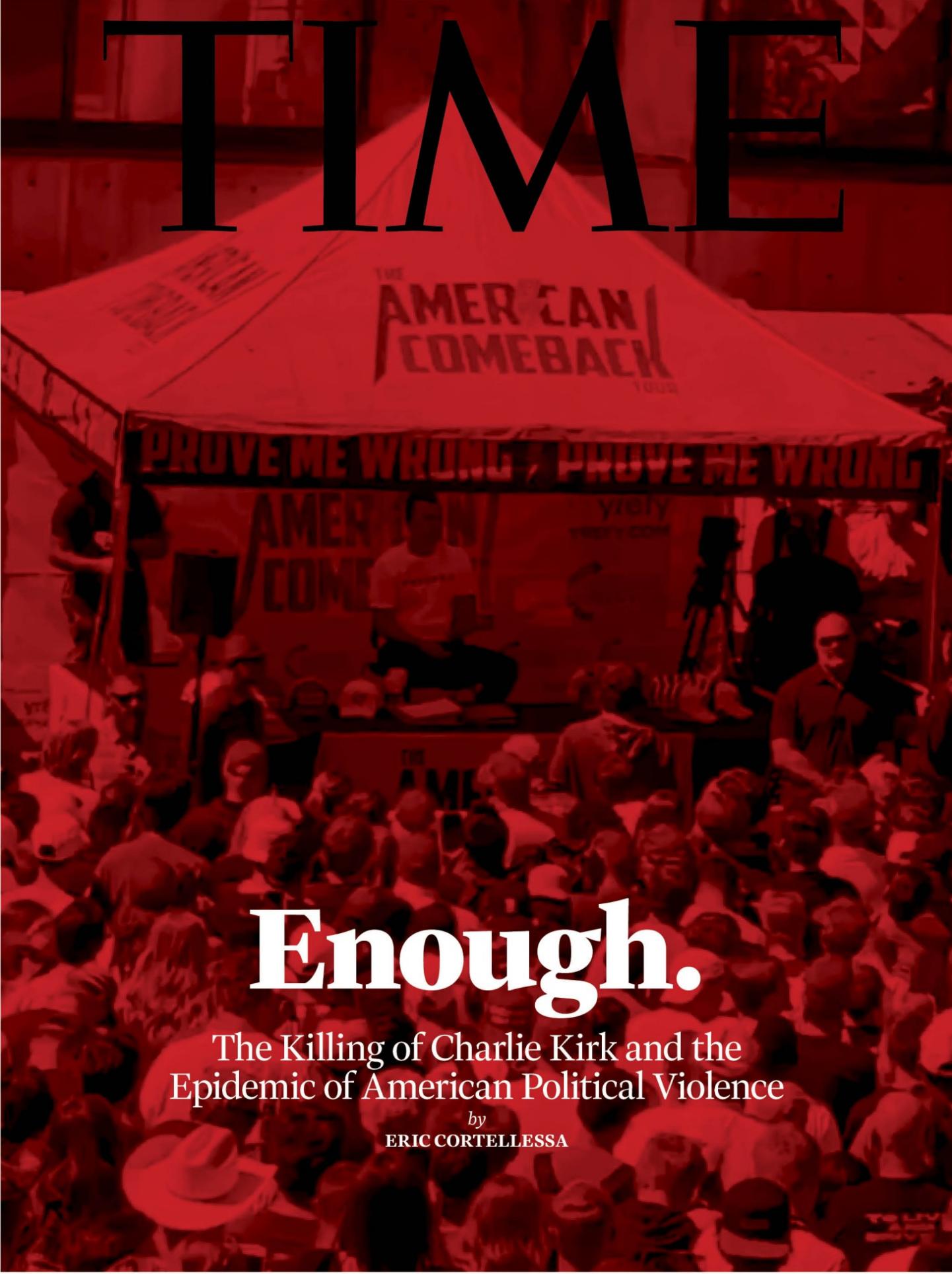


TIME



THE
AMERICAN
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Enough.

The Killing of Charlie Kirk and the
Epidemic of American Political Violence

by
ERIC CORTELLESSA

TIME Magazine

[Sep 29, 2025]

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The Killing of Charlie Kirk and the Political Violence Haunting America

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



The Brief September 11, 2025

The killing of Charlie Kirk and the political violence haunting America, the deadly ‘kissing bug’ disease spreading across the U.S., and more

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Charlie Kirk was doing what he so often did—working a college crowd, prodding and provoking students in debate. The [31-year-old](#)

founder of Turning Point USA was at Utah Valley University near Salt Lake City on Sept. 10, surrounded by thousands of students gathered in an outdoor courtyard. It was the first stop of Kirk's fall campus tour, and he was seated beneath a tent emblazoned with the words "The American Comeback." Kirk became a star in these settings. Since founding his right-wing advocacy organization at 18, he proved peerless at channeling youthful discontent into political energy, shaping a movement with national reach.

As Kirk fielded questions from the audience, a shot rang out, striking him in the neck. Panicked students scattered. Kirk was rushed to the hospital. Grisly footage of the shooting rocketed across social media. Inside the West Wing, staff sat in shocked silence, scrolling to see the latest updates of news on their phones and messages on their computer screens. At 4:40 p.m., Trump announced Kirk's death on Truth Social. "No one," the President wrote, "understood or had the Heart of the Youth in the United States of America better than Charlie." He leaves behind a wife and two young children.

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In recent years, the prospect of a political assassination such as this, carried out before a stunned crowd in broad daylight, has hung over a nation riven by factional fury. Elected officials whispered about it in green rooms and on campaign buses. When the moment arrived, it unfolded with chilling precision: a campus stage, a microphone, a single burst of gunfire. Where it will lead now is an ominous question with no obvious answers.

Kirk was one of the most powerful and incendiary figures on the American right, the [tireless tribune of Trump's young army](#). To admirers, he was a defender of free expression in hostile territory; to critics, a provocateur who thrived on the rancor of the age. The size and fervor of his audiences spoke to his place in the

conservative firmament. “The most influential voice of my generation,” as Trump adviser and family friend Alex Bruesewitz puts it.

America is a nation shaped by political violence and steeped in its aftershocks. The 1960s were scarred by political assassinations, from Kennedy to King. But in recent years, acts of brazen violence have been the grim drumbeat of a debased national politics. In 2021, the year Trump supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol, there were more than 9,600 recorded threats against members of Congress, according to the Capitol Police. The following year saw a hammer-wielding assailant attack Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband Paul in their San Francisco home and the attempted stabbing of New York gubernatorial candidate Lee Zeldin at a campaign rally. In 2024, Trump himself faced two attempts on his life, including the history-bending afternoon in Butler, Pa., when he turned his head at the instant an assassin fired, the bullet grazing his ear instead of piercing his skull.



This year the threat grew more insistent. The residence of Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, was set on fire by an arsonist; a gunman shot two Democratic Minnesota legislators and their spouses; two Israeli embassy staffers were shot and killed outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C.;

a man shouting “free Palestine” tossed Molotov cocktails at a pro-Israeli demonstration in Boulder, Co., injuring multiple people and killing one; and a gunman who allegedly held anti-vaccine views opened fire at CDC headquarters in Atlanta.

“I think the evidence is clear that we’re at a dangerous point of potential escalation,” says Shannon Hiller, executive director of Princeton University’s Bridging Divides Initiative, which tracks political violence in the United States. A range of forces, she argues —the widespread use of dehumanizing rhetoric, the availability of firearms, the spread of disinformation, vanishing trust in institutions—have converged to create an intractable problem. “It’s the confluence of all of these things that we’re living in,” she says. “And it’s why it’s so hard to put a finger on a single solution to get us out of it.”

Kirk’s path to national prominence was unlike that of other MAGA icons. Born in a Chicago suburb, he gravitated toward conservative politics in a predominantly liberal enclave. At 17, he volunteered for a Republican U.S. Senate campaign. He drew notice by writing an essay for the right-wing site Breitbart News, alleging his school textbooks were freighted with liberal bias. Kirk’s zeal caught the attention of Bill Montgomery, a businessman and Tea Party activist, who urged him to forgo college and dedicate himself fully to political organizing.

With Montgomery’s seed money, Kirk founded Turning Point USA while still a teenager. He had a knack for finding wealthy patrons drawn to his entrepreneurial panache. GOP megadonor Foster Friess was one of them, writing a check for \$10,000 to help get the fledgling organization off the ground. Republican strategist Michael Biundo was among many to observe how confident Kirk was from the jump, how undaunted by being new to the scene and often the youngest person in the mix. “I have known Charlie since he started in politics. He always loved the challenge of changing

the hearts and minds of the youth. He saw them as the future, the turning point to move the needle of conservative policies and principles,” Biundo says. “He took the battle right to the campuses with both his words and his debating style. His impact in this realm cannot be overstated.”

What began as a youth-oriented effort to rally college students against liberal orthodoxy morphed into something bigger. Kirk made headlines with his “[Professor Watchlist](#),” which targeted academics accused of suppressing conservative speech or promoting left-wing propaganda. He reveled in provocations that delighted the right and incensed the left. Kirk argued that some gun-violence deaths were a [reasonable price to pay](#) for preserving the Second Amendment, called for a “patriot” to [bail out](#) Paul Pelosi’s attacker, helped to spread baseless [rumors](#) that Haitian migrants in Ohio were eating people’s pets, and once called the Civil Rights Act a “[huge mistake](#).” The list of people he offended—often intentionally—was as long as his roster of supporters.

Over time, Turning Point grew into a well-funded, multipronged organization: a media outlet, a voter-turnout machine, and a hub for student chapters on thousands of high school and college campuses. “They’re all symbiotic,” Kirk told me a few weeks ago. “They all feed one another.”

Kirk was not initially a Trump backer. During the 2016 Republican presidential primary, he supported Scott Walker and Ted Cruz before endorsing Trump. During the thick of the campaign, an associate arranged a meeting with Donald Trump Jr., who hired Kirk on the spot. For the rest of the campaign, he worked as Trump Jr.’s assistant, a role that vaulted him deeper into Trump World and secured his place within its inner orbit.

After Trump’s victory in 2016, Kirk returned his focus to Turning Point and quickly fashioned himself into one of the President’s most zealous defenders. He shed the vestiges of Reaganite

libertarianism and embraced the national-populist framework that undergirded Trump's political project: restricting immigration, imposing tariffs, rejecting foreign entanglements. "It's not a metamorphosis," he once told me. "It's a journey."



In 2019, Kirk launched Turning Point Action, a political group dedicated to defeating Democrats and boosting Trump-aligned Republicans. The COVID-19 pandemic propelled him to a new level of prominence. Kirk began recording multiple podcasts a day, railing against mask mandates and school closures. He became a fixture on Fox News, where his tirades caught Trump's attention. One evening, Kirk delivered a phrase that crystallized conservative anger: "The cure cannot be worse than the disease." Trump heard it, liked it, and began repeating it himself.

In the years that followed, Kirk became one of Trump's most unshakable allies. He amplified Trump's false claims that the 2020 election had been stolen and pressed the case for J.D. Vance as Trump's running mate. By 2024, Turning Point was running the voter-mobilization drive in Arizona that the campaign relied upon, an effort that helped return the pivotal swing state to Trump's column. By then Kirk had amassed millions of followers across social media, and *The Charlie Kirk Show* became one of the most popular political podcasts in the country. He was a one-man

persuasion campaign on Trump's behalf, helping the Republican notch a surprisingly strong performance with young voters last November.

After [Trump's return to the White House](#) was assured, Kirk decamped to a donor's condo in West Palm Beach to help manage the transition, vetting prospective appointees for loyalty. When Trump took the oath of office, Kirk stood only steps away.

Three weeks ago, I joined Kirk in Phoenix, where we spent hours talking as he showed me around Turning Point's headquarters, a sprawling six-building complex tucked into the manicured grounds of the Arizona Grand Resort. Each building was devoted to another wing of the labyrinthine organization he had conjured from scratch. When I walked in, he was dressed in a T-shirt and sweatpants, padding around in his socks and anxiously checking the score of the Chicago Cubs game. He and his aides were deep in planning a fall speaking tour, anticipating ever-larger crowds.

Kirk mused about writing a book on the core tenets of MAGA. But his focus, as ever, was on building a movement that could endure for years to come. He was thinking about who might carry Trump's torch forward. "If J.D. wants to run, he has my full support," Kirk told me. "I will do everything in my power to make him President. Row one, day one."

For Kirk's friends and allies, the assassination is shattering—both for the personal loss and for what they fear it portends. "Unfortunately, I don't think it's going to be the last, which is why it's so scary," says [Representative Anna Paulina Luna](#) of Florida, the first Turning Point alumna elected to Congress. Her words carried the tremor of recognition: in American life, acts of political violence have rarely been isolated. The murder of Martin Luther King Jr. fueled riots across the country; the shooting of [Gabrielle Giffords](#) deepened the atmosphere of paranoia and mistrust; [the](#)

[Jan. 6 attack](#), with its scenes of armed men roaming the Capitol, enraged the left and illustrated the extreme grievances gripping the right.

Kirk's sudden, public death risks joining that chain. His killing could become not just a tragedy but a catalyst—an event that radicalizes ever more Americans, less an aberration than a feature of our increasingly perilous national politics.

With reporting by Charlotte Alter, Brian Bennett, Philip Elliott, Connor Greene, and Chantelle Lee

<https://time.com/7316280>

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Gabby Giffords: I Mourn for Charlie Kirk's Family

Gabby Giffords is a former U.S. Congresswoman and the co-founder of the gun violence prevention organization [Giffords](#).



I mourn for Charlie Kirk's family.

I didn't agree with almost anything he said, but he had a right to speak. Just as he had a right to go on a work trip and return safely to his wife and two young children at home in the state we share, Arizona.

Just as Melissa Hortman, the former Speaker of the Minnesota State Legislature, deserved to be safe at home with her husband and her dog. Instead they were all three shot dead together one night in June.

Just as President Donald Trump had the right to campaign without fear of being assassinated, as two different people tried to do last summer.

Just as I had the right to meet with my constituents safely on January 8, 2011—the day when instead I, a young congresswoman in a purple district, was nearly assassinated. Eighteen other people were shot and six were killed.

Our stories are unique, but what Charlie Kirk, President Trump, Melissa Hortman and I all have in common is that someone who wanted to kill us had a gun.

We can and should talk about political violence, and its toxic relationship to political rhetoric. We can and must talk about social media's role in these moments. We all, as individual Americans, need to do a better job considering our words and their impact. But anyone who responds to preventable tragedies like this—tragedies that over time begin to erode the very fabric of our country—by refusing to face the problem of gun violence and crime head-on is missing the point.

What we share, and what puts all of us in danger—from elected leaders to little children, like those shot while praying in church in Minnesota a few weeks ago—is the overwhelming prevalence of guns in this country and the loopholes that make it appallingly easy for dangerous people to access them.

