going to f-ck them up."

While every generation has wanted to get parenting right, millennials' anxiety may be motivated by socioeconomics. We are the first generation in a long time not finding greater financial success than our parents. "The middle class and upper-middle class used to think their kids would be OK—they would end up upper-middle class," says Nomaguchi. "I think today middle-class parents aren't really sure whether their kids will make it because of increased competition in the labor force globally."

It sounds dramatic to say we're worrying about our children's success when trying to get them to nap, but when you repeatedly read that sleep boosts brain development, suddenly their college-admissions chances seem tied to how many hours they slumbered. That notion is fueled by images on social media of parents raising seemingly perfect kids, each post of a child eating asparagus a reminder of how you failed to get something green into your kid that day.

The truth is sometimes there's simply no right answer. Take baby-led weaning, the feeding method du jourin which parents let babies hand-feed themselves solids rather than spoon-feeding them purees. "Obviously, I contribute to this, but I literally get the question 'If I didn't do baby-led weaning, have I ruined my child?' an astonishing number of times," says Anderson. "It really doesn't matter."

Dumaplin, too, insists there's no tried-and-true formula. "If what you're doing is working, you don't have to change it," she says. "You are the expert of your baby." •

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6997589

Why We All Have a Stake in Twisters' Success

Stephanie Zacharek is the film critic at TIME. She is the recipient of a Newswomen's Club of New York award, and was a 2015 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

No one makes a movie in a vacuum. Even filmmakers working with the most micro of microbudgets want their films to be seen; movies are, after all, a mode of communication, a way of celebrating shared experiences or locating common ground amid differences. It's no wonder filmmakers who make a big splash with a small film often want to stretch their horizons by working on a larger canvas, with a fatter budget and flashier stars, all in the service of speaking to *us*.

One of the surprise indie hits of 2020 was Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari*, an intimate, semi-autobiographical drama about a Korean American family struggling to establish a farm in rural Arkansas. *Minari* earned six Academy Award nominations; one of its stars, Youn Yuh-jung—as a swearing, card-playing Korean grandma—won for Best Supporting Actress. And its success brought Chung a golden opportunity: this summer sees the release of *Twisters*, his reimagining of Jan de Bont's nature-gone-wild thriller *Twister*, from 1996. In *Twisters*, Daisy Edgar-Jones and Glen Powell play rival storm chasers tearing through Oklahoma's Tornado Alley—though it turns out that even though she's a serious-minded researcher and he's a YouTube star, they have more in common than they think.

Twisters is a movie with a $200 million budget; *Minari* cost $2 million. That makes Chung just the latest in a long line of directors who have grabbed the chance to leap from low-key indie success to blockbuster attention grabber. More broadly, though, a big swing like this is a test of how we moviegoers feel about filmmakers as artists. Everyone loves an underdog hero. But what happens when a filmmaker sets their sights on a bigger project, one designed to reach a wider audience—and, ideally, to net a handsome payoff? Is that selling out or stepping up? And in a climate where movies designed to be viewed on the big screen face an uncertain future, is it an act of hope or an exercise in futility?

People who watch lots of movies tend to treasure indie filmmakers. Unbowed by big-studio expectations, they're often the people doing the most interesting work. That's why we feel stung when a filmmaker appears to be selling out. Suddenly, somehow, they're no longer on "our" side. As consumers of culture and everything else, we may be motivated by money—who isn't, to some degree? But we expect purity from creative people.

In the world of moviemaking, that's an idea that could hold us back—especially if we want smarter, better mainstream movies. Let's take Rian Johnson, whose first feature, the 2005 teenage noir *Brick*, earned enough acclaim to allow him to make movies on an increasingly larger scale. On the ladder of big-ticket potential crowd pleasers, you can't get much higher than a *Star Wars* film, and Johnson got his chance with the 2017 *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Last Jedi*. But hardcore fans of the series rebelled. Many felt he'd taken the story and the characters in the wrong direction. More insidious were fans' complaints about what they called, to use a slippery and increasingly sinister word, the story's wokeness. As Emily St. James wrote in a 2017 *Vox* article parsing fans' complaints, the movie's "millennial good guys are a young white woman, a black man, a woman of Asian descent, and a Latino man, while its millennial bad guys are two white dudes." That didn't sit

well, she said, with a fandom that “has long been presided over by white guys.”

[video id=Z5YHauY4 autostart="viewable"]

Though *The Last Jedi* performed well enough at the box office, it’s generally treated by fans as a *Star Wars* fail. But it’s a pretty terrific movie, an emotionally generous work with both a sense of humor about itself and a sense of joy. In other words, Johnson’s sensibilities shine through the template laid out by George Lucas nearly a half-century ago. If you care about the greater landscape of film, that’s exactly what you should want when a thoughtful director takes on a franchise property.

But the realities of modern big-ticket filmmaking aren’t for the faint of heart. Chloé Zhao’s austere, low-budget *Nomadland* won three Oscars in 2021, including Best Picture and Best Director. (The third award, for Best Actress, went to the movie’s star, Frances McDormand.) By that time, Zhao’s next movie, the Marvel entry *Eternals*—heavy on green-screen special effects and featuring a roster of stars including Gemma Chan, Angelina Jolie, and Salma Hayek—was already in the works. But when it was finally released, in November 2021, neither critics nor Marvel fans liked it. Part of the problem, Zhao suggested in a 2022 *Empire* interview, was that amid the pandemic, audiences weren’t in the mood for what she described as a film “about existential crisis, both for humanity and God.” That may sound like the understatement of the century, but Zhao was onto something. The ideas she cares about, and the intimate style of filmmaking that’s clearly her forte, were quite obviously at odds with the Marvel machine—though that’s Marvel’s problem, not hers. Sometimes indie filmmakers who stretch their wings learn plenty about the kinds of movies they *don’t* want to make.

For indie filmmakers who haven’t won an Oscar, a big movie can serve as a calling card in the greater world. Colin Trevorrow made

his debut with the charming 2012 sci-fi comedy *Safety Not Guaranteed*, though his *Jurassic World* movies are what made him famous. And some filmmakers build a career by making increasingly ambitious films over several years. In the early 2000s, Greta Gerwig was one of DIY cinema maestro Joe Swanberg's go-to performers. She hopscotched from mumblecore to directing the megahit *Barbie*, with *Lady Bird* and *Little Women* in between.

