MAY 13, 2024

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL DOCTORS, SCIENTISTS & MORE

TIME 100 HEALTH

time.com

TIME Magazine

[May 13, 2024]

- **Articles**

Articles

- How We Chose the TIME100 Most Influential People in Health of 2024
- Coco Gauff Is Playing for Herself Now
- What Judge Merchan Knows About Trump
- TikTok Vows to Fight Its Ban. Here's How the Battle May Play Out
- An Animated Guide to the Rare 2024 Cicada Co-Emergence
- PEN America Cancels Annual Award After Writers' Boycott Over Gaza War
- Why Kate Middleton's New Title Is of Historical Significance
- 'Putin Is My Enemy.' The Revolution of Yulia Navalnaya
- How to Start Foraging, According to TikTokers
- The Modi-fication of India Is Almost Complete
- Brittney Griner: What I Endured in a Russian Prison
- Democrats in Trump Districts Are Outraising Republicans in Biden Districts

- **Why Taylor Swift’s Music Makes Us So Emotional**
- **Greece’s Prime Minister Wants His Nation to Be the Comeback Story of the Decade**
- **In the Kitchen With ‘Real Americans’ Author Rachel Khong**
- **Welcome to the Golden Age of Ryan Gosling**
- **Netflix’s Flimsy A Man in Full Makes Tom Wolfe’s Epic Novel Feel Small**
- **How Writing Her Feminist-Punk Memoir Put Kathleen Hanna on the ‘Happiness Train’**

How We Chose the TIME100 Most Influential People in Health of 2024

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

In 2018, we worked with Bill Gates on a special issue of TIME dedicated to the power of optimism. Gates' view, shared by many of the issue's contributors, was that people are wired to focus on when things go wrong and when they don't work. Sometimes this attention distracts us from the moments when progress is being made. Journalists fall prey to this phenomenon as much as anyone else.

As we put together this issue, I was reminded of the conversations with Gates that led to that project. With guidance from Dr. David Agus and Arianna Huffington, our team of health correspondents and editors, led by Emma Barker and Mandy Oaklander, spent months consulting sources and experts around the world to select the 100 individuals who are most influential in the world of health right now. The result is the TIME100 Health, a community of leaders from across industries—scientists, doctors, advocates, educators, and policy-makers, among others—dedicated to creating tangible, credible change for a healthier population. Together, they are a reminder that many things are going right, and their work is enough to inspire the belief that the world of health is in the middle of a golden age of accomplishment and transformation.

While the global pandemic made painfully clear the distances we still have to go to create a healthy and safe world, our emergence from that period has also put a light on the many ways humanity is making progress. Renewed investment and attention is driving a boom in drug discovery and disease eradication.

The TIME100 Health includes a group of scientists—Dan Drucker, Joel Habener, Jens Juul Holst, and Svetlana Mojsov—whose discoveries led to the GLP-1 weight-loss and diabetes drugs like Ozempic; Khaled Kabil, who ran a program that rid Egypt of hepatitis C infections, despite the nation's having one of the highest rates in the world just 10 years ago; French neuroscientist Grégoire Courtine and Swiss neurosurgeon Jocelyne Bloch, who created a brain-spine implant that enabled a paralyzed man to walk again;

Peter Attia, who may be the reason your friend is embracing a high-protein diet; Jonathan Haidt, whose hit book *The Anxious Generation* is leading a call to ban cell phones in schools and keep kids off social media until they're 16; and immunobiologist Akiko Iwasaki, one of the foremost Long COVID researchers, who is developing a nasal COVID-19 vaccine that she hopes could prevent infection—and thus long-term symptoms—altogether. Health innovation, like this list, reflects humanity at its best: people using all their resourcefulness and ingenuity to help one another live better.

The introduction of the TIME100 Health is part of our ongoing effort to expand the TIME100, the world's most influential community, into the sectors that may do the most to define our future—artificial intelligence, climate, and health. Whether you are familiar with the individuals on this list or this is the first time you're reading about them, their work is changing the lives of people in your community and around the world. We are thrilled to announce the first TIME100 Health and looking forward to May in New York City, when we will gather this group together in person for the first time.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6972830

Coco Gauff Is Playing for Herself Now

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.

At the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Calif., maybe the most prestigious nonmajor tournament on the global tennis tour, players conduct their warm-up routines on a patch of grass outside the stadium. Some toss medicine balls to their trainers, while others stretch with elastic bands. A few pedal lightly on upright bikes. One player throws a Frisbee.

Then Coco Gauff takes the field.

Gauff, who in September became the first American teenager to win the U.S. Open in nearly a quarter-century, grabs a football, sends a guy downfield, and uncoils a tight, 40-yard spiral, right into the receiver's chest. Then she does it again. And again.

Gauff's cannon is a flex. I see your toe-tapping a soccer ball and raise you a Patrick Mahomes bomb. Gauff, who grew up in the football hotbed of South Florida, takes tremendous pride in showing off her athleticism. "It's not really for the girls," Gauff tells TIME in early March, about a week before her 20th birthday. "I don't think they care too much, especially the Europeans. They don't know much about football." Her throws are designed to mess with the men. "I do like to show, especially the American guys, that I can probably throw it just as far as them, if not farther," says Gauff. "I love to get in the American guys' heads."

Read More: *Coco Gauff Is Chasing That Championship High*

To her coach, former tour player and current ESPN commentator Brad Gilbert, Gauff's live arm speaks to her still untapped potential. "When you see that, it's almost like 'Sh-t, she should be serving better,'" he says.

That's quite a statement, considering that Gauff's 125-m.p.h. delivery to Aryna Sabalenka at this year's Australian Open was the fastest female serve in the tournament. That her game might just be scratching the surface of its greatness speaks to Gauff's status as America's potential next iconic, mononymous athlete. From Tiger to Serena to LeBron to … Coco?

Fans have forged a unique connection with Gauff, a function of both her achievements at a young age and her willingness to be vocal about sociopolitical issues. She struggled to meet early expectations on the court, fighting self-imposed pressures for years, but she finally eased her mind a bit last summer, thrilling the crowd in New York City as she nabbed her first Grand Slam win at the U.S. Open. Throughout the tournament, Gauff charmed her growing fan base. She supported the rights of climate protesters to disrupt her semifinal match. She mused on her anime infatuation, and, in her victory speech, she spontaneously thanked her online detractors for “adding gas” to her fire.

When Naomi Osaka withdrew from the 2021 French Open to tend to her mental health, Gauff was the first tennis player to message her with support. Late last year, when 18-time major champion Chris Evert revealed that her ovarian cancer had returned, Gauff was one of the few active players to reach out to her. “When people see an athlete with her level of fame and fortune having humility and empathy for people around her and awareness of world events, it sends a clear message,” Evert tells TIME. “She’s focused. She’s fearless. We need some leaders in the women’s game. She definitely will be one of them. If not *the* one.”

Gauff earned nearly $23 million in winnings and endorsements in 2023, making her the highest-paid female athlete in the world, according to Sportico, a sports-business publication. She has a momentous spring and summer ahead—the French Open starting May 26, then Wimbledon, then the Olympics, then her U.S. Open title defense beginning in August. “I always knew I wanted to try to win multiple Grand Slams,” says Gauff as an SUV rolls along I-10, en route from Indian Wells to L.A. for TIME’s Women of the Year gala. “Sometimes people get unmotivated after winning one. That hasn’t been a personal challenge for me.”

Gauff usually arrives ahead of schedule. She won a major while still in her teens, upset Venus Williams in the first round of Wimbledon at 15, and started walking at 9 months, skipping the crawling stage. When she was 3, she got out of her stroller and tried to catch up to her older cousins who were running around a track. She was too small to pass them. But she also refused to tire out. Her mother Candi, a former track-and-field star at Florida State, could spot athletic excellence. “That was the first inkling of like, ‘This is not normal,’” says Candi.

Before Coco turned 6, she and her dad Corey were watching Serena Williams win the Australian Open. Corey, a former college

basketball player, called Williams the GOAT. “What’s a GOAT?” Coco asked. Greatest of All Time, he replied. “I want to be a GOAT,” she said. He bought her a pink Wilson racquet, and she spent hours hitting against her garage in Atlanta. The example of the Williams sisters drove her. “As a little girl, it was very important to see representation and see myself in players, especially in the field where it is predominantly white,” says Gauff. “I don’t think I would have had the belief I could do it if it wasn’t for them.”

Read More: *TIME 100 Next: Coco Gauff, by Billie Jean King*

When Gauff was 8, the family relocated to Delray Beach, Fla.—where Candi and Corey grew up—to be closer to expert tennis training. She’d be homeschooled, giving her more time to work on her game. She spent a few weeks a year in France at the academy run by Patrick Mouratoglou, Serena Williams’ coach from 2012 to 2022. At 10, she told Mouratoglou she wanted to win more Grand Slams than anybody. “She was crazy ambitious,” he says. “She was looking me in the eyes and was really sure about what she was saying.”

Life on the road could be isolating for a tween. Gauff missed going to school and hanging out with friends. When she was 12, at a tournament in France, she says, a group of Croatian boys threw orange peels at her and called her a monkey. She cried that night. “Then I just kind of got over it the next day,” says Gauff. “I just felt like that’s just something that people experience, which is not a great thing. They just probably didn’t grow up around other people that looked different. I don’t have any anger towards it. It was not an experience that defined me.”

In December 2018, at 14, Gauff became the youngest player in 15 years to win the prestigious Orange Bowl under-18 singles championship. Just a few months later, however, she got rolled, 6-1, 6-1, in a qualifying round of a low-level pro tournament in Bonita Springs, Fla. She complained about the scouting report. “She was making all kinds of excuses,” says Candi, who gave her daughter the option to step away and enroll in a brick-and-mortar high school if she wasn’t going to at least try.

A mere two months later, Gauff was getting social media shout-outs from Michelle Obama, Snoop Dogg, and Magic Johnson for becoming the youngest woman to reach Wimbledon’s fourth round in almost three decades. That August, Obama met with Gauff’s family in her Washington, D.C., office for nearly an hour. Her main piece of advice: When the demands of fame overwhelm you, it’s OK to say no.

That fall, Gauff attended a homecoming dance in Boca Raton, Fla., for a glimpse of normal adolescent life. She and her best friend danced together for 15 minutes or so, then spent most of the night sitting in the bleachers, waiting for a ride home. “I just think I was at a maturity level different from the kids around me,” says Gauff. “No one has their life figured out at 15. But I, for the most part, did.”

In June 2020, during the global sports shutdown and following the murder of George Floyd, Gauff stepped before a crowd in Delray Beach. “If you are choosing silence,” she said, “you are choosing the side of the oppressor.” Gauff’s parents weren’t certain that at such a young age she should wade into the charged issue of police brutality. But the prior speaker at the -protest—Gauff’s grandmother Yvonne Lee Odom, the first Black student to attend an all-white high school in Delray Beach, effectively ending segregation in the area’s public schools—served as inspiration. “If she can do that with such grace, I can do my part,” says Gauff now.

When tennis restarted later that summer, Gauff lost in the first round of the U.S. Open and the second round of the French. “I was trying to live up to what other people wanted for me,” she says. Pundits began knocking her forehand as unsound. “That got in my head a little bit,” she says. She reached her first major championship final in 2022, at Roland Garros, where she faced world No. 1 Iga Swiatek. “I had a lot of anxiety attacks before that final,” says Gauff. “It felt like life or death. It felt hard to breathe.” After losing the first set, she went to the bathroom and cried. “I lost that match before I stepped on the court,” she says.

Last year, another early exit—at Wimbledon, in the first round—almost sent Gauff spiraling. The day after the loss, she refused to leave her room. Her parents invited her out for dinner and a show. Instead, she ordered Uber Eats and watched *Judge Judy.* “I was in a really dark place,” says Gauff. “I put my identity too much into tennis. It was taxing to feel awful all the time.”

She made a conscious effort to adjust her mindset. “It is much easier to play for yourself than it is for other people,” says Gauff. “I realized it’s impossible to satisfy everyone.” She made other key changes too, like teaming up with Gilbert, who coached Andre Agassi to six major championships and an Olympic gold medal, and having Corey sit in a different spot to watch her matches. “My

dad, he doesn’t give the best reactions in the box,” says Gauff. “He’s a very emotional person.” She mimics his familiar “frustrated dad in stands” histrionics: arms flailing, foot stomping. “Sometimes when I lose a point, the first thing I look at is the box,” says Gauff. “And there’s something more reassuring seeing somebody clapping.” Corey didn’t sit in her box during tournaments in Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati, and Gauff won both events. He watched the U.S. Open matches in a suite, or in the case of the final, on a TV in an empty fitness room in Arthur Ashe Stadium, where he could scream, pout, and pray to his heart’s content.

Gauff lost the first set, just like in Paris the previous year. She again retreated to the bathroom. But this time she didn’t shed any tears. She looked in the mirror, splashed water on her face, and brimmed with confidence. “I feel like I won the match before I even stepped on the court,” she says.

Unburdened from suffocating expectations, Gauff devotes her attention in Southern California to a favorite off-court pastime: giving proper guff to the middle-aged men in her life. On the ride back to Indian Wells after the Women of the Year event, Gauff laughs out loud watching her father wiggle around in his seat. As he whines about his comfort level, she is utterly gleeful. Before another morning practice session, her conversation with Gilbert—a man fond of sharing his step count, weight-lifting routine, and history with Agassi—somehow turns to the *Magic Mike* movies. “Brad, do you know how to strip?” she asks him. Gilbert, 62, seems unsure how to respond. “You didn’t say no.” Later, Gilbert mimes volleying a ball and shuffling his feet toward the service line, as if Gauff should copy him. “A little bit faster than that, though, right?” Gauff says. “That’s how you backpedal? You look like you’re going to park the car. It’s a technique. The hunchback.”

When she makes a mistake, Gauff will glance at her dad rather than at Gilbert. She's more comfortable venting to him. "Sometimes he has to take a lot of bullets," she says later. She says "sorry" a lot: three times in the first eight minutes of one session. She apologizes for serving the ball long into the gut of her hitting partner, or wide, or short. "That's part of wanting to be perfect," Gilbert says. "The only thing you ever got to be sorry about is if you didn't give 100%. You give 100%, sometimes the result is sh-t."

"It's something I'm going to try to change," Gauff says. "But I don't do it during the match. That's the important part."

Her expression turns severe when she walks off the court for a rest during a subpar training block with Russia's Daria Kasatkina. Her body language speaks volumes: Stay away. But near the end of practice, she chases down impossible balls and fires them back, displaying what her doubles partner, world No. 5 Jessica Pegula of the U.S., calls Gauff's "superpower"—her incredible court coverage. At one point, Kasatkina lobs a shot over the net that Gauff, for a moment, loses in the sun. "I can't see sh-t," she says. But she spots it and smashes a winner, delighting hundreds of onlookers.

Then Cocomania ensues. As Gauff walks toward the players' lounge, fans line up against a railing begging for autographs and

selfies. An older gentleman asks her to sign his arm. “It’s for my wife!” he says. A quartet of women fix their hair, for their Instagrammable moment with the defending U.S. Open champ. “No pushing, please,” a security guard shouts at the aggressive adults. “We’ve got little kids up here.”

Gauff seems most at ease interacting with children. “I still feel very youthful,” she says. She watches *SpongeBob SquarePants.* She dressed up as Aisha—“the Fairy of Waves” from the animated series *Winx Club*—for Halloween. She says she’s tried to incorporate the respiratory methods of Tanjiro Kamado, the protagonist of the anime series *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, into her tennis. Tanjiro’s breathing techniques give him supernatural powers. “I’m not out here slaying demons,” says Gauff. “But it does help in the pressure moments.”

Gauff’s an avid reader. She packed *Fourth Wing*, a fantasy romance novel by Rebecca Yarros that went massively viral on TikTok, in her travel bag at Indian Wells. She also keeps up on current events as best she can. She objects, for example, to the book bans enacted in her home state of Florida and elsewhere. Gauff particularly objects to a YA novel she loves, *The Hate U Give*, appearing on banned lists: the story explores racial identity and police violence. Gauff’s message to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who supported measures that have led to an increase in restrictions: “Leave the books alone.”

She feels a sense of helplessness watching Israel’s military force in Gaza. “I don’t really support the mass violence going on to innocent people on both ends of the spectrum,” Gauff says. “And there’s one side that’s getting killed at more drastically faster rates than the other side.” She wants Hamas to release all Israeli hostages and wants to see a ceasefire, but she fears that neither side is hearing the other. “I feel like it’s becoming more, if you don’t support what’s happening in Gaza, it makes you feel like you’re antisemitic,” she says. “I feel far from that.”

Gauff makes no apologies for expressing her views on one of the most fraught issues of our age. “I am not one to shy away from something that I feel informed about,” she says. “And I feel pretty informed about this topic.”

After reaching the semifinals of Indian Wells—the best showing there of her career—Gauff returns to Delray Beach in mid-March for a ceremony marking the refurbishment of the tennis courts at Pompey Park, a public facility where she trained with her dad growing up. After Gauff won the U.S. Open, the United States Tennis Association pledged to spend an amount equal to her tournament winnings, $3 million, resurfacing courts around the

country, starting here. Before Gauff hits balls with kids from the Delray Beach Youth Tennis Foundation, all wearing her signature New Balance shoe—the coordinates of Pompey Park are inscribed on the left toe—some two dozen extended-family members gather around her for pictures. “Everybody look at the camera,” Gauff says, one of the youngest members of the group, but unquestionably in charge.