In America, we now have [more guns than people](#). Many states take sensible steps—background checks, extreme risk protection orders, and safe storage laws—all policies that help [reduce gun crime and gun deaths](#). Other states—like Utah, which year after year receives

a F grade in the annual [Gun Law Scorecard](#) released by my organization, GIFFORDS—do far too little to save lives. Utah has [expanded](#) gun access in recent years, and gun deaths have increased along with that, soaring by 45% from 2014 to 2023, according to the [CDC](#).



 Secondary image

I was gutted to learn that Charlie Kirk died yesterday in Utah—and it's also true that in Utah, someone dies from gun violence every 20 hours. Too many families know the pain of having a loved one killed by guns, in that state and across the country.

In fact, mere hours after Kirk's shooting, at least two students were shot at a high school in Evergreen, Colorado.

Americans of both political parties desperately want this violence to end. Our research suggests that the vast majority of Republican voters want to close loopholes that allow criminals and dangerous people to get their hands on guns. When you ask parents what they want most for their children's education, they tell us [again and again](#) that keeping their kids safe from gun violence is their top priority. The American people are far more united than their representatives in Washington. Our polling shows 88% of

Republicans support background checks on all gun sales, 75% support laws to get untraceable ghost guns off the streets, and a surprising 81% support requiring a license to own a gun (just like Americans need licenses to drive cars). Yet somehow Congress refuses to act.

It is physically very hard for me to speak due to my injuries from the bullets that hit me that day in January, and after watching yet another political shooting violently steal someone's life before our eyes, it's even harder to find words. So I want to speak plainly to my former colleagues in Congress, both the House and the Senate: Do something. Take action. Pray also if you want, but understand: your job is action. Nobody goes to the polls to elect someone to pray for them. We vote because we trust the people we elect will pass sensible, moderate policies that make our country a better, safer place to live and raise a family.

We may never be able to eliminate all gun violence. But we must realize that all gun violence is preventable. We know what to do to make our country safer for all of us, and our elected representatives can do it immediately. Come to the table, as Republicans and Democrats, to pass solutions to the epidemic of gun violence that's killing both of us. There's no shortage of policies with a history of bipartisan support: closing background check loopholes, supporting violence intervention programs, funding law enforcement—including the brave agents at the ATF who catch violent criminals and crack down on the small percentage of gun dealers who break the law—among many others. Above all: prioritize American lives over the donations and profits of gun industry CEOs.

When I was shot, my friend Judge John Roll was killed. He was a Republican. We didn't always agree, but we still worked together for the good of our state. Also killed was Christina-Taylor Green. She was only nine years old and had just been elected Class President at her elementary school. Their families will never be

whole again, just as the Kirk family will never be whole again, and I hold them all in my heart.

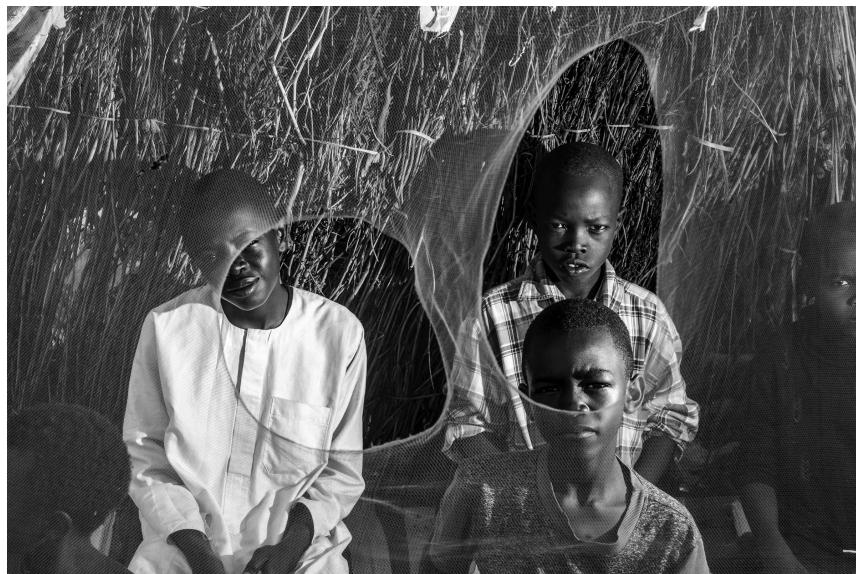
I call on my colleagues in Washington to show courage, not cowardice. I call on them to show loyalty to our country and our common values, and to do the single most important thing they can for their constituents: keep them safe.

<https://time.com/7316434>

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Sudan's Crisis in the Shadows

Campbell is an editor at large at TIME, based in the Singapore bureau. He covers business, tech, and geopolitics across Asia. He was previously China bureau chief.



Invisible anguish is especially wretched. That has been Sudan's lot during two years of brutal civil war—slaughter that has claimed some 150,000 lives and forced almost a quarter of its population of 50 million to flee their homes.

Yet this forgotten war has received scant attention from an international community preoccupied with carnage in Ukraine and Gaza, and rising tensions in East Asia. That Sudan's plight remains largely hidden is what struck Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Moises Saman when he spent almost two weeks in Darfur, and Sudanese refugee camps in neighboring Chad, in July and August. A veteran of covering conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, Saman hitched rides on U.N. planes and trudged along mud tracks to reach this arcane frontier at Africa's beating heart. By embedding with the international NGO Médecins Sans Frontières, or Doctors Without Borders, he photographed maimed

civilians, grieving mothers, and children conjuring games from the trash of people who have nothing to spare.

“What makes this conflict unique is the fact that it’s in the shadows,” says Saman. “This huge civil war is having such deep humanitarian consequences but has not been given the attention it deserves.”

It’s a conflict that officially began in April 2023 when a vicious power struggle erupted between Sudan’s armed forces and its powerful Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group. But the underlying tribal, religious, and political tensions have simmered for decades. Many of the tens of thousands who fled to Aboutengue refugee camp in eastern Chad belong to Sudan’s Masalit ethnic group, whose slaughter by militias aligned with the RSF was declared a genocide by the U.S. in January, echoing an earlier genocide designation in 2004.

At Aboutengue, Saman documented how limited access to clean water, shortages of food, and overstretched health services compound the trauma of displacement. Meanwhile, the onset of the rainy season has exacerbated already deplorable conditions, transforming dust into thick sludge, flooding fragile shelters, and bringing swarms of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Recent aid cuts have deepened hardships for families. Relief organizations estimate that the Trump Administration’s slashing of USAID has shuttered 4 of every 5 emergency food kitchens catering to displaced Sudanese.

The U.N. estimates 7 million women and girls in Sudan have lost access to essential reproductive health services, leading to a spike in stillbirths, preventable maternal deaths, and newborn mortality. Saman photographed 24-year-old Khadija, who uses an alias for security and fled the capital Khartoum while eight months pregnant.

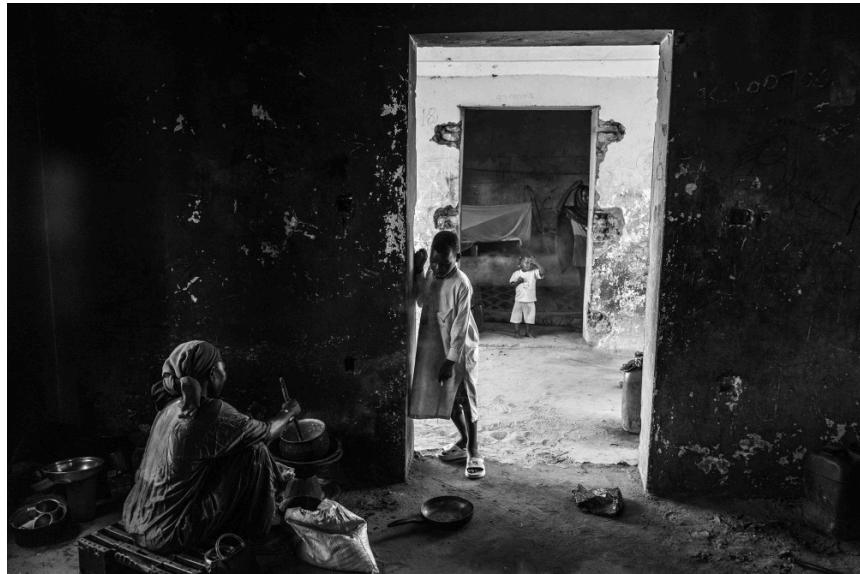
“We escaped as explosions hit near our house,” she told him. “We left with nothing.” Khadija underwent a clandestine cesarean in a makeshift clinic only for her baby to die hours later.

By traveling across the border into RSF-controlled western Darfur, Saman also met rebel combatants and captured the sorrows of their wounded fighters and bereaved kin.

“What I found interesting is the parallels in how the civilian population is suffering,” says Saman. “Be it families aligned with the RSF, or fleeing the RSF, they find themselves displaced, under a lot of stress, without access to proper food, medical attention, or shelter. It speaks to how this war is affecting everybody.”

Sadly, it’s also a conflict without any glimmer of resolution. For while historic animosities fuel the fighting, Sudan is yet another proxy conflict between the Middle East’s squabbling theocracies, with Qatar and Iran major backers of the Sudanese government, and the UAE bankrolling the RSF, according to U.N. sanctions monitors. (Abu Dhabi steadfastly denies stoking the bloodshed.)

The grim irony of Sudan’s predicament is that Africa’s third-largest country boasts significant mineral reserves, including huge quantities of gold, as well as vast swathes of arable land. Yet foreign powers feuding over these precious resources have destroyed countless lives as well as any hope of a prosperous future. Adds Saman: “These are people that just want to survive until tomorrow.”



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TIME

THE FORGOTTEN CRISIS

Photographs by
MOISES SAMAN

Hawa Al Muhajer, 27,
lost her leg during
Sudan's civil war, which
has claimed some
150,000 lives and forced
almost a quarter of its
population of 50 million
to flee their homes

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Photographs by Moises Saman—Magnum Photos for TIME

Correction, Sept. 5: The original version of this story contained a caption that mischaracterized Al Junaynah Teaching Hospital. It is one of the few functioning hospitals in West Darfur, not the only one.

<https://time.com/7313600>

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TIME's Kid of the Year Is Protecting Seniors From Cybercrime

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



The unnamed cybercriminals trying to scam seniors out of their money got more than they bargained for when they targeted Tejasvi Manoj's grandfather back in February 2024. Tejasvi, then a 16-year-old junior at Lebanon Trail High School in Frisco, Texas, was driving home from Scouting America camp with her father when he suddenly noticed five missed calls on his phone—all from his 85-year-old father. He called back, and the older man reported that he had received an urgent email from another relative, Tejasvi's uncle, asking for \$2,000 to settle an unexpected debt. Given the apparent emergency, Tejasvi's grandfather was prepared to transfer the funds—but her father urged him not to and the grandfather, at the suggestion of his wife, then called the uncle to see if the request was legitimate.

“I never asked you for money,” came the response. “Please don’t send anything until I can look into what’s going on.”

It was a near miss for the unsuspecting senior. The fact that criminals would seek to take advantage of an old man’s lack of sophistication about the workings of the internet galled Tejasvi. When she got home she went to her room and immediately began researching how common such scams are. *Very common, it turns out.*

In 2024, the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center received nearly 860,000 reports of scams, with potential losses exceeding \$16 billion. Of those, acts of fraud targeting people over the age of 60 accounted for nearly \$5 billion, a 32% increase over the previous year. Seniors represent a target-rich cohort for the bad guys. They’re typically retired, sitting on pensions and 401(k)s, and may be naive to the techniques favored by con artists and reprobates who run riot on the internet. According to the Federal Trade Commission, the number of older adults who lost more than \$10,000 to online scams increased fourfold from 2020 to 2024. For those who lost \$100,000 or more, the increase was seven-fold, for a total of \$445 million in 2024 alone. And none of those figures includes losses victims were too embarrassed to report.

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“Tejasvi was surprised that there was such a lack of awareness among her grandparents,” says Aishwarya Manoj, her mother. “It was like, Why did you not know? That’s when she went on with her research and found out that it was not an isolated case with her grandparents, but a much larger problem.”

Older Americans clearly need protection, and Tejasvi was determined to provide it. Within the year she had built and launched Shield Seniors, a website designed to educate the 60-plus demographic about what online scams look like, analyze suspicious emails and messages users upload, and, if the communications prove fraudulent, provide links to report them. The site is currently

available in a private preview mode only, pending more R&D and fundraising, but is already—like its creator—making itself known. Tejasvi was recognized with an honorable mention in the 2024 Congressional App Challenge; delivered a 2025 TEDx talk in Plano, Texas, about the need to build “digital bridges” to all demographics; and makes occasional appearances at local assisted-living facilities, demonstrating her website and teaching seminars about cybercrime.





“I remember going to my first seminar and I was super nervous,” says Tejasvi, whose work has earned her recognition as TIME’s Kid of the Year for 2025—and as the first such honoree to also be a TIME for Kids Service Star, taking part in our sister publication’s program highlighting young people making a positive impact. “What if no one shows up? What if I totally mess up?” She didn’t mess up—totally or otherwise. “There were so many people who were really interested—taking notes on their notepads, which was really nice. At the end some of them came up to me with questions, and I was able to help them.”

[Learn more about Service Stars here.](#)

Shield Seniors didn’t come easy. For one thing, Tejasvi had a lot of other activities to attend to. She is active in Scouting America—

recently receiving her Eagle Scout rank—and plays violin in her school orchestra. She tutors Bhutanese refugees online in math and English through an organization called Vibha, a nonprofit involved in workforce and scholastic development in India. She also does volunteer work—serving on the leadership board of the North Texas Food Bank Young Advocates Council and packing meals, with the social-enterprise company TangoTab, for families facing food insecurity.

“I started volunteering in sixth grade,” she says. “I think it’s really important; if you’re lucky yourself, you want to make sure other people feel loved and lucky too.”

Shield Seniors presented another way to do that, and Tejasvi was well prepared to do the coding that would make the project possible. Both of her parents work in the IT domain—in fact, her father Manoj Ganapathy adds, “everyone in my family is into tech”—and she grew up fluent in the language of computers.

Tejasvi began coding in eighth grade, taking cybersecurity classes and attending summer programs sponsored by the nonprofit Girls Who Code. She has also gotten involved in Cyber-Patriot, a joint Air Force and Space Force program to spark interest in cybersecurity and STEM disciplines among young people.

“I code mostly in Java and Python, and a bit of HTML,” Tejasvi says. “I really love the fact that you can solve problems with your computer, and I really like creating.”

Throughout the development of the site she tapped her on-site experts—her parents—for help, and reached outside the home too. Aarathi Rajamanickam, a neighbor and software-engineering manager in the banking sector, has served as Tejasvi’s mentor for several years and regularly provided counsel.