Always, though, the big question is this: Can a director with a light touch, like Chung, bring his special sensibility to a bigger project—one that comes with outsize expectations attached? Studios—in *Twisters'* case, Universal—have something to gain by hiring a Lee Isaac Chung to direct a big movie. His name brings cachet to a film that might otherwise be considered just another workaday blockbuster. And depending on how high your expectations are, *Twisters* is an engaging enough summer diversion. Chung knows he's making a monster movie, one in which the chaos of nature reigns: he hints at this in big ways and small ones, with dashes of

wit. (One tornado whirls toward a small-town movie theater that happens to have programmed a classic-monster-movie festival.) The special effects are regal and terrifying: at one point, twin twisters show up on the horizon, slender and dust-clouded at the bottom but fanning out, like Tiffany lily vases, at the top. There's a great deal of driving, as the storm chasers zip around in search of their next conquest, and there are many, many shots of debris flying into the air and then, dangerously, clattering back to earth. That's the reality of tornadoes; *Twisters* captures it, in places even incorporating footage of real-life twisters.

There are human stars, too, of course. Edgar-Jones' Kate, much like Helen Hunt's Jo in the original, is an Oklahoma-born weather scientist who has always dreamed of finding a way to lessen the severity of tornadoes and thus save lives. She meets her match in Powell's swaggering Tyler, a cocky former rodeo rider from Arkansas—though in reality, he too is a science nerd who seeks to save lives.

Chung is an earnest filmmaker, and this is one area where his ideals may be a liability: it's not enough for these characters just to obsessively chase down crazy weather; they must also spend the proper amount of time expressing angst over the damage it can do. *Twisters* is kind of a sweet movie, even as it invites us to relish the usual disaster-film stuff, like bodies being cruelly flung into the air and sucked into oblivion. Chung can't fully resolve those two elements.

But there's no doubt about his love for the movie's setting. *Minari* was drawn from Chung's experience: when he was a kid, his Korean-born parents moved the family from Atlanta to a small farm in rural Arkansas. *Minari* was shot in Oklahoma, as *Twisters* was, but it's a corner of the world in which Chung feels completely at home. Even with its CGI'ed tornadoes, the landscape still feels visceral and vital, a wide-open expanse of red-dirt roads and skies streaked with melancholy-elegant gray clouds.

From an economic standpoint, of course it matters whether Twisters—which is expected to bring in $50 million to $55 million when it opens in North America this weekend—is a hit or not: you can hate the monolith known as the industry, but the sad reality is that anyone who cares about seeing movies on the big screen has a stake in that industry's survival. At one point Kate stands in the center of a wind-ruffled plain, having detected an approaching storm. "Man," she says, "I love Oklahoma!" That's a big sentiment, just made to play out on a big screen. With *Twisters*, Chung puts all his faith in the big-screen idea, and in the staggering beauty of the open sky. Maybe that's a gamble. Or maybe it's just a way of looking up and out, a way of stretching the boundaries of what you thought you could do. And you can't put a price tag on that.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6999207

Netflix's Audacious Riff on The Decameron Is Tons of Fun. But Is It Really The Decameron?

Judy Berman is the TV critic at TIME. Along with reviewing current television, she writes about the ways in which entertainment and pop culture intersect with our larger social and political realities. Her TIME essay on *Ted Lasso* and modern masculinity won a New York Press Club award in 2022.

In the annus horribilis of 2020, as COVID-19 ravaged the world, a generation that had yet to experience a cataclysm of precisely this nature and scale turned to art for insight into how we might survive it. Contemporary speculative fiction about lethal pathogens, from Ling Ma's novel *Severance* to Steven Soderbergh's movie *Contagion*, surged in popularity. Readers also turned to tales of pestilence past: Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. But no dusty tome got a bigger boost than Giovanni Boccaccio's early-Renaissance classic *The Decameron*. Virtual book clubs sprung up to dissect it. The New York *Times* commissioned stories from the likes of Margaret Atwood and Tommy Orange for its own update, *The Decameron Project*. "Six Centuries Later, *The Decameron* Is

Suddenly the Book of the Moment," reported that self-proclaimed arbiter of relevance, *Vogue*.

Set amid the Black Death that decimated Europe in the mid-14th century, Boccaccio's masterpiece follows 10 young nobles fleeing a plague outbreak in Florence that would ultimately reduce the city's population by half. To pass the time in their rural idyll, they tell the stories that make up the bulk of the book—one apiece for 10 days, hence the title. The consensus interpretation of *The Decameron* has long been that it illustrates the unique power of storytelling to buoy humanity through history's most devastating moments. The author Rivka Galchen sums up this reading in her introduction to *The Decameron Project*: "Reading stories in difficult times is a way to understand those times, and also a way to persevere through them."

Kathleen Jordan, the creator of Netflix's *The Decameron*, came away from her pandemic-era reading of Boccaccio with a very different understanding. What if, her black comedy proposes, the book's true timeless message is that, whether they're Florentine aristocrats in 1348 or Manhattan financiers in 2020, the privileged will always blithely abandon their less fortunate neighbors when the plague comes to town? Jordan has stripped *The Decameron* of its stories, choosing instead to riff on the frame narrative. Somehow, her irreverence pays off. As successful as it is on its own terms, the series raises the question of which derivative works, devoured by platforms hungry to capitalize on trending intellectual property (especially if it predates the advent of copyright law), even deserve to be called adaptations.

The Decameron without stories sounds about as promising as *The Inferno* without circles of hell, but if anyone can pull off an impossible premise, it's Jordan and her fellow executive producer, Jenji Kohan. With *Orange Is the New Black*, Kohan reshaped a middle-class white writer's prison memoir into a dark yet vibrant ensemble dramedy of carceral injustice starring the Black and brown women disproportionately ensnared in that system. Jordan and Kohan's frustratingly short-lived *Teenage Bounty Hunters* proved that, when executed with enough warmth and wit, even the stupidest-sounding concept can yield a wonderful show.

The same audacious humor suffuses *The Decameron*. Like the original, the series opens in the corpse-strewn wasteland of 1348 Florence, as a handful of nobles and their servants prepare to skip town to wait out the plague at a luxurious country villa. The characters share names with Boccaccio's brigade, but little else. Zosia Mamet and *Derry Girls* star Saoirse-Monica Jackson are perfectly paired as Pampinea, a bossy 28-year-old so desperate to marry, she's accepted a proposal from the villa's owner sight unseen, and her weirdly loyal maid, Misia. Tindaro (Douggie McMeekin), a pompous hypochondriac who has just inherited his family's fortune, arrives with his hot physician, Dioneo (Amar Chadha-Patel) in tow. Canny Panfilo (Karan Gill) and pious Neifile

(Lou Gala) are the married lovebirds—but neither can stop staring at Dioneo. Then there's bratty Filomena (Jessica Plummer) and her long-suffering servant Licisca (*Sex Education* standout Tanya Reynolds), whose mistress gets her to leave the deathbed of Filomena's own father by claiming he's already dead.