Gauff is transitioning to a new phase of her life. “At first I was scared to grow up,” she says. “But now I’m embracing adulthood and womanhood.” She still lives with her parents. Her mom still washes her clothes. But Gauff hopes to move out and find her own place. “I don’t have a timeline on that,” she admits. “I always say it’ll happen in my 20s at some point.” Despite also managing the extracurricular lives of Gauff’s brothers Codey, 16, a promising baseball prospect, and Cameron, 10, a multisport athlete, Candi insists either she or Corey will continue to travel with Gauff to tournaments until, in Candi’s words, “she’s a true adult.”

“It has a lot to do with the age gap,” says Candi, pointing out that Coco is still 10 years younger than many players on tour. “It’s a lonely world.”

Gauff has had a boyfriend for about a year, whose identity she prefers to keep private. She does share that he’s from Atlanta, and not famous. “This is my first real relationship,” says Gauff. “To just have someone to talk to who is not involved in tennis at all gives me a fresh perspective.” Candi was his fourth-grade teacher. “My mom always said, if they’re bad in school, they’re probably bad as adults,” says Candi. “He’s always been a smart, nice kid.”

Meanwhile, Gauff, who’s currently ranked third in women’s singles, is still shooting for best-in-world status. “I get goosebumps representing my country,” says Gauff of her upcoming Olympic debut in Paris. “I want to win a gold so bad.” She’s backing off her childhood declarations about winning the most Grand Slams in

history. “I was just 10 and delusional,” she says. “Serena made it look too easy.” Double-digit Slam victories, she says, feels like a more realistic goal.

Sitting under an awning at Pompey Park, shaded from the late-afternoon sun, Gauff looks out at the gleaming new tennis courts. “My goal is to be relaxed and have fun and play with less pressure,” she says. “I know people are going to start talking about defending the U.S. Open title later on in the year. I’m not worried about that.” She can’t help hearing some noise, like when she fell short of expectations at two hard-court events in the Middle East in February, but her doubters continue to propel her. “All the hate comes,” she says. “People were like, ‘Oh, she’s burnt out, she’s

this, she’s that.’ I’m like, ‘Oh my God.’” In her short time on this planet, Gauff has learned more than most about perspective. “If I could win every match, I would,” she says. “But I can’t. People don’t go to work and have a good day every day. We just have to all give each other grace.” —*With reporting by* Leslie Dickstein *and* Julia Zorthian

Set design by Henry King; styling by Gem Brookes; hair and make-up by Shella Martin; production by B&A Sydney

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://ti.me/4bjNgwe

What Judge Merchan Knows About Trump

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.

The first former U.S. President to face a criminal trial and the judge overseeing those proceedings are both children of Queens. Donald Trump grew up in a faux Tudor house in Jamaica Estates, and Juan Merchan was raised a few miles down the Grand Central Parkway in Jackson Heights.

Merchan knows more about Trump than their shared geography.

The New York Supreme Court judge, named to that position in 2009, also presided over the case that found the Trump Organization guilty of criminal tax fraud for failing to pay taxes on compensation to senior executives. That trial resulted in a $435 million judgment that Trump has appealed, and jail time for Trump's chief financial officer Alan Weisselberg, who pled guilty to perjury.

It also made Merchan familiar with the players in Trump's orbit—many of whom like Eric Trump and Don. Jr. are potential witnesses in the hush-money case—and with Trump's well-worn courtroom tactics to deny, deflect and delay legal proceedings.

Trump has gone after Merchan in public, calling him a "certified Trump hater" and saying he's biased because his daughter has worked on campaign marketing for Democratic campaigns.

People who've watched Merchan for years paint a different picture. He is known for being soft-spoken, well-prepared and efficient and has a reputation for not letting his courtroom be dominated by wild antics.

"He's just a no-nonsense individual," says Alberto Ebanks, a criminal defense attorney who has argued cases in front of Merchan and graduated a year ahead of him at Hofstra Law. Merchan is "fair" and "in full command of that courtroom," Ebanks says.

That approach has been on display as Trump's trial in New York gets underway.

During jury selection, Merchan shut down Trump when he exclaimed in court about a potential juror who posted videos of people celebrating after Trump lost the 2020 election. Merchan told Trump's lawyer, Todd Blanche, that he could hear Trump speaking and see him gesturing, and warned him to make Trump stop. "He was speaking in the direction of the juror," Merchan sharply said. "I won't tolerate that. I will not tolerate any jurors being intimidated in this courtroom."

Merchan's rulings haven't all been against Trump. He told prosecutors on Monday they would not be allowed to show footage from the Access Hollywood tape of Trump describing grabbing women's genitals. (Prosecutors will be allowed to tell jurors what Trump said.)

But Merchan has shown signs that he has limited patience for Trump's tactics.

This week, Merchan warned Trump's lawyers not to draw out the jury selection as a way to delay the trial. So far Merchan and other judges in New York have rebuffed Trump's repeated efforts to

delay the trial, including a failed attempt to get the case moved to federal court, two failed attempts to get Merchan to take himself off the case, and a dozen other efforts to delay the proceedings.

Days before Trump's trial was set to start, Merchan shot down Trump's request for a delay over complaints for how the case was being depicted in news reports. In his ruling, Merchan warned Trump's team against "presenting inflammatory, baseless, or downright false claims in sworn filings," telegraphing that he wasn't going to put up with many more motions larded with unproven accusations. "The People's justifiable concern, compels this Court, again, to express its continuing and growing alarm over counsel practice of making serious allegations and representations that have no apparent basis in fact," Merchan wrote.

Trump has repeatedly blasted Merchan, in a calculated effort to turn public opinion against the judge and paint him as politically motivated. Walking out of the second day of court on Tuesday, after Judge Merchan had impaneled 7 jurors, Trump described Merchan as "a conflicted judge" who is "rushing this trial." "This is a Biden-inspired witch hunt and it should end," Trump told reporters outside the courtroom.

Trump has repeatedly put a spotlight on Merchan's daughter, Loren Merchan, who has worked as a leader of Authentic Campaigns, a firm that does marketing work for Democratic campaigns such as web design, digital fundraising, mobile messaging. Judge Merchan sought an ethical opinion on whether he should step aside. In August 2023, Merchan rejected an earlier motion by Trump to recuse himself, writing that he found "that recusal would not be in the public interest" and that "this Court has examined its conscience and is certain in its ability to be fair and impartial."

Merchan has served as a judge for nearly two decades. He migrated with his family to the U.S. from Colombia at the age of six and, while living in Queens, worked his way through New York's

Baruch College studying business administration, eventually graduating from Long Island's Hofstra University Law School. He started working as a lawyer in 1994, first as an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's trial division and later in the state attorney general's office. In 2006, Republican New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, appointed Merchan to the family court in the Bronx. Three years later, Democratic Governor David Paterson named Merchan to the New York Court of Claims. Also in 2009, Merchan was named an acting judge on New York's Supreme Court, the statewide trial court that has broad jurisdiction over criminal and civil matters.

In addition to Trump's trial, Merchan is also the judge for a case against Trump's former White House strategic advisor Steve Bannon, over allegations of criminal fraud in a fundraising effort called "We Build The Wall." That case is set to go to trial later this year.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6968242

TikTok Vows to Fight Its Ban. Here's How the Battle May Play Out

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

TikTok's fate hangs in the balance. On Wednesday, April 24, President Biden signed a bill into law that demands that the app's Chinese parent company ByteDance either sell TikTok, or face a nationwide ban.

But the bill's legislative success does not mean that TikTok is going away anytime soon. ByteDance now has at least nine months to sell the app. The new law will face legal challenges, antitrust hurdles and public backlash. And TikTok has vowed to fight back in the courts.

"Make no mistake, this is a ban… A ban on you and your voice," Shou Chew, TikTok's CEO, posted on TikTok on Wednesday. "Rest assured, we aren't going anywhere… The facts and the Constitution are on our side."

Here's what lies ahead for the immensely popular video platform.

How the anti-TikTok bill gained momentum

For many months, members of the House of Representatives, and especially conservatives, have stumped against TikTok's spread in the U.S., arguing that it is a tool for Chinese propaganda and the surveillance of the 170 million Americans that use it. Their complaints intensified in the midst of the Israel-Hamas War, when politically-charged content about the war flooded the app.

In March, the House passed a bill giving ByteDance two choices: sell the app, or face a ban. But that bill's progress stagnated when it reached the Senate. Senators on both sides of the aisle urged caution and expressed doubt the bill would hold up to a legal challenge.

However, the House found another path forward this month: They attached a similar anti-TikTok bill to a U.S. foreign policy package that includes aid for Ukraine and Israel. The measure in the package that included the ban, as well as penalties against Russia and Iran, passed 360 to 58.

Senators who have previously expressed skepticism about a TikTok bill, including Maria Cantwell, said that they would support this version. On Tuesday, the measure was approved in the Senate 79 to 18. The following day, President Biden signed it into law.

Read More: *In the Face of U.S. Ban Threats, TikTok's Parent Company is More Profitable Than Ever*

But the bill faces significant challenges

There is one major difference between this successful bill and the failed one: It gives ByteDance more time to sell TikTok. Instead of a six-month timeline, this bill allows Bytedance nine months to sell

its stake, with a possible three-month extension for a sale in-progress. This new timeline means that TikTok won't have to divest or be shut down until after the U.S. election—to the chagrin of people who believe that TikTok could be used by the Chinese government to influence the results.

Many experts had said that completing a deal in six months would have been nigh impossible, and that a year is still ambitious. For comparison, AOL's $182 billion merger with Time Warner in 2000 took roughly a year to finalize, while Facebook's $19 billion acquisition of WhatsApp in 2014 took seven months to clear regulatory hurdles.

Further, finding a buyer for TikTok may be tricky. TikTok made $16 billion in sales in the U.S. last year, and is expected to garner a massive price tag that only a handful of Big Tech companies can afford. Any large potential buyer will face intense scrutiny from the E.U. and the Biden administration, which have challenged acquisitions attempted by tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon, and Google, citing antitrust laws. Meanwhile, China has vowed to oppose a forced sale of the company.

What moves can Tiktok make?

TikTok has mobilized its rabid usership to try to turn public opinion against the bill. A MoveOn petition calling for President Biden not to ban the app has garnered over 30,000 signatures. The company has also indicated that it will wage an all-out legal war in preventing the law from being enacted. The company has had success in the courts before: In 2020, federal judges blocked an attempt by President Trump to ban TikTok or force its sale.

Michael Beckerman, TikTok's head of public policy for the Americas, wrote in an internal memo obtained by CNN that the company would "move to the courts for a legal challenge." He wrote: "This is the beginning, not the end of this long process."

TikTok will likely try to challenge the bill on constitutional grounds. A company spokesperson said the bill “would trample the free speech rights of 170 million Americans.” This line of argument has received support from some civil rights organizations. A representative for the American Civil Liberties Union has called the bill “unconstitutional,” and Nadine Farid Johnson, policy director of the Knight First Amendment Institute, wrote in a statement that the TikTok bill would “infringe” on “Americans’ First Amendment right to access information, ideas, and media from abroad.”

Bryan Cunningham, the executive director of UC Irvine’s cybersecurity policy and research institute, says that TikTok could try to challenge the law under equal protection, to argue that it disadvantages foreign-owned companies. He also expects a vigorous free speech-based challenge. While some lawyers believe the ban will be struck down by the courts, Cunningham is doubtful that either challenge will be successful. “It doesn’t actually prohibit any speech,” Cunningham says.

“It would be like trying to argue that the FCC can’t regulate who can buy and own TV stations because Americans have a right to CBS in Chicago. They don’t. They have a right to free speech, but not to a particular platform.”

[video id=NvcHQfkb]

What will happen if ByteDance doesn’t sell?

Even if ByteDance refuses to sell TikTok, triggering the ban, the app would not disappear from the United States overnight. Having TikTok on one’s phone would not become illegal. But the app would be taken off app stores and become ineligible for updating, making it buggier and less functional over time.

TikTok fans could use a VPN to pose as a user from abroad, or simply download the app in another country. But the barriers to

entry and a declining user experience would mean TikTok would lose its edge in the market and likely fade slowly over time.

“It can’t actually be fully banned,” Cunningham says. “But the law will create a huge competitive advantage for any challenger.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6969781

An Animated Guide to the Rare 2024 Cicada Co-Emergence

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

Lon Tweeten is the graphics director at TIME. His infographics and animations cover news topics including science, health, technology, and sports. He has won a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service as well as a number of other infographic awards including several from The Society for News Design.

More than a trillion noisy, inch-long cicadas are set to emerge from underground this spring to embark on the final leg of their lifetimes, in a massive co-emergence that hasn’t been seen in more than 200 years.

Cicadas that are part of both a 13-year and a 17-year brood will emerge at the same time this spring. It will be the first time since 1803—when Thomas Jefferson was President—that these particular broods simultaneously tunnel up from their burrows to find a mate and make way for the next generation of cicadas.

Cicadas will be visible in a number of states including Iowa, Illinois, Georgia, Tennessee, and others. But you don't need to worry that your neighborhood will be inundated with a greater number of cicadas than in past years; the two broods live across different regions—Brood XIII in the north and Brood XIX in the south— according to the University of Connecticut, meaning people are unlikely to witness both broods at the same time.

Here's an animated look at what will happen in the upcoming emergence of Brood XIX and Brood XIII.

Cicada nymphs emerge

Once the soil temperature near the cicadas' home reaches about 64 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, the insects begin to climb through their exit holes.

Time to molt

That same night, cicadas transform from nymphs, or their sexually immature phase, to adults. The cicadas molt into their new form by shedding their final exoskeleton. (The species already underwent

this shedding process four times while living underground, according to Arizona State University.)

Their exoskeleton hardens

Cicadas must keep a low profile in the hours after they molt to avoid being eaten by predators while their new exoskeleton hardens. Afterwards, they begin looking for mates to reproduce in a ritual that will take place six to 10 days later.

Buzzing calls for mates

Male cicadas are known for their deafening mating call, which in 2021 was reported to reach as high as 90 to 100 decibels, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The sound is caused by the vibration of their tymbal, an organ that rests on the side of their abdomen. Since the cicadas emerge all at once, their sound is hard to miss, but the CDC advises folks not to fret. The sound does not cause hearing loss because other factors, like noise duration and exposure distance, have to be taken into account.

Predators feast on the insects

A number of predators—birds, bears, fish, raccoons, turtles, and even some humans—love to eat cicadas, which are in the same family as the stink bug. While many will die as a tasty snack, the number of cicadas set to emerge is so large that predators will not make a significant dent in their population.

Females lay their eggs

After mating, female cicadas use their ovipositor—a spear-like structure—to slice into small trees, shrubs, and even grapevines. It allows the insect to make small slits into the twigs or branches and lay nests of tens of eggs at a time. (This process does not cause any serious damage to the plant.) Females lay anywhere from 400 to 600 eggs before they begin to die and their bodies become fertilizer for the soil around them.

From the eggs, nymphs hatch

Six to eight weeks after the eggs are laid, the nymphs hatch and fall to the earth. The tiny nymphs then dig to the plant's roots where they will live for the next 13 or 17 years, depending on the type of brood.

It's a regional affair

Periodical cicadas will emerge across more than 10 states this spring, but their habitat spans across the eastern and midwestern U.S. Brood XIX is geographically the largest of all broods, living from Maryland to Georgia and Iowa to Oklahoma. The next emergence will happen in 2025, with Brood XIV.

[video id=EmP1OKcl autostart="viewable"]

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6968210

PEN America Cancels Annual Award After Writers' Boycott Over Gaza War

Armani Syed is a world affairs reporter at TIME. She covers global affairs, with a focus on the SWANA region, arts and culture, and royal institutions.

PEN America has canceled its prestigious 2024 awards ceremony after nearly half the writers nominated for a prize withdrew their work in protest of the organization's stance on the war in Gaza.

The group, which is dedicated to free expression, announced on Monday the cancellation of the April 29 awards in New York City. Some 28 of the 61 authors and translators who were nominated for awards had this year withdrawn their books, citing PEN America's alleged lack of support for Palestinian writers.

Nine out of ten authors nominated for the $75,000 PEN/Jean Stein Book Award—the event's most lucrative honor—withdrew their work from consideration.

“We greatly respect that writers have followed their consciences, whether they chose to remain as nominees in their respective categories or not,” PEN America’s Literary Programming Chief Officer Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf said in a press release on Monday.

“We regret that this unprecedented situation has taken away the spotlight from the extraordinary work selected by esteemed, insightful, and hard-working judges across all categories,” Rosaz Shariyf said.

The annual awards ceremony has, since 1963, recognized outstanding literary voices across multiple genres including fiction, poetry, children’s literature, and drama.

This writers’ boycott comes amid growing discontent in the literary sphere over PEN America’s response to Israel’s ongoing bombardment of Gaza, as the conflict approaches its 200th day. Since February, over 1,300 writers and poets have called on PEN America to “find the same zeal and passion that they have for banned books in the U.S. to speak out about actual human beings in Palestine.”

A second open letter—published last week—saw 30 nominated writers and translators demand the resignations of PEN America CEO Suzanne Nossel, PEN America President Jennifer Finney Boylan, and the entire PEN America Executive Committee.

There are also question-marks about PEN America’s World Voices Festival, due to take place in New York City from May 8 to 11 and Los Angeles from May 8 to 18. Last month, prominent writers such as Naomi Klein, Michelle Alexander, and Zaina Arafat, signed an open letter withdrawing from the festival.