“Because I work in cybersecurity I see these kinds of [fraud] cases come by on an almost daily basis,” says Rajamanickam. “For Shield Seniors I’ve been a mentor, I’ve been a guide, I’ve been a sounding board.”

Then, in February, after an early version of the site was ready, a story about Shield Seniors and Tejasvi appeared in the *Dallas Observer*, bringing her to the attention of the people at AARP. “They set up a meeting where I walked them through the website, and they were very impressed,” Tejasvi said in a follow-up email to TIME. “They provided feedback and guidance, and shared my work on LinkedIn, helping me connect with a wider network of people.”



The website that has resulted from all of this work is equal parts intuitive, smart, and artful. Shield Seniors is divided into four principal sections. The first is labeled “Learn,” and helps users master the basics of internet security, such as the importance of creating strong passwords, understanding privacy settings, knowing what information to share and what not to share, and, most important, recognizing what a scam looks like. “Make sure to be aware of common tactics used to scam seniors, such as by creating fake charities,” the website reads. “Be careful with unexpected

messages, especially those that rush you or seem too good to be true.”

The second section, labeled “Ask,” takes users to a chatbot that answers questions. Interacting with a population that was already approaching middle age when the internet appeared, Tejasvi’s bot keeps its answers simple—holding them to two sentences or even less.

“If you ask ChatGPT or Gemini questions about cybersecurity, they are going to give you, like, 10 paragraphs of answers with very hard-to-understand terminology,” she says. “That works for some people, but it doesn’t work for most older adults.”

“What her portal does, for lack of a better word, is to dumb it down,” says Rajamanickam, “to kind of make it very simple.”

The third section, labeled “Analyze,” is where the true brains of the site live. When users click this tab they’re directed to a page that allows them to upload a suspicious text or email, which an AI system will then analyze with what Tejasvi says is 95% accuracy at determining what’s a scam and what’s not a scam. Then, it goes beyond just providing a digital thumbs-up or down.

“It will also explain why,” she says, “because our goal for Shield Seniors is to make sure older adults are independent and know what to look for. We want to make sure they’re able to navigate the online world confidently, with independence, and with dignity.”

Finally, the site includes a “Report” section that allows users to rat the fraudsters out. The site provides links to 14 private and government groups that accept and act on complaints, including the FBI, the Better Business Bureau, the Social Security Administration, AARP, the SEC, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Just which group is the right one to contact depends on just which kind of fraud was committed. The FBI, for

example, is a sort of one-stop-shopping site for all manner of cybercrime, including identity theft, computer intrusions, investment fraud, phishing, and ransomware. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau responds to complaints involving financial products and services including bank accounts, credit reports, and payments made or requested.

“This is supposed to bring people a sense of ‘You’re not alone,’” says Tejasvi. “A lot of people are embarrassed that they got scammed, but this isn’t something you should be embarrassed about. It’s just a learning experience. You should report it to help make sure it doesn’t happen to anyone else.”



Shield Seniors is a formidable site, with a formidable array of resources provided to give users redress—or at least the satisfaction that they've blown the whistle on bad actors doing bad things in what should be a safe public space. The site itself is made to feel safe too. Tejasvi designed it with large-font type to make text easier to see and read, and a soft, blue theme intended to be soothing to people who may come to the site fresh from a scam and be fearful or frazzled. Tejasvi test-drove early versions of the site with her grandparents and other older members of her community before she settled on its current design.

Still, Shield Seniors is very much a work in progress. It currently relies on a free AI engine, which limits its power and the size of the audience it can host—hence its private preview status. Tejasvi's fundraising work is partly devoted to allowing her to transition to a larger, commercial AI platform. "We plan to open it to a wider audience once we secure funding to support broader access," she said.



Meantime, like every other high school senior, Tejasvi is looking ahead. For college, she plans to apply to at least one school close to home—the University of Texas, Austin—as well farther afield, with her eye on schools ranging from Georgia Tech to Purdue. No

surprise, she intends to major in computer science and minor in AI or cybersecurity.

And she'll keep working to expand and improve Shield Seniors—and her personal footprint as well, hoping especially to be welcome in more assisted-living facilities where she can interact with seniors face-to-face. For now, she's had the opportunity to visit just a few, with others telling her to come back when she's had a little more experience. "I'm a bit young, I guess," she says.

But that's not stopping her from getting the message out as best she can, as she continues to advocate for seniors to become savvy and independent in cyber-space, and for their family members to help them gain the necessary experience and confidence.

"Just make sure to check up on your loved ones," Tejasvi says, asked if she has any advice for those who want to join her in that quest. "Make sure that they're staying safe online."

<https://time.com/7315024>

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President Lee Jae-Myung's Plan to Reboot South Korea

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The Brief September 18, 2025

ABC suspends ‘Jimmy Kimmel Live!’, President Lee Jae-Myung’s plan to reboot South Korea, and more

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It was not how Lee Jae-myung envisioned his first day on the job. Following his election as South Korea's President on June 3, Lee's staff arrived at their new offices in central Seoul the next morning to find rooms strewn with trash and desks equipped with monitors but bereft of computers, which had all been piled in a corner. It was a struggle to get doors unlocked and find even basic stationery.

“It was a very busy and chaotic period,” Lee, 61, tells TIME in his only Western media interview since taking office. “I thought that we had done much preparation in advance, but it was not sufficient.”

Behind the chaos was his disgraced predecessor, Yoon Suk-yeol, whose December declaration of martial law plunged the East Asian nation of 50 million into six months of political paralysis that concluded with Yoon’s impeachment—and, after a snap poll, Lee’s election.

Just over 100 days on, the new leader has moved with such speed that the chaos he encountered on his first day seems like a distant memory. In Seoul, one of the world’s most densely populated cities, he has imposed a 600 million won (\$430,000) cap on mortgage loans for property purchases to quell an overheated housing market. A new labor law, meanwhile, has reduced legal liabilities for striking workers, and some \$10 billion of cash vouchers ranging from \$110 to \$330 have been distributed to every citizen, depending on income, to boost local businesses.



“One of my biggest accomplishments is that South Korea’s domestic political situation has been stabilized,” he says.

For all the action at home, perhaps his greatest challenge was external: the turbulence caused by Yoon’s martial law declaration meant that South Korea languished half a year behind other nations in negotiating a new trade deal with the Trump Administration. Seoul and Washington have had a free-trade agreement since 2012, and last year South Korea sent cars worth \$34.74 billion to the U.S. —accounting for about half of the Asian nation’s auto exports, a figure that plummeted when the Trump Administration imposed levies of 25%. On July 31, Lee negotiated a reduction to 15% in exchange for pledges to invest \$350 billion in the U.S. and other concessions.

It was a critical milestone—and one that is central to Lee’s plan to reenergize a moribund economy. The home of world-leading firms such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG spent decades at technology’s vanguard, but fortunes have wilted in recent years because of a stifling regulatory environment, demographic pressures, and fierce competition from China. After years of steady decline, South Korea’s GDP grew by only 2% in 2024, less than half the Asia-Pacific average.

SEPT. 29, 2025



Lee, who has hiked spending on science and technology by almost 20%, wants to turn things around by creating a “super innovation economy.” His government, he says, will invest \$71.5 billion over the next five years to transform South Korea into one of the top three AI nations worldwide. And in July, Tesla inked a \$16.5 billion deal to produce AI chips at Samsung’s new semiconductor foundry in Texas.

Geopolitically, Lee wants to position South Korea as a “bridge” between East and West. Leaders of Lee’s progressive Democratic Party have traditionally been closer to China, hostile toward former colonizer Japan, and kept the U.S. at arm’s length. Lee, however, pointedly made Tokyo his first foreign visit en route to Washington

and pledged to work “as partners” with Japan’s Prime Minister in the neighbors’ first joint statement in 17 years.

Lee’s actions are meant to reboot South Korea. The West may think of his nation in terms of space-age technology and zeitgeist-defining cultural phenomena like *KPop Demon Hunters*, though in truth South Korea battles the lowest birth rate, top suicide rate, and highest youth unemployment of any developed nation. Lee is clear-eyed about the stakes. South Korea is in “a very serious crisis,” he says. “To address these issues, we need to bring our economy back on track for growth and increase opportunities for our people.”

His pitch is that securing South Korean prosperity and boosting its role in sensitive supply chains can help regional security too. In October, South Korea hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation for the first time in 20 years, and Lee hopes the event—due to be attended by the leaders of both the U.S. and China—can catalyze his nation’s return to Asia’s top table.

However, threading the needle will not be easy. On the same day Lee sat down with TIME in Seoul, less than 600 miles away Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed Russia’s Vladimir Putin and North Korea’s Kim Jong Un to Beijing to commemorate 80 years since the end of World War II. Other dignitaries included the leaders of Iran, Belarus, and Myanmar—a motley cohort dubbed the “axis of upheaval” by the Western press—in a clear rebuke to the U.S.-led order. “I think China wanted me to attend, but I didn’t ask further,” laughs Lee.



Against this backdrop, critics say Lee may be tilting too close to historic ally the U.S. But there are also questions whether Washington remains a reliable partner, not least since the arrest by ICE officials of over 300 South Korean workers at a Hyundai Motor–LG car-battery factory in Georgia on Sept. 4, which prompted Lee's Foreign Ministry to express "concern and regret."

Lee, however, insists South Korea remains well-placed to act as a "bridge of exchanges and cooperation" in the region by cementing ties with the White House. "We will stand together with the U.S. in the new global order, as well as supply chains centered on the U.S., but there is a need for us to manage our relationship with China so as not to antagonize them." Otherwise, Lee concedes, there's "a risk that South Korea could become the front line of a battle between two different blocs."

Lee is no stranger to a challenge. Born the fifth of seven children in a poor farming family in South Korea's rural east, he would trudge daily for two hours each way to elementary school before returning home to plow fields. Lee quit school at 13 and lied about his age to work in factories, where shady bosses would often withhold workers' wages. At one job, Lee's wrist was crushed in a pressing machine, an injury that left him officially designated as disabled. In constant pain, the young Lee even attempted suicide. Asked about

his ascent from that nadir to his nation's top job, Lee breaks into a bashful grin: "It was hard to die, and if I can't die, why not live better?"



Much like his nation, rising from among the world's poorest following the Korean War to ninth biggest economy in 2020 (it is 13th today), Lee's life was poised for a remarkable turnaround. Despite no formal secondary education, he was accepted to law school and passed the national bar exam immediately after graduation. Following a period immersed in human- and labor-rights cases, he entered politics, serving first as Seongnam city mayor, and then later as governor of Gyeonggi province. He ran for President in 2022—but lost to Yoon by 0.7%.

Now finally in office, he faces economic headwinds. Alongside lackluster growth, South Korea's national debt has surged to \$930 billion over the past year, raising questions about his ambitions to transform his nation into an AI superpower. Next year's budget includes funding for 150,000 GPUs, or processors specialized for AI. But it isn't even clear that South Korea's creaking electricity grid, which is struggling to meet the country's current needs, can keep up with Lee's ambitions.

Lee has also courted criticism for pardoning controversial allies, and over a formal apology for the 2016 shutdown of the Kaesong Industrial Complex—where South Korean factories could access North Korean labor by the shared border. Though South Korea's then President Park Geun-hye halted operations in response to North Korea's fourth nuclear test, the new statement explicitly absolves Pyongyang of any responsibility, and has been framed by conservatives as kowtowing to the Kim regime.

A combination of these and other factors led Lee's approval rating to fall from 63% in late July to 51% in mid-August. It has since rebounded to its previous high. The trigger? Lee's successful courtship of—and negotiation with—Donald Trump.

The South Korean leader played his hand deftly, arriving at the White House on Aug. 25 with a golf putter customized for Trump's stature and engraved with his name, two cowboy hats emblazoned

with make america great again, as well as a foot-long model of an ironclad turtle ship to symbolize Korea's shipbuilding traditions. When the U.S. Commander in Chief took a liking to Lee's pen, that was proffered too.



Then there were the compliments: about the Oval Office's gaudy new decor, a surging stock market, Trump's diplomatic prowess. "Many wars in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in the Middle East are coming to peace because of the role that you are playing," Lee gushed.

There had been a sense of trepidation going into the meeting, with Trump posting on Truth Social just hours earlier: "WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOUTH KOREA?" and hinting at a "Purge or Revolution," in reference to investigations into ex-President Yoon. Lee's team feared they might be walking into the kind of ambush sprung on Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky or South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa. In the end, things were cordial, with Trump praising Lee as "a very good guy." It helped, of course, that other than encomiums Lee brought hard cash—half a trillion dollars of it. Aside from the \$350 billion already agreed to, Lee unveiled an additional \$150 billion of investments in the U.S., including Korean Air Lines' buying \$50 billion in Boeing.

But behind the scenes Lee faced tough questions about the \$350 billion investment fund he had put together for the U.S. Would it be all cash? And who would swallow any losses from the investments? The U.S. demands were so strict that “if I were to agree then I would be impeached!” says Lee. “So I asked the U.S. negotiating team for a reasonable alternative.”

With no agreement on these issues, it was perhaps unsurprising that Lee focused on praising Trump for his prior diplomatic success with Kim Jong Un, while urging him to re-engage with Pyongyang. Trump met three times with North Korea’s leader, including at the demilitarized zone that has split the peninsula since the 1950–53 Korean War. However, his budding bromance with Kim exploded dramatically at a summit in Hanoi in 2019, when both leaders left early while blaming each other for the failure to build on an earlier consensus on “denuclearization” achieved at a prior summit in Singapore.

For Lee, pushing for South Korean engagement is not without risk. Public opinion turned against his Democratic Party predecessor Moon Jae-in precisely because he appeared preoccupied with concessions to their Stalinist neighbors. Yet rekindling diplomacy’s greatest soap opera with Kim is something that does interest the U.S. President, who told reporters “I’d like to meet him this year.” And indulging Trump on Kim could help Lee downplay bugbears with Seoul. “Lee probably brought up North Korea to take Trump’s attention away from the trade and investment issues,” says Naomi Chi, a professor at Hokkaido University.

Trump’s yearning after a Nobel Peace Prize is no secret—Israel, Pakistan, and Cambodia have nominated him so far—and Lee may use that chimera to keep Trump onside. It’s also a diplomatic push that would necessitate engaging Pyongyang’s chief sponsor Beijing, possibly lowering the temperature between the world’s top two economies and elevating South Korea’s global standing as Lee’s “bridge.” Asked whether he would nominate Trump for a

Nobel Peace Prize for rapprochement with the North, Lee replied that “if there is concrete progress on this issue … there is no other person who would deserve that prize.”

The problem is defining progress. Few believe Kim would countenance relinquishing his nuclear deterrence, given the fates of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, both toppled after abandoning their weapons programs. “The best the U.S. could hope for is nuclear arms talks, not denuclearization,” says Kim Chol-min, a Seoul-based North Korean defector who used to handle the leadership’s secret funds and uses a pseudonym for security. “All sanctions lifted in return for partial destruction of nuclear weapons.”