Upon arriving at the villa, the party finds their host absent but his accommodating steward (the great Tony Hale) and surly, noble-hating cook (Leila Farzad, a highlight of the season's second half) at their service. No matter; the rich kids are determined to have a fun holiday even as the plague shreds the fabric of civilization. "We are here to eat and drink and move into a bright new future," announces the delusional Pampinea—who, as the ostensible soon-to-be lady of the manor, eagerly and a bit dictatorially assumes the role of hostess.

That is precisely what they do for a while, guzzling wine and indulging in the kind of innocently illicit sexcapades that Boccaccio's virtuous characters only told tall tales about. (Like most streaming series, *The Decameron*'s episodes and season are a smidge longer than they need to be.) As their employees labor to satisfy the bosses' absurd whims, the nobles seize the moment of societal flux as an opportunity for self-discovery. "If the pestilence has taught us anything," says a character trying to lure Panfilo out

of the closet, “it’s that we’re to choose the parts of ourselves we wish to keep and the parts we wish to throw away.”

It’s a great philosophy if you’re confident you’ll survive. But, as viewers who’ve lived through the past four years already know, the assumption that wealth and seclusion alone are infallible defenses against a pandemic attacking society from all angles is hopelessly naive. In truth, the villa has never been a safe refuge, and its gates are useless against not just the infected but also the marauding mobs it has empowered. One great thrill of Jordan’s lively, earthy, and hilarious *Decameron* is watching the spoiled discover that, for the filthy horde circling their oasis, they are the spoils.

Is the show really *The Decameron*, though? In fairness, it would be virtually impossible to adapt the 860-page, 100-story volume in full. When admirers borrow from it, as Shakespeare did with *All’s Well That Ends Well* and, just a few years ago, filmmaker Jeff Baena did in *The Little Hours*, they usually appropriate just a story for two. English translations of the book have often been heavily abridged, while even relatively faithful adaptations like the Italian auteur Pier Paolo Pasolini’s 1971 film *The Decameron* depict just a small selection of its tales. Still, there’s something about the idea of taking Boccaccio’s title but leaving his stories that doesn’t sit right.

Hollywood’s eagerness to slap a familiar, if unearned, title on every project is one red flag. Yet Jordan has a solid justification for her

approach. While the brief stories didn't strike her as right for TV, she has said that she "loved the armature and skeleton" around them, "this idea of a group of wealthy people who think that they can escape a pandemic." It's through this COVID-informed interpretation that she accesses the soul of Boccaccio's work. Her *Decameron* doesn't just reference the famous story where an adulterer hides from his lover's husband in a barrel; it also captures the author's ribald sense of humor, his scorn for a corrupt Church, the glee with which his characters scheme and transgress, his prescient insight about a pandemic's potential to remake society.

It isn't fidelity to the letter, or even the basic structure, of the source material that makes a worthy adaptation. What matters more is that the retelling embodies the spirit of the work that inspired it. In the best cases, among which I'd surely count Netflix's *Decameron*, it also challenges received wisdom about that work. As Licisca, the show's sharpest character, notes once the villa has begun its descent into chaos: "Independence is the greatest luxury." Her revelation applies as much to a 21st century TV creator adapting classic literature as it does to a servant fleeing her tyrannical mistress while the plague consumes their city.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/7001262

The 36 Best Celebrity Memoirs

Stars may or may not be like us, but there is one thing they all seem to have in common: they love writing about their lives. From silent film legend Charlie Chaplin to Nickelodeon child star Jennette McCurdy, Hollywood autobiographies have been a thing for generations now. But in the last few years, publishing has seen a celebrity memoir boom in which chart-topping pop stars and Brat Packers alike are more than willing to bare their souls for our amusement. To much success; last year, Prince Harry's *Spare* became the fastest-selling non-fiction book of all time, according to Guinness World Records, besting previous record holder Michelle Obama and her 2018 memoir, *Becoming*.

With so many celebrity memoirs to choose from, TIME has put together a list of the best, which includes Elliot Page's coming out story, Stanley Tucci's food-focused walk down memory lane, and Carrie Fisher's hilarious account of what it's really like being a nepo-baby 50 years before the term went viral.

However, "celebrity" isn't just code for famous actors; this unranked list features celebrated performers from all walks of

entertainment life. There are four EGOT winners—Viola Davis, Mel Brooks, Rita Moreno and Elton John—included here. As well as books from a couple of renowned athletes, including Andre Agassi's much-talked about airing of tennis grievances and Megan Rapinoe's empowering call to action. Not to mention one First Lady and a few eloquent aging rockers. (Here's looking at you, Keith Richards!)

Because we'd actually like you to be able to read these books, the list only includes memoirs that are reasonably accessible in print and digital formats. That being said, if you happen to stumble upon the rare copy of Ronnie Spector's *Be My Baby: How I Survived Mascara, Miniskirts, and Madness* or John Waters' *Shock Value: A Tasteful Book About Bad Taste*, definitely pick it up.

Here, the 30 best celebrity memoirs to read right now.

Open, Andre Agassi (2009)

Andre Agassi's *Open* is a thrillingly untriumphant sports memoir that isn't afraid to court controversy. Co-written with J.R. Moehringer, who also helped Prince Harry with *Spare* as well as his own memoir, *The Tender Bar*, *Open* covers the highs and lows of the career of the once-mulleted bad boy of tennis. Agassi calls

out on-court rivals and delves into his off-court troubles, which included crystal meth use. He even declares his one-time hatred for tennis, detailing his father's abusive training tactics that caused him to loathe the sport, which makes the chapters dedicated to his joy-filled late career surge all the more poignant.

Buy Now: *Open* on Bookshop | Amazon

By Myself and Then Some, Lauren Bacall (2005)

In 1979, screen legend Lauren Bacall released her National Book Award-winning memoir, *By Myself*, which offered an intimate look at her life, career, and romance with Humphrey Bogart. Twenty-six years later, she released an expanded edition of the book now called *By Myself and Then Some* that invited fans to catch up with her once again. The newly added 80 pages are pure unbridled Bacall, who was 81 at the time of release. She ruminates on aging in Hollywood, shares her haunting memories of being in New York City on 9/11, and mourns the loss of famous friends like Katharine Hepburn. You'll get your money's worth and then some.