Following the boycott, PEN America shared the names of its 2024 finalists and winners online. The organization said it is considering how to allocate funds for each award on a case by case basis.

The estate of Jean Stein has directed PEN America to donate the $75,000 prize money to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund, calling Stein a "passionate advocate for Palestinian rights" in PEN America's press release.

"Proud, inspired," wrote novelist Maya Binyam, one of the nominees who withdrew their work, on social media platform X. "Thank you to all the authors who withdrew their work, to the PEN staff who supported our action, to the writers who withdrew from the WVF and charted a path forward, to Jean Stein for saying what PEN America refuses to—Gaza will be free."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6969954

Why Kate Middleton's New Title Is of Historical Significance

King Charles III bestowed honors on his family members and nobles, including a new historically significant title for his daughter-in-law, Kate Middleton.

The King appointed the Princess of Wales to be a Royal Companion of The Order of the Companions of Honour on Tuesday, St George's Day. The order was founded by King George V in 1917 to recognize outstanding achievements and major contributions over a long period of time to the arts, sciences, medicine, and public service. The motto of the order is "in action faithful and in honour clear."

Kate is the first member of the royal family to hold the title, the press office of the Prince and Princess of Wales confirmed in a call to TIME. The Princess is the patron of several arts organizations, including the National Portrait Gallery, the V&A (Victoria and Albert Museum), and the Royal Photographic Society. She studied art history at St. Andrews University.

There are 65 members in the Order of the Companions of Honour at a time. Notable current members are actors Dame Maggie Smith and Sir Ian McKellen, musicians Sir Elton John and Sir Paul McCartney, author J.K. Rowling, and broadcaster and biologist Sir David Attenborough. Past members were physicist Stephen Hawking, Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Non-British nationals can be honorary members in addition to the core 65.

[video id=b4DhRPU2 autostart="viewable"]

The King also awarded new honors to other relatives. He named his son Prince William, the Prince of Wales, who is married to Kate, a Great Master of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.

The order, established by King George I in 1725 although believed to originally date back as far back as the eighth century, is awarded to members of the military or civil service for exemplary service. It’s been previously given to royals.

The King also made his wife, Queen Camilla, a Grand Master and First or Principal Dame Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, established by King George V in 1917 to honor both military members and civilians.

The family honors come as both the King and the Princess are undergoing cancer treatment.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6970300

‘Putin Is My Enemy.’ The Revolution of Yulia Navalnaya

Simon Shuster is a senior correspondent at TIME. He covers international affairs, with a focus on Russia and Ukraine. For his first book, *The Showman*, he reported inside the Ukrainian President’s compound in Kyiv as the Russian invasion unfolded.

In Russian custom, the soul of the dead is believed to remain on earth for forty days, finishing its business among the living before it moves on to the afterlife. Surviving friends and relatives often

spend this period in mourning and reflection. But the loved ones of Alexei Navalny, Russia's leading dissident, did not have much freedom to abide by this custom after he died in an Arctic prison camp on February 16.

For them, and especially for his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, the days and weeks that followed his death rushed by in a blur of studio lights, airport terminals, hotel rooms and video calls. Somewhere in that time, between consoling their two children and being consoled by them, she met with President Joe Biden in San Francisco and addressed the European parliament in Strasbourg. She accused Vladimir Putin of killing her husband, and she implored the Russian people to help her get revenge. Along the way, to the surprise of many of her husband's followers, Navalnaya took on a role she had never occupied before — no longer the first lady of the Russian opposition, but now its figurehead.

It was in this new role that she agreed in early April to an interview with TIME, a little more than forty days after her husband was killed. The location took some time to figure out. Her family's exile from Russia has forced her to move around in recent years. But we agreed to meet in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, where her husband's activist organization has its base of operations. At the appointed time, Navalnaya arrived in the company of a bodyguard, striding through the parking lot in a stark black suit and patent-leather heels.

Read More: *'Share My Rage.' Read the Transcript of Yulia Navalnaya's First Interview Since Her Husband's Death in Prison*

Some of her husband's friends and allies had warned me that she could come off as distant and aloof. One of them unkindly referred to her as a "snow queen." But as we sat down to talk over coffee, her memories of Navalny often made her smile as she recalled his sense of humor, the lightness with which he faced the darkest moments in his life. Not once in those two hours did her voice

catch in her throat, and only a few times did she allow the pain of the previous weeks to show in her eyes. “There has been so little time to think, to plan, to process,” she admitted. “But we have to keep working, to keep moving forward.”

For her husband’s followers in Russia, the way forward looks far from clear with him gone. It took well over a decade of campaigning and activism for Navalny to earn his place within the opposition movement, as the only dissident to pose a genuine threat to Putin’s rule. Even after his imprisonment in 2021, Navalny continued to run his revolutionary network, to campaign against corruption and to spread his promise that Russia would one day

become a normal European democracy. That hope dimmed after Navalny's death, and for many it was extinguished.

His wife could see that in the messages she received after his death. "I saw how many people feel this loss very, very deeply," Navalnaya says. "And I really wanted to support these people, to give them some kind of hope." Her best chance of doing that, she says, was to step into his role and continue his struggle. So that is what she decided to do. In a video address three days after his death, she fought back tears as she told the people of Russia: "Share my rage – the rage, anger and hatred toward those who dared to kill our future."

Read Vice President Kamala Harris' TIME100 tribute to Yulia Navalnaya here

Many assumed that this decision had been Navalny's wish. But his wife says they had never talked about it. There was no succession plan, not even after Navalny was nearly poisoned to death in 2020. "It was not discussed," she says in our interview. His allies always clung to their faith that, sooner or later, Navalny would outlive the regime and emerge from the prison to replace it.

That vision of Russia's future died with Navalny, and his team has now set out to imagine a new one. In the weeks that followed his death, TIME interviewed over a dozen of his friends, allies, critics and fellow dissidents, traveling to find them in four of the countries where they have gone to escape Russia's system of repression. Many of them described feeling paralyzed by grief and despair in Navalny's absence. Most agreed that his wife stands the best chance of succeeding him and carrying his banner. But some wondered what she could achieve from exile, cut off from her supporters, with little if any space to operate in Russia itself.

[video id=n80ZjJcn autostart="viewable"]

The main risk, one of them told me, was that Navalnaya turns into what Russians sometimes call a “parquet politician” — attending summits and ceremonies in Western capitals, accepting prizes for her courage and calling for change, all while the Kremlin continues to dismiss her as a demagogue in exile, detached from the lives of the people she intends to save. In our interview, Navalnaya acknowledged this risk. At times it seemed to worry her more than my questions about the physical danger she faces in challenging Putin so openly.

Her core mission, she says, is to remain in touch with her supporters inside Russia, even though she cannot see or touch them. “Most of all, I want the Kremlin and its officials to understand: if they killed Alexei, then I will step up. If they do something to me, another person will come,” she says. “There are many, many people who are against the ruling authorities in Russia, against the regime, and I don’t doubt that even if they kill a great many of these people, more will appear to take their place.”

Navalnaya last saw her husband almost exactly two years before his death. At the time, he was imprisoned not far from Moscow, in Penal Colony No. 2, in the town of Pokrov, where regulations sometimes allowed the wives of inmates to come and stay with them for a couple of days. Small apartments were set aside for such visits on the prison grounds, each equipped with a kitchen, a bed and a TV set.

For the visit that would turn out to be their last, Navalny’s parents came along, bringing bags full of groceries and food they had prepared. Among his favorites was green borscht, a kind of soup with sorrel that, according to Navalny, has a “cult following” in their family. After lunch, his parents drove back home to Moscow, while his wife stayed with him for two more nights, watching figure skating events from the Beijing Olympics and talking for hours about politics.

It was the middle of February 2022, and the debates on every news network concerned the Russian troops that stood poised to launch an invasion of Ukraine. Navalny believed these armies to be part of an elaborate bluff, a way for Putin to extract concessions from the West. “Time and again the West falls into Putin’s elementary traps,” he wrote in a letter to TIME that January. “It just takes my breath away, watching how Putin pulls this on the American establishment again and again.” He argued instead for sanctions targeting the personal wealth of Putin and his closes allies.

Read More: *The Story Behind TIME’s Interview with Alexei Navalny*

Putin had not been bluffing. On his orders, Russian warplanes launched a relentless barrage of missiles across Ukraine on the morning of Feb. 24, 2022, and a ground assault involving thousands of military vehicles soon began its march on Kyiv.

Navalny, during his court hearings and in his prison letters, condemned the invasion once it was underway, calling it a “war built on lies.” But he stuck to his long-held belief that corruption, not imperialism, serves as the foundation of Putin’s regime, and he continued calling for targeted sanctions against the assets of Putin’s inner circle. By seizing their wealth, Navalny argued, the West

could cause fissures in the Kremlin elites, thus speeding the collapse of the regime that started the invasion.

Many Russian billionaires did face sanctions in the U.S. and Europe, but they did nothing to change Putin's behavior. Instead, the war intensified, and Russia's descent into dictatorship accelerated. What remained of its independent media shut down under the laws of wartime censorship in Russia, which imposed prison terms of up to 15 years for public criticism of the military's actions. Even lonely picketers in the streets of Moscow faced arrest and prosecution. One man was sentenced to two years in prison after his 12-year-old daughter drew an anti-war picture in school.

Hundreds of thousands of Russians fled the crackdown, including many of the well-heeled urbanites who had always formed Navalny's base of support. The few who stayed had no luck sparking an anti-war movement. "We did resist," one of Navalny's closest friends and allies, Ilya Yashin, wrote to me in a letter from prison about a year after the invasion started. He listed a few isolated cases of dissent that had quickly been repressed. In Yashin's case, the state sentenced him to more than eight years for posting a video about Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

"Those who remain in Russia," Yashin wrote, "are living with the rights of hostages. Many of them don't support the war, but they remain silent, afraid of repressions."

Navalny's children were already in exile by the time the invasion started. His son Zakhar was enrolled in a boarding school in Germany. His daughter Daria studied at Stanford. Their mother shuttled between them, staying in touch with her husband's activist group, the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which set up its headquarters in Lithuania. When I visited their offices in Vilnius at the start of 2022, they had just finished building a small production studio to film their livestreams for viewers in Russia. Millions of

them tuned in, and the Foundation's broadcasts soon became a vital source of news and analysis about the war in Ukraine.

Read More: *How Tech Giants Turned Ukraine Into an AI War Lab*

But its focus remained on the work that made Navalny famous in Russia: investigating acts of corruption within the elite, exposing the yachts and villas that Putin's courtiers tried to hide around the world. Their findings, released on YouTube as bingeable videos, routinely attracted millions of viewers. But, to escape arrest, the Foundation's activists inside the country were forced to go underground in 2021, when the state declared them an "extremist group," a legal status similar to that of ISIS or Al-Qaeda.

Navalnaya, then living in Moscow to remain close to her husband, had never played a prominent role in the Anti-Corruption Foundation. She did not take part in its day-to-day operations and held no position its management. The group's leading members saw her as a friend, an inspiration and a sounding board, capable of divining how Navalny would feel about a decision even when he could not be there to help them make it. She was not even deeply involved in their negotiations to win Navalny's freedom. "I knew

about these talks," Navalnaya told me. "But I didn't participate in them."

Those talks had started in early 2022, when Navalny's allies set out to arrange a prisoner swap, inviting Russia to trade him for someone locked up in the West. The dissident in charge of this effort at the Anti-Corruption Foundation was Maria Pevchikh, a scrappy and relentless activist who led the group's investigative unit before becoming its chairwoman in 2023. For two years, Pevchikh traveled across the U.S. and Europe to help facilitate the swap, approaching intermediaries who could make offers and pass messages to the Kremlin. The only one whose name she would reveal on-the-record was Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. Secretary of State, who was known to have an open line with Putin and other senior officials in Moscow. "He did not prove very useful," Pevchikh told me, noting that Kissinger died in November, months before a deal was struck.

The deal's main impediment, Pevchikh says, was the dearth of high-value Russians in U.S. custody. Eventually, they landed on a candidate in Germany. Vadim Krasikov, a hitman for the Russian intelligence services, was serving a life sentence in Bavaria; he had been convicted of murdering an enemy of the Kremlin in a Berlin park. Putin, who started his career as a KGB spy in Germany, made clear that he wanted to bring the assassin home.

In an interview with Tucker Carlson in early February, Putin hinted that Russian and Western spy agencies were working on a swap involving Krasikov, suggesting that he could be traded for Evan Gershkovich, an American journalist held in Russia on baseless charges of espionage. "They're keeping in touch," Putin said of the negotiators. "So let them do their work." He made no mention of Navalny.

Read More: *The Fight to free Evan Gershkovich*

But within a week of that interview, Navalny's allies say they understood from contacts in the U.S. and Germany that the terms of the swap had been set. On February 15, Navalnaya arrived in Germany to take part in the Munich Security Conference, an annual summit of political leaders and military brass from around the world. Pevchikh accompanied her, aiming to meet with some of the officials involved in the prisoner-swap negotiations. That night, when they checked into their Munich hotel, she said, the agreements to free Navalny had been finalized: "I thought he would be home in a week."

The following day, Yulia Navalnaya was alone in her hotel room when the news alert appeared on her phone. It bore the headline she had always dreaded: Alexei Navalny has died. "For about five seconds, I turned away," she recalls of the moment she saw his name flash up on the screen. Inertia kept her mind on the immediate cares of the day, the need to get dressed and ready for her meetings in Munich. Then the full meaning of that headline reached Navalnaya, and a wave of pain washed over her. "It was a feeling," she says, "like I cannot describe, and I hope never to feel again."

She imagined her husband in that frozen prison colony more than 2,000 miles away, north of the Arctic circle, in a facility known as the Polar Wolf. He had been transferred to that camp in December, and its wardens seemed intent on breaking his will. Guards held him in isolation, deprived him of food and curtailed his contact with the outside world. "He was starving," Navalnaya told me, looking up at the ceiling to stop her tears from flowing over. "They were torturing him with hunger. That is probably the most horrible thing I think about when I imagine his existence in the camps."

Day and night, the prison used a speaker to transmit Putin's speeches into Navalny's cell, the rambling lectures that the dictator used to justify Russia's war against Ukraine and to blame the West for provoking it. Once in a while, the broadcasts cut to a music station on the radio, and Navalny made a habit of passing notes to his wife about the songs he heard.

They were usually love songs, but the last one he told her about, in a message smuggled out through one of his lawyers, had lyrics that worried Navalnaya. "That song was just so sad," she told me, declining to name it. The message gave her the sense that her husband was losing heart, and she tried her best to cheer him. "I wrote him back: 'No, come on, that's going too far.' I laughed about it." It was the closest thing she had to a warning of what was to come.

Prison officials, in their bland pronouncements of his death, gave no explanation of the cause. They only said he had gone for a walk that morning, collapsed and died. To Navalnaya, it seemed at once impossible and inevitable. The regime had tried to kill him before, once poisoning him with a weapons-grade nerve agent that left Navalny comatose for weeks. Then again, on the day before his death, he had appeared in a Russian courtroom via video link, cracking jokes at the judge and looking healthy.

When she considered Putin's motives — why kill him now? — Navalnaya found only one theory that made any sense. Putin wanted to stop the prisoner swap, she said, to signal to the Americans and the Germans that they would still hand over Krasikov, the Russian assassin, in exchange for someone else. But they would never get Navalny in return. "Once he understood that the trade would need to involve Alexei, he decided right away to kill him," Navalnaya told me. "Then he merely gave the order when he felt the time was right."

The Kremlin's propaganda outlets barely reported the news of Navalny's death. But it spread within minutes across the vast diaspora of his supporters around the world, especially the community of activists, journalists and other Russian citizens — at least a million of them — who went into exile after the invasion of Ukraine. Their posts on social media went beyond the anguish and commiseration one might have expected. Their apparent consensus was that, without Navalny, the final strand of hope for Russia had disappeared from the horizon.

The cheerful promise of a "beautiful Russia of the future" — a catchphrase Navalny used for much of his career — had nurtured the faith of a generation of Russians, allowing them to believe that the horrors of life under Putin would not last forever. Now they felt that hope disintegrating. The war in Ukraine, the repressions in Russia, the angst and dislocation that came with living in exile — none of it had any clear end in sight for many of Navalny's followers.

Read More: *Column: Alexei Navalny Is With Us Forever Now*

On the night of his death, the voice that expressed these feelings most clearly was that of Mikhail Fishman, an anchor on Russia's only independent news channel, TV Rain, which broadcasts from a studio in Amsterdam to millions of viewers in Russia and abroad.

“Right now we’re in shock,” Fishman said live on air as he struggled to hold back his tears.

“The power of Navalny is that, from prison, he supported those of us who are free, and not the other way around. We were the ones who despaired, while he engaged in politics, made jokes, and showed us the strength of his spirit. Now all of us will need to answer his call not to give up. But how? How can we not give up?”

A few nights later, when we met for dinner in Amsterdam, the answer seemed clearer to Fishman. He had assumed after Navalny’s death that no one could ever take his place. Even if the title of opposition leader would pass to another dissident, someone with clout and experience within the revolutionary movement, the void would remain. But then Navalny’s wife stepped into that void, “and this seemed like the most natural and obvious thing,” Fishman told me. “We all exhaled. The sense of emptiness and hopelessness did not disappear. But it eased when we all saw Yulia.”

In some ways, she had long been preparing for the role. She first met Navalny while on holiday in Turkey in 1998, when they were both 22 years old. Spotting her through the window of a tour bus, the young real estate lawyer was struck by her looks and, as they got to know each other, her intellect and knack for politics. “She was the beautiful blonde who knew every cabinet minister by name,” he later said.