But rolling back the strict U.N. sanctions regime imposed in 2017, which has rendered economic cooperation between Seoul and Pyongyang virtually impossible, would be hugely controversial. Still, a focus on arms control makes sense. North Korea is estimated to wield at least 50 nuclear bombs and may have the capacity to produce 10 to 20 annually. Lee points out how North Korea agreed in 1994 to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for heavy oil and light water reactors. (The deal collapsed in 2003.) He advocates “negotiations to partially ease or lift sanctions” on North Korea in exchange for a three-stage process: arms suspension, reduction, and finally denuclearization. “And I believe that President Trump would be on the same page.”

Of course, any deal depends on North Korea’s willingness to sit down. But today the regime is flush with an estimated \$20 billion reaped from arms sales to aid Putin’s war in Ukraine, and Lee’s conciliatory measures have been met with scornful ripostes. Last year, Kim symbolically demolished the Arch of Reunification in Pyongyang while his influential sister Kim Yo Jong dismissed Lee’s remarks about restoring inter-Korea trust as “a fancy and pipe dream.”

In the end, even failure may serve a purpose. While Trump's previous North Korea engagement flopped by any objective measure, it probably didn't in the mind of the former reality-TV star, for whom success is measured in column inches, breaking-news alerts, and shattered protocol. We live at a moment when flattery is strategy, and Lee's providing Trump the stage he craves may be a canny act of distraction diplomacy from a leader who knows more than most about beating the odds.

“Korean people have an indomitable will,” says Lee. “My life trajectory has similarities. Although there are many difficulties in front of us, I believe that we will be able to prevail.” —*With reporting by Stephen Kim/Seoul*

<https://time.com/7317953>

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Climate-Fueled Wildfires Are Reversing Clean Air Progress

Shah is a reporter at TIME.



Wildfires are reversing decades of clean air standards in Canada and the U.S., according to new data published Thursday.

Researchers at the University of Chicago released their annual [Air Quality Life Index](#) (AQI), which tracks air pollution and how it impacts life expectancies. This year's report analyzed data collected in 2023.

That year, as Canada faced its worst wildfire season in history, burning over [40 million](#) acres of land, the flames caused air pollution concentrations to rise to levels not seen since 2011 in the United States and since 1998 in Canada, the years AQI began recording air quality data. Both Canada and the U.S. had made great strides in lowering air pollution in the past—but the wildfires reversed that progress. The two countries saw the highest increases in air pollution worldwide in 2023—despite both having strict air quality rules at the time. The fires elevated pollution levels in

pockets of the U.S., and also changed the geographical distribution of pollution in the U.S. The most polluted counties in the U.S. are typically concentrated in California, but that year, wildfires caused counties in several other states including Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, and as far south as Mississippi, to be included among the most polluted.

Around the world, 2023 saw concentrations of PM2.5—small particles 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter that are released in the air by fires and other sources of pollution—increased by 1.5% compared to 2022 levels, AQLI data shows—reaching nearly five times the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Long term exposures to PM2.5 can increase the risk of health impacts including heart disease, lung cancer, and stroke.

The findings are a stark warning of what could be a new reality for tackling air quality. This year's fire season has been the second worst on record, with a total of [18.5 million acres](#) burned since the beginning of 2025. Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires, with the largest increases occurring in the Western U.S. and the boreal forests of northern North America and Russia, according to a [NASA](#) study.

This comes at the same time as the Trump Administration is working to rollback clean air standards in the United States. In March, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that it plans to undo landmark pollution standards, including the [National Ambient Air Quality Standards](#), which regulates harmful pollutants like particulate matter.

The administration has also [proposed](#) revoking the 2009 “endangerment finding” which determined that greenhouse gases were a threat to public health and provided a legal backbone for regulations under the Clean Air Act. Researchers say that climate change and air pollution are deeply linked and that lowering carbon

dioxide emissions, which raises temperatures and [worsens wildfires](#), is an essential part of reducing air pollution.

“Both climate change and air pollution are driven by the same source—fossil fuel combustion from vehicles, power plants, and industry,” researchers wrote in the report. “In this respect, reductions in fossil fuel consumption have the potential to decrease air pollution concentrations and the risks of disruptive climate change.”

<https://time.com/7313163>

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The Iconic Look That Exemplifies Giorgio Armani's Impact

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



When Giorgio Armani, the founder of one of the world's most revered fashion brands, died at 91 on Sept. 4, he left behind a legion of extraordinarily beautiful clothes, but perhaps no outfit encapsulates the impact he had on his era better than the champagne-and-silver suit Jodie Foster wore when she won the 1992 Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in *The Silence of the Lambs*. While it doesn't make it onto all of Armani's best-of lists, it represents much of what made the Italian designer and the label he founded so successful.

Lambs was not Foster's first Academy Award. When she won in 1989, for *The Accused*, she wore a light-blue strapless knee-length sheath in ruched taffeta with an enormous bow at the back. She had chosen it herself off the rack, as was common for Oscar nominees of the era. It was not widely admired at the time, and it has since found its way onto several worst-dressed lists. The following year, she entrusted herself to Armani, and the house has dressed her for the Oscars—and most other events—ever since.

Foster's embrace of the label was not an accident; Armani had set up a specialist VIP dressing room on Rodeo Drive in the late '80s that stars could visit to be styled. He understood the power of Hollywood, having had a huge bump in popularity and exposure after providing all of Richard Gere's suits for *American Gigolo*. His strategy was working: in 1990, Julia Roberts caused a stir by wearing an off-the-rack Armani suit when she won a Golden Globe, and so many celebs, male and female, wore the label for the Oscars that year that *Women's Wear Daily* dubbed it "the Armani Awards." Up until that point, Oscar gowns had often been the purview of costume departments and more theatrical designers (save an occasional visit by a Givenchy). Armani was the first to take the Oscars seriously as a fashion event.

Foster's outfit, and the many photos of it that were published when she won, cemented the symbiotic relationship between contemporary designers, stars, and the Oscars, which began to change the nature of the event. Fashion became a feature of the ceremony. The celebs knew that a well-styled outfit would get them publicity even if they didn't win—and a bad outfit would too. Designers loved the attention. As the arrival of decked-out stars proved to be as entertaining for viewers as the distribution of awards, the broadcast grew longer, attracted more viewers, more attention, more advertisers, more money, and then more stars and more designers.

But it wasn't just the Oscars. Armani became associated with celebrity: [Lady Gaga at the 2010 Grammys](#), [Cate Blanchett at the 2014 Oscars](#), and [Zendaya](#) at a movie premiere. Rare was the big public event in which none of the bold names were telling red-carpet interlocutors that were wearing Armani. This association helped him with brand extensions: the perfumes, sunglasses, and handbags that finance many labels' high-fashion lines. Other designers—Valentino, Versace, Oscar de la Renta, to name a few—also successfully courted celebrities, but few had as much success as Armani.

Foster's pantsuit ensemble was classic Armani: the tailoring was impeccable, but it was in service of a more relaxed silhouette than the Bob Mackie and Arnold Scaasi confections that had been in vogue the prior decade. The silk faille jacket was not quite white but a pale blush, and the loose pants and top beneath had an intricate pattern of silver beads. Foster looked like a million bucks, but she also looked like she wasn't trying too hard. Her star rose enough as a result that she was on the cover of *People's* Most Beautiful People issue that year.

That suit, with its flowing lines and subtle color palette, also marked a pivot away from the louder, bigger, bolder ethos of the '80s and toward a quieter definition of sophistication. Armani, who had already introduced unstructured jackets for men and women, was part of the generation of designers who ushered in a less formal fashion era, one that would allow men and women to look refined without looking stuffy. Foster proved it could be done.

These trends had their unintended effects too. In due course the informality and loosening of the customs around dressing would take people all the way to grunge and eventually, in the new millennium, put CEOs of multimillion-dollar companies in hoodies. And as designers increasingly tied their fortunes to famous people, famous people realized they could sell clothes just by wearing them, leading to a rash of clothing lines built in their own

images: Victoria Beckham's eponymous line, Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop, [Kim Kardashian's Skims](#), the Olsen twins' The Row, and Rihanna's Fenty.

The fashion world Armani just departed is different from the one he entered when he started his label in 1975. It's more atomized, less orderly, more enmeshed in the culture of fame and of never-ending updates. But at least in part, it's a world he helped build.

<https://time.com/7314777>

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Israel's Policies and Actions in Gaza 'Meet Legal Definition of Genocide,' Says Association of Scholars

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Trump may declare national housing emergency, anti-Trump protests take over the U.S., and more

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The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) has [passed a resolution](#) stating that Israel's "policies and actions in Gaza meet the legal definition of genocide."

Citing “Article II of the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” within its findings, the resolution argues that Israel’s actions in response to the terrorist attack committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, have not only been directed against Hamas “but have also targeted the entire Gazan population.”

“The government of Israel has engaged in systematic and widespread crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, including indiscriminate and deliberate attacks against the civilians and civilian infrastructure,” the association said in the resolution passed on Aug. 31.

A spokesperson for Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs [rejected](#) the resolution, calling it an “embarrassment to the legal profession and to any academic standard.”

“It is entirely based on Hamas’ campaign of lies and the laundering of those lies by others,” claimed Oren Marmorstein.

Explaining its conclusion, the IAGS argued that Israel has “forcibly displaced nearly all of the 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip multiple times” and cited estimations that more than 90% of the housing infrastructure in the territory has been destroyed.

Onur Uraz, chair of the IAGS Resolutions Committee, confirmed to TIME on Monday that 86% of the association’s members voted in favor of the resolution. “The process of this resolution has been one of the smoothest ones in light of numerous U.N. and NGO reports that support the conclusion,” he said.

“This is a definitive statement from experts in the field of genocide studies that what is going on on the ground in Gaza is genocide,” president of IAGS Melanie O’Brien [is quoted as telling Reuters](#).

Article II of the 1948 U.N. Convention [defines genocide](#) “as a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part.” It does not include political groups or what is known as “cultural genocide.”

Read More: [*What to Know About South Africa’s Genocide Case Against Israel*](#)

The Palestinian Government Media Office said that it welcomed the IAGS’ resolution in a statement viewed by TIME.

Israel has previously strongly denied that its actions in Gaza constitute genocide, citing its right to defend itself.

A statement from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office called allegations of genocide “ridiculous” and a “blatant falsehood” during [an address on Aug. 13](#).

Israel has faced accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the case was [first submitted by South Africa](#) in December 2023. Furthermore, the International Criminal Court (ICC) [previously issued arrest warrants](#) for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

TIME has reached out to Netanyahu’s office for comment.

The IAGS resolution comes as Israel escalates its military expansion in Gaza City, a plan that has garnered much criticism from global leaders and humanitarian organizations. [Germany moved to suspend its Gaza-associated arms sales](#) to Israel upon the announcement of the expansion.

Read More: [*World Leaders React as U.N.-Backed Report Confirms Famine in Gaza*](#)

Furthermore, there are mounting concerns over the [malnutrition crisis in Gaza](#), particularly after a U.N.-backed food security body

[confirmed that famine](#) is taking place in Gaza City for the first time since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

The Israel-Hamas war started after Hamas launched a terror attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing over 1,200 people and taking around 250 hostages. Over 63,000 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war, 348 of those deaths were the result of “starvation and malnutrition,” [according to Gaza’s Health Ministry](#).

In the absence of independent monitoring on the ground, the ministry is the primary source for casualty data relied upon by humanitarian groups, journalists, and international bodies. Its figures do not differentiate between civilians and combatants and cannot be independently verified by TIME. Data from the IDF suggests a [Palestinian civilian death rate of 83%](#).

<https://time.com/7313709>

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World's Best Companies of 2025

Hu is an Associate Editor for TIME focusing on special projects including TIME's franchise lists and accolades. She covers science, health, tech, innovation and business.



In the past year, tariffs, AI, and changing consumer sentiments have made once-dominant companies reshuffle their growth strategies. New giants emerged amid this shift.

Nvidia, which [this summer](#) became the first public company to hit \$4 trillion in market value, tops TIME and Statista's 2025 statistical ranking of the World's Best Companies. The ranking measures employee satisfaction, revenue growth, and sustainability transparency. Nvidia rose through the ranks on a wave of [growing AI demand](#) and a [well-performing gaming division](#).

Methodology: How TIME and Statista Determined the World's Best Companies of 2025

Many companies ranked high on the list have benefitted from that enthusiasm for AI. [Microsoft](#), ranked second on this list and right behind Nvidia in market value, also saw surges in [revenue throughout 2024](#) driven by AI and cloud computing. Apple—which

topped the World's Best Companies list [in 2024](#)—is notably absent this year due to a decline in revenue from 2022 to 2024, which many Wall Street analysts have [postulated](#) could be due to the company [falling behind on AI](#). But tides may be turning as the behemoth figures out its footing in the new tech landscape; CEO Tim Cook said on a third quarter earnings call that the company is significantly growing investments in AI, embedding it across devices and platforms. In July, after the study period for this list, [Apple reported](#) a 10% year-over-year revenue growth—the biggest bump [since 2021](#).

Nike (no. 14) is the highest ranked Apparel, Footwear & Sporting Goods company, surpassing luxury giant LVMH (no. 21) and athleisure queen Lululemon (no. 36). The company faced a few rocky years due to [competition from breakout brands](#) like On and Hoka, and [last year](#) brought in a new CEO, Elliott Hill, to invest “heavily in big sport moments and key product launches to win back our brand voice,” Hill said in an earnings call [in June](#). In summer, game day looks for tennis champions Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner bumped sales.

Drugmaker [Novo Nordisk](#) (no. 15) is also innovating to stay ahead. Building on the popularity of its [game-changing diabetes and weightloss treatments](#) Ozempic and Wegovy, the company is now [launching an oral semaglutide](#) to retain its lead [against rivals](#) like Eli Lilly. “When we think about the obesity market in the U.S., everyone knows we’re in a competitive environment,” David Moore, EVP of U.S. operations at Novo Nordisk, said in an [earnings call in August](#). “We’re still growing. The market’s growing.”

<https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/fAEYB/2/>

<https://time.com/7315547>

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With U.S. Open Win, Carlos Alcaraz Reclaims World No. 1 Ranking

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 and 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.



The Brief September 8, 2025

The fight over the Epstein disclosure bill, Carlos Alcaraz's U.S. Open Win, and more

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In 2025, for the first time in modern tennis history, the same two men met in three major tennis tournament finals in the same calendar year. And this was no fluky occurrence. These two players, [Carlos Alcaraz](#) of Spain, 22, and [Jannik Sinner](#), 24, of Italy, are far and away the two best players on the planet, and if they remain in good health, stand to hold that distinction for years to come. They're young and hungry and have already won every major tournament of the past two seasons. Alcaraz won their first duel, at the French Open in Paris, and his comeback, five-set, 5-plus-hours thriller still stands as the [outstanding sports moment of the year](#). Sinner got Alcaraz back with a clinical four-set victory at Wimbledon.