Buy Now: *By Myself and Then Some* on Bookshop | Amazon

All About Me!: My Remarkable Life in Show Business, Mel Brooks (2021)

In 2021, at the age of 95, legendary comedic auteur Mel Brooks released his first autobiography, *All About Me!*, which covers his celebrated 70 years and counting career in show business. Across 480 pages, he puts his delightful sense of humor on full display, telling laugh-out-loud stories about being a teenage comedian in the Catskills, working as a writer for volatile funny guy Sid Caesar, and the making of the legendary flatulence scene in *Blazing Saddles*. But comedy wasn't the great love of his life, as *All About Me!* makes abundantly clear. It was his late wife, Anne Bancroft, who passed away in 2005 of uterine cancer at the age of 73. In many ways this book is a loving salute to her and her ability to bring the best out of Brooks onscreen and off.

Buy Now: *All About Me!* on Bookshop | Amazon

The Meaning of Mariah Carey, Mariah Carey (2020)

With *The Meaning of Mariah Carey*, the titular pop icon with a five-octave vocal range reflects on her life and career so far. Mariah Carey, with help from journalist Michaela Angela Davis, doesn't shy away from writing about her difficult childhood, tempestuous first marriage to music executive Tommy Mottola, and her mental health struggles. But it isn't all doom and gloom; she also offers unguarded insight into her short-lived romance with Derek Jeter, her love of Christmas, and her beef with Jennifer Lopez. For the record, she still doesn't know her.

Buy Now: *The Meaning of Mariah Carey* on Bookshop | Amazon

My Autobiography, Charles Chaplin (1964)

Screen legend Charlie Chaplin wrote his first memoir, *My Autobiography*, a decade after he was forced to flee the U.S. to Switzerland at the height of McCarthyism. (Chaplin, who long denied having any Communist affiliations, stepped foot in the States only once before his 1977 death to pick up an honorary Oscar.) Perhaps that's why his autobiography doesn't pull any punches about his impoverished childhood, successful silent film career, and self-exile. (He does not, however, write about his romances with underaged women.) At this point in his life, Chaplin was a man with nothing to lose. *My Autobiography* is a fascinating look at the golden age of movies from the era's biggest star.

Buy Now: *My Autobiography* on Amazon

Baggage: Tales From a Fully Packed Life, Alan Cumming (2018)

Alan Cumming's 2014 debut memoir, *Not My Father's Son*, is a thrilling autobiography focused on his troubled relationship with his father. While it's definitely worth a read, it's his cheeky second book, 2018's *Baggage*, that taps into what has made Cumming such a beloved show business staple. Full of juicy gossip, dirty puns, and plenty of exclamation points, *Baggage* picks up in 1994 amid his failing marriage to fellow actor Hilary Lyon. The dissolution of that relationship leads the then up-and-coming actor on a journey toward self-discovery. With humor and panache, Cumming divulges his juiciest tales including being scolded by a drunken Gore Vidal, using ecstasy the night he won the Tony for *Cabaret*, and enduring the dysfunctional *X2* film set led by the now-disgraced director Bryan Singer.

Buy Now: *Baggage* on Bookshop | Amazon

Finding Me, Viola Davis (2022)

Allow Viola Davis to reintroduce herself with her radically honest debut memoir. *Finding Me* delves into Davis' journey to become the unflappable person and performer she is today. She details the constant bullying she endured from mostly white classmates growing up and how that helped her succeed at Juilliard, where she fought to empower Black students who felt stifled by the legendary school's curriculum. It seems only fitting that the audiobook of *Finding Me* won Davis a Grammy, helping her become one of only 19 people to clinch Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards. After reading her autobiography, you can't help but feel as if she was destined to break into this exclusive club.

Buy Now: *Finding Me* on Bookshop | Amazon

Chronicles: Volume One, Bob Dylan (2004)

Bob Dylan may be one of the most influential singer-songwriters to have ever lived, but he wasn't known for waxing poetic about his life and career. That is, until *Chronicle: Volume One*, his eye-opening 2004 memoir in which he rambles on (in a good way) about growing up in Minnesota, finding folk music in Greenwich Village, and going electric at the Newport Folk Festival. As he traces his journey from complete unknown to voice of a generation (a label he's not so fond of), he also introduces fans to wild characters and scenes that seem straight out of one of his songs. Knowing Dylan's penchant for embellishing the truth of his own biography, one may wonder if what they read in *Chronicles* is true. Our advice: don't think twice, it's all right if he fudges the facts when the results are this entertaining.

Buy Now: *Chronicles* on Bookshop | Amazon

Wishful Drinking, Carrie Fisher (2008)

"If my life wasn't funny it would just be true," Carrie Fisher writes in her first memoir, *Wishful Drinking*. "And that is unacceptable." It's only fitting then that this book, adapted from Fisher's 2006 one-woman show of the same name, takes a self-deprecating look at the *Star Wars* actor's stranger-than-fiction existence as the daughter of two eccentric Hollywood stars, *Singin' in the Rain* actor Debbie Reynolds and crooner (and one-time husband of Elizabeth Taylor) Eddie Fisher.

Buy Now: *Wishful Drinking* on Bookshop | Amazon

My Life So Far, Jane Fonda (2005)

It's safe to say Jane Fonda has lived a lot of life since the 2005 release of her memoir, *My Life So Far*. (Watch the 2018 HBO documentary *Jane Fonda in Five Acts* to fill in the nearly 20 year gap.) But that's what makes this book, her first, so captivating; it is not a complete look at the award-winning actor and activist's existence. Nor, as the title implies, was it intended to be. Back in 2005, Fonda, then nearing 60, felt that she had been defined by her family name, her film roles, and her relationships with powerful men like media mogul Ted Turner, activist and politician Tom Hayden, and *Barbarella* director Roger Vadim. In her memoir, she takes back the narrative and explores the traumas of her past. Part Hollywood tell-all, part self-help book, *My Life So Far* offers a poignant look at how Fonda found her authentic self.

Buy Now: *My Life So Far* on Bookshop | Amazon

The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music, Dave Grohl (2021)

The Storyteller is a portrait of an aging artist as a young man. Throughout the book, Dave Grohl recalls the musical memories of his past, returning to his early days as a suburban Virginia kid learning to play the drums like Led Zeppelin's John Bonham before quitting high school to join the D.C. hardcore band Scream. The

Foo Fighter writes of the ebbs and flows that came with being the drummer for one of the biggest rock bands of all time, Nirvana, and doesn't hold back when speaking of the pain he felt—and still feels—after the loss of Kurt Cobain. *The Storyteller* is Grohl's deeply sincere look at the music that defines him.