Navalnaya had studied at one of Moscow’s most prestigious universities, where she earned a degree in international economics before going to work at a Russian bank. After their marriage in 2000, and the birth of their daughter the following year, Navalnaya set her profession aside and focused on their family. For a while, she helped her husband’s parents sell the wicker furniture they produced at a workshop near Moscow, while he took up with a clique of activists under the tutelage of Yevgenia Albats, the grand dame of Russia’s dissident circles.

In the early 2000s, Albats ran a supper club in Moscow for young politicians, helping to school them in skills like canvassing and grassroots organizing — concepts that were almost entirely foreign to Russian politics at the time. The club, called Ya Svoboden ("I Am Free"), attracted many upstarts from across the political spectrum who would later emerge as leaders of the opposition movement. Among them, Navalny stood apart. "He was a genius of a politician, the kind that comes along once in a hundred years," Albats told me. "There has never been a political figure in our history who could speak so well with every stratum of society."

Albats first met Navalny's wife in 2006 at his 30th birthday party, which he threw in a basement nightclub across the river from the Kremlin with a banquet table full of food pressed up against the dance floor. Yulia, lithe and imposing, glided among the guests like a revelation, and the host seemed indecently proud to have such a woman for a wife. "I watched them dancing," Albats recalls. "And I thought to myself: So this is what drives him. He had to prove to her that he was worthy of her."

Now, in taking up his cause, Navalnaya may have advantages that her husband lacked. Within the revolutionary movement, she has a chance to unite the forces of the opposition, moving past the internal feuds and rivalries that cost her husband plenty of potential

allies. Among workaday Russians, her story could resonate on a more visceral level, connecting with people in ways that Navalny's appeals to freedom and democracy did not. "Her power is her motive," Albats says. "She is out to take revenge for a murdered husband, and that gives her a moral authority that people in Russia can understand."

In her new role within the opposition, Navalnaya has not been shy about using what may be her clearest advantage: the ability to move around the democratic world, lobbying its leaders and shaming the ones who refuse to stand up to the Kremlin.

A few days after Navalny's death, she flew to San Francisco to see their daughter Daria, who organized a meeting for them with President Biden. He happened to be in town for a series of fundraisers, and he spent more than an hour with them, Navalnaya told me, offering words of support that struck her as deeply felt. "Maybe it had to do with the fact that, in his life, he also suffered huge personal loss," she says. Biden's first wife and their 1-year-old daughter were both killed in a car crash in 1972. "He can understand better than most what it means, without warning, to lose someone so close to you."

Still, at their meeting, Navalnaya did not miss the chance to advance her cause. She wanted the President to impose sanctions against Putin's inner circle, and she asked him to involve the Anti-Corruption Foundation in a working group on this issue. Their investigators, led by Maria Pevchikh, have a long track record of uncovering Putin's wealth and the way his bagmen try to hide it. Biden seemed open to the idea, and he gave Navalnaya the contacts of an official in his administration who could help move the process along.

But so far, both the U.S. and European sanctions imposed after Navalny's death have been a painful disappointment to Navalnaya

and her team. They failed to hit the specific members of Putin's entourage that the Anti-Corruption Foundation had long identified as targets. Instead, the U.S. sanctioned a state-run firm that issues debit cards to millions of regular Russian citizens, including many political exiles, journalists and dissidents who will now find it harder to access their money from abroad. Russia's largest shipping company also wound up on the new U.S. blacklist, but its fleet was immediately granted exemptions, allowing it to continue operating without penalties.

In the hope of drawing a stronger reaction from Europe, Navalnaya addressed the European parliament on Feb. 28, telling its members to treat Putin not as a president, nor even a dictator, but as a mafia boss who has seized control of Russia. "You aren't dealing with a politician," she said, "but a bloody mobster." It took nearly a month after that speech for the E.U. to unveil its response to Navalny's death — a set of sanctions that would seize the foreign assets of 33 people, mostly low-level prison officials who do not earn enough to holiday in Europe, let alone hold assets there. "I wanted to scream," says Pevchikh, the lead investigator at the Anti-Corruption Foundation. "What the f—!"

Navalnaya, true to form, did a better job restraining her emotions when we discussed this question. When sanctions have so little impact, she told me, "they are not only an insult to Alexei's memory. They are an insult to the dignity of those who impose them."

In the month that followed Navalny's death, his wife and their allies had no time to come up with a long-term strategy. Putin's re-election to a fifth presidential term was scheduled for the middle of March, leaving his opponents only a few weeks to game out a plan of action for election day.

They knew the regime tended to be vulnerable around the time of these ballots. In 2011 and 2012, Navalny got his best chance to lead a revolution against Putin after the Kremlin rigged two national elections in a row. At least 100,000 people came out on the streets of Moscow that winter to protest, cheering as Navalny called Putin a “scared little jackal” from a stage on Sakharov Avenue.

Read More: *From Beyond the Grave, Russian Dissident Alexei Navalny Challenges Vladimir Putin at the Polls*

This time, Putin would not allow such acts of defiance. The authorities had signaled that any political protests would be met with overwhelming force and mass arrests. To show that their movement would survive Navalny’s death, the opposition needed a way to demonstrate dissent without putting their supporters in danger of repression.

Navalny’s funeral, held in Moscow on March 1, gave them some hope that it would be possible. Tens of thousands of his supporters turned out mourn his loss, subsuming his gravesite in an enormous mound of flowers. From exile, Navalnaya watched videos of the funeral procession. They convinced her of the latent power of her husband’s followers. “At any opportunity, they are ready to go out into the streets,” she told me. But harnessing that power on election day proved difficult.

In a series of strategy sessions, Russia’s most influential dissidents in exile came up with a plan called “Noon against Putin.” It called on all of Putin’s opponents in Russia to gather at polling stations at noon on election day and line up to vote against him. To make these people look different from other voters, the organizers wanted them to wear the same colors — blue, or white and blue — when they showed up.

But activists working inside Russia said it would be risky to wear matching colors; it could attract the attention of police. “The

response we got from our people in Russia was, Are you crazy? That's too dangerous," says Pavel Khodorkovsky, an opposition figure living in exile in New York City. "They said, 'You people in exile don't know what it's like for us here.'" As a compromise, some of the organizers suggested that people wear blue "where it is safe to do so." Practically none of them did.

In the end, the midday flash mobs against Putin still took place on election day, and many thousands of Russians took part, standing in line at noon as instructed by the organizers. But they were indistinguishable from the people who came to cast their ballots for Putin at the same time. On the Kremlin's television channels, the crowds lined up at polling stations were, predictably enough, cast as enthusiastic supporters of the regime, not as demonstrators against it. From the footage shown on TV, it was impossible to tell the difference.

Even so, Navalnaya felt the action had an impact. "I see that event as highly successful," she told me. "It's very difficult at a time of war, at a time when people can be jailed or sent to prison for holding a sign or liking a post — it's very hard to find the moment when people are ready to go out and not be afraid. This demonstration gave them that chance, and it was the right thing to do."

On Election Day, Navalnaya was in Berlin, and she lined up to vote at midday outside the Russian embassy in the German capital, standing alongside hundreds of other Russian exiles and supporters of her husband. Some of them worried that she would be taken into custody as soon as she entered the embassy grounds, which legally count as Russian territory. “They told me they would fight to pull me out if that happened,” she recalls. “We laughed about it.”

But, once inside, the Russian poll workers treated her as just another voter. They checked her passport and handed her a ballot. Across the front of it, Navalnaya wrote her dead husband’s name. Then she slipped it into the ballot box and walked back into the safety of the Berlin afternoon.

A couple of weeks later, I arrived at the headquarters of Anti-Corruption Foundation, which stands on a busy street in Vilnius, its door equipped with a facial-recognition system that scans the face of every visitor. My arrival caused a red sign to flash up on the system’s screen. “Stranger,” it said.

Navalny’s press secretary, Kira Yarmysh, soon came down to let me inside. During my previous visit at the start of 2022, their headquarters had looked like a shoestring operation, with beanbags on the floor where activists sat and worked on battered laptops. Now the space looked more impressive, with three fully operational studios and a high-tech control room full of gleaming dials and monitors.

To make room for its staff of around 60 activists, the organization now rents out another floor of the building to house its investigative unit. Millions of people inside Russia watch their broadcasts, which seek to counter the barrage of propaganda that issues from Russian television. In March 2024, their YouTube channels had 19 million unique views, about 75% of them from people inside Russia.

On the day of my visit, the heads of the organization had gathered to plot out the future of their movement, a light rain pattering at the windows of their conference room. Forty-seven days had passed since Navalny's death, and this was the first strategy session at which his wife occupied the leader's seat, her hair pulled back, her thin frame wrapped in a bulky sweater.

In preparation for the meeting, the Anti-Corruption Foundation had sent out a private call to its activists, asking them to offer ideas for specific actions, demonstrations and other tactics for weakening the regime. Their prospects looked dire that afternoon. Putin had secured another six-year term in office during the March presidential elections; the official tally gave him 88% of the vote.

Improbable as it seems, the result was roughly in line with independent surveys conducted by the Levada Center, a respected pollster that the Kremlin has banned as a "foreign agent." In a nationwide poll conducted in February — two years into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and around the time of Navalny's killing — the agency found that 86% of respondents supported Putin, while only 11% disapproved of his rule.

In our interview, Navalnaya insisted that tens of millions of Russians oppose the regime. "Of course I'm sure of this," she said when I challenged her on this figure. "Almost everyone opposes the war, they just do so in different ways," she continued. "Some of them are resisting, and that number is of course not in the tens of millions. But many people are against all of this. It's just that, well, not everyone is ready to be a hero. So they go on living their normal lives."

Order your copy of the 2024 TIME100 issue here

In Russia today, even the mildest expression of public dissent requires a degree of heroism and a willingness to sacrifice that few of Russia's citizens can muster. The goal of the opposition

movement in such circumstances, says Navalnaya, will be to offer people ways to resist without facing the wrath of the Russian police state. Participating in a flash mob, signing a petition, writing a letter to an imprisoned dissident — anything that gives people the sense that they are not alone in their desire for political change.

“We have to survive and be ready for any opportunity that may arise,” Pevchikh told me after the strategy session with Navalnaya. She compared it to training for the Olympic Games without knowing when they would take place, or what sport their team would be forced to compete in. Past revolutions have shown that minor flare-ups of public dissent can spread quickly into a conflagration. It is impossible to know where the first spark will come from, she told me — a natural disaster, an act of brutality by the police, a dissident murdered in prison. “But we have to be ready,” Pevchikh says. “Training every muscle, keeping our network alive.”

Navalnaya says she is ready to wait, and to fight, for as long as it takes. Giving up now, she says, would mean that her husband’s efforts, his sacrifices and his death would all have been in vain. At one point in our interview, I asked what Navalny might have made of her decision to take up his struggle. She paused for a moment and looked at her hands. “Honestly, I don’t want to make guesses about this,” she said finally. “Otherwise, in difficult moments, I may start to wonder: What if this wasn’t his wish? What if he wanted the opposite?’” Such thoughts could force Navalnaya to doubt herself, and she cannot afford to do that now. Nor can the movement she seeks to lead.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6967013

How to Start Foraging, According to TikTokers

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

There are more than 400,000 species of plants on Earth and at least half are suitable for human consumption—yet you'll only find a small portion at the grocery store.

That's part of the reason why Sam Thayer loves foraging. He started collecting wild food from the woods when he was a kid, and he still has cravings for delicacies he can't buy. "Last year I gathered about 30 gallons of serviceberries"—blueberry-like fruits that grow on trees and shrubs—"and I make fruit leather and eat it as a snack year-round," says Thayer, a naturalist who lives in Northwest Wisconsin and has authored an array of field guides. "I have about 8 pounds of Wapato, which is a tuber, in my pantry, and I grind it up into hot cereal for breakfast. I love it, and you can't buy it."

Foraging spiked in popularity during the pandemic, when people who felt unsafe going to the store discovered it was a fun way to

collect healthy, nutrient-packed food from the great outdoors for free. It's possible to forage in all sorts of places, even cities: Thayer recalls an excellent salad he made out of leaves plucked from trees in Washington, D.C. For all these reasons, foragers have found a home on TikTok, where millions of people watch videos explaining how to harvest puffball mushrooms, gather and process black walnuts, and make wild violet syrup.

We asked a few of TikTok's most popular foragers, including Thayer (aka Well Fed Wild on TikTok), to share their best tips on getting started.

Do your homework before setting out

It's often easiest to get a feel for foraging in your backyard or at a local park. But make sure to check the rules first: Some parks, nature centers, and other public properties don't allow foraging, says Gabrielle Cerberville—aka "Chaotic Forager" on TikTok—who's based in Charlottesville, Va. To find out, check an online resource like your state's Department of Natural Resources, or contact someone from the park you're interested in foraging at, she advises.

Read More: *7 Ways to Bring a Dead Friendship Back to Life*

It's also best not to forage where there's obvious pollution, like near train tracks or next to busy highways. And while perhaps it should go without saying, don't forage on private property unless you have explicit permission. Alexis Nikole Nelson—aka the "Black Forager" on TikTok—sometimes passes homes in her neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio, with super unusual or eclectic plants. She leaves a note with her contact information, which "puts the ball in their court," she says. "When I see a yard and I'm like, 'Oh my God, three pawpaw trees and a persimmon,' I know I need to become their friend."

Stock up on simple supplies

You don't need much gear to forage, experts agree. Nelson likes to take a swiss army knife, which she might use to saw a branch that's fallen across a trail or to cut a mushroom off a tree. She wears a backpack filled with cotton satchels that she can put her finds in to keep them separate and organized until she gets home; plastic grocery store bags also do the trick. As for what to wear? "I would love to say that I'm always in nice, sturdy hiking boots, but I find myself foraging in platform Crocs more frequently," she says with a laugh. Closed-toe shoes are always a good idea when you're venturing out in nature.

Look for easy-to-identify fruits and veggies

If you're new to foraging, look for what you already know, Cerberville advises—like dandelions. You can do a lot with the easy-to-spot flowers: "Every part is edible," she says. "The roots can be roasted and brewed, kind of like coffee. They're also really good ground up and put into coffee cake or different sorts of baked goods."

Read More: *What to Know About Orienteering, the 'Thinking Sport'*

Flowers like lilacs and roses, meanwhile, can be turned into a simple syrup that looks and tastes like honey, Cerberville says. Or, you can add them to a salad for a splash of color. You might also recognize field garlic, a common weed that can be used as a substitute for garlic or onion powder. To figure out what's in season near you, join local foraging groups on Facebook. Members tend to post photos of their daily finds, which can inspire your search.

Only eat something if you're positive you know what it is

A rule of thumb: Don’t put something in your mouth if you can’t identify it with 100% confidence. If you’re uncertain, check your field guide, Thayer recommends. When a forager eats something they shouldn’t, it usually stems from carelessness, not misidentification, Thayer says—someone shoves a weed or mushroom into their mouth, for instance, without attempting to figure out what it is.

Don’t over-complicate your recipes

People tend to relish the scavenger-hunt aspect of foraging—but once they get home, they aren’t sure what to do with their finds, Nelson says. Some feel like their entire dish needs to be foraged, a TikTok-worthy concoction that wouldn’t be found in any cookbooks. Take the pressure off, she advises, and consider which foraged ingredients could stand in for ones you already love.

Nelson enjoys spinach and artichoke dip, for example, so she now makes it out of foraged lamb’s quarters (wild spinach) and burdock (a root vegetable). And instead of blueberry muffins, she makes serviceberry muffins. “You don’t have to rebuild the wheel,” she says.

Be respectful

Foragers tend to be ecologically conscious and committed to preserving and protecting the land. “We’re thinking sometimes years in advance about wanting to be able to come back to the same spot and enjoy the same bounty,” Cerberville says. It’s essential to be mindful of how you move through the environment, leaving no sign that you were there.

Read More: *Put Your Shoes Back On. Here’s the Problem With Going Barefoot*

Another rule of thumb: Take only what you need. This helps ensure the plant or fungi will continue to grow back—and that there will be some left for the other people and animals that pass by next. Take mushrooms, for example. “Deer eat mushrooms, squirrels eat mushrooms,” Cerberville notes. “It’s really important that when we’re talking about sustainability, we’re thinking not just in an anthropocentric way, but in an ecologically deep way where we’re considering the needs of everything around us.”

Have fun

People have different reasons for foraging: the food is healthy, it saves money. “But those are just the excuses we make up,” Thayer says. “The secret is, it’s fun.” He describes searching for and collecting wild food as awe-inspiring and gratifying. “It’s such a profound joy when you come across a lake where the wild rice is ripe, and you’re like, ‘We’re going to get our year’s supply of rice today,’” he says. He recalls a recent visit to a nearby farm where, with the owner’s permission, he picked 76 gallons of hickory nuts. He pressed them into cooking oil and gave bottles away to friends and family. “Foraging has the self-reliant joy of being connected to what it is to be human,” he says.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6900325

The Modi-fication of India Is Almost Complete

Michael Kugelman is director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center.

Earlier this month, two Indian writers published an ode to their Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Written in lyric form and titled "Forever In Our Hearts," it recounts his achievements while singing his praises in highly effusive language. "With courage and wisdom/you show citizens the way," it gushes. "Oh Modi, oh Modi/their hopes never sway/A people's beacon, in whom they see light/Oh Modi, oh Modi, guiding day and night."