As for the final chapter of this year's debut Alcaraz-Sinner trilogy: advantage, Carlos.

Under the watchful eye of President Donald Trump and a host of other glittering names (Bruce Springsteen, Pink, Lindsay Lohan, Kevin Hart, and Ben Stiller, among them), Alcaraz outlasted Sinner 6-2, 6-3, 6-1, 6-4 in an inspiring effort that put all his brilliance on display. He reclaimed the world No. 1 ranking, and the U.S. Open win, the [second of Alcaraz's career](#), already gives him six grand-slam championships for his career. Worth repeating: he's 22.

“I’m seeing you more than my family,” Alcaraz told Sinner on the court after the match.

Wearing a sleeveless pink shirt showing off his NFL-caliber musculature, the hair he famously [shaved off](#) before the tournament growing in quite nicely, Alcaraz had his redheaded opponent, who was clad in University of Texas burnt orange, bouncing around the court during rallies. Twice in the first set—which began with Arthur Ashe Stadium about half full, since hordes of fans were waiting in line to go through the security checkpoints erected due to Trump’s presence in his hometown borough of Queens—Sinner

slipped, unable to change direction as quickly as Alcaraz's shots required.



Alcaraz broke Sinner's serve in a back-and-forth, eight-minute first game; Sinner made a couple of surprising unforced errors, a bad sign for him. Alcaraz never looked back, really. He finished the match with 10 aces, to Sinner's two. He doubled up Sinner's winners count, 42 to 21. Alcaraz didn't double-fault the entire match.

While Sinner responded in the second set, highlighted by a backhand smash that ended a 19-shot rally and got the crowd behind him, albeit briefly, Alcaraz wasted no time blunting Sinner's momentum in the third. After hitting a winner to go up 3-0, he held his hand to his ear, asking for noise. The fans obliged.

(Trump, who received what can charitably be called a lukewarm reaction from the crowd when his face was blasted on the jumbotron—he smiled stiffly as mostly boos were interspersed with some cheering—left his seat, in the Rolex box across from the chair umpire, after Alcaraz took the 3-0 third-set lead. But he wasn't running back to the White House, it turns out. He returned in the fourth.)

Early in the fourth set, Sinner rushed in to catch an Alcaraz drop shot: he reached it, with plenty of time, and had room on the other side for a winner. But with Alcaraz also at the net—ready as always to further frustrate Sinner—Sinner pushed it wider than he needed to, giving Alcaraz the point instead. Alcaraz broke Sinner’s serve that game, and with Alcaraz serving for the match up 5-4, Sinner again made a backhand error on an Alcaraz drop shot that gave Alcaraz match point. Thanks to a rocket return of an Alcaraz second serve, Sinner created some drama to tie the game at 40-all. Two points later, however, on Alcaraz’s third championship point, Sinner’s racket barely touched a 131-m.p.h. Alcaraz serve that finished the bout.

Alcaraz spread his arms wide, smiled at his team’s box, and dropped his head into Sinner’s shoulder at the net as the pair exchanged pleasantries.



At the last major sporting event held in the United States that the President attended, the FIFA Club World Cup in July, Trump lingered too long at the trophy ceremony, [overshadowing the accomplishments of the athletes](#). This time, he stayed in the box as Alcaraz and Sinner were honored on the court following the match. Neither player acknowledged the President in his speech.

Tennis fans are incredibly spoiled. [Rafael Nadal](#) and [Roger Federer](#) retired, and almost right away, Alcaraz and Sinner emerged to carry the sport forward. There was barely a post-Federer/Nadal hangover. Alcaraz and Sinner split the 2025 majors, with a pair of victories apiece. And Sinner had an awesome year. He's one of four men's players to have reached the finals of all four major tournaments in the same season: Rod Laver during his 1969 Grand Slam season, Federer (2006, 2007, 2009), Novak Djokovic (2015, 2021, and 2023), and now Sinner in 2025.

Last and best word, though, goes to Alcaraz.

<https://time.com/7315226>

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Why All Americans Should be Football Fans

Todd Rogers is a professor of public policy at Harvard University.

Audrey Feldman is a doctoral student at Harvard University.



Todd once spotted a person wearing a Philadelphia Eagles hat at a local shop. Instinctively, he shouted “Go Birds!”—and received the automatic “Go Birds!” back. After a few minutes of conversation, he invited his new acquaintance, George, to his family’s weekly Eagles watch parties. George and his son showed up that weekend, cheesesteaks in hand. As the season went on, more of George’s family joined. Now, they all look forward to reconnecting as the new NFL season kicks off today.

This simple story captures something important: being a football fan can be good for you and for those around you. You don’t have to know the difference between a cover-four and a Tampa-2 defense to put on a hat, make a friend at the shop, and build a new family tradition. In an era marked by epidemics of [loneliness](#) and [political distrust](#), sports fandom is one simple and universally accessible medicine.

And it's a popular medicine. More than [70% of Americans](#) consider themselves football fans. Over a third think the [Super Bowl should be a national holiday](#), and half say the Monday after should be a paid day off work. The NFL isn't just the most-watched entertainment in America—it's one of the country's last truly unifying institutions. And for those who care about social connection and civic life, fandom is a surprisingly promising path to both.

Decades of [research](#) show that fans have wider friendship networks, stronger feelings of belonging, and less alienation. Ben Valenta and David Sikorjak captured this in the title of their 2022 book: [*Fans Have More Friends*](#). One [2023 study](#) even found that attending live sporting events boosts life satisfaction and reduces loneliness as much as starting a new job. And in one provocative experiment, fans were more likely to step up for one another—being three times more likely to [stop](#) to help a stranger in need who is wearing their team's jersey.

Sports fandom has a special power to connect people, especially at a time when so many of our traditional civic bonds are fraying. As Robert Putnam documented in [*Bowling Alone*](#), the churches, neighborhood associations, and bowling leagues that once anchored American communities have steadily lost members and influence, eroding civic life and our [trust](#) in one another.

Alongside generational shifts in time use and community involvement, we increasingly sort ourselves into homogeneous communities: [Democrats living among Democrats](#), [Republicans among Republicans](#). We shop for [different brands](#), watch [different shows](#), and [consume different news](#). The combination of social media and political polarization makes it dangerously easy to never interact with people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Few institutions in America still draw large, diverse, and deeply engaged memberships—and professional sports teams top that list.

Joining in is easy: the only barrier is deciding to become a fan.

In 2024, 18 of the 20 most-watched television broadcasts were NFL games. The only non-NFL entries were one presidential debate and the Oscars. Last year's opening weekend averaged 21 million viewers *per game*. **Liberals and conservatives** follow football at roughly equal rates. So do **men and women**, and fans across **racial and ethnic groups**.

The NFL has real problems—from head trauma to racial disparities in leadership. Until 1946, Black players were effectively banned. But the social and civic benefits of fandom are too meaningful to ignore.

It's hard to think of any institution that is so broadly representative of the country—and so passionately embraced. So put on a team hat. Wear your jersey to the grocery store. You may be greeted by your neighbors with spontaneous “Skol!” “Gang Green!” or “Go Birds!”

When you return the cheer you will have just taken a small step toward strengthening your community—and maybe making a new friend to watch with next week.

<https://time.com/7314403>

Iran's Troubles Are About to Get Worse

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



Just three months ago, Israel and Iran fought a [12-day war](#) that shook the Middle East. Missiles and drones flew in both directions, but with a major assist from the U.S., Israel [established dominance](#) of Iran's airspace, repeatedly struck nuclear and military targets across Iran, and [killed](#) 30 security commanders and [19 of Iran's nuclear scientists](#). Iran's retaliation accomplished little that might deter Israel in the future.

A return to war is unlikely. Though Iran [likely retains a stockpile of enriched uranium](#) and the means to rebuild enrichment capability, the [Israeli-American bombing campaign](#) ensured it is now several years away from being able to produce a nuclear weapon. Israel has

also essentially normalized direct strikes inside Iran's borders and demonstrated its ability to inflict significant damage to the regime. Israel can carry out limited "mow the grass" operations if Iran makes sudden progress in rebuilding its [nuclear program](#), and it can strike more missile bases and air-defense systems to keep Iran's defenses down.

For its part, Iran can't afford war. It will retaliate if and when Israel strikes again, but the response will be carefully calibrated to avoid a dangerous escalation it is less able to fend off. Iran is in a [far weaker geopolitical position today](#) than it was before Oct. 7, having lost much of its allied network—from [Hamas](#) and [Hezbollah in Lebanon](#) to Bashar Assad in Syria—that Tehran had long relied on to deter Israel and project power regionally.

For now, the Iranian regime remains stable. The country's water and energy [shortages](#) have triggered a few demonstrations, but a [post-war security-force crackdown](#) has prevented any re-eruption of the [Woman, Life, Freedom protests](#) that rocked the country in 2022. Any return to high-intensity war might jeopardize the regime's control.

Read More: *The Future of Iran Belongs Only to its People*

Yet, even if Iran can avoid another war, pressure on its economy, and therefore the regime, is about to go up. Iran faces the imminent "snapback" of U.N. sanctions. At the end of August, the three European governments that signed the 2015 deal to block development of a nuclear weapons program—Britain, France, and Germany—triggered the return of U.N. sanctions on Iran in response to its decision to halt co-operation with inspectors.

Barring an unlikely diplomatic breakthrough, these sanctions will be reimposed on Oct. 18, just after the snapback deadline expires. Washington has already [hit Iran's oil and mining sectors](#) and banned the use of U.S. dollars in commercial transactions. The

E.U. has also imposed penalties over the violent suppression of past protests and Iran's military support for Russia's war on Ukraine. But U.N. sanctions would be far more sweeping and likely to cause a considerable decline in Iran's oil revenues and put additional pressure on its economy.

Iran has signaled to the Trump Administration that it's open to talks, but the White House appears set on squeezing Tehran further before new bargaining can begin. The official U.S. position is that Iran must first make major concessions on uranium enrichment, and such a climbdown is unlikely. In the meantime, Washington can use the threat of U.N. snapback sanctions to push Iran's leadership deeper into a corner.

Tehran is not without sympathizers and clients. Though the U.S. has slapped sanctions on those who move Iranian oil, China continues to discreetly buy the country's crude. Its major energy companies and banks remain effectively walled off from the Iran oil trade, which limits their risk of penalties. But the bigger picture for Iran's oil revenue is darkening as other potential buyers hang back. Floating storage—tankers containing Iranian oil that have no current destination—surged from 5 million barrels to 30 million over the first half of 2025. At the very least, that means Iran will have to offer bigger discounts, and accept lower revenues, to attract more takers.

The Islamic Republic has weathered many storms since the 1979 revolution, and may well survive a few more. In the wake of the recent Iran-Israel war, Tehran has worked hard to sell survival as victory. But the troubles are only going to grow.

<https://time.com/7316478>

The Warning Signs In Trump's Crusade Against Wind

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The Brief September 8, 2025

The fight over the Epstein disclosure bill, Carlos Alcaraz's U.S. Open Win, and more

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The Trump Administration filed plans this week to cancel the approval for two large wind farm projects off the coast of New

England. With an [estimated](#) value of nearly \$15 billion, the project was a big win for the region—and offered a useful source of new electricity in a time of growing demand.

Trump's move was the latest in a string of attacks on the American wind industry. At a quick glance, it's easy to view this primarily as an attack on clean energy and efforts to tackle climate change—and, of course, that is a big part of the picture.

But, if we step outside the climate bubble a bit, the full-throated push against wind is more than an anti-climate move. By targeting investments that are already in train and in some cases close to completed, Trump's move strikes against the core of the free market and private enterprise. While past administrations have certainly changed subsidies and tightened or loosened regulatory requirements, targeting projects with active construction represents an unprecedented level of regulatory uncertainty that threatens the foundation of how major infrastructure gets built in America and puts government whims in the driver's seat.

In climate and energy circles these days, it's taken as almost a given that wind power has become the ugly duckling of clean energy even as other renewable sources face bright futures despite a hostile administration. Indeed, economics and the growing demand for energy should continue to create opportunities for solar power and battery storage. But the speed and scale of the attempt to diminish wind power should underscore that nothing is safe.

Trump's anti-wind posture originates long before he took office for the second time in January. In his real estate developer days, he complained that wind turbines off the coast of Scotland were hurting business at his seaside golf course. And over the last decade he has offered tirade after tirade condemning the power sources for everything from [killing birds](#) to [simply being ugly](#). In other words, whatever policy justifications the administration may offer, the opposition is at least in part personal.

In Trump's first term, the administration pushed to prop up coal and derail renewables with mixed success and commitment. But this time around has been different. In the first days of his new term, Trump's administration paused new permits for offshore wind power and began a review of existing leases of federal land for wind development. Since then, the administration has slashed clean energy tax credits, imposed tariffs on parts of the wind supply chain, and, with few details, launched a national security investigation on offshore wind.

Most striking and unprecedented has been the attack on projects already permitted or already actively under construction. The projects targeted this week—New England Wind 1 and 2—received permits last year. The company building the Revolution Wind project, which is around 80% completed, received a stop work order in August with the administration citing “national security” concerns. Earlier this year, the administration temporarily halted construction on Empire Wind, another mega-project off the coast of New York. The White House allowed construction to resume after the state’s governor approved a new natural gas pipeline. In all of these cases, billions of dollars of private funding are on the line—investments that have been carefully calculated under the assumption of a consistent legal framework.

“Permitted energy projects of any type shouldn’t be halted at such a late stage,” Martin Durbin, senior vice president of policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, wrote in a Sept. 3 [blog post](#).

“Revoking wind permits today opens the door to uncertainty for all types of energy projects in the future.”

It’s a telling warning coming from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a business lobby group with historic ties to the GOP. Trump’s wind agenda is a message to anyone making a big capital investment: the success of your project may depend on Trump’s favor. Under these conditions, it will be hard not only to invest in the energy transition at scale but also to build a whole lot of necessary infrastructure that

requires large investment—hampering efforts to tackle climate change and foster economic growth.

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After Years of Boasting About His Health, Trump Faces Questions He Can't Shake

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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.

As Donald Trump began [speaking](#) in the Oval Office on Tuesday afternoon, many Americans were less interested in what he had to say than how he looked. Was he wearing more makeup than usual? Any new visible bruises? Was he steady? It was perhaps a reasonable response after much of social media had spent several days declaring Trump on his death bed—or worse.

After years of being told Trump is the model of health, an exemplar of youth, and a man always in his prime, there is well-earned skepticism about his wellbeing—so much so that the public is conditioned to doubt even their own eyes when it comes to Trump's

existence. Trump's unhinged cognitive swerves—a constant but perhaps intensifying trait—don't much help, either.