Buy Now: *The Storyteller* on Bookshop | Amazon

Lady Sings the Blues, Billie Holiday (1956)

While Billie Holiday's autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*, may not always be factually accurate, those who knew her best say it was all emotionally true. It's what makes the book, the basis for the 1972 film of the same name starring Diana Ross, such a heartbreaking self-portrait of a legendary musician gone too soon. Released three years before her death at the age of 44, *Lady Sings the Blues* offers a candid look at the jazz singer's chaotic life and career, offering sobering accounts of her teenage years working as a call girl, struggles with heroin addiction, time spent in jail, and the racism she faced as a Black performer.

Buy Now: *Lady Sings the Blues* on Bookshop | Amazon

Me, Elton John (2019)

Elton John's memoir, *Me*, is his deliciously dishy account of how a shy English schoolboy named Reginald Dwight became the bedazzled and bespectacled Captain Fantastic. John has fun revisiting his humble beginnings, recalling his '70s heyday, and reveling in celebrity gossip. (Bob Dylan is apparently terrible at charades—who knew?) But the majority of John's mockery is aimed at himself. (Case in point: he spends a lot of time trying to explain his much-talked about hair.) His honesty and humility about his own ups (his coming out, his advocacy) and downs (drug addiction, tragic loss of friends Princess Diana and Gianni Versace) make this a charming swan song by a glitter rock icon.

Buy Now: *Me* on Bookshop | Amazon

Thursday's Child, Eartha Kitt (1956)

Whether you know Eartha Kitt as the Catwoman to Adam West's Batman or Harriet the Spy's reclusive neighbor, her first of three memoirs, 1956's *Thursday's Child*, offers a look at the first 30 years of her incredible life and career. (Fun fact: Kitt's book also inspired the 1999 David Bowie song of the same name.) Born in 1927, Kitt, whose real name was Eartha Mae Keith, grew up poor in the Deep South with her young mom, who was of Cherokee and African descent. When her mom's boyfriend refused to accept Kitt for the color of her skin, she was adopted by an aunt who lived in New York City. It's there that Kitt joined a dance troupe led by Katherine Dunham, the "queen mother of Black dance," and traveled the world before making her way to Hollywood. Kitt doesn't gloss over the racism and sexism she faced during her early years as an actress and singer, which makes her rise to stardom all the more compelling. It also helps that Kitt has a knack for storytelling; *Thursday's Child* reads like a riveting novel you don't want to put down rather than a paint by numbers autobiography.

Buy Now: *Thursday's Child* on Bookshop | Amazon

Spike Lee: Best Seat in the House: *A Basketball Memoir*, Spike Lee (1997)

For more than three decades, Spike Lee has been cheering on his beloved New York Knicks from a courtside seat at Madison Square Garden. (He has also stirred up a bit of controversy from that same spot; most notably, his feud with former Indiana Pacer Reggie Miller.) His passion for the sport is on full display in his first memoir, *Best Seat in the House*, in which the legendary Brooklyn director tells the story of his life through the lens of basketball fandom. With help from late *Sports Illustrated* journalist Ralph Wiley, he recounts how watching his long struggling hometown franchise helped him grieve his mother, who died when he was in college, and survive the frustrating shoot of his 1992 film *Malcolm X*. He also offers his thoughts on the racial politics of a league that, in the late '90s, was exploding in popularity, and interviews NBA greats like Michael Jordan and his favorite player, Knicks Hall of Famer Walt "Clyde" Frazier. (Some will prefer to skip his conversation with fellow director and lifelong Knick fan Woody Allen.) With *Best Seat in the House*, Lee explores the ways in which his love of the game shaped who he would become.

Buy Now: *Best Seat in the House* on Amazon

I'm Glad My Mom Died, Jennette McCurdy (2022)

Former child actress Jennette McCurdy uses humor to detail the physical, emotional, and verbal abuse she suffered at the hands of her late mother in her best-selling memoir, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*. As the book's title suggests, McCurdy has strong opinions about her mom's role in her life and career, and works through those complicated feelings across 320 pages. It's no easy read, but McCurdy manages to find hope, empathy, and understanding for the woman that all too often made her young life a living hell.

Buy Now: *I'm Glad My Mom Died* on Bookshop | Amazon

Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More, Janet Mock (2014)

"Why tell your story if you're not going to tell it in its entirety?" Writer and transgender rights activist Janet Mock's debut memoir, *Redefining Realness*, isan unsparing account of how she found her true self, published three years after she first publicly came out as trans in the pages of *Marie Claire*. Across 263 pages, Mock lays her soul bare, sharing the heartbreak and confusion she felt throughout her childhood being identified as a boy when she knew she was not. She writes about the pain of watching her dad struggle with drug addiction, being a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and how sex work helped her earn enough money for a sex-change operation. For all that Mock was forced to endure, her memoir is anything but despairing. She writes lovingly of the women who supported her throughout her transition, whether it be by helping her pick out the right clothes or loving her when she didn't know how to love herself. *Redefining Realness* is Mock's love letter to her chosen family who embraced her for who she always was.

Buy Now: *Redefining Realness* on Bookshop | Amazon

Inside Out, Demi Moore (2019)

Demi Moore isn't afraid to go there with *Inside Out.* With help from *New Yorker* writer and memoirist Ariel Levy, she writes freely of her abusive childhood, struggles with substance abuse, and troubled marriage to Ashton Kutcher, which ended in divorce in 2013. Moore told the New York *Times* that she wrote *Inside Out* in order to rediscover herself. Now, fans have a chance to do the same.

Buy Now: *Inside Out* on Bookshop | Amazon

Rita Moreno: A Memoir, Rita Moreno (2013)

Watch any interview with Rita Moreno and it's clear she has a real gift for gab. She put that skill to good use when writing her memoir, which covers everything from her joyous childhood in Puerto Rico to becoming an octogenarian icon. (She was 81 at the time of the book's release, and has since appeared in 11 movies, including *80 For Brady* and *Fast X*.) She isn't afraid to spill the tea about Hollywood, whether it be the prejudice she faced throughout her career or her famous romances. (She devotes three chapters to her nearly decade-long tumultuous affair with Marlon Brando.) But the best moments in the book are when Moreno gets to brag about a red hot career that even now shows no signs of cooling.