Such reverence captures the essence of Modi's popularity. Many simply respect him; many others seemingly worship him. He's beloved by a large majority of the country, as evidenced by an approval rating that climbed to a new high of 75% earlier this year. Victory in the upcoming general elections—which begins Friday and runs through June 1—is widely expected.

There's much that explains Modi's popularity. That includes his personality (supporters view him as incorruptible), leadership and

communication styles, and his policy achievements at home and abroad—not to mention a weak opposition and the massive BJP machine behind him. Above all, and perhaps most worryingly, he's won over millions for his government's aggressive Hindu nationalism. That includes laws and policies that discriminate against Muslims (such as denying fast-track citizenship to Muslim refugees from neighboring nations, restricting or banning beef in some states, and expunging mentions of Muslim history from school textbooks). Some of Modi's party colleagues and supporters have resorted to hate speech, and the country has seen pronounced and rising numbers of attacks on religious minorities. Modi supporters have also propagated conspiracy theories against Muslims (including the "love jihad" that baselessly claims that Muslim men court Hindu women to force them to convert). This has all played out against shrinking space for dissent, with crackdowns on media and broader civil society.

Not all of this is unprecedented. Pre-Modi, India experienced religious tensions (and deadly riots). Indian Muslims have tended to be the most vulnerable, but communal tensions have harmed Christians and Sikhs. There have also been periods where democracy struggled—including states of emergency between 1975 and 1977. It was justified by the then-government of Indira Gandhi (of the Congress party) to restore law and order following massive opposition protests. But those cases were episodic. What's happening today is continuous, and playing out on a greater scale. And much of it—including the Prime Minister publicly performing religious ceremonies—is very new.

Read More: *India's Ayodhya Temple Is a Huge Monument to Hindu Supremacy*

The Modi-era actions are highly controversial because of India's constitutionally enshrined secular traditions and resilient democracy. But while this Modi-fication of India has not gone down well with many citizens—particularly Muslims—it has far

too many backers to be characterized as a wholesale trampling on the public will. This may be the tyranny of the majority, but it's also something that enjoys a public mandate.

For Modi and his mammoth base, this new India is stronger domestically and internationally, more confident, and utterly democratic. It delivers big-bang achievements—from landing on the moon to becoming a top-performing economy. The Modi-ification of India has provoked pushback, and even mass protests. But rarely has Modi reversed course on a new policy or law—and never on religion-based issues. The same is likely to be true in a third Modi term.

On the international stage, Modi's policies have generated extensive criticism. Yet foreign governments are in no position to do anything about it. The West perceives India—because of its size, military, and economic clout—as a crucial partner in efforts to counter China. Much of the broader world sees India as a partner in these or other ways. There is little appetite to upset India over internal affairs or use any leverage to push a change of tack. It's India, therefore, not its critics, that has leverage to wield.

There is little choice, then, but to accept the reality of a Modi-fied India, and that India will be what Modi and so many of his compatriots want it to be.

For the West, this is easy when guided by purely strategic concerns. Sure, there are positions India takes—like its embrace of multipolarity, which risks diluting U.S. power, and its enduring partnership with Russia—that don't thrill Western capitals. Yet the Modi-fication of India could undermine the U.S. and its allies' interests. For instance, Washington wants India to attract more foreign tech firms to reduce their presence in China. But New Delhi's crackdown on social media content risks scaring some away. A third Modi term could also produce more communal unrest, distracting his government's foreign policy bandwidth.

All that said, the Modi-fication of India is not necessarily irreversible. Whether after his third term or beyond, the 73-year-old Modi will have to retire. The BJP, deprived of its wildly popular leader, may struggle to adjust without a man so closely associated with the party. This may provide an opening for a Congress that has floundered since losing power in 2014.

Political opportunities could also emerge for new BJP leaders with different ideas and policies. Much will depend on who succeeds Modi as BJP head. The two top candidates, interior minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, are fervent and at times aggressive proponents of Hindu nationalism. Other possible successors are more moderate.

Nevertheless, for now and certainly in the immediate aftermath of June 1, don't expect any modifications to India's Modi-fication.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6968332

Brittney Griner: What I Endured in a Russian Prison

Griner is a six-time WNBA All-Star and two-time Olympic gold medalist. She is the author of Coming Home, *written with Michelle Burford.*

Prison is more than a place. It's also a mindset. When I entered Corrective Colony No. 2—or IK-2, in Mordovia, a region more than 300 miles east of Moscow—I flipped a switch in my head. *I'm an inmate now,* I told myself. *I'll be here at least nine years.* I even rehearsed my release date: Oct. 20, 2031. I knew that might change. Still, focusing on a goal would get me through the nightmare. As deeply as I cared for my wife Relle and my family, I had to seal off that love to some extent. I felt softness would compromise my toughness.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, new inmates at prisons in Russia were initially isolated and tested for various infectious diseases, from TB to hepatitis B. That sequestering became more important with COVID-19, with overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and communal living ensuring rapid spread. I recall

spending only one week in quarantine, with five other women. A pin on our uniforms displayed our names and one or more colors, from white and yellow to green and burgundy. The colors gave the guards your story at a glance: aggressive toward staff, suicidal, arsonist, swindler, runaway, on and on. Mine was white, signaling drug-related charges. Around campus I'd spot the rainbow, including black for the most heinous crimes: Murder. Terrorism. Torture.

I got the lay of the land from Ann and Kate, the two inmates in IK-2 with the best English. Kate assisted the deputy warden, whom the inmates called Mother of Dragon—tall, blue camo, 60s, and she breathed fire while waving her baton. Ann brought us cake that night, a perk of being the head cook. Kate gave me the lowdown, starting with rule one. "If a guard stops you," Ann said, "you have to tell them your crime and release date." She taught me every word of it in Russian. I practiced but never mastered it.

They also described the grounds and other rules. All prisoners were housed in multilevel buildings called detachments, like a quad. Each was overseen by the most senior inmate in the group. "No handcuffs here," Ann said. The guards were watching but didn't escort prisoners through the colony, which revolved around the Yard. On one side was the cafeteria, where three daily meals were served: edible but still distasteful, aside from the honey cake I craved. Behind it was a church, a visitation room, an infirmary, and the market. All could be visited at certain times on weekends. There was also an orphanage for the children of inmates who'd given birth while incarcerated. They could keep their babies there until the children turned 2. Out of view was the hole for troublemakers. "Don't end up there," Ann warned. There were stories of women who'd been beaten bloody and then left for weeks in solitary.

Some requirements were like those I experienced in detention before I was sentenced: 6:00 a.m. roll call, 10:00 p.m. lights out,

beds tightly made. Three realities were new and awful. One was the bathroom. The second was my job. My building leader was the third. The stripe on her pin gave me chills.

Read More: *Brittney Griner's Fight for Freedom*

For seven days I was totally off the grid. My team had been told I'd been transferred from detention but didn't know when or where. "I have no idea where you are or if you'll get this letter," Relle wrote to me. "I'm in shock and disbelief. I wish none of this was happening. We will find you, Babe, I promise." She'd heard the same stories I had, of inmates crammed in dark and dingy train cars, rattling across Russia for sometimes months. Was I eating, sleeping, or even still alive? My family didn't know. On the eighth day, one of my lawyers, Maria, finally networked her way to someone who whispered my whereabouts and confirmed them in a letter: "Yes, Brittney Yevette Griner is with us."

Maria and my other lawyer Alex planned the long journey to see me while I moved into my quad. A short woman with black hair met me at the entrance. Through Ann, she introduced herself as Val, the building leader. Though she greeted me warmly, I knew she was trouble. Ann told me Val had once led a criminal organization, pointing out people to be assassinated. In the outside world that made her dangerous. In prison it earned her respect. She'd been at IK-2 since 2008 and was the warden's right hand. Prison 101: stay away from inmates in the boss's pocket. Val made that impossible. She tried to turn me into her bestie.

Our building had three levels. I was on the third. Each floor had 50 women, scattered among three massive bedrooms. My room had 20 inmates. When I entered, they all just stared. No one spoke English, and Val spoke very little. She shooed several women out of her way and directed me to my bed, next to hers.

The bathroom was a special hell. There was no hot water at IK-2. If you chose to shower—and most didn't—you heated water in an electric kettle and poured it in your bucket. The shower was a tiny, tiled stall behind a folding screen. I was too big, so I squatted behind the screen, scooped water over my dreads, and tried to get clean. Meanwhile, the restroom buzzed. It was one big open area with four toilets facing each other and six sinks shared by all 50 of us. I saw a lot I didn't want to see, and the room reeked, as did most of the women.

The guards allowed building leaders to do mostly as they wanted, so Val hogged the restroom for herself at 5:30, a half-hour before lights on. All others shoved in whenever, allowed 10 minutes max. A week in, Val began insisting I rise early and use the bathroom while she did. She also demanded that her main minion, a sweet woman named Sveta, heat my water for me. I didn't want to become known as Val's evil twin, but eventually gave in. I did my best to keep my distance otherwise.

No luck there, because Val was also my boss. We all had different shifts depending on our jobs, but Russian labor camps are called that for a reason. All inmates work 10-, 12-, or 15-hour-or-longer days. We earned a few rubles an hour, around 25¢. It was basically slave labor.

Read More: *America Asked the Wrong Questions About Brittney Griner*

I worked in sewing, in a factory-like building with row after row of Soviet-era machines. There was no ventilation and little heat. No bathroom breaks. We knew to empty our bladders during the 20-minute lunch break. Each group was given a quota, around 500 military uniforms a day. Teams who failed were berated. A girl near me was sewing so fast she stitched together her fingers, which meant she bled onto the garment and slowed production. Her leader

yanked the material from her hand, threw it on the floor, and screamed for her to pick it up and continue.

More From TIME

[video id=h9Witaq0 autostart="viewable"]

I was too tall to fit at the sewing machines, so Val made up a job for me: clipping threads from buttons using mini scissors, like the kind used to cut nose hairs. The buttons had been freshly sewn onto jackets made of stiff, waterproof material. Once I'd cut off stray threads, I used a damp sponge to wipe off the powder markings the sewers had used as guides then buttoned the jacket from top to bottom. The job sounds simple, but it wasn't for me, and I had the bruised hands to prove it. The hardest part was standing hunched over a worktable for hours. My knees swelled; my back throbbed. That was my first job. My next would involve a whole new round of danger.

Evenings brought dinner, TV time in the common area, and calls from each floor's phone room. Val ran that show too. Newcomers in our building got no calls their first year, simply because she said so. Even if she'd let me use the phone, I could've called home only with outside permission. I was surrounded by women, but I'd never felt more alone.

My lawyers came to visit about a week into my time at IK-2. I was overjoyed to see familiar faces and fought back tears when I saw them. Visitation took place in a small room. I had to get there early so I could be searched. After stripping to my boxers, I dressed and entered a room with a camera above. A guard stood nearby, monitoring our conversations. Alex had to hold up any letters to the divider and have me read them.

They brought news from home. Midterm elections had come and gone, which they felt cleared the path for talk of a trade. My agent Lindz was in constant touch with the White House and the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs. “President Biden has made public statements about his commitment to getting you home and he’s at the G-20 this week,” she wrote. “Putin isn’t there but Russian officials are, so there will be conversations.” My lawyers reiterated how much they still believed I’d be freed, though they were saddened by my aggressive nine-year sentence.

Pops sent Scriptures for me to cling to. Relle tried to lift my spirits with her usual humor.

Once I’d moved into the quad, Kate and Ann visited when they could, but far less than they had initially. I begged to be in their quad, which was for the best behaved. I was told I’d have to be at

IK-2 two years before I could even apply. Ann tried to pull some strings to get me in, but Val's strings were longer.

Even from afar, Ann and Kate became my sanity. Kate got me out of my cell on errands while Ann gave me the hookup. Soon after I arrived, she took me to another woman named Sveta. This Sveta was less than 5 feet, with long blond hair, and was the sweetest person you'd ever meet. She was the master seamstress. She took quick measurements and soon delivered two uniforms—one for work, another for weekends, with the purpose of reducing funk—plus an overcoat. She also made me pajamas, mittens, and extra scarves. "How's my big friend?" I'd joke when I saw her. "How's my little friend?" she'd reply. She didn't know English either, but I taught her that phrase. My new uniform at least covered all of me. Still, it'd be no match for a Russian winter.

After three days in sewing, I could hardly stand. "I need to get out of there," I told Ann. I also wanted to move away from my assassin boss.

On the one hand, Val kissed up to me. On the other, she tried knocking me down to size. One night, she bumped into me, hard. I shoved her to the floor as the other girls stared. She pretended to laugh it off. Me too. I even helped her up from the floor like, *My bad*. But we both knew it was no accident.

Ann and I went together to ask the warden if I could do different work. "Tell her she'll get no special treatment," he barked.

We next tried our luck with one of the deputy wardens, this tall woman who had played volleyball back in the day. "Her knees and back are killing her," Ann translated. Feeling desperate, I showed the deputy warden my blistering hands, and she agreed to move me from sewing to fabric cutting.

My new crew was made up of second offenders. It was unheard of for a new inmate to work alongside the vets, who follow their own rules to some degree. It was also unheard of to have a 6-ft.-9 American in a Russian slave camp, so concessions had to be made. My new task was dangerous: I sliced large pieces of fabric using a spinning blade. If we got an order for military jackets, me and another inmate would grab a huge fabric roll, hoist it onto a big table, roll out the amount of fabric needed, clamp it down, and then lower the rotating blade to cut it. After cutting, we'd place a big stencil on each fabric piece and mark it with chalk for the sewing team. Then we'd count the pieces, bundle them, and haul them to the next building. I did the most hauling, carrying two huge bags at a time, one on each shoulder.

Our machine was basically a rusted old table saw with no shield. Several of the 30 women in my group were missing fingers. My partner had a long scar on her face, starting near her eye. Alex had given me a traveler's dictionary that I took to work. But it had phrases like *Where's the nearest restaurant?* rather than *How do I keep from killing myself with a blade?* I had several close calls.

Shortly after I started my second job, I got sick. When I inhaled, I felt like my breath had frozen in my lungs. My hands were always freezing, my head cold. Our morning exercises were required even in blizzard conditions. The snow that constantly gathered on my head would melt and make my wrap damp. Same with my uniform. Also, we were required to hand-wash our clothes in the bathroom sinks and then air-dry them either on clotheslines outside (they'd freeze) or on the radiators. That was if you could get a spot on one of the few radiators. Val allowed me a place to lay out my wet socks and underwear, but they never got dry. Worse than being cold was being wet and cold.

Read More: *The Fight to Free Evan Gershkovich*

And then there was my hair. My dreads had become knotted over the months. At IK-2, they froze together. My iced locs started molding beneath that wrap. They took three days to dry after I showered. During exercise on frigid mornings, I could literally feel a head cold coming on.

At one point the entire prison lost electricity. That temp dropped so fast. It started on a Saturday and lasted three days. I had on every piece of (damp) clothing I owned. Luckily, no fights broke out, and no one tried to escape. The guard dogs were still wide awake. Some inmates took advantage of the cameras being off by hugging up with their girlfriends on other floors.

I tried to warm up by helping Ann cook for the colony. In a field near the kitchen, she and her team made our meals over makeshift campfires. I carried half a cow from the deep freeze to the field. My lawyers had been concerned I'd be given the prison's toughest jobs because of my size. True. The guards once had me shoveling snow and breaking up ice around a building and were shocked at how quickly I got it done. I wanted the difficult jobs. They took my mind off things.

The physical exertion probably weakened my immune system. That plus my wet hair and uniform and the power outage broke me all the way down. I felt like I was dying. I didn't get tested for COVID-19. The nurse in the infirmary took my temperature, which was high, and then gave me Theraflu and sent me back to work. My team had connected me with two local attorneys to help with any issues that arose, since Alex and Maria were so far away. They couldn't do anything legally for me, just checked on me. One dropped off medicine and other supplies. She also visited me while I was sick, just so I could get out of work. I laid my head down on my side of the partition and took a nap.

Around that time I celebrated Thanksgiving alone, jailhouse style. I bought a smoked turkey leg from the market. In my quad's kitchen,

I deboned the turkey and made rice, put both in a bowl, and poured soy sauce over them. I thought about Relle, Mom, and Pops, my whole family gathered in Houston. I ached that I couldn't be with them.

My locs kept freezing after I recovered. I started thinking about making it through the coming winter and possibly eight more. The damp mop on my head would make that tougher. In late November I decided to cut it off.

You know a Black woman only when you know her hair journey. When I was in elementary school, my mom tried to lay down my hair with thick grease. That lasted two minutes. And getting it combed out on the weekends was an ordeal. A few times my Momma tried to flat iron it. My curls quickly made a comeback.

In high school I wore braids or had my hair pulled back in a giant poof ball. Occasionally, I'd pick it out into a big 'fro, Angela Davis style. Then, at the end of my freshman year at Baylor, I started locking it. Dreads are a commitment—if you don't like them, you've gotta chop off all your hair to start again—so I began slowly. I did two-strand twists in the front, with braids still in the back. From then on I just kept twisting the front with Jamaican beeswax and thinking, *I like this*. By the time I met Relle, I had a

nice full head of locs. I loved how easy they made my life. I didn't have to think much about my hair. I could just hoop.

After almost 20 years with dreads, I was ready for a change. They were breaking in a few places. If I pulled them, they'd snap off. For two years before my detainment, I'd been going back and forth on whether to cut them. But me and my dreads had history: coming out to Pops, the WNBA draft, my rise at Baylor, my love story with Relle. Together, we'd been through the good, the bad, and the devastating. Now I was facing the sick and frozen. They had to go.