After all, earlier this year the White House physician [praised](#) the President's health by boasting that he logs "frequent victories in golf events." During his first term, Trump's doctors [kept](#) him just one pound away from being classified as obese but said he was nevertheless a machine. "Some people just have great genes. I told the President if he had a healthier diet over the last 20 years he might live to be 200," Dr. Ronny Jackson [said](#) in 2018, years before joining Congress. During the 2016 campaign, Trump's personal physician released a letter lauding his excellent health—one that Trump himself prescribed, it was later [reported](#). "He dictated that whole letter. I didn't write that letter," Dr. Harold Bornstein said three years later. "I just made it up as I went along."

So it is completely understandable why tin-foil conspiracists of all stripes would buy into the rumors of Trump's imminent, or possibly recent, demise. It builds upon the White House's [announcement](#) that Trump had been diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, which was offered as the reason for his cankles. Big-handshake energy was the excuse [offered](#) up for the clear bruising on his hands, despite visible [make-up](#) deployed to hide it. During an Alaska summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, questions [emerged](#) about his gait. And Tuesday's announcement followed almost a week away from the cameras, leading to claims that the event was a show-of-life move from a Potemkin presidency.

"I didn't see that," Trump said on Tuesday, dubiously brushing off a question about the buzz about his decline. "I didn't hear that," he shrugged off when asked again.

For that media-obsessed President, the protest rings hollow and will not serve his flaking credibility. But it also reinforces a trend that should leave Americans regardless of party affiliation nervous: when Trump came to power in 2017, [49%](#) of Americans saw him as

not honest or trustworthy, according to YouGov polling. The same survey now finds 56% don't believe what he says.

(In fairness, CNN's final poll on Bill Clinton's presidency had 58% of Americans [saying](#) he was not honest or trustworthy.)

Presidencies crumble when they lose credibility. President George W. Bush arguably never recovered after he seemed untethered from reality in the [response](#) to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It's why Republicans thought they had their version of that when Barack Obama seemed [drifting](#) in 2012 after the attack in Benghazi, Libya. Joe Biden [aborted](#) his re-election bid last year after a public meltdown on a debate stage. (A must-read [book](#) detailing Biden's decline [roiled](#) Washington earlier this year, too.)

That last example has even Trump's fanboys asking questions. "There is obviously something going on with Trump that the White House is covering up," Nick Fuentes, a white nationalist and influential far-right figure, [asserted](#) on social media. "This is literally Biden 2."

Trump and his team have tried to dismiss the comparison but these things tend to snowball. Trump knows this. It's why, nine years ago, he [amplified](#) the viral moment of Hillary Clinton stumbling at a Sept. 11 memorial in the final stretch of the 2016 campaign. "She's supposed to fight all of these different things and she can't make it 15 feet to her car? Give me a break. Give me a break," he [said](#). "Give me a break! She's home resting right now. She's getting ready for her next speech which is going to be about 2 or 3 minutes."

Clinton's doctor said she overheated that day and had pneumonia but it did nothing to quell the conspiracy theorists. On Election Day 2016, 61% of voters told the exit polls they did not think Clinton was honest or trustworthy. But here's the rub: 64% said the same of Trump, and he went on to victory. So maybe this whole question of

character is one the current President has figured out how to discard—just as easily as he dispatches with the truth. Americans have just grown numb to the disconnect.

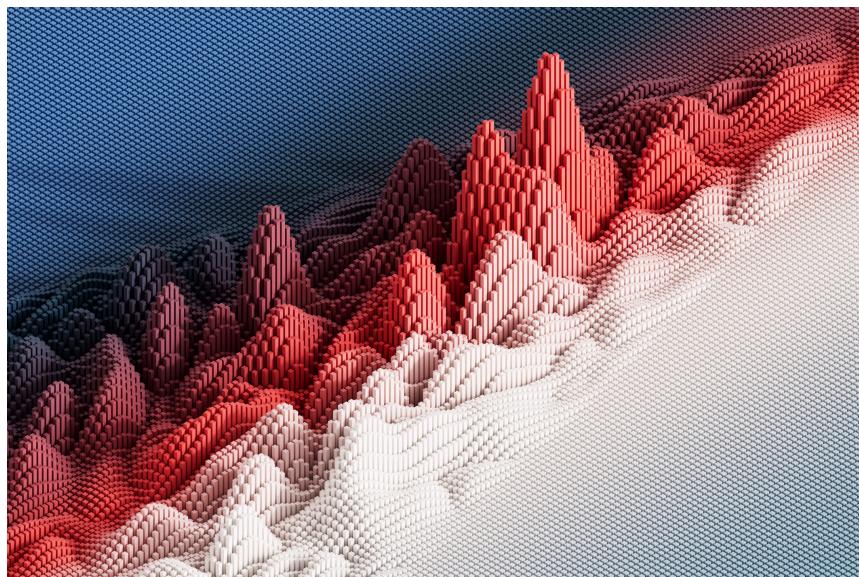
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The AI Summit Where Everyone Agreed on Bad News

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



Welcome back to *In the Loop*, TIME’s twice-weekly newsletter about the world of AI. If you’re reading this in your browser, you can subscribe to have the next one delivered straight to your inbox.

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What to Know: The AI social contract

At a lakefront venue in Sweden earlier this month, 18 individuals from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, the U.K. AI Security Institute, the OECD, and other groups gathered for an invite-only summit. On the agenda: arriving at an understanding of the likely ways that

advanced AI will impact the “social contract” between working people, governments, and corporations.

Top AI CEOs like DeepMind’s Demis Hassabis and OpenAI’s Sam Altman have recently been [urging](#) academics and governments to grapple with this issue more deeply, to better prepare the world for what they expect will be a highly disruptive economic shock. So, every day for a week—in breakout rooms and in a nightly communal sauna—these 18 experts hashed out a picture of what economic shocks might be coming down the track... and what to do about them.

Bad news — One outcome of the so-called “AGI social contract summit” was a list of four draft statements, according to the summit’s organizers. These statements have not previously been reported. They paint a grim picture of where the world could be headed, absent significant interventions by governments and societies. “AI is likely to exacerbate increasing wealth and income inequality within countries, worsening economic conditions for many working and middle-class people and families,” the first reads. “AI will increase inequality between countries that have access to AI infrastructure and those that don’t—both in terms of access to benefits as well as ability to respond to shocks,” says the second. “Without intervention, AI-enabled inequalities may lead to the political dominance of wealthy individuals and corporations, eroding democratic institutions and increasing levels of political dissatisfaction,” the third says. And the fourth: “The encroachment of AI systems and the erosion of the value of labor could lead to the increasing disempowerment of most humans, causing a degradation in individual well-being and purpose.”

Human disempowerment — Attendees at the summit agreed that the existing social contract—in which people receive security and a stake in society in return for their labor—is in trouble due to AI, says Deric Cheng, the event’s organizer, who serves as Director of Research at the Windfall Trust, a non-profit founded this year to

grapple with these issues. “We’re essentially worried that labor will be disempowered relative to corporations, and also to some degree that governments might be disempowered relative to corporations,” Cheng says. “The obvious result of lower labor power is decreased real wages.” This view holds that people in wealthy democracies enjoy a high standard of living not due to their rights enshrined on paper—but due to their ability to withhold their labor. Remove labor from that equation, and standards of living are vulnerable to going down, even if overall GDP or productivity statistics rise.

Ways forward — Without intervention by governments, attendees agreed, the default path of advanced AI would likely result in bad economic outcomes for the average person. But fortunately, they also identified several possible actions that governments could take to push things in a better direction, Cheng says. For example: developing new institutions, in the vein of the IMF, to ensure that wealth derived from AI is distributed globally, rather than within the one or two powerful countries where AI companies are located. States could also run pilots today, Cheng says, for policies like basic income and reduced working weeks, to gather evidence about what kinds of safety nets are effective.

Google DeepMind declined to comment on the statements that arose from the summit. OpenAI did not respond to a request for comment. After the publication of this article, Cheng said in a message that all attendees were present in a personal capacity, not an official capacity, and that the statements do not reflect the views of their organizations. He also added that some attendees disagree with some of the draft statements, which he had previously described as a “consensus” of the group.

If you have a minute, please take our quick survey to help us better understand who you are and which AI topics interest you most.

[Take the survey](#)

Who to Know: U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta

Last year, Federal District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google had illegally maintained a monopoly over online search and ads. This week, he is expected to announce the court's decision on what to do about it—a ruling that could range from making Google share data with rivals, to forcing a breakup of the search giant itself.

Payments to rivals — The U.S. Department of Justice's case against Google revolved around the multibillion dollar yearly payments that Google made to Apple in order to secure Google as the default search engine on iPhones. Observers expect the court to, at a minimum, place limits on these kinds of payments, which Mehta ruled were anticompetitive.

Spinning off Chrome — Another possibility is that Mehta could order Google to sell Chrome, the most popular browser in the world, with a 67% market share. Chrome allows Google to collect intricate data about users' browsing patterns that shore up its dominance of the search and ad space. Any of Google's competitors would no doubt jump at the chance to buy the world's top browser, given the opportunity it affords to point users toward their LLM of choice.

Sharing user data — The data that Google collects on its users is part of the secret sauce of its search engine. Mehta could rule that Google must share this data with competitors—perhaps in an anonymized form, to ward off accusations of privacy violations.

AI in Action

The public trusts AI chatbots more than companies or community leaders, according to [polling](#) of users in 68 countries carried out by the Collective Intelligence Project.

More than half (56.6%) of people trust AI chatbots, the polling found. That's higher than the AI companies that make them (34.6%) or even faith and community leaders (44.2%).

More than one in 10 people (14.9%) are using AI for emotional support on a daily basis, the survey found. And 30% of people have "at some point thought their AI chatbot might be self-aware."

And 56% of people polled said that the proliferation of AI across society was likely to worsen access to good jobs.

As always, if you have an interesting story of AI in Action, we'd love to hear it. Email us at: intheloop@time.com

What We're Reading

[The Race for Artificial General Intelligence Poses New Risks to an Unstable World](#), by Billy Perrigo in TIME

A shameless plug for my own story here. Earlier this year I traveled to Paris to sit in on a fascinating exercise: a simulated war-game, where four teams played out the impact of advanced AI on geopolitics. It was sort of like watching a game of Dungeons and Dragons, except the players were former government officials and AI researchers—and the game board was planet Earth. I use the war-game as a jumping-off point in the story to explore how Artificial General Intelligence has become an increasingly salient dimension of great power competition between the U.S. and China. I hope you'll give it a read, and let me know what you think!

Correction, Aug 30

The original version of this article mischaracterized the level of agreement among summit attendees; after publication, Cheng said that some attendees disagreed with some statements, rather than it

being a true consensus. The article has also been updated to note that all attendees were present in a personal capacity, not an official capacity, and that the statements do not reflect the views of their organizations.

<https://time.com/7313344>

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The Origins of Patagonia's Conservationism

Gelles is the “Corner Office” columnist and a business reporter for the *New York Times*. His new book is [The Man Who Broke Capitalism: How Jack Welch Gutted the Heartland and Crushed the Soul of Corporate America](#)



The Brief September 9, 2025

TIME's Kid of the Year, another French government collapse, ICE operations in U.S. sanctuary cities, and more

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Earlier this year, a titanium mine was slated for construction on the edge of Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp, an unusually diverse ecosystem that is home to some of the country's most pristine

wetlands. If built, the mine would likely have unleashed catastrophic pollution in the area.

Then in June, the project was called off. In a stunning deal, the company behind the mine announced it had reached a \$60 million agreement to sell the site of the proposed project to a group of conservationists. There would be no titanium mining on the edge of the Okefenokee, after all.

It was a hefty price to pay for a tract of backwater marshland, but the conservationists had deep-pocketed backers, including Patagonia, the outdoor-apparel brand founded by rock climber Yvon Chouinard.

Two million dollars of the funds used to protect Okefenokee came from the Holdfast Collective, a group of nonprofit entities that since 2022 has donated the profits generated by Patagonia to nonprofit groups fighting climate change.

It is an arrangement unlike almost anything else in corporate America. Rather than distributing earnings to shareholders, or letting executives keep the money for themselves, Patagonia gives away most everything it makes.

That kind of philanthropy is unusual in an age when many billionaires flaunt their wealth with mega-yachts and Wall Street firms work to extract profits from their investments. But it is a structure that is in keeping with Patagonia's unique history of charity and conservationism.

Back in 1972, when Chouinard was still making rock-climbing gear, he heard about a plan to divert and develop the mouth of the Ventura River, which flowed just behind his office and then into the Pacific Ocean, shaping one of the best surf breaks in California. If the plan went ahead, the waves that drew Chouinard to Ventura in the first place could be gone.

Beyond the waterway's importance to the surf, Chouinard and his pals knew that as recently as the 1940s, the Ventura had been a major spawning ground for thousands of steelhead trout and Chinook salmon. But over the years, the river had been dammed upstream, drying it up and killing the fish.

Chouinard wound up backing a young environmental activist named Mark Capelli who led an effort to halt development on the Ventura. Thanks to Chouinard's financial backing, the development was halted, the river was protected, and the surf break was preserved.

Capelli wasn't a businessman and Chouinard wasn't an activist at this point, but the men shared an affinity for nature and a willingness to challenge authority. "We were both marching to our own drummer," Capelli said.

The check for Capelli was the first environmental grant Chouinard ever made. One small donation had made a difference, and Chouinard understood for the first time that his money could have an impact.

Years later, on Earth Day 1989, Chouinard hosted an activist named Rick Klein at the Patagonia offices in Ventura. Klein, a native Californian who had first visited Chile in the 1970s and fallen in love with the land, had come straight off the plane from South America, and he was there to ask Chouinard for money.

He was running an organization called Ancient Forest International, working to preserve old-growth trees around the globe. In particular, he was trying to protect a 1,100-acre swath of forest in southern Chile that was home to ancient araucaria, also known as monkey puzzle trees. Rumor had it that a New Zealand-based timber company wanted to buy the land, situated in the Cañi mountains, and clear-cut the trees to make paper for fax machines.

Klein described the land and unfurled a spread of nine photographs he had taped together, displaying a majestic vista of forests and lakes. It was a rare opportunity to preserve pristine land, he told Chouinard. Klein had already raised money from another philanthropist; would Chouinard help?

He didn't hesitate. Chouinard was in for \$40,000. That was an enormous commitment and took even his family by surprise. "It wasn't a great time for us financially," his wife Malinda Chouinard said. "Is any time a good time to spend an unbudgeted \$40,000?"

Chouinard told Klein that if he wanted to raise more money, he should go to San Francisco and hit up Doug Tompkins, his best friend and the founder of another clothing company, Esprit. Chouinard was sure his friend would match his contribution. He was right. When Klein arrived in San Francisco, Tompkins cut the activist a check on the spot. Klein now had most of the funds needed to save a unique stand of ancient forest.