Buy Now: *Rita Moreno* on Bookshop | Amazon

Born a Crime, Trevor Noah (2016)

Comedian Trevor Noah's best-selling autobiography, *Born a Crime*, recounts growing up with a white Swiss-German father and a Black South African mother during the final years of apartheid South Africa. With heart and humor, the former *Daily Show* host details the difficulties that came with being the product of an illegal mixed-race relationship. How hard was it? The book begins with his mom throwing him off a moving bus, as she was concerned the driver, a member of a different tribe, would kill him. But *Born a*

Crime is more than just Noah's origin story; it's a tender tribute to the fearless and fiercely religious woman who helped get him where he is now.

Buy Now: *Born a Crime* on Bookshop | Amazon

Becoming, Michelle Obama (2018)

In 2008, Michelle Obama made history, becoming the first African American First Lady of the United States. A decade later, she shared her incredible journey to the White House and everything that came after in her debut memoir, *Becoming*. With warmth and sincerity, Obama (née Robinson) details her childhood growing up in Chicago's South Side, the pressures that came with attending Princeton University and later Harvard Law School, and finding her voice as a young lawyer. She also writes about falling in love with Barack Obama, watching him pursue a career in politics, and helping him become America's first Black president. But making history didn't come without sacrifice and she doesn't shy away from the difficulties that come with being a Black woman in America, especially one whose every move has been placed under a microscope. Her candor didn't go unrecognized; *Becoming* became the best-selling book of 2018 in the U.S. 15 days after it was released.

Buy Now: *Becoming* on Bookshop | Amazon

Pageboy, Elliot Page (2023)

Three years after Elliot Page came out as transgender on the cover of TIME, he released his memoir, *Pageboy*, a no-holds-barred look at his journey to understand his identity. The book, named one of TIME's 100 Must-Read Books of 2023, recalls Page's difficulties with bullying, body dysmorphia, and disordered eating, as well as finding his place in Hollywood. His retelling of his life is non-linear, flashing back and forth between his childhood and his time in the public eye, which puts the focus on his fractured sense of self. It's only by putting the disparate pieces of his life together that he's able to become the fully realized person he is now.

Buy Now: *Pageboy* on Bookshop | Amazon

Mo' Meta Blues, Questlove (2013)

To say Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson loves music is an understatement. He eats, sleeps, and breathes music. And in his kaleidoscopic memoir, *Mo' Meta Blues*, he explores how he went from being a devoted fan to a hip-hop historian, revisiting his favorite music memories. From hearing "Rapper's Delight" for the first time with his sister to rushing home to tape Prince's "Housequake" off the radio, this book is a celebration of the music that soundtracked the most pivotal moments of his life and career.

Buy Now: *Mo' Meta Blues* on Bookshop | Amazon

One Life, Megan Rapinoe (2020)

In her best-selling debut memoir, *One Life*, Megan Rapinoe recalls how her illustrious soccer career led to her political awakening. The retired athlete, one of the most decorated soccer stars in the U.S., provides an intimate look at her life beyond the headlines. She offers insight into her decision to come out as gay after the 2011 World Cup in hopes of encouraging others to do the same. And she writes passionately about her choice to kneel in solidarity with former NFL star Colin Kaepernick to protest racial injustice and police brutality—and the blowback that came with it. Rapinoe seems unbothered by the latter, which is no surprise after reading about her parents, who taught her that real success isn't about winning trophies, but being a good person. *One Life* is Rapinoe's way of paying that important life lesson forward.

Buy Now: *One Life* on Bookshop | Amazon

Life, Keith Richards (2010)

It has been said that the only two things that will survive nuclear war are cockroaches and Keith Richards. In his debut memoir, *Life*, the guitarist offers some context as to why that might be true by sharing some of the craziest stories of his rock and roll past. With the topsy-turvy glee of a merry prankster, Richards recalls his days on the road with the Rolling Stones, complains (a lot) about his

bandmate Mick Jagger, details his former drug habits, and reminisces about the famous loves of his life including Marianne Faithfull, Ronnie Spector, and current wife Patti Hansen.

Buy Now: *Life* on Bookshop | Amazon

Open Book, Jessica Simpson (2020)

Jessica Simpson's frank, often heartbreaking memoir covers 15 years of her life in the all-too-unforgiving public eye. The pop star turned founder of a billion-dollar fashion brand doesn't refrain from sharing the traumas of her past. She writes openly of her troubled marriage to Nick Lachey, struggles with alcohol addiction, and anxieties pertaining to her body, which were made worse by a now infamous pair of "mom jeans."

Buy Now: *Open Book* on Bookshop | Amazon

Just Kids, Patti Smith (2010)

Just Kids picks up at the Chelsea Hotel in the late 1960s where punk icon Patti Smith and late photographer Robert Mapplethorpe were living while pursuing their bohemian dreams. In her best-selling and award-winning memoir, Smith casts herself as an outsider looking in, sharing sweet and often silly stories of her run-ins with notable names like Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, who once bought her a cheese sandwich at the Automat because he thought she was an attractive boy. It's Mapplethorpe, who died in 1989 due to complications from AIDS, that helps her feel as if she can do it all. It's that feeling, that anything is possible, that makes *Just Kids* such an inspiring read.

Buy Now: *Just Kids* on Bookshop | Amazon

Born to Run, Bruce Springsteen (2016)

Bruce Springsteen surprised fans when, in 2016, he dropped his memoir, *Born to Run*, while gearing up for his one-man Broadway show. Even more surprising may be just how loosey goosey the Boss' first autobiography is. Alongside intimate never-before-shared recollections about his hardscrabble New Jersey upbringing and struggles with depression, he throws in more than a few dad jokes and silly stories about getting kicked out of Disneyland for violating the dress code or singing jazz standards with Bob Dylan at Frank Sinatra's 80th birthday party for good measure. Springsteen's levity makes *Born to Run* a rewarding read for even those who don't bow down at the altar of Bruuuce.

Buy Now: *Born to Run* on Bookshop | Amazon

The Beauty of Living Twice, Sharon Stone (2021)

In 2001 at the age of 43, Sharon Stone nearly died from an undetected brain hemorrhage. In her memoir, *The Beauty of Living Twice*, she writes about how her late grandmother, Lela, came to her in a dream, telling her not to move her neck. Shortly after, Stone discovered that her right vertebral artery, the major artery that supplies blood to the brain and spinal cord, was torn and bleeding into her face, brain, and spine. Any sudden movement of her neck would have killed her. But the advice from her grandmother she dreamt not only saved her, it offered her a second chance. Stone's book is filled with these kinds of harrowing, often darkly funny stories about the years before and after her near death experience. It's what makes *The Beauty of Living Twice* so hard to put down and even harder to forget.