In prison I needed permission to chop my hair. Ann helped me write an application to give to Mother of Dragon, telling her I'd keep getting sick if I kept them. She agreed. There was a salon at the colony. The stylist was Val's girlfriend, an older lady named Jenya. She had a nice little setup: barber chair, hair tools, pictures of hairstyles on the walls. And she did it all, from perms and buzz cuts to color and curls. Still, when I sat down in her chair, she looked at my dreads like, What do I do with this?

I showed her a picture of my nephew E.J., who had the short fade I wanted. I gestured for her to snip off the locs. A dread at a time, the old me fell to the floor. She then put a guard on her clippers and—*bzzzz*—raked the vibrating steel over my scalp. I couldn't see while she cut. I just had to trust her. Later, when she turned me around to the mirror, I thought, *Not bad*.

Since arriving at IK-2, I'd been frozen, sick, got my hair chopped off. The girl I once was now lay in a heap of dreads on the concrete floor. But the true me, the survivor, remained. I'd always thought of myself as someone who could endure almost anything. At a slave camp in Russia in the dead of winter, I found out just how tough I was.

Adapted from Coming Home *by Brittney Griner with Michelle Burford. Copyright © 2024 by Brittney Griner, out in hardcover on*

May 7 from Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6972085

Democrats in Trump Districts Are Outraising Republicans in Biden Districts

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

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

Rare is the member of Congress who represents a district that voted for the other party's nominee for President. Gerrymandering has rendered those political survivors harder to find than unicorns while reducing the truly competitive House districts to so few they fit on a single whiteboard in strategists' offices. But it's those oddities that draw intrigue and, with that, campaign cash. And looking at the money flowing to those 22 lawmakers, a telling trend emerges that may indicate something important about 2024.

In the first three months of this year, the official campaign committees for the five Democrats who represent districts that

voted for Donald Trump in 2020 are outraising the 17 Republicans from Joe Biden-backing districts by a more than two-to-one margin. (An 18th Republican, George Santos, began this Congress as a political unicorn but became an Icarus and ex-House member. His seat is now in Democrats' hands.)

Every single day of the last three months, these mismatched Democratic lawmakers in the House raised, on average, more than $12,000 in hard dollars for their campaign, according to a new TIME analysis of records filed to the Federal Election Commission this week. (This analysis is ignoring super PACs, joint fundraising efforts with state or national parties, and independent and advocacy groups.) Republicans, who are enduring an incredibly narrow and fractious majority in the House, brought in an average of $5,200 daily for their campaigns in the last quarter. Put bluntly: this doesn't suggest the most vulnerable Republicans are successfully convincing donors to stock the war chests.

In terms of total dollars that donors have handed over, each of these Democratic lawmakers on average have about a $1 million head start over their Republican counterparts. (Democratic Rep. Matt Cartwright's $280,000 personal loan only explains part of this disparity; Republican Rep. David Schweikert similarly loaned himself about $240,000, and Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, an Oregon Republican, has loaned her campaign $411,000.)

To be sure, the balance of power in the House doesn't rest on this oddball group. Democrats are looking well beyond the 17 mismatched Republican lawmakers to target the GOP nominees by tying them to the unpopular end of federal abortion rights and Trump, who will almost certainly once again be atop the ticket. And Republicans are banking on Trump's die-hard base to keep them in office, turning out more enthusiastically than anyone wearing their Biden aviators with a mix of exhaustion and disappointment. Still, this analysis indicates that Democrats—and

their donors—understand just how close they are to reclaiming the House's gavel.

A *CQ Roll Call* review of the same records shows battleground Democrats with an average 21% advantage over their similarly positioned Republicans. The *CQ Roll Call* report considered 77 seats that are seen as competitive, including both the crossover group and others.

There was a time not that long ago when this crossover cohort would have been fairly common. In 2000, for instance, 46 Democrats were elected from districts that supported George W. Bush's Republican campaign, while 40 GOP lawmakers went to Washington to represent districts that favored Democrat Al Gore. Those 86 seats accounted for one out of every five seats in the House. Even as late as 2010, 62 Republicans came from districts that backed Barack Obama, although just 12 Democrats came from John McCain-favoring places.

But as political hacks have learned how to make maps—and state legislatures and leaders have largely let them—the competitive districts dwindle every time someone tries their hand at district cartography.

Take for instance Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the hard-nosed Democratic politician who has represented her northern Ohio district since 1983. The district sided with Trump in 2020 by about 3 points. She won re-election by 6 points four years later in a newly drawn district that was supposed to force her retirement. National Republicans are hoping that she'll finally stumble in a district where more than half of her constituents have never known her *not* to be Congress. But since starting her bid to win a twenty-second term this year, she has picked up close to $2 million.

No seat has seen a bigger swing than the one representing the whole of Alaska. Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola's constituents

voted for Trump over Biden by 10 points in the last election. When she won the full term, she did so with the same comfortable margin, representing a stunning 20-point swing. She raised more than $1.6 million since the start of the year and has collectively hauled in close to $4.7 million; both are records in this group of 22 mismatched lawmakers.

Money alone, of course, doesn't determine winners or losers. Candidate quality matters; just ask New York about George Santos. So does the national mood. But it is telling just how much of an advantage Democrats are enjoying inside this cohort, at least as represented by the latest campaign finance papers. It's an admittedly smudged window into how this campaign is shaping up, but it's one of the best peeks we'll get until the nominees are set and debates get underway.

Republicans know losing even some of these 17 seats would be enough to cost them the House. Five of them are in Biden-backing parts of California, six are in New York, and four others hail from battleground states. So far, as a group, they've pulled in more than $43 million. But none of them should be feeling cocky. They're going to need every dime of it if they're going to stick around for another term, and at least last quarter, they're trailing far behind the comparable Democrats.

Correction, April 20

The original version of this story misstated the amount Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer loaned her campaign. She had loaned her campaign $411,000 and has a balance of $357,000 from the previous cycle; she did not loan her campaign more than $880,000.

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

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6969222

Why Taylor Swift’s Music Makes Us So Emotional

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

A suggestion for the masses: Now would be a good time to check in on your favorite Taylor Swift fan. After months of feverish anticipation, the superstar delivered her 11th studio album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, on Friday—and Swifties everywhere are losing their minds.

From a neuroscience perspective, the response makes sense. Research suggests that music activates the brain’s reward system, triggering the release of the neurotransmitter dopamine. “We know that music is highly tied to emotion for a variety of reasons,” says Lindsay Halladay, an associate professor in neuroscience and psychology at Santa Clara University. “The tempo of music can actually modulate neural oscillations, which are sometimes called brain waves. It can alter the way the whole brain is communicating.” That’s why you might feel more energized after listening to upbeat music, for example, or relaxed after an evening of Beethoven.

But what is it about Swift's music, in particular, that resonates so deeply? We asked a few psychologists who moonlight as Swifties.

She sings about things we all experience

Last year, when millions of people were trying to snag Eras Tour tickets, students at Texas Christian University were working just as hard to get into "Psychology (Taylor's Version)," a new class offered by developmental psychologist Naomi Ekas. "We take different topics and themes from her music or her life and apply a developmental perspective to it," she says. Classes have centered, for example, on infidelity, revenge, attraction, and breakups.

[video id=FYwMBbYR autostart="viewable"]

During one recent class, Ekas played *Marjorie*, the devastating *Evermore* tune that pays tribute to Swift's grandmother. (*I should've asked you questions, I should've asked you how to be*, she sings.) Many of the 120 students started crying and asked if they could have a few minutes to text their grandmother or their mom or their dad. "We were all like, 'Do we continue with class today? Because we're very sad,'" Ekas recalls.

Read More: *Taylor Swift Is Embracing the 5 Stages of Grief. Should You?*

That speaks to the universality of the themes Swift spotlights. "We all experience loss," she says. "We all experience friends that hurt us, and we want to get back at them and get revenge on them. We all fall in love, we all fall out of love." Knowing that Swift feels what we feel validates our emotions, Ekas says—letting you know it's OK to lean into that heartbreak or joy.

Her lyrics get imprinted on our brain

When music evokes an emotion—maybe anger if you've just listened to *Bad Blood*, or longing if you have *Dress* on repeat—you'll likely experience stronger memories, Halladay says. "Strong emotions have an ability to alter the way memories are processed," she says. "Whether it's positive or negative emotions, they can affect the way our brain stores information." That's why we don't remember mundane events, like what we had for lunch two weeks ago, but more thrilling or traumatic situations are burned into our memory. "We want to hold on to that information, and our brain is very good at doing that when given a cue that it should," Halladay says. So if you're already finding it hard to get *So Long London* out of your head, blame the stirring lyrics: *My spine split from carrying us up the hill … You swore that you loved me but where were the clues?*

She's vulnerable—so we are too

Swift is unusually open about her life, penning raw lyrics about her personal challenges and triumphs. (In the first seconds of new tune *Fortnight*, she declares: *I was a functioning alcoholic 'til nobody noticed my new aesthetic*.) That vulnerability can have a profound effect on listeners, says Naomi Torres-Mackie, a psychologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. Torres-Mackie's clients bring Swift up in sessions more often than you might expect, serving as a catalyst for deeper introspection. "I've had a few people come to me and they're like, 'I was just listening to this Taylor music, or revisiting this album, and all of a sudden I was able to emote all these feelings that were really hard to express,'" she says. As Torres-Mackie notes, Swift refers or alludes to themes like eating disorders, depression, and self-doubt in her music—and that can grant permission for some people to feel like they're able to do the same.

She makes girls and women, in particular, feel seen

Gender plays a role in the emotions that Swift's music sparks. Societal norms continue to restrict and dismiss girls and women, Torres-Mackie points out—especially their experiences, interests, and feelings, all of which can be deemed silly or irrelevant. Yet one of our basic psychological needs is feeling seen and understood. Swift's songs "really give listeners the feeling that girls are, in fact, allowed to be sad, angry, lost," Torres-Mackie says. "Any emotional experience is important, and it's worth singing about."

Read More: *Why You Can't Remember That Taylor Swift Concert All Too Well*

Plus, Swift's songs probe nuances of life that are often unique to women. Take *Tolerate It*, in which she croons: *I wait by the door like I'm just a kid / Use my best colors for your portrait / Lay the table with the fancy shit / And watch you tolerate it*. "What she's talking about is doing emotional labor for a man and having it not be appreciated," says Kerry McBroome, a psychologist in Brooklyn. "She's touching on that unique specific feminine experience of having all this emotional work being expected of you, and then not being recognized or acknowledged or praised or rewarded for it." McBroome recalls feeling a gut punch when she first heard the song and thinking, "Oh my God, Taylor, get out of my diary."

She helps us feel connected to others

Swift excels at making personal experiences feel universal—and when we connect with an experience she describes lyrically, we feel like we're part of "the larger community of the heartbroken or the jubilant," McBroome says. "We realize other people have been through the same experiences, and it's a sense of oneness with a million fans." Take the infamous scarf Swift describes leaving behind at her ex's sister's house in *All Too Well*. McBroome expects many listeners love the song because they, too, have left a

scarf or some other sentimental item behind at someone's house, understanding it's lost forever. "It's easy to put your own stamp on it, and then realize that the world is full of people who have left scars on each other's lives. And I think she does this by using such specific imagery."

Read More: *Love Languages Actually Do Improve Your Relationship*

Plus, there's the army of Swifties who have banded around the star—and each other. Ekas, who's 45, recently got a call from a 79-year-old friend who listened to Swift for the first time and loved what she heard. Her class helped brainstorm birthday gift ideas for an 8-year-old Swiftie. And one of her few male students told her he had enrolled in the class because he wanted to be able to connect with his sisters, who are fans. When Ekas went to Swift's Eras Tour alone last year, she spent hours having fun with a group of strangers. Swift "is so positive and uplifting," she says—which bleeds through to her community of fans and helps cultivate an emotional attachment to her work.

She enjoys messing with us

In the days leading up to *The Tortured Poets Department*'s release, Ekas and her students fell down rabbit hole after rabbit hole of theories and speculation about the new album. Swift—who famously loves dropping Easter eggs—unveiled a library pop-up installation packed full of clues to decipher. All the puzzling "feeds into the relationship we think we have with her," Ekas says. "We think, 'Oh, she's giving *me* this clue.'" That strengthens the bond we feel with her and her music. Plus, trying to uncover hidden messages heightens anticipation, whipping fans into a frenzy—which means our emotions were already in a heightened state going into the new album. That almost guarantees a visceral reaction. "I think she genuinely loves it and has fun messing with us," Ekas

says. “I feel like she’s just sitting back this week with her cats and Travis going, ‘Ha ha ha.’”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6968864

Greece’s Prime Minister Wants His Nation to Be the Comeback Story of the Decade

Adam Rasmi is World Affairs Editor at TIME

Kyriakos Mitsotakis has a confession to make. “Sometimes I watch the footage from my speeches and I always look much taller than everyone else around,” the 6-ft. 1-in. Greek Prime Minister says with a wry smile, buckled up in the back seat of his car in a pressed blue shirt and black hoodie. “Just so you know, there’s a small platform that I climb up that you can’t see in the videos.”

Mitsotakis is addressing his followers on TikTok, where his account so successfully showcases his softer side that it has brought his team a national award. “We are very biased, but I honestly believe it’s the best TikTok of any politician in the world,” says Alex Patelis, his chief economic adviser.

“I loved it,” echoes Mitsotakis, 56, after the two of us sit down in March in his wood-paneled office at the pale pink and white Maximos Mansion in Athens, which has served as the neoclassical workplace of every Greek leader since 1982. He’d spent the past 20 years in politics trying to close the gap between what people thought of him—as someone who “wears a tie” and is “proper”—and his more lighthearted side. “TikTok bridged that, completely.”

That’s not the only way Mitsotakis is surprising people. He legalized same-sex marriage in February—making Greece the first Orthodox Christian country, and practically the only country in the eastern half of Europe, to do so. He took that step despite the ire of the powerful Greek Orthodox Church and lack of support from a third of his own center-right New Democracy party, forcing him to reach across the aisle. “As a matter of principle, the time had come to do the right thing,” Mitsotakis says, fidgeting with his *komboloi*, or worry beads, as an oil painting of the Virgin Mary looms above.

The legislation has left many with the feeling that Mitsotakis is a different brand of conservative leader. He is socially liberal. Progrowth but fiscally responsible, he says. Tough on migration. Strongly pro-Western and pro-NATO. He thinks he's found an "interesting sweet spot" and even has a name for it: the "new triangulation." At a time when incumbents are being hammered around the globe, Mitsotakis can boast that he won re-election with a higher share of the vote than the first time around. (The trophies on his desk with the margins of his 2019 and 2023 election victories are a daily reminder of this.) "That seems to be a formula that's worked well for us politically," he says.

It's a vision, Mitsotakis seems to suggest, that sets him apart from world leaders on both the left and right. Yet he faces headwinds. He has come under fire for a recent spate of tragedies and missteps. And his main goal now is to bring Greece's living standards in line with the rest of Europe. For a country that's second poorest in the E.U., after postcommunist Bulgaria, that's a tall order. "There's a lot of catching up to do," he concedes.

Mitsotakis was surrounded by politics from his earliest days. His father Konstantinos, a prominent lawmaker who would go on to be Prime Minister from 1990 to 1993, was arrested and the family put under house arrest following a military coup in 1967; he was born the next year. It was thanks to the Foreign Minister of Turkey, Greece's historical nemesis, that they managed to escape, first to Istanbul then Paris. They returned to Greece in 1974 once democracy was restored. "My Greek was not very good at the time. I had to struggle in school and make sure I caught up," says Mitsotakis, who also speaks French, English, and some German. "And so these are my first memories."

Catch up he did. A graduate of the Athens College prep school, he set off to the U.S. in 1986, where he earned a bachelor's degree at Harvard and a master's from Stanford, before going back to

Harvard for his M.B.A. A stint at McKinsey in London followed before a turn to private equity in Greece, which he walked away from to become a Member of Parliament in 2004. Being from a prominent political family—he is also a great-great-nephew of former Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, credited as "the Maker of Modern Greece"—opened him up to accusations of nepotism. "I have to work twice as hard to convince people that I'm not here because of my name," Mitsotakis says.

Few today seem focused on his family. "There's a respect for this McKinsey, Harvard-educated guy. A Greek done good. Competent, gets things done," says Kevin Featherstone, a professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science who specializes in contemporary Greece. "But he looks awkward, slightly nervous when talking to ordinary people." That may be why his TikToks have resonated—and why Mitsotakis' aides are keen to highlight he's not so different after all: a favorite band is Guns N' Roses, and"Paradise City" was his cell ringtone when he first took office.

But it’s ultimately the aura of professionalism that leaves millions of Greeks feeling he is the best candidate for the job—particularly in the wake of the Crisis, as the country refers to the 10 years from 2009 to 2018. Following the global recession of 2007–2009, a nation that had binged on debt saw its main creditors—the European Commission, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund—push austerity measures that caused the economy to shrink by a staggering 25%. Incomes and pensions were hit harder, with unemployment climbing above 25% and reaching nearly 60% among youth. No other developed country has experienced a similar economic catastrophe in modern times.

When Mitsotakis first came into office in 2019, things were already looking up. His left-wing predecessor Alexis Tsipras is credited with steering Greece out of the bailout era a year earlier. But Mitsotakis' approach has won praise since. GDP growth is above the euro-zone average. Unemployment is nearing single digits again. Debt to GDP levels are high but declining among the fastest in the world. The country has regained its investment-grade status. And the Greek stock market is soaring. The Economist even ranked Greece as the world's top economic performer for the past two years and named it "country of the year" in 2023.