As Chouinard grew wealthy thanks to Patagonia's success, he began allocating much of his money to the acquisition of undeveloped land. He built himself homes in exclusive locales, including the foothills of the Tetons in Jackson, Wyo., and the beach in Ventura. He acquired property in the exclusive Hollister Ranch, north of Santa Barbara, Calif.

But most of his swelling fortune was funneled toward environmental activism and conservation. Along with Tompkins, he bought up vast swaths of Argentina and Chile, helping fund the creation of a new network of national parks. He also contributed to a new protected area on the southernmost tip of Argentina, known as Peninsula Mitre.

And in 2022, Chouinard gave away the company to a series of trusts and nonprofit organizations including the newly created

Holdfast Collective, which now turns over all of Patagonia's profits to environmental causes including large-scale conservation.

In its first year of operation, Holdfast made 690 grants and commitments totaling more than \$61 million. There were big donations for conservation efforts, including donations to help protect the Vjosa River in Albania. The Nature Conservancy got \$5.2 million to buy 8,000 acres in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta to protect a fragile waterway. And Holdfast has already blocked other mining projects as well.

Shortly after Chouinard gave away the company, Greg Curtis, the former deputy general counsel of Patagonia who now runs Holdfast, heard about a campaign to impede the construction of Pebble Mine, a proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska. Within days, Curtis had committed to providing the final \$3.1 million needed to buy up some critical parcels of land, scuttling the mining project. In total, the Holdfast funds helped protect 162,710 acres of wilderness around the world in its first year of operation. And now, the money is helping protect the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.

In some respects, Patagonia has hardly changed since Chouinard founded the company. More than five decades on, Patagonia's profits are still going to grassroots groups working to protect nature, perpetuating, with an almost manic level of consistency, the approach Chouinard first took when he gave his initial grants to Capelli and the Friends of the Ventura River some 50 years earlier.

And yet in restructuring Patagonia to ensure that its profits are used to protect wild lands, Chouinard accomplished something remarkable, turning a for-profit corporation with \$1 billion in annual sales into one of the biggest environmental philanthropies in the country.

"It changed the whole way the company operates," he said of Patagonia's commitment to the environment. "We make all

decisions based on: Is this the right thing for the home planet?"

Excerpted from Dirtbag Billionaire: How Yvon Chouinard Built Patagonia, Made a Fortune, and Gave It All Away by David Gelles. Copyright © 2025 by David Gelles. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster Inc.

<https://time.com/7315021>

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How We Chose the 2025 Latino Leaders

Fradkin is an executive editor at TIME.

Arrieta-Kenna is a senior editor for TIME, based in the Singapore bureau. He edits global news and features across sections—including politics, sports, and more—and oversees coverage of the Asia-Pacific region.



“People tend to put you in a box—you know, you’re Mexican, and you’re this way,” says [Ignacio “Nacho” Jimenez](#), who this year won a James Beard Award for his New York City cocktail bar Superbueno, about his early experience trying to make a life and career in the U.S.

It’s a familiar feeling for many Latinos in the U.S., despite their diversity of identities and national backgrounds.

And, research shows, there are an equally diverse range of ways in which Latino immigrants and their descendants are crucial parts of the country. An October 2024 [fact sheet](#) by the nonpartisan American Immigration Council cited a study that found that

communities with higher shares of Latinos were “associated with decreases in the number of homicides, assaults, and burglaries.” Latinos start more businesses per capita than any other racial or ethnic group in the U.S., notes a December [report](#) by McKinsey. And while Latinos represent just under 20% of the U.S. population, they account for over 30% of the country’s economic growth, according to UCLA [research](#) published in April.

America’s largest racial or ethnic minority is filled with [creators](#), problem solvers, and role models across industries.

TIME marked Hispanic Heritage Month by highlighting several of them in [2023](#) and [2024](#), and is now shining a light on 12 new Latino Leaders including Jimenez, as well as Hollywood stars like *The Bear*’s [Liza Colón-Zayas](#), [Isabela Merced](#) of *The Last of Us* and *Superman*, and *SNL*’s [Marcello Hernandez](#); changemakers like *Shark Tank*’s [Daniel Lubetzky](#) and women’s-sports investor [Emma Rodriguez-Ayala](#); and storytellers like novelist [Isabel Allende](#).

As accomplished as these leaders are, they’re as focused on giving back as they are on their own successes. “I’m actively trying to work as much as I can so that I can have the means and the power to do more and help more people and create a name for myself,” says Hernandez, “but also to represent for Latinos, which is really important to me.”

[Read the full list of 2025 Latino Leaders here.](#)

<https://time.com/7314985>

The True Story Behind The Smashing Machine, According to the Man Who Lived It



The day before the premiere of *The Smashing Machine* at the Venice Film Festival earlier this week, former mixed martial arts fighter Mark Kerr describes his emotional state as “vibrational.” It’s tough to pin down where jet lag ends and nerves begin, but not long before audiences will see [Dwayne Johnson](#) act out his life

story for the first time, the 56-year-old is just trying to roll with the absurdity of the moment. Keeping a clear head has been at the top of his agenda for some time now: the first thing he told me, a week earlier over Zoom, was that he was “trying to try to wrap my head around what’s in front of me.” Entrusting your story to someone else and then putting it out there for public consumption is no small thing, even when you’ve lived out much of that story in the public eye to begin with.

Kerr’s particular story includes some epic highs and lows, as *The Smashing Machine*, out Oct. 3, depicts how a battle with [painkiller addiction](#) and a strained, volatile relationship pushed a fighting career on the cusp of historic achievement to its breaking point. And the man Kerr entrusted it to is writer-director [Benny Safdie](#), best known for co-directing the 2019 crime thriller *Uncut Gems* with his brother Josh. In Venice, [Safdie](#) effuses about his subject’s generosity and vulnerability alike, and Johnson makes headlines for sobbing following the film’s premiere, as his own journey to tell Kerr’s story launches his transition from blockbuster action star to Serious Actor—the Oscar buzz began long before anyone had even seen the film.

As Safdie explained to Kerr as they began their journey together, “You lived your life so we can all feel it.”

Read more: [Dwayne Johnson Captures the Complex Spirit of a Fighter in The Smashing Machine](#)

A rocky rise to the top of a burgeoning sport

The Smashing Machine focuses on an intense period of Kerr’s life between 1997 and 2000, but his fighting career began in wrestling, first at his high school in Toledo, Ohio, then at Syracuse University. He graduated and moved to Arizona, training from 1992 to 1996 in the hopes of making the Olympic team. When he didn’t make the

cut, Kerr needed a way to make money from his training—before the [UFC](#), the only options were scrappy “barroom brawlers”.

“When I first started, I had no clue what I was getting into. Then the UFC got a hold of me. I had this drive to be considered a professional, not a bar brawler, not like [being] the toughest kid scooped up off the playground.”

In the early 1990s, [MMA](#) was burgeoning in popularity. The 1993 formation of the promotion company [Ultimate Fighting Championship](#) ensured that the few-rules, multi-style approach of MMA had an official American home. MMA was a combat sports disruptor—by combining different disciplines, you could no longer be the “best of the best” if you had spent your whole life training in just one of the martial arts. Instead, you needed to master countless styles and strategies to remain competitive. It was Kerr’s aggressive style and decisive victories that earned him the nickname the film borrows for its title.

But in the late ‘90s, the sport faced an existential threat: After sustained political pressure over brutal matches, cable networks began refusing to air Ultimate Fighting Championship fights and states began to ban matches point blank. This massive reduction in potential income upset the trajectory of many emerging careers, including Kerr’s, so U.S.-based fighters like him migrated to international tournaments in Japan to compete in front of crowds who understood the technique and philosophy behind the sport.

“It had gotten a bad reputation, undue. People just didn’t understand it. If you don’t understand something, you fear it, you label it. ‘Oh, it’s barbaric, it’s like cockfighting.’” Those were the words favored by Senator John McCain, a leader in the fight to ban the sport, though 10 years on, he changed his tune on MMA, citing new rules that made the sport less dangerous.

Still, it was a time of exploration for fighters like Kerr. “We were trying to answer these fundamental questions like, ‘Can a smaller guy beat the bigger guy? Can a 10th degree black belt get beat by a wrestler? Can a wrestler get beat by a jiu jitsu guy?’” he explains.

The sport’s value has only increased in the ensuing decades—in August, Paramount procured the exclusive UFC streaming rights for \$7.7 billion. But Kerr’s career didn’t last long enough to benefit from that solid ground. By the time we see him competing in Japan’s illustrious Pride Fighting Championship in *The Smashing Machine*, he was addicted to the painkillers prescribed by his doctors to help him deal with the blows and bounce back more quickly for the next fight. In 1999, he survived an overdose. He officially retired in 2009, seven years after HBO aired a documentary that covered the same timeframe as Safdie’s film.

Read more: [*The 46 Most Anticipated Movies of Fall 2025*](#)

Struggles with addiction and an intense relationship



During this time, Kerr was using pain medication regularly, not knowing that it could result in a physical addiction that would

threaten his life. His logic was simple: every fighter knows that they have a limited number of fights before they're not able to compete anymore, and pain medication was the only way to maximize longevity and therefore income. His addiction was driven by a need to be available. "I don't have time to sit on the sidelines for three weeks to heal. It became an easy solution for the moment, but a very complex solution long term."

Opioid addiction is distressingly common in nearly every contact and combat sport, but Kerr was isolated from the endemic abuse of painkillers in the industry. "I couldn't get on the internet and search like I can today. There was a certain amount of, 'Man, if I told somebody...' It's like this shame that I carried around, kept me quiet. So I just dealt with that. Whether it was prevalent or not, I know it was easy to access."

When *The Smashing Machine* isn't situating audiences in the backstage corridors and makeshift infirmaries of Kerr's matches, it takes us to Phoenix, Ariz., where Kerr and his girlfriend at the time, Dawn Staples, live what might have been a calm suburban existence if not for the walls of resentment erected between them. Staples, played in the movie by [Emily Blunt](#), was a recovering alcoholic, and the couple's fraught journeys with sobriety led to feelings of abandonment and bitterness. They separated after Kerr's 1999 overdose and stint in rehab, only to reconcile months later. But one night, the police were called after an argument escalated to the point of Staples trying to hurt herself with razors, even grabbing Kerr's handgun.

"What I was doing at the time was incredibly selfish. Dawn just wanted my love. She wanted to feel important. The only thing important at the time was me fighting, then the second thing that came in importance was the drug and alcohol use. A lot of that volatility was because of my actions. I look back on it now, she's a little girl asking to be loved, and I'm just a little boy that doesn't know how to accept or give it."

Kerr's career never recovered from his seismic and public defeat at Pride in May 2000, but he and Dawn quickly reconciled and married, staying together until 2006 and having a son together. Kerr fought occasionally afterwards, but always resulting in defeat. "So much of my identity is tied up in who I was as a fighter," says Kerr. "I just didn't know how to move on from it. It's what held me in my addiction longer. It took me forever to realize it's what I did, it's not who I am."

After his last fight, Kerr realized he still had a lot to figure out. Sobriety was a huge part of that. "I've been sober for seven years now, and that took me a minute, because that's a reckoning. I recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of body and mind. It took my son saying, 'Dad, do you think you can stop drinking?' I bounced around a couple different car dealerships trying to figure things out. It just wasn't clear that I have, as an individual, so much more to offer than just this little tiny parcel of me that I was giving out to the world."

Read more: [*The 10 Best Movies Based on a True Story*](#)

Bringing the story to Hollywood



The idea to bring Kerr's story to the screen originated with Johnson, whose own wrestling career coincided with Kerr's trajectory in the ring, and who saw this as a chance for a meatier role after years of tough-guy action parts. When Safdie first encountered glimpses of Kerr's story through grainy digital images in that 2002 documentary, he related to it immediately. "As soon as I saw him, I was like, 'I know what it feels like to be that guy.' Maybe it's because certain things have happened in my family [where] I've had to put my own feelings to the background for the benefit of somebody else," says Safdie. While the documentary portrayed Kerr's deep pain, Safdie felt his personality come through alongside it. "Mark was very comfortable in front of the camera, and I think that that allowed him to be vulnerable."

Kerr's persona was markedly different in and out of the ring. Watching him speak at press conferences or make his case in private to Pride FC officials, both in the HBO documentary and as depicted by Johnson in *The Smashing Machine*, his desire to come across as a polite, thoughtful, and articulate representative of the sport shines through. By contrast, when Kerr competed, he experienced a kind of sensory overload. "There's nothing else in my life that gives me that intensity. Even at the point where I can smell my opponent 30 feet from me. It's this intensity of every single sense I have as a human being at its peak."

Cut to 2019, when Johnson's agent Brad Slater contacted Kerr to acquire his life rights. Kerr felt out of his depth with anything to do with the entertainment industry—he didn't know who owned his life rights, didn't understand what it meant when the film was "greenlit," and didn't remember that he had met Slater 25 years earlier in a Los Angeles Cheesecake Factory. Johnson announced the project that fall during a UFC event at Madison Square Garden, and while the actor had briefly spoken with Kerr about how it would play out, Kerr describes their initial conversation as "almost transactional."

When the pandemic hit, *The Smashing Machine* took an extended pause, and Kerr tried to stop paying attention to the film's prospects: "I gave it to the universe. I had Dwayne's cell phone number for four years. I didn't call or text once." Four years later, just before A24 announced the film with Safdie attached as director, Johnson called Kerr, and the tone of the conversation was completely different. "It wasn't transactional, it was heartfelt, like, 'I'm ready to do this. I'm ready to take on something that's completely different from what I've ever done.' The amounts of sincerity and compassion were completely different than when we had spoken a few years earlier."

This wasn't the first time Johnson had picked Kerr's brain. Johnson began his pro-wrestling career around the same time as Kerr started in MMA, and in the late '90s, both men trained at Gold's Gym in Venice Beach. "It was before he had the Rock persona nailed down. He said he was on the road 300 days out of the year, and [with] what he was making, he had to *pay* to be on the road at the end of the day.

"We had lunch at a place in Venice called The Firehouse. He was asking me, like 'Hey, the Japanese, did they treat you good? Did they pay?'" He was asking all these questions, but I didn't understand at the time that he was interviewing me to see if there was a possibility that he could go to Japan and fight."

Making sure the film got it right



Before the cameras started rolling, Kerr acted as an informal consultant on Safdie's script. "There are certain parts where he wanted clarity," Kerr says of Safdie. "Not clarity of what happened, but emotional clarity."

"I would ask him if this felt truthful. He would say yes, or he would say no, and I would say, 'Well, why not?'" says Safdie, who stresses that he didn't want Kerr to feel "used and abused by this process." In one of their earliest conversations, Safdie told Kerr his entire life story in order to address how intense and uncomfortable the project could be for Kerr. "If you're going to trust me telling your story, I'm going to trust you with my story."