Buy Now: *The Beauty of Living Twice* on Bookshop | Amazon

My Name Is Barbra, Barbra Streisand (2023)

My Name Is Barbra, Barbra Streisand's long-awaited debut memoir, offers a no-stone-left-unturned look at this funny girl turned even funnier lady. At nearly a thousand pages, she covers her life, career, and everything she ate in between. (The *New Yorker* called it the "mother of all memoirs" for just how delightfully detailed it is.) For those that want even more Babs: Listen to the audiobook of *My Name is Barbra*, which lets Streisand regale fans with a few more stories that somehow didn't make the cut the first time around.

Buy Now: *My Name Is Barbra* on Bookshop | Amazon

Trejo: My Life of Crime, Redemption, and Hollywood, Danny Trejo (2021)

Danny Trejo's unflinching memoir offers a look at his unlikely journey from convicted felon to celebrated character actor known for playing tough guys on projects like *Desperado* and *Breaking Bad*. *Trejo* doesn't sugarcoat his past as he shares the details of his harrowing childhood growing up in an abusive household, struggles with heroin addiction, and time spent in San Quentin and Folsom, two of the most notorious prisons in the U.S. For all his lows, he is quick to celebrate his highs, most of which came after he found sobriety. After starting from the bottom, Trejo is here with a redemption story that he hopes will inspire others to keep on the straight and narrow.

Buy Now: *Trejo* on Bookshop | Amazon

Taste: My Life Through Food, Stanley Tucci (2021)

Make yourself a shaken, not stirred Negroni—just the way Stanley Tucci likes it—and take a big bite out of *Taste*, the actor and cookbook author's culinary-focused memoir that follows his journey from struggling actor and bartender to famous Hollywood gourmand, and all the meals he loved in between. Just like Tucci's soothing Instagram cocktail tutorials, his book offers delicious, often hilarious anecdotes about his wife (and Emily's sister) Felicity Blunt's odd way of making potatoes and the time Meryl Streep dug into a plate of tripe sausage that apparently looked a lot like a horse phallus.

Buy Now: *Taste* on Bookshop | Amazon

I, Tina: My Life Story, Tina Turner (1986)

I, Tina, the late Tina Turner's best-selling debut memoir, co-written with MTV News legend Kurt Loder, offers a deeply personal look at her life, career, and turbulent relationship with ex-husband Ike Turner. Born Anna Mae Bullock in 1939, Tina grew up poor with apathetic parents in the tiny town of Nutbush, Tenn. In her teens, she met aspiring musician Ike, who was eight years her senior, and joined his band in 1957. The two were married five years later and Ike quickly became her biggest tormentor. As her star rose, Ike looked to control her. In her bombshell-filled-book, which inspired the 1993 film *What's Love Got To Do With It*, she recalls in horrific detail the ways in which he would abuse her physically, mentally, and emotionally throughout their 16-year marriage. (Ike would confirm his abuse of Tina in the years before his 2007 death.) *I, Tina* is not only a gripping rock star memoir, released at the start of Tina's solo career resurgence, but an empowering tale of survival.

Buy Now: *I, Tina* on Bookshop | Amazon

Just as I Am, Cicely Tyson (2021)

Cicely Tyson's memoir, *Just as I Am*, released two days before her death at 96 years old, offers a candid look at a one-of-a-kind actress and cultural icon. From her parents' troubled marriage and her teenage pregnancy to her first Academy Award-nomination and her tormented relationship with jazz legend Miles Davis, Tyson writes openly about the ups and downs of her life. It's one that despite its challenges, she makes very clear, was a life well-lived.

Buy Now: *Just as I Am* on Bookshop | Amazon

You Got Anything Stronger?, Gabrielle Union (2021)

If Gabrielle Union's 2017 debut memoir, *We're Going to Need More Wine*, was an aperitif then its sequel, *You Got Anything Stronger?*, is the main course.With her second memoir in essays, Union delves a little deeper into difficult topics, writing about her experiences with IVF, suicide ideation, and neo-Nazis. But just like her first book, she is able to balance those darker stories with lighter ones about her daughter Zaya Wade's journey to coming out as transgender and the bathroom emergency she suffered at a strip club. Her commitment to telling her truth, no matter how dirty—sometimes quite literally—is what made this one of TIME's Must-Read Books of 2021.

Buy Now: *You Got Anything Stronger?*, on Bookshop | Amazon

Crying in H Mart, Michelle Zauner (2021)

Musician Michelle Zauner's best-selling debut memoir, *Crying in H Mart*, was born out of her viral 2018 *New Yorker*essay of the same name, in which she wrote about how, following the death of her mother from cancer, she would break down crying in H Mart, the Korean-American supermarket chain where the two often shopped. The book looks at the ways in which our favorite foods become visceral reminders of those we loved and lost. For Zauner, who is half-Korean and half-white, losing her mom sent her

searching for “evidence that the Korean half of my identity didn’t die when they did.” Over the course of 256 pages, the leader of the indie pop band Japanese Breakfast writes of the foods they both loved: miyeok-guk, a comforting non-spicy seaweed soup often served to new mothers, or sannakji, a controversial live octopus dish. Using her palate and her favorite food memories, she looks to reconcile her complicated relationship with her mom, whose constant nagging she comes to realize was her love language.

Buy Now: *Crying in H Mart* on Bookshop | Amazon

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6998731

Snoop Dogg on His Olympic Gig, the Horse He Wants to Meet, and Being a ‘Very Legal Guy’

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.

Snoop Dogg is on the line from Eugene, Ore., where he’s pitching in on NBC’s coverage of the U.S. track-and-field trials, to talk about his new TV gig and upcoming Olympic trip to Paris. On the heels of his memorable Olympic commentary with Kevin Hart on the streaming service Peacock during the last Summer Games, in Tokyo in 2021—a clip of Snoop saying a horse in the dressage competition looked like he was doing the crip walk went viral—NBC has hired Snoop as a special correspondent for the Paris Games.

But as Snoop is about to discuss the draw of the Olympics and what he hopes to deliver to audiences watching back home in the U.S., a car alarm goes off nearby. And just like any other red-blooded American trying to have an undistracted conversation on a Sunday afternoon, he pauses for a moment before flipping his lid.

“Where’s the driver? Turn it off,” says Snoop Dogg, exasperated but calm. But it won’t stop – *beep, beep, beep.* So Snoop has had about enough.

“Turn your goddamn car off!” Snoop Dogg, to my great delight, yells at his offending neighbor, my cell phone picking up the entire exchange.