Mitsotakis has also brought substantial investment to Greece. Early on in his first term, he appointed Sir Christopher Pissarides, a Nobel economics laureate, to chair a commission tasked with developing a growth plan. A painstaking 244-page report followed that would prove influential in shaping Greece's Recovery and Resilience Plan that Mitsotakis presented to Brussels, securing €36 billion in grants and loans through 2026 from the E.U.'s mammoth €800 billion-plus COVID-19 recovery fund.

The amount is equivalent to more than 15% of the entire Greek economy and involves over 100 investment streams and 75 reforms, with about 60% geared toward the green transition and digitization. Greece can now boast that more than half its electricity comes from renewables. Everything from paying bills to renewing a driving license can also now be done online, rather than by lining up at notoriously bureaucratic government offices. "One of the biggest successes of his first term was what was done at the Digital Governance Ministry," says Yannis Palaiologos, a journalist and author of *The 13th Labour of Hercules*, about the Greek economic crisis.

Foreign direct investment has also shot up, hitting an all-time high of €8 billion in 2022. Part of that is wooing investors with business-friendly regulation and lower taxes. Amazon, Google, and Microsoft are investing at least $1 billion in Greece, which will

create thousands of jobs. But the Greek economy still lags on key metrics like productivity, and there are ongoing concerns about the business and regulatory environment. “They are providing incentives—money—for companies. They are encouraging foreign direct investment,” Featherstone says. “But when he leaves power, how far will the structure of the economy be different? … I think the jury at the moment is out on that.”

On a visit with Mitsotakis to Metaxa Cancer Hospital in Piraeus, a working-class port city within greater Athens, it’s clear that reforming the economy is not the only challenge he faces. Dozens of hospitals and over 150 health centers are getting an upgrade thanks to E.U. funds and his government. Yet the hospital still feels creaky, not least when we cram into a steel elevator that struggles to get moving—“We are too many,” Mitsotakis says. Some of us exit and take the stairs.

Workers upset over pay and conditions greet Mitsotakis on our arrival, chanting “Give more money to health” and holding up a large banner that reads PERMANENT CONTRACTS NOW TO ALL CASUAL WORKERS. Although Greece has ramped up investment to the health care sector, overall spending and pay remain below the E.U. average. “Look, we inherited a deeply, deeply problematic national health system that had 10 years of underfunding and cuts,” Mitsotakis says. “Hospitals are the most difficult … But in general, I’d say the mood has improved over what was maybe three, four years ago.”

Then there are tragedies and scandal. One is the February 2023 Tempi rail disaster that killed 57 people, most of them students. “It was a combination of human errors. Horrible human errors. And maybe systemic failures,” Mitsotakis says. The accident, which exposed poor safety measures, prompted the resignation of the country’s Transport Minister and an investigation. But relatives of the victims and survivors have said they have little faith in the

inquiry; some 34 railway employees and officials face possible charges, with a trial not expected to start before the summer.

Another is the Pylos shipwreck in June, when an overloaded trawler smuggling some 750 migrants sank off the coast of Greece, killing more than 600 people. Greek authorities say the ship refused assistance. But multiple investigations by media and rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, suggest otherwise. Adriana Tidona, a migration researcher at Amnesty, says the tragedy could have been averted had Greece "accepted responsibility and taken the appropriate measures." Mitsotakis bristles at criticism. "Pointing the finger at the coast guard and not at the smugglers seems very unfair to me," he says.

An altogether different matter is the "Greek Watergate." Over a coffee in central Athens, Thanasis Koukakis, a veteran business journalist and the scandal's first confirmed victim, recounts the moment in 2020 when a source told him, "*Malaka*, you're under surveillance" and supplied transcripts of private conversations. The wiretapping scandal blew up in the summer of 2022 when an opposition leader was also found to have been surveilled; at least 92 people have been targeted. Mitsotakis fired the head of the National Intelligence Service, and the Prime Minister's nephew, who was chief of staff and oversaw the agency, has stepped down. He also banned the sale of spyware. "I assumed responsibility. Made changes. Changed the law. Added additional filters when it comes to legal wiretapping," Mitsotakis says. But concerns linger, with the European Parliament citing the scandal in a February resolution criticizing "serious threats" to the rule of law in Greece.

On the ride back from Piraeus, Mitsotakis points out the window at a laundry list of projects that are meant to underscore that Greece has turned the page, buoyed by favorable macroeconomic conditions and a slate of reforms. Since coming to power, his government has passed more than 400 pieces of legislation

covering everything from the labor market and taxation to health care and electrification.

That frenetic pace has won him praise in Brussels and Washington. So has a busy schedule on the international stage. When we meet, Mitsotakis' team is preparing for a trip to Cairo with other E.U. leaders that would result in €7.4 billion in funding to cash-strapped Egypt, as part of a push to stem migrant flows to Europe. A planned trip to Ankara is also in the works for May, following Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's December visit to Greece, where a "new era" of friendship was promised between the NATO members.

His backing of Ukraine is particularly notable for Greece, a country that shares deep historical ties to Russia. “Nothing against Russian people. But I would never allow Greece to be a geopolitical pariah by not supporting Ukraine in times of need,” he says. That position tested him when a Russian missile struck the port of Odesa during a trip with President Volodymyr Zelensky to the city days before our interview, landing within hundreds of meters of his convoy. Five Ukrainians died in the attack. “We were in a place where we could take no shelter,” he says. “It was a shocking reminder that a war is taking place, and it affects people’s lives every day.”

But even as the Prime Minister keeps his eye on Greece’s role on the world stage, he must answer to voters at home first and foremost. And despite the macroeconomic turnaround, the Greek economy is still considerably smaller than before the Crisis. “The government is rightly proud that Greece is growing faster than the euro zone for the last couple years,” Palaiologos says. “But we must recall that this comes from an economy that lost a quarter of its output.”

It’s a fact that Mitsotakis readily admits. Yet he points out that Greece has a history of remarkable economic gains that he hopes to repeat. “People forget, between the ’50s and the ’70s, the Greek economy was the second fastest growing economy in the OECD, after Japan,” he says. It’s a difficult road ahead, but Mitsotakis is optimistic that Greece has entered a new era of long-term growth. After all, he says with a faint smile, “it’s not that we haven’t done it before.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6970097

In the Kitchen With ‘Real Americans’ Author Rachel Khong

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

Knocking on the front door, it’s already clear that this is one of those dreamy California artist houses, its rich green paint and big

windows lighting up a quiet street. Inside there are flowers on the bathroom shelf, music lilting in the background. And the kitchen! A jar of fresh cilantro sprigs on the table. The sea green backsplash, warm wooden cabinets, and the dangling strands of a pothos over the sink. It's an unfriendly, blustery early-spring day out there in Los Angeles, but everything in here is inviting, most of all its inhabitants: the author and food journalist Rachel Khong and a sweet brown cat she and her husband call Bunny.

I was warned about this. A mutual friend told me about Khong's cozy office, stacked high with books; about the persimmon tree outside; about, most of all, what happens in this kitchen: "She'll woo you with her delicious things." Tonight, I'm here to talk to Khong about her second novel, *Real Americans*, while making a dinner she planned for us—mapo tofu with pork and mushrooms, smashed-cucumber salad, and rice.

This marriage of food and fiction is only fitting for a writer whose career has been defined by both. Khong, 38, started in food service then came up in food media, an early staffer at *Lucky Peach* magazine under celebrity chef David Chang and his partner Chris Ying. After the magazine shuttered in 2017, she founded the Ruby, a co-working space for women and nonbinary creatives in San Francisco, making food and beverage programming a crucial element.

For all these reasons, people who know Khong's work tend to arrive at her fiction with certain expectations. To some, her 2017 debut novel *Goodbye, Vitamin*, about a young woman caring for her father after an Alzheimer's diagnosis, was brimming with food. To others, there wasn't enough. *Real Americans* will inspire the same response.

Read More: *The 25 Most Anticipated Books of 2024*

On its surface—and at its heart—the book has nothing to do with cooking or dining; it's a multigenerational family saga tracing the

lives of a mother, a son, and a grandmother through a history that begins in China during the Cultural Revolution and reaches into the future, though not in that order. Khong layers the lives of her characters to challenge how well we can really know one another. The book asks who gets to be American and calls for deeper compassion. It also, in my experience, could make a reader very hungry.

“There’s not that much food in it, right? I think we can agree on that,” Khong says when I broach the subject. My mind immediately fills with images she conjured on the page: a teenager staring warily into the shell of his first oyster, a man chewing dry chicken. A scene at the fanciest restaurant a 20-something has ever visited, her date sliding the rest of his buttery venison across the table to her.

We look at each other and laugh. “Oh,” Khong says. “Do you think there’s a lot?”

Khong, who was born to ethnically Chinese parents in Malaysia and moved to the U.S. when she was 2, grew up with an “uncomplicated” love of food. Her family ate dinner together every night, usually home-cooked Chinese or Malaysian dishes her mother made. It wasn’t only the food that set an example for Khong: “She’s a joyful cook too—it wasn’t drudgery for her,” she says.

Now, for Khong herself, making dinner at the end of the day is an important ritual. After moving from San Francisco to Los Angeles less than a year ago, for the first time she’s working as a full-time writer without the structure of her previous workplaces. “There’s something uncomfortable about writing something that’s just your own and nobody is expecting it,” she says. “You’re kind of looking around like, *Who gave you permission?*” To cope with her amorphous new schedule, she started to build up routines to create

a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. Usually, she takes a walk in the morning—the only safe time to avoid baking in the Southern California sun—then writes for two to four hours. The rest of the afternoon seems to disappear, so come dinnertime, there's comfort in doing something so concrete. "Cooking is always satisfying—there's nothing like writing 1,000 words and feeling like I need to delete them all," she says. "You can't f-ck things up so bad that it's not edible." (Well, maybe *she* can't.)

Tonight, she puts me to work first peeling ginger, handing over a thin-sided spoon she picked up in Thailand, her favorite tool for the job. She sets a radish-shaped timer, a souvenir from Japan, next to the stove for the rice. Soon, to smash cucumbers, she'll give me the biggest pestle I've ever held—the kind used to make curry paste in Southeast Asia. And later, I'll watch her as she stands over the pan of sizzling mushrooms and meat with a hand on her hip, stirring in a mix of Chinese and Japanese pastes and seasonings without measuring (Sichuan peppercorns and chili-bean sauce, miso and vinegar, soy sauce). There's a sense of blending cultures here that feels particular, a porous line between identities that shows up in *Real Americans*.

There is no shortage of great immigration stories. Khong's feels real because it comes from a place of authenticity. This is not her family's story, but the way the characters are searching for belonging, or have found ways to be multiple things at once, rings true—she captures the feeling of floating in the in-between, not firmly tethered to one pole of identity or another but instead looking for a way to feel secure in your own space.

And that title—*Real Americans*—evokes more questions than any single book could answer. What is American, and what is real? In Khong's novel, it's someone far away, someone who has never identified as American, who uses the phrase to describe one of the three main characters. And that character probably would not say it

about herself. This is how Khong's novel pokes holes in the assumptions we make about each other. As soon as you start to understand one of the three protagonists, she moves on to the next, tracing the influence of history, trauma, biology, and life experience on how the characters are understood, or misunderstood, by one another.

Khong describes the space she's trying to fill—or rather, the space she finds herself in without trying. Her favorite writers are Deborah Levy, Ruth Ozeki, Kazuo Ishiguro—writers who do their own thing, conventions be damned, and this book offers a twist in genre of its own, a turn into the realm of speculative fiction. On a more personal level, Khong felt like there was no one with her point of view writing fiction she could fully relate to when she was growing up. Amy Tan's work was "unabashedly Chinese" in a way Khong was not. "I felt like I wasn't anything enough—I wasn't Chinese enough. I wasn't Malaysian enough. I definitely wasn't American enough, even though I felt more American than anything else," she says. It's akin to how Lily—the mother in *Real Americans*, sandwiched between the other two characters—might describe herself.

Khong shied away from writing about Asian American identity in *Goodbye, Vitamin*—she didn't feel skilled enough to tackle it in the way she would've wanted to. Since then, she has written multiple short stories with Asian characters, finding her way through. "Usually it's not that the whole story is about Asian American identity. It's more like this Asian American female character is just going about her day and then is reminded she's Asian by other people, which is reflective of my own experience," she says. Lily is a representation of this woman in the Y2K era. Someday, Khong posits, Lily's story may feel obvious. "As I was writing, I was thinking: How much of this is too basic?" she says. She gives an example, tying her thoughts back, as ever, to food. She references "the smelly-lunch story" and how certain experiences become

tropes. “People know that immigrant kids once felt embarrassed by their lunches, and now it’s a cliché. If in 10 years it seems like Lily’s story is dated because nobody could possibly be insecure about these things anymore, that’s fine,” Khong says—then clarifies, “That would be really great.”

We’re both hungry by the time dinner is ready. I’m giddy as I help set the table, laying down yellow cloth napkins and heavy ceramic plates. Khong has this device she uses in her writing—food in her world is like the weather, an omen. That dry chicken I remembered before? It was a breakup scene, a mistake in the kitchen portending certain doom. “The food is bad when people aren’t having a good time or something is wrong,” she says.

We’re silent for a moment, chewing. The tofu is soft and savory, Khong’s improvised blend of spicy, salty, and tangy flavors hitting every note. The cucumbers are crisp and garlicky, cooling in contrast. The rice is fluffy and tender, balancing it all out. This food is, in a word, delicious.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6972034

Welcome to the Golden Age of Ryan Gosling

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.

In Derek Cianfrance's 2010 love-on-the-rocks heartbreaker *Blue Valentine*, Ryan Gosling plays a husband and father, Dean, who appears to be nothing but an annoyance to his wife, Michelle Williams' Cindy, a harried nurse. She hustles to get their young daughter out the door to school, even as Dean, relishing the role of the fun dad, turns breakfast into a game. "Let's eat like leopards!" he suggests, dotting the kitchen table with raisins plucked from his daughter's oatmeal bowl, which the two lap up with jungle-animal gusto. In a flashback we see a younger Dean who, in his job as a mover, has been charged with unpacking the belongings of a frail, elderly man who's just been consigned to a nursing home. He removes plates, pictures, knickknacks from their wrapping with casual tenderness, aware that each item bears the fingerprints of a life. Plenty of gifted actors—Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino, Paul Newman—have cited Marlon Brando as an inspiration and an influence. But in the realm of the happenstance gesture—the

absent-minded tug of a shirt collar, maybe, or a glance so fleeting the camera could almost miss it—Gosling may be Brando's truest heir. The work he puts into his characters is translucent, evanescent; the result is a firefly flicker you feel lucky to catch.

Gosling, now 43, was around 30 when he made *Blue Valentine.* That movie came roughly six years after he broke through in the romantic weepie *The Notebook*, and four years after he'd earned an Oscar nomination for his disarming performance as a jauntily dissolute junior high school teacher with drug problems in *Half Nelson.* He would go on to play a daredevil motor-cyclist who turns to robbery to support his young son *(The Place Beyond the Pines)*, the resolutely unflashy astronaut Neil Armstrong *(First Man)*, and a futuristic LAPD officer in a sequel to one of the most-loved science-fiction movies of all time *(Blade Runner 2049)*. His next project, recently announced, is *Project Hail Mary*, a space drama to be directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller. But for now, Gosling is riding a breezy new wave of his own creation, having taken two roles in succession that might seem less serious or consequential but may in fact be the beginning of a golden age. Charm is hard to come by in 2024: most of us are exhausted just by making ends meet, when we're not freaking out over a world that might be falling apart around our ears. The Ryan Gosling of 2024 is the antidote to all that. At a time when living often feels like plodding, he makes acting look like dancing.

In his new movie, *The Fall Guy*, Gosling plays Colt Seavers, a swaggering stuntman who breaks his back while executing a routine, if dangerous, maneuver. A few minutes earlier, he'd been flirting with cameraperson Jody Moreno, played by Emily Blunt—they'd fantasized about getting away, just the two of them, sitting "on a beach somewhere, wearing bathing costumes, drinking spicy margaritas and making bad decisions," as Colt puts it, borrowing Jody's British vernacular for the word *swimsuit.* Next thing he knows, he's being hustled away on a stretcher; during his long recovery, he loses his mojo and ghosts Jody. Now she's making her directorial debut in a sci-fi blockbuster being shot in Australia, and she's requested Colt's stunt skills—or so he's led to believe. When he arrives on set, she wants nothing to do with him. Winning her back involves locating her movie's star (Aaron Taylor-Johnson), who has mysteriously gone missing.

Directed by longtime stunt performer David Leitch, *The Fall Guy* is about a guy with everything to prove, starring a guy with nothing to prove. After completing *First Man*, Gosling took a break from movies to spend time with his young family. (He's married to actor Eva Mendes, and the two have pulled off the miraculous Hollywood feat of keeping their personal lives private.) He re-emerged in 2022 with *The Gray Man*, a Netflix action movie that practically nobody liked. And when early promo photos for Greta

Gerwig's *Barbie* were released, the internet couldn't believe its collective Google eyes. There was Gosling as Ken, he of the featureless plastic groin, in blinding platinum hair and a cheesy jean vest with nothing but a polished chest underneath. He looked ridiculous. He looked amazing. And at the Oscars, when he reprised the movie's best musical number, "I'm Just Ken"—an anthem of mingled self-regard and self-acceptance, with Gosling front and center in a secure-in-its-masculinity pink spangled suit—it seemed as if the movie gods had performed a miracle, for once turning this very square event into something you were glad you'd tuned in to watch.