During production, Kerr knew it would be awkward for Johnson to be nearby while the actor was recreating deeply personal emotional moments from his life. He found the experience of being on set in Vancouver surreal. "The running joke was that everybody talked about me in the third person, and then [producer] Dave Koplan would go, "He's right here." It still has that feeling of talking about myself in the third person."

Kerr was most involved during "fight week," where he worked alongside Johnson and the stunt team to nail details that serious MMA fans would be sure to notice. Their approach was teaching

foundational MMA fight moves—for example, Kerr’s recognizable double-leg takedown—so that Johnson could make it his own and wasn’t confined by trying to mimic Kerr exactly.

Safdie’s love for Kerr included aftercare when the cameras stopped rolling. “I know what it’s like when you’re done with a movie and actors leave. It’s hard to have that kind of come down. He’s been burned by people in his life, and I didn’t want him to have that with this. I wanted him to have a good connection with the movie on a deep level.”

He’s clearly pulled this part off. Kerr sums up his feelings by recalling a piece of wisdom he received from producer Dave Koplan. “Sometimes you make a movie. Sometimes you create a family, and this created a family who made a movie.”

Before we say goodbye, back in a Venice hotel lounge, a member of his entourage makes sure to tell me that I’ve been talking to a legend. And 25 years after his peak, Kerr is reckoning with that legendary status, finally at ease in the feeling that everything has come full circle. As he reflected a week earlier, recalling how his UFC Hall of Fame induction ceremony cemented this new sense of closure: “DJ asked me backstage, ‘How do you feel, brother? You’re home.’ I said, ‘It’s not a feeling. It’s a vibration.’”

<https://time.com/7314526>

Jude Law and Jason Bateman's Brother Act Is the Reason to Watch Netflix Thriller *Black Rabbit*

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.



The Black Rabbit is the kind of Manhattan restaurant that invariably gets described as a clubhouse. Nestled in the armpit where FDR Drive meets the Brooklyn Bridge, the fictional multi-story establishment that gives the Netflix thriller *Black Rabbit* its title boasts a historic location, a killer menu, a celebrity co-owner, decor that splits the difference between shabby chic and bohemian louche, and a fashionable clientele that treats its VIP room like a second home. As its proprietor, the charismatic former rock frontman Jake Friedken (executive producer [Jude Law](#)), explains to the crowd assembled there for a trunk show of high-end jewelry, this is “a place where the night could go anywhere.” Almost immediately, it does. A pair of masked thieves burst into the party, thrusting guns in people’s faces and demanding the jewels.

After this stylish and energetic intro, *Black Rabbit* takes viewers back in time a month to trace the convoluted origins of a robbery

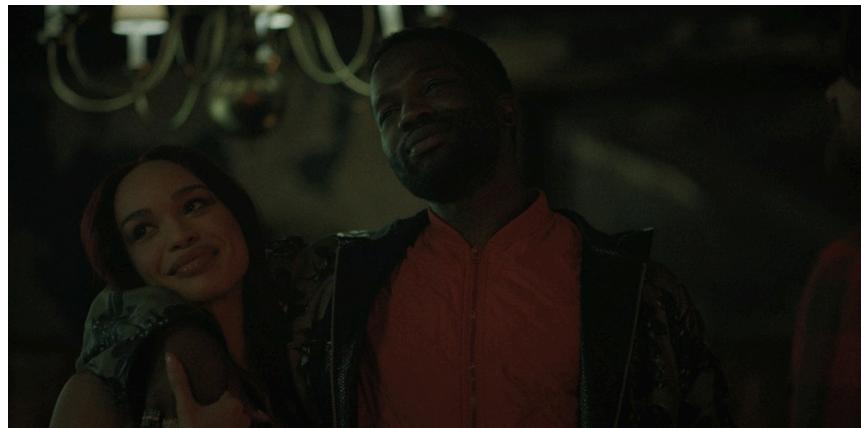
that raises some pressing questions—why, for instance, do the perpetrators have a key to the restaurant’s padlocked gate?—and is still in progress when the show cuts away from it. The trouble seems to begin when Jake’s ne’er-do-well older brother, Vince (played by executive producer [Jason Bateman](#), who also directed the first two episodes), returns to the city after a stint in Reno that ends with him running over a guy who tried to steal the rare coins he was selling out of a casino parking lot. Given how much money and anxiety Vince has cost him over the years, it’s tough to understand why hard-working, put-together Jake would not just pay for his plane ticket home, but also welcome him back behind the Rabbit’s bar.



The foundation of their complicated relationship, even more than the story behind the opening set piece, is the show’s animating mystery. When it stays focused on its two leads—and especially when they’re playing off each other—*Black Rabbit*, which arrives on Sept. 18, can be riveting. But the choice creators Zach Baylin ([King Richard](#), [Creed III](#)) and Kate Susman make to overload their scripts with plot instead of using that time to deepen the story’s many secondary characters flattens the brothers’ world. Though it was shot on location, this New York is a city of dated archetypes that might have carried a feature but can’t sustain an eight-hour series.

You can see why Bateman and Law would be excited enough about this project to want to throw their weight behind it as producers.

Their roles are cool as well as meaty—the kind that even male actors might struggle to find once they reach their 50s. Native New Yorkers who grew up in working-class Coney Island, the Friedkens escaped a chaotic household to become stars of the city's Y2K-era rock revival with their band, the Black Rabbits. (A black-and-white music video of the duo performing their hit, which injects a dose of humor into a show that could use more of it, suggests they were a sort of missing link between [Nirvana](#) and the [Strokes](#).) In their heyday, Jake was the pinup, ready to play the part in which the music industry cast him, while drummer Vince was the artist—and the drug-abusing liability. That dynamic has persisted into the present. Before bringing his charm and work ethic to the Rabbit, Jake was managing a famous multihyphenate artist, Wes (Sope Dirisu), who is now a partner in the restaurant. But Vince was the dreamer who saw the potential in a dilapidated space that he would ultimately be too busy drinking, snorting, and gambling away the equity in their family home to help transform.



This dichotomy, the sweaty striver vs. the tortured genius, isn't exactly novel. So it's a relief to see Baylin and Susman complicate it, challenging our expectations by capitalizing on the sinister smarm baked into Law's signature performances and the core of embattled decency that's still palpable beneath Bateman's Cousin Itt makeover. What seems at first like it might be miscasting, especially of Bateman, evolves into an understanding that there's more good in Vince, more rotten in Jake, and more gray area in their symbiotic relationship than either we or they realize. (The

script is not subtle on this, or any other, point. “He’s an addict, too,” one character says of Jake. “What’s he f-ckin’ addicted to?” asks another. The reply: “His brother.”)

One trait the brothers share is that they’re both terrible with money. Despite his prosperous posturing, Jake is scrambling just to pay the Rabbit’s vendors, let alone scrape together the funds to pursue a new opportunity at the Four Seasons’ iconic Pool Room. And Vince’s return to New York is immediately clocked by Junior (Forrest Weber) and Babbitt (Chris Coy), callow gangsters who lent him a huge sum that he neglected to repay before going west. Which makes *Black Rabbit* the kind of thriller that derives its pressure from the protagonists’ desperation to raise an impossible amount of cash in an unfeasibly short period. Jake’s reputation and livelihood are at stake. For Vince, what hangs in the balance isn’t just his own life; his creditors are also threatening his semi-estranged daughter, a tattoo artist named Gen (Odessa Young).



Whether a get-money-fast plot comes across as a tired trope or as the reinvention of a classic depends on execution; in *Black Rabbit*, it’s a little of both. A clubby restaurant makes a novel setting for such intrigue, even if the Rabbit feels more like a relic of pre-pandemic—if not pre-Great Recession—New York nightlife than a spot that could really exist today. Yet the serialized structure requires the Friedkens to nearly save themselves before nose-diving into a new mess so many times, it gets repetitive. When we finally glimpse the formative moments of their relationship, the

timing of that revelation suggests an arbitrary desire to withhold them until the last two episodes more than it serves the needs of a story that could've used those details.

But the real missed opportunity is the failure to give the dozen-plus characters around the Friedkens much personality or purpose outside of what they do to help or hinder, inspire or threaten or tug on the heartstrings of Jake and Vince. Jake has an ex and a son... and an electric connection with Wes' wife, Estelle (Cleopatra Coleman), who designed the restaurant. Vince has his skeevy associates. The Rabbit is its own world, populated by an ambitious chef (Amaka Okafor) and her loyal right hand (Robin de Jesus), along with several front-of-house employees. It's always a pleasure to see *The Gilded Age* star Morgan Spector, but his poorly defined role here seems to exist purely for the purposes of tying up loose plot threads.



All of these characters are short on interiority—which, among other problems, makes a storyline involving an influential customer who likes to drug and take advantage of young, female servers feel a bit exploitative. It says something, too, about the generic, expository nature of the dialogue that the only performance on the same level as Bateman's and Law's is a silent one from *CODA Oscar winner Troy Kotsur*. He plays Junior's father, Joe, an exacting but also fiercely loving deaf crime boss who has a long history with the Friedken family.

Black Rabbit is worth watching for its stylish direction (Bateman's fellow *Ozark* alum [Laura Linney](#) helms two episodes), propulsive pace that mitigates some of the narrative wheel-spinning, and most of all Law and Bateman's brilliantly cast brother act. But technical polish and the faithful execution of genre conventions alone can't elevate a show beyond competence. In its own terms, *Black Rabbit* is a workmanlike Jake, not a visionary Vince.

<https://time.com/7313171>

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David Lauren on Having His Father as His Boss and Letting People Live in a Ralph Lauren Ad

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



You're the chief innovation officer and chief branding officer at Ralph Lauren. What does that actually mean you do?

Every time we design products, there are stories that inspire those products. My job is to help bring those stories to life, to inspire our customers to want to be engaged in our world. Sometimes it's creating events, sometimes immersive experiences online, sometimes it's a fashion show in China.

A lot of people don't want to work for their parents. What's it like...

...to work for my dad? My dad is my best friend. He's my mentor and inspiration. I am so lucky to have somebody who cares about what I do and wants to educate me. The good thing, when he loves what I do, is that your dad, your mentor, and your boss loves something. But there's nothing more painful than when your dad, your mentor, and your boss doesn't like your idea, and I live with that a lot as well.

How does he communicate that?

It's never easy. You know, we have to be direct with each other and want that honesty. At the same time, we know that it comes with a certain level of sensitivity. Sometimes I feel the criticism or the comment in a harder way than I should. And sometimes I'll say that I like something he's doing, or I'll say I don't like something, and I have to be careful about that, because he's my father, but at the same time, that's my boss.

Did you never want to do something else? Go off and start your own [candy store](#) or [produce](#) a film, like your siblings?

You can build another company, but this is the greatest platform to effect change, and I think we're doing it. I worked on an advertising campaign about volunteerism. There's no other way to have done that and to reach millions of people around the world, except at Ralph Lauren. We had the opportunity to create products to take plastic out of the oceans and create an environmentally friendly shirt. I feel very fulfilled, and I feel like I'm adding something to our planet.

What is the purpose of your new AI tool, Ask Ralph?

We want to give people the confidence to live their better lives. This is a tool to create a personal connection with a customer, because you're taking clothes that mean nothing and finding a way to make them personal. It's like having Ralph Lauren in your back

pocket, 24/7, as if you could pick up the phone and ask Ralph Lauren what to wear.

Fashion is a fickle business. How has [Ralph Lauren](#) lasted so long?

He has a philosophy that things that are timeless get better with age. If you really look at the things that we cherish in America, from the *Star-Spangled Banner* to an old baseball glove to, you know, the great old pair of jeans that you see on a rancher, these are things that are part of our culture. He's built an entire company around identifying, perpetuating, and loving the things that last and he designs with a sensibility of "I'm not creating this so it will look trendy this year. I want it to feel relevant, but I want you to still want to wear it in 30 years, and I want your kids to want it."

Do you have a favorite Ralph Lauren era?

I'd been with my dad as we drove across the West. I watched him discover all these great Navajo blankets and the great Western saddles and Western art, so to see it come onto the runway and still impact designers today is amazing. A designer in Paris just put a horse on the runway. That's very Ralph Lauren.

A lot of the label's growth this quarter came from Asia and Europe. Are you worried about tariffs?

We are constantly monitoring the ecosystem and the business dynamics in the world. Our job is to navigate as best we can, and so far I think we're doing very well.

Do you think you have imbibed enough of your father's vision and instincts that if he can't be the leader of it anymore or the visionary behind it, you could play that role?

I'm very proud to have worked closely with my dad and to have internalized his vision and to work closely with our CEO Patrice

Louvet and 25,000 employees for the last 25 years. And I think that there is a lot of opportunity ahead, and that's exciting, but scary as well.

But is there a discussion about legacy planning? Will there be a Ralph Lauren post-Ralph?

There will be a very strong Ralph Lauren after Ralph Lauren, but he's still here.

You have a family with a big legacy. You have married into a family with a big legacy. How do you make sure that your three children do not feel too much privilege and also do not disappear under the weight of being a Bush and a Lauren?

We both believe that we came from lives that were privileged but full of values. It's wonderful to have access, and it's wonderful to feel like you have a great name, but that comes with responsibility, and a legacy of families that believe in work. My father still comes into the office; Lauren's grandfather [President George H.W. Bush] and her uncle [President George W. Bush] really believe in making the world better.

Ralph Lauren as a company has been progressive, and the Bush family is known for being conservative. Is there tension in the in-law political leanings?

Not at all. We believe in what we believe in. And I think everybody has done a great job making the world better.

Your father loves movies. Is there a movie character that reminds you of him?

One of the movies that inspired Polo was the original *Thomas Crown Affair* with Steve McQueen. And I sometimes think that that's Ralph Lauren.

He's a thief?

No. You know, there's something about the cool, stylish guy falling in love. It's romantic, it's stylish, it's adventurous. I might also think about *Batman*. *Rocky* is one more that I always love—a great story about a somebody really having the conviction and the fight to stand up for what they believe in. The world of fashion is not so different than any other world. You have to have a vision. You have to believe in yourself and believe you can do anything.

Ralph Lauren has a wide range of businesses. Is there any new area you'd like to move into?

We've just started a hospitality business. Our coffee and our restaurants are probably as popular as our Polo shirts and our sunglasses. I think there's an opportunity to allow people to live in the Ralph Lauren ads. We'd love to open hotels.

Do you do the Canadian tux?

Like a denim top and a denim bottom? Yeah, of course. When I think of Ralph Lauren, I always think of a black tuxedo jacket and the pair of jeans and cowboy boots. It's very timeless and very rough.

Do the kids wear all Ralph Lauren?

There's never been any pressure from my father. Whatever we love, we love. My father has shopped at Walmart and Kmart and wears it very publicly. It's more about the fact that we do love what he makes. My kids right now are into soccer jerseys and the New York Yankees, and thank God, we have a partnership with the Yankees, so it's working for us.

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