- Welcome to the **Noah Lyles Olympics**
- The **Best Photographs** From the Paris Olympics
- The **Cost of Attending** the 2024 Paris Olympics
- See **How Many Medals Every Country Won** at the Paris Olympics—So Far
- Why Are the **Olympics Held Every Four Years**?
- **Snoop Dogg on His Olympic Gig** and Being a ‘Very Legal Guy’
- Get Our **Olympics Newsletter in Your Inbox**

In an instant, the alarm stops, and all is quiet.

Thank you, Snoop.

Interview crisis averted, Snoop, 52, is now ready and eager to talk Olympics. With the Games now exactly a month away—opening ceremonies begin on July 26—here’s the multiplatinum rapper, producer, actor, and entrepreneur on why he first started watching the Olympics, who he’s excited to see in Paris, and a potential meetup with that crip-walking horse.

(This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity)

While growing up in Long Beach, Calif., what are some of your first Olympic memories?

Bruce Jenner and the Wheaties box. Sugar Ray Leonard boxing. Edwin Moses. Things of that nature.

Read More: *Before There Was Caitlin Clark, There Was Jimmer Fredette*

What made you fall in love with the Games?

Back then we only had so much. It's not like right now, where you got so many different things you can watch and social media and all that sh-t. We only had TV. There was only one TV in the house, so whatever one member of the family was watching, we were all forced to watch it. The Olympics was big because it would take over the whole house whenever it would come on. And it's special 'cause you're seeing athletes for the first time in three, four years and they're representing the country. So that meant a lot, watching it as a kid.

When NBC came to you about this gig, why did you sign on?

Why not? Not why. This is what I do, you know what I'm saying? I love being in front of the people. I love sports. I know what I'm talking about. The network is appealing enough to understand that we deserve each other. So we're gonna make magic.

And what do you plan to bring to NBC's coverage that maybe we haven't seen before?

The fire and the smoke.

What do you mean by that?

You figure it out. I'm pretty sure you've been doing this sh-t long enough to figure out what I mean by that. *[Laughs]*

Read More: *Sunny Choi Is Heading to Paris for Her Sport's Olympic Debut. Just Don't Call It 'Breakdancing'*

Any stories you particularly want to do in Paris?

I definitely want to roll with the [U.S.] basketball team. And I definitely want to try to get in the water. See if I can get a 50-[second] time out of myself in the 50-meter freestyle.

I'm just a kid that's living his dream. I ran the 200 today. I wanted to do the pole vault till I seen what that sh-t looks like. I was like, 'No way.' I'll try the high jump. It don't require poles and holding [them] in the air.

There's things that I'm going to try. And at the same time I respect the sport and I respect the Olympics.

Do you plan to try equestrian at all?

Me and horses, I'm gonna let them dance while I talk.

I saw somewhere that you're going to try to meet the horse you said was crip walking in Tokyo.

Yes, I'm definitely trying to meet him. Hopefully he's in the Olympics so I can say, 'What's happening?' to him. Bring him a couple of carrots, some apples or somethin', know what I'm saying?

Read More: *Fred Richard Is Team USA's Next Olympic Hope for Men's Gymnastics*

Have you been to Paris before?

Yeah, many times. I've performed in Paris a whole bunch of times. I ran through the Arc de Triomphe. I've been to a lot of the big buildings out there, classic buildings from back in the day. They never change. I've been all over Paris.

What is special about the city to you?

Love. Love is in the air once you get there. You feel the love.

How's your French? Have you been working on it?

Nah, I don't think I have to. I think they like my language, you know what I'm sayin'? They're going to convert to me. I'm going to translate to them what we're talking about.

Do you think Caitlin Clark should have been on the U.S. Olympic basketball team?

I just wish they got the best team possible. They ain't lost in about 18 years. On the women's side in basketball, in the Olympics, they know what they're doing. What they said is basically, she's great, but I don't believe she's gold-medal-worthy until she pulls her stuff in the WNBA.

This is a big step from college to the WNBA. I love what she's done for the sport in general. But you've got to understand, these are WNBA players that have been seasoned to do this. And when you're going for that gold medal, you want your best girls out there.

You just watched Sha'Carri Richardson win the 100-m title at the U.S. Olympic trials. What do you think of Sha'Carri?

She's living young, wild, and free. She's supposed to. She's supposed to be wild. She's supposed to be everything that she is. The setbacks set up the comeback. I love the way that she's doing

it, the way the team is supporting her, the way she's got great people around her. She's going to be just fine.

She had a big setback before the last Olympics, as she missed the Games for testing positive for cannabis, which is on the sport's banned list. Do you think cannabis is performance-enhancing in track and field?

Nah, I just ran a 34.44 in the 200 meters and I was smoking all night. So that sh-t ain't got nothing to do with helping my time at all. It f-cked my time up, if anything. Unless they got some supersh-t to get you faster. Let me know where it is and I'll be the first to try.

Cannabis is illegal in France, not sure if you knew that.

Yeah, yeah. Trust me, I'm a very legal guy.

Do you plan on lobbying the French government to change that while you're over there?

Oh, nah. I plan on going out there and doing NBC Olympic work. Being clean as a book, clean as the athletes. They can test me if they want to. I'm going to be out there doing what I'm supposed to be doing to make sure I bring home the gold. Which is me.

Any international Olympians you're excited to see in Paris?

The Australian swim team, up against the Americans. They push us to the limit. And I like Jamaica's track team. And Canada's basketball team. They got a shot to get to the gold-medal round, but they're not going to win it. They got a shot 'cause they've got a bunch of NBA players who are really seasoned and on top of their game. But the overall factor is going to be, the USA is the dogs. We're not going to lose to no puppies.

What do you think of Canadian star Shai-Gilgeous Alexander as a player?

I think he's the Snoop Dogg of basketball. I love the way he plays, his style. The way he stays focused and gets better every time he gets out on the court. I love his game. I respect it.

Why is he the Snoop Dogg of basketball?

Look at him. He looks like me. He's got the braids, he's low-key, he's the Silent Assassin.

What is the Snoop perspective you can bring to the Games that nobody else can?

It's just me. It's hard to explain. I can't say it's going to be a bag of potato chips, Kool-Aid, but I know it's me. Put some plastic around me and let me come there, I do what I do. You can sell me. I'm sold.

Anything I didn't ask or you want to say before you get back to watching the trials out in Oregon?

Nah, I'm just going out there to have a good time. *Potpourri. Comment allez-vous. Oui oui.* And all of the above.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6991607