Gosling, for now, can do no wrong, but those who have always loved him are neither surprised nor worried about a backlash. The truth is, we need Ryan Gosling more than he needs us. On April 13 he hosted *Saturday Night Live* for the third time, and in the week before, he confessed his nervousness to Jimmy Fallon on *The Tonight Show.* Doing live comedy on TV is unnerving; he feared he might crack up during a sketch. A few days later, *of course* he cracked up. During the show's cold open, a variation on its popular alien-abduction-and-probing routine—featuring guest alum Kate McKinnon—he lost it when she proceeded to mime the aliens' fascination with what he'd euphemistically referred to as his "troll nose." When Gosling laughs in the middle of a bit, it's a joyous, conspiratorial event. And when he breaks character, the hatchling inside that cracked shell is just Gosling. Within a week, it became the most watched episode of *SNL* on Peacock. How could we not be happy to see him? To get a glimpse of true movie stars as real people—and not fake real people, as they so often appear to be—is a rare delight.

Gosling's character in *The Fall Guy*, on the other hand, is nothing like you or me. He's a professional who gets paid to be set on fire, to drive cars that roll over so many times it's surprising there's any metal left on them, to surf atop speeding trucks while chopping the air with his cool karate moves. The movie is an ode to all the guys—and, ostensibly, women, though there are no obvious stuntwomen in the film—who take hard knocks to make stuff look real on film. (Gosling performs a few stunts in the movie himself, including a 12-story drop down the side of a building, which, he has said, terrified him.) *The Fall Guy* is so packed with stunts that it's likely to leave you stunt-drunk. It's also tremendous fun.

And although Gosling has made comedies before (like *The Nice Guys*, from 2016, with Russell Crowe, which in the years since its release has been recognized, correctly, as a work of genius), *The Fall Guy* is his first time as a proper romantic-comedy lead—and even then, this is hardly a typical romantic comedy, given its overarching obsession with guys' leaping from great heights, driving at insane speeds, and dangling from helicopters in flight.

But you couldn't ask for more from the frisson between Blunt, one of the finest comic actors we've got, and Gosling, who doesn't so much play against her as open a portal for her fizzy wit to flow through. This is the kind of generosity a great actor can bring to comedy—it's essential to listen and not just react. When Colt looks at Jody, even in her angriest moments—even when she punishes him by forcing him to do a challenging man-on-fire stunt over and

over again—his lovesickness pours out of him like an awkward blessing. There are little things he does, both to tease her and to convey an affection he can't contain, like instinctively pulling up the slider on the big, unflattering sun hat she's wearing to protect her from the Australian sun, so it's snug at her chin. She hates this; but she sort of loves it—you can tell. We live in an era of too much entertainment: in addition to movies, there's more TV than most of us can keep up with, and not all the shiny things vying for our attention are trustworthy. But there's nothing about Gosling the actor, or even Gosling the movie star, that feels false or fake. He offers us pleasure instead of mere fleeting distraction. And probably not even he realizes how rare that is.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6972690

Netflix's Flimsy A Man in Full Makes Tom Wolfe's Epic Novel Feel Small

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.

Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full* is a massive book, in more ways than one. A 742-page social novel with an iconoclastic Atlanta real estate mogul at its center, it took Wolfe over a decade to research and write. When it was published, in 1998, Farrar, Straus & Giroux ordered a jaw-dropping initial print run of 1.2 million hardcover copies; two years later, it had sold 1.4 million. The book's themes —money, power, race, masculinity—are just as grand.

So it's beyond strange that the first word that comes to mind to describe the new Netflix adaptation of *A Man in Full*, premiering May 2, is *slight*. The talent involved is hardly minor. The overly prolific *Big Little Lies* creator David E. Kelley serves as the miniseries' writer and showrunner; Regina King, who made an impressive feature directing debut with *One Night in Miami*, helms half the season; and the cast includes Jeff Daniels, Diane Lane, Lucy Liu, and William Jackson Harper. Yet the scant six episodes this team delivers feel superficial, disjointed, and ultimately

pointless. Tasked with updating a 26-year-old novel that has aged poorly, Kelley pares back so much context and character development that what's left never resolves into a cohesive story.

The series unfolds during the final 10 days of hometown hero Charlie Croker's (Daniels) life. This isn't a spoiler. The premiere opens with an overhead shot of the real estate titan sprawled out dead on a rug. In voiceover, Charlie explains, in his Foghorn Leghorn-meets-Boomhauer from *King of the Hill* drawl, that he wanted to make his mark on the world: "At the end of the day, a man's gotta shake his balls." After celebrating his 60th birthday with a flashy party where he's serenaded by Shania Twain, he sees his flamboyant ways challenged at an ambush meeting with a bank he owes $800 million. They want their money back, and they're going to ruin him if they don't get it. For the banker Raymond Peepgrass (Tom Pelphrey, creepified with Jeffrey Dahmer glasses), this fight is personal; Charlie treats him like a nobody, so the cartoonishly pathetic Raymond has become obsessed with taking him down.

There are a few poorly incorporated subplots. Charlie's conflicted in-house counsel, Roger White (Aml Ameen) gets dragged into his Morehouse classmate, Atlanta mayor Wes Jordan's (Harper), scheme to smear a right-wing opponent. A Black man named

Conrad Hensley (Jon Michael Hill), the husband of Charlie's assistant (Chanté Adams), gets arrested in a racially coded incident, and Roger is put on that case as well. Charlie's ex-wife, Martha (Lane), and her friend Joyce (Liu), a skincare entrepreneur, lurk in the background, until they're finally drawn into improbable storylines involving Raymond and sexual assault, respectively.

Bad decisions permeate every frame of this adaptation. There's rampant overacting, nonsensical backstories, sex scenes that were maybe supposed to be funny but are actually just weird. The conclusion is rushed. One could complain that the Black and female characters have no interiority, but in fairness, no one here displays much of an internal life. Seething envy comprises Raymond's whole personality. Charlie just keeps repeating his alpha-male koans.

Most of these problems originate from the gut renovation Kelley performed on Wolfe's book, resituating it in the present and writing out many elements that might cause controversy in 2024: a KKK rally, Roger's "Too White" nickname, and most strikingly, an Atlanta on the verge of combusting over rumors that a Black athlete raped a white heiress. In their place are generic invocations of 21st century feminist and racial-justice fights, plus the occasional dig at the real estate tycoon who became our 45th

President, tied precariously together with thin strands of plot that strain believability. TV has a voracious appetite for literary adaptations these days, but not every era-defining doorstop stands the test of time. Better to let a sleeping Croker lie than to exhume him for a project so desperately bereft of, well, as he would put it, balls.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6973213

How Writing Her Feminist-Punk Memoir Put Kathleen Hanna on the ‘Happiness Train’

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.

Kathleen Hanna has always been dead serious and slyly funny at once. More perspicacious than angry invective alone, that alchemy of tones has been her signature since the early ’90s, when a 20-something Hanna fronted Bikini Kill, the punk band that became the most visible act associated with the third-wave feminist movement known as riot grrrl. “Suck my left one,” she growled, in the face of an abuser, on one of their most famous tracks. Her subsequent solo project, Julie Ruin, conjured visions of a subversive, scrunchie-wearing “valley girl intelligentsia” over a bouncy surf beat. And at the turn of the millennium, she pivoted to dance-punk with the trio Le Tigre, executing synchronized choreography while channeling Fred Flintstone (“Yabba-dabba-

dabba-doo, man") in a song with the sarcastic title "Mediocrity Rules."

Hanna's new memoir, *Rebel Girl: My Life as a Feminist Punk*, out May 14, applies that same caustic, introspective, politically astute, and often mischievously playful voice to the ups and downs of her own life story. "There've been a lot of situations where I felt like I could roll up in a ball and just cry and cry and cry," she explains, over the phone from Southern California. "And I do cry. But then I start to find the funny in the tragic." In the book, "I hope I struck a balance between being able to laugh at myself and be serious, because I didn't want to make light of stuff like I usually did." In her first draft, "all the rape stuff was really funny." But the final product, achieved only after an overdue stint in trauma therapy, contains moving yet incisive, generously frank passages about the sexual assaults she survived as a teen and young adult.

This is one aspect of her origin story that will likely be familiar to fans, who have over the years gleaned a sketchy timeline of her life, from difficult childhood to '90s notoriety to a diagnosis of late-stage Lyme disease that sidelined her for years following Le Tigre's dissolution in 2007. In the last decade, all three of Hanna's major musical projects have made triumphant comebacks. Once she's made the promotional rounds for *Rebel Girl*, the 55-year-old artist and activist will follow up last year's Le Tigre tour with an international Bikini Kill jaunt this summer.

Candid and reflective, *Rebel Girl* tells the stories behind her best-known songs ("Suck my left one" was her older sister's catchphrase) and reframes her most mythologized brushes with the mainstream—like that time she accidentally titled Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Hanna also writes about aspects of her life she's kept mostly private in the past: her marriage to Adam Horovitz of Beastie Boys, a miscarriage, the adoption of a son.

Arduous as it was, the writing process turned out to be a voyage from pain to joy. “I wrote all the bad sh-t first,” Hanna recalls. “Then I had to be like, ‘I’ve got to temper this with some happiness.’” She stared at a blank page for a week before the good memories started flowing, “and it was miraculous. Once I unburied the trauma, look what I found: a f-cking rose garden underneath a grave.”

TIME: You’ve been a public figure for more than 30 years now. How long have you been thinking about writing a memoir?

Kathleen Hanna: I first started talking about it when I was maybe 40 with one of my best friends, [*Also a Poet* author] Ada Calhoun. Then I got sick with Lyme disease, and I was like, “This is too big of an undertaking for me with the place that my health is at.” When I got better, I immediately was like, “I want to get back to that.” I was moving [from New York] to Pasadena to be closer to my mom, which was a big change. And I wanted to release the me who I used to be—to write it all down so I could move on. It was a long time coming. But I’m glad I waited ’til I was 50 to start, because I think I had a better perspective than I would have when I was 40.

Now that you’ve written the book, do you feel like you’ve entered a new phase of life?

I think once it’s out, I’ll feel more complete about that, but yeah, I do. I feel like I’m finally grown up—which is weird, that I didn’t feel grown up till I was 55. But something about putting the word *author* after your name makes you feel like an adult all of a sudden. And I do feel like I achieved what I set out to do, which was to get on the happiness train. I really want to learn how to be happy. And it’s way harder if you have PTSD and trauma and all that kind of business.

One of the things that came up for me, while writing, was that I started realizing all of this trauma that I had not dealt with. I just

kept moving, I just kept making stuff—or I got sick. Keeping busy was my way of not looking at my own trauma. And I finally was like: “I jump every time my husband walks in the room. I’m constantly in a state of stress, and I need to figure this out.” I started getting serious trauma therapy, because I had to—because I would have to stop [writing] for months at a time. I would walk around with weird, crazy eyes, just staring into the distance. It was awful. I feel like I jumped in a life raft off the Titanic, and I just hit land.

One of the biggest themes in the book was this tension between the responsibility and obligation you felt, beginning when you were in your early 20s, as a highly visible representative of feminism and your personal needs as a human being. At this point, have you learned to strike a balance between those two aspects of yourself?

Definitely. If you're an abuse survivor, you learn how to dissociate and check out of your life in order to survive. You turn your intuition off. I was great as a frontperson in a band, because I would shut down and take on what everybody else wanted me to take on and try to be who they wanted me to be. I was always present when I sang, but I wasn't always present for the rest of it. That allowed me to get through some very difficult touring, but it also kept me from taking care of myself. When you don't feel your body, you're not really cognizant of everything going on; you can end up just people-pleasing, because it's the route of least resistance. I'm still working on being more present and enjoying the little moments of life that I neglected for a long time.

In the prologue to *Rebel Girl*, you write: "My war has never been with sexism, but with how sexism has warped me." Can you explain the distinction you're making there?

One of the things that has hurt me the most is when I'm trying to be generous and a man ends up abusing that generosity. When I was a teenager, an adult man who was really smart gave me a bunch of cool books, and we talked about them together. I thought, "Wow, finally an adult who sees how intelligent I am." Then he hit on me, and then he started stalking me, and it felt like *now I can't open myself up to that experience, because I'm just a f-ck doll*. Then I started thinking every situation was going to be like that. These men teach you not to be kind, not to trust people or let your guard down—and then you're penalized for not being nice.

The part of sexism that has wounded me the most is that my personality is warped by it, to not be able to open up to new experiences. I'm sick of being told to be thick-skinned and let stuff roll off my back. You know what? These f-cking a–holes should stop being sexist jerks. It's on them. But I don't have any control over that. And I don't sit around and think about sexist men all the time. Because they're not worth the space in my head. I just think about, *how can I stay open to critique and to new experiences, despite the fact that I live in a sexist world?*

***Riot grrrl* was not a term you chose to describe yourself, but you have consistently and conspicuously—in everything from song lyrics to the subtitle of this book—identified as a feminist. How has your relationship to that word evolved over the years?**

My definition of it has evolved over the years—mainly thanks to younger people and older scholars, who have taught me the [blindspots] in my own life. I have never experienced racism, so I need to educate myself on, *how has my white privilege shaped my life?* In the beginning, while I paid lip service to being intersectional, I don't think I was putting it into practice. My feminism is way more expansive now. I feel like economic things are very tied to feminism, healthcare is very tied to feminism; I see it as connected to so many other issues.

And I get scared about mainstream feminism saying things like "Believe all women." Because rape [claims] have been used in North America, sometimes by white women, as a way to enact oppression on Black men and children. I don't want to have slogans that encourage that legacy to continue. We need to not victim-blame or tell people they're liars. But in certain situations, it's important to get to the truth and not just throw out a *believe all women* blanket.

As you've expanded your understanding of social justice, did you ever worry that feminism, as a concept, had outlived its

usefulness?

No. As long as women, especially women of color, are making so much less on the dollar than white men. As long as the domestic violence shelters are filling up. As long as abortion is not legal [in parts of the country] and women—disproportionately Black and brown women—are being jailed for having miscarriages. Thinking that feminism doesn't matter is not even a concept I entertain. But you can call it whatever you want. I'm not going to take somebody else's action in the world and define it as feminist. They can define it, and I will use their language.

You write candidly about your childhood, growing up in an unhappy home with a father you say "terrified" you. How did discovering art and music, as a kid, change your life?

I found singing very young—singing along with Jackson Five records or whatever we had in the house. That was a secret place I could go to, away from my dad's meanness. I played with Barbies 'til I was 14 years old, in the attic. I didn't really do the typical things with Barbie. I built her houses a lot. That was sort of my first art-making practice: saying I'm playing with Barbies, but I'm really building these weird Barbie apartment complexes. I was in the un-air-conditioned attic, in the summer in Maryland, being hot as hell, making something to get away from my dad. I had these magical experiences, because my home didn't feel safe. I ventured out or I hid in the attic and pulled the ladder up behind me, so nobody knew I was up there. And I created these imaginary worlds of my own. I think it served me as an artist.

There are parts of your life covered in *Rebel Girl* that you rarely discuss in interviews. Why did you decide to write about your relationships with some of the famous men who've played major roles in your life, from your husband to Kurt Cobain, who was your friend when you were both indie musicians in the Pacific Northwest?

Obviously, I'm a feminist artist. There's already a lot of people who are just going to talk about me in terms of my relationship to these famous male artists. So there's these sexist stereotypes that you have to contend with. But this is my book. And in my world, I want to write about the people who actually have affected me. The truth of the matter is: Kurt, Adam—because I'm married to him, but not so much as a musical collaborator—and Ian MacKaye from Fugazi and Minor Threat were people who played really big roles in my life. I don't want to diminish that.

Many fans who read the book will find out, for the first time, that you have a son, Julius Horovitz. Did you make a conscious decision to keep him out of the public eye, and has it been difficult to maintain that privacy?

We're not followed around by paparazzi. There was a picture that got taken of him and we were like, "That's Adam's brother's kid." It's for his safety and wellbeing. Because I still have crazy men who want to murder me. So I want to be safe with his life, and also I don't want him to be [overshadowed] by who his dad is or things that I've done. It's very easy to keep it close to the vest because we have a lot of lovely, supportive friends who don't take pictures of us and put it on Instagram, unless they ask. We're not in a very Hollywood universe.

From anti-trans legislation to the end of *Roe* to the attack on antiracist education, the past several years have been one of the hardest periods for women, LGBTQ people, and people of color in the U.S. in decades. Amid so much oppression, have you managed to hang on to some optimism about the future?

I am optimistic. Moments that people in community with each other create—where people see themselves reflected and have places to go where they're seen and heard, and where we can enjoy the beauty of stuff each other creates—form the basis for the society we're going to create. Artists don't make legislation

happen, and it’s corny to say you have to vote, but you gotta vote. I don’t necessarily like the choices I have in terms of my health care or the President, but I’m gonna vote anyway, because people fought and died for my ability to vote. And I would much rather see a maniac like Trump not get in power again.

I hate the fact that young people have everything [older generations have done wrong dumped on them to fix]: “You guys got to change the world because we f-cked it up.” But I do feel like intergenerational working-togetherness could change the future. I get educated every day by somebody younger than me, whether it’s on a TikTok video or in person, and that gives me a lot of hope. My kid crying at an Olivia Rodrigo show is pretty beautiful.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
https://time.com/6975049